



TOWN OF MORAGA

GENERAL PLAN | 2040



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TOWN OF MORAGA

GENERAL PLAN 2040

Adopted November 13, 2024

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The Town of Moraga extends its gratitude to the partner agencies and organizations who participated in the development of this Plan:

Confederated Villages of Lisjan/Ohlone
Cities of Orinda and Lafayette
Saint Mary's College
Contra Costa Transportation Authority
East Bay Municipal Utility District
Moraga Chamber of Commerce
Moraga Orinda Fire District
Moraga Historical Society
Moraga Chamber of Commerce

Moraga Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary Clubs
Moraga School District
Acalanes Union High School District
Recycle Smart
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District
350 Contra Costa Action
Protect Lamorinda Open Space
Moraga Citizens Network



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Moraga pear trees.

1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

A SHARED VISION FOR MORAGA'S FUTURE

General Plan 2040 outlines a unified vision for Moraga's future. It aims to preserve the qualities that make Moraga unique today, while also enhancing the community's vibrancy, sustainability, and resilience for the future. The Plan includes goals, policies, and actions needed to achieve this vision.

Although the General Plan is ambitious, it's not just a "wish list." It serves as a strategic guide for shaping Moraga's development. Developed with input from hundreds of residents over several years, the Plan addresses key issues, evaluates options, and offers data-driven guidance to navigate a complex and changing future.

A REQUIREMENT OF STATE LAW

In California, all counties, cities, and towns are required to adopt a general plan for their future development. The plan must be regularly updated to reflect changing conditions, new laws, and emerging issues. The State Government Code specifies that general plans must cover certain topics (known as "elements") and must be comprehensive, long-range, and internally consistent.

Moraga has a legacy of long-range planning. The Town was incorporated in 1974 to chart its own future, especially local land use decisions. It adopted its first General Plan in 1979, updated it in 1990, and again in 2002, with each update extending the Plan's time horizon. This edition, prepared between 2022 and 2024, looks ahead to 2040.





Ascot Drive

A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

The General Plan directs Moraga's long-term growth by establishing a legal framework for development and conservation. It influences daily operations, future plans, ordinances, and programs.

The General Plan forms the basis for the Town's zoning regulations, which define permissible land uses and development standards for each property. It also underpins the Capital Improvement Program, which aligns infrastructure, road, and public facility projects with areas designated for growth. This comprehensive document shapes Moraga's future in areas such as housing, transportation, safety, parks, urban design, and economic development. Additionally, it guides service providers like school districts and utility agencies in planning their facilities and investments.

A PLAN FOR ENHANCED QUALITY OF LIFE

The General Plan aims to improve the experience of living and working in Moraga. It addresses housing, transportation, economic development, and environmental protection in ways that are complementary and mutually beneficial. For instance, focusing future development in Moraga's two commercial centers helps preserve open space and natural areas, boosts the local economy, provides workforce housing, expands shopping options for residents, and creates a more vibrant community.

The Plan is crafted to balance community needs while maintaining public health, safety, and welfare. It considers market trends, property rights, regional issues, and State law. As Moraga grows, the Plan ensures that public services and facilities evolve accordingly. Ultimately, it seeks to maintain what makes Moraga unique while strengthening the community.



A STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

General Plan 2040 addresses the effects of global climate change on a local scale. It begins with a land use and transportation strategy aimed at fostering a more sustainable community with less reliance on fossil fuels. Key components of this strategy include increasing density in town centers, improving walkability, using renewable energy, enhancing water and energy efficiency, minimizing waste, and adopting environmentally friendly development practices.

Additionally, climate and sustainability concerns influence the town's approaches to conservation, open space, safety, and housing. The General Plan also highlights the importance of resilience and emergency preparedness as Moraga adapts to climate change impacts.

A LIVING DOCUMENT

The Moraga General Plan is intended to be a clear and accessible guide for Town staff, elected and appointed officials, property owners, developers, businesses, and residents. It offers direction for daily operations and specific projects, showing how everyday actions can align with the Plan's goals. It is designed as a blueprint for the continued managed growth of the Town.

The Plan looks ahead to the year 2040, but it is periodically amended to keep it current and relevant. Under State law, amendments may be considered up to four times a year, responding to new data, completed actions, and emerging issues or opportunities. Additionally, an annual report to the Town Council is required to review progress, set new priorities, and outline future programs.

1.2 AREA COVERED BY THE PLAN

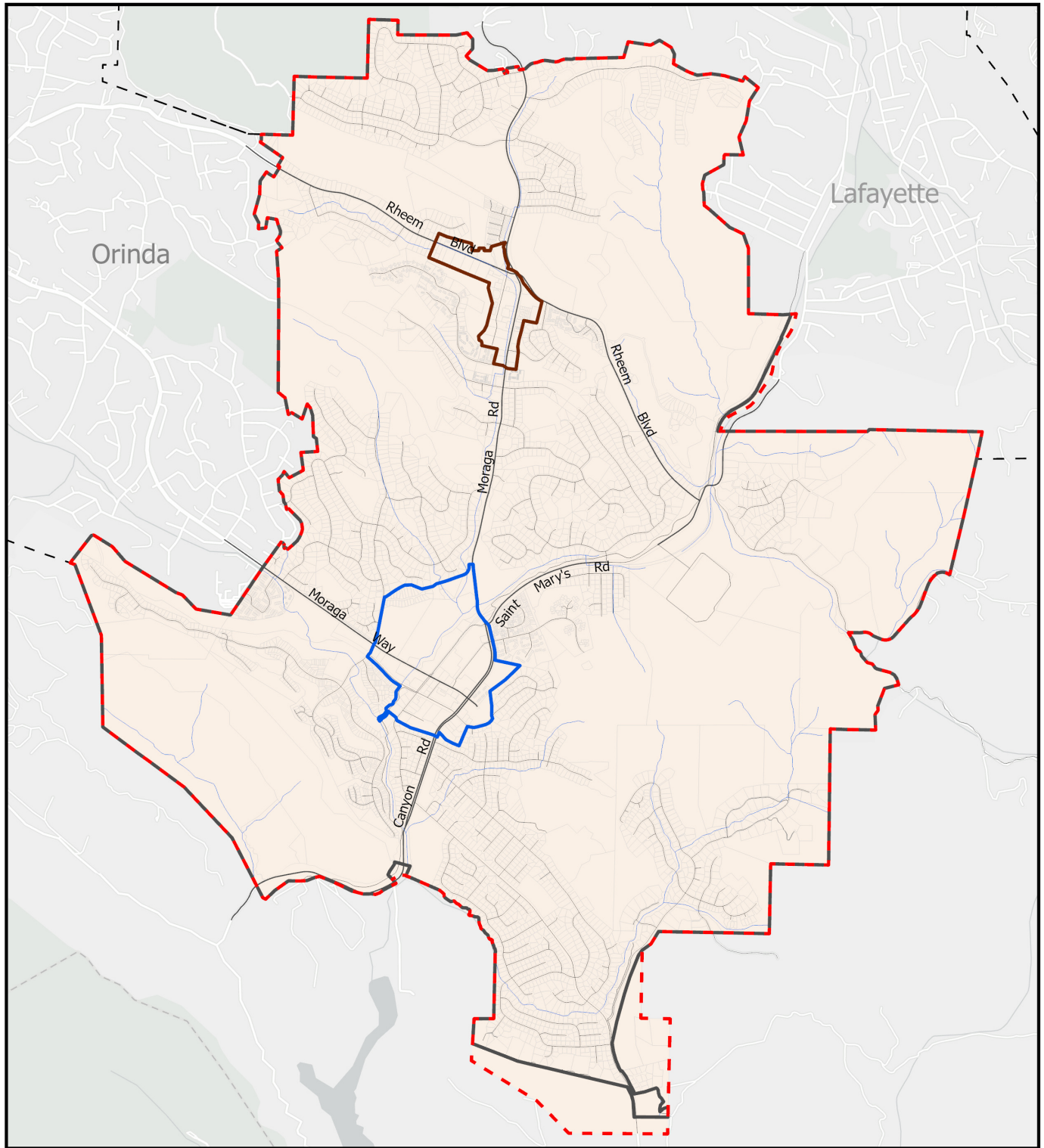
The area covered by the General Plan is shown in **Figure 1.1**. The Plan covers all lands located within the Town limits as well as the Town's Sphere of Influence. The Sphere of Influence is defined as "the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency" (Government Code Section 56076). In other words, it represents the potential ultimate Moraga Town limits. Changes to the Sphere of Influence boundary must be approved by the Contra Costa County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), an independent regulatory commission.

The Town of Moraga covers 9.442 square miles (6,042 acres). The Sphere of Influence is 0.221 square miles (141 acres), bringing the Planning Area total to 9.663 square miles (6,184 acres).

Many policies in the General Plan are regional in nature and consider Moraga's relationship to nearby cities. In particular, Lafayette and Orinda provide access to and from Moraga and contain land uses and activities that affect Moraga's quality of life. The unincorporated community of Canyon also relies on Moraga. Although Moraga does not have planning authority beyond its own border, it actively engages in issues that cross jurisdictional lines. Similarly, the General Plan guides coordination between the Town and partner agencies, including Contra Costa County, East Bay Municipal Utilities District, East Bay Regional Park District, Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority, Moraga-Orinda Fire District, and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.



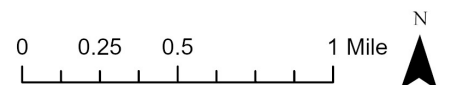
Figure 1.1: Planning Area Boundary



- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels

- Moraga Center Specific Plan Area
- Rheem Center Priority Development Area
- Neighboring Jurisdictions

Town of Moraga, California
General Plan Update



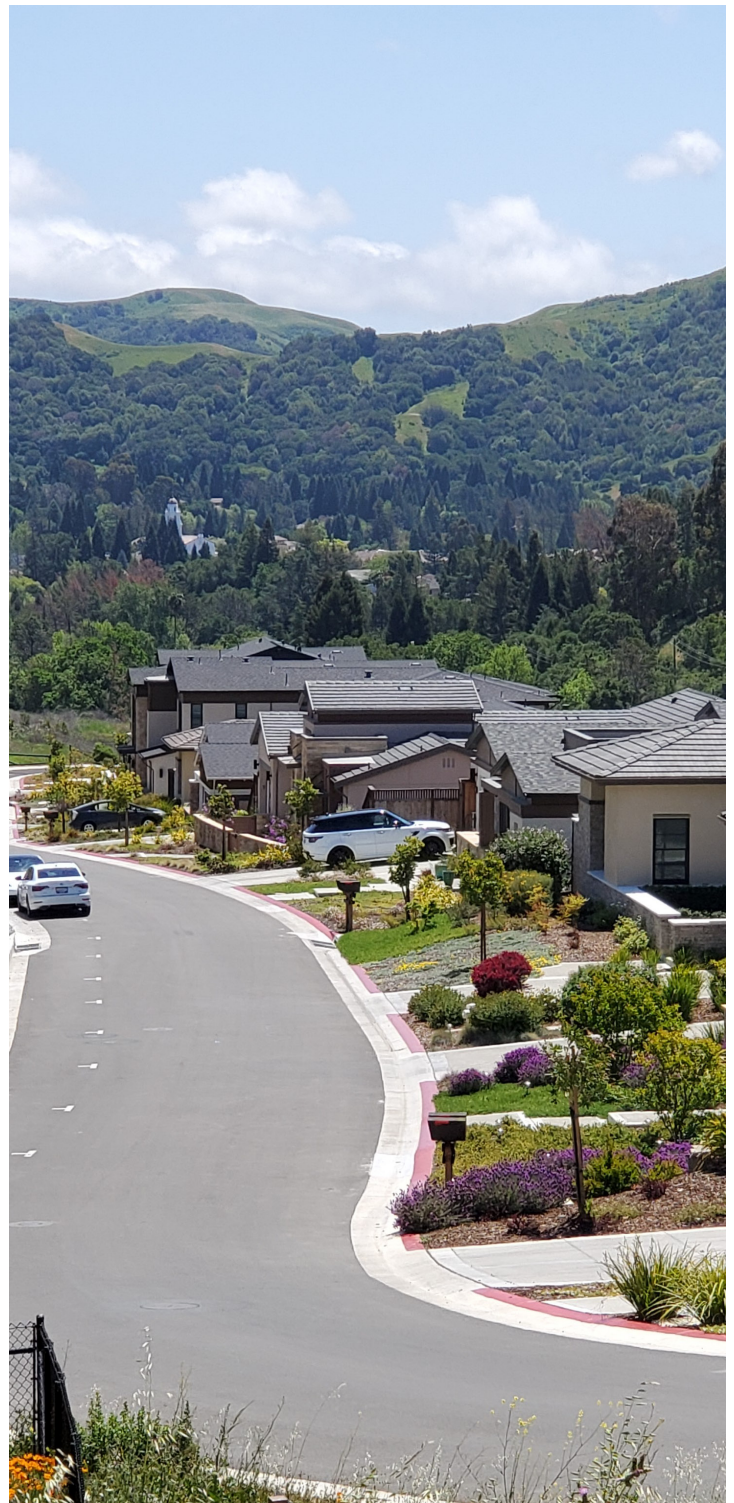
1.3 ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

Under California law, cities are required to address seven issue areas or ‘elements’ in their general plans: land use, transportation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and noise. Recent changes to State law also require that cities and towns with disadvantaged communities, as defined by the State of California, include an environmental justice component in their General Plans. No disadvantaged communities have been identified in Moraga.

The State provides flexibility in how these elements are organized and encourages the inclusion of “optional” elements that address issues of local importance. Once they are adopted, optional elements carry the same legal weight as mandatory elements. No one element supersedes another.

In addition to the State requirements, all communities in Contra Costa County are required to adopt a Growth Management Element. This requirement has been in effect since 1990, when County voters approved a half-cent transportation sales tax. The purpose of the Growth Management Element is to ensure that transportation, infrastructure, and services are improved as growth occurs.

The Government Code includes special requirements for Housing Elements. The Housing Element must be updated on an eight-year cycle set by the State legislature and is subject to certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development. State law also requires that Housing Elements meet rigorous standards for data, analysis, and maps. For readability, the Housing Element is formatted as a separate document, but it has been adopted as part of this General Plan. Moraga adopted its 2023-2031 (“Sixth Cycle”) Housing Element on January 25, 2023.



Fronteras Drive



Table 1-1: Legal Requirements and Moraga General Plan Elements

MANDATED ELEMENTS	MORAGA 2040 GENERAL PLAN
Land Use	Land Use Element
Circulation	Transportation Element
Housing	Housing Element (separate volume)
Open Space	Open Space and Parks Element
Conservation	Conservation Element
Safety	Safety and Resilience Element
Noise	
Environmental Justice (*)	N/A
N/A	Community Design Element
N/A	Economic Vitality Element
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY MANDATED ELEMENT	
Growth Management	Growth Management and Governance Element

(*) applicable in jurisdictions with “disadvantaged communities” as defined by the State.

The Moraga General Plan includes the mandated elements as well as several optional elements. Table 1-1 identifies where mandated and optional elements are covered in this document. The Town has included the Noise Element within its Safety Element and expanded its Open Space Element to also cover parks and recreation. The Growth Management Element also addresses governance issues, including Town operations and schools.

Following is an overview of the Moraga 2040 General Plan’s organization and contents.

INTRODUCTION (CHAPTER 1)

The Introduction explains the purpose of the Plan, how it is organized, and how it was prepared.

FRAMEWORK AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES (CHAPTER 2)

This chapter provides the context for the General Plan, including Moraga’s history and current conditions, and long-range forecasts. It also presents guiding principles for the Town’s future, which serve as the foundation for the Plan.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE (CHAPTER 3)

This chapter highlights greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience as overarching goals that underpin the entire General Plan. It describes the ways in which Plan policies and maps respond to the climate crisis and will make Moraga a more sustainable and resilient community.

LAND USE ELEMENT (CHAPTER 4)

The Land Use Element provides overall guidance on the use of land, including the physical form of Moraga over the next 15 years. The Element identifies growth and conservation areas, as well as policies for specific land uses. The General Plan Diagram is included in this Element.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER ELEMENT (CHAPTER 5)

The Community Character Element includes policies on the design of neighborhoods, infill housing, town centers, and natural areas, as well as policies to improve public spaces and protect historic resources.





Residents celebrate Moraga's 50th birthday

HOUSING ELEMENT SUMMARY (CHAPTER 6)

The Moraga Housing Element is a separate volume of the General Plan. Chapter 6 is intended only as an electronic link to the full document.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT (CHAPTER 7)

The Transportation Element covers all modes of travel in Moraga, including driving, walking, bicycling, and transit use. It also addresses transportation issues such as safety and parking.

ECONOMIC VITALITY ELEMENT (CHAPTER 8)

The Economic Vitality Element strives to maintain Moraga's fiscal health, support the success of local businesses, provide more retail and service choices for Moraga residents, and recognize Saint Mary's College as an essential community partner.

OPEN SPACE AND PARKS ELEMENT (CHAPTER 9)

The Open Space and Parks Element includes policies to protect and manage Moraga's open lands, including hillsides and ridgelines. It also includes policies related to parks, trails, and recreation.

CONSERVATION ELEMENT (CHAPTER 10)

The Conservation Element addresses Moraga's natural resources, such as creeks, woodlands, and wildlife habitat. It also addresses air and water quality, energy, and solid waste management.

SAFETY AND RESILIENCE ELEMENT (CHAPTER 11)

The Safety and Resilience Element strives to minimize potential damage to life and property due to natural hazards such as wildfire, earthquakes, flooding, and landslides. It also addresses emergency preparedness and noise. A separate document—the Local Hazard



Mitigation Plan (LHMP)—addresses these topics but is focused on a vulnerability assessment and mitigation of hazards in accordance with federal requirements. The LHMP, which is prepared by Contra Costa County in collaboration with its cities and towns, is adopted by reference as part of the General Plan.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ELEMENT (CHAPTER 12)

The Growth Management Element is a County-mandated component of the General Plan. It is focused on intergovernmental coordination and also addresses schools, libraries, and infrastructure.

APPENDICES

A number of technical appendices accompany the General Plan but are not formally adopted as part of the Plan. Updates to the Appendix do not require an amendment to the General Plan and may be added over time.

1.4 HOW TO USE THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is intended for use by all members of the community. Residents may consult the Plan to see what changes are planned in their neighborhoods and how development applications are evaluated. Businesses may use the Plan to better understand the Town's strategies for economic vitality. Town staff, Boards and Commissions, and the Town Council use the Plan to make important decisions about budgets, capital improvements, future development proposals, and local regulations. Other agencies, such as the school districts, use the General Plan to shape their own long-range plans and programs.

Each Element of the General Plan presents goals and policies that state the Plan's intent across a range of planning and development issues.

- A **Goal** is a general statement of values or aspirations held by the community in relation to each issue area. It is the end towards which the Town will direct its efforts.
- A **Policy** is a more precise expression regarding the community's position on a particular issue, or how a particular goal will be interpreted or implemented. Policies may include guidelines, standards, objectives, maps, diagrams, or a combination of these components.
- **Implementation measures** are the steps the Town takes (or will take) to carry out its goals and policies. These include ongoing **programs**, such as design review and zoning. They also include specific **actions** or changes to existing practices that should be taken after the General Plan is adopted.

Policies related to sustainability and climate change are specifically called out with a leaf icon. Collectively, these policies lay the groundwork for a Climate Action Plan to be prepared following General Plan adoption. Similarly, policies to make Moraga more resilient and better prepared for emergencies are noted with a climate icon.



LOOK FOR THE LEAF!

The leaf icon indicates a goal or policy that supports the General Plan's sustainability and climate theme.



A CLIMATE-RESILIENT COMMUNITY

The weather icon indicates a goal or policy that supports the General Plan's resilience theme.



Policies typically start with a verb, which indicates whether they are mandatory or advisory (e.g., “require” vs “encourage”). As the text box below indicates, the choice of verbs and modifiers is an important part of understanding how a policy should be applied. The use of advisory language (“promote”, “support”, “discourage,” etc.) is intentional and helps to balance competing objectives. While General Plan policies must be internally consistent, there may still be tension between its statements. It is not the intent of the General Plan to predetermine every Town decision, but rather to help guide the process.

The General Plan is a regulatory document, but it is also subject to the laws of the State of California and the United States. As such, the Plan must be interpreted and applied in a manner that would not constitute a taking of property under state and federal Constitutions.

1.5 HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The 2040 Moraga General Plan is the product of a three-year planning effort involving residents, businesses, Town Boards and Commissions, and the Moraga Town Council. The Update program occurred in two phases, collectively referred to as the Moraga Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative. Each phase included extensive community workshops and robust outreach to local institutions, major stakeholders, and community groups, as well as web-based information, education, and opportunities for feedback. Each phase also included data collection and analysis, mapping and field work, review of prior plans and documents, assessment of existing and projected conditions, and the development and vetting of new goals, policies, and programs.

Encourage vs Require: What’s the Difference?

The terms “encourage,” “strongly encourage,” and “require” indicate varying levels of obligation or recommendation for compliance with certain guidelines or regulations:

- **Encourage:** This suggests that the subject party (Town Council, staff, developers, etc.) is urged to consider a particular action or guideline favorably. It implies a recommendation or suggestion without strict enforcement. Compliance is often voluntary, though there might be incentives or benefits for following the encouragement. Similarly used verbs include support and promote.
- **Strongly Encourage:** This term indicates a higher level of recommendation compared to “encourage.” It implies a stronger suggestion or directive, often with an expectation that the recommended action will be seriously considered and implemented. While compliance may still be voluntary, there may be more substantial reasons or benefits provided for adherence.
- **Require:** When something is “required” in a planning document, it means that compliance is mandatory and legally binding. There are no options to opt out or ignore the stipulated guideline or regulation, although there may be different ways to achieve or measure compliance. Requirements are typically enforced through provisions of the Moraga Municipal Code or the codes and regulations of other government agencies.

These terms help clarify the expectations and regulatory framework within planning documents, guiding developers, architects, and town officials in the decision-making and implementation processes.



The 2040 Plan continued Moraga's tradition of engaging its residents in long-range planning at the grass roots level. It built on the success of the previous General Plan Update two decades earlier in 1999-2002. That process included a steering committee, exhibits, surveys, and nearly two dozen workshops and town meetings prior to formal public hearings. As appropriate, goals and policies from the 2002 Plan have been updated and carried forward into this Plan.

PHASE ONE

In August 2021, the Town launched Phase One of its Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative, catalyzed by the State-mandated Housing Element Update. Components of the program included:

- 2023-2031 Housing Element Update
- General Plan and zoning amendments for the 423-acre Bollinger Canyon Study Area
- Amendments to the Circulation and Safety Elements
- Conforming amendments to the General Plan for internal consistency
- Zoning changes to meet the Town's Regional Housing Needs Allocation

As required by State Housing Element law, Phase One included an assessment of the 2002 Moraga General Plan. The assessment found that the existing Moraga General Plan did not address some of the emerging issues facing the Town, including the increased threat of climate-related natural disasters such as wildfire, underperforming commercial centers in need of revitalization, and declining housing affordability. Further, the existing Plan did not address some of the State requirements for General Plans that had been adopted since 2002.

Moraga's regional housing assignment for the 2023-2031 period was 1,118 units, including 501 units of low and very low-income housing. This was nearly five times the previous (2015-2023)

assignment, which was 229 units. As part of Phase One, the Town increased allowable densities in its two commercial districts, allowed multi-family housing in areas previously zoned for commercial uses only, and rezoned several parcels to facilitate multi-family and mixed-use housing. It also adopted a slate of policies and programs to affirmatively further fair housing, support accessory dwelling units; and facilitate housing construction for seniors, college students, and the local workforce.

The Housing Element Update involved an unprecedented level of public outreach. Over 1,200 residents provided direct input, many through surveys, on-line exercises, or participation in interactive virtual and real-time workshops. Components of the outreach program included the "Make Moraga Home" project website and branding, social media and traditional media (including news stories and press releases), seven community workshops, a walking tour, a mobile booth for Town fairs and special events, and more than a dozen Planning Commission and Town Council study sessions.

The Housing Element was adopted on January 25, 2023, prior to the State-mandated deadline. It was certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development on September 14, 2023.

Other components of Phase One occurred concurrently with the Housing Element. Amendments to the Circulation Element added "Vehicle Miles Traveled" standards for transportation, while the Safety Element amendments responded to State laws relating to wildfire and resilience. These amendments, plus conforming amendments to the rest of the Plan, also were adopted on January 25, 2023. Zoning amendments also were adopted at that time.

Bollinger Canyon Study Area amendments were adopted on April 25, 2023. This area had been designated as a "Study Area" in the 2002 Plan and prior plans. The April 2023 amendments replaced this designation with Rural Residential,



Open Space, and Low-Density Residential (1 DUA) designations, and updated policy language on the former Study Area.



Residents participate in a workshop during Phase One of the Plan Update

PHASE TWO

Phase Two of the Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative began in July 2023. Its objective was to update the remaining elements of the General Plan, moving the Plan's time horizon forward to 2040. Since changes to the Land Use Map were completed in Phase One, the focus was on the other elements of the Plan, such as Transportation, Open Space, and Conservation. Phase Two did not change the Town's "buildout" potential or development pattern; rather, it refreshed the Plan's policies to be future-focused.

While all elements of the Plan were reviewed in Phase Two, several topics emerged as particularly

important, including sustainability, community design, economic vitality, and transportation. Much of the community engagement that occurred during Phase Two centered on these four topics. A community workshop on April 30, 2024 was expressly focused on these subjects. Joint Planning Commission/ Town Council study sessions also were convened on these four focused topics. Planning Commission and Town Council study sessions also were held on the Plan's Guiding Principles, which were updated to reflect current topics.

At the same time, Phase Two offered an opportunity for continued education and outreach on recently adopted housing policies, as well as the zoning changes made during Phase One. This outreach occurred in many different formats, including more than 20 meetings with civic organizations, homeowner associations, stakeholder groups, and Town Boards and Commissions in early 2024. Phase Two also saw expanded outreach to Saint Mary's College, the Chamber of Commerce, community service groups, and partner agencies such as the cities of Orinda and Lafayette.

Data collection and analysis continued to be an important part of the planning process. Phase Two tasks included existing land use mapping, traffic counts, noise monitoring, as well as a "policy audit" covering the Town's prior General

Phase Two of the Update included a "Town Hall" style meeting at Saint Mary's College



Plan and other long-range planning documents. The Town also participated in the countywide update of its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan during this period, and refined its strategy for addressing evacuation needs and potential improvements.

A Draft General Plan was published in September 2024. The Plan was considered at public hearings before the Planning Commission and Town Council and was adopted on November 13, 2024.

1.6 RELATION TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

The 2040 Moraga General Plan provides a framework for other plans, regulations, and planning activities focused on particular topics or geographic areas in Moraga. Internal consistency across all plans and regulations is required.

CODES AND ORDINANCES

Zoning. The Zoning Ordinance provides parcel-specific regulations pertaining to development standards, permissible activities, and the process

for development approval. Government Code Section 65860 requires that the Town's Zoning Ordinance be consistent with its General Plan. Consistency means that the land uses authorized by the Zoning Ordinance, and the distribution of these uses, must serve to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan.

Subdivisions. Subdivision regulations control the division of property into two or more parcels. Government Code Section 66410 et seq. requires that local jurisdictions regulate and control subdivision activity through adoption and use of a Subdivision Ordinance. The Town may not approve a proposed subdivision unless the design and proposed use are consistent with the General Plan.

Building. California Health and Safety Code (Section 17910 et seq.) requires the Town to adopt regulations imposing standards for buildings and construction. The Town of Moraga may adopt standards that are more restrictive than those mandated by State law, if justified by local conditions. The General Plan can serve as the vehicle for documenting local conditions and specifying the necessary code changes.

Aerial view of Moraga looking northwest from Rancho Laguna Park, Larch neighborhood in foreground



Open Space, Hillside, and Ridgelines. This General Plan incorporates specific policies approved by Moraga voters in 1986 as part of the Moraga Open Space Ordinance. It also carries forward amendments made in 2018 as part of the Town’s adoption of a Hillside and Ridgeline Ordinance. Exemptions from the Hillside and Ridgeline regulations are specified in the Ordinance and are referenced in the General Plan as appropriate. The General Plan also includes definitions, maps, and standards established in the 1986 and 2018 Ordinances.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS AND BUDGET

Government Code Section 65401 requires the Town Council to obtain from Town officials and staff, and from special districts operating within the Town limits, lists of all public works projects recommended for study, design, or construction during each ensuing year. In Moraga, the Town’s capital improvement programs are set forth in the Town budget. The Town must ensure that the budget and its components are consistent with the General Plan.

MORAGA CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN

In 2010, the Town adopted a Specific Plan for the 187-acre Moraga Center area. The Plan included policies, guidelines, and standards that address land use, urban design, circulation, and public services. Land use designations and policies in the General Plan are consistent with the Specific Plan and help advance its vision of a revitalized town center with new housing, office, shopping, dining, and recreational opportunities.

SYSTEM PLANS

System plans include those related to particular topics or issues covered by the General Plan. Examples include the Moraga Walk | Bike Plan, the Local Roadway Safety Plan, the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. These plans must be consistent

with the General Plan. This means they must use the same assumptions about the amount and location of future growth, and reflect the policies embodied by the General Plan. The 2040 General Plan calls for several new system plans, including a Climate Action Plan and an Economic Development Strategy.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)

A General Plan Update is considered a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), since it accommodates growth and change and includes policies that may impact the environment. The level of CEQA review and documentation depends on the nature and extent of the impacts.

As noted in the previous section, Phase One of the General Plan Update covered the Housing Element and amendments for the Bollinger Canyon Study Area. This included changes to the General Plan Map, which resulted in increased development potential in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas. To assess these changes, a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared. A Program EIR evaluates the impacts of a broad development pattern (or program) over a specific time frame (e.g., through 2040) rather than the impacts of a specific project on an individual site.

In addition to evaluating impacts, the EIR established mitigation measures for those impacts deemed to be potentially significant. It also identified impacts that would remain significant and unavoidable even after mitigation. The EIR was finalized and certified in January 2023, along with a Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Phase Two of the Plan Update extended the Plan’s time horizon to 2040, revised its goals, policies, and programs, and reorganized its contents and themes. No further changes to the Land Use Map, including allowable densities, were made during this phase. An Addendum to



the January 2023 EIR was prepared to cover the second phase.

Future projects that are consistent with the growth assumptions and land use designations in the General Plan may rely on the EIR for its analysis of impacts on specific topic areas. This is referred to as “tiering.” Tiering does not entirely relieve these projects of environmental review requirements, but it may streamline the process. Traffic studies, geologic studies, biological studies, and other analyses may still be required to evaluate localized, site-specific impacts.

“Town” vs. “town”

Throughout this document, the word “town” is capitalized (“Town”) when it specifically refers to the government of the Town of Moraga. A lower case “t” is used when describing aspects of the community, such as its population or topography.

1.7 REVIEWING, AMENDING AND MANAGING THE PLAN

To remain a viable and effective planning tool, the Moraga General Plan must be reviewed on an annual basis and modified over time in response to changing conditions, needs, and priorities.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The General Plan is the Town’s most significant policy document and, therefore, must receive regular, annual appraisal to ensure that its policies remain relevant and appropriate. Staff prepares an annual report for review by the Planning Commission and Town Council regarding the status of the General Plan and progress in implementing its action programs.

AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN

The Town may consider amendments to the General Plan in response to the annual review, changes in the planning context and State law, or requests from property owners. The following provisions apply to the amendment process:

Types of Amendments. Amendments to the General Plan may take the form of either text changes (revisions to the Plan’s goals, policies, programs, or narrative text) or map changes (revisions to the General Plan Diagram).

Consideration of Amendments. State law (Government Code Section 65358) allows the General Plan to be amended up to four times per year. This process typically requires initial direction from the Town Council, followed by at least one public hearing by the Planning Commission and a final hearing by the Town Council to act on the amendment request. Amendments may be requested by members of the general public, property owners, or the Town itself. Fees for amendment requests are prescribed by resolution of the Town Council.

Environmental Review. Each amendment application must be accompanied by statements and data justifying the application, including an environmental assessment when necessary. The application is reviewed by staff and the Planning Commission to ensure compliance with the Town’s environmental review guidelines and the California Environmental Quality Act.



EVALUATION CRITERIA

Before approving a General Plan amendment, the Town must find that:

- A balanced and logical land use pattern will be maintained.
- The social, economic and physical well-being of the community will generally be improved.
- The Town and other affected governmental agencies will be able to maintain levels of service consistent with their abilities and financial capacity.

ONGOING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The General Plan is designed to be a flexible document that encourages continuous community involvement. As the Plan is put into action, the Town will ensure open and transparent processes, allowing all residents, businesses, and stakeholders to have a voice. To facilitate meaningful participation, the Town provides timely, accurate, and comprehensive information about planning issues, limitations, resources, opportunities, options, and important decisions.





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

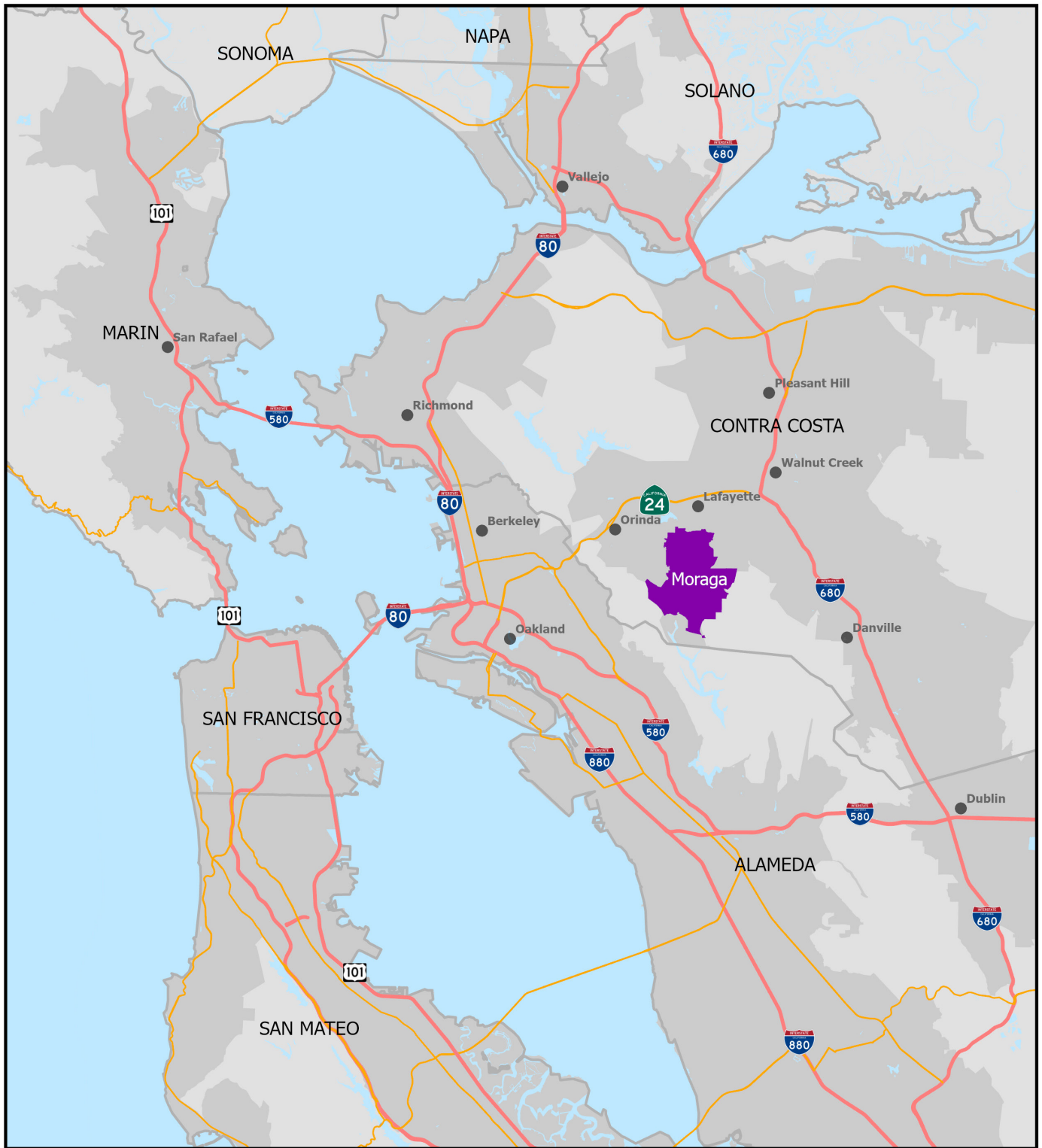
Moraga is located in central Contra Costa County, approximately 13 miles east of Oakland, 22 miles east of San Francisco, and eight miles southwest of Walnut Creek. It is the second smallest municipality in Contra Costa County by population and the fifth smallest in land area. Regional location is shown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



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.

