

TOWN OF MORAGA
MORAGA CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, September 4, 2019, 6:30 PM
Soda Center (Orinda Room) - Saint Mary's College
1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga

The following meeting summary captures the highlights from the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP) Implementation Project Citizens Advisory Committee meeting held on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 6:30 PM at Soda Center – Orinda Room. This document is not a meeting transcription and does not capture comments verbatim.

1. CALL TO ORDER at 6:35 PM

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Wykle , Vice-Chair Korpus, Barker, Berman, , Burns, Carman, D'Arcy, Deutz, Dobbs, Driver, Fritzky, Gera, Gray, Jones, Kovac, Lucacher, Miles, Moore, Nelson, Oehlschlager, Onoda, Phillips, Poppingo, Scarpitti, Scheck, Schofield, Simpson, Stromberg, Whitney

Excused: Bruzzone

Absent: Markey, Mende, Schnurr, and Stoop

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA

Vice-Chair Korpus moved to adopt, the motion was seconded, and all approved.

4. DISCUSSION: MORAGA CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

David Early, Senior Adviser with PlaceWorks, gave a presentation that covered the following:

- MCSP Overview, CAC Process and Next Steps
- Overview of Design Scenarios
- Introduction to Discussion Topics

The presentation is posted online at: <http://www.moraga.ca.us/dept/planning/MCSP>

After Mr. Early concluded the first section of the presentation on the MCSP background, CAC role and process, and next steps, he opened up the floor for questions. No CAC members had questions.

Richard Olsen, a 47-year resident of Moraga asked who would be on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and what would be their role? Derek Farmer, Town of Moraga Planning Director, responded that the TAC is currently being formed and its members will include representatives from Public Works, transportation specialists, and other technical experts. Richard Olsen further commented that the Fire Department should have a role on the TAC given the increasing wildfire hazards.

Next, Mr. Early finished the remainder of his presentation, providing an overview of the design scenarios and the five suggested CAC discussion topics: 1) Town center land use allocation, density, and design (upper story setbacks); 2) Residential development in the hillside area vs. town center; 3) Creek corridor/public access; 4) Scenic corridors/setbacks; and 5) Moraga Ranch.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the CAC had the following questions:

Q: If a developer/sponsor wants to provide a community benefit, such as a community center, would that be subtracted from the allowed commercial development?

A: No. A community center would likely replace an existing building. It might be difficult to finance and that is why it is not shown on the scenarios.

Q: There is no discussion question that tackles how to address historic and cultural resources. There should be consideration of Moraga's history.

A: This topic can be added to our list of discussion topics. We understand that preserving Moraga Ranch and reusing the buildings is one way to preserve Moraga's history.

Q: Do the design scenarios preserve the open space area to the southeast of Moraga Road?

A: Yes, the open space area is preserved in both scenarios (It is out of the study area).

Q: Will any historic resources be preserved?

A: According to federal and State definitions, there are technically no historic resources in the study area. However, this does not mean that buildings the community considers historic will not be preserved. The community's concerns will be noted at this time, though which buildings will remain or be demolished will be determined at a later date (i.e. once a developer submits a proposal to the Town).

Q: What are the building height limitations?

A: Building height is limited to 45 feet in the core area and 35 feet everywhere else.

Q: Would it be possible to receive a matrix that summarizes the pros/cons of each topic the CAC will be provide input on? Can you give examples of what zoning code and development regulations have been successful in other communities?

A: We will consider adding a pro/con column. However, one potential pitfall of doing so is that everyone has their own opinions – one person's pro could be another person's con.

Q: In both design scenarios, the northwest part of the hillside orchard is left undeveloped. Will future development also preserve this portion of the hillside?

A: The design scenarios preserved this portion of the hillside because it is the steepest part of the hill and is also most visible from Moraga Way.

Q: What do the white areas on the design scenarios represent?

A: The white areas represent parking, open space, and private yards and landscaping.

Q: Will the new residential units need water detention basins? If so, where would the water detention basins be placed?

A: We are not at the point of engineering or designing stormwater detention basins as no development project has been proposed. In general, water detention basins would be placed in the flatter portions of the site.

Q: Can the CAC discuss building heights as part of the Zoning Code discussion?

A: Yes, we can talk about building heights, but we need to implement zoning consistent with the MCSP to avoid potential legal action.

Q: In Scenario 1, the assisted living/congregate care facility shown in Area 14 includes a significant amount of white space. In addition to parking, could the white area also accommodate townhouses?

A: The MCSP allows residential densities of 12-20 dwelling units/acre in Area 14, so it is possible this area could also support townhouses.

Q: How do we limit development to 630 housing units?

A: The Zoning Code will stipulate that no more than 630 housing units are permitted.

Q: Can you zone for topography, specifying that steeper slopes should be developed at lower intensities (in terms of density and building height)?

A: Yes. However, the Zoning Code will need to be consistent with the land use intensities permitted by the MCSP to avoid potential legal action.

