

**TOWN OF MORAGA
OPEN HOUSE
AND
JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION AND DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING**

Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room
335 Rheem Boulevard
Moraga, CA 94556

January 25, 2016

7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

1. **OPEN HOUSE**
2. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Marnane called the Special Joint Meeting of the Planning Commission and Design Review Board (DRB) to order at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

A. Planning Commissioners:

Present: Commissioners D'Arcy, Kovac, Kuckuk, Woehleke, Chairperson Marnane

Absent: Commissioners Carr, Mallela

Design Review Boardmembers:

Present: Boardmembers Crews, Escano-Thompson, Glover, Chairperson Helber

Absent: None

Staff: Ellen Clark, Planning Director
Holly Pearson, Senior Planner
Stefan Pellegrini, Opticos

B. Conflict of Interest

There was no reported conflict of interest from the Planning Commission or the DRB.

C. Contact with Applicant(s).

There was no reported contact with applicant(s) from the Planning Commission or the DRB.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from the public.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Moraga Center Specific Plan Implementation Project – Vision Concept

Senior Planner Holly Pearson presented the background of the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP) Implementation Project – Vision Concept, as detailed in the January 25, 2016 staff report.

Stefan Pellegrini, Principal, Opticos Design, Inc., presented an overview and PowerPoint presentation and also identified the background of the project; the formation and discussions of the MCSP Implementation Project Steering Committee; development of the vision concept; and the elements of the Vision Concept including guiding design principles for the site, a set of site plan alternatives for key parts of the MCSP Area, a mixed-use and residential zoning framework, a proposed street network, proposed zoning map, and illustrative drawings and renderings to demonstrate potential development scenarios that could result from application of the new zoning.

Mr. Pellegrini explained that underlying the MCSP implementation strategy was the integration of “form-based” zoning standards into the code amendments that could promote high-quality, mixed-use, walkable, people-oriented places. He stated that form-based zoning focused on the physical form of development rather than the separation of land uses, as was the case with conventional zoning, and the approach could ensure a more predictable outcome for the MCSP in terms of the type, scale, and form of new development. In the process leading up to the crafting of the Vision Concept, the consultant team Opticos, Town staff, and the Steering Committee, had reviewed examples of form-based coding applications that had been enacted in other jurisdictions, both locally and around the country.

Mr. Pellegrini identified the following design principles that formed the basis of the Vision Concept for the MCSP:

1. Create a connected street network through the entire Specific Plan area;
2. Support new public spaces through active block frontages (i.e. requiring building fronts and entries to face streets and public spaces); and
3. Create fine-grained pedestrian and bicycle routes through the site.

The Implementation Strategies included a series of site plan alternatives based on the above principles, which had been divided into two different timeframes for implementation. Short- to mid-term site development strategies included:

- Develop School Street as a “complete street” to serve as a new main street for the area;
- Create a central public square, which should be the initial focal point for new commercial and mixed-use development;
- Create an active public space along the creek with good pedestrian access;
- Establish an inviting, human-scale neighborhood environment through appropriately-designed building frontages along School Street and along the creek;
- Provide a bridge connection from School Street’s public square to new and existing residential neighborhoods across Laguna Creek;
- Establish a new street network through the existing shopping center area, with an emphasis on the streets as public spaces. Provide on-street parking and improve access and facilities for pedestrian and bicyclists;
- Improve building frontages along the primary streets in the area; Moraga Road and Moraga Way (i.e. requiring building fronts and entries to have a primary orientation to the street that relates to an improved design scenic corridor design);
- Enhance and improve the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail through the site, either or both through developing a multi-use trail along the creek and/or with on-street bike lanes and an improved pedestrian path;
- Revitalize and improve connectivity through the existing shopping center by adding new streets that provide the structure for development of smaller scale, neighborhood-serving retail and services. Convert small portions of existing underutilized parking into new public spaces;
- As the site develops, accommodate parking in lots that are internal to blocks (i.e. not fronting on the street); and
- Improve the design of the scenic corridors through the site (Moraga Way and Moraga Road) through one of two design options, “Frontage Road” or “Attached Green.”