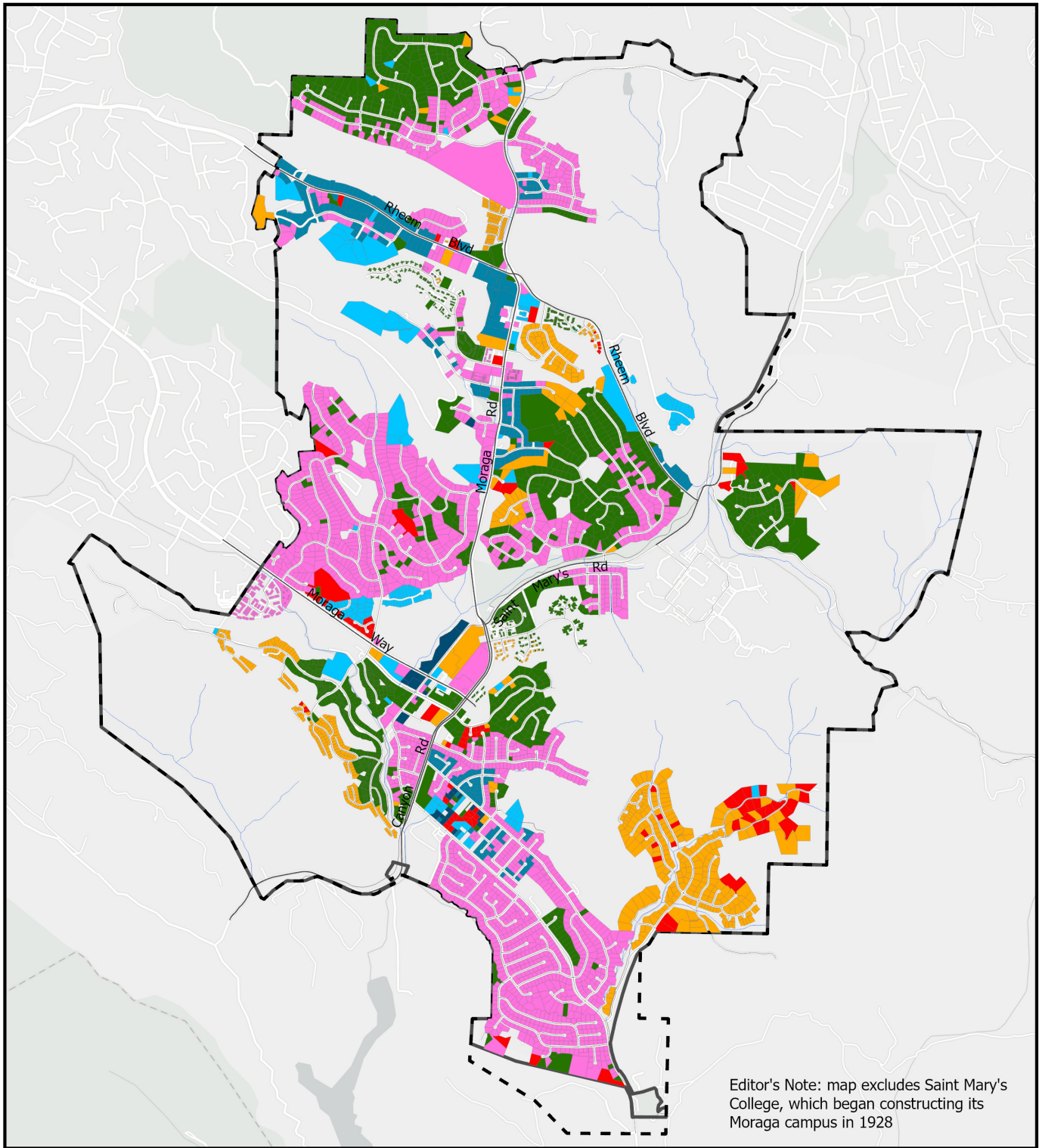
Only 217 homes were built in Moraga between 2000 and 2024, a much slower growth rate than previous decades. Median home prices surged by 122% from 2012 to 2021, creating challenges for Moraga's workforce and first-time homebuyers. Higher prices led to fewer housing options, longer commutes, and increased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



The new homes at Via Moraga replaced a former bowling alley



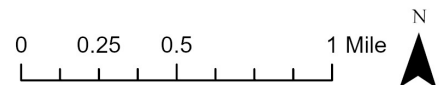
Figure 2.2: Year of Construction



- Town 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



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.

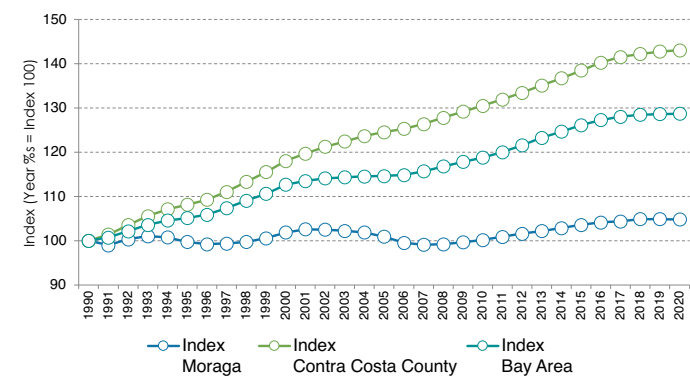
In 2024, the US Census Bureau estimated Moraga’s population at 16,859, a modest increase of 3.3% since 2000. Over the same period, Contra Costa County’s population grew by 20.8%. The Bay Area experienced a 14.5% increase from 2000 to 2020, followed by a slight decline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chart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

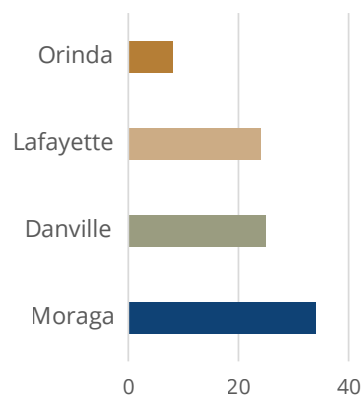
Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey (2018-2022)



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

Due to shifts in the real estate market, new State laws, and local zoning changes, missing middle housing is expected to become more common in the future. Most new construction in the Bay Area over the next 20 years is anticipated to be multi-family, which tends to be more sustainable due to its design, density, and affordability.

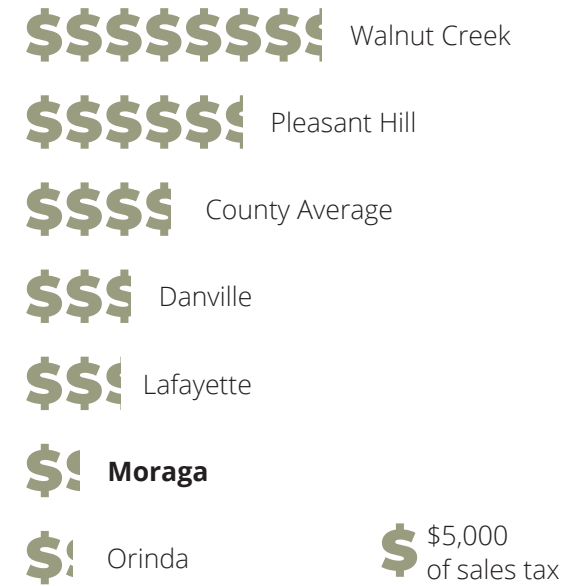
This General Plan places a stronger emphasis on missing middle housing than previous plans, recognizing its role in fostering a well-rounded community.

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.

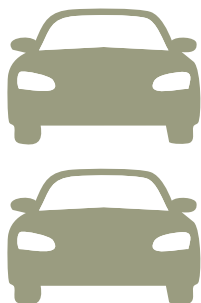
2023 Retail and Food Sales Tax Per Capita



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.



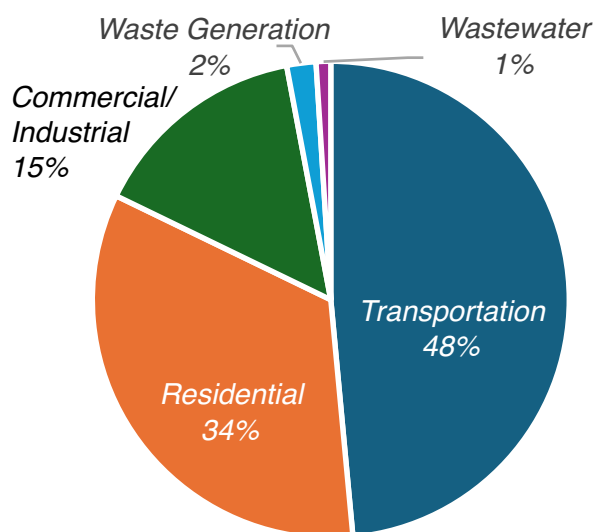
Percentage
of Moraga
households with
two or more cars:
70.0%

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.

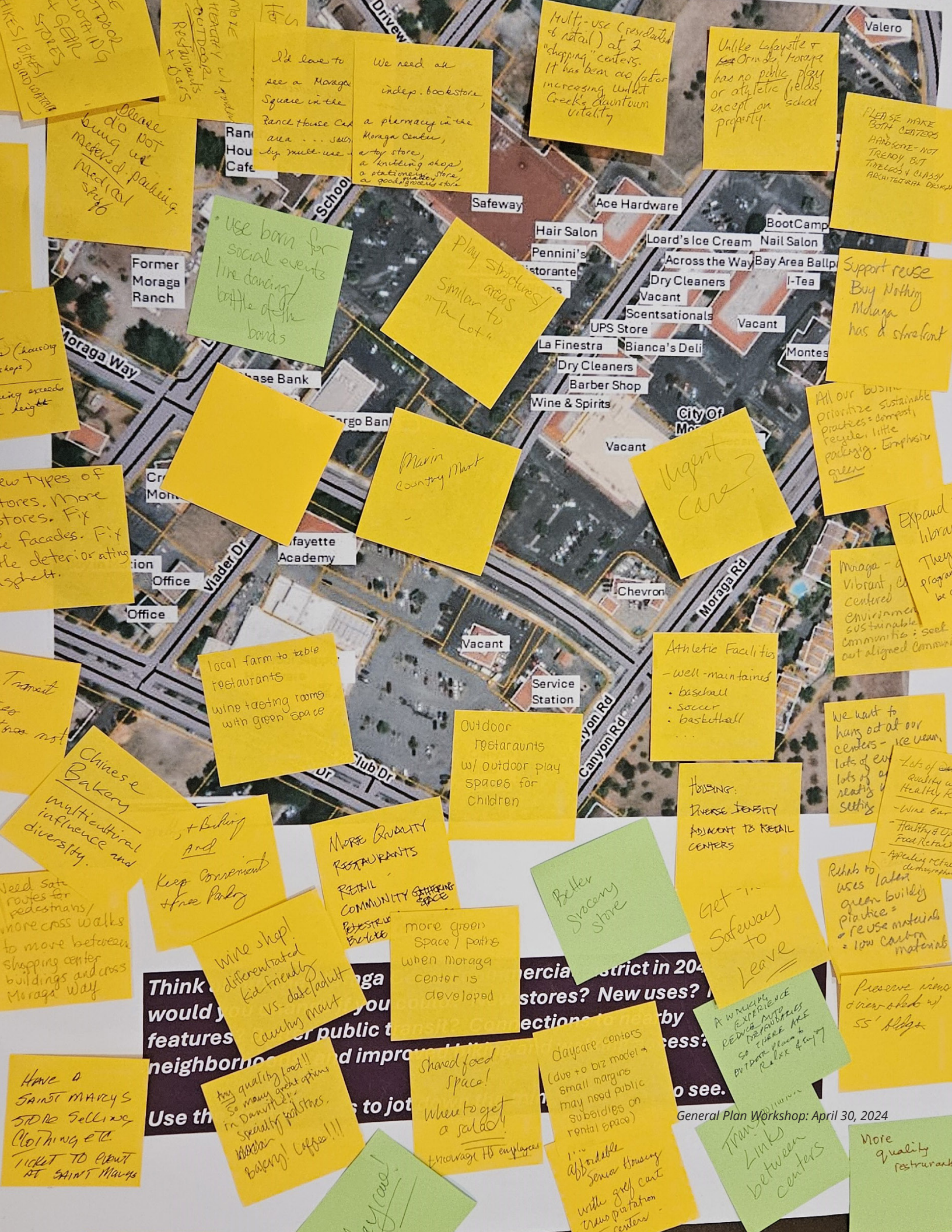
14. MAINTAIN FISCAL STABILITY.

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



Community festival in Commons Park





3

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The General Plan affects the ways we will grow, travel, work, shop, build, and live for the next 15 years. As such, it is an important opportunity to express the Town's commitment to addressing global climate change at the local level. While the State does not require a Sustainability Element in the General Plan, this chapter has been included to underscore the importance of sustainability and resilience as central themes of this document.

In 1987, the United Nations defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Other definitions have followed, with one consistent theme: everything we need for our survival as a species depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. The phenomenon of climate change has made sustainability an urgent priority, compelling us to seek new ways to reduce our impacts on the planet.

Moraga was largely developed during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, an era when the automobile was the dominant form of transportation, gasoline was cheap, roads were uncongested, and climate change was not a concern. Today, the City's land use pattern is dependent on cars and its road system and commercial districts have been designed for driving rather than walking or cycling. The town was also developed before wildfire was a pervasive concern and the risks of living in high fire hazard areas were fully understood.

Making Moraga a more sustainable and resilient community requires policies that touch all elements of this General Plan. The Plan's policies have been structured in ways that conserve the qualities that Moragans love about their town, while making the community safer. This General Plan retains the low densities of Moraga's neighborhoods but places a stronger emphasis on emergency preparedness and defensible space. It also supports higher-density infill development in the town's commercial centers,



recognizing that such land use patterns are more sustainable and ultimately more resilient to climate impacts.

The General Plan recognizes the essential nature of car travel for many Moraga residents, while promoting zero emission vehicles and streets that are safer for walking and bicycling. Its policies emphasize water and energy conservation, a shift to renewable energy, and greater energy independence—all with the goal of reducing our collective carbon footprint.

This Chapter highlights key aspects of sustainability, climate change, and resilience and indicates where they are addressed in this plan. As noted in Chapter 2, relevant policies are noted throughout the document using a leaf (sustainability) icon or a climate (resilience) icon.

3.1 THE CLIMATE IMPERATIVE

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report (2021) concluded that consumption of fossil fuels such as natural gas, coal, and gasoline has substantially increased the level of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Climate models predict that continued increase in GHGs will cause global temperatures to rise by 5 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of this century.

For Moraga, the impacts of warmer temperatures include greater wildfire risks, threats to our water supply, more severe storms and flooding, increased risk of drought, loss of species, and public health hazards. These impacts require that we think about the future differently than we have in the past.

California has been a leader in efforts to address climate change at the state and local levels (see text box). In 2022, the California Air Resources Board released a plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. Achieving this goal is



CLIMATE CHANGE MILESTONES IN CALIFORNIA

Key milestones in the State's climate change response include:

- **Executive Order S-3-05 (2005)**, which established that California would reduce GHG emissions to their 2000 level by 2010, their 1990 level by 2020, and 80 percent below their 1990 level by 2050.
- **Assembly Bill (AB) 32 (2006)**, which instituted a schedule to meet the State's emissions targets, including tracking, reporting, and enforcement.
- **Senate Bill (SB) 97 (2007)**, which amended the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to require greenhouse gas emissions to be addressed during environmental review.
- **SB 375 (2008)**, which required each region of California to adopt a Sustainable Communities Strategy, and then tie State transportation funds to projects that help implement that strategy.
- **SB 350 (2015)**, which aimed to double energy efficiency in buildings and increase the renewable energy portfolio to 50% by 2030.
- **SB 100 (2018)**, which set a target for California to achieve 100% carbon-free electricity by 2045.



dependent on the collective actions of California’s local governments, as well as the private sector. The State has encouraged local governments to adopt Climate Action Plans identifying strategies to reduce GHG emissions at the local level.

Moraga completed a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2014. It included a goal of reducing GHG emissions by at least 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. The 2014 CAP’s planning horizon has passed, and new targets should be set. The 2040 General Plan supports updating the 2014 Plan, followed by regular reporting on progress and periodic major updates.

3.2 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIES IN GENERAL PLAN 2040

FOCUSING OUR GROWTH

This General Plan focuses Moraga’s growth in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park commercial districts. It allows residential densities of 24 units per acre in these two areas, which will enable a more diverse mix of new housing than the town has seen in the past four decades. The General Plan also encourages new commercial development in these two areas, including retail, office, and hospitality development. It also supports civic amenities and public spaces that allow these areas to evolve into walkable mixed-use “villages.”

This form of development is more sustainable than low-density residential development and car-focused shopping centers. It uses energy more efficiently, reduces land consumption, improves access to public transportation, and enables more daily trips to be completed without driving long distances. Per capita carbon emissions are as much as three times lower in denser mixed-use areas than they are in low-density

residential areas. Living near everyday goods and services, such as restaurants and grocery stores, makes walking easier and more convenient. Mixed use neighborhoods are designed to be walkable, with sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, and architecture that encourages safe pedestrian movement.

Focusing Moraga’s growth in its two commercial districts is not a new concept; it was also advocated by the Town’s 2002 General Plan. The 2040 General Plan takes prior plans a step further, recognizing the link between compact growth and greenhouse gas reduction. Multi-family apartments and townhomes represented 33 percent of Moraga’s housing units in 2024. By contrast, approximately 62 percent of the housing capacity identified in General Plan 2040 is on multi-family and mixed-use zoned sites. This will result in a higher overall share of medium to high density units in the future. Some of the new development will serve Moraga workers, college students, and others who currently face long commutes to Moraga each day.

Policies to reduce GHG emissions through focused and compact growth

- Policy LU-1.1: Directing Growth
- Policy LU-1.2: Sustainable Development
- Policy LU-4.3: Higher Density Residential Uses
- Policy LU-4.4: Residential Densities in Moraga Center and Rheem Park
- Policy LU-4.10: Sustainable Commercial Development
- Policy CD-1.3: Location of New Development
- Policy CD-4.6: New Multi-family Development
- Policy CD-5.3: Pedestrian-Oriented
- Policy CD-5.9: Connecting Activity Centers
- Policy CD-7.1: Walkability
- Policy CD-7.2: Mixed Use Development
- Policy H-1.4: Infill Housing
- Policy EV-1.8: Workforce Housing
- Policy OSP-1.5: Transfer of Development Rights



GREENER TRANSPORTATION

Transportation accounts for roughly half of Moraga’s GHG emissions. Reducing these emissions requires a multi-pronged strategy that reduces the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by Moraga residents and workers while also reducing dependence on fossil fuels for transportation. The General Plan Transportation Element focuses on both of these objectives, while improving transportation safety and managing congestion.

Policies in the 2040 General Plan emphasize the concept of “complete streets.” This concept recognizes that roads should be designed for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as cars. In some cases, this might mean adding bike lanes and sidewalks where none exist today. Improving the pedestrian and bicycle network is a critical focus of this Plan. While many Moraga residents walk or bicycle for recreation and fitness, only six percent walked or bicycled to work in 2024. The General Plan aims to make “active” transportation a more viable alternative to driving for many trips, recognizing the environmental and health benefits.

The General Plan also seeks to improve transit service to Moraga, which is currently very limited. Although transit operations are beyond the Town’s control, increasing population density in the two commercial areas can make increased service more viable. Policies in the Plan also aim to reduce VMT by improving retail, entertainment, and restaurant choices in Moraga’s commercial districts, making it less necessary to drive out of town for basic goods and services. Another key strategy for reducing VMT is to support programs such as ridesharing, vanpooling, telecommuting, and flextime.

Reducing dependency on gasoline-powered motor vehicles and trucks requires a different set of strategies. To some extent, this will be guided by State requirements, including an Executive Order to phase out the sale of new gas-powered

cars by 2035. Likewise, the California Building Standards Code already requires certain types of new development to include parking spaces outfitted for zero-emission vehicles. The Town can support such efforts by switching its own fleet to zero- emission vehicles and encouraging infrastructure for such vehicles in key locations. Another local strategy for reducing emissions is to reduce vehicle idling by installing “smart” traffic signals and other technologies that allow the local road system to operate more efficiently.

Policies to reduce GHG emissions through greener transportation

- Goal T-2 strives for a more sustainable transportation system. Policies T-2.1 through T-2.8 outline how this goal will be achieved, including reducing VMT and increasing zero emission vehicle use.
- Goal T-3 relates to “complete streets” that support all modes of travel. Policies T-3.1 through T-3.6 outline how this goal will be achieved.
- Policy T-4.3: Smart Signals
- Policies T-5.1 through T-5.7: Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation and Safety
- Policies T-5.8 through T-5.11: Transit Improvements
- Policy EV-4.5: Bicycle and Pedestrian Access to Commercial Centers
- Policy CON-3.5: Transportation control measures (TCM) to improve air quality
- Policy CON-6.4: Transportation focus of GHG programs
- Policy G-2.4: Regional Transportation Sustainability Focus



GREEN BUILDINGS AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE SITE PLANS

Green buildings are structures designed and constructed to minimize their environmental impact while enhancing the health and well-being of their occupants. Sustainable materials, such as recycled products, are commonly used, along with water-saving fixtures and renewable energy sources. Indoor environmental quality is also prioritized, with the use of non-toxic materials, good ventilation, and natural lighting. Various certification programs, such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) evaluate and recognize these practices. The benefits of green buildings extend beyond environmental protection and also include reduced utility costs and healthier living spaces.

The concept of “green building” can be extended beyond structures and also applied to site planning and subdivision design. The 2040 General Plan includes policies to preserve biodiversity and open space, minimize tree removal, and protect natural habitat. For many years, Moraga has emphasized clustering the allowable number of units on a site in ways that enabled most of the site to be retained as open space. This can improve architectural quality, reduce grading and site disturbance, and conserve important natural resources. The Town also supports density transfers and transfer of development rights to reduce environmental impacts.

Policies to reduce GHG emissions through green buildings

- Policy LU-1.9: Clustering
- Policy OSP-1.5: Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
- Policy CD-1.4: Site Planning, Building Design, and Landscaping
- Policy CD-7.3: Resource Efficiency in Site Development
- Policy CD-7.4: Green Building
- Policy CD-7.5: Sustainable Building Materials
- Policy CD-7.6: Landscaping
- Policy CD-7.7: Cool Roofs and Pavement
- Policy H-5.1: Environmental Sustainability (in Housing)
- Policy CON-3.1: Development Design (to improve air quality)
- Policy CON-3.4: Buffering along Major Roadways
- Policy CON-3.6: Indoor Air Quality

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Moraga’s residential and commercial buildings collectively generate almost the same volume of GHG emissions as the transportation sector. These emissions are primarily the result of electricity and natural gas use. Most of the building stock in the town was built prior to modern energy efficiency standards and many homes are still dependent on fossil fuels.

California implements various building standards to conserve energy, primarily through CALGreen and Title 24. As discussed in the Conservation Element of this Plan, the latest building codes mandate that new residential buildings achieve Net Zero Energy (NZE) by 2020 and commercial buildings by 2030. This includes regulations on energy use related to building envelopes, mechanical systems, and lighting. The General Plan encourages sustainable building



practices aligned with CALGreen codes, resulting in lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

Conservation Element Goal CON-5 is to promote energy conservation, fossil-free energy generation, and greater energy security. The General Plan includes a set of policies supporting this goal, including weatherization of existing development, enforcement of State energy efficiency building standards, and promotion of renewable energy for building heating, cooling, and power. The Plan supports energy independence through such measures as microgrids and home photovoltaic systems with battery storage.

Policies to reduce GHG emissions through energy strategies

- Policy CON-5.1: Energy Conservation
- Policy CON-5.2: Energy Efficiency Standards
- Policy CON-5.3: Renewable Energy
- Policy CON-5.4: Energy Innovation
- Policy CON-5.5: Decarbonization
- Policy CON-6.3: Leading by Example
- Policy CON-6.5: Buildings and GHG Emissions

WATER CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENCY

Fresh water is a limited commodity in California and will become scarcer in the future due to climate change. Policies supporting water conservation are included in the Conservation Element (Goal CON-2). Much of Moraga's water consumption is associated with landscape irrigation. As such, the General Plan strongly supports water-efficient landscaping (Community Design Element) and the future use of recycled water to meet the town's water demand (Conservation Element). More judicious use of water can also reduce electricity use associated with pumping, treatment and transport. This supports GHG reduction goals and avoids water waste.

Policies to reduce GHG emissions through water conservation

- Policy CON-2.8: Water Conservation
- Policy CON-2.9: Reclaimed Water
- Policy CON-2.10: EBMUD Lands
- Policy CD-7.6: Landscaping
- Policy S-3.5: Fire Flows

WASTE REDUCTION

Landfills are a source of methane, a greenhouse gas that is 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide in terms of its heat-trapping effects. Waste reduction and recycling can extend landfill capacity and reduce the amount of methane that would otherwise be generated. Waste reduction also conserves natural resources. Like other Bay Area cities and Towns, Moraga is working to increase its waste diversion rate and support new and expanded programs such as commercial food waste recycling and construction debris recycling.

Policies supporting improvements to solid waste management are included in the Conservation Element (Goal CON-4). In addition, the Safety and Resilience Element addresses the safe disposal of hazardous materials, including household hazardous waste. Together, these goals and policies support improved environmental quality, less waste, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Policies to reduce GHG emissions through waste reduction

- Policy CON-4.1: Waste Reduction
- Policy CON-4. 2: Expanded Participation in Recycling/ Composting
- Policy CON-4.3: Special Waste Pickup
- Policy CON-4.4: Source Reduction
- Policy CON-4.5: Construction and Demolition Debris



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Moraga’s open spaces effectively serve as “green infrastructure” and mitigate some of the impacts of climate change. In particular, riparian zones—the wooded areas along creeks and streams—can filter and slow down stormwater runoff. The town’s trees sequester carbon emissions, while also reducing the heat island effects of urban development. Its gardens and landscaping can provide pollen and nectar for butterflies and pollinating insects.

The town’s open space networks provide migratory corridors for wildlife and sustain biologic resources. Ultimately, green infrastructure provides an ecological framework that supports the health of the town and its surroundings.

The Land Use, Community Design, and Open Space and Parks Elements of this General Plan all support the maintenance of the Town’s open space networks, including the natural functions of drainage ways and creeks. Within developed areas, the Plan supports the use of permeable pavement, rain gardens, and other natural approaches to managing stormwater. The Plan supports the concept of “Low Impact Development,” which aims to manage stormwater flows by incorporating it into the environment and reducing excessive runoff to storm drains. This can reduce flooding and erosion and also help improve water quality. The General Plan also supports tree preservation and planting, recognizing the value of Moraga’s “urban forest” to improving air and water quality.

Policies to reduce GHG emissions through green infrastructure

- Policy CON-1.3 and 1.4: Creek Protection
- Policy CON-1.5: Wildlife Corridors
- Policy CON-1.8: Woodland Areas
- Policy CON-1.9: Tree Preservation
- Policy CON-1.10: Urban Forest
- Policy CON-2.2: Stormwater
- Policy CON-2.3: Urban Runoff
- Policy CON-2.7: Low Impact Development
- Policy CON-6.8: Green Infrastructure
- Policy S-5.3: Flood Mitigation
- Policy S-7.1: Climate Informed Decision-Making
- Policy S-7.5: Nature-Based Resilience
- Policy S-7.8: Urban Heat Islands



MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

Local governments play an important role in achieving the emission reduction goals for their communities. Although municipal operations account for a small total of GHG emissions, local governments can lead by example and implement practices that can be emulated by residents and businesses. Moraga has taken important steps in recent years related to energy procurement, waste reduction, and renewable energy generation facilities. The General Plan supports continued movement in this direction.

Goal CON-6 establishes policies that incorporate climate change as a planning consideration, support regional partnerships to address GHG reduction, promote climate education and awareness, and recognize green businesses. The Plan supports further collaborations with agencies and community-based organizations that promote and advocate for sustainability and resilience.

Policies to reduce GHG emissions through municipal operations

- Policy CON-6.1: Climate Action Strategies
- Policy CON-6.2: Climate Change as a Planning Consideration
- Policy CON-6.3: Leading by Example
- Policy CON-6.6: Regional Partnerships
- Policy CON-6.7: Climate Change Education and Awareness
- Policy CON-6.9: Green Business
- Policy G-2.4: Sustainability Focus

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Moraga's success in reaching its climate goals hinges on the strength of the local economy. When local goods and services are readily available, residents don't have to drive as far, which helps reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Similarly, the availability of workforce and student housing in Moraga influences how far workers and students must commute, further affecting GHG emissions. Sustainability is an economic issue as well as an environmental one.

The Land Use, Housing, and Economic Vitality Elements of this General Plan address this issue. Ultimately, economic sustainability supports Moraga's fiscal sustainability, which is essential to implement the programs, capital improvements, and private investments envisioned by this General Plan. Growth and development will be required to maintain the quality of services residents desire—and to attain the climate targets adopted by the State.

Policies to reduce GHG emissions through economic development

- Goal LU-1: Balanced Community
- Policy LU-4.10: Sustainable Commercial Development
- Policy EV-1.7: Shop Local Initiatives
- Policy EV-2.2: Reducing Retail Leakage
- Policy EV-4.1: Upgrading the Centers
- Policy EV-4.3: Mixed Use Development
- Policy EV-4.6: Infrastructure
- Policy EV-5.1: Revenue Generating Uses
- Policy H-1.4: Infill Housing
- Policy H-2.1: Housing Variety
- Policy H-2.3: Affordable and Workforce Housing
- Policy H-2.6: Missing Middle Housing



3.3 SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Sustainability and resilience both support the long-term ecological and social health of the community. While sustainability emphasizes responsible resource use and environmental protection, resilience refers to the ability of communities to withstand and recover from the impacts of natural disasters and long-term stressors. Resilience can support sustainability by ensuring that systems can endure future challenges.

Just as the General Plan provides a framework for a more sustainable Moraga, it also provides a framework for a more resilient Moraga. Resilience is a guiding principle of this Plan, and the focus of the Safety and Resilience Element (Chapter 11). The concept of resilience shapes the Town's land use and transportation plans, its infrastructure investments, and its emergency preparedness and evacuation strategies.





Looking northwest along Cypress Point Way

4

LAND USE ELEMENT

The Land Use Element sets the direction for Moraga's future growth and built environment. The Element includes the Town's General Plan Map, which defines allowable land uses throughout the town along with standards for the density or intensity of development. It includes Moraga's policies for residential, commercial, civic, and open space uses. These policies provide direction on how Moraga will maintain its outstanding neighborhoods, strengthen its commercial centers, add new housing, and preserve its magnificent natural setting.

Requirements for the Land Use Element are established by California Government Code Section 65302(a). The Element must "designate the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, greenways, and other categories of public and private uses of land." Policies in this element must be carefully coordinated with policies relating to housing, community design, transportation, open space, safety, and economic vitality to ensure internal consistency.



4.1 EXISTING LAND USES

Figure 4.1 shows existing land uses in Moraga. Moraga is characterized by a mix of single-family residential neighborhoods and open spaces, with two commercial centers and multiple civic and institutional uses. The Town's land use pattern is shaped by its topography, with development generally following valleys and extending up the slopes of hillsides in some locations.

Table 4-1 summarizes the acreage in each land use based on tax assessor data and field surveys completed as part of the General Plan Update. The table includes the entire Planning Area, including the unincorporated Sphere of Influence. The Planning Area is 6,185 acres.

As indicated in the table, open space is currently the largest single use in the town, representing 45 percent of Moraga's acreage. Residential uses occupy about 33 percent of Moraga's acreage, while commercial uses occupy just under 2 percent. Other uses, such as Town facilities, schools, Saint Mary's College, and churches, represent about 11 percent of the town's area. About 9 percent of Moraga's land area is dedicated to street right-of-way. The town has no industrial land.

Most of Moraga's open space is in private ownership. The Planning Area includes more than 1,800 acres of ranchland, orchards, vineyards, undeveloped woodland, and grasslands, much of it on hillsides. Moraga also includes a substantial amount of "common" open space within subdivisions and planned developments, some of which is improved (e.g., golf courses, landscaping, etc.) and some of which is left in its natural state. There are also over 500 acres of public open space in Moraga, including Town-owned properties and land owned by East Bay Regional Park District.



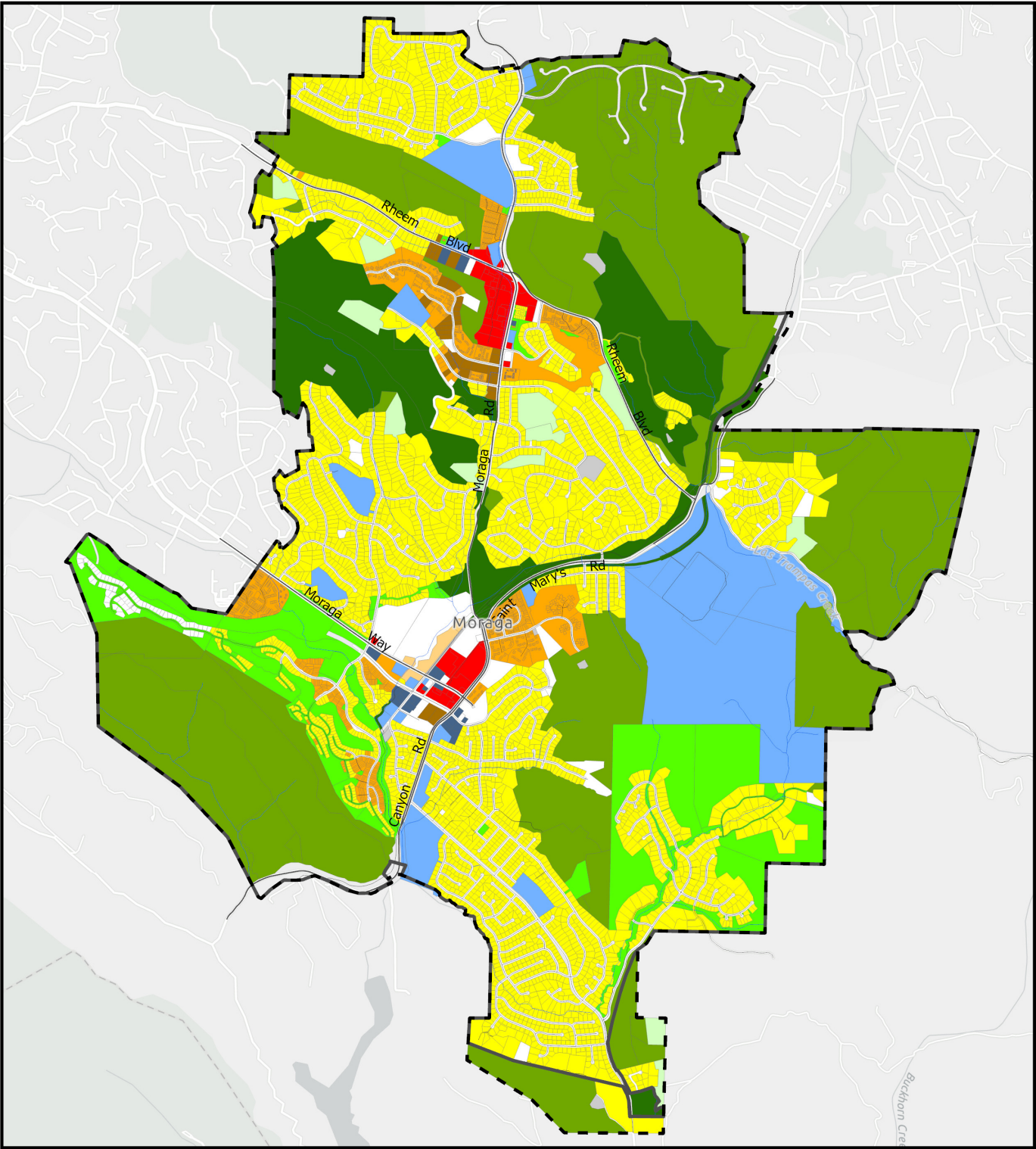
Moraga's "Semi-Rural" Character

Since its incorporation, preserving Moraga's "semi-rural character" has been a Town priority. The following attributes contribute to this character:

- 1. Open Space.** More than 45 percent of Moraga's land area is designated as open space, distributed across the entire community.
- 2. Single Family Residential Neighborhoods.** More than 32 percent of Moraga's land area is designated for low-density single family residential neighborhoods.
- 3. Village Centers.** Commercial uses in Moraga are concentrated in two central locations. These locations effectively serve as village centers, with the potential to become more walkable and vibrant through infill development.
- 4. Scenic Views.** Open hillsides and ridgelines throughout the community add to the town's overall character.
- 5. Agricultural Heritage.** The town's agricultural heritage (including but not limited to cattle ranches, pear and walnut orchards, and vineyards) remains an important part of the Moraga community.
- 6. Sense of Community.** Moraga's convenient location, abundance of open space, highly desirable educational institutions, and access to urban amenities and transportation options, provide a strong sense of community and a high quality of life.



Figure 4.1: Existing Land Use (2023)



- | | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Town Limits | General Commercial | Common Open Space/
Private Recreation | Legacy Commercial
Agriculture |
| Sphere of Influence | Office | Agriculture/Rangeland | |
| Streams | Single Family (Detached
Housing) | Public Open Space/
Parkland | |
| Streets | Single Family (Attached/
Townhomes) | Public Facility/
Institutional/Religious | |
| | Multi-Family Housing | Utility | |
| | Rural Residential (5
acres or more) | Vacant | |

Town of Moraga, California
General Plan Update

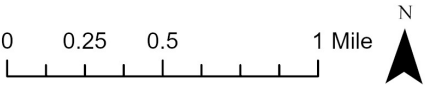


Table 4-1: Existing Land Use Acreage in Moraga, 2024¹

Land Use	# of Parcels	Acres	Percent of Total Acreage
Residential	5,536	2,016.2	32.6%
<i>Rural (5 acres+)</i>	(10)	(80.8)	(1.3%)
<i>Single-family Detached</i>	(3,996)	(1684.3)	(27.2%)
<i>Single-family Attached</i>	(1,490)	(222.3)	(3.6%)
<i>Multi-Family</i>	(40)	(28.8)	(0.5%)
Commercial	77	108.0	1.7%
<i>General</i>	(47)	(80.8)	(1.3%)
<i>Office</i>	(26)	(16.9)	(0.3%)
<i>Legacy Commercial Ag</i>	(4)	(10.3)	(0.2%)
Open Space	373	2,824.3	45.7%
<i>Agriculture/ Rangeland</i>	(178)	(1842.4)	(29.8%)
<i>Public Open Space/Parks</i>	(32)	(509.1)	(8.2%)
<i>Common Open Space</i>	(163)	(472.8)	(7.6%)
Other	151	679.8	11.0%
<i>Public Facility/Institutional</i>	(31)	(517.2)	(8.4%)
<i>Utility</i>	(15)	(13.7)	(0.2%)
<i>Vacant</i>	(105)	(148.9)	(2.4%)
Transportation Rights-of-Way	N/A	556.7	9.0%
TOTAL	6,137	6,185.0	100.0%

Source: Barry Miller Consulting, Town of Moraga, 2024

¹ Each parcel in Moraga is assigned a two-digit “use code” by the Contra Costa County Assessor’s Office based on its existing use. This table summarizes that data using traditional urban planning classifications.

Moraga’s residential land uses are distributed throughout the town and include a mix of housing types and densities. There are just over 2,000 acres of existing residential land use in Moraga. About 88 percent of this acreage is single-family detached housing, with a total of almost 4,000 housing units. The remaining 12 percent (250 acres) supports another 1,900 units, consisting primarily of townhomes and multi-family apartments and condominiums.

Figure 4.2 shows Moraga’s residential parcels by size, using tax assessor records for all parcels recorded as developed with single-family residential use. The map excludes townhomes and attached housing types. It uses different

colors to show parcels that are less than 0.25 acres, 0.25 to 0.5 acres, 0.5 to 1 acre, 1-5 acres, and larger than 5 acres. The mapped information on **Figure 4.2** is summarized in Chart 4-1.

