



Commemorative banner on Moraga Way

2

FRAMEWORK AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Framework and Guiding Principles provide the context for the General Plan. The chapter includes background information about Moraga, forecasts for the future, and a set of guiding principles that shape all other Plan elements.

2.1 REGIONAL SETTING

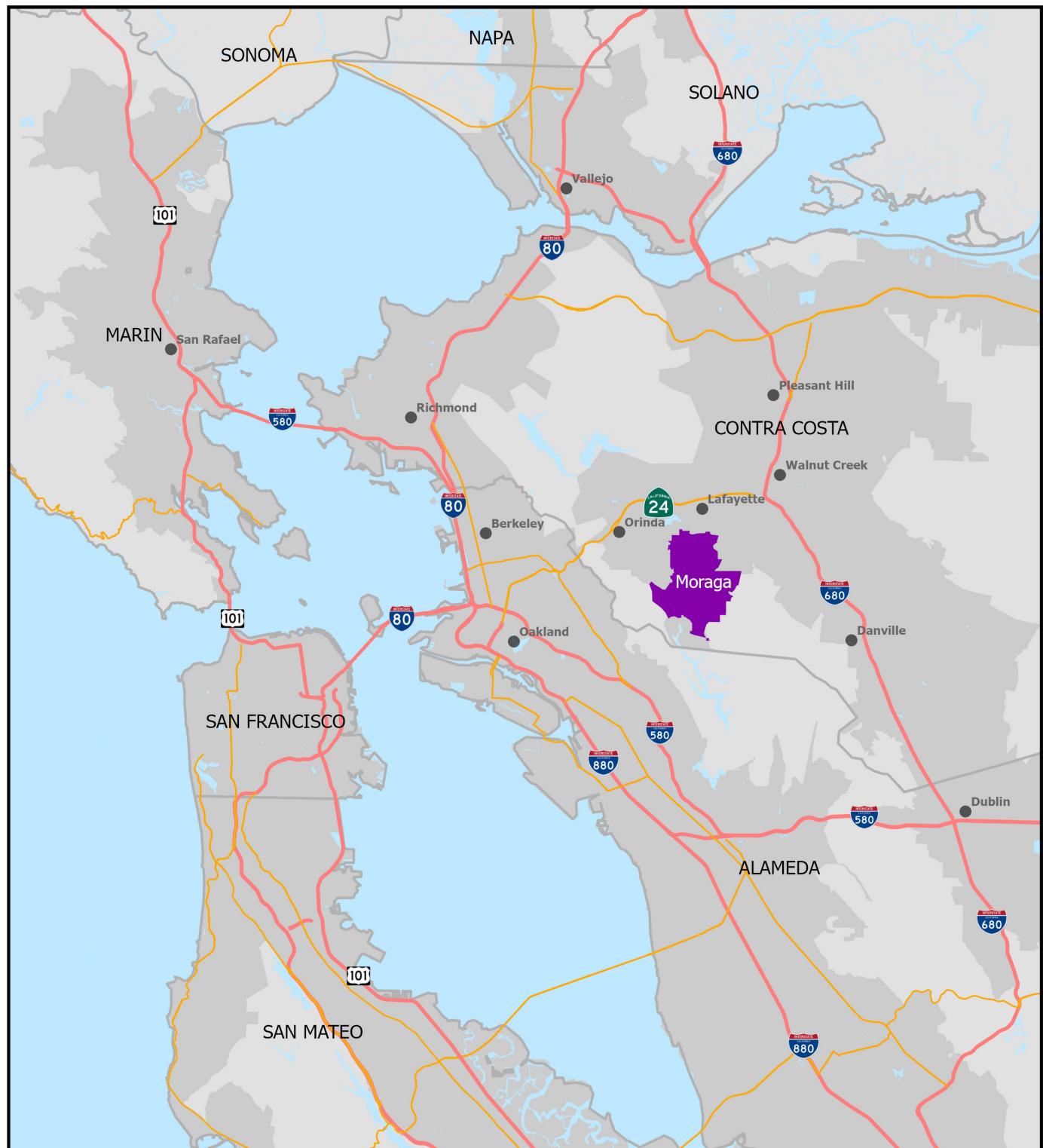
Moraga is located in central Contra Costa County, approximately 13 miles east of Oakland, 22 miles east of San Francisco, and eight miles southwest of Walnut Creek. It is the second smallest municipality in Contra Costa County by population and the fifth smallest in land area. Regional location is shown in **Figure 2.1**.

The town is bordered on the northwest by Orinda and on the north and northeast by Lafayette. The three communities combined are commonly known as "Lamorinda." Unincorporated Contra Costa County lies to the south, east, and west, with the unincorporated community of Canyon about four miles to the west. Highway 24, the major freeway linking Contra Costa County with the Central Bay Area, is located about three miles to the north via Moraga Road (through Lafayette) and Moraga Way (through Orinda).

