



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Town of Moraga Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative EIR

Date: October 27, 2022
To: Reviewing Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations
Subject: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Town of Moraga's Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative

The Town of Moraga has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative. Copies of the Draft EIR are available for review at the Town's Planning Department at 329 Rheem Boulevard, at the Town Library at 1500 St Mary's Road, and online at: www.makemoragahome.org. Comments will be received until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 12, 2022; any person or agency wishing to comment on this matter must submit such comments, in writing, prior to this date.

Project Name: Town of Moraga Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative

Project Location: Town of Moraga, within the County of Contra Costa, California. Most of the sites analyzed under the project would be located within the Moraga Center Specific Plan area and the Rheem Park Area about a mile to the north. Figure 1 shows the regional location and Figure 2 shows the Plan Area, which includes the Town limits and sphere of influence. The three geographic areas highlighted on Figure 3, which include the Moraga Center Specific Plan area, Rheem Park area, and Bollinger Canyon, are discussed in greater detail in the Project Description below.

Project Description: The Planning Initiative includes an update to the Town's Housing Element, rezoning of key sites within the Town's jurisdiction, and amendments to the 2002 General Plan. The Planning Initiative would provide a cohesive long-term framework for future growth and development in the Town. The Initiative was catalyzed by the regional housing needs allocation (RHNA), as well as Plan Bay Area 2050 and other initiatives that support denser housing in "Priority Development Areas" around the region. The Planning Initiative is meant to ensure the Town has a sufficient number of appropriately zoned sites to meet its housing allocation. It is also intended to provide supportive housing goals, policies, programs, and quantitative objectives to meet the Town's future housing needs. It is further intended to provide objective design and development standards so that projects may be approved more quickly and efficiently, thus reducing development costs and making housing easier to build.

The Town of Moraga is also consolidating long range planning efforts through this initiative, namely the Housing Element Update and corresponding rezoning of the Moraga Center Specific Plan and Rheem Park areas, rezoning of the Bollinger Canyon Study Area, and 2002 General Plan amendments to achieve internal consistency and meet recent State requirements.

The Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- A State-certified Housing Element for 2023-2031 that responds to local and regional needs.
- An internally-consistent, easy-to-use General Plan that is legally compliant and addresses emerging issues.
- Rezoning of sites designated in the Housing Element
- Updated long-range planning policies and programs that respond to recent State legislation related to RHNA, VMT, climate change and resilience, fire hazards, evacuation, and other pertinent topics.
- General Plan land use and zoning designations for the Bollinger Canyon Study Area.
- Opportunities for meaningful public participation, including the engagement of residents who have not historically participated in planning processes.
- New objective development standards consistent with state law.

Each of the Planning Initiative's components is described below.

Housing Element Update and Urban Rezoning

The Housing Element Update will present a comprehensive set of housing policies and actions for the years 2023-2031 and will encompass the entire Town of Moraga. The Housing Element Update will be based on the Town's RHNA, plus a buffer of units to ensure ongoing compliance with the No Net Loss provisions of State housing law. Potential new opportunity sites have been identified based on several factors, such as existing use, adjacent uses, occupancy levels, availability for sale, floor area ratio (relative to zoning allowances), and improvement to land value ratio.

As illustrated in Figure 3, rezoning would be focused in two specific geographic areas:

Rheem Park Area - The Rheem Park area is an approximately 60-acre area located at the intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road in north-central Moraga. The Rheem Park area includes the Rheem Shopping Center, the Rheem Theater, Town of Moraga Offices, a Saint Mary's College administration facility, private office buildings, a convalescent facility, miscellaneous commercial uses, and vacant land. Current zoning in the area includes Suburban Office, Limited Commercial, and Community Commercial. Currently, multi-family residential uses are not listed as a permitted use in these zoning districts. Proposed zoning changes in this area would rezone some of the commercial parcels to mixed use to permit residential development at densities meeting the State default density" requirement of at least 20 units per acre.