Moraga’s residential densities are lower than most Bay Area communities. The median single-family lot size in the town is 14,860 square feet (about 1/3 of an acre). There are some neighborhoods where prevailing lot sizes are smaller, including the Larch area southeast of Moraga Center and the Moraga Country Club. There are also areas like Sanders Ranch and The Bluffs, where the prevailing lot sizes are larger.



Figure 4.2: Existing Single-family Parcel Sizes

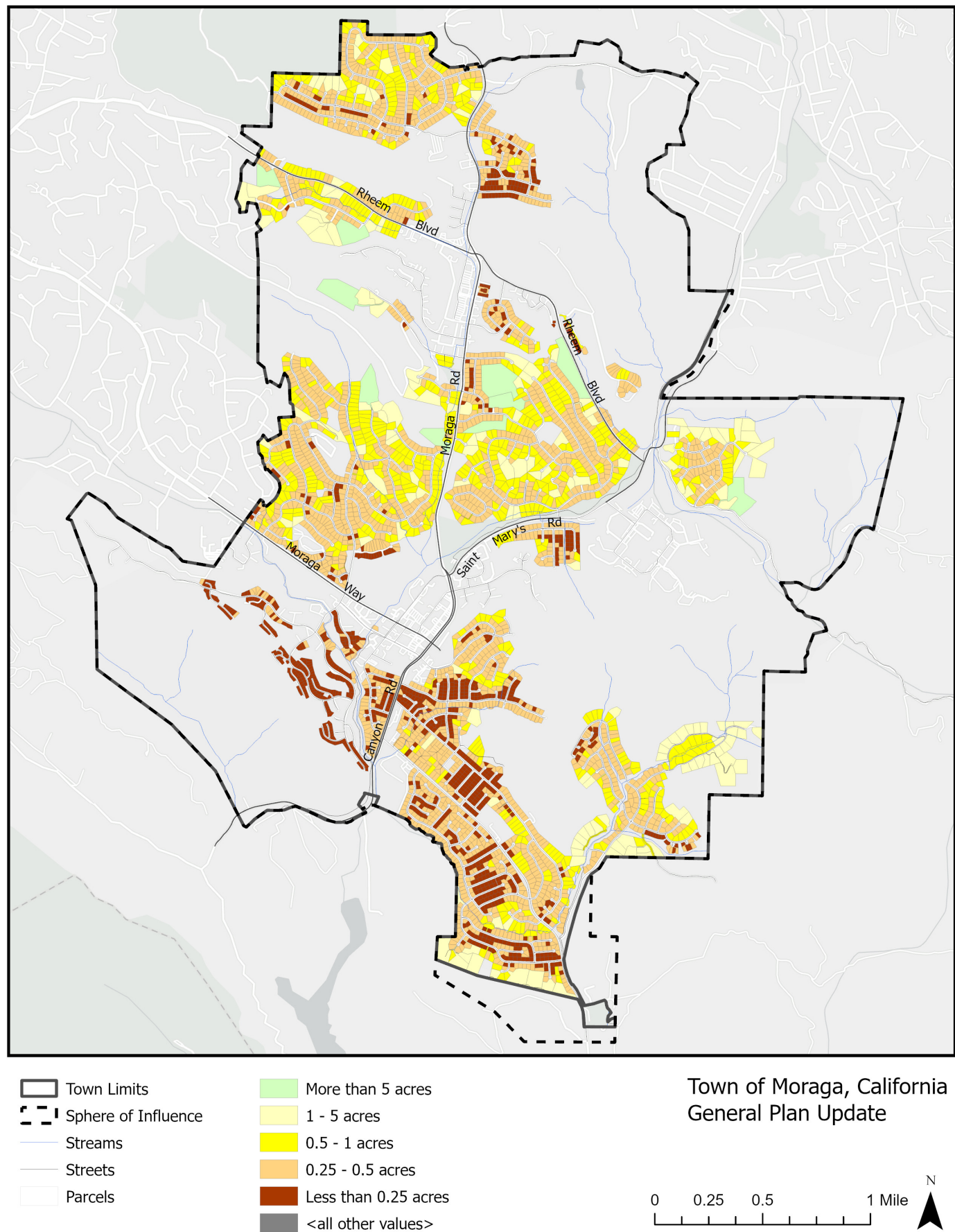
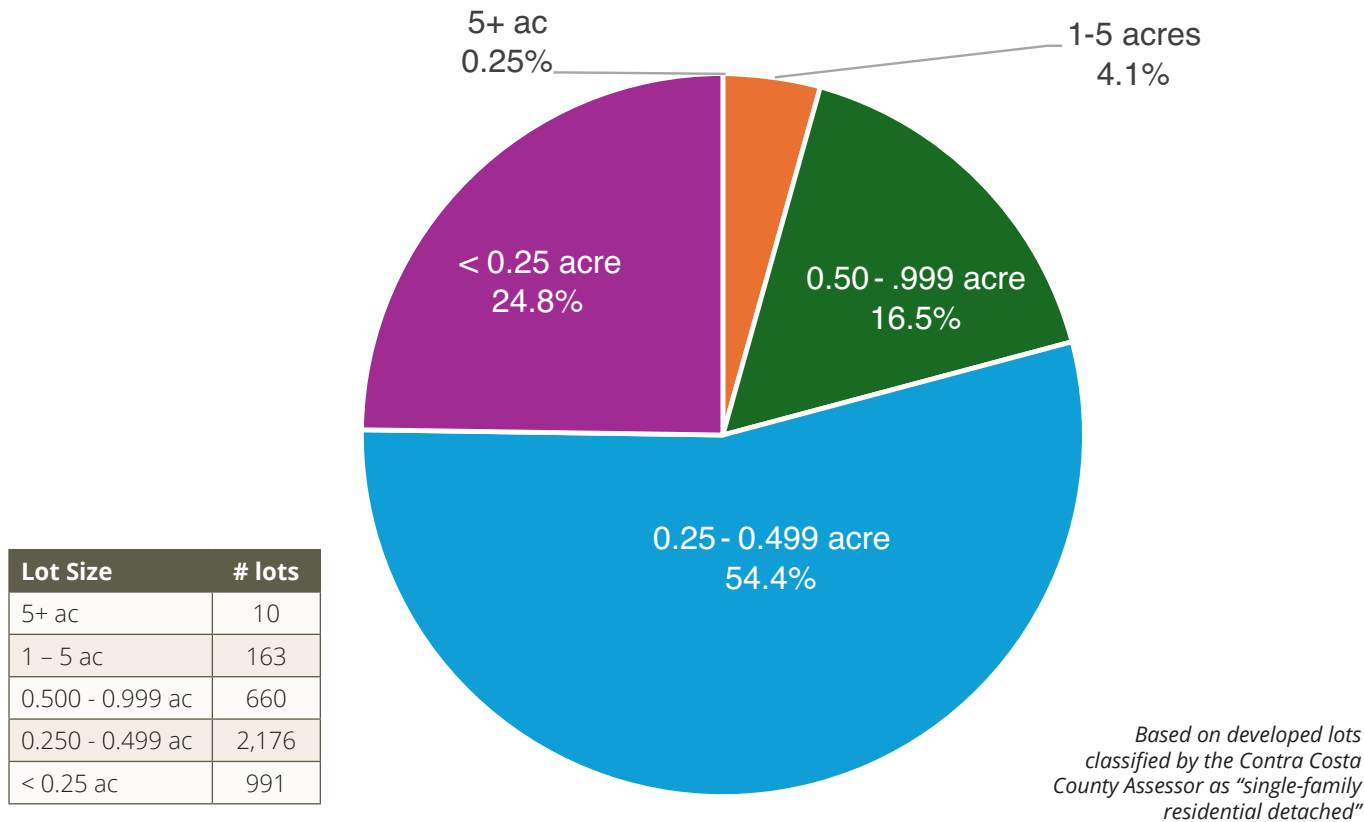


Chart 4-1: Existing Single-Family Lot Sizes In Moraga



The distribution of lot sizes is important, as it shapes the designations on the General Plan Map. Historically, Moraga has had three single-family General Plan categories, corresponding to residential densities of one unit per acre, two units per acre, and three units per acre. Moraga’s multi-family districts historically have been assigned a maximum density of six units per acre. These are considered “gross” densities, meaning that they include areas set aside for streets and common space. “Net” densities are higher and reflect pre-incorporation approvals.

There are 108 acres of developed commercial land use in Moraga. This includes 81 acres of general commercial land, 17 acres of office, and 10 acres of legacy commercial agriculture. Commercial land includes retail, restaurant, and gas station/ auto repair uses, among others. These uses are clustered in and around the Moraga Center and Rheem Valley Shopping

Centers. Office uses primarily consist of small professional and medical office buildings constructed in the 1970s and 80s, also in the Moraga Center and Rheem Valley areas.

Saint Mary’s College is the largest institutional use in Moraga, occupying 420 acres along Saint Mary’s Road. Other larger public uses include Campolindo High School, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, and three elementary schools. Public uses also include the library, fire stations, and Town offices. Utility-owned properties in the town include EBMUD water tanks, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District facilities, and PG&E properties.

About 2.4 percent, or 149 acres, of Moraga is classified by the tax assessor as “vacant.” This includes land that is zoned for development but not currently developed. Most of this acreage has been identified for future housing.



4.2 GENERAL PLAN MAP AND CATEGORIES

Figure 4.3 is the Moraga General Plan Map. The Map defines the general pattern of future development within the Town of Moraga and its Sphere of Influence. It shows the pattern of land uses envisioned in the horizon year of the Plan (2040) and is a graphic expression of the General Plan's goals and policies. The Map identifies areas planned for residential, mixed-use, open space, and community facility uses. Because Moraga is mostly built out, the future land use pattern matches existing land uses in most locations.

The General Plan Map is implemented through zoning. Zoning maps are required to be consistent with General Plan Maps, but they do not need to match them exactly. For Moraga's Rural, Low, and Medium Density residential categories, there is a one-to-one correspondence between General Plan categories and zoning designations. For the Moraga Center and Rheem Park General Plan categories, there are multiple zoning districts within each area. The General Plan categories for Open Space and Community Facilities likewise have multiple corresponding zoning districts, designed to implement local land use policies.

The categories that appear on the General Plan Map are defined on the following pages. The colored boxes indicate the map colors used to show each category.

RESIDENTIAL CATEGORIES

In all residentially designated areas, the following general conditions apply:

1. Residential density is expressed using gross acreage. In other words, it includes areas required for local streets, easements, and other public uses. By contrast, zoning is based on net density and excludes these areas. For example, the allowable density in the 1 DUA General Plan designation is 1 unit per acre (43,560 square feet). However, the minimum lot size (codified through zoning) is 30,000 square feet. This recognizes that there are streets and other non-buildable features within each area depicted on the General Plan Map.
2. The maximum density stated in each case is subject to State density bonus laws. These laws allow an increase in the number of permitted units for projects meeting specific criteria with respect to the inclusion of affordable housing units.
3. Pursuant to state law, accessory dwelling units do not count as a dwelling unit when calculating the number of units permitted on a property under the General Plan.
4. The Town's policies and zoning regulations support the clustering of allowable units to achieve more cohesive design, increase efficiency, and reduce environmental impacts. Policies in this Element establish the requirements for clustering, including allowable lot sizes.
5. Other compatible uses, such as schools, childcare centers, parks, and religious facilities, may also locate in areas with residential designations. The zoning ordinance indicates which uses are permitted by right and which uses require a conditional use permit.
6. To translate the density standard to a population standard (e.g., number of persons per acre), the unit/acre range should be multiplied by 2.59, which is the average number of persons per household in Moraga.
7. High-density residential development is permitted in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park categories and is not included in the residential categories below.



The residential land use designations, and corresponding map colors, are as follows:

Rural Residential (RR).

This designation allows agricultural and very low-density single-family residential uses, not to exceed a gross density of one unit per five acres. Although very low-density housing is permitted in these areas, the focus is on preservation of the natural environment.

Low Density Residential (LDR).

This encompasses low-density single-family residential neighborhoods and areas suitable for future low-density single-family residential development. There are four General Plan designations within this category, each corresponding to different maximum densities. Each of the four categories below has its own corresponding zoning district.

1 Unit/ Acre (1 DUA).

Areas with this designation have a maximum gross density of one dwelling unit per acre. The corresponding zoning district is 1 DUA, which has a minimum lot size requirement of 30,000 square feet.

1.5 Dwelling Unit/Acre (1.5 DUA).

Areas with this designation have a maximum gross density of 1.5 dwelling units per acre. The corresponding zoning density is 2 DUA, with a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. The slightly higher zoning densities permitted in this category relative to the General Plan are intended to encourage clustering of the allowable number of units. The total number of units in any area with this designation may not exceed the General Plan maximum.

2 Dwelling Units/Acre (2 DUA).

Areas with this designation have a maximum gross density of 2 units per acre. The corresponding zoning density is 2 DUA, with a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet.

3 Dwelling Units/Acre (3 DUA).

Areas with this designation have a maximum gross density of 3 units per acre. The corresponding zoning density is 3 DUA, with a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet.

Medium Density Residential (MDR).

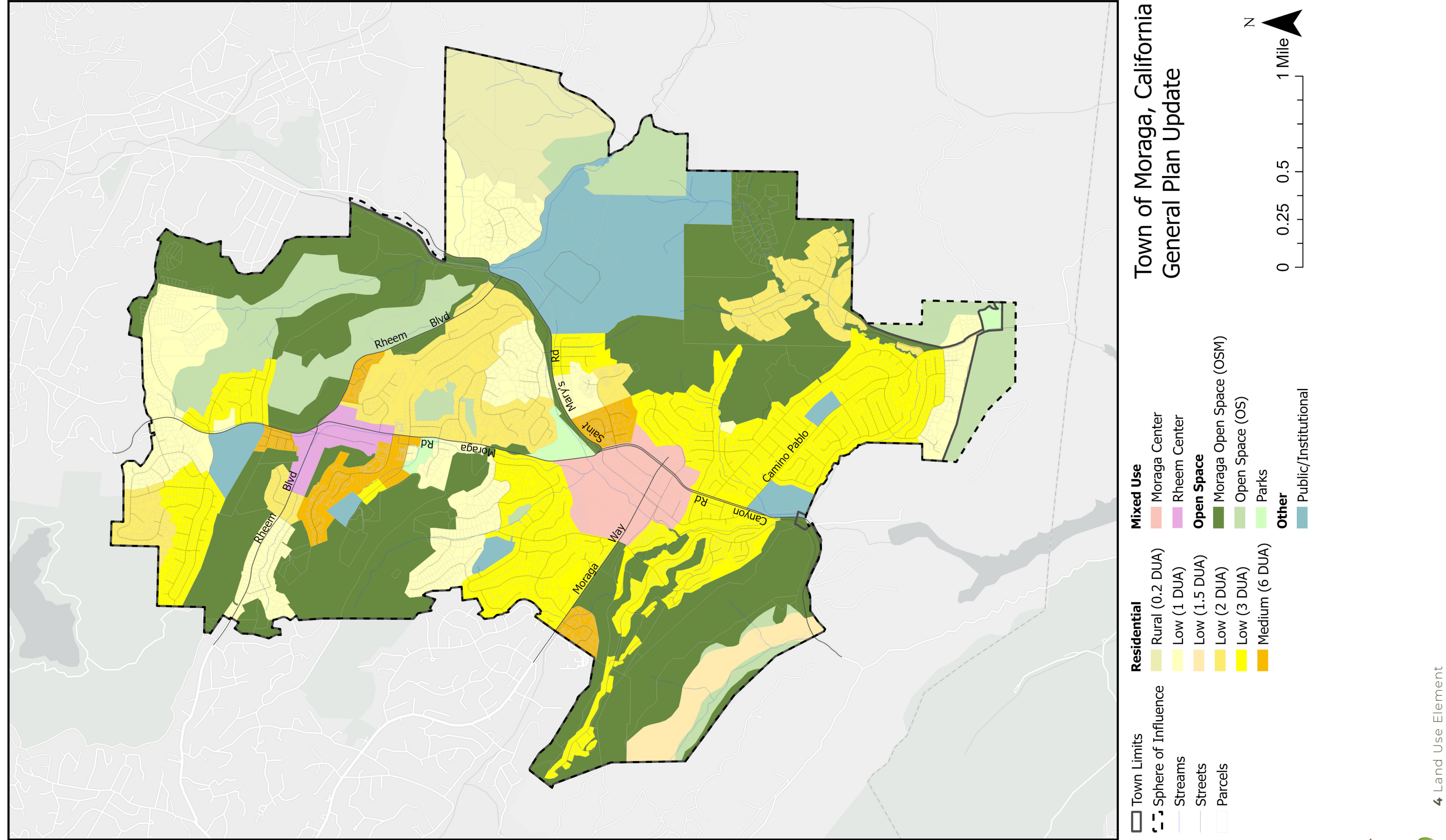
This designation applies to areas that include a mix of housing types, including single-family detached and attached housing, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and multi-family housing. The maximum gross density permitted is 6 units per gross acre. This designation may include housing that exceeds this density within larger developments that include a mix of open space and developed areas.



Example of Medium Density Residential development in Moraga



Figure 4.3: General Plan Diagram





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MIXED-USE CATEGORIES

There are two mixed-use designations on the General Plan Map, both described below and noted on the Map with the colors below.

Moraga Center (MC).

This designation applies to the 187-acre Moraga Center Specific Plan Area. The Area is envisioned as a vibrant and walkable mixed-use center, including residential, commercial, and office uses, as well as open space and community facilities. Land use in this area is governed by a Specific Plan, including zoning districts corresponding to low, medium, and high-density residential development, mixed office-residential development, mixed retail-residential development, and community commercial development. Maximum density in the MC area is 24 units per gross acre, although this density is not permitted on all sites.² Maximum FAR for non-residential uses is 0.85.

Rheem Park (RP).

This designation applies to the 60-acre commercial area generally lying south and west of the intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road. The area includes the Rheem Shopping Center and Theater, offices, housing, and commercial uses. There are multiple zoning districts, intended to facilitate infill development with mixed-use, higher density housing (up to 24 units per gross acre), and commercial and civic uses.² Maximum FAR for non-residential uses is 0.85.

OPEN SPACE AND CIVIC CATEGORIES

There are four open space and civic designations on the General Plan Land Use Map. These are defined below and noted on the Map with the colors below:

MOSO Open Space (OS-M).

This designation applies to properties that are specifically identified by the Moraga Open Space Ordinance approved by Moraga voters in 1986. The primary intent of this designation is to conserve environmentally sensitive lands and protect the visual integrity of ridgelines and hillsides. On privately owned land with this designation, residential uses and civic and recreational facilities may be considered with a conditional use permit, subject to maximum gross densities of one unit per 5, 10, or 20 acres, depending on site conditions.

Non-MOSO Open Space (OS-N).

This designation applies to open space properties that are not specifically listed in the 1986 Moraga Open Space Ordinance. As with OS-M lands, the primary intent is to conserve environmentally sensitive lands and protect the visual integrity of ridgelines and hillsides. Residential uses and civic and recreational facilities may be considered with a conditional use permit, subject to maximum gross densities of one unit per 5, 10, or 20 acres depending on site conditions.

Parks (P).

This designation applies to parkland that is owned and operated by the Town of Moraga. A variety of active and passive recreational uses are accommodated. These properties generally have Non-MOSO Open Space zoning.

² 30 units per acre is allowed for senior housing (see Policy LU-1.3).



Public/Institutional (PI).

This designation applies to public school campuses and to land owned by Saint Mary's College. Land uses are primarily educational in nature, although recreation and open space uses, and housing (for students and faculty) are also permitted, subject to a campus master plan. Public schools generally have residential zoning, while an Institutional zoning district has been established expressly for Saint Mary's College.

4.3 2040 GROWTH CONCEPT

OVERALL CONCEPT

The land use plan for Moraga directs future housing, commercial, and civic development to the town's two main commercial centers while preserving existing land use patterns elsewhere. The plan acknowledges "legacy" projects, such as Palos Colorados, and maintains land use designations from previous General Plans that may allow limited development on certain sites outside the commercial centers.

State law requires Moraga to plan for growth; the Town is obligated to meet its fair share of the region's housing needs. The Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas represent less than four percent of Moraga's land area but are expected to accommodate 73 percent of the town's housing growth in the next 15 years. Most of this growth will occur in the Moraga Center area, given its size and larger inventory of vacant land.

The idea of focusing development in the two commercial centers is not new. It was a major theme of the 2002 Moraga General Plan and remains a key theme today. This strategy has become even more crucial due to climate change, which requires local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, concentrating

development in these centers offers economic benefits, such as providing more housing for the local workforce, attracting new businesses that serve Moraga residents, and increasing customers for existing businesses. Furthermore, expanding the commercial areas can give these centers a stronger sense of place, allow for reinvestment, and make them more appealing and vibrant community gathering spots.

The Town also anticipates employment growth in Moraga Center and Rheem Park. This will include additional retail and service businesses, local-serving offices, and potentially a hotel or other hospitality-related uses. Moraga will also continue to support the growth of Saint Mary's College as a community institution and cultural resource, guided by an updated campus plan.

Beyond the town centers, Moraga's neighborhoods will be retained and enhanced as great places to live. While the town's neighborhoods are mostly "built out," they may still change over time. Consistent with State law, the Town will encourage accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to meet some of its housing needs. It will ensure that its zoning and building regulations are responsive to changing demographics, family structure, and workplace trends. The Town will also work to make its neighborhoods and housing stock become more fire-safe and address critical issues such as evacuation and emergency vehicle access.



Table 4-2: Acreage in General Plan Land Use Categories³

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total Acreage
Rural Residential	266.9	4.3%
Residential 1 DUA	654.0	10.6%
Residential 1.5 DUA	111.3	1.8%
Residential 2 DUA	522.6	8.4%
Residential 3 DUA	1,097.0	17.7%
Medium Density Residential (6 DUA)	144.0	2.3%
Mixed-use-Moraga Center	182.6	3.0%
Mixed-use-Rheem Park	67.5	1.1%
MOSO Open Space	1,884.0	30.5%
Non-MOSO Open Space	691.8	11.2%
Parks	42.5	0.7%
Public/Institutional	520.8	8.4%
TOTAL	6,185.0	100.0%

Source: Barry Miller Consulting, Town of Moraga, 2024

Table 4-2 above shows the acres in each land use designation on the General Plan Map. Approximately 45 percent of the town has a residential designation, while 42 percent has an open space designation. Public and institutional uses represent 8 percent of the total, while mixed-use areas represent about 4 percent. Most future housing and commercial development will occur in the mixed-use areas.

LEGACY DESIGNATIONS

In the context of the Land Use Element, the term “legacy designation” refers to a designation from the prior Moraga General Plan that is carried forward to the 2040 General Plan. This includes approved development at Palos Colorados, the Residential-1.5 DUA designation for Indian Valley, and the Rural Residential designation for Bollinger Canyon.

Palos Colorados is a 123-lot single-family subdivision approved on a 460-acre site along

the Town’s border with Lafayette. The project was initially proposed in the 1980s and its design has been revised several times. As of 2024, the project is fully entitled but not yet constructed. The underlying General Plan designations include a combination of MOSO and Non-MOSO Open Space and Residential-1 DUA. The allowable density on the site has been clustered in a manner that allows most of the site to be retained as open space. Lot sizes range from 15,000 to square feet to about an acre, and at least 30 of the homes are expected to have ADUs. Access will be via a new road that will terminate at Moraga Road.

Indian Valley is a roughly 140-acre area located north of Canyon Road in the southwest part of Moraga. The area was designated for 2 DUA in the 1990 General Plan. The 2002 General Plan reduced the residentially designated area to 107.8 acres, and the allowable density to 1.5 DUA. The most recent conceptual development proposal for the site was for 71 single-family lots along a central spine roadway, representing about 50 acres of the total site area. While the 2040 General Plan carries the 1.5 DUA designation forward, additional technical studies and environmental review would be required prior to any entitlements or change of use.

Bollinger Canyon is a 423-acre area located on Bollinger Canyon Road to the east of Saint Mary’s College. The area is rural and agricultural in character and has topographic and access constraints. The area had been designated as a “Study Area” by prior Moraga General Plans. In 2023, the Moraga General Plan was amended to replace the Study Area designation with a combination of Rural Residential (270 acres), Residential 1-DUA (17 acres), and Non-MOSO Open Space (136 acres). These designations are carried forward to the 2040 Plan.

³ Road rights-of-way are not called out in the table, as they are included within each General Plan category.



Country Club Extension includes 65 existing lots along Augusta Drive in the Moraga Country Club neighborhood. The Augusta extension has been completed and the lots are recorded and in place.

Hetfield Estates includes a southerly extension of Hetfield Place just south of Sanders Drive, providing access to seven new single-family lots, plus accessory dwelling units. The 58-acre site is designated MOSO Open Space. Most of the site will remain open space, as the development is clustered on lots averaging about 18,000 square feet each. The MOSO Open Space designation for this site is retained.



Bollinger Canyon

MORAGA CENTER

Moraga Center is one of two areas in Moraga that has been designated a “Priority Development Area” by the Town of Moraga and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). The purpose of the PDA designation is to bring transit, jobs and housing together in walkable mixed-use neighborhoods. PDAs help the Bay Area reduce greenhouse gas emissions by supporting more energy-efficient and less car-dependent development. The PDA designation provides access to grants for transportation, infrastructure, housing, and planning,

Moraga Center encompasses 187 acres around the intersection of Moraga Road and Moraga Way. It includes the Moraga Shopping Center, adjacent commercial and office uses, two assisted living complexes, and housing. The Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP) was adopted in 2010, with initial zoning amendments adopted at that time. In 2020, the Town adopted the MCSP Implementation Project, including more comprehensive zoning changes. Further amendments were approved when the 2023-2031 Housing Element was adopted.

The area is currently a patchwork of retail and office buildings, vacant land, former orchards, and older buildings dating back to Moraga’s initial settlement. The Plan envisions a pedestrian-friendly “Main Street” atmosphere with shops, restaurants, outdoor seating and dining areas, new sidewalks and bike lanes, and a promenade along Laguna Creek. It includes specific capital projects, including a northerly extension of School Street to connect to Saint Mary’s Road at Moraga Road and a bridge across Laguna Creek to provide access to new multi-family housing west of the creek. The MCSP also envisions revitalization of the Moraga Shopping Center, adaptive reuse of the Moraga Ranch, and potentially a new park and community center.

The MCSP identified 17 numbered “sub-areas” within its boundary and provided guidance for





Conceptual rendering of new mixed-use development in Moraga Center

future land use in each sub-area. Sub-areas include the “Village” (Areas 1-7), the Shopping Center (Areas 8-12), and additional areas of vacant and underutilized land along the south and east edges of the planning area (Areas 13-17). In the mixed-use areas, the MCSP provides the flexibility for either residential or commercial uses, and encourages projects in which both land uses are horizontally or vertically mixed. Collectively, the MCSP area is estimated to have the capacity for about 950 additional housing units, 90,000 square feet of retail/entertainment space, and 50,000 square feet of new office space.

RHEEM PARK

Rheem Park is a 67-acre mixed-use district located around the intersection of Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard. The area includes the Rheem Valley Shopping Center, which is the town’s largest sales tax generator and retail center. It also includes the Rheem Theater, the Town’s offices and Council Chambers, and a variety of professional office buildings and commercial services. Like Moraga Center, Rheem Park also has been designated a “Priority Development Area.”

Zoning changes adopted in 2023 allow multi-family housing and mixed-use development of up to 24 units per acre in most of the Rheem Park

area. The area is expected to evolve into a more walkable center, with housing complementing existing and new commercial uses. There are also opportunities to better connect Rheem Park to adjacent neighborhoods and make the district more walkable and bike-friendly. The Community Design Element of this General Plan provides additional detail on potential improvements.



Rheem Theater facade





Open space surrounds many Moraga neighborhoods

4.4 OPEN SPACE LAND USES

The Moraga Planning Area includes over 1,800 acres of privately owned open space (see Table 4-1). The Town's land development regulations balance property rights with the protection of public health, safety, and the environment. Since its incorporation, Moraga has implemented zoning and other development standards to preserve environmentally sensitive open space. This has enhanced the town's quality of life and overall character. These provisions are described below and are further discussed in the Open Space and Parks Element.

MOSO AND NON-MOSO OPEN SPACE

In 1986, Moraga voters approved the Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO), designating about 1,880 acres—roughly one third of Moraga's land area—as protected open space. The Ordinance does not preclude development on these lands, but it does limit the allowable residential density to one unit per 5, 10, or 20 acres, depending on site conditions. The Ordinance further requires that the lowest density

standard (e.g., one unit per 20 acres) be used in "high risk" areas, which include areas with geologic hazards such as landslides and unstable soils. The Open Space and Parks Element may be consulted for additional detail.

A second category of open space has been created for lands not covered by the 1986 Ordinance ("Non-MOSO Open Space") but still warranting conservation. This designation applies to undeveloped properties larger than 10 acres and located outside the Town's commercial centers, characterized by steep slopes and limited access. Non-MOSO Open Space is subject to density standards similar to those that apply on MOSO Open Space.

HILLSIDE AND RIDGELINE REGULATIONS

Moraga has adopted special provisions for hillside and ridgeline areas. The Town has identified four categories of ridgelines and developed regulations applicable to each type. These regulations prohibit development in certain locations, establish visual separation requirements, address the location of roads, include standards for scenic corridors, and establish requirements for Hillside Development Permits.

The Open Space and Parks Element provides the foundational policies for the hillside and ridgeline regulations and should be consulted for additional guidance.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AND CLUSTERING

The Town requires the use of Planned Development Districts (PD) on sites larger than 10 acres so that the site plans for such properties are tailored to the context of each site.⁴ Creating a PD District is a discretionary process (e.g., it requires approval by the Planning Commission

⁴ Properties in the Moraga Center, Rheem Park, and MOSO Open Space General Plan designations are exempt from this requirement.



and Town Council) that results a unique set of development standards for each project. Implicit in the PD concept is that development should reduce environmental impacts. This is accomplished by clustering the allowable number of units on each site in ways that allow portions of the site to be retained as open space. The PD process effectively transfers allowable density within a site, allowing lots that are smaller than what is allowed by zoning while maintaining the same aggregate total number of units.

Policies under Goal LU-1 establish the parameters for PDs, starting with the basic concept that new subdivisions should minimize grading, avoid geological hazards, and mitigate negative visual impacts. The General Plan establishes specific standards for smaller lots, including requirements for public benefits such as access to outdoor recreational facilities accessible to the general public.

Subdivisions on sites covered by the MOSO Open Space Ordinance typically retain their Open Space General Plan designations even after they are developed. This is consistent with the MOSO Ordinance, which mapped specific sites as Open Space. As a result, there are several pockets of post-1986 residential development within the open space areas shown on **Figure 4.3**.

4.5 LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL LU-1: A BALANCED COMMUNITY
SUSTAIN MORAGA AS A BALANCED COMMUNITY, WITH HIGH-QUALITY NEIGHBORHOODS, VIBRANT COMMERCIAL CENTERS, EXCELLENT PARKS AND PUBLIC FACILITIES, AND SCENIC OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL AREAS.

Policy LU-1.1: Directing Growth

Strategically direct the town’s future growth to the Moraga Center and Rheem Park commercial districts. Support the development of these areas as vibrant, walkable mixed-use centers, with housing and commercial development on infill sites.

Policy LU-1.2: Sustainable Development

Ensure that future development mitigates its impacts on the environment to the greatest extent possible and is designed to advance principles of sustainability. These principles include habitat restoration and preservation, efficient use of energy and water, greener building and construction practices, linked land use and transportation decisions, and reduced dependence on fossil fuels and non-renewable resources.

Policy LU-1.3: Residential Densities

Except as specified in Policies LU-1.4 and LU-2.2, use the densities in Table 4-3 as the basis for determining the maximum allowable number of units on sites where housing is permitted.



Table 4-3: Maximum Allowable General Plan Densities

General Plan Designation	Density Range (units/ acre) ^(1,2)
Residential – Rural	up to 0.2
Residential – 1 DUA	up to 1
Residential – 1.5 DUA	up to 1.5
Residential – 2 DUA	up to 2
Residential – 3 DUA	up to 3
Residential – 6 DUA	4 – 6
Moraga Center – 12 DUA	10 – 12
Moraga Center/Rheem Park – Mixed Use zones and R-20/24 ^(2,3)	12 - 24

NOTE: 'DUA' = Dwelling Units per Acre

(1) Excludes density bonuses for affordable and senior housing, as required by State law.

(2) Allowable densities in Open Space areas are addressed under Goal LU-2 and in Policies LU-1.6 and LU-1.11.

(3) These zones allow 30 DUA for senior housing. R-20/24 has a minimum density of 16 DUA.

Policy LU-1.4: Exceptions to Density Standards

The allowable number of units on a given site may vary from the standards in Table 4-3 based on environmental constraints, the availability of public services and service levels, and provisions for open space and recreation, consistent with the General Plan and to the extent permitted by State law. The allowable number of units on a given site may also be increased due to State and local density bonus allowances, accessory dwelling units, and transfer of development rights from other properties.

(see also Policy LU-2.1 regarding development densities on designated open space and Policy OSP-1.5 on density transfers)

Policy LU-1.5: Large Parcel Development

Outside Moraga Center and Rheem Park, allow the development of vacant parcels larger than 10 acres when:

- The densities and parcel sizes comply with this General Plan and zoning regulations.
- The site plan is consistent with General Plan policies, Town regulations, and design guidelines.
- The project has complied with all provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, including mitigation of any potentially significant impacts.
- The project meets all applicable Fire Codes and emergency access requirements.

Policy LU-1.6: Planned District Zoning

Apply Planned District zoning for all new residential subdivisions larger than 10 acres. Parcels with General Plan designations of MOSO Open Space, Moraga Center, and Rheem Park shall be exempt from this requirement.

Policy LU-1.7: Hillside and Ridgeline Protection

Encourage new development to maintain currently undeveloped and publicly visible Hillside Areas and Ridgelines in an undeveloped and natural state to the greatest extent possible while considering private property rights and other community goals such as economic vitality, public health and safety, and housing availability.

(see Community Design Element Goal CD-1 and Conservation Element Goal CON-1 for additional policies on hillsides and ridgelines)

Policy LU-1.8: Lot Size and Slope

Where subdivision of land is permitted, lot layout should minimize grading, avoid geological hazards, and mitigate negative visual impacts. New subdivisions should incorporate varied lot sizes so that smaller lots are placed on more level terrain and larger lots may be located on steeper slopes.

(see also Policy LU-1.9 on clustering, LU-1.10 on minimum lot size, and Policies OSP-2.1 and -2.3 on Slope Restrictions)



Policy LU-1.9: Clustering

Provide for the permanent preservation of open space and avoidance of sensitive visual and natural resource areas by allowing clustered housing. Clustered housing should be sensitively sited and should be designed to minimize visual impacts to scenic corridors and existing residential areas.

(See also Policy OSP-1.5 on transfer of development rights)

Policy LU-1.10: Minimum Lot Sizes and Percentage Mix in New Development

To facilitate clustering and the protection of environmentally-sensitive open space, natural resources, and hazardous areas, allow lots in new subdivisions that are smaller than the density limits listed in Policy LU-1.3. Where smaller lots are allowed, the aggregate number of dwelling units proposed in a given subdivision shall not exceed the overall gross density limits set by Policies LU-1.3 and LU-1.4. Table 4-4 shall be used to determine the allowable lot sizes in such instances, subject to the further provisions and conditions in Policy LU-1.11 below.

Table 4-4: Allowances for Smaller Lots

General Plan Designation	Minimum Lot Size	Lot Size Mix
MOSO Open Space	40,000 sq. ft.	See LU-1.11(d)
Non-MOSO Open Space	40,000 sq. ft.	See LU-1.11(d)
Rural Residential	40,000 sq. ft.	See LU-1.11(d)
1 DUA	30,000 sq. ft.	45% min.
	20,000 sq. ft.	45% max.
	10,000 sq. ft.	10% max.
1.5 DUA/ 2 DUA	20,000 sq. ft.	45% min.
	15,000 sq. ft.	45% max.
	10,000 sq. ft.	10% max.
3 DUA	10,000 sq. ft.	NA

NOTE: 'DUA' = Dwelling Units per Acre

Policy LU-1.11: Additional Requirements for Clustering Allowable Density

Apply the following qualifications to Table 4-4, if supported by environmental analysis:

- Additional Lots for TDRs and Density Bonuses.* Allow additional lots of 10,000 square feet or larger (beyond the percentages listed in Table 4-4) to accommodate Transfer of Development Rights or Density Bonus.
- Variations in the Mix of Lot Sizes.* Subject to approval of the Planning Commission, allow any percentage category listed in Table 4-4 to be increased by up to 20 percent of the specific percentage listed as long as the total allowable lots are not increased in the aggregate. The mix of lot sizes may exceed 20 percent for projects incorporating major outdoor recreational facilities, subject to the review and determination of the Planning Commission and Town Council.
- Clustering in the 2 DUA and 3 DUA categories.* In the 2 DUA and 3 DUA General Plan land use categories, allow units to be clustered on lots less than 10,000 square feet, subject to Planning Commission review and approval, so long as the clustered units:
 - result in permanent open space areas;
 - are designed to be compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhoods; and
 - are compatible with existing single-family developments.
- Lot sizes in Open Space Areas.* Lot sizes in areas designated "Non-MOSO Open Space", "MOSO Open Space", or "Rural Residential" on the General Plan Diagram may be less than 40,000 square feet but not less than 15,000 square feet when the overall project will provide outdoor recreational facilities with guaranteed permanent access to the general public. In all cases, overall project densities may not exceed one unit per 5 acres.



Policy LU-1.12: Height Limits

Maintain height limits for residential, commercial, and institutional uses. Height limits are shown in Table 4-5.

Table 4-5: Height Limits

Land Use	Maximum Height ^(1, 2)
Low Density Residential (zoning less than R-6)	Two stories or 35', whichever is less ⁽³⁾
Medium Density Residential (R-6, MCSP R-6, R-12)	35' ⁽³⁾
High Density Residential (R-20/R-24 zoning)	45' ⁽⁴⁾
Commercial, except those areas zoned for Mixed-use	Two stories or 35', whichever is less
Mixed-use areas, including multi-family	45' ⁽⁴⁾
Institutional uses	Consistent with the base zoning district or an approved master plan

- (1) Reduced heights may be required if the reviewing authority finds that the proposed height will create a significant adverse effect on neighboring properties or is incompatible with natural terrain or vegetation.
- (2) Additional height limitations apply on scenic corridors, per MMC 8.132.
- (3) Per Moraga Municipal Code (MMC), on lots where a building footprint is stepped down a slope of 20 percent or greater, the maximum aggregate height is 45 feet.
- (4) Excludes potential State density bonus allowances.