The region surrounding Moraga—the nine county San Francisco Bay Area—is the fifth largest metropolitan area in the United States. In 2024, the region's population was 7.6 million people. Moraga is part of the "East Bay" sub-region, including Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. There are roughly 2.8 million people and 1.4 million jobs in the East Bay, representing more than one-third of the region's total.

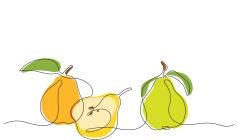


Figure 2.1: Regional Location



**Town of Moraga, California
General Plan Update**

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



2.2 MORAGA'S HISTORY¹

PRE-EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

The original inhabitants of Moraga were the Saklan Indians, a subgroup of the Miwok tribe. They lived in the watersheds of San Pablo and San Ramon Creeks, where they hunted, fished, and gathered food. Historical records show several Saklan villages in the Lamorinda area, usually situated along creeks and streams. The area's rich natural resources supported their way of life for thousands of years. However, the arrival of the Spanish and the establishment of missions in California brought diseases and displacement, which led to a dramatic decline in the Saklan population and a loss of cultural traditions.

19TH CENTURY MORAGA

Before California became a state, it was part of Mexico. In 1828, Mexico passed a law to encourage ranching by granting large tracts of land. In 1835, Joaquin Moraga and his cousin Juan Bernal, both descendants of early California settlers, were awarded a 13,326-acre land grant called Rancho Laguna de Los Palos Colorados. This land encompassed what is now Moraga, as well as large portions of Lafayette and Orinda.

After the Mexican-American War in 1848 and California's admission to the Union, Moraga and Bernal had to prove their land grant's validity. This process took several years and led to squatters and homesteaders moving onto the property. Eventually, much of the land grant came under the control of Horace Carpentier, an attorney and politician who acquired large areas of the Central East Bay as compensation for settling property disputes. Plans for a townsite in Moraga began as early as 1894, but actual development did not start until two decades later.

EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Like many American towns, Moraga's early growth was tied to the railroad. The Oakland and Antioch Railroad began operation in 1909, eventually extending to Chico and connecting Moraga to Oakland via a tunnel through Shepherd Canyon in the Oakland Hills. Train stops included Moraga and later, Saint Mary's College. Passenger service ended in 1941, while freight continued until 1957. Today, the railroad right-of-way is the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail, a popular hiking and biking path.

In 1912, Charles Hooper bought 10,000 acres of what is now Moraga from Horace Carpentier. He sold it to developer James Irvine, who formed the Moraga Company to manage the development. By 1913, plans were underway to create a townsite around the Moraga railway station, including 21 city blocks, a main street, two parks, a playground, and four subdivisions.

The Moraga Company also developed orchards and vegetable crops in the Moraga Valley. The area along School Street had farming facilities and employed nearly 150 people during peak seasons, mainly processing walnuts and pears. Their operations included a cookhouse, commissary, cooler, mess hall, garage, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, barns, stables, bunkhouse, and bathing facilities.

The new town of Moraga encountered several challenges, including the local water company acquiring proposed residential areas through eminent domain. Out of the four planned subdivisions, only Valle Vista was developed in 1914, with about 20 houses built. The town center was not established as planned due to limited water access, and the Depression further hampered growth. Today, only 38 homes in Moraga pre-date 1940.

¹ The primary sources for Section 2.2 are "Moraga: Images of America" and the Moraga Historical Society.



In 1928, the Moraga Company donated 100 acres to Saint Mary's College. Founded in San Francisco in 1868 and relocated to Oakland in 1889, the college had 600 students when its new Moraga campus was built. Saint Mary's has been a key community institution ever since.

Throughout the early 20th century, Moraga was characterized by orchards, ranches, and small farms. Residents raised livestock, operated dairies, and grew pears and other crops. Neighborhoods like Carroll Ranch and Sanders Ranch reflect the names of early local families. Roads were developed to connect Moraga with Orinda and Lafayette, aiding in transportation and trade.

In the 1930s, manufacturer Donald Rheem acquired over 1,800 acres from the Moraga Company and established a ranch with horse stables and a racetrack. He also bought a building intended for use as an orphanage and transformed it into a summer estate called the Hacienda. Roads were constructed

on the property, setting the stage for future development.

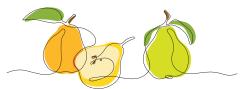
In 1945, when the United Nations held its first meeting in San Francisco, finding a permanent headquarters was a top priority. Moraga was considered as a potential location due to its scenic beauty, location, and proximity to Saint Mary's College. Although New York City was ultimately chosen, significant changes were on the horizon for Moraga.

MID 20TH CENTURY AND SUBURBANIZATION

After World War II, the Bay Area experienced rapid growth and suburban expansion, driven by new bridges and freeways. Donald Rheem developed subdivisions such as Rheem Glen, Rheem Highlands, and Rheem View Acres between 1949 and 1952. He also began construction on the Rheem Shopping Center in 1953 and completed the Rheem Theater in 1957. Rheem Elementary School opened in 1959.