Moraga Center Specific Plan Area - Moraga Center is an approximately 187-acre area generally located around the intersection of Moraga Road and Moraga Way as shown in Figure 3. Land use in this area is governed by a Specific Plan adopted in 2010, as well as new zoning regulations adopted in 2020. The Moraga Center Specific Plan used a buildout range of 510-630 units (the higher number includes increased density for senior housing) for CEQA analysis and planning purposes. The previous 2015-2023 Housing Element assumed that the entire 510-630 units would occur on residentially zoned land and did not quantify any housing potential on mixed -use properties.

To meet the higher RHNA for the 6th Cycle, the Housing Element Update considers several of the Moraga Center Specific Plan mixed use sites as Housing Opportunity Sites.

Rezoning of Bollinger Canyon Study Area

Bollinger Canyon, located in the east central portion of the Town as shown in Figure 3, is identified as “Study Area” on Moraga’s General Plan and Zoning maps. The Study Area is approximately 423 acres and includes 20 parcels with 13 different owners. The Study Area designation does not have an associated density range. The Moraga Town Council has expressed the goal of replacing the Study Area designation, with permanent General Plan, zoning designations and development standards.

The Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative would eliminate the Study Area designation from both the General Plan and zoning maps and apply new General Plan and zoning designations for both areas. A community process was implemented in late 2021 and early 2022 to consider new designations. Three “parcel groups” were identified based on shared characteristics, and different zoning strategies were adopted for each group.

General Plan Amendments

The Housing Element Update and resulting rezoning would require amendments to the 2002 Moraga General Plan. The amendments are required to maintain internal consistency, respond to new State laws, and provide a framework for zoning changes. Amendments to the 2002 Moraga General Plan, specifically new and modified goals, policies, and implementation programs, apply to the Planning Initiative in its entirety, including development within the Moraga Specific Plan, Rheem Park, and Bollinger Canyon Study areas.

Public Comment Period:

The Draft EIR will be available for public comment for a 46-day review period as specified by CEQA Guidelines Section 15105. The purpose of this comment period is to allow the public and reviewing agencies an opportunity to consider the content of the Draft EIR and the potential environmental impacts that may result from project implementation.

Comments pertaining to the impact analysis, criteria and thresholds, mitigation measures, and alternatives presented in the Draft EIR will be considered by the Town during preparation of the Final EIR. The Final EIR will include copies of comments and the Town’s responses to comments pertaining to the environmental analysis provided in the Draft EIR. The public comment period for the Draft EIR will begin on October 27, 2022 and will end on December 12, 2022 (a 46-day public review period). Comments to the Draft EIR must be in writing and submitted to the Town by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 12, 2022. If applicable, please indicate a contact person for your agency or organization. If your agency is a responsible agency as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15381, your agency may use the environmental documents prepared by the Town when considering permits or approvals for action regarding the project. Please submit written comments by email or mail to the Town Contact:

Mail: Afshan Hamid, Planning Director
Town of Moraga Planning Department
329 Rheem Boulevard
Moraga, California 94556

Email: makemoragahome@moraga.ca.us

For comments submitted via email, please include “Draft EIR Comments: Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative” in the subject line and the name and physical address of the commenter in the body of the email.

Probable Environmental Effects: The EIR has been prepared because of the potential for unavoidable, significant adverse effects resulting from project implementation. The EIR prepared for the Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative identifies and discusses potential impacts, mitigation measures, residual impacts, and monitoring requirements. All environmental impacts included in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist are included and analyzed in the Draft EIR.

Hazardous Waste Sites. The Planning initiative area contains two active hazardous materials sites included on a list of sites prepared by Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List).

Significant Environmental Effects: The Town has prepared a Draft EIR to address the specific environmental effects of implementing Town of Moraga Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative. The Draft EIR consists of an analysis of the following environmental issue areas that may be impacted by the project:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

If you have questions regarding the Draft EIR, please contact Afshan Hamid at ahamid@moraga.ca.us or via email at makemoragahome@moraga.ca.us.