Policy LU-1.13: Development in Bollinger Canyon

Apply a mix of Non-MOSO Open Space, Rural Residential, and Residential 1DUA zoning in the area formerly known as the Bollinger Canyon Special Study Area. Residential 1DUA shall apply to previously subdivided parcels where it reflects existing land use and density. Non-MOSO Open Space shall be applied to agricultural and ranchlands where long-term open space protection is envisioned. Other areas in Bollinger Canyon shall be designated Rural Residential,

with a density of one dwelling per five acres. The allowable number of units on a given parcel or group of parcels under common ownership may be clustered, as described in other policies under this goal. Site plans shall be based on studies provided by property owners demonstrating that natural resources will be protected and hazards will be mitigated to the greatest extent feasible. Development shall meet all applicable access and fire safety standards.

GOAL LU-2: OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL LAND

PROTECT MORAGA'S OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY, ENSURE ADEQUATE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SENSITIVE VIEWSHEDS, RESTRICT DEVELOPMENT IN POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS AREAS, AND REDUCE POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACTS ON TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE.

Policy LU-2.1: MOSO Open Space

Designate parcels referenced by the 1986 Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO) as "MOSO Open Space" on the General Plan Map. In the event such parcels are subdivided, any lots developed or intended for residential use shall retain the MOSO Open Space designation. Any remaining parcels within the subdivided area shall also retain the MOSO Open Space designation.



Policy LU-2.2: Development Densities in MOSO Open Space

Abide by the provisions of the Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO) in all land use and planning decisions. Notwithstanding any other provision of the General Plan, any development on lands depicted on the General Plan Diagram (**Figure 4.3**) as MOSO Open Space shall be limited to a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 20, 10, or five acres. In no case shall the density on such lands exceed one dwelling unit per five acres. Areas identified as “high risk” areas, as defined by the MOSO, shall be limited to a maximum density of one dwelling per 20 acres.

(see also Policy LU-1.3, 1.4 and 1.11. See the Open Space Element for a map of “high-risk” open space areas)

Policy LU-2.3: High-Risk MOSO Open Space

Prohibit any changes to the allowable density in “high risk” areas as defined in the Moraga Open Space Ordinance once the Town makes a final determination that an area meets the

high-risk criteria. The classification and allowable density may not be changed as a result of physical alteration, including but not limited to remediation of geologic hazards in connection with a proposed development project.

Policy LU-2.4: Non-MOSO Open Space

Outside of MOSO Open Space areas, use “Non-MOSO Open Space” as the General Plan designation for vacant sites larger than 10 acres characterized by constraints such as geologic hazards, restricted access, riparian habitat, historically significant features, and visibility from a scenic corridor. This policy shall not apply to parcels already designated with residential or mixed-use General Plan categories, unless the area in question is being set aside as open space as part of a development application.

View northeast across Miramonte Gardens



Policy LU-2.5: Agricultural Uses

Allow agricultural and horticultural uses and activities so long as they are low intensity and compatible with adjacent uses. Examples include small orchards, vineyards, and cattle grazing.

Policy LU-2.6: Preservation of Agricultural Resources

Strive to preserve the Town’s remaining agricultural resources, such as active pear and walnut orchards, where preservation would not conflict with the designation of a property as a Housing Opportunity Site.

GOAL LU-3: RESIDENTIAL AREAS
PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE
OUTSTANDING QUALITY OF
MORAGA’S RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

Policy LU-3.1: Single-family Neighborhoods

Maintain the low-density, single-family residential character of areas designated for 1, 2, and 3 units per acre on the General Plan Diagram.

Policy LU-3.2: Medium Density Residential

Apply the Medium Density Residential designation to areas that include a mix of housing types, including single-family zero lot line, attached, duplex, triplex, fourplex, and townhome units. This designation should also be used to acknowledge existing areas of multi-family and “missing middle” housing, which are an essential part of the Town’s housing supply, as well as the recreational amenities and common areas associated with such developments.

Policy LU-3.3: Neighborhood Preservation

Maintain planning and development review procedures that support reinvestment in the housing stock and ensure that new development is harmonious with its surroundings. New development and home alterations should be consistent with standards for setbacks, height, and bulk that respect and conserve the character of Moraga’s neighborhoods.

Policy LU-3.4: Residential Code Enforcement

Support effective and comprehensive code enforcement through agreements with the Building Inspection Division of the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development.

Policy LU-3.5: Animal Keeping

Regulate animal keeping on residential land in a manner consistent with surrounding land use and the well-being of the animals. When appropriate and possible, the density and design of subdivisions may provide for the keeping of horses, bees, pygmy goats, and other small farm animals, as specified in the Municipal Code.

Policy LU-3.6: Residential Care and Child Care Facilities

Ensure that activities allowed in residential areas by State law, including childcare and residential care facilities, are designed and operated to minimize the potential for adverse effects on nearby homes and neighborhoods.

Policy LU-3.7: Accessory Dwelling Units

As required by State law, allow for the ministerial approval of accessory dwelling units (in-law apartments) meeting adopted standards in all zones where residential uses are permitted.

Policy LU-3.8: Home-Based Occupations

Allow Moraga residents to operate home-based businesses, provided that adverse impacts on adjacent residences are not created.





Outdoor dining in Moraga Center

GOAL LU-4: TOWN CENTERS

TRANSFORM THE MORAGA CENTER AND RHEEM PARK COMMERCIAL AREAS INTO VIBRANT MIXED- USE CENTERS WITH RETAIL, SERVICE, OFFICE, HOUSING, PARK, AND CIVIC USES.

Policy LU-4.1: Modernization of Existing Uses

Support continued reinvestment and improvement of existing development in Moraga's commercial centers, particularly upgrading and modernization of the Moraga and Rheem Valley Shopping Centers. Recognize the shopping centers as important parts of Moraga's character, economy, and quality of life.

Policy LU-4.2: New Commercial Uses

Encourage new business and office uses that enhance the local economy, respond to local resident and business needs, employ local residents, generate revenue, and strengthen the character and attractiveness of the Town's commercial centers. Such uses should be located in the vicinity of existing commercial areas, in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park General Plan land use categories.

(see the Economic Vitality and Community Design Elements for further guidance)

Policy LU-4.3: Higher Density Residential Uses

Plan for a substantial increase in higher-density residential and mixed-use (with housing) development within the two commercial centers. Such development should meet State-mandated housing goals, while providing additional customers for local business, housing opportunities for the local workforce, and greater vibrancy for the commercial centers.



Policy LU-4.4: Residential Densities in Moraga Center and Rheem Park

Allow base densities of up to 24 units per acre in Moraga Center and Rheem Park, and 30 units per acre for senior housing in these two areas. These densities exclude bonuses that may be awarded for projects including affordable units, as required by State law. All future mixed-use and residential projects in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas shall meet objective design standards to be adopted as part of the Moraga Municipal Code. On all sites where the maximum density of 24 units per acre is permitted, a minimum density of 12 units per acre also shall apply.⁵

Policy LU-4.5: Phased Development

Allow phasing of larger-scale projects as a way to respond to financial and market conditions. In such instances, phasing shall be completed in accordance with an approved plan or agreement indicating the timing of each phase and associated infrastructure and construction improvements.

Policy LU-4.6: Traffic Access and Impacts

Review and evaluate potential traffic impacts when considering commercial, residential, and mixed-use development in Moraga's two commercial centers. Ensure that development is designed to provide for safe and adequate street capacity, while supporting local goals to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Policy LU-4.7: Buffering

Require appropriate measures to buffer commercial and non-commercial land uses in order to ensure land use compatibility. This should include buffering where new commercial development projects abut existing residential areas, as well as within mixed-use projects where commercial and residential uses within the same structure or adjacent structures have the potential for conflicts.

Policy LU-4.8: Heavy Commercial Uses

Locate automobile service and similar potentially impactful commercial uses only in areas where compatible with adjacent uses. Ensure that any outdoor operational or storage uses are properly screened, and that any noise, light, glare, odor, and other impacts are appropriately mitigated.

Policy LU 4.9: Responsive Commercial Zoning

Ensure that planning and zoning regulations for commercial areas are responsive to evolving business needs and changes in the ways Moraga residents shop, work, and travel. Zoning should support the adaptive reuse of vacant and obsolete space with more economically productive uses that are compatible with adjacent uses and have similar or lesser external impacts.

(See also Economic Vitality Element)

Policy LU-4.10: Sustainable Commercial Development

In support of local sustainability goals, strongly encourage activities in Moraga's commercial districts that are oriented toward Moraga residents rather than activities that generate regional traffic and increase vehicle miles traveled. To the extent possible, future commercial development should be planned and designed to reduce the need for driving to other communities for basic goods and services, and support walking and bicycling within the town.

⁵ A minimum density of 16 units per acre applies in R-20/R-24.



GOAL LU-5: INSTITUTIONAL USES

PROMOTE AND PRESERVE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONAL USES THAT SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN MORAGA, INCLUDING SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, RELIGIOUS FACILITIES, AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

Policy LU-5.1: Parking and Circulation

Require adequate off-street parking and circulation for all institutional facilities. Parking and traffic studies may be required for major expansions or new facilities on institutional properties, including plans to reduce impacts on surrounding streets and neighborhoods.

Policy LU-5.2: Community Access

Locate institutional uses so that they have easy access to and from the community, with direct access to major arterials.

Policy LU-5.3: Access by Persons with Disabilities

Design institutional uses to facilitate access by people with disabilities, and encourage the retrofitting of existing institutional uses to be more universally accessible.

Policy LU-5.4: Facility Siting

Site institutional facilities, including outdoor athletic facilities and gathering places, in ways that complement the natural environment and minimize impacts on adjacent open space and residential areas.



Saint Mary's College | Photo Credit: Saint Mary's College



Policy LU-5.5: Public Safety Facility Compatibility

Ensure that future land use and development decisions protect the functionality of public safety facilities and the capacity to respond in the event of an emergency.

Policy LU-5.6: Saint Mary's College

Continue the 'good neighbor' relationship between the Town and the College to maintain the College's viability as an integral part of the Town and enhance Moraga as a "college town." Work with the College on opportunities for new affordable housing in Moraga Center and Rheem Park.

Policy LU-5.7: Campus Master Plans

As provided by the Moraga Municipal Code, require Campus Master Plans as necessary to ensure the orderly and compatible development of institutional uses such as Saint Mary's College. Participate in the development of such plans to ensure they address Town concerns and support the goals of this General Plan.

4.6 LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Program LU-A: General Plan Diagram

Use the General Plan Diagram to guide land use planning activities in the Town and its Sphere of Influence area. Review and update the General Plan Diagram as part of the annual General Plan review process.

Action LU-A1: Mapping Protocol. Consider changes to General Plan mapping protocol that allow residential subdivisions within MOSO and Non-MOSO open space areas to be mapped with residential categories (rather than as open space) once they are developed.

Program LU-B: Zoning Ordinance

Use the Moraga Zoning Ordinance (Moraga Municipal Code Chapter 8) to govern the permitted and conditionally permitted use of land and required development standards, including lot width and depth, lot area, minimum yards, height, parking, lot coverage, floor area ratio, and open space requirements. The Zoning Ordinance also establishes procedures for land use permits, variances, density bonuses, transfer of development rights, and conditional use permits, as well as standards for specific uses such as accessory dwelling units and wireless facilities. The Ordinance is periodically amended in response to emerging issues, development trends, State law, and other factors.

Action LU-B1: PD Regulations. Amend the Planned District (PD) regulations to: (a) reduce the number of hearings and submittal cycles and the associated cost and time delays to applicants; and (b) apply more objective approval findings.

Action LU-B2: R-6 Zoning. Consistent with the 2023-2031 Housing Element, amend the R-6 zoning district regulations to recognize existing development types and create additional opportunities for "missing middle" housing.

Action LU-B3: CUP Requirements. Consider changes to the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) requirements that make it easier to start and operate a business, including designating lower-impact activities as permitted uses.

Action LU-B4: Parking Standards. Review existing parking standards and ensure that they are consistent with industry standards and best practices.



Program LU-C: Development Review

Continue to implement fair and efficient development review procedures. Development review is the process through which development applications are received, evaluated, and approved. The 2023-2031 Housing Element includes actions directing the Town to pursue streamlining of development review processes.

Action LU-C1: Assessment of Procedures and Code Amendments. *Consistent with the Moraga 2023-2031 Housing Element, improve development review procedures to provide clarity and greater certainty for applicants. Meet with developers, homeowners, and applicants to identify ways to reduce permitting costs and address potential barriers to construction. Pursue Municipal Code amendments to streamline the review process as appropriate.*

Program LU-D: Focused Planning for Town Centers

Maintain and implement focused plans for Moraga's two designated "Priority Development Areas" as follows:

- (a) In Moraga Center, implement the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP). The goal of the MCSP is to create a mixed-use village with local-serving commercial development and a range of residential opportunities. The 2010 Plan may be amended as necessary to respond to existing or anticipated conditions, resources, opportunities, and requirements.
- (b) In Rheem Park, undertake future planning processes to identify public realm improvements, infrastructure and circulation changes, and other modifications that reinforce the area's role as a mixed-use district and focal point. This should include urban design and streetscape plans, infrastructure plans, parking plans, public transit improvements, and traffic access and circulation plans for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Action LU-D1: Zoning Amendments. *Consistent with the direction provided by the 2023-2031 Housing Element, the following amendments to the MCSP and its related zoning standards should be completed:*

- *Amend the R-12 regulations to facilitate small lot development without requiring PD applications and accommodate a wider density range than minimum 10 DUA and maximum 12 DUA.*
- *Amend the R-20/R-24 development standards to ensure that the top end of the density range is achievable on parcels with this designation.*
- *Facilitate lot line adjustments and infrastructure improvements to enable development of the MCSP area, particularly the areas west of Laguna Creek and north of Moraga Way.*

Action LU-D2: Small Lot and Townhome Standards. *Develop standards for small lot subdivisions and townhomes that can be applied in the R-12, R-20, and mixed-use zoning districts.*

Program LU-E: California Environmental Quality Act/ Environmental Review

Continue to follow all mandated environmental review procedures established by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Use the CEQA process to evaluate and document the potential environmental impacts of proposed development, avoid environmental degradation, and establish mitigation measures to reduce the potential for significant impacts.

Program LU-F: Priority Development Area (PDA) Designation

Leverage the designation of Moraga Center and Rheem Park as PDAs to apply for grants for planning, infrastructure, sustainability, transportation, housing, and public facility improvements.



Development Streamlining in General Plan 2040

General Plan 2040 includes a comprehensive set of actions that aim to simplify and streamline the development process in Moraga. Some of these actions are also in the 2023-2031 Housing Element. Streamlining actions include:

- Action LU-B.1 on streamlining the Planned Development process
- Action LU-B.3 on simplifying CUP requirements
- Action LU-B.4 on revisions to off-street parking standards
- Action LU-C.1 on revisions to development review procedures
- Action LU-D.1 on amending the R-12 and R-20/R-24 development standards
- Action LU-H1 on Hillside Development Permit requirements
- Action CD-A1 on making the Design Guidelines more objective
- Action CD-C1 on revisions to the Scenic Corridor standards
- Action CD-D1 on revisions to the Design Review process

Collectively, these actions should make the development process easier to understand, quicker to navigate, and less onerous and expensive for applicants. These actions are high priorities and should be programmed for early implementation following Plan adoption.

Program LU-G: Development Fees

Collect impact fees to recover the cost of on-site and off-site improvements associated with new development projects, and permitting fees to cover the cost of development processing. Provide fee deferrals for projects that contain low- or moderate-income housing. Fee deferrals should be commensurate with the percentage and income levels of the affordable units proposed and should be offered only when necessary to ensure the financial feasibility of

the project and/or the affordability of the low- or moderate-income units.

Action LU-G1: Fee Review. Periodically review the Town's fee structure to ensure that fees align with actual costs, are adjusted for inflation, and consider economic and financial feasibility impacts.

Program LU-H: Hillside Development Permits

Continue to require Hillside Development Permits for construction meeting specified thresholds in Hillside Areas, as defined by the Moraga Municipal Code. The intent of the HDP requirements is to ensure that development in Hillside Areas preserves Moraga's scenic qualities, minimizes environmental impacts, and reduces exposure to geologic and other hazards.

Action LU-H1: Hillside Ordinance Amendments. Review and update the HDP requirements to address unintended obstacles for applicants, such as the ability to expand existing hillside homes in ways that do not affect sloped areas.

Program LU-I: Building Code

Implement the California Building Standards Code, which includes the Building, Residential, Green Building Standards, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, and Existing Building Codes. These codes are enforced by the Building Inspection Division of the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development, which also provides building inspection services to the town. Contra Costa County has amended the State codes to address local conditions, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 17958.7. The Town of Moraga has determined that the more restrictive standards adopted by the County are reasonably necessary and has adopted these amendments. The Town will adopt updated codes in the future as appropriate, consistent with State updates and related County actions.



Program LU-J: Code Enforcement

Continue to work with Contra Costa County on Planning and Building Code enforcement and the abatement of violations. The Town will encourage the County to respond to complaints of substandard property conditions through inspection and enforcement, and to inform staff and Town officials regarding code compliance issues.

Program LU-K: Technical Assistance and Expedited Processing

Provide technical assistance to developers to facilitate project approvals. This may include expedited permit processing and permit assistance to developers providing affordable housing to ensure that unnecessary delays do not occur.

Program LU-L: LAFCO/ Annexation Review

Consider annexation of areas within Moraga's Sphere of Influence when and if property owners in those areas request connection to the water and sewer systems. Periodically meet with Local Agency Formation Commission staff to discuss issues related to development and annexation in the sphere.

See also:

General Plan Annual Report

(Growth Management Program G-B)

Capital Improvement Program

(Growth Management Policy G-1.7)

Moraga Country Club





Moraga Town Center Homes

5

COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

Moraga is a beautiful community. Its identity is shaped by hillsides, open spaces, vegetation, scenic vistas, the built environment, and its agricultural heritage. Collectively these features create a distinct character that is cherished by residents.

The Community Design Element seeks to retain these qualities while planning for changes in Moraga's commercial centers, including increased densities. It provides a framework to protect open spaces and hillsides, maintain the character of neighborhoods, conserve historic resources, and enhance the appeal of shopping areas. Additionally, it addresses the improvement of public spaces, including roads, parks, public buildings, and community gateways.

This Element seeks to strengthen Moraga's identity as a predominantly residential community in a scenic natural setting. Protecting the town's natural setting must be accompanied by an equally ambitious effort to improve the quality of its built-up areas, particularly its two commercial centers. The Town will continue to adopt guidelines and standards to encourage excellence in the quality of its public places, architecture, landscapes, and streets. These guidelines and standards should create cohesive places that "feel like Moraga" while creating a stronger identity for the town.

The Community Design Element begins by describing the key attributes of community design in Moraga. This provides the foundation for the goals, policies and programs that follow.



5.1 COMMUNITY DESIGN FEATURES

NATURAL SETTING AND VISTAS

Moraga's character is shaped by valleys, canyons, creeks, hillsides, and ridgelines. To the west are the Berkeley/Oakland Hills. To the east are the ridges of Las Trampas Peak, Castle Hill, and Sugarloaf Hill, with Mount Diablo on the eastern horizon. The branching network of valleys and canyons within the town include Moraga Valley, Rheem Valley, and Bollinger Canyon.

Major topographic features in the town includes the Indian, Sanders, Mulholland, and Campolindo ridgelines. The most prominent knolls and ridgelines reach 1,200 feet above sea level, creating long distance views over the valleys. Riparian areas occur in the canyons and valley floors. The network of valleys, canyons, ridges, and streambeds create a naturally connected system of open spaces that are visible from almost every part of town.

Development patterns reflect this relationship, organically fitting into the landscape and reinforcing the natural setting. The town's overall image provides a feeling of spaciousness and

strong landscape character. Scenic views define the image of Moraga and the way the Town is perceived by residents and visitors.

GATEWAYS AND SCENIC CORRIDORS

As a result of Moraga's topography and historical development pattern, there are several distinct gateways into town. The primary gateways are on Moraga Way (from Orinda) and Moraga Road (from Lafayette). Secondary gateways are located on Rheem Boulevard (from the Glorietta area of Orinda), Saint Mary's Road (from the Burton Valley area of Lafayette), and Canyon Road (from unincorporated Canyon). The town's gateways provide scenic views of local hillsides and ridgelines and generally convey a positive image. However, they lack distinctive entry monuments, art, or other features that convey a sense of arrival. Gateways into the town—and its two commercial districts—are understated. Improving these gateways can create a sense of arrival and a more distinct identity for the town.

Moraga has taken steps to protect the scenic quality of its roadways, including views from the road to hillside areas, by adopting a Scenic Corridor Ordinance. The Ordinance provides development guidelines and procedures

Southbound Moraga Road at the Lafayette border



for land along key corridors. As noted in the Implementation section of this Element, changes to the Scenic Corridor Ordinance were recommended by the Housing Element to remove potential housing constraints and recognize the potential of the built environment to improve the appearance of the corridors. Within Moraga's commercial areas, scenic corridors provide an opportunity to define transitions and gateways, and to create streetscapes that are more walkable and architecturally cohesive.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Moraga's design identity is also shaped by its neighborhoods (see **Figure 5.1**). The town's neighborhoods vary in built character and composition, although they are largely characterized by one- and two-story homes built between 1950 and 1990 on relatively large, landscaped lots. The town also includes medium-density townhome communities such as the Moraga Country Club, Miramonte Gardens, Carroll Ranch, Rancho Moraga, and Villa Moraga (Camino Peral). There is no single prevailing architectural style, and the mix is often eclectic. However, the consistency in height and scale contributes to the identity of the town and its overall sense of place.

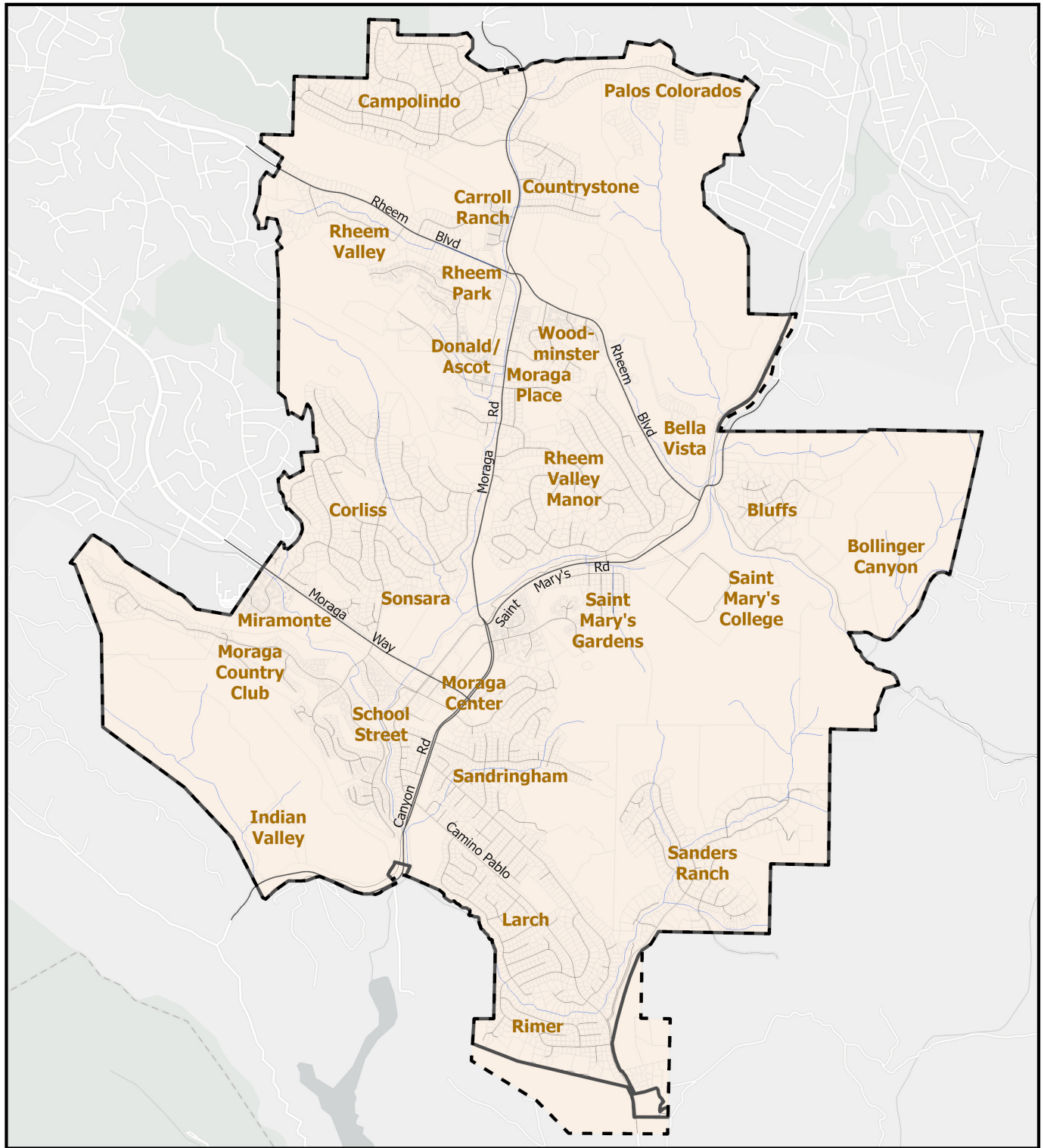
The Town has adopted design guidelines to help ensure that new development contributes to and enhances the overall quality of its neighborhoods. These guidelines address remodeling as well as new construction. Design priorities include protecting hillsides and ridgelines, complementing existing landscaping, enhancing scenic corridors, minimizing the impacts of development, promoting commercial centers as community gathering places, and thoughtfully designing new single family and multi-family residential neighborhoods.

As the value of Moraga homes has increased, so have applications to modernize and expand older homes. This has created concerns about architectural style and scale, as well as issues related to privacy, noise, and parking. The Town's guidelines address these issues, as well as design elements such as graded slopes, landscaping, and retaining walls. Moraga will continue to work with property owners and neighborhoods to evaluate its design guidelines, ensure they are objective, and revise them as needed to address emerging design issues.

Sonsara Neighborhood | Photo Credit: Tom Clearwood

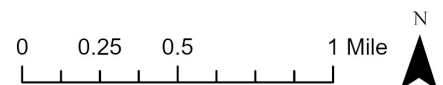


Figure 5.1: Neighborhoods



- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels

Town of Moraga, California
General Plan Update





Moraga Center Farmers Market

ACTIVITY CENTERS

Moraga does not have a traditional “downtown” but it does have two active commercial centers. Each includes a suburban shopping center as well as offices, local-serving businesses, and civic uses. Saint Mary’s College is another important activity center in the town.

Moraga Center is the largest commercial district in Moraga, and its historical center. The community design vision for this area is expressed in the 2010 Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP) and in the MCSP Design Guidelines. The MCSP envisions Moraga Center as a “village” with walkable streets, pedestrian connections to nearby neighborhoods, a creekside promenade, and a central area with new mixed-use development and revitalized storefronts. It further envisions a network of large and small open spaces, a future “town square” that becomes a civic gathering place for all Moragans, and new neighborhoods with medium to high density housing. The MCSP identifies the area west of Commons Park as a possible site for a new

community center, creating a focal point and civic gathering place for this area.

Achieving this vision will require a substantial amount of public and private investment. General design concepts are laid out by the MCSP and Design Guidelines, but more specific design plans will be needed as development occurs. This includes plans for the School Street extension, the Lafayette-Moraga Trail extension, and development of a new neighborhood on the former orchards west of Laguna Creek. The Town amended its Municipal Code in 2020 to add MCSP objective design standards as well as new zoning districts for this area. The Objective Design Standards are intended to expedite development approvals, particularly for new housing and mixed-use development.

The Rheem Park commercial district covers a smaller land area than Moraga Center but has a larger amount of retail space. The Rheem Valley Shopping Center includes 165,000 square feet of shopping space in an “L” shaped complex stretching nearly a half-mile from end to end. The



Town adopted objective design standards for this district in 2023, but the area does not yet have a plan for its streets and public spaces. This General Plan recommends a “public realm” plan for Rheem Center to establish a clear framework for public and private investment, and a foundation for funding future streetscape and infrastructure improvements.

Unlike the two shopping centers, Saint Mary’s College has a distinct design identity, established when the campus was first developed. The campus is surrounded by open space and accessed by a long entry drive, giving it a destination quality. The chapel bell tower is a visual landmark and is built in a Mission Renaissance architectural style that is emulated across the campus. Formal open spaces, courtyards, landscaping, and walkways between buildings provide symmetry and add to overall aesthetic quality. Elements of this design aesthetic can be adapted to Moraga’s two commercial districts to create a more unified and cohesive appearance for the town.

PUBLIC REALM

The term “public realm” refers to spaces and areas that are accessible to everyone in the community, including parks, streets, public buildings, and plazas. These places are crucial for social interaction, civic activities, and cultural events. They also shape Moraga’s identity. Examples of public realm improvements in Moraga include the sculptures in West Commons Park, street lighting and signage along major streets, and median plantings and landscaping.

Revitalizing Moraga Center and Rheem Park will require public realm improvements as well as private investment. The Town is actively planning for these improvements, and increasing the quantity, prominence, and design quality of its public spaces. It will continue to invest in tree planting, public art, lighting, and street beautification projects, while coordinating with PG&E and private property owners on utility

undergrounding. Public realm improvements provide an opportunity to take advantage of Moraga’s desirable climate, enhance views of the surrounding landscape, and demonstrate new approaches to sustainability and resilience that can be emulated in private development.



Public art outside Moraga Council Chambers



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic buildings and sites contribute to Moraga's character and are an important part of its design heritage. They enhance the town's attractiveness to residents and visitors and provide diversity and visual interest. Identifying and protecting historic resources creates economic, social, environmental, educational, and cultural benefits and provides the community with a link to its past.

The Town of Moraga adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance in 2015. The Ordinance provides a tool for nominating and designating historic landmarks, creates incentives for property owners to preserve these landmarks, and establishes a permitting process for changes once a landmark is designated. The criteria for designating landmarks are based on United States Secretary of the Interior standards. The process includes consultation with the Moraga Historical Society, a local volunteer organization dedicated to gathering and preserving knowledge about Moraga's history. The Ordinance includes provisions to avoid "demolition by neglect" and

ensure that landmarked buildings are maintained in good condition.

Landmarking of a structure is typically initiated by the owner. Incentives include Variances from local zoning, use of the State Historic Building Code, and eligibility for reduced taxes under California's Mills Act. As of 2024, no buildings have been formally landmarked. The Town will continue to work with property owners, the Historical Society, and the public at large to promote awareness of Moraga history and the benefits of preservation.

Moraga is also working with Native American representatives to identify and protect tribal cultural resources in the town. Policies in the General Plan acknowledge the potential for such resources, especially along the town's creeks and valleys. There are also opportunities to increase public awareness of the area's Native American heritage and traditions, including environmental stewardship. Consultation with Native American tribes is a critical part of the planning and development review process.



Originally built as a hotel in 1914, the refurbished Moraga Barn is one of the town's oldest buildings | Photo Credit: Moraga Historical Society



5.2 COMMUNITY DESIGN GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL CD-1: NATURAL SETTING

PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE NATURAL SCENIC QUALITIES THAT MAKE MORAGA UNIQUE.

Policy CD-1.1: Open Space Frame

Retain the open space “frame” of regional park and watershed lands that surrounds Moraga, defines neighborhood edges, and contributes to the town’s character and identity.

Policy CD-1.2: View Protection

Protect the important visual elements of Moraga’s natural setting. These elements include the major and minor MOSO ridgelines, significant non-MOSO ridgelines, mature tree groupings, and other significant natural features, especially as viewed from the Town’s scenic corridors.¹ Development projects in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas shall be deemed compliant with this policy if they comply with objective development and design standards related to views and visual impacts.

¹ See the Open Space and Parks Element for the definition of MOSO and non-MOSO ridgelines and a map (**Figure 7.3**) showing their location.

Policy CD-1.3: Location of New Development

To the extent possible, concentrate new development in areas that are already urbanized and have less environmental and visual sensitivity, including:

- a. The Moraga Center and Rheem Park commercial areas (e.g., “priority development areas”)
- b. Infill parcels in areas of existing development
- c. Areas of flat or gently sloping topography outside of flood plain or natural drainage areas.

Policy CD-1.4: Site Planning, Building Design, and Landscaping

In areas where development is permitted, retain natural topographic features and scenic qualities through sensitive site planning, architectural design, and landscaping. Buildings and improvements in single family areas should retain a low visual profile and provide fire-safe landscaping that complements the natural setting. New development in multi-family and mixed-use areas should respect natural terrain and enhance the visual character of Moraga’s town centers.

Policy CD-1.5: Ridgeline and Hillside Areas

Protect ridgelines from development. In hillside areas, require new developments to retain and respect the character of existing landforms, conform and blend with the natural setting, preserve significant native vegetation, and locate building sites so that visual impacts to ridgelines are minimized. Grading in areas with an average slope of 20 percent or more should create a natural appearance, minimizing soil displacement and the need for large retaining walls. Buildings and other improvements on such sites should maintain a low visual profile that blends with the natural setting and incorporates appropriate screening using native vegetation.

(See the Conservation Element and Implementation Chapter for additional guidance on grading)





Views of open space, trees, and hillsides contribute to the town's character and should be protected | Photo Credit: Tom Clearwood



Development on sloped sites should follow natural contours, with low-profile buildings and landscaping to enhance the natural setting
Photo Credit: McDonald-Jones

Policy CD-1.6: Development Regulations for Ridgelines and Hillside Areas

Maintain development regulations for ridgelines and hillside areas that protect scenic vistas and the public enjoyment of these vistas. These regulations shall require that hillside development conforms to the provisions of Policy CD-1.5 and is uninterrupted by visible manmade features to the maximum extent feasible. The MCSP area shall be exempt from these requirements.

(See Open Space and Parks Element for further discussion of Hillside and Ridgeline regulations)

Policy CD-1.7: Valley and Riparian Areas

Protect the scenic and environmental qualities of environmentally sensitive riparian and valley areas. This includes the significant linear open spaces, woodlands, and grasslands along the town's creeks, as well as hillside views from valley floors.

GOAL CD-2: PUBLIC REALM

CREATE A CONNECTED NETWORK OF ROADS, PATHS, AND PUBLIC SPACES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MORAGA'S VISUAL QUALITY AND IDENTITY, ADD VALUE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY, AND PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

(See Goal CD-5 for additional policy guidance on commercial and mixed-use centers)

Policy CD-2.1: Public Places as Focal Points

Provide and maintain parks and public facilities that serve as community focal points, gathering places, and activity centers. These facilities should be connected to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial centers, with inviting entries, good visibility from adjacent streets, and safe and easy access for bicycles and pedestrians.

(See also Policy T-3.4 on connectivity)

Policy CD-2.2: Schools as Neighborhood Gathering Places

Work with the school districts to enhance the role of school properties as neighborhood gathering places and activity centers. Address design, use, safety, management, and maintenance issues to improve access to schools, schoolyards, and playfields during after-school hours and on weekends.



Policy CD-2.3: Undergrounding of Utilities

Whenever and wherever possible, convert overhead utility lines to underground. A priority should be placed on undergrounding projects in commercial/mixed-use areas. Require underground utilities in areas of new development.

Policy CD-2.4: Wireless Communication Facilities

Regulate the location and design of wireless communication facilities and other telecommunications infrastructure in accordance with Town ordinances and the Federal Communications Act.

Policy CD-2.5: Wayfinding and Gateway Signage

Improve wayfinding and gateway signage, including consistent graphic conventions, branding, and logos for Town signs, placement of additional entry signage at Town limits and gateways, and improved directional signage for significant destinations (commercial centers, public buildings, parks, Saint Mary's College, etc.).

Policy CD-2.6: Sidewalks and Street Plantings

On streets with sidewalks, manage sidewalks and planting areas in the public right-of-way to promote pedestrian safety, enhance visual character, and reduce the impacts of vehicle traffic. Where medians are present, support their beautification and improvement.

Policy CD-2.7: Street Lighting

Provide street lighting that improves public safety and visibility while also enhancing neighborhood character and design. Consider decorative street lighting with banners in public rights-of-way adjacent to and within commercial areas. Streetlights should avoid light and glare conflicts and be consistent with energy conservation goals.

Policy CD-2.8: Public Art

Support the use of public art as a means of creative expression, placemaking, enhancing Moraga's visual quality, and showcasing the work of local and regional artists.



The "Wings" sculpture in Rancho Laguna Park adds visual interest while raising awareness of Monarch butterfly habitat.



GOAL CD-3: SCENIC ROADWAYS

MANAGE MORAGA'S SCENIC ROADWAYS IN WAYS THAT STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND APPEARANCE, PRESERVE HILLSIDE AND RIDGELINE VIEWS, AND MEET PUBLIC SAFETY, EVACUATION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE NEEDS.

Policy CD-3.1: Designation of Scenic Corridors

Designate the following routes as "scenic corridors":

- (a) Bollinger Canyon Road
- (b) Camino Pablo
- (c) Canyon Road
- (d) Donald Drive (along ridgeline of Mulholland Hill)
- (e) Moraga Road
- (f) Moraga Way
- (g) Rheem Boulevard
- (h) Saint Mary's Road

Policy CD-3.2: Visual Character of Corridors

Improve the visual character of Moraga's corridors with lighting, landscaping, and signage. Within Priority Development Areas, encourage building placement and landscaping to help define and enhance the visual quality of each corridor.

(See also Policy CD-2.8 on gateways)

Policy CD-3.3: Moraga Road and Moraga Way

Recognize Moraga Road and Moraga Way as the two primary access roads in and out of Moraga. Special efforts should be made to recognize the role of these corridors in defining Moraga's identity while protecting their function as major arterials and evacuation routes.

Policy CD-3.4: Landscaping and Amenities

Use additional street tree planting, berms, fencing, and landscaping to enhance visual continuity along major corridors. Require appropriate landscaping for both public and private developments, including pedestrian lighting and street trees within existing commercial areas. Encourage use of native and drought-tolerant species and, where applicable, preservation of orchard trees.



Scenic corridors such as Moraga Way (pictured here) should be enhanced with native and drought tolerant landscaping and conversion of overhead utility lines to underground utilities wherever possible. | Photo Credit: JD Lisa, Wikipedia Commons



Policy CD-3.5: Development and Design Standards

Adopt development standards for site design and setbacks, landscaping, infrastructure location, grading, and signage that enhances each corridor. Ensure that these standards are consistent with and support complementary goals for multi-family housing and mixed-use development within Moraga Center and Rheem Park.