The railroad through Moraga was operational from 1909 to 1957. The Moraga Barn (at right) was built as a hotel in 1912, operated as a bar for many years, and is now an office building. | Photo Credit: Moraga Historical Society



In the late 1950s, plans were proposed to connect Moraga to Oakland and Walnut Creek via a new freeway. The proposed State Route 77 was designed to follow the old rail line through Shepherd Canyon, continue through a tunnel, and then a bridge across the redwood canyon. The freeway would have bisected Moraga Ranch, skirted Saint Mary's College, and extended to Pleasant Hill Road in Lafayette. Preliminary engineering and alignment studies by Caltrans began in 1956, and right-of-way acquisition started.

The Route 77 plan was ultimately withdrawn in 1972. However, the prospect of the freeway spurred commercial development along the planned route. Additionally, Route 93 was proposed in 1959 to connect Gateway Valley (Orinda) to Moraga and extend to Alamo, but this plan was also canceled in the 1970s.

In 1953, the Moraga Ranch was sold to Utah Construction and Mining Company, which planned to transform much of Moraga Valley into

residential subdivisions. Development began in the late 1950s and early 1960s. By 1960, there were approximately 540 homes within Moraga's current boundaries—a 700 percent increase from a decade earlier.

In 1964, local developer Russell Bruzzone acquired most of Utah Construction's land, marking the start of Moraga's most rapid development phase. This growth coincided with the expansion of the Caldecott Tunnel and the opening of Highway 24, which spurred development across central Contra Costa County. Bruzzone also developed the Moraga Shopping Center, creating the town's second commercial district near the former ranch.

During the 1960s, nearly 2,000 homes and apartments were built in Moraga, with another 2,000 added in the 1970s. This development accounts for about 70 percent of the town's current housing. The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the construction of numerous townhomes, including Miramonte Gardens (1965), Casitas de



Mid 1960s, looking north. Moraga Center Shopping Center is on the right.

The photo pre-dates the Moraga Country Club, built south of Moraga Way in the early 1970s. | Photo Credit: Moraga Historical Society



Moraga (1971), and Moraga Country Club (1973). Multi-family complexes were also built along Ascot Drive and Donald Drive, providing more housing options for college students, smaller households, and the local workforce.

To accommodate the growing population, several civic facilities were developed, including Camino Pablo Elementary (1960), Campolindo High School (1962), Los Perales Elementary (1965), and Joaquin Moraga School (1966). A post office was established on School Street in 1955, replaced in 1966, and later moved to the Rheem Shopping Center. The volunteer fire department was supplemented with paid staff, and a police department was created after incorporation. A permanent library was set up in 1969 and replaced with a larger facility in 1979.

Moraga's two commercial centers thrived during this period, as thousands of young families settled in the growing town. In 1970, the median age in Moraga was just 25. Supermarkets, retail stores, and restaurants were developed, along with service stations and banks. Office development would follow in the 1980s, creating two full-service business districts serving town residents.

INCORPORATION AND EARLY PLANS

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, growing environmental concerns led many communities to rethink their long range plans. Issues such as loss of open space, traffic congestion, and strained public services prompted efforts to limit growth and reduce zoning densities. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), enacted in 1970, was part of this shift and changed how development projects were approved statewide.

During this period, local residents formed a Parks and Recreation Authority, which acquired the Hacienda de Las Flores for community use and created Rancho Laguna Park. The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) had already bought much of the land west of Moraga for watershed protection, and the East Bay Regional

Park District was securing open space to the north, south, and east. Many of the hillsides and ridgelines remained undeveloped and in private ownership, with zoning allowing roughly three homes per acre.

In 1970, Moraga was still an unincorporated community. Its population was 14,205. Lafayette had incorporated in 1968, and other Contra Costa communities were exploring similar moves. County zoning for Moraga still reflected planned freeways and large-scale growth, and residents were concerned that the town's character was at risk.

The Moraga Community Association began advocating for incorporation in the early 1970s. They requested a development moratorium from the County until a traffic impact study could be completed. The County approved the moratorium and the study, boosting incorporation efforts. In 1974, the incorporation proposal was put to a vote and passed with a 60% majority. A town council was elected soon after, and work on the first general plan began. The Moraga General Plan was adopted in 1979, followed by a new zoning map and ordinance in 1980.

Following incorporation, there were additional efforts to preserve open space and expand parkland. This included acquiring 20 acres at Saint Mary's Road and Moraga Road, formerly planned for a freeway interchange, which became Moraga Commons Park. In 1976, a 7.64-mile path on the former rail line became a regional trail connecting Moraga and Lafayette. In 1986, residents supported Measure A to protect hillsides and ridgelines around the town. A decade later, Mulholland Hill was preserved as open space, and vulnerable areas were rezoned to lower densities.



1990S AND BEYOND: A MATURING COMMUNITY

Figure 2.2 shows the year of construction for buildings in Moraga. By 1990, most of the town's buildable land had been developed, and most of the undeveloped areas were designated as open space. Infill development opportunities existed in the two commercial districts, but these areas were zoned for business rather than housing.