Q: Can the Zoning Code tie building height to increased setbacks from the street and between buildings?

A: The CAC can discuss that at the next meeting, but the Zoning Code needs to be consistent with the development standards specified in the MCSP.

Q: How much can the Zoning Code conflict with the MCSP?

A: The Zoning Code should be consistent with the MCSP.

Q: Transportation linkages are critical in the MCSP area. A transportation hub would be appropriate near Moraga Way and Moraga Road.

A: The MCSP calls for a central transit stop near School St. and Moraga Way.

Q: Is placing housing near transit considered transit oriented development (TOD) zoning?

A: The entire MCSP is based on the principle of TOD. When you write zoning to implement it, it includes TOD zoning by definition.

Q: What is your view of the function and benefits of second and third-story building setbacks?

A: The purpose of building setbacks is to create visual relief.

Q: What is the logic behind including the vehicular bridge from the residential area to the town center?

A: The MCSP calls for a vehicular crossing over the creek to connect the residential area to the town center.

Q: Can we specify different sidewalk widths by area or use?

A: Yes, the Zoning Code could specify different sidewalk widths.

Q: How would the maximum development cap account for existing structures being replaced with higher intensity uses?

A: If a building is torn down and replaced with a higher intensity use, only the net new development would contribute toward the maximum development cap.

Q: Both scenarios account for a park on the existing orchard, but the park is not visible in the viewpoints.

A: The park is intentionally located slightly downslope from the hillside so it would not be as visible from Moraga Way.

Q: If you rotated viewpoint 1 of the visual simulations toward Camino Ricardo, would the development on the hillside be more visible?

A: Yes, you would see more development.

Q: What does the red dotted line along School Street signify?

A: The red dotted line represents the Lafayette/Moraga Regional Trail.

Q: Is there a reason to have a trail on School Street?

A: The MCSP calls for the Lafayette/Moraga Regional Trail to run along School Street.

Q: Does the MCSP require affordable housing?

A: The MCSP provides for workforce housing which is typically understood to signify housing affordable to low and moderate incomes. A portion of the senior housing could also be affordable.

Q: To what extent are the MCSP land use designations set in stone? Could we suggest historic preservation in the Zoning Code?

A: The Zoning Code needs to be consistent with the MCSP land use designations.

Q: What are the legal rights of the Bruzzone family, the primary property owner of the MCSP area? What happens if they don't like the Zoning Code?

A: It is generally accepted that local government has the right to zone and make development regulations. It is also accepted that local government cannot deprive property owners of an economic return. From there you get into grey zones. Town staff and consultants are working on zoning that reflects the MCSP, represents the desires of the community and is legally defensible.

Q: Could you explain the difference between workforce housing and senior housing?

A: Workforce housing is typically income-restricted and senior housing is usually age-restricted (typically residents of senior housing need to be 55 years or older).

Q: Would the price of a workforce housing unit be capped?

A: The rent or sale price of a workforce unit could be capped.

Q: Will there be different design requirements for workforce and senior housing?

A: There is usually not different design regulations for workforce or senior housing, though senior housing requires fewer parking spaces per unit than workforce housing.

Q: The MCSP does not provide for student housing. Why not?

A: It's true that student housing is not called out in MCSP. If it is not a university, college, or other educational institution providing the housing, it is not typical to specify housing be reserved for students only.

Q: What happens when the beneficiaries of a senior housing homeowner inherit the unit? Are they able to live in the unit even though some of the residents may not meet the minimum age requirement?

A: All residents of senior housing units must meet the age requirements. This is a very common requirement.

Q: In Scenario 2, if the shopping center is not revitalized how will it attract future shoppers?

A: Scenario 1 calls for the auto-oriented shopping center to be revitalized to a pedestrian-oriented experience with a new town gathering place. In Scenario 2, the shopping center would likely be revitalized with new landscaping, signage, and other improvements, but the town gathering place would be located along School Street.

Q: Is it possible to set performance goals for future development and monitor whether the developer/landowner meets those performance goals?

A: Yes, it is possible to set performance goals for future development, but they are difficult to monitor and track.

Q: Are performance goals successful in achieving their desired outcomes? Can you enact penalties if a desired goal is not achieved?

A: Performance goals are complicated and not always successful at achieving their outcomes. You have a better chance of success if your goals/rules are straightforward. You can enact consequences if a performance goal is not met (ex. if you require reduced vehicle trip generation and if the goal is not met, the developer might be responsible for adding more bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure). Local governments can spend a lot of time to interpret and enforce rules without achieving desired outcomes.

Q: If a new street is required that wasn't anticipated in the MCSP, would new mitigation be needed?

A: Once a development proposal is put forth, the Town will look at the entire traffic pattern and assess whether additional traffic mitigation is needed.

Q: Could a roundabout be installed (instead of a traffic signal) at the new four-way intersection at Moraga Road and the future School Street extension? Could the Town get federal funding to study its requirement?