Longer-term implementation strategies for the site included:

- Build out the new street network over time with a variety of new residential unit types that can accommodate different household types, such as families, seniors and students. Examples of unit types include townhouses on the internal streets

near the central square, live/work units around the shopping center, and apartments or flats along the scenic green on Moraga Road; and

- Provide a pedestrian path along the scenic corridor frontage to improve access to the shopping center and new housing.

The Vision Concept articulated a series of new zoning districts for the MCSP Area, accommodating a range of land uses and intensities of built form, following the policy direction established in the MCSP.

Medium and higher intensity “core” zones would be located at the center of the site, with progressively lower intensity zones (“general” and “edge”), providing a transition between the village center and the existing residential neighborhoods adjacent to the MCSP site. The zoning districts had been applied to the MCSP Area to implement the land use designations described in the specific plan, and to generally provide land use mix, density and intensity that was in keeping with the MCSP vision. In some cases, the district boundaries had been refined from the MCSP land use map in order to better relate to existing topography and/or site constraints and to ensure compatibility between zones.

The Vision Concept proposed a total of eight new zoning districts. Four zones largely applied to the eastern portion of the site, and implemented the land use framework within the Mixed-Use and Commercial core of the current Town Center parcels. The existing Moraga Ranch would have its own unique zoning designation as a Special Planning Area, recognizing the special characteristics of the site. Four additional zones, largely applied to the western portion of the site, implementing residential neighborhoods of varying intensity. These various zones had been outlined in the staff report, and had been proposed as a way to structure the various implementing zoning regulations that would include more fine-grained detail on aspects such as setbacks and stepbacks, building separations, frontage requirements, treatment of pedestrian-oriented spaces in different contexts, and the like.

Mr. Pellegrini detailed the zoning framework for the Vision Concept; the general characteristics of the four Mixed-Use and Commercial zones; and the four proposed Residential zones, as outlined in the staff report.

Mr. Pellegrini advised that the comments received at this meeting from the DRB, the Planning Commission and the public would be presented to the Town Council for review and comment. Comments received would be used to guide the consultant team and Town staff in the development and refinement of the MCSP implementing zones. The next steps would be the preparation of the detailed zoning code regulations for public review in draft form, and consider them for adoption through public hearings later in the year.

Commissioner Kovac commended the work on the project, acknowledged the concerns of the public with the lack of a transit center, reported that he had met with representatives from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the Association of Bay Area Governments

(ABAG), whose definition of a transit center was a half mile from a major hub. A transit center had not been discussed in the MCSP plan, nor had parking spaces for residential uses been addressed.

Mr. Pellegrini advised that a transit center had been discussed conceptually; a transit study was underway and in some form of completion with County Connection, which had recommended the MCSP Area as possibly appropriate to accommodate some sort of Park & Ride facility with a place for people to park and then access a bus to the BART Station. Other options had also been considered such as public buses to the BART Station, and where that could occur on-site had been discussed. It was appropriate for efficiency of the buses to stay on the edges of the project area, which would keep the buses operating quickly with minimal conflict.

While locations had been considered where a parking lot could be located, the zoning standards limited the ability to implement such an option.

In terms of the parking standards, no determination had been made as to how residential parking should be regulated or counted for the proposed zoning districts. Best practices emerging in other communities had shown that higher density areas could result in lower parking requirements given the opportunity for shared parking between uses, and senior housing which had lower parking needs; however, caution was urged given the suburban environment of the Town where it would be inappropriate to lower the parking requirement too much.

Commissioner D'Arcy commended all of those involved in the project. She clarified with Mr. Pellegrini the recommendation that School Street accommodate a Class II Bicycle Lane, and with the creek side trail on the southern side of the creek to be a slow moving path, with a fast moving path on the north side of the creek.

Mr. Pellegrini also clarified the differences between the frontage road and the attached green in the scenic corridor. The idea for the frontage road had been to have a landscape buffer and behind it one-way traffic, which had parking in front of buildings, and which parking could be parallel or diagonal and then a sidewalk on the other side. The dimension could be approximately 50 feet from the edge of the arterial road to the front face of the building. The attached green model would be similar or it could be tighter absent the roadway, and would be something that would be open for discussion.