During the 2000s and 2010s, Moraga's long-range plans responded to changing needs and conditions. The 2002 General Plan envisioned the Moraga Center and Rheem Park commercial districts as vibrant town centers with new housing as well as commercial uses. In 2010, the Town adopted a Specific Plan for the Moraga Center area. In subsequent years, it adopted a bicycle and pedestrian master plan, a parks and recreation master plan, and an ordinance to protect hillsides and ridgelines.

Only 217 homes were built in Moraga between 2000 and 2024, a much slower growth rate than previous decades. Median home prices surged by 122% from 2012 to 2021, creating challenges for Moraga's workforce and first-time homebuyers. Higher prices led to fewer housing options, longer commutes, and increased cost burdens, impacting local businesses and institutions such as Saint Mary's College.

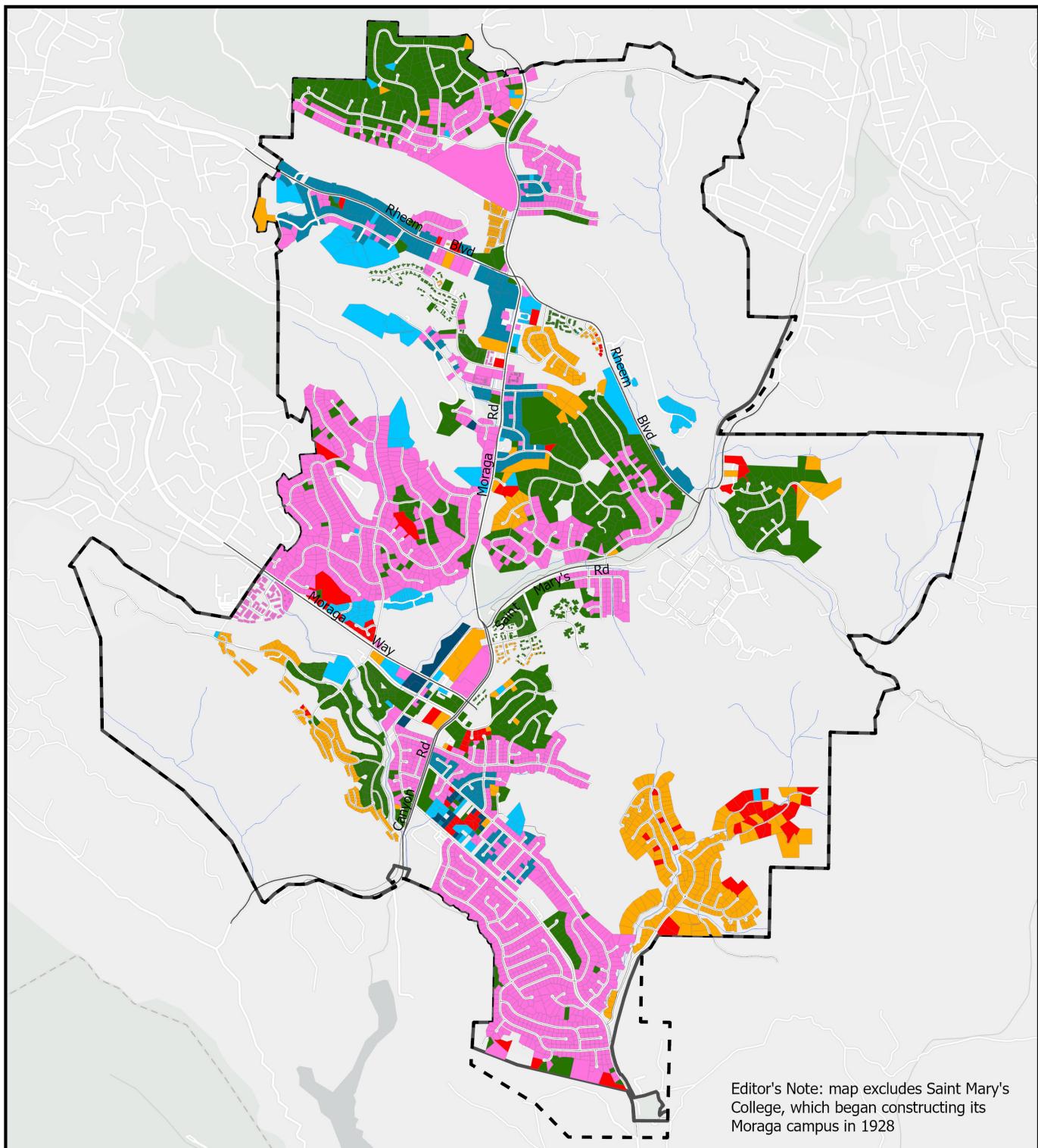


The new homes at Via Moraga replaced a former bowling alley



Figure 2.2: Year of Construction

Town of Moraga General Plan 2040



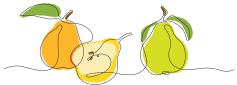
Town Limits
Sphere of Influence
Streams
Streets

Before 1950
1950 - 1959
1960 - 1969
1970 - 1979
1980 - 1989
1990 - 1999
2000 or Later

**Town of Moraga, California
General Plan Update**

0 0.25 0.5 1 Mile

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2.3 MORAGA TODAY: A SNAPSHOT

This section provides an overview of Moraga today, highlighting data that frames long-range planning goals, policies, and programs. It includes key findings on local demographics and the economy. Additional data, maps, and tables can be found in each element of the General Plan and in the Housing Element.