(See also Policy CD-2.6 regarding undergrounding of utilities)

GOAL CD-4: NEIGHBORHOODS

PRESERVE THE SCALE, CHARACTER, AND QUALITY OF MORAGA'S RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE SUPPORTING HOME IMPROVEMENTS AND A SAFER, MORE WALKABLE ENVIRONMENT.

Policy CD-4.1: Development Standards

Maintain and enforce planning and development standards for Moraga's residential neighborhoods.

Policy CD-4.2: Neighborhood Character

Work with individual neighborhoods to identify improvements that strengthen and enhance neighborhood character. Examples include tree planting, sidewalks, street lighting, bike paths, neighborhood entries, and landscaping.

Policy CD-4.3: Pedestrian Amenities

Design single family and multi-family developments to create high quality pedestrian environments, including pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods and the Town's path and trail system.

Policy CD-4.4: Infill Development in Single Family Neighborhoods

Facilitate, and where appropriate streamline, improvement of Moraga's single family housing stock, including home repair, remodels, additions, accessory dwellings, and new homes on vacant lots within established neighborhoods. Objective design standards should be used to ensure that the scale, height, setbacks, and character of such projects is compatible with existing development.

Policy CD-4.5: New Single Family Residential Development

Ensure that the layout of new residential lots respects site topography and natural features, including lot sizes and shapes that minimize the need for large-scale grading.

(See also Policy LU-1.9 on clustering)

Policy CD-4.6: New Multi-Family Development

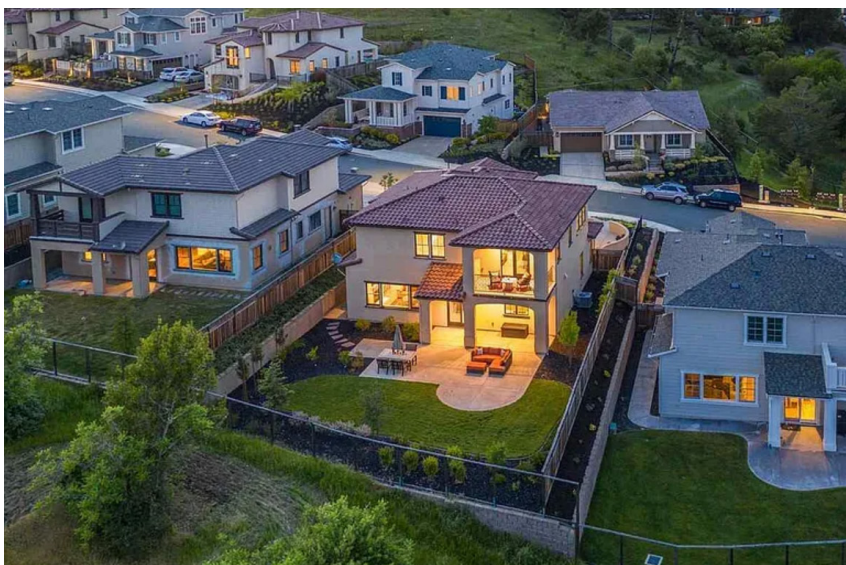
Locate new multi-family developments in close proximity to commercial centers, transit stops, and community facilities. Use site design and landscaping to create buffers to adjacent uses, while providing connections through pedestrian and bicycle paths.

Policy CD-4.7: Multi-Family Design

Ensure that new multi-family development is planned, designed, and constructed to enhance the local area and respect the scale and quality of its surroundings. Encourage designs that:

- Reduce perceived building mass
- Provide variation in rooflines
- Create three dimensional ("articulated") facades rather than large flat facades
- Use landscaping to soften building edges and enhance the natural setting
- Incorporate architectural design and materials that support walkable, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods, including "four-sided" architecture.





New infill housing should be consistent with the scale of existing neighborhoods, while incorporating modern amenities and features.



Residential developments should provide connections to adjacent neighborhoods and parks. For example, the Harvest Court development in Moraga Center included a publicly accessible pedestrian path connecting the end of Willowbrook Lane (shown here) to West Commons Park, Commons Park, and Moraga Road.



The design of multi-family residential developments should strive for high architectural and landscape quality. Through proper site and architectural design, high-density developments like this one in Lafayette can look and feel less dense than they actually are and create a positive, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood environment.
Photo Credit: Contra Costa Association of Realtors, 2024



Policy CD-4.8: Private and Common Open Space

Require usable private open space in new residential development, and common open space in multi-family projects.

GOAL CD-5: COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE AREAS

PROVIDE A STRONGER SENSE OF PLACE AND IDENTITY FOR MORAGA'S TWO COMMERCIAL CENTERS, INCLUDING WALKABLE STREETS, HIGH-QUALITY ARCHITECTURE, AND ATTRACTIVE CIVIC SPACES.

Policy CD-5.1: Design Quality

Improve the design quality of the Town's commercial centers, creating an attractive and inviting environment for shopping, socializing, living, and working. Architectural and site design improvements should support upgrading and modernizing existing commercial space, new housing above active ground floor commercial uses, creation of pedestrian walkways and gathering spaces, outdoor dining areas, and more attractive signage.

Policy CD-5.2: Town Center Improvements

Use street furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, etc.), paving materials, medians, signage, landscaping, lighting, and other physical design features in the town's commercial districts in ways that support the identity of these areas as civic gathering places and "town centers."

Policy CD-5.3: Pedestrian Orientation

Create a strong pedestrian orientation in commercial districts that supports the role of these areas as community gathering spaces and activity centers. Incorporate amenities such as plazas, outdoor seating, street trees, and landscaping to create a safer and more inviting atmosphere for walking. Where pedestrian paths cross parking areas or vehicle lanes, give clear priority to pedestrians through pavement markings, differentiation in the pavement surface, and signage.



Entrances to commercial areas can be enhanced through reconfiguration of parking areas, landscaping, signage, lighting and a stronger pedestrian orientation.



Site design, landscaping, architectural design and other amenities can combine to create a pedestrian-friendly environment that enhances the shopping centers' role as a community gathering place.



Objective Design Standards

For many years, cities and towns relied on discretionary review processes when considering new development projects. These processes allow a Planning Commission or Town Council to use their “discretion” when reviewing a project, sometimes based on personal judgment or subjective criteria such as whether the project reflected the “look and feel of the community.” This led to approval processes that took several years and often resulted in projects being denied, redesigned, or reduced in size.

California’s housing shortage has been attributed at least in part to vague criteria and discretionary processes that add to the cost of construction. Recent State housing laws now require “objective standards” and streamlined processes with fewer public hearings.

Senate Bill 35 defined objective standards as “standards that involve no personal or subjective judgment by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant and the public official prior to submittal.” The Town of Moraga has adopted such standards for Moraga Center and Rheem Park, enabling projects that meet the standards to be approved more quickly.

SUBJECTIVE GUIDELINES

*Lack specificity and may allow
for personal opinion and
arbitrary interpretation*

vs.

OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

*Involve no personal judgment
by a public official and
provide quantifiable direction
for when and how to apply
development requirements.*

Policy CD-5.4: Block and Lot Patterns

Consider realignment of existing blocks, parcels, and parking areas to support infill development in the commercial centers. Use reduced setbacks, wider sidewalks, and other development standards that encourage the placement of buildings closer to the front property line, with parking located to the side or rear.

Policy CD-5.5: Vehicle Access and Circulation

Provide for adequate traffic access, circulation, and parking in the town’s commercial centers. Reduce potential safety hazards by minimizing driveway openings on to public streets, encouraging side street access to commercial developments, and encouraging connections between developments.

(See Transportation Policy T-6 for additional guidance on access and parking)

Policy CD-5.6: Office Development

Direct office development to the Town’s commercial centers. New office buildings, or conversion/replacement of existing office buildings with different uses, should respect the visual qualities of the landscape, reflect the scale and character of adjacent neighborhoods, include pedestrian connections to nearby commercial uses, and create buffers between residential neighborhoods and arterial roadways.

Policy CD-5.7: Moraga Center Design

Facilitate development in the Moraga Center area that supports its role as a mixed-use “town center.” This includes revitalization of the existing shopping center and development of complementary new buildings on vacant and underutilized land. It further includes maintenance and upgrading of the existing buildings, access, signage and landscaping. Use the Moraga Center Specific Plan and Design Guidelines as the framework for redevelopment in this area.



Policy CD-5.8: Rheem Park Design

Facilitate transformation of the Rheem Park area from an auto-oriented commercial center to a mixed-use area including housing as well as shopping, service, office, civic, and open space uses.

(See also Land Use Element implementation programs on Moraga Center and Rheem Park)

Policy CD-5.9: Connecting Moraga's Activity Centers

Encourage and improve access and pathways between Rheem Park, Moraga Center, Saint Mary's College, Hacienda de las Flores, Commons Park, Campolindo High School, and other schools and public facilities.

GOAL CD-6: HISTORIC RESOURCES

PRESERVE MORAGA'S HISTORIC RESOURCES AND RECOGNIZE THESE RESOURCES AS A VALUED PART OF COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND AN IMPORTANT LINK TO THE PAST.

Policy CD-6.1: Designation of Historic Resources

Identify and protect historic resources in the community, including buildings, sites, and other resources that connect residents with Moraga's past. These resources may include:

- (a) Hacienda de las Flores
- (b) Older buildings at Saint Mary's College
- (c) Moraga Ranch
- (d) Moraga Barn

The list of potential resources may be adjusted over time for buildings, sites, natural features (such as heritage trees), and other resources meeting the criteria for landmark designation specified by the Moraga Municipal Code, the

State Historic Preservation Office, and the US Secretary of the Interior. The Town shall maintain a process for nominating resources, incentives for designating and maintaining resources, and procedures for actions that could impact such resources in the future, including correction of unsafe conditions and violations.

Policy CD-6.2: Treatment of Historic Resources

Manage historic resources to support their ongoing maintenance and adaptive reuse, avoid demolition, and ensure that additions and alterations do not compromise historic integrity. Where appropriate, objective design standards and guidelines should address the protection of the character-defining features of historic resources.



*A consistent Mission Renaissance architectural style on the Saint Mary's College campus creates design unity and cohesion.
Photo Credit: Saint Mary's College, 2024*

Policy CD-6.3: Context-Sensitive Design

Ensure that development on sites adjacent to designated historic resources is sensitive to the resource and does not adversely affect contributing historic features. Further ensure that landscaping around historic resources is maintained and updated to complement the resource and be more sustainable.





Hacienda de las Flores is an important historic resource as well as a valued community activity center.

Policy CD-6.4: Spanish Heritage Districts

Consider Saint Mary's College and Hacienda de las Flores to be "Spanish Heritage Districts" for planning and design purposes. In these areas, encourage continued use of the basic elements of "Spanish Heritage" architecture, with flexibility to allow for innovation, variety, contemporary design, and modernization of (or additions to) existing buildings. These elements include:

- (a) simple white stucco walls
- (b) red clay tile roofs
- (c) porches across the building front or side, with or without arches
- (d) arches as an architectural feature over drive-ways and entrances
- (e) buildings adapted to topography, for example through use of terraced gardens and porches
- (f) bay windows
- (g) garden walls
- (h) lattices over carports and porches
- (i) distinctive rooflines with low pitches

- (j) balconies and verandas
- (k) covered walkways and passages (arcades, colonnades)

Within Spanish Heritage Districts, structures, landscaping, and pathways should be maintained and improved in a manner that is complementary with the existing style.

Policy CD-6.5: Agricultural and Railroad Heritage

Recognize Moraga's history as an agricultural community and railroad town in local preservation efforts. Support events that commemorate this heritage, as well as actions that preserve important historic features.

Policy CD-6.6: Public Information on Historic Resources and Preservation

Promote and support educational and informational programs regarding Moraga's history to help residents better understand and appreciate the Town's past and its remaining historic resources.



Policy CD-6.7: Recognition of Potential Historic Resources

Support the efforts of local organizations to maintain and expand collections of historic photographs, artifacts, books, media, oral histories, and other resources, and to make these materials available to the public. Support programs to recognize important sites and structures with plaques and markers, and to support local school efforts to incorporate Moraga history in their curriculum and programs.

Policy CD-6.8: Preservation Incentives

Consider incentives that encourage stewardship of historic resources, such as the use of federal tax programs (Mills Act) and state grants that facilitate preservation and adaptive reuse of older buildings.

Policy CD-6.9: Protection of Tribal Cultural and Archaeological Resources

Coordinate with representatives of the Native American community to protect historic Native American resources and raise awareness of Moraga's Native American heritage. This includes the use of standard conditions of approval in future development projects to ensure that Native American resources are protected during construction.

GOAL CD-7: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

IMPLEMENT DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES THAT REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY.

Policy CD-7.1: Walkability

Locate higher density residential development near shopping and workplaces in ways that facilitate walking and bicycling for shorter trips and support the use of public transportation. Leverage the designation of Moraga Center and Rheem Center as Priority Development Areas to pursue grant funding for "complete street" improvements that make these areas less dependent on private automobiles as the sole means of travel.

Policy CD-7.2: Mixed-Use Development

Strongly support mixed-use development in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas to create opportunities for persons to live, work, and shop in close proximity. Building housing, office, retail, and service uses in a pedestrian-oriented "village" setting can reduce driving time and distance, and result in more sustainable land use and transportation patterns.

Policy CD-7.3: Resource Efficiency in Site Development

Encourage site planning and development practices that reduce energy demand and improve energy efficiency. This includes siting of structures and building design to maximize solar energy heating and cooling benefits, as well as construction methods, building materials, and building improvements that reduce dependence on carbon-based energy sources.





Bioswales in new development can absorb runoff and improve water quality

Policy CD-7.4: Green Building

Strongly support the use of green building techniques in the design, construction, and renovation of new development. The Town itself should lead by example, incorporating best management practices for green building in the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of its own facilities.

Policy CD-7.5: Sustainable Building Materials

Encourage the use of building materials that reduce environmental impacts and the consumption of non-renewable resources. Consider measures that incentivize green building practices and sustainable design, including energy efficiency upgrades.

Policy CD-7.6: Landscaping

Use landscape design to advance Moraga's goals related to aesthetics, sustainability, walkability, climate change, water conservation, hazard mitigation, and biodiversity. Landscaping should control heat build-up from pavement, provide shade, absorb air pollution, sequester carbon, improve visual quality, and enhance wildlife habitat value. The use of native, fire-resistant, drought-tolerant species should be encouraged.

Policy CD-7.7: Cool Roofs and Pavement

Encourage the design of roofs, pavement, and other exposed surfaces in a manner that mitigates the heat island effects of development and improves energy efficiency.

(See also Conservation Element Policy CON-2.7 on Low Impact Development)



5.3 COMMUNITY DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Program CD-A: Residential Design Guidelines

Use the Town's Residential Design Guidelines to inform the public of the Town's design expectations and to evaluate applications for new residential construction and major alterations and additions.

Action CD-A1: Design Guidelines Update.

Update the Town's Residential Design Guidelines to make them more objective and provide greater guidance for multi-family, townhome, small lot, and mixed-use development. The intent of this measure is to improve predictability for applicants and neighbors, clearly state the Town's design expectations, and provide additional guidance for medium and higher-density housing types.

Program CD-B: Objective Design/ Development Standards for Moraga Center and Rheem Park

Continue to implement objective design and development standards for Moraga Center and Rheem Park. Revisit these guidelines at least once every five years to ensure that they are achieving desired outcomes.

Program CD-C: Scenic Corridors

Provide standards and approval procedures for development in Moraga's corridors. Standards should be objective and support the construction of housing as well as reinvestment in existing commercial and residential development along the corridors.

Action CD-C1: Scenic Corridor Revisions.

Update Moraga Municipal Code provisions for Scenic Corridors, particularly as they apply to parcels in Moraga Center and the requirements for review of structures and features within 500 feet of a designated corridor. Ensure that

development standards in the Code, including setbacks and stepbacks, do not preclude achievement of the maximum development envelope that would otherwise be allowed by zoning. Standards should encourage attractive architecture that enhances the visual quality of corridors and support walkability and pedestrian connectivity in the commercial/mixed use districts.

Program CD-D: Design Review

Maintain design review processes and procedures that implement the design goals and policies of the General Plan and Town design guidelines.

Action CD-D1: Procedural Review. *Conduct an evaluation of design review processes and procedures and identify measures to streamline existing processes and reduce applicant expenses. This should include simplifying the process for window replacement and other minor replacement/ repair projects, allowing over-the-counter review or similar processes.*

Program CD-E: Wayfinding, Signage, and Streetscape Plans

Support future development of wayfinding, signage, and streetscape plans to establish a stronger identity for Moraga, highlight and beautify Town entries, support investment in public art and landscaping, and enhance the natural beauty and aesthetic qualities of the Town.

Action CD-E1: Rheem Public Realm Plan.

Develop a public realm plan that contains strategies for design, development, connectivity, and management of Rheem Park's public and outdoor spaces, including streetscapes, landscaping, lighting, infrastructure, and circulation.

Action CD-E2: Landscaping and Lighting Assessment District (LLAD).

Evaluate the feasibility of creating a LLAD to support streetscape and lighting improvements in Moraga Center and Rheem Park.



Action CD-E3: Art in Public Places. Consider revisions to the Town's policies for art in public places, including potential requirements for new development and public art set-asides for future capital improvement projects.

Program CD-F: Utility Undergrounding

Work with Pacific Gas and Electric to convert overhead utility lines to underground lines using Public Utilities Commission Rule 20 funds and other available sources. Place a priority on undergrounding projects in Moraga Center and Rheem Park.

Program CD-G: Wireless Facilities Ordinance

Maintain Municipal Code provisions regulating the location and design of wireless communication facilities, including small cell facilities. These provisions are intended to preserve the visual character of the town and discourage such facilities in residential areas and visually sensitive locations, while complying with federal law and recognizing the benefits of improved wireless infrastructure.

Program CD-H: Water-Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (WELO)

Continue implementation of the State Model WELO, which encourages water conservation through specific standards for landscape installations, including composting and mulch. The Town has codified these requirements in its Municipal Code.

Program CD-I: Historic Preservation Program

Continue to advocate for the protection of historic resources and increased awareness of Moraga's history and historic sites. Maintain the Town's existing historic preservation ordinance and consider additional measures (such as Mills Act contracts) that support preservation and adaptive reuse. Moraga's ordinance was adopted in 2015

and includes criteria for designating resources, procedures for evaluating alterations, incentives for listing, and provisions to avoid demolition by neglect.

Program CD-J: Cultural Resource Protection at New Development Sites

Implement measures to protect potential cultural resources within new development projects in areas where such resources have been identified through a study or are likely to be present. As appropriate, the following measures may apply:

- **Historical and Archeological Resource Surveys.** Prior to issuance of a grading permit in a previously undisturbed area, require a historic and archaeological resources survey. Actions may include but are not limited to avoidance of discovered cultural resources; relocation, rehabilitation, or alteration consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards and/or data recovery mitigation or documentation that offsets the loss of the resource;
- **Protection of Potential Historic and Archaeological Resources.** Retain a qualified cultural resource specialist to conduct site-specific analysis and implement feasible mitigation or avoidance measures for development that may impact a listed, eligible, or potentially eligible historic or archaeological resource;
- **Construction Monitoring.** Retain a qualified cultural resource specialist to monitor construction activities that involve ground-disturbing activities in or around a potentially significant cultural resource.
- **Unanticipated Discoveries.** Suspend earth-disturbing work in the event a cultural resource is identified. Retain a qualified cultural resources specialist to design and implement feasible measures.



Program CD-K: Tribal Cultural Resource Protection

In the event an unanticipated tribal cultural resource is identified during construction, retain a qualified specialist in consultation with an appropriate Native American representative to design and implement a resource treatment plan. Earth-disturbing work within 60 feet of the resource shall be suspended until consultation has occurred and feasible mitigation measures have been designed and implemented.

Program CD-L: Paleontological Resource Protection

Applicants for new construction that would involve ground disturbance in areas known to have a high probability for paleontological resources shall retain a Qualified Professional Paleontologist to determine the project's potential to significantly impact paleontological resources. As appropriate, measures may be prescribed to reduce potential impacts.

Program CD-M: CalGreen

Implement CalGreen building code requirements, including standards for energy efficiency, water conservation, and indoor air quality. CalGreen promotes sustainable practices in new buildings and major renovations to reduce environmental impacts and improve the health of occupants.

(See also Land Use Element programs related to Development Review and Zoning)

Looking south on Moraga Road
from Painted Rock



6

HOUSING

The Housing Element was adopted on January 25, 2023 and covers the time period 2023-2031. The Element was certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development on September 14, 2023. The Element is a separate volume of the General Plan and can be accessed at the following link: www.moraga.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8125/2023-2031-Moraga-Housing-Element-Clean-version-PDF





Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail | Photo Credit: EBRPD

7

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

The Transportation Element includes the Town's policies for roads, intersections, bike paths, and sidewalks. It also addresses issues such as public transit, traffic safety, parking, and transportation technology. While the Element addresses current issues, it also looks ahead to the Year 2040 and evaluates future travel needs.

The overarching goal of this Element is to enhance travel options, safety, and efficiency across all transportation modes—driving, transit, bicycling, and walking—while minimizing greenhouse gas emissions. The Transportation Element aims to improve vehicle travel on streets while integrating more reliable transit, expanding bicycle lanes, and increasing pedestrian facilities like sidewalks and crosswalks. It supports a transportation network that maximizes the safe movement of people using existing infrastructure. This will be accomplished through design improvements that boost efficiency and accommodate all travel modes, as well as programs that reduce the total vehicle miles traveled on the town's roads.

The goals of this Element are closely tied to the Land Use and Housing Elements, which envision additional density in Moraga's commercial areas supported by a safe, multi-modal transportation system. Linking land use, transportation, and housing can create a more sustainable community, and help focus future capital improvement projects.



7.1 MORAGA TRANSPORTATION PROFILE

OVERVIEW

Moraga is served by a transportation system that connects residents to local and regional destinations via roadways, trails, and public transportation. The Town strives to accommodate all modes of travel on its road network by providing for smooth traffic flow, connected pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and a basic level of transit service. The road network is complemented by well-maintained streetscapes, bike lanes and trails, crosswalks, and sidewalks.

Initial plans for Moraga were focused on keeping traffic moving as quickly as possible, usually through traffic signals, turning lanes, and road widening. The current vision responds to State laws which require communities to balance the needs of different modes of travel. This is particularly important in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas, which are envisioned as becoming more walkable neighborhoods. The updated approach also recognizes the needs of Moraga residents, including students, older adults, and people with limited mobility, as well as commuters who could benefit from alternatives to driving alone.

The broader perspective on transportation is also driven by state and regional efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable growth. In 2008, the California legislature adopted SB 375, requiring coordination of land use, transportation, and housing decisions. Practically speaking, this means making better use of existing transportation infrastructure, focusing development in town centers, and making it easier to travel without a car.



Sidewalks and bike lanes allow Moraga Road to accommodate multiple modes of travel

MOBILITY PATTERNS IN MORAGA

Moraga's land use pattern, regional location, low densities, and limited public transit result in driving being the prevalent form of transportation. Based on 2024 Census data, about 77 percent of the town's households owned two or more cars and less than one percent did not own a car. Commute data also indicates heavy dependence on automobiles, although a growing percentage of residents are working from home in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among those who commute, 68 percent drive alone and only 12 percent use transit.

Between 2010 and 2024, the percentage of employed Moraga residents working from home increased from 7.5 percent to 31.5 percent. While this has reduced the aggregate number of vehicle miles traveled by residents, there is still a significant amount of traffic on Moraga Road and Moraga Way during the peak hours. Roughly 54 percent of the town's employed residents work outside of Moraga. In 2024, the mean commute time for Moraga residents was 31.9 minutes, an increase over 2010 (30.1 minutes). About 31 percent of the town's residents commute to jobs outside of Contra Costa County, and 15 percent commute more than an hour each way to their jobs.¹

¹ 2024 data is from the 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) and 2010 data is from the 2006-10 ACS.



Meanwhile, most of the local workforce is commuting in from other communities. The largest employer is Saint Mary's College, followed by the Moraga School District. Other large employers include retail and health care businesses, with a primarily lower- to middle-income workforce.

ROAD NETWORK

Moraga's road network consists of arterial, collector, and local streets. Arterials are major streets carrying traffic to and from freeways, typically with traffic signals at major intersections. Collectors move traffic between arterial streets and local streets, while local streets are designed for limited volume and through-traffic. In Moraga, all three street types provide direct access to individual properties.

Moraga does not have a freeway within or adjacent to its boundaries. State Route 24 is located three miles north of the town boundary and is an 8-lane facility connecting I-580 in Oakland and I-680 in Walnut Creek. There are exits at Moraga Way (Camino Pablo) in Orinda and Central Lafayette that provide access to Moraga. Secondary points of access are available through the Acalanes Road and Pleasant Hill Road exits.

Moraga's arterials are described below and are shown in **Figure 7.1**.²

- **Moraga Road/Canyon Road** is a north-south arterial that includes two-lane and four-lane segments. Moraga Road extends from Mt. Diablo Boulevard in Downtown Lafayette to Moraga Center. The road becomes Canyon Road south of Moraga Center and continues southwest across Moraga Creek to Pinehurst Road and unincorporated Canyon.

- **Moraga Way** extends from SR 24 in Orinda southeast to Moraga, terminating in Moraga Center. The road is two lanes through residential areas and widens to four lanes in the commercial district.
- **Saint Mary's Road** is a two-lane arterial that extends from Moraga Road past Saint Mary's College to southeastern Lafayette. The road provides access to the Reliez/Glenside corridor in the Burton Valley neighborhood, which connects to Olympic Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road.
- **Rheem Boulevard** is a two-lane arterial that connects Glorietta Road in Orinda to Moraga Road at the Rheem Valley Shopping Center. It continues on to Saint Mary's Road.

Figure 7.1 also shows collector streets.

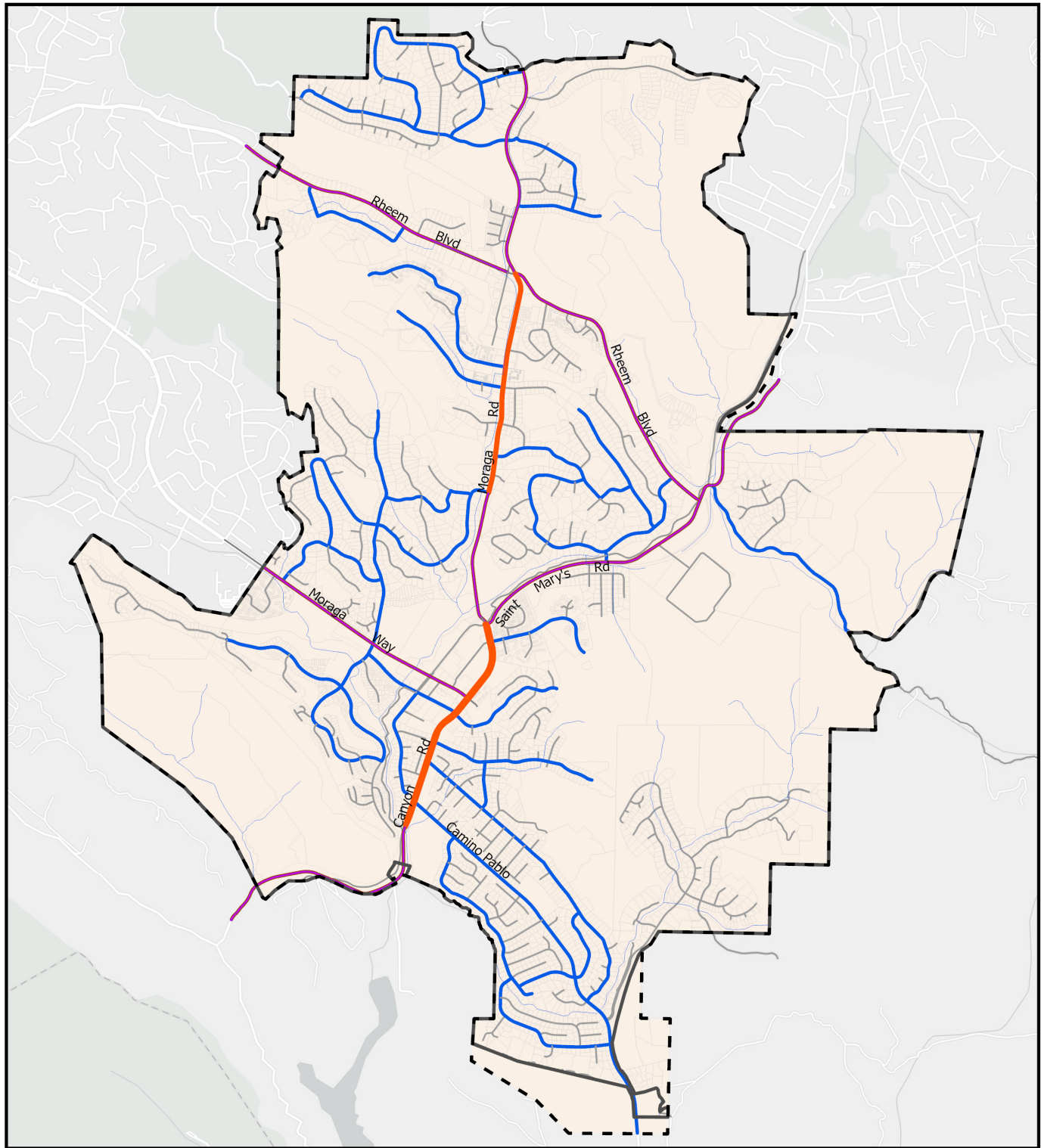
These are typically two-lane streets with lower volumes than the arterials. They sometimes provide the primary points of access into major neighborhoods. All streets not shown in color on **Figure 7.1** are classified as local streets. The town has adopted different engineering standards for each street type. While the prevalence of cul-de-sacs and dead ends has resulted in low traffic volumes on many residential streets, it has also made it more challenging to walk between home, shopping, school, and other local destinations. This General Plan supports greater connectivity in the future, with through-streets and paths that make walking easier. Connectivity also improves emergency response and evacuation capacity.

Figure 7.2 shows average daily traffic volumes in each direction on the arterial street network based on traffic counts taken in 2022. Table 7-1 shows the typical average daily volumes in both directions on these streets. Appendix B lists the arterial and collector streets.

² **Camino Pablo** is a two-lane road connecting southern Moraga with Rancho Laguna Park. It also provides access to Camino Pablo Elementary School, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, and the Larch and Sanders Ranch neighborhoods. In 2021, the Town Council reclassified the road from arterial to collector. Caltrans still classifies the street as an arterial.



Figure 7.1: Circulation Diagram



- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Parcels

- Street Classification**
- 4-Lane Arterial
 - 2-Lane Arterial
 - Collector
 - Residential
 - Sphere of Influence

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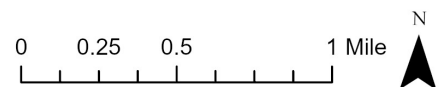
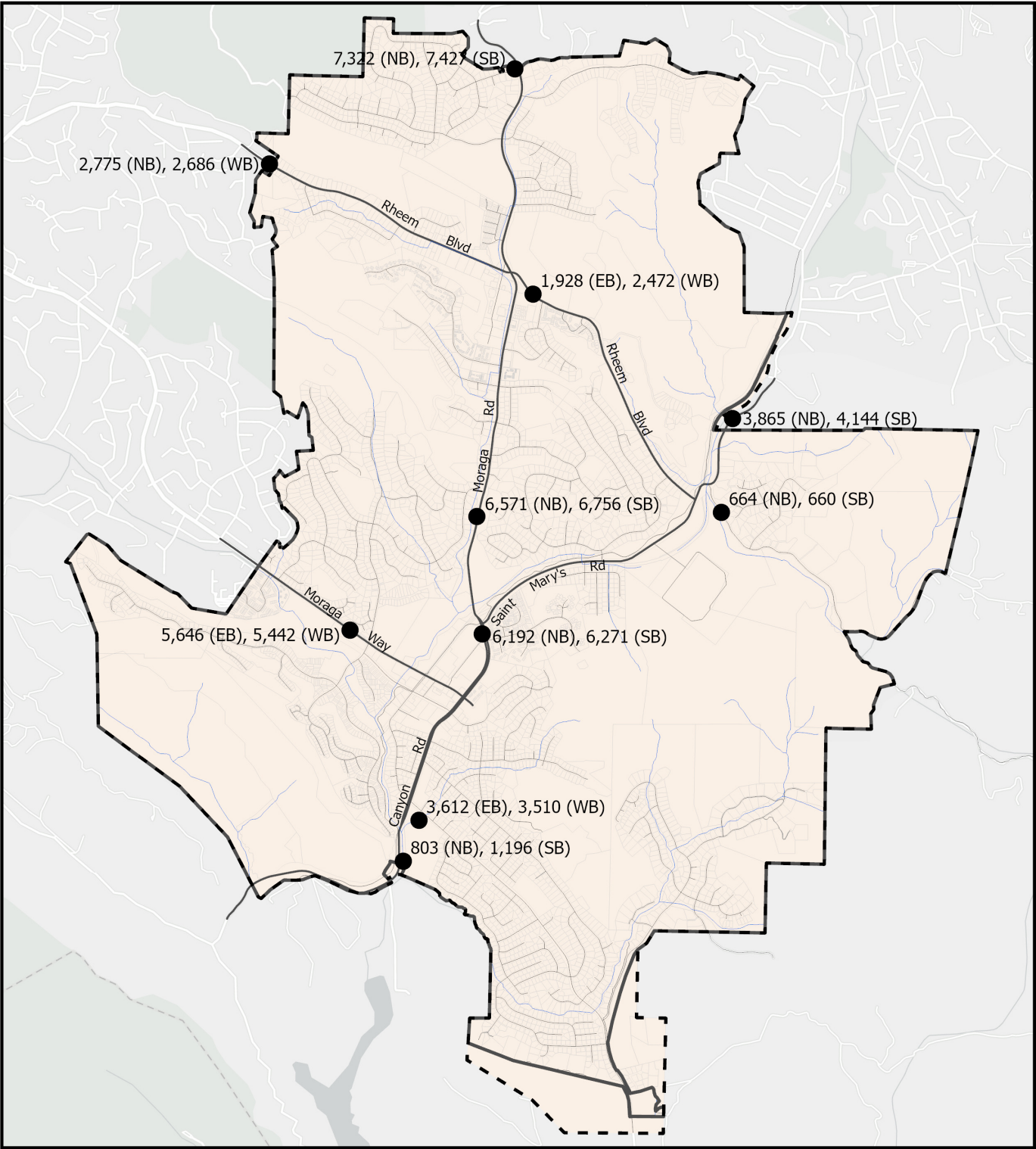


Figure 7.2: Traffic Volumes (2022)



- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels

KEY

(NB), ### (SB)

Average daily traffic (number of vehicles)

Directional flow (northbound, southbound, etc.)

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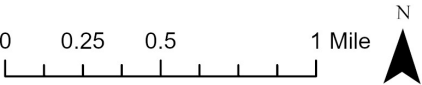


Table 7-1: Average Daily Traffic Volumes (2022)

Moraga Road (at Lafayette city limit)	14,749
Moraga Road (south of Corliss Dr)	13,327
Moraga Road (south of St. Mary's Rd)	12,463
Moraga Way (at Camino Ricardo)	11,088
St. Mary's Road (at Lafayette City limit)	8,009
Canyon Road (at Camino Pablo)	7,122
Rheem Boulevard (at Orinda City limit)	5,461
Rheem Boulevard (east of Moraga Road)	4,400
Canyon Road (near Valle Vista staging area)	1,999

Source: Town of Moraga (Fehr and Peers), 2022

Volumes on the town's arterials range from about 2,000 trips per day on Canyon Road southwest of the town to almost 15,000 daily trips on Moraga Road at the Lafayette border. Moraga Road is the town's busiest arterial, with volumes of 12,000-14,000 vehicles per day between Moraga Center and Rheem Center. Volumes on Moraga Way between Moraga Center and the Orinda border are about 11,000 vehicles per day. Rheem Boulevard and Saint Mary's Road have much lower volumes.

Much of the traffic on Moraga Road and Moraga Way is going to and from Highway 24. Moraga works in tandem with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, Orinda, and Lafayette to develop special plans for these routes to manage congestion and ensure their functionality. Both roads may see increases in volume when there are incidents on Highway 24, occasionally causing traffic delays in Moraga. Both roads also serve high schools, shopping centers, and other traffic generating uses that make them vulnerable to congestion. These two routes are critically important to Moraga, especially in an emergency or evacuation scenario. They provide the primary means of ingress and egress to the town.

LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) AND VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT)

Historically, and consistent with standard practice in most cities and towns, the performance of streets and intersections in Moraga has been expressed through a measurement called "Level of Service" (LOS). In traffic engineering practice, streets and intersections are classified into six "levels of service" reflecting the degree of traffic congestion. Like a lettered report card, streets are graded on a scale from "A" to "F." The grades are based on the volume of vehicles passing through an intersection or along a street segment relative to the design capacity of that street or intersection (this is also called the volume to capacity ratio, or V/C ratio). LOS "A" indicates free flowing traffic with no delays. LOS "F" indicates jammed conditions, with long delays.

In the past, Moraga has used LOS "C" as the benchmark for defining the adequacy of a road's performance during the peak hour. Roads in the Town generally meet this standard today. CCTA has adopted different standards for roads designated as "Routes of Regional Significance" which recognize the higher volumes and more frequent daily congestion on such roadways. Programs in the Lamorinda Action Plan (discussed later in this chapter) are focused on managing this congestion. The Town is also working with Lafayette, Orinda, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, and CCTA to address evacuation needs, trail improvements, and safety issues on a regionwide basis.³

³ The Draft 2023 Lamorinda Action Plan designates Moraga Road, Moraga Way, and Saint Mary's Road as Routes of Regional Significance.





Moraga Way at Camino Ricardo

In 2013, the California legislature passed SB 743, which disallowed the use of LOS standards in environmental review (CEQA) documents. The State requirement was a response to unintended consequences of relying on LOS for decades, namely the continuous widening of roadways and expansion of road capacity. Expanding the road network—in effect making it easier to drive—made it harder to shift trips to public transit, cycling, and walking, leading to urban sprawl and conflicting with the State’s climate change goals.

Jurisdictions are now required to evaluate transportation impacts using a metric called Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). VMT is explained in the text box on the next page. It is based on the amount of driving a project will generate, rather than the amount of congestion it will create. VMT impacts are addressed by identifying alternatives to driving, rather than increasing road capacity. Moraga adopted VMT standards in January 2023, thereby complying with SB 743.