Commissioner Woehleke also commended the work on the project and the graphics that had been provided for what had been envisioned. He verified with Mr. Pellegrini the same presentation would be made to the Town Council; clarified the scope of the project; and clarified that the vision in the MCSP remained intact. He also clarified the purpose of this effort was to identify ways to implement that vision. He understood that once reaching a higher level of detail, it was likely the standards in the MCSP would have to be rethought.

Commissioner Woehleke asked what part of the MCSP would be held un-touched, to which Mr. Pellegrini reiterated that the MCSP had previously been adopted and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project had been completed. He understood

the program the MCSP described should not be disturbed in that it had already been measured and quantified and the impacts of the program had been agreed upon. Any reconsideration could require re-opening of the MCSP. The land use designations in the MCSP would provide guidance but there was no supporting information in the Zoning Ordinance currently to implement those decisions.

Commissioner Woehleke also clarified with Planning Director Clark that the scope for the project included a long list of items that staff had asked the consultant to look at as part of the project, with funding and financing some of those items. Based on the available budget, staff wanted the consultant team to draft some recommendations for strategies as to how to fund some of the items given the limited funding for the project.

Ms. Clark noted that one of the gaps in the MCSP was the extent to which private development was required to provide features and amenities called for in the plan as part of projects that are implemented.

Ms. Clark explained there was little in the MCSP to require developers to create new public spaces as part of their projects, although there was an opportunity in the standards to be more explicit about those requirements and be more effective in implementing the things the MCSP wanted to achieve.

Commissioner Kuckuk recognized the purpose of the project to match the land use designations with the zoning, and that the consultant had taken an interim step to illustrate how the zoning areas could correlate to the MCSP land use designations. She spoke to interfacing with existing neighborhoods such as along Camino Ricardo, where there was some lower density zoning, which would remain intact given the ridgeline as a barrier, and then with higher density in the lower lying areas. She found the presentation to be consistent with the current land use designations and a step in the right direction to establish comprehensive zoning changes to implement the MCSP. While she had been unaware how all of the building types would appear, the presentation had illustrated the different types of residential housing that would meet the needs of the changing community. She liked the diversity of what they would be able to build, and liked moving things along the creek and the expansion of School Street, which was critical to the Town.

DRB Chairperson Helber clarified with Mr. Pellegrini that the Zoning Break Hillside Exhibit, and the identification of the streets, were intended to show that the zoning should include a plan which generally located the streets and provided standards for the streets and how they might shift and still comply with the standards.

Mr. Pellegrini also clarified the matrix had been provided to show the desired forms for Residential and Mixed-Use, and the desired form and building types, which would become the form based code, and had been intended to reflect there would be standards to show how a building would be placed on a parcel, with additional standards to guide how to design and choose a building type, and how it would interface with the public realm through a porch, stoop, or large yard, as examples.

Boardmember Crews appreciated the work on the project, was excited with the way the MCSP had been knitted together with pedestrian uses, moving away from the large parking lot environment in the area. He asked whether there was major support for the project from the major landowners outside of the MCSP Area, and was informed by the Planning Commission Chair that was outside of the scope of the discussion.

Boardmember Escano-Thompson suggested the addition of the name of the roads would provide a better understanding of the boundaries for the roads. She was pleased the Town would have a town center. She understood the intent of the MCSP Area had been to create a vision for that within the boundaries of the MCSP, and asked whether the MCSP also applied to adjacent commercial properties such as the area located across the street where OSH was located.

Ms. Clark clarified that OSH was located within the MCSP Area and the standards of the MCSP Area would apply to that property.

Mr. Pellegrini explained the intent was not to create a situation of non-conformities within the new zones, thereby creating an undue burden on the existing property.

Mr. Pellegrini clarified there was a need to ensure that when and if investment occurred, it would contribute to the larger plan, with the standards required to provide a balance between existing and new development and which would have to be discussed further. He affirmed the standards would apply to the boundaries of the MCSP Area, and if outside of those boundaries would involve a separate subject.

Boardmember Glover expressed concern with the potential for traffic issues if commercial deliveries were not separated from customer parking, which he did not see had been addressed in the plans. If the deliveries were to be accomplished with double parking on the main access street, that could be a disaster. He questioned how commercial deliveries would be made to the larger establishments that would not be unsightly, and yet be separated from the customer parking.