1. MORAGA HAS BEEN GROWING AT A SLOWER PACE THAN THE COUNTY AND REGION.

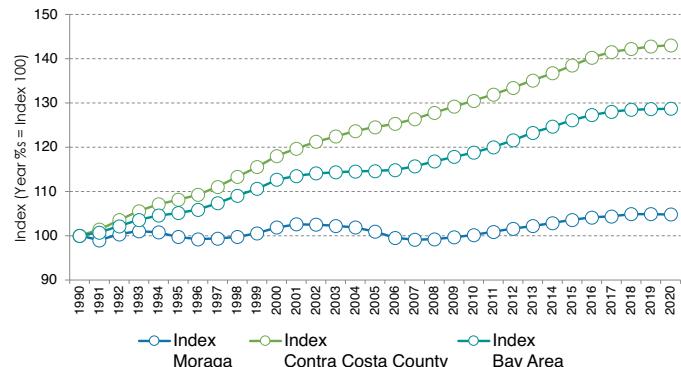
In 2024, the US Census Bureau estimated Moraga's population at 16,859, a modest increase of 3.3% since 2000. Over the same period, Contra Costa County's population grew by 20.8%. The Bay Area experienced a 14.5% increase from 2000 to 2020, followed by a slight decline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chart 2-1 illustrates these comparative growth rates since 1990.

There are indications that Moraga's growth rate may rise in the coming years, with several projects in the development "pipeline" and more vacant "infill" sites now available for development or redevelopment.

2. MORAGA'S AGE PROFILE IS CHANGING.

Moraga's population of older adults is growing, increasing the demand for senior housing, health care, transportation, and social services. Table 2-1 shows the distribution of residents by age group in 2000 and 2024, highlighting percentage changes over the 24-year period. Age groups that have decreased by more than 10% are marked in red, while those that have increased by more than 10% are marked in blue.

Chart 2-1: Growth Rates Change Since 1990: Town, County, And Region



Source: ABAG Housing Data Package, 2021

Table 2-1: Change in Age Distribution Since 2000

Age	2000	2024	% Change
0-4	718	732	2%
5-14	2,445	2,131	-13%
15-24	2,878	3,474	21%
25-34	945	890	-6%
35-44	2,269	1,969	-13%
45-54	2,779	2,075	-25%
55-64	2,084	2,049	-2%
65-74	1,436	1,865	30%
75-84	881	1,193	35%
85+	207	481	132%

Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey ((2018-2022))

The most significant growth has been among older adults, with a 40% increase from 2000 to 2024. People over 65 now make up 21% of Moraga's population. The only other notable increase was in the 15-24 age group, likely due to higher enrollment at Saint Mary's College and more adult children living at home.

Conversely, the number of children aged 5-14 and residents aged 35-54 has declined. This decrease is partly due to the high cost of housing and limited new construction in the town. Providing additional housing options could help free up existing homes for families, although the high cost of housing remains a challenge.



3. THE TOWN IS BECOMING MORE DIVERSE.

Moraga is becoming more culturally diverse, with the percentage of White, Non-Hispanic residents declining from 78 percent of the population in 2000 to 62 percent in 2024. The town is not as diverse as Contra Costa County or the region but it is more diverse than Lafayette and Orinda. As Table 2-2 shows, Moraga's Hispanic population increased by 93 percent between 2000 and 2024, while the Asian and Pacific Islander population increased by 87 percent. The number of white Non-Hispanic residents declined by 18 percent during this period.

Growing diversity and changing demographics requires adjusting long-range plans and local services to ensure inclusivity. Social services, recreation programs, economic development strategies, and the design of housing, parks and public spaces should consider the varied needs of different groups.

Table 2-2: Race and Ethnicity Since 2000

Race/Ethnicity	2000	2024	% Change
White, Non-Hispanic	12,760	10,486	-18%
Black/African-American	161	143	-11%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2,024	3,710	83%
Hispanic/Latino	775	1,446	87%
More than One Race	519	1,004	93%
Other	51	70	37%

Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey, 2018-2022

4. CHANGES IN THE WAYS WE WORK AND TRAVEL ARE RESHAPING MORAGA'S ECONOMY AND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS.

In 2000, Census data showed that 6.4% of Moraga's employed residents worked from home. Most residents commuted to other cities for work, sometimes spending over an hour driving or taking BART to Oakland, San Francisco, and other job centers. Due to advances in technology and changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 31% of Moraga's employed residents now work from home. This shift has altered commuting patterns and reduced demand for office space. Ultimately, it could reshape Moraga's commercial districts as a larger daytime population seeks goods and services close to home.