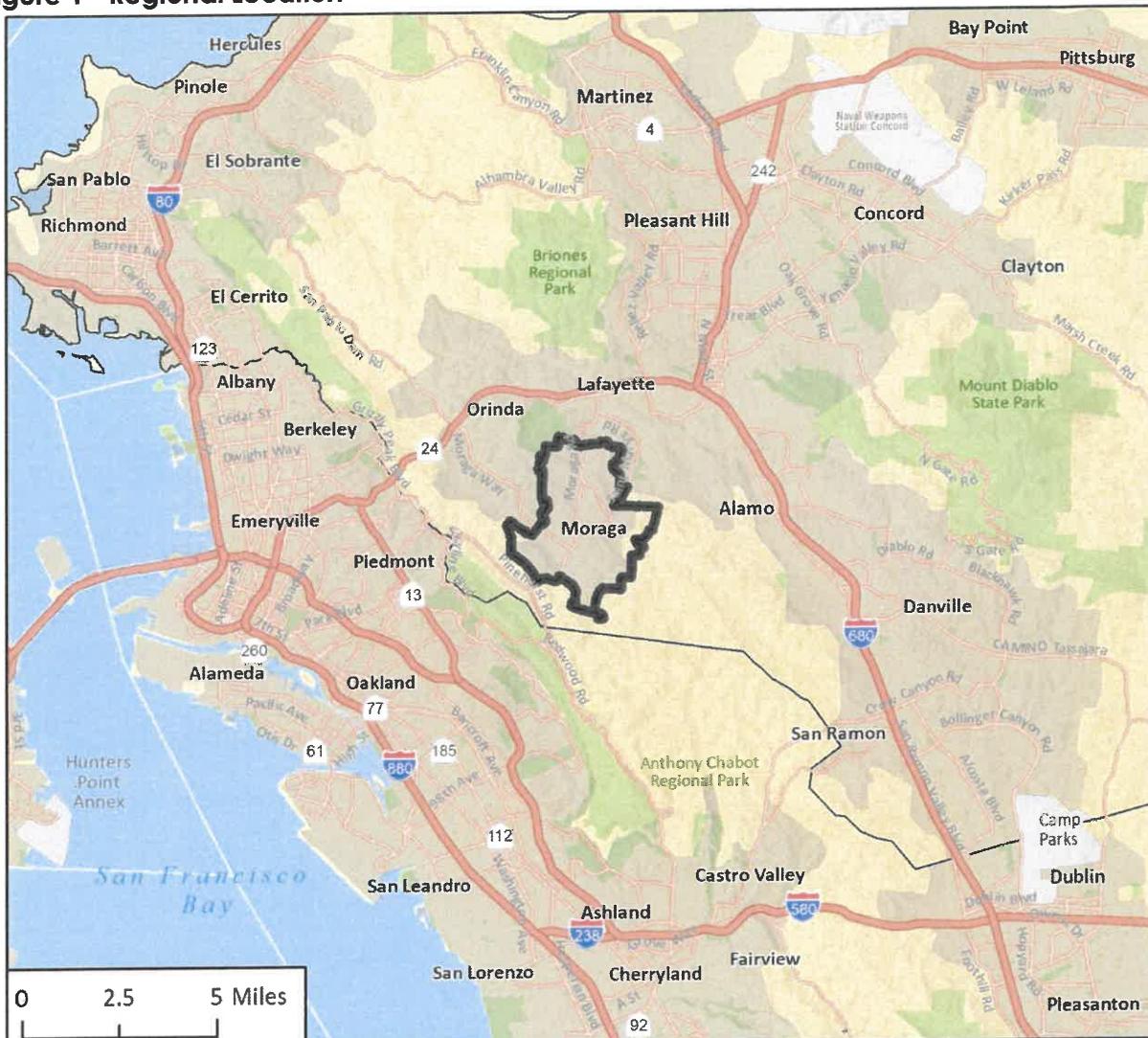


Afshan Hamid, AICP, Planning Director

10.25.2022

Date

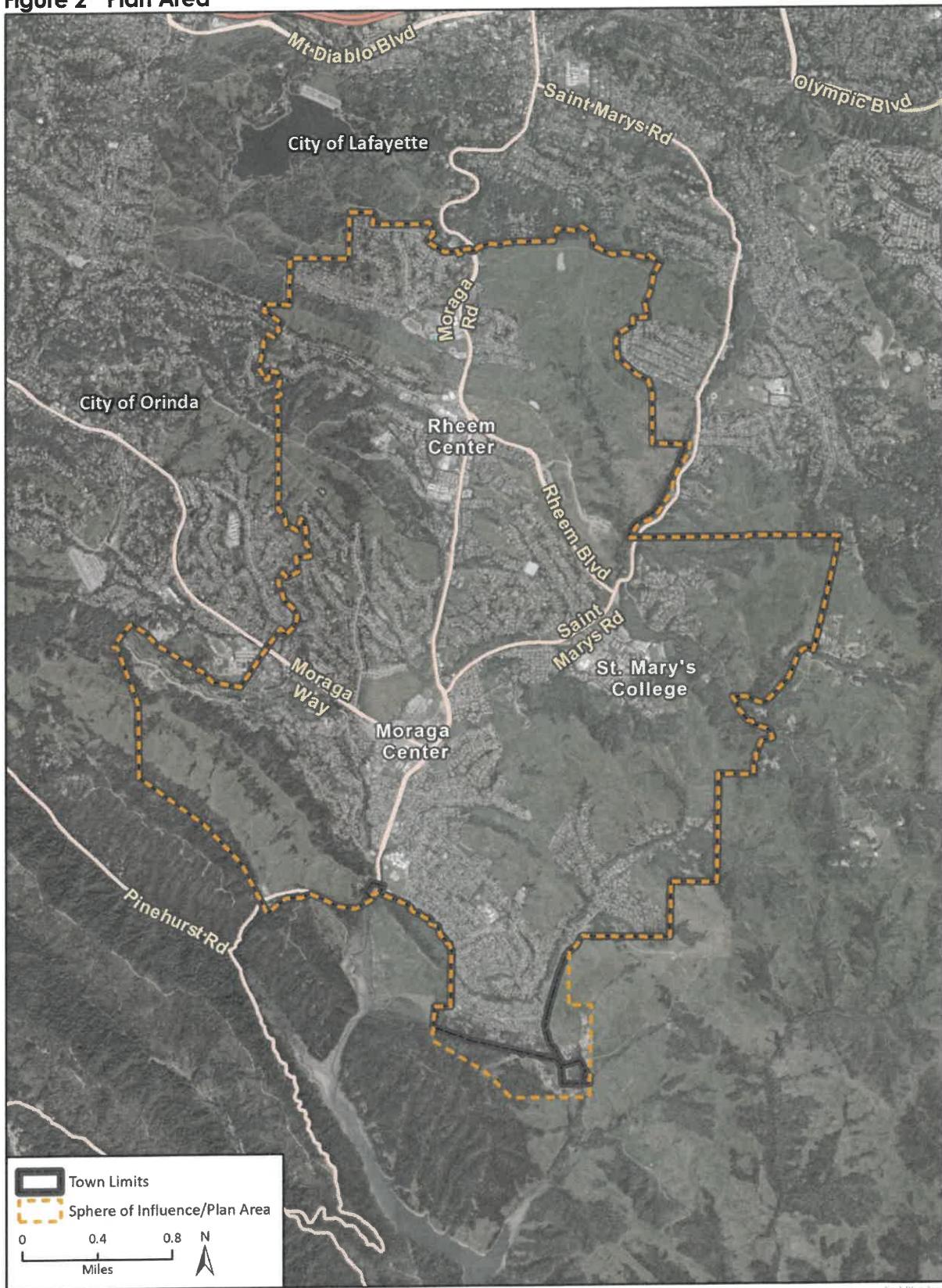