Mr. Pellegrini advised that the Town's existing loading and parking regulations would have to be considered and a determination made as to how well they applied, which detail would have to be discussed further.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPENED

An individual who wished to remain unidentified was pleased with the care given to the neighbors, which she suggested had not occurred with the City Ventures project. She was displeased the CCTA did not have the money to fund more routes to BART; asked that the Town consider expanding the roads which had not been taken into account for the City Ventures project; expressed concern with the time to reach the City of Lafayette and Orinda due to traffic; asked that parking be taken into account since Moraga was a dead end neighborhood with no public transit; and that a left turn lane into the City Ventures development be considered. She was pleased with the plans envisioned for the creek.

Dave Bruzzone, Moraga, supported some of the graphics that had been presented, although he stated there were major portions of the plan that would impact his properties and existing tenants. The original concept of the MCSP had called for land use flexibility and expedited processing of projects, which had not occurred, and he doubted would occur with the implementation project. He spoke to procedures which could conflict with the existing MCSP, including a large amount of additional regulations and policy shifting, and stated the vision expressed was different from the original MCSP.

Mr. Bruzzone expressed concern that new policies and regulations would impact existing tenants or new tenants who might wish to remodel, with no way to fund the huge cost of infrastructure changes that could essentially drive away new tenants and discourage tenants from considering upgrades. He emphasized the efforts to recapture sales lost to neighboring communities, and if those sales were recaptured, there would be no place to park. He stressed that convenient parking was needed for the properties to succeed. He also questioned the recommendation for eleven new zoning districts as being efficient and understandable given that would result in major changes to the existing zoning. He added that the original MCSP had started in 2002, had been approved in 2010, and there was still no implementation of the MCSP Area. He questioned the political will to complete the implementation effort.

Joan Bruzzone, Moraga, emphasized the basic rights of property owners, and was disappointed the property owners' opinions had not been considered.

Ron Mucovich, Moraga, spoke to the proposed parking ratios and suggested the proposal to reduce the ratios would be an overall controlling factor as zoning was put into place. He highlighted the parking problems in the City of Lafayette and the City of Walnut Creek and the complaints with the parking conditions in those communities. He did not see that all of the buildings envisioned in the MCSP Area would be feasible absent a reduction in the parking, and suggested that some of the buildings might have to be eliminated. He urged careful attention to the parking issues.

Clay Claassen, Moraga, asked about the percentage increase in residents when the MCSP Area was developed to its fullest; commented on his understanding that existing businesses would not be pushed out, but questioned the percentage of available space for any new businesses in the MCSP Area.

Seth Freeman, Moraga, characterized the presentation as unintelligible to the average citizen. He requested more overlay on Google Maps to understand the location and geographies; a better understanding of the building types and form-based design being considered; identification of the potential square footage, size, and prospective price of the proposed homes; factual information to support the demand for commercial space; and the variety, range, and type of residential units. He also questioned the process as related to the City Ventures project. He referenced a recent newspaper article which had stated the City Ventures project would have no impact on the zoning or the MCSP Area Plan, and questioned why the public concern about the City Ventures project was

not being addressed. He asked whether City Ventures had vested development rights which would interfere with the plans to change the zoning.

Mr. Freeman described the process as a utopian situation with no information on impacts to schools, economics, the Town's overall infrastructure, an existing resident, or a potential homebuyer. He also questioned why the project was being considered; whether the community wanted this level of density; and whether the property tax bonus that came with such development had taken into consideration the potential impacts to the Town's infrastructure.

Dale Walwark, Moraga, explained that the initial questions related to the project of who was doing what, how much it would cost the Town, and where the money would come from had not been addressed. While he understood the purpose of the meeting, he sought more information as to how and when the project would be implemented. He spoke to past efforts to develop a Town Center project and suggested that project had no realistic chance of becoming a reality.