Despite an increase in the daytime population and the high buying power of residents, the town has seen a decline in sales tax revenues when adjusted for inflation. Moraga has a significant amount of vacant and underutilized commercial space and lacks sufficient grocery stores, restaurants, and entertainment options. Additionally, Moraga's commercial areas are less walkable compared to nearby downtowns like Walnut Creek and Danville and offer limited civic spaces for community gathering. Looking ahead, the Town aims to develop a more "village-like" environment in Moraga Center and Rheem Park.



Percentage of Moraga residents working from home in **2000**:

6.4%

Percentage of Moraga residents working from home in **2024**:

31.0%

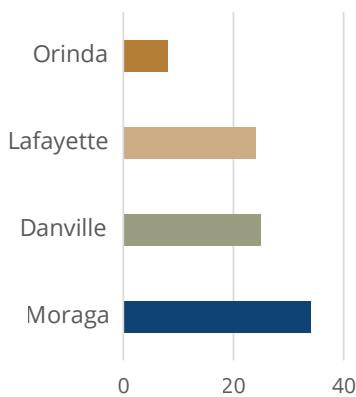
Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey (2018-2022)



5. OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS, MORAGA HAS SEEN ALMOST NO “MISSING MIDDLE” HOUSING PRODUCTION.

“Missing middle” housing includes building types such as duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes. These types of housing can be affordably designed and blend seamlessly with single-family neighborhoods and older commercial areas. Moraga built a significant amount of missing middle housing in the 1960s and 1970s, but there has been very little of this housing type constructed in the past 40 years. Although Moraga has a higher percentage of multi-family housing than Lafayette, Orinda, and Danville (see Chart 2-2), this is due to pre-1980 development rather than recent trends.

Chart 2-2: Percentage of Existing Housing that is Multi-Family or Townhomes



Source: CA Dept of Finance, 2024

tends to be more sustainable due to its design, density, and affordability.

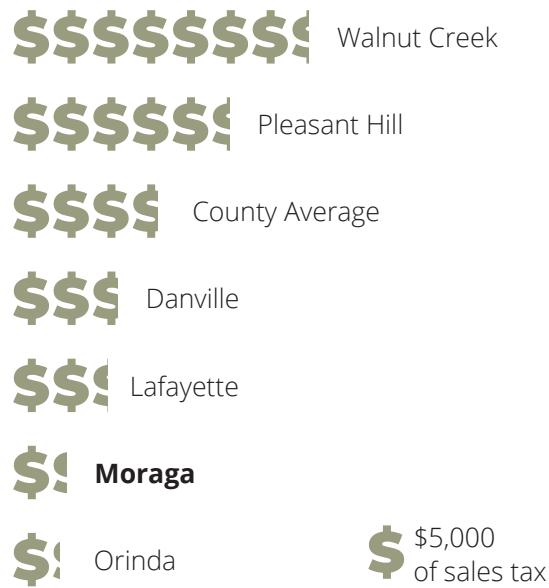
This General Plan places a stronger emphasis on missing middle housing than previous plans, recognizing its role in fostering a well-rounded community.

6. MORAGA HAS UNTAPPED POTENTIAL FOR MORE VIBRANT AND SUCCESSFUL COMMERCIAL CENTERS.

An economic analysis for the General Plan Update revealed that Moraga captures only about 33% of its households' potential retail spending. Due to the limited variety of goods and services available locally, residents often shop in Lafayette, Walnut Creek, and other neighboring areas, leading to retail “leakage.” Adjusted for inflation, net sales tax revenue has dropped by over 6% since 2015. Additionally, national retail trends show a shift towards online shopping and a demand for unique shopping and dining experiences.

Moraga is poised for greater economic vitality in the coming years. The town's median household income is 62% higher than the county average, and residents have expressed strong interest in more grocery stores, restaurants, and essential services. Moraga can also capitalize on its relationship with Saint Mary's College, the town's largest employer, to enhance its “college town” atmosphere, providing amenities that cater to students, staff, and faculty.

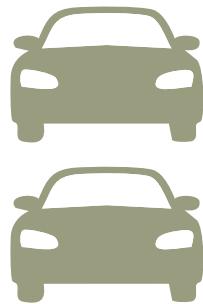
2023 Retail and Food Sales Tax Per Capita



7. MORAGA'S PHYSICAL FORM AND LOCATION CREATES TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES. TECHNOLOGY AND CHANGING TRAVEL PATTERNS ARE CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A SAFER, MULTI-MODAL ROAD NETWORK.

Moraga's distance from freeways and BART lines has made the community heavily reliant on cars. According to the Census, 70% of Moraga households own two or more vehicles. Among those commuting to work, 77% make the journey by car, and 68% drive alone. Moraga Way and Moraga Road are often congested during peak hours and school times. Public transit is limited, with buses running to BART approximately every 30 minutes.

