

MCSP Implementation Project  
Steering Committee  
Goals Memo (Deliverable 2.a)  
May, 29 2015

## **Project Background**

The Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP) was adopted in 2010, following a seven-year community process that involved local stakeholders, property and business owners, and Town decision-makers including the Design Review Board, Planning Commission and Town Council. The Specific Plan defines a land use and circulation plan, goals, policies and actions that regulate future development in a 187-acre area centered around the existing Moraga Center shopping district. The MCSP includes, along with the land use plan, development standards intended to promote higher intensity mixed use, residential and infill development. In general, the MCSP calls for a mixture of uses, increased residential development, pedestrian orientation, protection of creeks and waterways, and creating a central focus or “village” for the town.

The Specific Plan was adopted by resolution rather than by ordinance, meaning that it provides policy guidance; similar to that of the General Plan, as opposed to constituting zoning for the area. The Implementation Element of the MCSP calls upon the Town to adopt corresponding amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map that would reflect the policies and land use program called for by the Specific Plan. Although the Town adopted a Residential 20 Dwelling Units per Acre (R20) zoning district at the time the Specific Plan was adopted, other necessary zoning changes have not yet been enacted.

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) Priority Development Area Planning Grant Program is intended to help local jurisdictions plan for, and implement, their designated Priority Development Areas (PDAs). PDAs are areas that local communities have identified as being most appropriate for growth, including new housing in proximity to amenities and services that can meet the day-to-day needs of residents, in a pedestrian-friendly environment served by transit.

Moraga has one PDA, the Moraga Center Specific Plan area. Last year CCTA awarded \$150,000 in funding for the Town’s Moraga Center Specific Plan Implementation project. The Town elected to work with a consultant team led by Opticos Design for the completion of this project.

## **Scope of Work**

The purpose of the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP) Implementation project is to develop code amendments, policies and design standards to more effectively implement the adopted Specific Plan, address potential inconsistencies between the Municipal Code and the Specific Plan, and avoid ambiguities and uncertainty in implementing Specific Plan policies. The project intends to close the gap between the Specific Plan’s policy guidance and the more specific regulation provided by zoning standards and requirements. The project aims to further refine streetscape and building standards to provide a consistent and well-articulated design approach to new development, public and private streets, and civic spaces within the Specific Plan area. The project provides a critical opportunity to ensure that the implementation of the Specific Plan can balance

potentially competing objectives, such as neighborhood compatibility, parking and protection of scenic corridors. The project proposes to do so by focusing on the form and design of new development, and defining more detailed standards appropriate to the unique character of the Specific Plan area. The project is not intended to substantially amend or revise the Specific Plan or redefine its basic land use framework.

The nine-month work schedule includes analysis of the existing MCSP and Municipal Code, visual analysis of design principles, development of zoning code and specific plan amendments (if needed), and recommendations for next steps and financing and implementation strategies.

The scope anticipates drafting a mix of form-based and conventional zoning districts for the land use designations in the Specific Plan. Form-based zoning, which regulates the scale and form of buildings and their relationship with the public realm, would provide greater assurance as to the character of development and is recommended for the mixed use and central commercial districts.

Complementary to the development of the zoning districts, the scope proposes development of sets of design standards based on building types (for example, a townhome and a multifamily building with ground floor commercial space would have different guidance); civic and public spaces; and pedestrian circulation that will shape the character of the public spaces and the walkability of new development. Standards will also be proposed for private frontages, roadways and intersections to provide a clear direction for the streetscapes as the Specific Plan area develops.

To assist in defining the vision for development in the specific plan area, the project team will develop a selection of site plans, renderings and perspective drawings for Specific Plan area sites that conceptually represent the range of development allowed by the standards of the Specific Plan and illustrate different guiding design principles. Similarly a series of street cross-sections and intersection plans would be prepared to present possible modifications to existing roadways and streetscape standards for the MCSP. Public feedback and comments from the Steering Committee (discussed below), Planning Commission, Design Review Board and Town Council would be used to guide the development of the zoning code and specific plan amendments.

The project will also address parking and transportation demand management (TDM). The project will develop parameters for how a parking district might be established and standards for parking by use and zoning district which may include provisions for bicycle parking, offsite and shared parking, and parking adjustments. For transportation demand management the scope proposes to identify strategies that can be implemented by individual property owners and provides an opportunity to coordinate with ongoing regional efforts.

### **Steering Committee: Roles and Responsibilities**

The Steering Committee will act in an advisory capacity to help balance stakeholder interests and the overall objectives for the Specific Plan implementation. The guidance from the Steering Committee would be supplemented by broader public outreach, targeted stakeholder outreach at key milestones, and “check ins” with the Planning Commission and Town Council (see Meeting Schedule below).

## Meeting Schedule

The proposed scope of work anticipates approximately six meetings within the course of the 9-12 month project. Meetings will be typically held on Thursday evenings at 7pm, at the Hacienda de las Flores. Five meetings, their anticipated date, and their objectives have been identified in the scope as follows:

- *Meeting #1: June 3 2015:*  
Project introduction. Review Steering Committee goals, project area boundaries, discuss issues and concerns with the MCSP, outline next steps.
- *Meeting #2, June 25 or 29, 2015 (tentative date):*  
Review and discuss Analysis and Key Issues memo, review and discuss recommended steps and strategies for amending the MCSP and Zoning Ordinance.
- *Meeting #3, July 16, 2015 (tentative date):*  
Review and discuss Vision Design Package, including guiding design principles, site plan alternatives, perspective vignettes, conceptual cross sections/intersections, and market comps. (Information will also be discussed with the community, through a subsequent open house; Design Review Board; Planning Commission; and Town Council prior to summer recess.)
- *Meeting #4, October 22, 2015 (tentative date):*  
After summer recess, review and discuss components of the draft code prepared to implement the range of possibilities discussed in the Vision Design Package and anticipated to include proposed zone districts, walkable community design standards, building type standards, frontage standards, thoroughfare standards, civic space standards, parking and transportation demand management standards, zoning maps, and procedures. Information anticipated to be covered over the course of at least 2 meetings.
- *Meeting #5, November 19, 2015 (tentative date):*  
Continue review and discussion of components of the draft municipal code amendments.

Following the Steering Committees review of the draft municipal code amendments they will be reviewed, discussed, and considered for approval and adoption by Planning Commission and City Council, with anticipated project completion in the first quarter of 2016.