With the shift to VMT, Moraga’s long-range planning policies must identify strategies for reducing the number and length of vehicle

trips made by Moraga residents and workers on a typical day. These strategies include providing more goods and services in the town’s commercial centers to reduce the need to drive out of town, supporting telecommuting and working from home (including local services that make this more feasible), and providing more housing for the local workforce. VMT reduction strategies also include improving public transit, and making walking and bicycling (including e-bikes) a more practical alternative to driving. VMT reduction is also achieved by placing new housing closer to shopping centers and transit, rather than in remote areas where driving is a necessity.

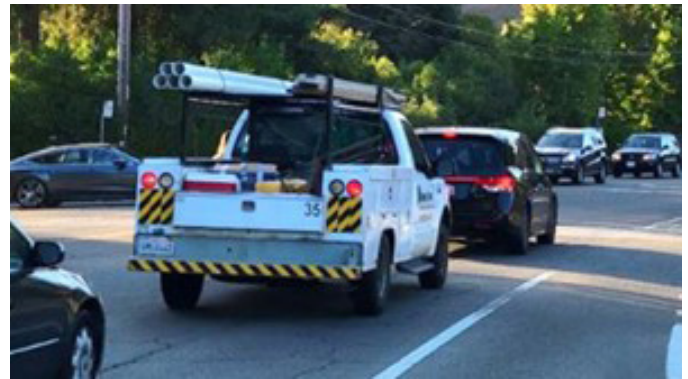
Even with these policies, traffic volumes in Moraga are expected to increase by 2040 as the town adds more homes and jobs. A traffic analysis conducted as part of the 2023-2031 Housing Element found that average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Moraga Road at the Lafayette border could increase by about 10 percent over current volumes by 2040. ADT on Moraga Way (west of Camino Ricardo) and Saint Mary’s Road (at the



Lafayette border) could increase by about 30 percent over current volumes by 2040.

In the 1980s, transportation plans for Moraga envisioned significant changes to the road network, including a new thoroughfare from Orinda's Gateway Valley (Wilder) to Moraga and an extension of Bollinger Canyon Road to San Ramon. These proposed road alignments were largely rescinded in the 1990s due to their potential for environmental and growth-inducing impacts. While improvements of this magnitude are no longer planned, there are still opportunities to address the potential for increased congestion. These include traffic signal improvements, turning lanes, and other intersection and road segment improvements to keep traffic moving safely and smoothly.

One such improvement is the extension of School Street between Moraga Way and Moraga Road. School Street currently ends about 800 feet south of Moraga Road. The extension would align with the existing "T" intersection at Saint Mary's Road and Moraga Road and provide circulation through the Moraga Center commercial area. Other planned improvements are the installation of a traffic signal at Rheem and Saint Mary's Road and potential improvements to the Bollinger Canyon Road/ Saint Mary's Road intersection.



What is VMT?

Vehicle Miles Traveled—or VMT—measures the number of miles traveled by all vehicles in a defined area over a given period of time. It is calculated by adding up the miles driven by all drivers in a city or town over the course of a day, a year, or other period of time. Reducing VMT is beneficial because it reduces the greenhouse gas vehicle emissions that cause global climate change.

VMT is calculated using anonymous data pulled from smart phones and devices with GPS. The data is used to generate maps evaluating the distance, frequency, origin, and destination of trips. Algorithms can be used to predict the VMT that will be generated by a new development project.

VMT is not a measurement of congestion, nor does it measure the effect of a project on nearby intersections or roads. It addresses the impacts of a project at a regional scale, based on the amount of driving it will induce. When development is placed in an urban location next to mass transit, VMT is typically low. When it is placed in low-density or rural areas, it is higher since residents are dependent on their cars and drive longer distances to work, shopping, and school.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission reported that Bay Area residents collectively drove 182 million miles per day in 2019, or about 23 miles per person per day. This dropped to 18 miles per day in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but has increased since then. The State Office of Planning and Research has suggested that new projects should strive for a per capita VMT that is 15 percent below the regional average. This can be achieved by locating new development in places where it is more feasible to walk, bicycle, or use transit for daily trips.



MAJOR CIRCULATION ISSUES

Currently, Moraga experiences congestion on Moraga Way and Moraga Road associated with commuting, school traffic, special events, and traffic incidents on Highway 24. In most cases, adding lanes to these two arterials is not feasible. The Town is instead working to optimize their capacity through “smart” signals that use real time demand data rather than cycling on a fixed time interval. Other strategies to manage demand and direct peak-hour and regional “cut-through” traffic are regularly evaluated. These strategies must address changes in travel demand associated with lifestyle and technology, such as remote work, on-line delivery, and transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft. They also must consider evacuation capacity and emergency preparedness needs.

School campus congestion is an ongoing issue in Moraga, especially during drop-off and pick-up times. Measures to manage congestion are tailored to each campus based on the configuration of road, driveway, and parking areas. Programs such as Safe Routes to School (discussed later in this Element) can encourage walking and bicycling, reducing vehicle trips. There is also a fee-based school bus program serving the Lamorinda communities run by a joint powers authority comprised of Lafayette,

Orinda, Moraga, and the Acalanes Union School District. Parents purchase annual bus passes for particular routes serving elementary schools in the three communities. Schools may also use transportation demand management (TDM) measures such as carpooling to reduce congestion.

Moraga is also working to make its travel system more multi-modal, particularly for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. Multi-modal design promotes sustainability and provides more options for those without access to a vehicle. It also supports transportation safety, since it includes design features that support safer walking and cycling. Goal T-3 of this Element focuses on the concept of “complete streets” and the importance of designing streets for multiple travel modes. These issues are addressed in the following sections of this Element.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK

Walking and bicycling are healthy, environmentally sustainable modes of travel. They promote physical activity, improve the environment, and contribute to neighborhood livability. While walking and bicycling have traditionally been forms of recreation in Moraga, they may also be a viable means of transportation for short trips to

School bus at Rheem Elementary



school, shopping, work, and other destinations. Presently the town lacks a comprehensive and connected network of paths and bikeways. While most of the arterial roads in town have paved shoulders, conditions for pedestrians and cyclists are highly variable.

The Town adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (Walk | Bike Moraga) in 2016 to make walking and bicycling safer and easier. The Walk | Bike Plan included physical projects and programs to address gaps in the existing system and make walking and bicycling safer and more convenient. It responded to community needs, as determined through surveys, workshops, and a segment-by-segment analysis of the existing system. Moraga General Plan 2040 recommends a comprehensive update of the Walk | Bike Plan, providing an updated vision, strategies, and implementation program.

Pedestrian Network

Sidewalks in Moraga are sometimes discontinuous, narrow, or lack curb cuts. This is acceptable in some residential areas given Moraga's lower densities, but it is a potential safety hazard in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas, around schools, and in other areas where high-speed vehicle traffic mixes with pedestrian traffic.

The Walk | Bike Plan acknowledges that it would be prohibitively expensive and even inappropriate to build sidewalks on all streets that lack them. Instead, it recommends sidewalks on about a dozen strategic high-priority roadway segments. These segments total 3.1 miles, with about half on Moraga Road. Many of the priority projects would serve schools or improve access to the town's shopping areas. In addition to sidewalk construction, the Plan calls for improvements such as clearing overgrown vegetation, replacing concrete, and relocating signposts.

The Walk | Bike Plan further calls for intersection improvements where there are long pedestrian crossing distances and fast-moving

traffic. These projects are focused on arterial streets and include recommendations such as textured pavement, pedestrian beacons, flashing digital speed signs, and pedestrian refuges on center medians. Street lighting improvements also are identified.



Bikes share the right of way with vehicles at St Mary's Road and Moraga Road

Bicycle Network

Figure 7.3 shows the recommended bicycle network, including segments proposed for future improvement. This network includes bike lanes, which are dedicated striped lanes within the right-of-way, and bike routes, in which bicycles use vehicle lanes. The bike routes tend to be on lower-volume streets where it is safer to mix vehicle and bicycle traffic. They are sometimes identified with "sharrows," which are pavement markings to alert drivers to the potential presence of cyclists. The text box on the following page highlights the different types of bicycle facilities in a typical network.

In addition to these facilities, the Town's bicycle network includes an off-road path operated by the East Bay Regional Park District called the



Lafayette-Moraga Trail. The trail is 7.65 miles long and connects the Valle Vista staging area on Canyon Road with a staging area near the intersection of Olympic Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road in Lafayette. It was established largely along a former railroad and utility right-of-way in cooperation with the City of Lafayette, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, EBMUD, and PG&E. The Town is prioritizing improvement of regional trail connections through planning, phasing, and funding opportunities.

Several intersections have been highlighted as presenting challenges for cyclists, including:

- Moraga Road at Rheem Boulevard
- Moraga Road at Corliss Drive
- Moraga Road at Saint Mary's Road
- Canyon Road at Country Club Drive
- Saint Mary's Road at Rheem Boulevard

The Walk | Bike Plan includes a menu of potential improvements to be considered for these and other locations. It includes recommendations for bicycle parking improvements, and longer-term projects such as widening the paved shoulders on various streets to accommodate stenciled bike lanes.

Moraga has also identified programmatic measures to support walking and bicycling in the town. These include Safe Routes to School (discussed later in this chapter), better signage, more bicycle-related events, traffic safety and education, and enhanced enforcement. Potential funding sources for these programs, as well as capital improvements, have been identified. The Walk | Bike Plan is intended to have a 15-year horizon, with a Plan update by 2031.

Bicycle Facility Types

Bicycle plans typically identify four “classes” of facilities, as follows:

Class I bicycle facilities consist of completely separate rights of way and are designed for the exclusive use of bicyclists and pedestrians. These facilities provide a safe environment for younger or less experienced cyclists who do not want to ride alongside traffic. An example is the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail.



Class II bicycle facilities provide a restricted right-of-way and are designated for use by bicyclists with a striped lane on the street. Bicycle lanes are generally five feet wide. Examples include Country Club Drive and parts of Moraga Road.



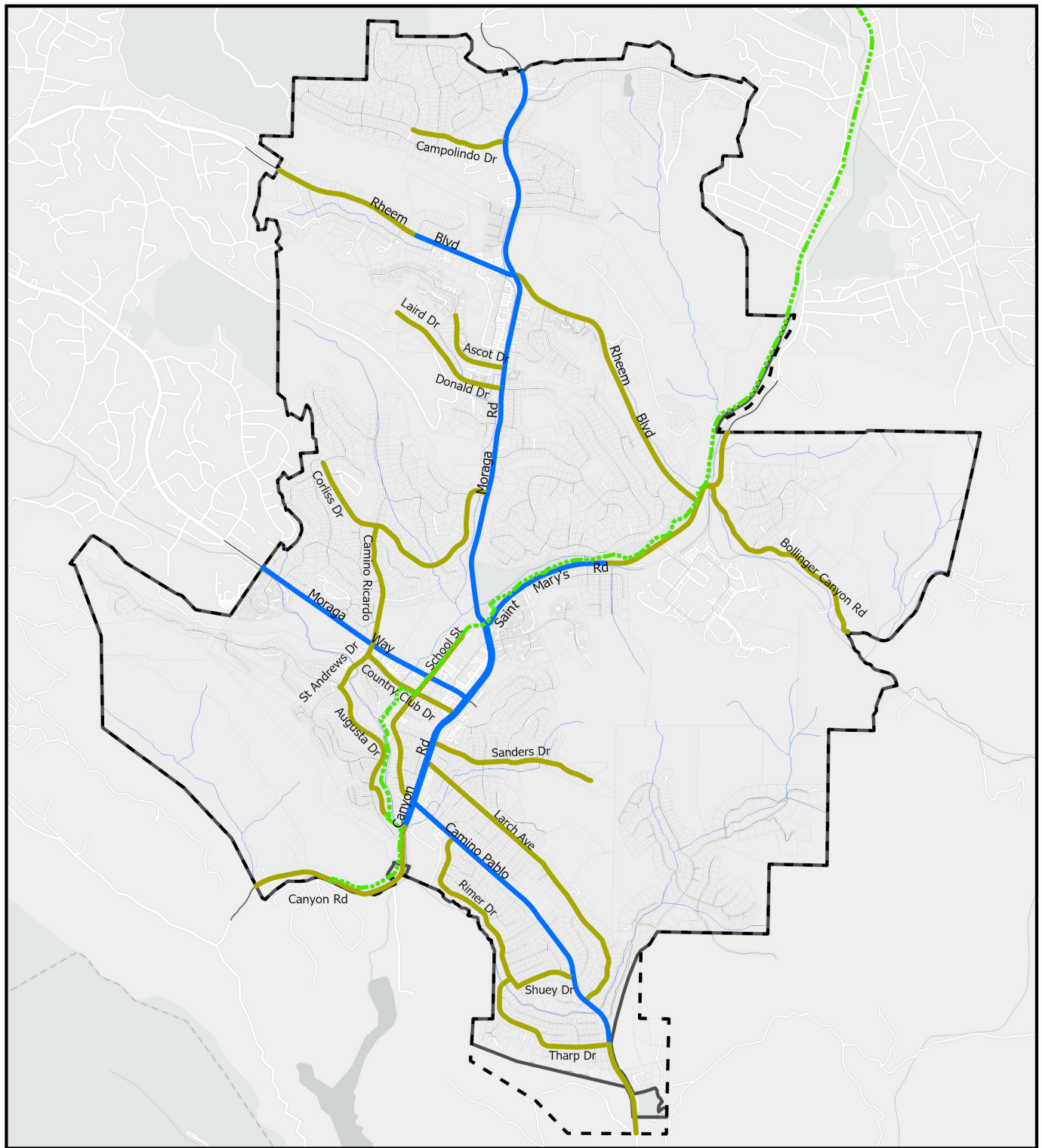
Class III bicycle facilities require bicyclists to share the right-of-way with motor vehicles. These routes may be designated by signs or by “sharrow” markings on the pavement that indicate that bicycles may use the travel lanes. Examples in Moraga include Rheem Boulevard, pictured here.



Class IV bicycle facilities are dedicated bike lanes separated from vehicle traffic by bollards, raised medians, or dividers. They are located on the curb side of parking lanes, offering a higher level of protection to cyclists. There are no Class IV facilities in Moraga at this time.



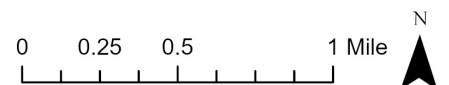
Figure 7.3: Bicycle Network



- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels

- Bike Lanes
- Bike Routes
- Lafayette-Moraga Trail

Town of Moraga, California
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TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT (TSM)

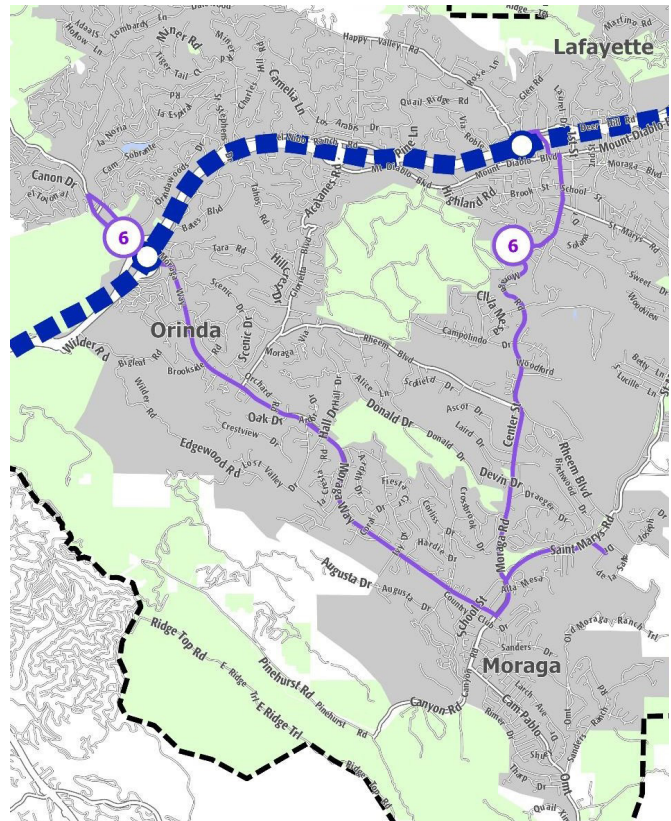
The Town of Moraga has taken steps to make more efficient use of its transportation system and to manage travel demand rather than simply increasing road capacity in response to growth. These steps are collectively referred to as Transportation Systems Management (TSM) measures. As required by the County Growth Management Act, Moraga has had a TSM Ordinance since the 1990s. The current Ordinance (Chapter 12.16 of the Municipal Code) relies on voluntary measures to reduce peak hour traffic rather than mandatory requirements. TSM is also an important part of the Southwest Area Transportation Committee's Action Plan and other transportation plans for the Lamorinda area.

The Town's TSM Ordinance promotes transit, ridesharing, bicycling, walking, flexible work hours, telecommuting and other alternatives to solo driving. Many of these strategies depend upon the participation of private sector employers such as Saint Mary's College and are implemented in partnership with other jurisdictions and transportation planning agencies.

PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE

Local bus service is provided to Moraga by Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA), also known as "County Connection." At the time the 2040 General Plan was adopted, there was a single route connecting Orinda BART to Moraga Center, continuing to Saint Mary's College, then returning to Moraga Center and heading north to the Rheem Valley Shopping Center and onward to the Lafayette BART station. Headways were 30 minutes during the peak hour, one-hour in the off-peak hour, and 80 minutes on weekends. There was no service between 8 PM and 6:15 AM on weekdays or between 5 PM and 10 AM on weekends.

Due to limited funding for transit, it is crucial that solutions are practical and aligned with local needs. In recent years, County Connection service has decreased service to Moraga, while operating costs have increased. Addressing these trends requires innovative approaches that rethink traditional notions of "public transportation." For example, the idea of a public/private shuttle connecting Saint Mary's College, Moraga's commercial areas, and the Lafayette and Orinda BART stations could be revisited.



Transit service to Moraga as of 2024. County Connection Line 6 provides service to the two BART stations. | Source: 2023 Lamorinda Action Plan

As technology advances, new "demand-responsive" services might complement the existing fixed-route County Connection service. Paratransit services (such as the Lamorinda Spirit Van for seniors) can also supplement traditional buses. Making transit more appealing also involves designing well-lit, comfortable bus waiting areas with real-time arrival and departure



information. Service reliability, comfort, and cost are critical factors to increasing ridership.

The Town will continue to advocate for service improvements and additional resources to make transit a more viable alternative to driving. General Plan 2040 focuses future residential development in Moraga Center and Rheem Park, where increased transit service is most practical and cost-effective. Growth in population and employment in these areas could ultimately boost ridership—and service feasibility.

LOCAL ROADWAY SAFETY

According to Moraga’s 2022 Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP), there were 190 vehicle collisions in the town between 2015 and 2019, including 60 resulting in injuries. Most occurred at intersections along the arterial street network. About 15 percent of these collisions involved a bicycle or pedestrian, while 46 percent involved another vehicle and 16 percent involved a parked vehicle. The Town’s LRSP provides a comprehensive analysis of collision locations and circumstances and identifies specific physical improvements to reduce hazards. These include larger stop signs, modified signal phasing at intersections, flashing beacons, improved crosswalks, and nighttime visibility improvements (such as reflectors).

At the Countywide level, CCTA has developed a Transportation Safety Policy and Implementation guide known as “Vision Zero.” Vision Zero is particularly focused on reducing pedestrian and bicycle collisions, both of which have been trending upward over the past several years. Increased safety is achieved by redesigning streets to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, slow down traffic, reduce lane widths, and develop visual cues that allow different modes to share the same space. These cues include more visible bike lanes and more crossing controls and warnings at crosswalks. Safety may also be improved through “road diets” that narrow the

portion of the street used for vehicles, while increasing pedestrian and bicycle space.

The countywide plan recommends that cities and towns in Contra Costa adopt policies to reduce transportation-related injuries and fatalities by implementing best practices or street design. Goal T-1 in the Moraga 2040 General Plan expresses such a commitment.

Improving the safety of children walking and bicycling to school was ranked as a top priority in General Plan 2040 community workshops. Safety improvements are being implemented on Corliss Drive around Los Perales Elementary School and along Moraga Road in the vicinity of Campolindo High School. Typical recommendations include reconstructing sidewalks, improving crosswalk markings, and reducing line of sight obstructions. A similar effort has been underway along Moraga Road for several years, modifying the current roadway design to create a protected multi-use path.

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Because of Moraga’s location, coordinated transportation planning with Lafayette, Orinda, and Contra Costa County is essential. The Town is an active member of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and the Southwest Area Transportation Committee (SWAT). SWAT is composed of elected representatives and technical staff from the Cities of Lafayette, Orinda, and San Ramon; the Towns of Danville and Moraga; and the unincorporated area of Southern Contra Costa County. The Town is also a member of the Lamorinda Program Management Committee and the Lamorinda Fee and Financing Authority.

CCTA implements Contra Costa County Measure J, a one-half cent countywide sales tax that is collected for transportation improvements within the county. Funds collected through Measure J must be spent on projects and programs that



are specifically itemized in CCTA's Transportation Expenditure Plan. About 18 percent of these funds are returned to local jurisdictions in the county for street maintenance and improvements. SWAT also provides funding through a Measure J set-aside known as "28c," a lump-sum allocation for miscellaneous projects in the SWAT area.

CCTA also develops the Countywide Transportation Plan. Moraga participates in the development of this Plan, which is intended to carry out the following countywide goals:

- Support the efficient, safe, and reliable movement of people and goods using all available travel modes
- Manage growth to sustain Contra Costa's economy, preserve its environment, and support its communities
- Expand safe, convenient and affordable alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle
- Maintain the transportation system
- Continue to invest wisely to maximize the benefits of available funding

The CTP incorporates five sub-regional Action Plans for Routes of Regional Significance ("Action Plans"). This is one of the primary vehicles for implementing achieving the Measure J Growth Management Program's goal of reducing the cumulative impacts of growth. Each Action Plan includes assumptions about future growth, multi-modal transportation objectives, and specific actions to be implemented by each jurisdiction. The Lamorinda Action Plan covers Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda.

Like the General Plan, the Lamorinda Action Plan is periodically updated to reflect changing conditions and forecasts. In Moraga, the most recent Plan's focus is on Moraga Road, Moraga Way, and Saint Mary's Road, as well as the Lafayette-Moraga Trail. The Action Plan addresses public transit and active transportation modes as well as vehicle flow in these corridors. It identifies future operational improvements (protected turn

lanes, synchronized signal timing, traffic calming, etc.) to improve roadway efficiency.

"Lamorinda's existing transportation network was constructed primarily with a focus on the efficient movement of vehicles. However, innovation and technology; prioritization of the movement of people (most efficiently transported via transit); considerations regarding the climate and safety; and an increased interest in non-vehicular modes of transportation have made possible a shift to a more dynamic future."

— Draft Lamorinda Action Plan, 2023



Bike path crossing Moraga Road at Saint Mary's Road



7.2 TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL T-1: SAFETY

IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF ALL MODES OF TRAVEL.

Policy T-1.1: Vision Zero

Support the countywide goal of eliminating fatal and serious injury collisions on all roads in Contra Costa County. Prioritize projects that achieve this goal.

Policy T-1.2: Local Roadway Safety

Implement local roadway safety measures that reduce collisions, address road hazards, improve safety for all travelers, and improve emergency response capacity. Consistent with Moraga's Local Roadway Safety Plan, these measures should focus on intersections with the highest collision rates, as well as education on rules of the road and targeted enforcement of traffic safety laws.

Policy T-1.3: School Traffic Safety

Work with the Moraga Union School District and Acalanes Union High School District to reduce school-related congestion and implement programs that facilitate safer walking and cycling to schools. This should include Safe Routes to School initiatives as well as programs to manage student pick-up and drop-off times and locations.

Policy T-1.4: Traffic Calming

Implement measures to reduce speeding and improve safety on residential streets. Examples of such measures include stop signs, reduced speed limits, digital speed indicators, curb extensions, and other physical changes that slow traffic on residential streets. All proposed traffic calming improvements should be reviewed by the Moraga Orinda Fire District during the design phase for

consistency with the Fire Code and emergency vehicle response impacts.

Policy T-1.5: Reducing Road Hazards

Regularly trim vegetation in Town rights-of-way to minimize road hazards and require homeowners to maintain vegetation in a manner that avoids potential sight-line obstructions. Ensure that parked recreational vehicles, trailers, fences, utilities, and other structures do not impact road safety.

Policy T-1.6: Collision Data

Regularly monitor and evaluate road safety and collision data, as well as the effectiveness of measures being implemented by the Town to reduce road hazards. Use the data to update road safety measures and achieve a safer, more efficient transportation system.



Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national public health initiative designed to encourage more children to walk or bicycle to and from school. The program was formed and funded at a national level in 2005 and encourages community-based solutions to eliminate safety risks around primary and secondary schools. SRTS efforts typically involve a combination of education, engineering, and enforcement activities, including programs as well as capital improvements. SRTS programs have been found to significantly increase the number of children walking or cycling to school, while reducing the number of injuries.



GOAL T-2: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

*CREATE A MORE SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
THAT REDUCES GREENHOUSE
GAS EMISSIONS, IMPROVES
AIR QUALITY, AND LESSENS
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.*

Policy T-2.1: Use of VMT in Environmental Review

Maintain local standards for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) that are consistent with County and State standards and support the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Apply these standards as part of the environmental review process as required by CEQA.

Policy T-2.2: Transportation and Land Use

Support land use decisions that reduce the number and length of trips that are made in single passenger vehicles. This includes locating higher-density housing, mixed use development, shopping and employment uses in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas, where walking, bicycling, and transit use can become more feasible. It also includes providing more workforce housing so that those working in Moraga can also live in Moraga, along with more local-serving shopping, services, and restaurants that reduce the need to drive elsewhere.

Policy T-2.3: Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Incentivize measures that reduce peak period travel demand and make it easier to travel around Moraga without driving. These measures include ridesharing, carpooling, shuttles, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, school buses, and better transit, along with support for telecommuting, compressed work weeks, and

home-based employment. The Town will work with 511 Contra Costa and other agencies to promote their TDM-related services at the local level.

Policy T-2.4: Zero Emission Vehicle Use

Encourage the use of electric and other zero emission vehicles, including transitioning the Town's vehicle fleet to renewable energy or electric vehicles wherever feasible. Support similar initiatives when implemented by Moraga businesses and institutions.

Policy T-2.5: Alternative Energy Vehicle Infrastructure

Expand infrastructure that supports zero emission vehicles. This includes, but is not limited to, electric vehicle charging stations and alternative fuel pumps at existing gas stations and Town facilities.

(See also Policy T-6.2 on zero emission vehicle parking)



Charging station at Commons Park



Policy T-2.6: Park and Ride

Support the development of park and ride areas and other facilities that support the use of public transportation, carpools, vanpools, and ridesharing.

Policy T-2.7: Environmentally Sensitive Design

Encourage the use of design features and practices that minimize the environmental impacts of roads and parking lots, including features that minimize stormwater runoff, conserve energy and water, create pollinator and wildlife habitat, and avoid urban heat island effects.

Policy T-2.8: Education and Outreach

Collaborate with transportation agencies, non-profits and advocacy groups that promote alternatives to driving, including walking, ridesharing, public transit, and bicycling.

(See Goal T-5 - Active Transportation for additional policies supporting sustainability)

GOAL T-3: MULTI-MODAL NETWORK

PLAN AND DESIGN MORAGA'S ROAD NETWORK IN A WAY THAT SAFELY ACCOMMODATES ALL MODES OF TRAVEL, PROVIDES MOBILITY FOR ALL TRAVELERS, AND ENHANCES MORAGA'S SENSE OF PLACE.

Policy T-3.1: Complete Streets

Create and maintain "complete streets" that provide safe, inviting environments for walking, bicycling, and transit users, as well as motor vehicles. Consider every transportation project as a potential opportunity to make Moraga's streets safer and more usable for all modes of travel.

(see text box)

Policy T-3.2: Context-Sensitive Transportation Planning

Apply accepted engineering principles in the design, construction, and maintenance of roadways to make them safe for all users. The design of each road segment or intersection also should reflect topography, adjacent uses, and the types of travel modes and trips it will support.

(see also Community Design Element Policy CD-2.5 on directional signage and Goal CD-3 on scenic corridors)



What's a Complete Street?

In 2008, the State of California began requiring all cities and towns to plan for "complete streets" in their General Plans. Complete streets is an approach to designing and building streets that considers the needs of all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders. It also considers the needs of persons of all ages and abilities.

While there is no single prescription for a complete street, some of the important elements include wider sidewalks, bike lanes, and traffic "calming" features that force vehicles to slow down. On higher volume streets, design changes might include pullouts for buses, medians, and curb extensions (also called "bulb-outs") that reduce the distance pedestrians must travel when crossing the street.



Policy T-3.3: Private Streets

At the Town Council's discretion, allow private streets if they are constructed consistent with Town street standards and Complete Streets guidance, are not gated or similarly restricted, and provide their own maintenance and liability coverage.

Policy T-3.4: Residential Arterials

Recognize the dual function of Moraga's arterials as through-traffic routes and residential streets that provide access to individual homes. Use landscaping, signage, driveway standards, speed limits, and setbacks to create an attractive residential environment, and buffer nearby homes from the effects of high traffic volumes. Similarly, new development along arterials should be buffered to reduce noise and other impacts.

Policy T-3.5: Meeting the Needs of All Residents

Design and construct transportation facilities that serve people of all ages and mobility levels, including persons with disabilities, older adults, students, and youth. Ensure compliance with state and federal accessibility rules for new projects so that mobility barriers for persons with special transportation needs are removed.

Policy T-3.6: Engaging the Community

Ensure meaningful and accessible community engagement in the planning and design of transportation improvements and make it easier for the public to participate.

Corliss Drive



GOAL T-4: ROADWAY EFFICIENCY

MAINTAIN A SAFE, EFFICIENT ROAD NETWORK TO ACCOMMODATE TRAVEL TO, FROM, AND WITHIN MORAGA.

Policy T-4.1: Road Hierarchy

Maintain a hierarchy of arterial, collector, and local streets to maximize the efficient flow of traffic (see **Figure 7.1**). Design standards should reflect the function of each road type.

Policy T-4.2: Street Maintenance

Implement pavement maintenance, repair, and reconstruction programs to keep Moraga's roads in good operating condition, improve safety, and reduce long-term repair and replacement costs.

Policy T-4.3: Traffic Flow

Support measures to improve traffic flow and safety at intersections, including the use of signal interconnect projects, sensor-activated "smart" signals, roundabouts at unsignalized intersections, and other best traffic engineering practices.

Policy T-4.4: Priority Projects

Identify priority roadway improvements to guide project funding decisions in the Town's Capital Improvement Program. Projects may include safety-related projects, multi-modal and capacity enhancements, and other types of improvements.

(See the Safety Element for policies related to the resilience of the street network to extreme weather events and natural hazards)

Policy T-4.5: Emergency Preparedness

Maintain and improve roads, trails, and signage in ways that facilitate emergency vehicle access and support evacuation plans. While bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic calming improvements are strongly encouraged, they should not diminish emergency response capacity.

Policy T-4.6: Traffic Studies

Require traffic studies for individual projects with the potential to create safety hazards, increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT) beyond adopted thresholds, or otherwise affect local circulation conditions. Measures to reduce trip volumes or enhance roadway capacity and safety may be required based on project-level analysis.

Policy T-4.7: Development Impact Fees

Require each new development to pay its fair share of the cost of improving the local and regional transportation systems. Use impact fee revenues to implement projects consistent with the Town's Capital Improvement Program and transportation-related plans.

Policy T-4.8: Cut-Through Traffic

Use signage and road design to discourage cut-through traffic and speeding in residential areas, shopping centers, and other locations where motorists may try to avoid congestion by diverting on to other streets.

Policy T-4.9: Technology and Innovation

Monitor the effects of emerging technology on vehicle design, traffic signal design, travel behavior, and transportation needs. Adjust transportation plans, standards, and proposed improvements to reflect best practices.





Moraga Road

GOAL T-5: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

ENCOURAGE WALKING, BICYCLING, AND TRANSIT USE AS A WAY TO REDUCE VEHICLE TRIPS, IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.

Policy T-5.1: Pedestrian Circulation

Provide a safe, continuous, and connected system of pedestrian routes throughout Moraga, including sidewalks, paths, and crosswalks along all principal streets. Pedestrian routes should link residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, community facilities such as schools and parks, and other important destinations.

Policy T-5.2: Bikeway Network

Develop a complete network of on-street and off-street bikeways that connect Moraga's neighborhoods, commercial areas, community

facilities, commuter corridors, and transit hubs. Bikeways should meet the needs of commuters and students, as well as recreational cyclists.

Policy T-5.3: Pedestrian-Friendly Centers

Focus active transportation improvements in Moraga Center and Rheem Park to make these areas more pedestrian-friendly and connected to adjacent neighborhoods. This could include intersection and road design improvements, higher-visibility crosswalks, signage, lighting, pedestrian refuges and medians along wide street segments, curb extensions, audible pedestrian push buttons, and other projects that make it safer and easier to walk and bicycle.

Policy T-5.4: Improving Connectivity

Pursue opportunities for dedicated pedestrian paths and walkways through existing and new development in order to reduce walking distances between residences and key destinations such as schools, parks, and shopping. Such connections should be considered as part of emergency response and evacuation planning.



Policy T-5.5: Regional Trail Access

Improve links between Moraga's neighborhoods and the regional trail system, including hiking trails in regional open spaces and cycling trails that connect Moraga to BART and the surrounding region.

Policy T-5.6: Bike Parking

Support the installation of bike racks in new developments, commercial areas, and at schools, including Saint Mary's College.

Policy T-5.7: E-Bikes and Scooters

Consider the effects of electric bicycles ("e-bikes"), electric scooters, and other micromobility modes on the transportation network, particularly the ways they may impact safety, design, and operations.

Policy T-5.8: Transit Improvements

Encourage the use of transit by Moraga residents, as well those who live elsewhere and commute to work or school in Moraga. Advocate for more efficient, comfortable, reliable and frequent transit service, particularly on routes connecting Saint Mary's College, Moraga's commercial districts, local schools, and the Lafayette and Orinda BART stations.

Policy T-5.9: Transit Infrastructure

Improve provisions for transit users in Moraga, including arterials that are designed to accommodate bus stops, more comfortable and attractive bus waiting areas, and real-time information on bus arrivals and departures. Future development along transit routes should include sidewalks, lighting, and bus stops built to the transit operator's design standards, as warranted by the scale and location of the development.

Policy T-5.10: Access to Saint Mary's College

Work with Saint Mary's College and transit operators to improve access between the college, Moraga's commercial districts, and the Lafayette and Orinda BART Stations. Promote efforts to create shuttle, car share, autonomous vehicle, or circulator bus service between the college and these destinations. Service improvements should be consistent with transit provider bylaws and joint powers agreements.

Policy T-5.11: Paratransit

Advocate for and promote expanded paratransit (e.g., "dial-a-ride") services and other programs that provide mobility to those with special transportation needs.

(See Open Space and Parks Element Goal OSP- 4 for additional policies on trails, including connecting Moraga to the regional trail system)



Photo Credit: VEO

Micromobility

Micromobility devices include e-scooters, e-bikes, and other devices that facilitate short-distance travel. They are increasingly popular for trips to school, work, and transit stops, and may be cheaper and less environmentally impactful than driving. However, these devices bring challenges, including increased potential for accidents and injuries, lack of clear regulation, improper parking, and conflicts with established travel modes such as bicycling and driving.

Communities are adopting a variety of strategies to regulate e-bikes, balancing their benefits with concerns over safety and road use. Some of these strategies include speed limits for e-bikes, classification (to determine where they may be used), limits on use on certain trails or roads, age restrictions, parking regulations. New strategies may evolve as these modes become more popular.



GOAL T-6: PARKING

PROVIDE A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF PARKING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MORAGA RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND INSTITUTIONS.

Policy T-6.1: Commercial Area Parking

Maintain sufficient, convenient free parking in Moraga's commercial areas to accommodate current and anticipated parking needs. Ensure that parking is efficiently used and is sited and landscaped in ways that support complementary goals related to walkability, aesthetics, and greenhouse gas reduction.

Policy T-6.2: Parking Standards

Periodically evaluate parking standards to ensure consistency with State law, emerging technology, vehicle design, business needs, transportation demand management (TDM) programs, and travel behavior. Consistent with State codes, implement measures requiring zero-emission vehicle parking and bicycle parking to be included in new multi-family, commercial, and mixed-use development.

Policy T-6.3: Shared Parking

Encourage shared parking arrangements for uses that have different peak demand characteristics (for instance, daytime office parking that can be used in the evening by restaurants).

Policy T-6.4: Parking Impacts

Carefully evaluate the potential impacts of new development on parking, particularly "overflow" impacts on neighborhood streets. To the extent permitted by law, require new development to include parking management measures that avoid adverse effects on neighborhood character and safety.

Policy T-6.5: Loading Areas

Regulate deliveries and the location of loading areas in a manner that minimizes congestion, reduces visual impacts, and avoids conflicts with customer and employee trips.

Rheem Valley Shopping Center parking



GOAL T-7: REGIONAL COORDINATION

IMPROVE MOBILITY AND ACCESS BETWEEN MORAGA, LAFAYETTE, ORINDA, AND THE REGION.

Policy T-7.1: Regional Collaboration and Problem Solving

Work collaboratively with Lafayette, Orinda, the Contra Contra Transportation Authority (CCTA), and local transit agencies to address mutual transportation issues, including traffic congestion, safety, evacuation, and reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions in planning and approving new development so that cumulative effects on congestion are considered and appropriately mitigated.

Policy T-7.2: Routes of Regional Significance

Work collaboratively with other Lamorinda jurisdictions and agencies to plan for improvements to Moraga Road, Moraga Way, and Saint Mary's Road. This includes development and implementation of subregional "Action Plans" that address all modes of travel along these corridors and identify potential funding sources for their improvement.

Policy T-7.3: Evacuation Planning

Coordinate with Lafayette, Orinda, and appropriate county and regional agencies to assess evacuation needs and develop plans and programs that improve efficiency and safety in the event evacuation is required.