To address these issues, Moraga is working to enhance its streets for walking and biking. While biking may not be suitable for everyone, expanding bike lanes, improving safety, and promoting e-bikes can make it a more viable option for many. Enhancing sidewalks, crosswalks, and adding street trees can also make the town safer and more pedestrian-friendly. Additionally, traffic flow can be improved through technology and signal synchronization. The Town is partnering with regional agencies to boost transit options. It is also focused on attracting local businesses to reduce the need for trips to other cities for goods and services.



Percentage of Moraga households with two or more cars:

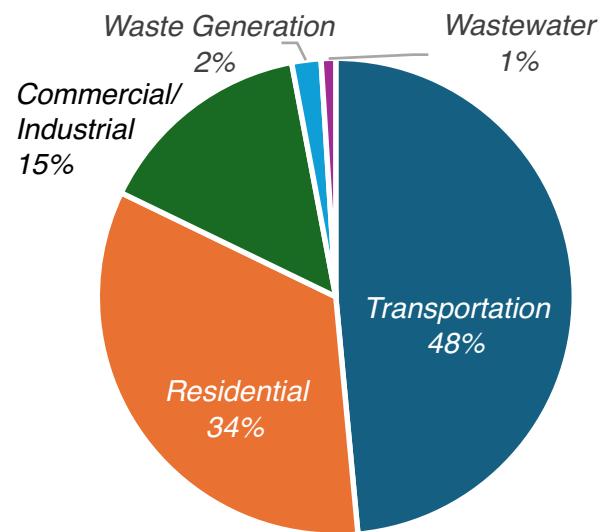
70.0%

8. CLIMATE CHANGE REQUIRES RETHINKING THE WAYS WE LIVE, TRAVEL, WORK, AND GROW.

Since 1895, California's average annual temperatures have risen by about 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit. Projections indicate this trend will continue and even accelerate. Climate change is causing significant adverse effects, including an increased risk of wildfires. A model from the State's Climate Change Assessment program predicts that by 2100, the average area burned could increase by up to 77%, and the frequency of fires exceeding 25,000 acres could rise by 50% statewide. Warming temperatures also pose health risks to vulnerable populations and threaten our water supply and energy grid resilience.

Moraga needs to plan for climate change impacts and enhance its resilience to growing threats. The Town must also commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, particularly those from buildings and transportation. This General Plan plays a crucial role in this effort, as it directly addresses the town's land use and transportation systems.

Chart 2-3: Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Sources in Moraga



2.4 MORAGA IN 2040: LOOKING AHEAD

The 2040 Moraga General Plan is based on assumptions about population, housing, and employment growth in Moraga over the 2020-2040 period. The assumptions are derived from several sources, including regional forecasts developed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and “buildout” estimates that consider the Town’s 2023-2031 regional housing allocation, approved projects, and zoning potential.

REGIONAL FORECASTS

ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments) provides population, housing, and employment forecasts for the nine-county Bay Area. These forecasts serve as benchmarks for regional plans, including the regional transportation plan and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (Plan Bay Area). They are also used by local governments, special districts, and utilities for long-term planning.

ABAG’s forecasts are based on national economic and demographic trends, as well as data on birth and death rates, interstate migration, and immigration. In 2017, ABAG prepared forecasts for 2040 as part of Plan Bay Area 2040. These were updated in 2021 for Plan Bay Area 2050. The 2050 forecasts project that the Bay Area will add 1.4 million households, 2.7 million residents, and 1.4 million jobs between 2015 and 2050, with about half of this growth occurring from 2025 to 2040.

The initial 2017 forecasts provided estimates for individual cities and counties in five-year increments. The 2021 forecasts, however, offer projections only for sub-regions, with Moraga included in a sub-region with Lafayette, Orinda, and Walnut Creek. Currently, Moraga accounts for about 10% of this sub-region’s population.

The 2017 forecasts predicted Moraga would gain 230 households and 95 jobs between 2020 and 2040, reflecting a continuation of slow growth. However, the 2021 forecasts suggest the sub-region including Moraga will add 28,000 households from 2015 to 2050, a faster growth rate than was previously projected. While much of this growth is expected to occur in Walnut Creek, Lamorinda jurisdictions may also grow significantly.

For employment, ABAG anticipates a 35% increase in Bay Area jobs and a 32% increase in Contra Costa County jobs from 2015 to 2050. The forecasts suggest job growth will be concentrated in other parts of the county, with Lamorinda, including Moraga, experiencing a potential decline in employment.

HOUSING ELEMENT “BUILDOUT”

The 2021-23 Housing Element process established new benchmarks for Moraga’s growth. In 2020, California determined that the Bay Area needed 441,176 new housing units for the 2023-2031 period. ABAG allocated this total to the nine counties and 101 cities in the region, assigning Moraga 1,118 units.