Figure 1 Regional Location



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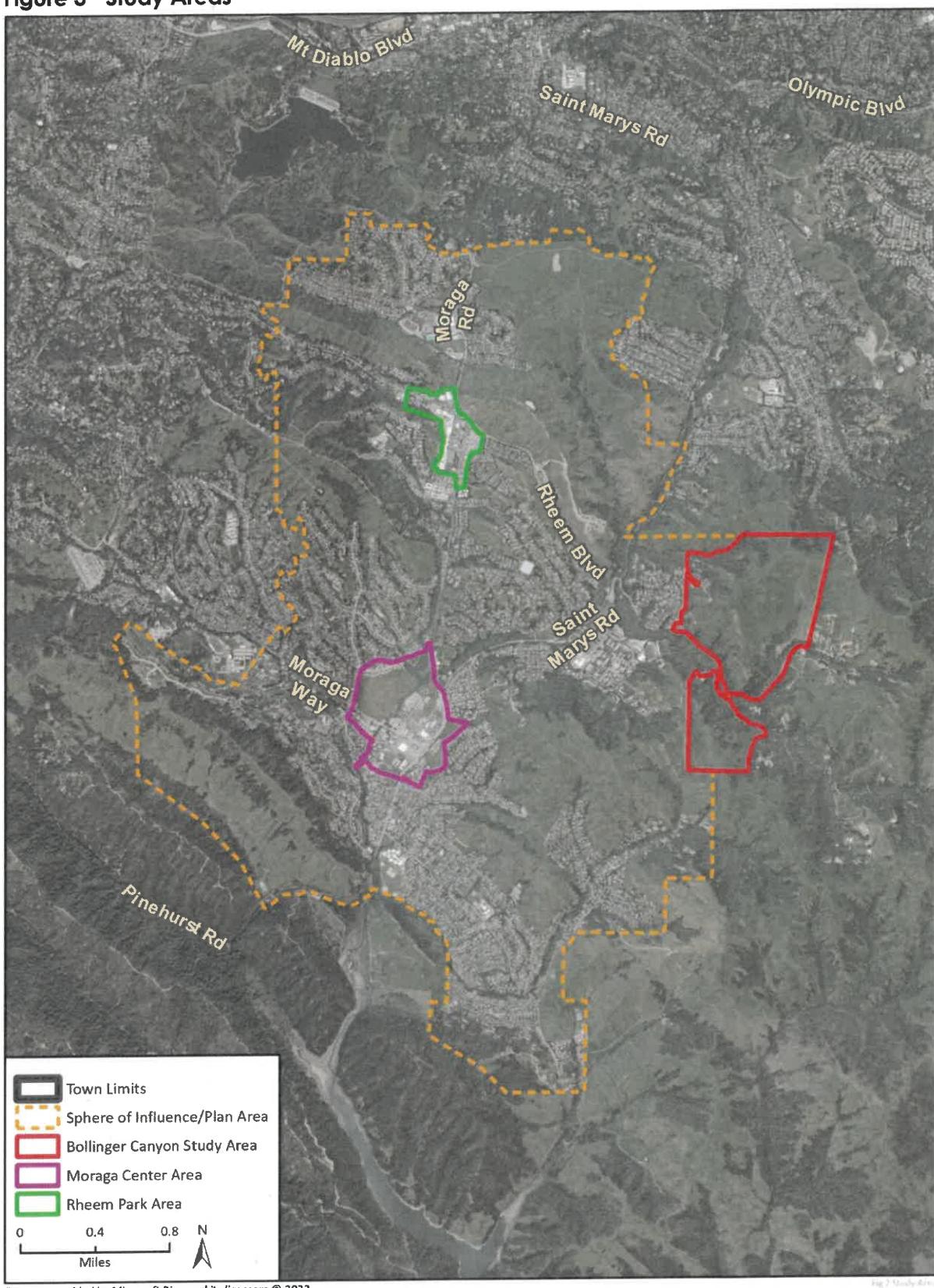
Figure 2 Plan Area



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Fig 2 Plan Area

Figure 3 Study Areas



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Fig 3 Study Areas