7.3 TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Program T-A: Capital Improvements Program

Use the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to budget for and manage the design and construction of transportation projects and other infrastructure projects over the lifetime of the General Plan. Key transportation improvements requiring funding in the coming years include:

- School Street extension to the intersection of Saint Mary's Road and Moraga Road
- Saint Mary's Road intersection improvements at Bollinger Canyon Road and Rheem Boulevard
- "Smart" traffic signal improvements
- Complete Streets improvements (Camino Pablo, Moraga Road/Canyon Road, Moraga Way, Saint Mary's Road, School Street)
- Corliss Drive Safe Routes to School
- Minor Traffic Safety Program
- Annual Street Repairs
- Pavement Rehabilitation

Action T-A1: Transportation Action Plan.

Prepare a "Transportation Action Plan" (TAP) to coordinate ongoing transportation initiatives, prioritize activities and programs, engage the community, and close any identified gaps in the Town's transportation planning initiatives. An important focus of the TAP should be to strategically position the Town for grant funding and to address cost and financing issues related to major infrastructure projects.



Aligning the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) with Transportation Priorities

General Plan 2040 includes a comprehensive set of goals and policies that align the CIP and decisions about future development with Moraga's transportation priorities. These priorities correspond to the seven goals of the Transportation Element and include:

- Improving the safety of all modes of travel
- Creating a more sustainable transportation system
- Planning and designing a multi-modal network that improves mobility for all users
- Maintaining an efficient road network
- Encouraging active transportation and transit to reduce vehicle trips
- Providing a sufficient parking supply
- Improving regional mobility and coordination

The CIP and future development should support Moraga's transportation networks by promoting safety, efficiency, and sustainability for all modes of travel. Improvements should promote a reduction in vehicle trips and enhance environmental quality, walking, bicycling, transit, and trail use.

Program T-B: Evacuation Planning

Implement and periodically update plans for safe, orderly evacuation in the event of an emergency. Such plans should consider evacuation time, responses, and strategies under different scenarios, and should account for anticipated local and regional growth and road capacity.

Action T-B1: Evacuation Plan. *Actively participate in the 2025-26 Contra Costa Transportation Authority Evacuation Study and use the outcomes of this study to inform future land use, transportation, and emergency preparedness decisions. CCTA will conduct local-level evacuation compliance assessments and a high-level evacuation route capacity, safety, and viability analysis for the county that includes the 19 cities/towns and unincorporated areas. These evaluations are intended to comply with*

California SB 99 and Assembly Bill 747— state laws requiring evacuation planning in the case of wildfires and other hazards. The Town will facilitate opportunities for local public involvement in this process.

(See Safety Element Goals S-1, S-3, and S-7, and Programs S-A, S-B, and S-C for related measures)

Program T-C: Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP)

Continue implementation of the adopted LRSP. The LRSP identifies location-specific and systemic safety improvements throughout the Town. The Town is utilizing Federal and State Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) funds to design and construct these improvements. Projects that cannot be funded through the HSIP program may become future CIP projects.

Action T-C1: Traffic Calming Design

Guidelines. *Develop guidelines for neighborhood traffic calming projects for future consideration by Town Council.*

Program T-D: Walk | Bike Plan Implementation

Continue implementation of the Walk | Bike Plan (WBP). The WBP is Moraga's bicycle and pedestrian master plan and includes recommendations for capital improvements and programming to make walking and cycling in Moraga safer and more convenient. While the current Plan was forward-thinking at the time it was adopted, it should be updated to reflect emerging issues and priorities.

Action T-D1: Walk | Bike Plan Update.

Update the Walk | Bike Plan to identify future needs, improvement types, incorporate related efforts such as Livable Moraga Road, and standardize designs.



Action T-D2: Trail System Expansion. Apply for Regional Measure 3 Safe Routes to Transit & Bay Trail (SR2TBT) grant funding to study—and then develop—improvements to the Lafayette Moraga Trail, including spur trails to Moraga neighborhoods.

(see also Program OSP E-2 in the Open Space and Parks Element)



A Town-sponsored bicycle safety event

Program T-E: Livable Moraga Road (LMR)

Pursue funding to implement the Livable Moraga Road (LMR) concept plan. LMR is a community-based plan for Moraga Road, looking at ways to improve the function, character, and livability of the corridor between Campolindo High School and Saint Mary's Road. A concept for LMR was initially adopted by the Town Council in 2016.

Program T-F: Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

Continue implementation of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. SRTS is a nationwide initiative designed to encourage and enable students to walk and bike to school safely through improved infrastructure, education,

and community engagement. The Town will also support educational initiatives on traffic safety, particularly around schools.

Action T-F1: Field Audits and Assessments.

Conduct field audits and assessments at each Moraga school to identify improvement needs and projects. The assessments can be used to seek grant funding and prioritize Town improvements and projects.

Action T-F2: SRTS Street Mapping and Safety Improvements.

Develop street maps and SRTS improvement programs for individual campuses.

Program T-G: Engineering Review of Development Applications

Engage the Town's Public Works and Engineering staff in the review of development applications to ensure that impacts on traffic, parking, and circulation are considered and mitigated as appropriate.

See also Action LU-B.4 (Land Use Element) on parking standards

Program T-H: Traffic Studies

Require traffic impact studies as part of the development application process in a manner that is consistent with the technical guidelines published by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). As appropriate, this should include requirements for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis for projects that exceed Moraga's VMT screening criteria. Projects resulting in significant VMT impacts shall incorporate measures to reduce VMT. For interjurisdictional consistency, the CCTA travel demand model should be used for traffic analysis purposes.

Action T-H1: Local Traffic Assessment

(LTAs) Guidelines. Utilize CCTA's guidelines to develop local guidelines for development-related traffic impact analyses, including guidelines for calculating VMT. As appropriate, LTAs may also address ingress/egress, safety, the need for physical improvements, level of service (LOS), and other site-level impacts.



Program T-I: Traffic Impact Fees

Continue to collect traffic impact fees to secure a portion of the revenue necessary for construction and implementation of improvements necessary to accommodate the traffic volumes generated by new development.

Program T-J: Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Ordinance

As required by County Measure J, maintain TSM provisions in the Moraga Municipal Code (see Section 7.2 for a description of this program).

Program T-K: Pavement Management

Maintain a pavement management program to identify and prioritize maintenance projects in the Town's Annual Budget. Maintenance should also include regular bike routes to address potential safety hazards.

Program T-L: Traffic Monitoring

Monitor the traffic levels on major arterial roads and the intersection capacity at the Town's signalized intersections. Use this data to identify trends and inform transportation plans and pavement management schedules. Additionally, monitor collision data to inform prioritization of traffic safety improvements.

Program T-M: Public Works Engineering Standards

Implement engineering standards for roads, bike lanes, sidewalks, and paving that are consistent with best practices, ensure public safety, and support the Town's sustainability goals. Standards should address road and lane widths, turning radii and geometrics, maximum grades, and other features that ensure safe efficient operation of the road system.

Action T-M1: Street Cross-sections. Prepare street cross-sections illustrating Town standards for arterial, collector, and local streets.

Program T-N: Transit Improvements

Continue to evaluate opportunities to improve transit service to Moraga, including working with County Connection to implement improvements to the local bus system. Explore opportunities to increase daily service and provide transit amenities such as real-time information on bus arrivals and departures and timed connections at BART stations.

Action T-N1: Lamorinda Service Plan Update. Work with Lafayette, Orinda, CCTA, and County Connection on an update of the 2015 Lamorinda Service Plan.

Program T-O: Special Needs Transportation

Continue to work with County Connection and local nonprofit organizations providing special transportation services to meet the needs of older adults and others with mobility limitations. These services include CCCTA's LINK paratransit service, the Lamorinda Spirit Van, and Mobility Matters.

Program T-P: Lamorinda Transportation Planning

Participate in multi-jurisdictional transportation planning, including coordination with Lafayette and Orinda on circulation and traffic issues such as evacuation, congestion management, bike route planning, and transit service improvements. This includes participation in the Southwest Area Transportation Committee and the Lamorinda Planning and Management Committee, including collection of the Lamorinda Transportation Impact Fee for regional improvements.

Action T-P1: Lamorinda Action Plan.

Participate with Lafayette, Orinda, and CCTA in the implementation of the Lamorinda Action Plan.

(See also Community Design Element Program CD-E on signage, wayfinding and streetscape planning)



Program T-Q: Street Light and Median Enhancement Assessment District Program

Expand and enhance the Town of Moraga's Street Lighting District 1979-1. This is a property tax-based assessment district that funds the maintenance, repair, and utility bills for 1,054 street light fixtures on poles in public and a limited number of private streets in Moraga. An expanded and enhanced Street Light and Median Enhancement Assessment District would provide additional program services and benefits. This new program includes: 1) developing revised Townwide standards for street lighting fixtures in residential and commercial areas for improved safety, operating cost reductions and efficiency; 2) annexation of more residential and commercial properties into an enhanced Street Lighting District to provide additional street lights where none currently exist, and 3) implementing median beautification, safety, and maintenance improvements for street medians. The program would be financed through property tax assessments for the new Street Light and Median Enhancement Program.







Outdoor dining in Moraga Center

8

ECONOMIC VITALITY ELEMENT

The goal of the Economic Vitality Element is to revitalize Moraga's commercial districts in ways that support existing businesses, attract new business, provide goods and services for Moraga residents, improve the Town's fiscal health and stability, and create vibrant, attractive places to live, work, dine, and shop. The Town has a unique opportunity to transform its two commercial centers in ways that strengthen Moraga's sense of place and create a more complete community.

Improving economic vitality will make everyday activities, like dining out or shopping for groceries, better for residents. It will also increase Town revenues and the ability to maintain services like road repairs and public safety. Importantly, a more economically vital community also means better conditions for local businesses, more investment in Moraga, and increased eligibility for grants and new funding sources.

This Element advances policies around five key goals. These goals are to be a business-friendly community, attract new businesses to meet local needs, strengthen Moraga's identity as a college town, modernize the commercial districts, and promote fiscal stability. A combination of strategies is presented, providing a bridge between economic vitality and other elements of the General Plan such as Land Use, Community Design, Sustainability, and Transportation.

Summer concert at Commons Park



8.1 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Data in this section is excerpted from the Moraga General Plan Economic Vitality White Paper, an inventory of economic conditions in Moraga in 2024. The White Paper is a companion document to the General Plan and may be consulted for more information. The data below and in the White Paper may be periodically updated to reflect changed conditions and emerging trends during the lifetime of this Plan.

JOBS IN MORAGA

Census data from 2022 indicated there were 5,700 jobs in Moraga and 7,400 employed residents. The town is a net “exporter” of workers, meaning that more people leave Moraga to go to jobs in other cities than arrive to work at jobs in Moraga.

Moraga residents are predominantly employed in health care, educational services, professional, scientific, and management positions. Many households have two income earners and household incomes are well above the county and regional medians. By contrast, many of the jobs in Moraga are associated with retail sales, food service, child or adult care, and education, including public schools and Saint Mary’s College. Many of these jobs pay relatively low wages,

Rheem Park Commercial Area



making it difficult for the local workforce to find housing in Moraga. In 2018, 70 percent of all jobs in Moraga paid wages that were below \$75,000/annually.¹ The annual income required to afford the median priced home in Moraga is approximately \$450,000, making local home ownership impossible for much of the workforce.

The largest employers in Moraga are Saint Mary’s College, the Moraga and Acalanes School Districts, and the Town of Moraga. Data from the US Economic Census indicates that there are also over 200 private businesses, most of them clustered in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park commercial districts. According to the US Economic Census, Moraga has about 435 retail jobs, 285 food service jobs, and nearly 600 jobs in the health care and social service sectors.

RETAIL SPACE

Moraga has about 450,000 square feet of retail space, mostly in two shopping centers along Moraga Road. The Rheem Valley Shopping Center, developed in 1957, was one of the first large shopping centers in Central Contra Costa County. The Moraga Shopping Center, built in 1964, is about 1.7 miles south of Rheem Valley. Both centers are surrounded by other commercial businesses, including general merchandise stores, self-storage, a fitness club, a movie theater, gas stations, and several restaurants.

Retail space needs are changing due to global and national factors. Online shopping has grown significantly, with e-commerce sales increasing from 5.6% of all sales in 2013 to 15.3% in early 2023 and expected to surpass 20% by 2027. While some retail sectors like groceries and pharmacies remain strong, others, such as department stores and apparel shops, have struggled. Today’s successful retail environments focus more on experiences and entertainment rather than just the purchase of goods and services.

¹ American Community Survey, 2022, BAE, 2023



Moraga's retail sector is adjusting to these changes but is behind larger markets like Lafayette and Walnut Creek. At the local level, the Rheem Valley Shopping Center is a larger economic generator than the Moraga Shopping Center. In 2023, Rheem Valley had nearly six times the number of annual visits and three times the number of visits per square foot compared to Moraga Center. Rheem Valley Shopping Center features more national chain stores, while Moraga Center has more locally-owned businesses.

To address these challenges, the Town is working with property owners and tenants to modernize the shopping centers, improve infrastructure, and explore funding opportunities. Plans include a new grocery store at Rheem Valley and future mixed-use development, including housing. At Moraga Center, the Town is helping implement the Moraga Center Specific Plan. The Plan envisions a "Main Street" environment that expands existing retail and office space, adds new housing, and becomes Moraga's Downtown.

OFFICE SPACE

The General Plan land use inventory identified about 150,000 square feet of leasable office space across 20 buildings, with one-third in Rheem Park and the rest in Moraga Center. This excludes administrative offices for the Town of Moraga, Saint Mary's College, schools, and local retailers. Most of Moraga's offices were built in the 1970s and 1980s. Office buildings in the town are typically one- or two-story with surface parking and landscaped grounds. Most buildings have 4,000 to 10,000 square feet of floor space.

Moraga did not suffer high vacancies during the COVID 19 pandemic to the extent that larger markets such as Walnut Creek and Concord did. While the regional office markets are geared to corporate tenants, Moraga's office space market primarily serves small businesses such as dentists, accountants, realtors, engineers, architects, insurance brokers, and small consulting firms. Local offices provide a resource

for Moraga residents operating small businesses near their homes, and professionals providing services to Moraga residents. Given its distance from freeways and BART, the town is less well-positioned for larger firms and headquarters-type operations.



Moraga office space on Country Club Drive

HOSPITALITY

There are no hotels or motels located in Moraga or Orinda. In 2024, the only hotel in the three Lamorinda communities was the 138-room Lafayette Park Hotel in Lafayette. The largest concentration of hotel rooms in Central Contra Costa County is in Walnut Creek, with additional hotels along the I-680 corridor extending north through Pleasant Hill and Concord.



Chart 8-1: 2023 Retail and Food Taxable Sales by Jurisdiction, Central Contra Costa County

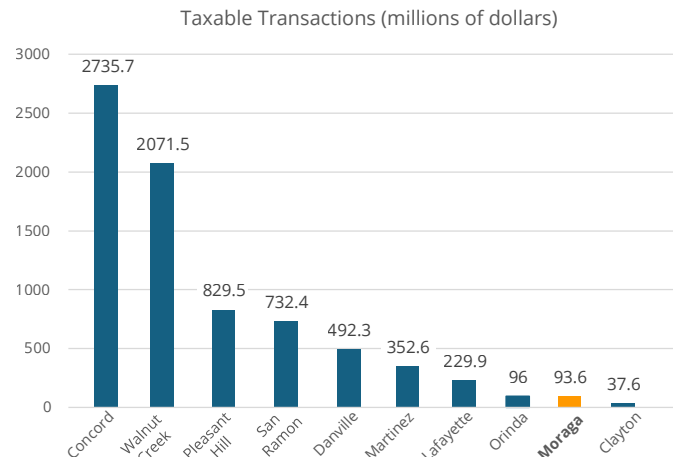
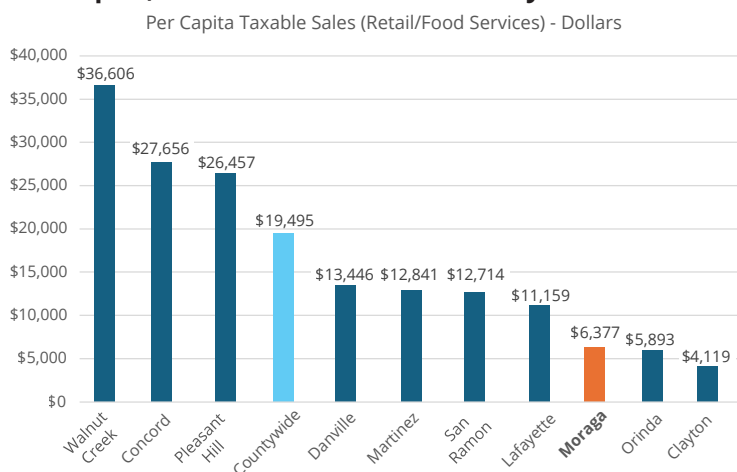
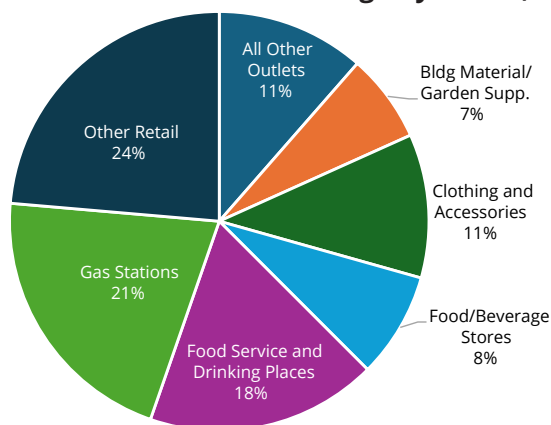


Chart 8-2: 2023 Retail and Food Taxable Sales Per Capita, Central Contra Costa County



California Dept of Tax and Fee Administration, Taxable Sales by City (2024), State Dept of Finance (2024)

Chart 8-3: Taxable Sales in Moraga By Sector, 2022



California Dept of Tax and Fee Administration, Taxable Sales by City (2024), State Dept of Finance (2024)

8.2 SALES TAX ACTIVITY AND LEAKAGE

Charts 8-1 and 8-2 show a comparison of sales tax volumes among Central Contra Costa cities and towns in 2023. Chart 8-1 shows total sales for all taxable transactions by jurisdiction. The highest grossing cities are Concord and Walnut Creek. Chart 8-2 shows total sales per capita, providing a more meaningful analysis of the data that accounts for population size. The highest sales per capita figures are in Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill.² Chart 8-2 also includes the Contra Costa countywide average as a benchmark.

The data indicates that Moraga's retail and food services sector is underperforming relative to the county as a whole. Among the 10 cities in the central part of the County, only Clayton had a smaller volume of taxable retail sales than Moraga. Moraga's total sales were slightly lower than Orinda's, though on a per capita basis they were slightly higher. Still, the sales volume of \$6,377 per capita in Moraga was substantially lower than Lafayette (\$11,159) and less than half of Danville (\$13,466). Even Lafayette and Danville are below the countywide average (\$19,495), reflecting their roles as community-focused markets rather than regional centers.

Moraga has also seen a decline in sales tax revenue over time, with taxable sales declining by 7.7 percent between 2015 and 2023 when adjusted for inflation. Clothing and accessory sales in Moraga declined by 11 percent and food sales declined by 13 percent during this period. These declines are not unique to Moraga, as retailers faced the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021 and continue to be challenged by on-line sales and changing consumer habits. Nearby cities such as Lafayette, Danville, and Orinda also saw declines in sales tax revenue during this period.

² Sales per capita represents the total sales expenditures in a jurisdiction divided by the population of the jurisdiction. It is a common measure of the standard of living in an economy.



Chart 8-3 shows the source of Moraga's sales tax revenue in Moraga by retail sector. About 21 percent of Moraga's sales tax revenue comes from gasoline, and 18 percent comes from restaurants. Only 8 percent comes from grocery stores, while 11 percent comes from clothing and accessories. About 8 percent comes from building materials and garden supplies. Roughly 24 percent comes from "other retail" sales, a category that includes general merchandise, motor vehicles, automotive products, home furnishings, and other miscellaneous items.

Moraga has a smaller share of restaurant and grocery sales compared to nearby communities. These sectors represent 26 percent of sales tax revenue in Moraga, compared to 40 percent in Lafayette and Orinda. Conversely, Moraga has more sales tax generated by clothing and accessories than the other two Lamorinda cities, as well as the County as a whole. The Town's gas stations represent a slightly higher percentage of total sales tax than Lafayette and Orinda, and more than double the percentage for Contra Costa County. Building materials and garden supplies are comparable to the countywide average.

An analysis of retail "leakage" conducted as part of the General Plan Update found that Moraga is capturing only about 33 percent of the retail and food service expenditures made by its residents. Many residents travel to Lafayette, Walnut Creek, and other nearby cities for dining, shopping, and entertainment. During the General Plan outreach process, community members shared their aspirations for more dining choices, grocery stores, and retail options in Moraga, as well as more attractive retail environments featuring amenities such as outdoor dining, entertainment, and activities for children.

The retail leakage analysis identified potential for additional food and beverage sales, home furnishings, and general merchandise in Moraga. Feedback from residents likewise suggested demand for a variety of business types

(bookstore, café, florist, brewpub, etc.). There is also untapped potential for businesses catering to Saint Mary's College students, faculty, and staff.

8.3 LOOKING AHEAD

The intent of the Economic Vitality Element is to define a path forward in response to the economic challenges and opportunities facing Moraga. Challenges include an underperforming retail sector, outdated commercial space, and aging infrastructure. Opportunities include high disposable income, available land, a safe, family-oriented atmosphere, and a population that is generally supportive of (and even actively advocating for) private investment in the two centers.

The Town is working proactively with the business community, property owners, and residents to revitalize Moraga's shopping centers and create commercial districts that are attractive, vibrant, and fun. Placemaking is an essential part of the Town's economic development strategy. Moraga's shopping districts should be more than transactional places for day-to-day purchases—they should be the heart of community life. Design elements such as landscaping, lighting, outdoor seating, common space, walkability, and architecture should strengthen Moraga's character and image as a great place to shop and dine.

Commercial space for lease at the Rheem Valley Shopping Center





Athletic events at Saint Mary's College bring thousands of visitors to Moraga

The addition of new housing in the two commercial centers over the next decade will create further opportunities. New residents will drive demand for additional retail, dining, and entertainment options. Many of these residents will be able to walk or bicycle to shops, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Free parking will continue to be available, making the centers a convenient destination wishing to drive or living further away.

As the home of Saint Mary's College, Moraga has a unique opportunity for marketing, branding, and collateral economic benefits. In 2023, the college employed about 700 people and had an enrollment of more than 2,800 students. The campus draws significant numbers of visitors to special events and athletic activities. This presents the potential for complementary activities serving students, staff/faculty, and visitors, including casual dining, live music or arts venues, entertainment, and youth-oriented shopping experiences. Such businesses could solidify Moraga's identity as a college town while enhancing the student experience at Saint Mary's and creating new local activities for residents.

Moraga can also benefit from the growing share of the workforce that is working from home. Former Moraga commuters who once fueled demand for restaurants, business services, and shopping in places like Downtown San Francisco and Oakland are now spending their daytime hours in town. Future activities could include co-working and mobile office space as well as new restaurants, brewpubs, health and fitness establishments, and business-focused services in the two commercial centers.

Given its high disposable income, Moraga is also well positioned to attract businesses that sell experiences rather than simply merchandise. Day spas, restaurants, family-oriented entertainment centers, and similar activities can enliven existing shopping centers and provide collateral benefits for existing businesses. Major property owners will need to adapt their retail centers – including parking areas, tenant spaces, loading areas, and internal circulation – to make them more attractive and functional. Features that contribute to the shopping experience, such as public art, landscaping, and common open space, will become more critical. The Town can support



these efforts through planning, public works, and capital improvement programming.

At Rheem Valley Shopping Center, Center Street could be transformed from what is effectively a parking aisle into a real “Main Street” with outdoor dining, plazas, entertainment, and residential uses above active ground floor uses such as restaurants and shops. At Moraga Center, the 2010 Specific Plan laid out a vision for a “town center” north of Safeway, including an extension of School Street with mixed use development on both sides. These spaces can be uniquely designed and branded to differentiate Moraga from Lafayette, Orinda, and other nearby downtowns.

Office space is expected to remain an important component of Moraga’s commercial centers in the future, despite the trend toward telecommuting and working from home. The town is well-positioned to capture demand for executive suites serving local professionals, medical practitioners, and service providers. There may also be growing demand for space serving residents who work from home but

need the amenities and services of an office on a temporary or part-time basis. This could include coworking space, shared office space, or space with features such as gyms, coffee shops, and childcare. The General Plan also promotes expansion of the hospitality sector, including a small hotel and/or other types of specialty lodging.

The Town will continue to make sure its zoning and permitting processes support these activities. It will also look for grant opportunities and financing tools that can help catalyze private investment. Potential financing tools could include Business Improvement Districts, Community Facilities Districts, Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts, Community Revitalization and Investment Authority Districts, and Economic Resiliency Districts, among others. As noted in the Implementation section of this Element, an Economic Development Strategy is recommended to determine next steps, including actions related to funding.

Special events like Moraga’s 50th Birthday build a sense of community and can support local businesses



8.4 ECONOMIC VITALITY GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL EV-1: BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

MAINTAIN A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS INVESTMENT IN MORAGA.

Policy EV-1.1: Technical Assistance

Provide technical assistance to businesses to facilitate permitting, licensing, code compliance, and orientation to Moraga. Work collaboratively with businesses to support tenant improvements, new construction, and site improvements.

Policy EV-1.2: Development Review Procedures

Provide a high level of certainty with regard to the Town's regulations, procedures, and expectations for businesses seeking to locate or expand in Moraga. This includes development and design standards, public hearing requirements, permitting processes, infrastructure improvements, and other requirements that may affect project costs and feasibility. Procedures and standards should be clearly communicated and remain consistent throughout the approval process.

Policy EV-1.3: Business Relations

Develop and sustain working relationships with local businesses, business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, and the real estate community. Regularly solicit input on local business needs and priorities, and potential ways the Town can support the business community. Where appropriate, amend Town policies and procedures in response to market changes.

Policy EV-1.4: Image and Messaging

Work with local media, business organizations, and retailers to promote Moraga's image as a business-friendly community. This could include marketing materials that support economic development in Moraga, on-line data bases listing leasing and development opportunities, and networking and outreach to potential retailers.

Policy EV-1.5: Partnerships

Encourage partnerships between local businesses, the Town of Moraga, business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, schools, and civic groups in support of the Town's economic development goals.

Policy EV-1.6: Business Continuity

Work with businesses who may be impacted by construction or demolition activities to minimize disruption and to support continuity of operations. This includes requirements to reduce the effects of construction on parking, access, and visibility, and assist businesses who may be displaced.

Policy EV-1.7: Shop Local Initiatives

Encourage initiatives to support local shopping and spending (e.g., "Shop Moraga First").

Policy EV-1.8: Workforce Housing

Support local affordable housing development and other housing programs that make it easier for persons working in Moraga to also live in Moraga. Explore community preference policies and other tools that match available housing units to the Moraga workforce.



GOAL EV-2: BUSINESS

ATTRACTION

ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF MORAGA RESIDENTS AND ENHANCE THE TOWN'S CHARACTER.

Policy EV-2.1: Local-Serving Orientation

Maintain the local-serving orientation of Moraga's commercial districts. Focus on smaller-scale businesses that are primarily oriented to Moraga residents, workers, and visitors.

Policy EV-2.2: Reducing Retail Leakage

Encourage businesses that reduce the need for residents to travel outside of town for basic goods and services, such as additional grocery stores, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Develop business attraction strategies that are focused on uses that are currently missing or under-represented in Moraga.

Policy EV-2.3: Brand Identity

Establish a stronger brand identity for Moraga that recognizes the town's natural setting, demographics, excellent weather, small town charm, agricultural past, and proximity to regional parks and outdoor recreation. Use architecture, signage, and placemaking to define an image for the town that is distinctive, unique, and pedestrian-focused.

(See Goal EV-4 and the Community Design Element for additional guidance on shopping centers)

Policy EV-2.4: Celebrating Moraga's Heritage

Celebrate Moraga's heritage as an agricultural community through events such as the annual Pear and Wine Festival and the weekend Farmers Market. Promote the town as a prospective location for farm-to-table restaurants, equestrian activities, agritourism, and other businesses that spotlight Moraga's rural heritage and open spaces.



Moraga's agricultural heritage presents economic opportunities

Policy EV-2.5: Arts and the Local Economy

Recognize the economic contribution of arts and culture to the town, including local institutions such as the Rheem Theater and Saint Mary's College Museum of Art, cultural sites such as the Hacienda de las Flores, and local businesses such as dance schools and art galleries. Invest in arts programming and special events to attract visitors and support spending at local businesses.

Policy EV-2.6: Office Space

Maintain a sufficient supply of office space in Moraga to meet the needs of small firms, professionals, health care practices, and other locally oriented service providers. Support the inclusion of local-serving office space in new development, including mixed use projects with housing and commercial space.



Policy EV-2.7: Flexible Workspace

Encourage the development of flexible workspaces that can accommodate co-working, telework, start-ups, live-work, and entrepreneurial space, along with amenities and businesses supporting the remote workforce.

Policy EV-2.8: Visitor Accommodation

Support additional visitor accommodation in Moraga, such as a boutique hotel or specialty lodging. Adopt transient occupancy taxes that provide a municipal revenue source from such development.

Policy EV-2.9: Recreation, Sports, and Entertainment

Pursue the development of additional family-friendly recreation, sports, and entertainment facilities and activities oriented to families, children, and youth.

Policy EV-2.10: Medical and Health Care Services

Encourage the continued presence of medical/dental offices and other health-related services in Moraga to reduce the need to travel to regional centers for basic care services.

GOAL EV-3: COLLEGE TOWN STRENGTHEN MORAGA'S IDENTITY AS A COLLEGE TOWN.

Policy EV-3.1: Saint Mary's College as an Economic Driver

Recognize Saint Mary's College as a driver of economic activity and increase the economic benefits of the college to local businesses and the Town of Moraga.

Policy EV-3.2: Collaborations and Partnerships

Work with Saint Mary's College to address shared issues such as housing, transportation, fire safety, evacuation, and trail access.

Policy EV-3.3: College-Oriented Businesses

Consider potential opportunities for additional college-oriented businesses and activities that are oriented toward students, faculty, and staff. Such businesses might include youth-oriented restaurants and bars, student supplies, bookstores, recreation activities and coffee shops. Support programs such as student nights at local restaurants, and local business discounts for Saint Mary's students.

Policy EV-3.4: Town-Gown Connections

Provide outreach to Saint Mary's College for Town events and activities to foster a "hometown" connection between the college and Moraga. Students, faculty, and staff should feel vested in Moraga and be encouraged to experience community life. Consider agreements that support college access to Town facilities and reciprocal Town access to college facilities.



"State of the Town" annual event at Saint Mary's College



Policy EV-3.5: Transportation to the College

Pursue bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and street lighting improvements that better connect the college to the two commercial districts and nearby BART stations.

Policy EV-3.6: Internship Programs

Support student internships, tutoring, and training programs that build connections between Saint Mary's College and Moraga businesses and schools.

GOAL EV-4: REINVESTMENT AND PLACEMAKING

MODERNIZE MORAGA'S TWO COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS SO THAT THEY BECOME MORE VIBRANT TOWN CENTERS AND GATHERING PLACES.



Today's successful retail environments offer amenities like outdoor seating and live entertainment

Policy EV-4.1: Upgrading the Centers

Work with property owners and businesses to improve the economic performance of the Rheem Valley and Moraga Shopping Centers, including their accessibility, physical condition, design, and vitality.

Policy EV-4.2: Main Street Moraga

Create more of a "Main Street" character in the commercial centers by providing new pedestrian amenities, high-quality architecture and infill development, seating areas and plazas, public art, specialty uses, greater programming of events and activities, and other measures that enhance shopping and dining.

Policy EV-4.3: Mixed Use Development

Support mixed use development combining commercial and residential uses in the Rheem Park and Moraga Center areas, increasing the customer base for local businesses while creating new housing opportunities for residents and the workforce.

Policy EV-4.4: Development Opportunities

Monitor commercial development opportunities, including vacancies and leasing activity. Work with property owners, real estate brokers, and local businesses to attract new tenants and investment, and adapt vacant space to meet modern needs.

Policy EV-4.5: Circulation Improvements

Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity within the commercial centers, and between the centers and adjacent residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, Saint Mary's College, and other destinations.



Policy EV-4.6: Infrastructure

Pursue infrastructure improvements in the commercial centers to ensure that they remain economically viable and attractive to business. This could include grant applications, private investment, coordination with utility providers, and new financing tools such as Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts.

Policy EV-4.7: Activation of Outdoor Space

Support the use of outdoor spaces adjacent to restaurants and other commercial establishments for open air dining and entertainment.

Policy EV-4.8: Temporary and Mobile Uses

Encourage temporary events, displays, and pop-up or mobile activities at Moraga's shopping centers to fill vacant spaces, draw patrons, and create a more vibrant atmosphere. Temporary and mobile uses should be managed in ways that create synergy between different activities, while ensuring that existing businesses and residents are not adversely affected.

(See the Community Design Element for additional policy guidance on the design of commercial and mixed use buildings, and changes to the commercial districts to make them more walkable, pleasant, and successful.)

GOAL EV-5: FISCAL STABILITY

PROMOTE MORAGA'S FISCAL STABILITY AND CAPACITY TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Policy EV-5.1: Revenue-Generating Uses

Encourage economic activities that generate sales tax, property tax, and other revenues that enable the Town to provide a high level of service to Moraga residents and businesses. Consider the fiscal impacts of new businesses and developments on the Town during the development review process.

Policy EV-5.2: Prudent Fiscal Policies

Continue to implement prudent fiscal policies that avoid excessive debt. Use the Town's budget process to evaluate Moraga's fiscal health and develop cost-effective service delivery strategies.

Policy EV-5.3: Transparent Budgeting and Spending

Develop the capital improvement program, annual budget, fee schedule, and other Town financial tools in ways that are transparent, fiscally responsible, and responsive to input from residents and businesses.

Policy EV-5.4: Grants and External Funding

Regularly apply for grants and other funding sources to support economic development activities, including sustainability initiatives and infrastructure maintenance, repair, and modernization. Leverage the designation of Moraga Center and Rheem Park as priority development areas (PDAs) to support grant applications.

Policy EV-5.5: Fee Updates

Periodically update the Town's fees to reflect actual costs, maintain fiscal stability, provide Town services and operations, and implement budget priorities.

Policy EV-5.6: Lamorinda as a Market Area

Consider multi-jurisdictional approaches to economic development that engage Lafayette and Orinda and treat Lamorinda as a cohesive market area made up of complementary sub-markets.



8.5 ECONOMIC VITALITY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Program EV-A: Economic Development Initiatives

Expand local economic development efforts, including collaborations with the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, communication and engagement with local businesses, outreach to developers, brokers, and retailers, shop local campaigns, and strategic planning.

Action EV-A1: Economic Development Strategy. Prepare a local Economic Development Strategy to identify goals, actions, strategies, and funding mechanisms aimed at improving Moraga's economy, reducing retail leakage, and supporting local businesses.

Action EV-A2: Staffing. As funds allow, consider retaining a part-time economic development specialist or "business concierge" to support business outreach and coordination, and to provide a single point of contact to assist with permitting, licensing, and networking.

Action EV-A3: On-Line Assistance. Provide a new business assistance page on the Town's website that clearly explains the process for starting and expanding a Moraga business.

Program EV-B: Shopping Center Revitalization

Work proactively with developers, property owners, and local businesses to improve and redevelop existing shopping centers, including new infill housing and mixed-use development.

Program EV-C: New Financing Mechanisms

Explore a range of financing mechanisms to facilitate infrastructure improvements and reinvestment in Moraga's commercial districts. These mechanisms could include, but are not limited to:

- **Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFD).** EIFDs authorize local agencies to use tax-increment financing to generate revenue for infrastructure, public facilities, and affordable housing. Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs) are similar to EIFDs and are also used to fund long-term infrastructure improvements.
- **Community Facilities District (CFD).** CFDs are special tax districts that provide funding for capital improvements, including infrastructure. CFD improvements and services are funded through a special tax levied on property which may be used to issue bonds or used on a "pay as you go" basis. CFDs include Mello-Roos districts.
- **Business Improvement Districts (BID).** BIDs are funded through voter- or property-owner approved assessments or fees. They typically cover marketing and promotional activities, special events, maintenance and security, landscaping, and capital improvements.
- **Climate Resilience Districts (CRD).** CRDs authorize local agencies to establish financing districts to fund projects that mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as wildfire hazards, and extreme heat. CRDs are governed by a Public Finance Authority and must adopt an annual expenditure plan, an operating budget, and a capital improvement budget.
- **Development Agreements.** State law authorizes cities and towns to negotiate formal agreements with developers to construct infrastructure improvements in exchange for development rights. The terms of each Agreement depend on construction costs, parking, market prices, and other factors related to the characteristics of the site and development project.

The Economic Development Strategy (See Action EV-A1) should identify the financing mechanisms that are best suited for Moraga.



Program EV-D: Grant Funding

Apply for grants that will facilitate the revitalization of Moraga’s two commercial centers, including grants supporting sustainable development and infrastructure improvements. Potential grantor agencies include but are not limited to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the Energy Commission, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the State Transportation Commission, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (iBank).

Program EV-E: Joint Development and Public/Private Partnerships

Consider the feasibility of future joint development opportunities, such as projects on Town-owned property or collaborative projects with Saint Mary’s College.

Program EV-F: Private Sector Support

Encourage the donation of funds, goods, and services by the private sector according to the established guidelines and policies of the Town.

Program EV-G: Saint Mary’s Partnerships

Work with Saint Mary’s College to identify opportunities for collaboration. Areas of potential collaboration include the development of student and faculty/staff housing (including incentives for accessory dwelling units), local businesses oriented to the college and student population, and transportation improvements connecting the college to the commercial centers and BART. Other areas include coordination on calendars of events, Town participation in facility planning, and regular meetings to discuss issues of mutual concern.







Foot trail in Moraga open space

9

OPEN SPACE AND PARKS ELEMENT

Moraga's open space is one of the town's most cherished assets. It reflects the dedication of multiple generations committed to preserving and protecting Moraga's environment. Open space defines neighborhood edges and views, supports local agriculture, provides recreational opportunities, and sustains plant and animal life. More than any other physical feature, it embodies what makes Moraga a unique and special community.

As highlighted in the Land Use Element, open space is the largest land use in Moraga, covering nearly half of the Planning Area. The General Plan Map designates 2,618 acres as open space, located throughout the town. Most of this land is privately owned. Since Moraga's incorporation in 1974, various ordinances and programs have been established to manage open space effectively. These measures aim to balance property rights, public safety, environmental quality, and the community's desire to live in a beautiful community close to nature.