To comply with state requirements, Moraga had to show it could accommodate this housing assignment and provide a “buffer” of extra sites. In response, the Town rezoned several areas in Moraga Center and Rheem Park and committed to programs facilitating housing construction. The 2023-2031 Housing Element identified capacity for 1,770 new units in the following categories:

- 225 units from approved projects
- 242 units on scattered low-density (single-family) sites
- 200 units on medium-density (small lot, townhome) sites
- 417 units on high-density (multi-family) sites
- 686 units on mixed-use (multi-family or mixed residential/commercial) sites



Additionally, Moraga projected construction of four accessory dwelling units (ADUs) annually based on past trends, totaling 32 units by 2031. This brings the cumulative total to 1,802 units.

With an average of 2.59 people per household, this equates to 4,667 new residents. This would result in a projected population of 20,445, excluding around 1,900 people in group quarters (primarily Saint Mary's College students).

The 1,802-unit estimate represents the maximum potential under the General Plan and is not a forecast or intended outcome. It served as a benchmark for the Housing Element Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and is used for projecting traffic, noise, and local service demands. Actual growth between 2025 and 2040 will depend on market trends, construction costs, and other variables. The 2040 General Plan emphasizes growth to a greater extent than previous plans, recognizing potential benefits for the town's fiscal health, economic well-being, and quality of life.

EMPLOYMENT

As noted above, the ABAG forecasts for Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda anticipate negative employment growth in the next 20 years. Forecasting employment at the local level is complicated by recent changes in the ways we work and commute. In the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic, there are many more residents working from home. These jobs are often not counted in tallies of local employment.

This General Plan supports increases in local employment, primarily through the revitalization of Moraga's two commercial districts. The Town will strongly encourage retail and service infill development in the coming decades, providing more goods and services for Moraga residents and creating a more vibrant local economy. The 2010 Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP) identified the potential for 90,000 square feet of new retail space, 50,000 square feet of new

office space, and a 75-room hotel. The Rheem Park area also has the potential for additional commercial space, particularly for retail, service, and entertainment uses.

The General Plan also supports growth at Saint Mary's College, and the retention of the local-serving office, service, and health care jobs that exist in Moraga today. In particular, the health care sector may need to expand as the population continues to age.



Saint Mary's College is Moraga's largest employer



2.5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles are aspirational statements that express the community's values and priorities for the future. They are based on the changing needs of the community and feedback from the Planning Commission and Town Council. The guiding principles identify cross-cutting concepts or themes that run through all elements of the Plan.

1. RETAIN MORAGA'S SEMI-RURAL CHARACTER.

Maintain our beautiful natural setting, agricultural heritage, open spaces, low-density neighborhoods, and distinct sense of place. Strategically focus future growth in and around the town's two commercial centers.

2. KEEP MORAGA SAFE.

Protect public health and safety through emergency preparedness and education, increased resilience to disasters, mitigation and avoidance of natural and human-created hazards, and adaptation to climate change.

3. LIVE SUSTAINABLY.

Conserve natural resources for present and future generations and respect the limits of our natural environment. Encourage land uses, development patterns, construction methods, and technologies that help reduce automobile trips, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and the town's overall impact on the environment.

4. STRIVE FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE AND RESILIENCE.

Ensure that the design and quality of development and infrastructure contribute to a consistent community aesthetic and promote attractive gathering places.

5. CONSERVE OUR OPEN SPACES.

Protect the hillsides and ridgelines, native habitat, wildlife corridors, significant open space areas, and natural recreation opportunities that make Moraga a wonderful place to live.

6. CELEBRATE OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

We are a welcoming, inclusive place for all people and a great place to call home.

7. STRIVE FOR AN EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

Facilitate safe travel in and around Moraga and between Moraga and nearby communities. Prioritize the safety and convenience of walking, bicycling, and public transit, especially for short trips between home, school, parks, and local services.

8. SUSTAIN A VIBRANT, THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMY.

Reimagine the Town's commercial centers and workplaces so that they meet the needs of our residents and businesses while reflecting the soul and spirit of our community. Work collaboratively with local businesses to support their success and engagement in community life.



9. INVEST IN AND IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE.

This includes green infrastructure such as parks, creeks, and woodlands. Recognize the importance of reliable water, wastewater, drainage, and communication services to community health, safety, and the economy.

10. SUPPORT A DIVERSIFIED HOUSING STOCK.

Encourage a mix of new housing types so that our children, seniors, college students, and local workforce can continue to call Moraga home. Recognize the potential for new housing and mixed-use development to create balance and bring new life to our commercial centers.

11. EMBRACE MORAGA'S IDENTITY AS A "COLLEGE TOWN."

Recognize Saint Mary's College as an important economic and cultural asset and community partner and work with the college to make Moraga a unique and vibrant college town.

12. PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY, COST-EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES, ESPECIALLY RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES.

Work closely with local school districts to maintain excellence in education and coordinate on issues of mutual concern.

13. ENSURE ONGOING, MEANINGFUL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE TOWN'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.

Continue Moraga's tradition of volunteerism and community spirit, as well as our close working relationships with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies.

14. MAINTAIN FISCAL STABILITY.

Manage Town finances responsibly and transparently. Seek new, sustainable sources of revenue to contribute to fiscal stability.





Community festival in Commons Park