An unidentified resident of Moraga emphasized the concerns of the landowners; expressed concern the exhibits did not label streets or buildings making it difficult for the public to read and study that information; understood the proposal would result in the removal of the Safeway parking; and questioned whether the proposal for pocket areas to make the area attractive for retail would result in the removal of parking spaces, with no cohesiveness in the plans for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The unidentified speaker also spoke to the overview of the west side of the residential area; questioned who would fund the needed repairs to the creek and the riparian area; and how that would not be in conflict with the MCSP. She questioned whether a zoning change or a MCSP re-write was being considered for that area of the Town. She also questioned whether assisted living was an existing zoning district in the Town and expressed concern for additional regulations that could be imposed on that type of development.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSED

Ms. Clark explained that when the MCSP had been adopted, all aspects had been reviewed as part of the environmental documentation through the EIR, involving the preparation of a comprehensive traffic study and where impacts on schools had been calculated and analyzed. Those conditions had not changed substantially in the last six years. The zoning was an implementation effort for the adopted plan and would not increase or substantially change the land use mix and the assumption and projections would hold true as part of the prior analyses.

Commissioner Woehleke supported defining the MCSP towards implementation. He expressed concern with the potential for eleven new zoning districts, questioned whether that would be practical; stated the different types of housing units appeared to be referenced but not defined; there appeared to be a lumping of the 10 to 12 and 12 to 20 densities together with no clarity on which of the zones were senior and workforce

housing, with an interpretation there could be 12 to 20 unit densities that were non-workforce, non-senior, and attached. He wanted to see that whatever was proposed for consideration would really work and would be appropriate for Moraga. He commented that Moraga urban could be significantly different from Oakland and San Francisco urban.

Boardmember Glover commented that Commissioner Woehleke had addressed his concerns.

Commissioner Kovac described the project as complicated; agreed with the issues raised by the public specifically with respect to parking and transportation; wanted to see the traffic in and out of Town to be resolved prior to any increase in population; liked the idea and understood the community had voted for a go to Town Center; and suggested the MCSP should be implemented as best as possible, but be done right.

Boardmember Escano-Thompson had no comment.

Commissioner D'Arcy concurred with the issues related to traffic, and the need to address the traffic issues in and out of the Town during certain times of the day. She also recognized that the MCSP had previously been approved although she would like to see the zoning be sharpened to allow development to commence.

Boardmember Crews stated that the core ideas that had been presented were strong, offering the best chance possible for the Town to compete as a shopping destination with Lafayette and Orinda. He lived near the area, but currently would not walk to the center given the existing conditions. He liked the concept for pedestrian cores, bicycle paths, and shopping destinations, and suggested the concept was something that should be supported.

Commissioner Kuckuk understood there was some confusion as to why the Town was proceeding with this project. She reiterated the MCSP had been adopted in 2010, and included land use designations that held even if the zoning prior to the implementation of the MCSP was different. The land use designations had established minimum and maximum densities the Town was required to follow, with the underlying zoning of some parcels already changed as part of the approval of that development. She pointed out that State law required the zoning to match the land use designation in the MCSP, with the purpose of this exercise to add specifics, clarity, and meet that requirement.

DRB Chairperson Helber stated that based on his review of the project, there was opportunity to further develop some of the form-based codes to help define future development along the business commercial core. He appreciated the controls to help direct the overall character and style of development within the MCSP, the flexibility intended on the residential side, but would prefer to see form-based, more prescriptive controls along the School Street side and to allow flexibility on the residential side, but was unsure what would work there and understood it would be based on market direction. He also appreciated the use of the topography to delineate between lower density and medium density residential zones, and the boundary between the two land

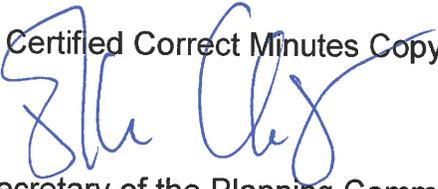
uses at rear yard to rear yard, versus one side of the street to be more or less dense than the other, which would result in a more preferable urban design.

Chairperson Marnane explained that no changes had been made to the MCSP. He liked the presentation of the vision, as a start, but emphasized that the devil was in the details.

5. ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Commissioner Woehleke, seconded by DRB Chairperson Helber and carried unanimously to adjourn the Joint Planning Commission and Design Review Board meeting at 8:35 P.M.

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Secretary of the Planning Commission