A: There is no requirement that you must study a roundabout, but the Town could look at potential funding sources for a roundabout study if desired by the community and Council.

Q: Every morning it takes me at least five minutes to turn from Alta Mesa onto Moraga Road. Will traffic mitigation be required as part of this project?

A: The MCSP Environmental Impact Report (EIR) specifies the required traffic mitigation measures. The traffic mitigation measures require things like new traffic signals in Moraga and Lafayette. The Town has already implemented a traffic mitigation fee and has begun collecting fees to cover future improvements which will be implemented on an as-needed basis.

Q: Can traffic mitigation be required as part of the Zoning Code? Or, will traffic mitigation be addressed at project implementation?

A: There is no legal requirement to do more traffic mitigation than what is already required by the MCSP EIR.

Q: The MCSP EIR was completed 10 years ago. Is it true that an EIR must be completed within five years of project construction?

A: An EIR need only be revisited if existing conditions have changed significantly. It is likely that traffic conditions are relatively the same as 10 years ago.

Comment: As each project is proposed a discretionary approval might be needed which could trigger additional environmental review and additional mitigation could be required.

Comment: traffic is an issue throughout the Town and the community is currently discussing the need for additional traffic signals.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

A public comment period followed the CAC questions and answers as summarized below.

Scott Bowhay: Would new projects proposed under the MCSP adopted zoning be required to meet the setbacks or could they match the existing Moraga Town Center Homes setback? Response: This scenario assumes that the areas near Moraga Town Center Homes would meet the 20 or 40 foot scenic corridor setback. Town understands that there have been community concerns about setbacks and height of Moraga Town Center homes.

Carol Landsman: Who is responsible for new Chase building that is choking out the adjacent building? Response: The property owner is the Bruzzone family and the applicant is Chase Bank.

Carol Landsman: Why is there an assisted living facility being proposed as part of the MCSP? Why did the MCSP provide for 150 beds?

Response: The original authors of the MCSP are not here to provide the reasoning for the inclusion of the assisted living/congregate care facility, but it is the Town's responsibility to implement the MCSP as adopted.

Mayor Roger Wykle (CAC Chair): The reason we are here tonight is to give the community certainty about the characteristics of future development.

Carol Landsman: Will senior housing be single-story? Most seniors cannot negotiate stairs.

Response: There is no requirement that senior housing be single-story. There are many examples of multi-story senior housing developments that include elevators to accommodate reduced mobility.

John Walker, Moraga resident in Area 15 of the MCSP: Mr. Walker thanked Ms. Onoda for measuring the sidewalk widths in the study areas as it gives a good picture about what appropriate building setbacks should be. He stated that one of the most critical tasks of the CAC is to consider setbacks and he is in favor of 40 foot setbacks along Moraga Road and Moraga Way. He requested that the basemaps fix the mislabel of Moraga Road when it turns into Canyon Road. Mr. Walker noted that the potential development of housing in Area 15 should require setbacks from Canyon Road and Country Club Road and sufficient spacing between houses. Density should be lowest at the steepest portion of the site. There should be a mandated transition zone where there is landscaping or pocket park to help transition between higher and lower densities.

Richard Olsen: The two scenarios call for preserving a portion of the orchard, however the MCSP does not call for this area to be permanently zoned as open space. Also, Area 16 is at the foot of a very active slide zone.

Brad Triebes - John Walker's neighbor: There is a potential safety issue with cars coming off of Country Club Drive to a 45 degree slope. Reduce the number of homes to be built to allow for larger setbacks.

Response: Your concerns are valid, but we are working at a program-level right now. When a development project comes forward, the Town will review it for street safety concerns.

George Brixzewski: How many new residents will be generated as a result of the MCSP?— Assuming total implementation of this plan, how many people would be added to the Town?

Response: The MCSP EIR assumed an average household size of 2.3 people/unit. Should 630 new housing units be built it would generate 1,449 new residents.

At the conclusion of the public comment period, Mr. Early explained that at CAC Meeting #3, to be held on September 19, 2019, the CAC and public would work in small groups to discuss and brainstorm responses to the discussion questions. All materials from these meetings are available online, as well as a FAQ document. Between CAC Meetings #3 and #4, the Town and consultant will summarize the public's feedback and make initial recommendations for the CAC to review and comment on at CAC Meeting #4 on Tuesday, October 1.

Mr. Stromberg made a recommendation to distribute a topographic map of the study area at the next meeting.

Mr. Early noted that for CAC members who cannot make the September 19 meeting, the discussion matrix will be emailed in advance of the meeting and can be completed and emailed in advance of CAC Meeting #4.

Should the CAC have additional ideas after tonight's meeting, Councilmember Korpus requested the CAC email suggestions to Derek Farmer. Mr. Early clarified that all suggestions should be sent by close of business on Friday, September 6, 2019.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.