



At the Economic Vitality station, participants shared their thoughts on possible improvements to Moraga's shopping centers

Economic Vitality

Each of the four groups visiting the Economic Vitality station had a lively discussion about potential improvements to the Moraga Center and Rheem commercial districts. Many of the comments applied to both shopping centers and were focused more generally on businesses residents felt were needed in Moraga. Some of the comments were more place-based, including ideas for areas surrounding the shopping centers as well as the centers themselves.

At the Moraga Center, many of the suggestions focused on improving access for pedestrians and cyclists, including safer and better marked crosswalks on Moraga Way and Moraga Road. Comments also addressed making the area more pedestrian-oriented, with continuous sidewalks and a more walkable scale. There were also suggestions to improve access between the shopping centers, upgrade the Safeway store, improve public transit, fix deteriorating asphalt, improve facades and overall maintenance levels, add housing, add "pods" of mobile food carts, improve the selection of retail stores, add medical services, and add housing. Several comments expressed concern about building heights and view preservation.

Suggestions also included reusing the Moraga Ranch for social events, maintaining free parking, providing more outdoor seating areas, and expanding the public library. Commenters also noted the need for more parks and athletic facilities in this area, and potentially a "town square" similar to Healdsburg. Specific suggestions included bringing back a pharmacy, and attracting an independent bookstore, a small hotel and spa, and more community gathering space.

At the Rheem Center, there were suggestions to add housing, daylight the creek, and modernize the center to make it more attractive. Preservation of the Rheem Theater was mentioned multiple times, along with suggestions for a brewpub, more kid-friendly activities, and electric vehicle charging. Several comments asked that parking remain free and that the number of parking spaces not be reduced. Comments also expressed support for higher-end stores, nicer restaurants, and locally-owned businesses (although many of the specific suggestions mentioned national chains).

Figure 1 provides a word cloud showing the types of businesses (as well as other attributes) most commonly referenced in the post it notes for both shopping centers. The size of the word indicates the frequency with which it was mentioned. The full responses transcribed from the post-it notes are included in Appendix B to this report.

Figure 1: Word Cloud of Desired Features in Moraga's Centers



Many of the comments called for more restaurants. Others called for more parks and green spaces in the centers, including plazas and outdoor seating areas and gathering places. Comments also mentioned housing, bakeries, wine bars, coffee shops, bookstores, pharmacies, a higher-end grocery store, a juice shop, a Pilates studio, and food carts. There were several suggestions for a Saint Mary's College store, selling college merchandise and tickets to college events. There were also requests for "timeless" design and "classy" or "handsome" architecture.

Several respondents named specific shopping centers that could be good models for Moraga, including Marin Country Mart in Larkspur and Town and Country Center in Palo Alto. Downtown Danville, Sonoma, and Healdsburg also were mentioned. There were also numerous suggestions for specific chains including Trader Joe's, Andronico's, Sprouts, Shake Shack, and Sweet Greens.