Ongoing management of the Town's open spaces is critical. Climate change has increased the risk of wildfire, requiring strategies to create defensible space. It has also heightened awareness that Moraga's open space is "green infrastructure" that absorbs greenhouse gases, reduces stormwater runoff and erosion, and mitigates heat impacts.

The Town of Moraga manages over 300 acres of parkland, ranging from natural areas such as Mulholland Ridge to community parks such as Moraga Commons and special uses such as Hacienda de Las Flores. Moraga's parks accommodate recreational programs that create a sense of community, enabling residents to learn, stay healthy, have fun, connect, and fulfill their creative potential. The Town's parks accommodate recreational and athletic activities and provide space to play and connect with nature. Town facilities are complemented by other recreational assets, including school grounds, regional parklands, and private facilities for golf, tennis, and swimming.



9.1 OPEN SPACE

MORAGA OPEN SPACE ORDINANCE (MOSO)

In 1986, Moraga voters approved the Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO). The Ordinance designated a number of properties in Moraga as “MOSO lands” and established more stringent standards for their conservation and development based on factors such as geologic risks (landslides, slope, erosion potential, etc.), visual prominence (including proximity to ridgelines), and sensitive natural resources. Following adoption of MOSO, the Town adopted “Guidelines for Interpreting and Implementing the Moraga Open Space Initiative” (MOSO Guidelines) which provided further direction on implementation of the Ordinance.

The intent of the Moraga Open Space Ordinance was to:

- preserve the feel and character of Moraga
- ensure the adequacy of recreational opportunities that depend on open space
- protect wildlife that depends on Moraga’s open space as habitat
- ensure that development did not occur in sensitive viewsheds
- protect public health and safety by restricting development on steep or unstable slopes
- ensure that development was consistent with road and public facility capacity and did not degrade local or regional air quality

Pursuant to the Ordinance, designated open space areas that have a grade of 20 percent or more, are within 500 feet of a Major Ridgeline, or are on a Minor Ridgeline may not be developed.¹ Other open space areas may be developed at a density of one unit per 20 acres, with a potential increase in density up to one unit per 5 acres depending on site characteristics and the

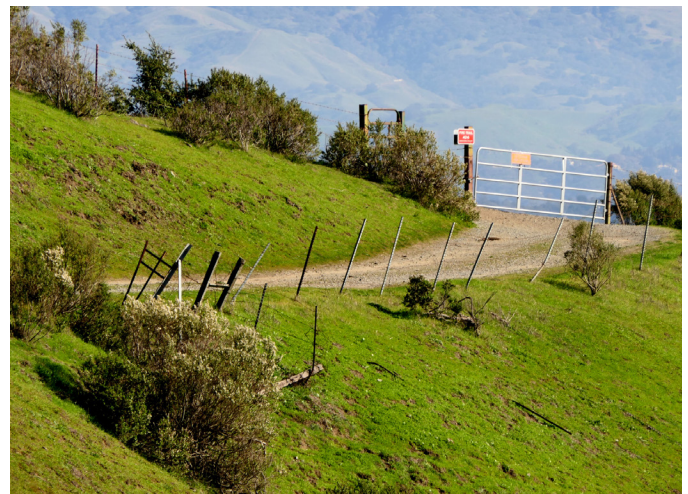
¹ See **Figure 9.3** and accompanying text box on Ridgelines



Open Space in Moraga

State law requires local general plans to recognize four types of open space:

1. **Open Space for the Protection of Natural Resources.** In Moraga, these resources include hillsides and ridgelines, riparian areas, and wildlife habitat.
2. **Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources.** This includes agricultural uses such as grazing, orchards, and vineyards.
3. **Open Space for Public Health and Safety.** This includes areas where urban uses should be avoided due to natural hazards such as landslides, fault lines, erosion, and flooding.
4. **Open Space for Recreation.** This category includes local parks, school athletic facilities, golf courses, and other outdoor spaces that are primarily used for recreation.



Hiking trail on Mulholland Ridge | Photo Credit: Tom Donald



development's anticipated environmental, health, and safety impacts. The allowable density on any given site is determined through a discretionary process by the Planning Commission, with specific findings required. Findings relate to issues such as grading, scenic corridor effects, public benefits (such as trail access), and the visibility of proposed development.

MOSO ensures that a significant amount of land in Moraga remains protected as open space. This land is usually held privately, but often contains provisions for public access. For example, the proposed Palos Colorados development will include 386 acres of MOSO open space. Though this land will be privately owned after the site is developed, it will include new publicly accessible trails.

The General Plan is an important tool for implementing MOSO. The 1986 Ordinance added specific voter-approved policies to the Open Space and Land Use Elements. These policies are further reflected in provisions of the Moraga Municipal Code, as well as Design Guidelines for hillside areas that cover both MOSO and non-MOSO open space areas.

"Non-MOSO Open Space" refers to land not expressly covered by the 1986 Ordinance but with some of the same characteristics. Non-MOSO areas include undeveloped hillsides outside the Town boundaries but within the sphere of influence, properties owned by open space land trusts, and scattered undeveloped and agricultural parcels around Moraga. Non-MOSO open space is also subject to a density of one unit per 20 acres, with similar provisions allowing increases to one unit per 5 acres through a discretionary process.

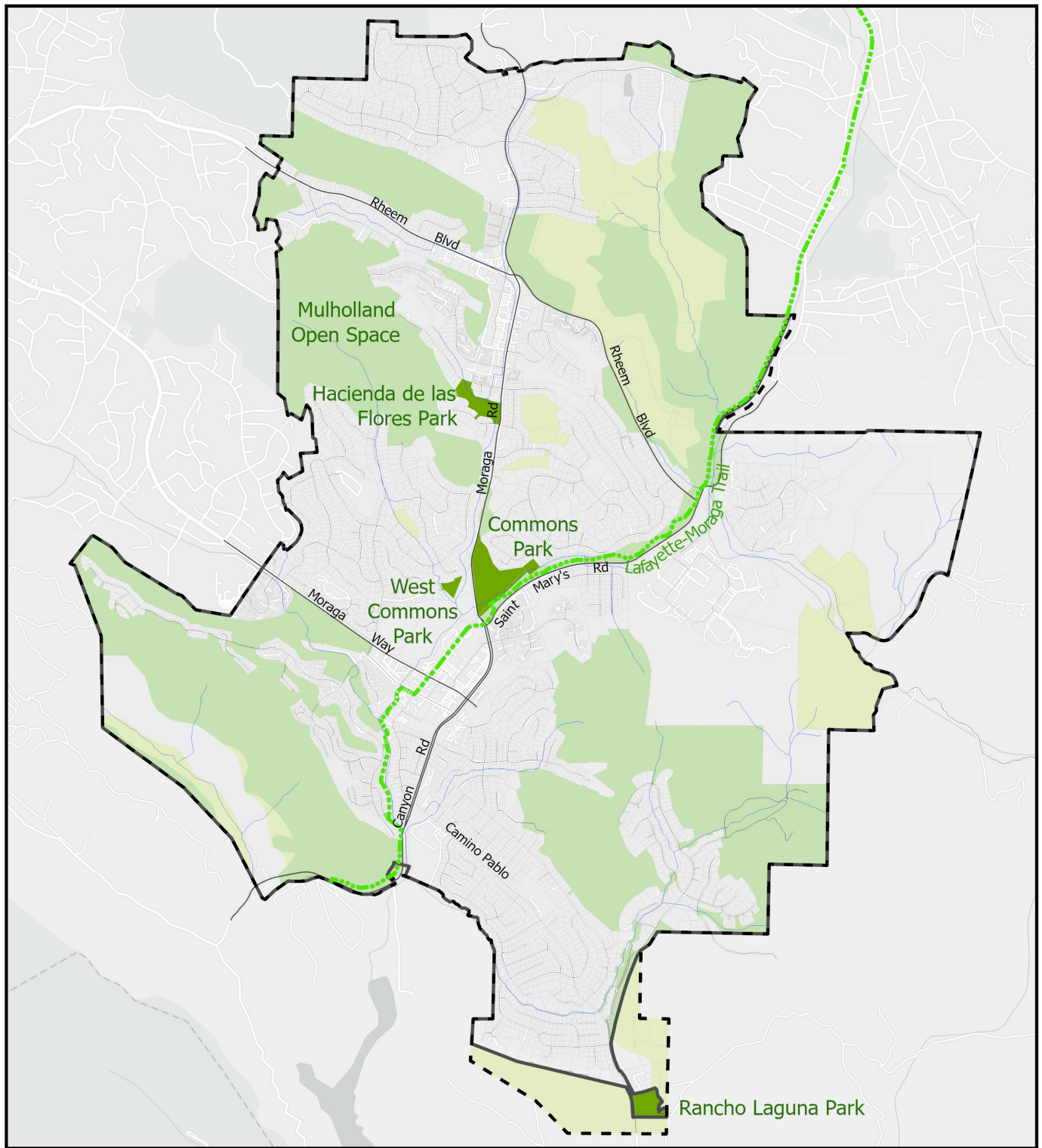
Figure 9.1 shows MOSO and non-MOSO open space in Moraga. MOSO areas total approximately 1,884 acres, while Non-MOSO open space (including unincorporated areas) total 564 acres. The Figure also shows Town parks (excluding MOSO lands), which total 65 acres. In addition to

the areas shown on the Map, land use categories such as Institutional (Saint Mary's College, etc.) and Rural Residential include large areas of undeveloped land which have many of the same physical characteristics as designated open space land.

Under Moraga's Zoning Code, the only use permitted in MOSO and Non-MOSO zones is agriculture. Residential uses, parks, and schools require a conditional use permit. Residential projects are typically processed as Planned Development (PD) districts. When they occur, General Plan policies encourage the clustering of the allowable number of units on the least environmentally sensitive parts of a site and in the areas that are most accessible from nearby roads and infrastructure. This maximizes the area that is ultimately retained as permanent open space following subdivision.



Figure 9.1: Open Space and Parks



- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels

- Moraga Open Space (OSM)
- Open Space (OS)
- Parks
- Lafayette-Moraga Trail

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0 0.25 0.5 1 Mile



HIGH-RISK OPEN SPACE

The 1986 Moraga Open Space Ordinance included special provisions for “high-risk” open space. The designation of an area as “high-risk” is based on soil stability, history of soil slippage, slope grade, accessibility, and drainage. High-risk open space is subject to a maximum density of one unit per 20 acres, with no provisions for increases beyond that level.

The Town’s Guidelines for interpreting the MOSO requirements include provisions for high-risk open space. These include directions for calculating slope, along with numeric standards such as distance from a known active or dormant fault trace; distance from a reservoir, pond, or natural spring; and seismic hazard level. The Guidelines direct that high-risk areas should be

defined by mapping 10,000 square foot areas (initially called “cells” and later referred to as “development envelopes”) across each parcel and considering cumulative risk factors within each cell.

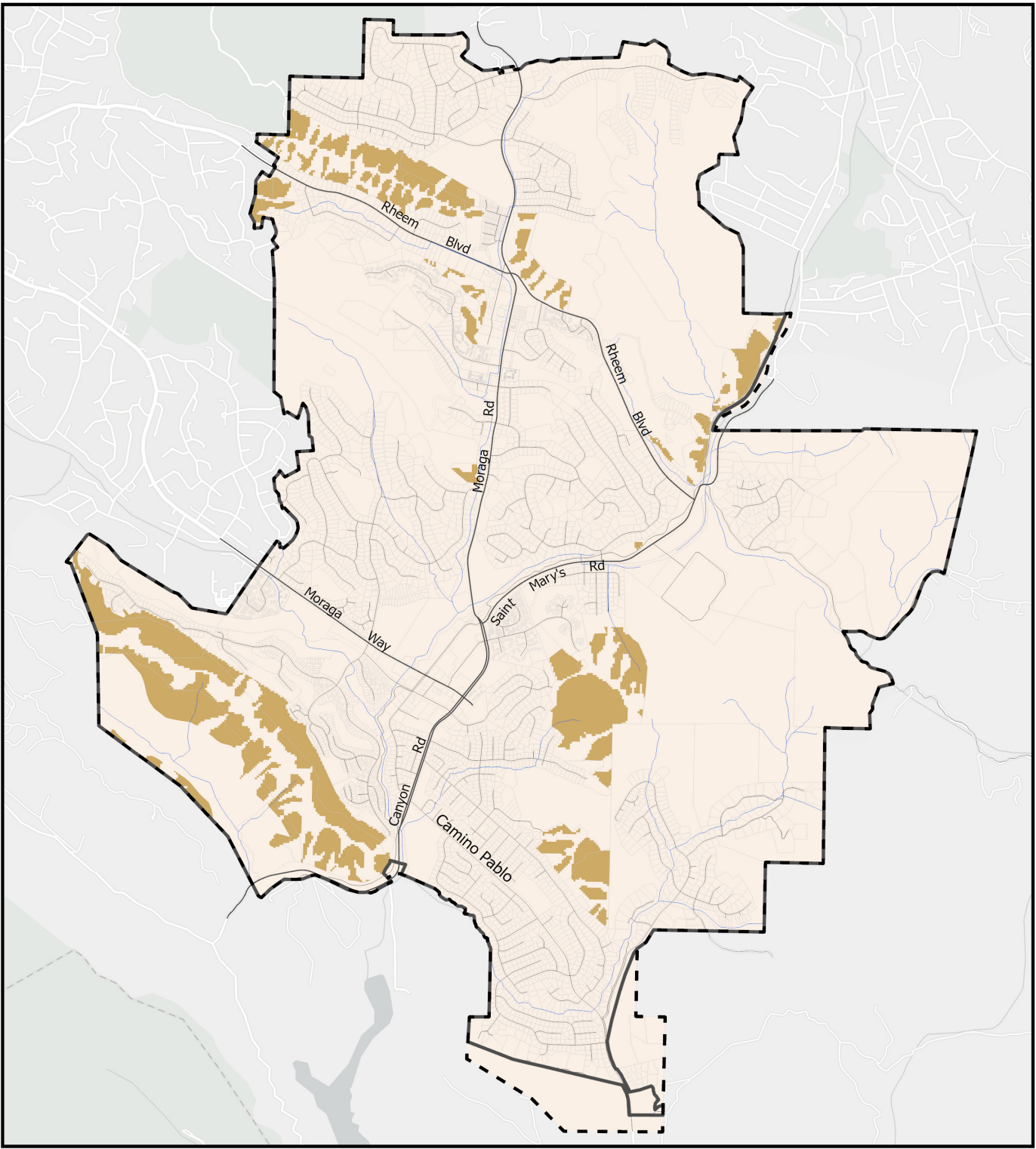
Provisions for high-risk open space were amended in 2018 as part of the Hillside and Ridgeline project. The updated provisions stipulate that the one unit per 20-acre density applies even when hazards are mitigated through grading or other means. A map showing the extent of high-risk areas was developed using GIS technology, which was not available when the Ordinance was initially adopted. **Figure 9.2** shows the map—the data is considered preliminary, and more detailed mapping is required for a “final” determination in the event that a subdivision is proposed on a MOSO site.

Landslide activity is one factor used to define “high risk” open space



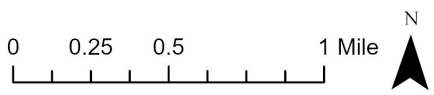
Figure 9.2: Preliminary Determination of High-Risk Open Space

Town of Moraga General Plan 2040



- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels
- High Risk MOSO Lands

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HILLSIDES AND RIDGELINE REGULATIONS

Moraga completed its Hillsides and Ridgelines Project between 2013 and 2018. The intent of the Project was to ensure consistency between the Town's Hillside and Ridgeline regulations, the MOSO Guidelines, and the General Plan. The Project resulted in amended Municipal Code provisions for Hillsides and Ridgelines, including updated definitions and revised requirements for Hillside Development Permits. The Project also added new General Plan policies, revised the MOSO Guidelines, changed the Town's design guidelines related to hillsides and scenic corridors, and added maximum house size requirements to the Municipal Code.

The updated regulations extended some of the protections afforded by MOSO to visually significant ridgelines on non-MOSO lands, such as those on Saint Mary's College and the Painted Rocks (above Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road). They also prevent new hillside development from blocking views of the ridgelines behind them. The regulations include additional limitations on slopes greater than 20 percent including a requirement that 35 percent of the vertical distance from the crest of a ridgeline to the toe of a slope remain visible as undeveloped open space when viewed from a scenic corridor. These requirements were expressed as General Plan policies as well as Code requirements, and they are carried forward in this Element.

The Hillsides and Ridgelines Project included a number of exemptions. These include projects within the Moraga Center Specific Plan, subdivisions where a final map has been recorded, and projects with published Draft environmental review documents at the time the Project rules became effective in 2018. The Project also established allowable uses on ridgelines and address issues such as roads crossing ridgelines. The text box to the right defines the four types of ridgelines defined by the Town; these are shown graphically in **Figure 9.3**.



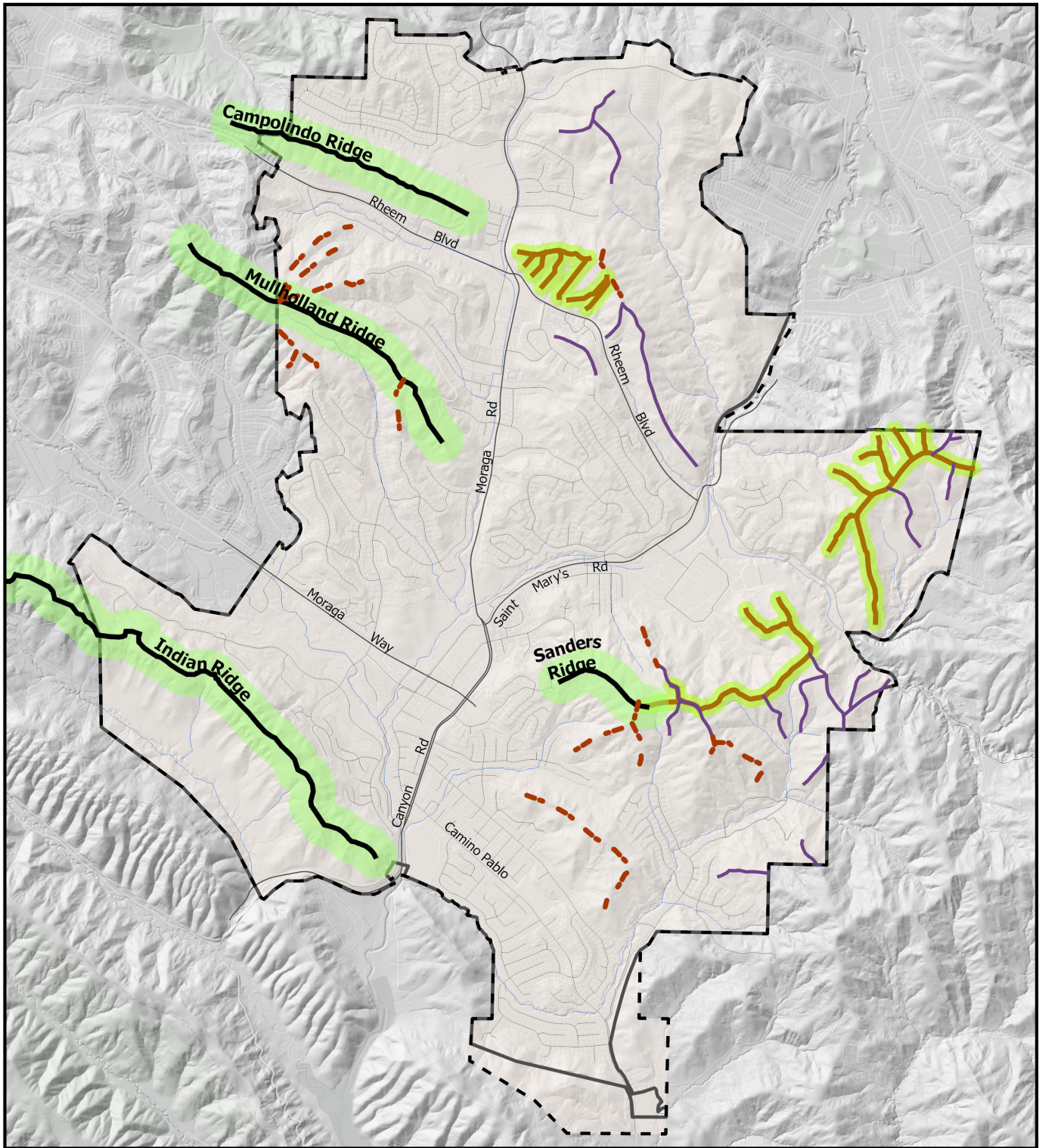
Moraga's Ridgelines

Moraga's development regulations identify four types of ridgelines, as shown on Figure 9.3:

- **Major MOSO Ridgeline** means the centerline or crest of the ridges known as Indian Ridge, Sanders Ridge, Mulholland Ridge and Campolindo Ridge, where the crest is above 800 feet above mean sea level and within an area with a MOSO Open Space designation. Major MOSO Ridgelines are referred to as "Major Ridgelines" in the Moraga Open Space Ordinance.
- **Minor MOSO Ridgeline** means the centerline or crest of any ridge other than those identified as 'Major Ridgelines,' where the crest is above 800 feet above mean sea level and within an area with a MOSO Open Space designation. Minor MOSO Ridgelines are referred to as "Minor Ridgelines" in the Moraga Open Space Ordinance.
- **Significant Non-MOSO Ridgeline** refers to the specific ridgelines labeled as such in Figure 9.3.
- **Other Non-MOSO Ridgeline** refers to the specific ridgelines labeled as such in Figure 9.3.



Figure 9.3: Designated Ridgelines

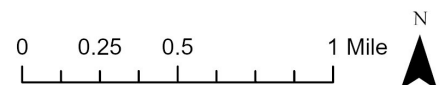


- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels

- MOSO Major Ridgelines
- 500-foot Buffer from Major MOSO Ridgelines
- MOSO Minor Ridgelines

- Significant Non-MOSO Ridgeline
- 200-foot Buffer from Significant Non-MOSO Ridgelines
- Other Non-MOSO Ridgeline

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9.2 PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS

Parks provide multiple benefits in Moraga, including environmental protection, youth development, health and wellness, a sense of community, and enhanced property values. Moraga's incorporation drive in the 1970s started as an effort to organize a local park and recreation district. Today, parks are central to Moraga's core values and image as an inclusive, accessible, environmentally aware community.

Residents rely on their parks as community gathering places, places to exercise or relax, and places to connect with nature. The Town's parks create healthy living environments, enjoyable outdoor opportunities, and a sense of place. Moraga's park system is complemented by school facilities and private facilities that also meet recreational needs.

The Town maintains a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide long-range planning and the delivery of recreational services. The Plan includes a park and recreation facility inventory, and sets comprehensive goals for enhancing existing parks, creating new parks, and meeting future recreational needs. It establishes park and recreation guidelines and standards, identifies capital improvements, and presents financing strategies to construct improvements.²

² The Parks and Recreation Master Plan in effect at the time of General Plan adoption (2024) is scheduled to be updated in 2025. The scope of this update will include open space and trails; thus, the document may be renamed.

MORAGA'S PARKS

The Town owns and operates the following parks:

- **Moraga Commons (Commons Park)**, which is located near the center of town at Moraga Road and Saint Mary's Road. This is a 23.5-acre community-serving park that includes an amphitheater, play equipment, a disc golf course, a skate park, a splash pad, basketball courts, a volleyball court, bocce ball courts and a horseshoe pit, picnic areas, restrooms, and a perimeter trail. The park is adjoined by a 21.5-acre linear park and trail extending along Laguna Creek from Moraga Road to Rheem Boulevard. The trail is one of the most popular segments of East Bay Regional Park District's Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail.

A 2016 Master Plan provides direction for future improvements at Commons Park, including upgrades to existing facilities, new parking areas, new play facilities, and potential concepts for an interior meadow area commonly referred to as the "Back 40."
- **Rancho Laguna**, which occupies 8.4 acres at the southern end of Moraga. The park houses a playground, amphitheater and large turf area, picnic areas, fitness zone, native plant garden, and allows unleashed dogs at specified times. Recommendations for future improvements are included in the Town's Parks and Recreation Master Plan and will be updated in the future.
- **Hacienda de las Flores**, which is an 8.9-acre park just south of the Rheem Valley Shopping Center. The site includes a short nature trail, botanical garden, and an historic residence that was the former home of industrialist Donald Rheem. The home and gardens are used for Town-sponsored recreational and cultural programs, as well as private events through rental agreements. The Town's Parks and Recreation Master Plan classifies Hacienda de las Flores as a "special use park" since it



is principally a cultural center rather than a traditional neighborhood or community park.

- **West Commons**, which is a neighborhood park located on the west side of Moraga Road, just west of Commons Park. This is a 2.5-acre park that includes a meadow containing a number of public art pieces. It also includes a picnic area and walking trail.
- **Mulholland Ridge**, which is a 250-acre natural area located along the Moraga/Orinda border. This park was gifted to the town in the late 1990s and is managed as an open space preserve and conservation area. The preserve includes several hiking and fire access trails. The Town's priorities for this area are to reduce fire risks, remove invasive species, restore natural areas, and maintain trails.

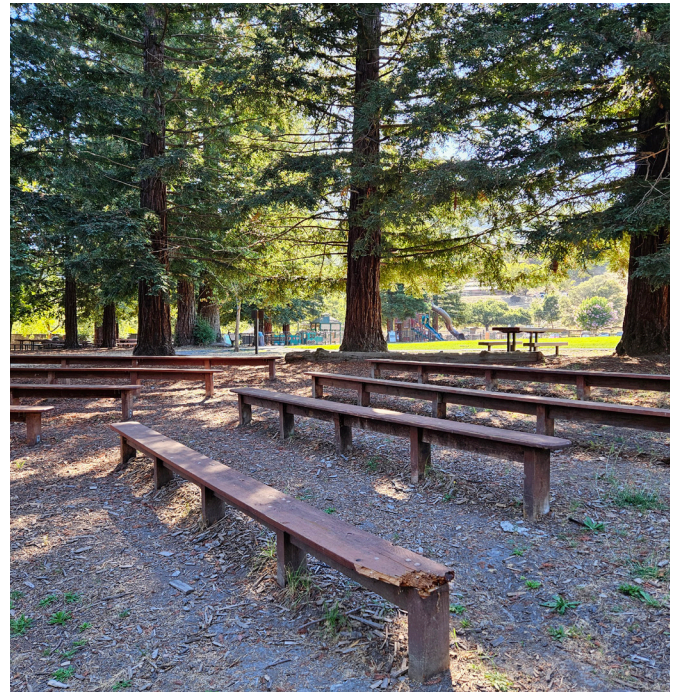
Collectively, these parks represent 314.8 acres, including the 250-acre natural area and 64.8 acres of improved recreation space. A common metric for evaluating the adequacy of a community's park acreage is to divide the improved acreage by the Town's population. In Moraga's case, dividing the 64.8 acres of improved space by the town's 2024 population of 16,436 yields a ratio of 3.94 acres per 1,000 residents. The Town's adopted standard is 3 acres per 1,000, which is below the current ratio. An action item in this General Plan suggests that the Town consider increasing its adopted standard as part of its Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update. The adopted standard is important, as it is used to calculate park dedication and impact fee requirements for new development.

The General Plan anticipates a population increase of about 4,600 people by 2040 (see Chapter 2). This will generate demand for roughly 15-20 acres of improved parkland, based on current ratios. Since new construction will likely shift to multi-family housing and townhomes, the per capita need for additional parkland may well be higher in the future than it is today. New housing units are unlikely to have the

large yards that now characterize most Moraga neighborhoods. New or expanded parks should be included as the Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas develop.

Even without new development, past studies have identified an unmet need for a community center/ senior center and gymnasium, as well as additional sports fields. The Town has had conceptual plans for a multi-use recreation facility for the last two decades, with a potential site identified south of West Commons Park. Such a facility would provide a gathering place for Town events as well as sports and recreational programming. Funding remains a constraint, as the Town's development impact fees alone would not cover project costs.

An updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan should identify potential funding sources and financing strategies. This could include new partnership opportunities with private developers, schools, Saint Mary's College, and property owners. The updated Plan may also identify new priorities based on demographics, recreation trends, and facility conditions.



Rancho Laguna Park



SCHOOL RECREATION AREAS

Moraga's schools are also essential recreational assets, as they include sports facilities that could not be economically or logically provided by the Town itself. These facilities include gymnasiums, swimming pools, multi-use fields, playgrounds, and basketball courts, among others. While access to these facilities is limited and governed by formal agreements with the School Districts, school campuses are a proxy for neighborhood parks in some neighborhoods.

The Town's Parks and Recreation Master Plan indicates that there are effectively 8.4 acres of multi-use fields and outdoor play areas at Camino Pablo, Los Perales, and Rheem Elementary Schools collectively that may be counted as part of Moraga's park inventory, given their function and location.³ There are additional facilities at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School and Campolindo High School, including football, baseball, soccer, and softball fields.

Saint Mary's College also includes athletic fields and recreational facilities. Public access to these facilities is more limited, as they are owned and operated by the college. However, they do meet the needs of college students and staff, who represent a significant user group in Moraga.

The 2040 General Plan and the Town's Parks and Recreation Master Plan both support continued partnerships and joint use agreements to provide access to school facilities. Because Moraga's parks generally do not include multi-use athletic fields, the town's school facilities meet an essential need.

³ Including the 8.4 acres of school "parkland" in the Town's park inventory yields a townwide total of 73.2 acres. Based on a population of 16,436 residents, this translates to a service level of 4.45 acres per 1,000, which exceeds the 3.94 acres per 1,000 cited earlier in this Element.

PRIVATE AND NON-PROFIT FACILITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Privately owned and operated facilities complement public recreational assets in Moraga. Many of the multi-family developments and larger subdivisions in the town include community pools, recreation centers, and playgrounds. The largest of these facilities is Moraga Country Club, which includes a golf course, tennis center, and community building. There are also non-profit enterprises offering organized recreational activities, such as youth baseball. These organizations are an important part of community life and depend on Town and school district facilities.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The Parks and Recreation Department provides recreation opportunities for all members of the community. The Department schedules programs for tots and youth, teens and adults, and seniors, including classes in dance, music, painting, cooking, fitness, yoga, and similar activities. It also runs youth after-school programs and coordinates special events such as the Fourth of July celebration, Pear and Wine festival, free summer concerts, day camps, tree lighting, and family activities. Historically, the Department has also coordinated rentals of most Town facilities and picnic areas.

REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT AND UTILITY LANDS

Moraga is also served by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), which provides open space management and recreational facilities serving 2.8 million people in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. EBRPD operates 73 parks spanning 127,000 acres, with 1,330 miles of trails. These include the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail and the Old Moraga Ranch Trail, both discussed in the next section (Trails). Moraga is adjacent to Las Trampas Regional Park and is linked by





West Commons Park

trails to Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in the Oakland Hills.

East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) has extensive landholdings to the south and west of Moraga that are managed as open space, including Upper San Leandro Reservoir. The utility also owns and operates Lafayette Reservoir, just north of the Town limits.

TRAILS

Moraga is surrounded by and connected to one of California's premier regional trail systems. However, many parts of town are not connected to this system, and the Town itself does not have a comprehensive trail network. Prior Town plans have recommended new trails to link neighborhoods, business districts, and the regional trail system. Such a network would provide multiple benefits, including health and wellness, greenhouse gas reduction, and improved access to nature and the outdoors.

Currently, EBRPD's Lafayette-Moraga Trail runs from the Valle Vista staging area to the Olympic Boulevard staging area in eastern Lafayette. EBRPD also operates the Old Moraga Ranch Regional Trail, a more primitive trail traversing Sanders Ranch, the hills above Saint Mary's College, and the Harvey Ranch preserve in Bollinger Canyon. The Town of Moraga operates a trail along Mulholland Ridge and several

smaller trails within its park system. There are also trail systems within private developments such as Sanders Ranch and Los Encinos (Bellavista). Trails are also planned in the Palos Colorados development.

Opportunities for additional trails and trail connections exist throughout the town. A 1995 plan called for an extensive network, including new trail along the Town's northern boundary, a Rheem Boulevard to Lafayette Reservoir trail, a Bollinger Canyon trail, an Indian Ridge trail, and a trail connection to Huckleberry Botanical Regional Preserve. The viability of these trails and other potential improvements should be considered as part of the Town's updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail



9.3 OPEN SPACE AND PARKS GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL OSP-1: OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

MAXIMIZE THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE FOR NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION, CLIMATE RESILIENCE, RECREATION, AGRICULTURE, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER.

(see Land Use Element Goal OSP-2 for additional policy guidance on open space)

Policy OSP-1.1: Public Open Space

Manage public open space lands such as Mulholland Ridge in accordance with recognized land management principles, community priorities, relevant deed restrictions, and budget constraints. Where appropriate, prepare management plans to address issues related to public access, wildfire hazard reduction, and habitat conservation.

Policy OSP-1.2: Private Open Space

Allow areas designated on the General Plan Diagram as open space (MOSO or Non-MOSO) to be retained in private ownership and used for purposes compatible with an open space designation. Such areas shall be managed in ways that reduce wildfire risk and other hazards and contribute to the protection of natural resources. Public access to private open space shall be at the discretion of the property owner; however, opportunities to expand public access shall be supported, where financially viable and consistent with General Plan goals and policies.

Policy OSP-1.3: Agricultural Uses

Allow use of open space for agriculture, including grazing, farming, and animal keeping, when such uses do not have adverse impacts upon residential areas, wildlife, or the land itself.

Policy OSP-1.4: Tools to Protect Open Space

Use a variety of tools to maximize open space preservation, including land acquisition, leases, dedication, easements, donations, zoning, and tax incentive programs.

Policy OSP-1.5: Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

Encourage the transfer of development rights from designated Open Space to centrally located “receiving areas” in the Moraga Center and Rheem Center areas.

Policy OSP-1.6: Voter-Approved Density Limits on MOSO Open Space

Implement the density requirements established by the 1986 voter-approved initiative protecting open space in Moraga. The language adopted by Moraga voters is provided in the text box on the next page and is incorporated by reference as part of the General Plan. A discretionary process is used to determine the number of possible housing units that may be built on MOSO open space. Allowable densities range from one unit per 5 acres, 10 acres, or 20 acres, depending on site conditions. Areas classified as “high risk” (based on soil stability, landslide history, slope grade, accessibility, and drainage) have a maximum density of one unit per 20 acres.



DENSITY LIMITS ADOPTED THROUGH THE 1986 MORAGA OPEN SPACE ORDINANCE

The following General Plan policy was approved by Moraga voters in 1986 and remains in effect:

Any use of or development on lands designated on the General Plan Diagram or by the Moraga Open Space Ordinance as 'Public Open Space-Study' or 'Private Open Space' (now designated as MOSO Open Space in the General Plan Diagram) shall be limited to a maximum density of one (1) dwelling unit per twenty (20), ten (10), or five (5) acres, but in no case shall density on such lands exceed one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acres. Areas identified as 'High Risk' areas, as defined by the Moraga Open Space Ordinance shall be limited to a maximum density of one (1) dwelling unit per twenty (20) acres. Transfers of Development Rights (referred to as 'Density Transfer' as in MOSO) from any open space designation to other lands shall be encouraged; provided that in no event shall dwelling units be transferred to another open space designation or to 'High Risk' areas. The Town Council shall identify 'High Risk' areas after taking into account soil stability, history of soil slippage, slope grade, accessibility, and drainage conditions.

GOAL OSP-2: HILLSIDE AND RIDGELINE PROTECTION

MAINTAIN THE SCENIC NATURAL SETTING AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF UNDEVELOPED HILLSIDE AREAS AND RIDGELINES.

*(see the text box on page 151 for the definitions of Moraga's four types of ridgelines, and **Figure 9.3** for the Designated Ridgelines Map. The term "Ridgeline" as used in the policies below refers to all four types. A policy that applies only to one (or more) specific type of Ridgeline is noted in the policy.)*

Policy OSP-2.1: Slope Limits for MOSO Open Space

Implement the slope limits established by the 1986 voter-approved initiative protecting open space in Moraga. The language adopted by Moraga voters is provided in the text box below and is incorporated by reference as part of the General Plan. The policy prohibits development on designated MOSO Open Space with slopes of 20 percent or greater and along the crests of minor ridgelines. It establishes a discretionary process for determining the allowable density on MOSO Open Space where the slopes are less than 20 percent.

SLOPE LIMITS ADOPTED THROUGH THE 1986 MORAGA OPEN SPACE ORDINANCE

The following General Plan policy was approved by Moraga voters in 1986 and remains in effect:

In MOSO Open Space, development shall be prohibited on slopes with grades of twenty percent (20%) or greater and on the crests of minor ridgelines. The Town Council shall reduce the allowable densities on slopes of less than twenty percent (20%) through appropriate means such as requiring proportionally larger lot sizes or other appropriate siting limitations. For the purposes of this paragraph the term 'minor ridgeline' means any ridgeline, including lateral ridges, with an elevation greater than 800 feet above mean sea level, other than a major ridgeline.





Moraga hillsides

Policy OSP-2.2: Grading in High-Risk MOSO Open Space

Within MOSO Open Space areas that meet the criteria for “high-risk” as specified in the Moraga Open Space Ordinance, consider grading applications only for the following purposes:

- (a) To accommodate development at a density that does not exceed one unit per 20 acres.
- (b) To reasonably accommodate development in other areas adjacent to the high-risk area.
- (c) To protect the community from geological hazards.

When permitted, grading shall comply with all applicable Town regulations and permit requirements and may not be considered as a basis for changing the high-risk classification to allow for increased density on a site.

Policy OSP-2.3: Slope Restrictions for Other Properties

Outside of MOSO Open Space areas, generally avoid development on slopes of 20 percent or greater. Such development may be permitted only if supported by site-specific analysis by a qualified geotechnical professional. The following additional provisions apply to non-MOSO Open Space and Rural Residential lots:

- (a) Grading on any land with a predevelopment slope of 25 percent or steeper is prohibited unless formally approved by the Town Council consistent with a site-specific geological analysis.⁴
- (b) Where grading of non-MOSO Open Space and Rural Residential lots is permitted, new residential structures may only be placed on building sites with an average after-graded slope of 25 percent or less.

⁴ See the Implementation section for proposed actions related to this policy.



Policy OSP-2.4: Hillside and Ridgeline Protection

Maintain the visual integrity of undeveloped hillsides and ridgelines. Development shall be located and designed so that Major MOSO Ridgelines, Minor MOSO Ridgelines, Significant Non-MOSO Ridgelines, and the Hillside Areas below them remain the dominant visual features when viewed from the Town's scenic corridors. To implement this Policy, the following requirements shall apply:

- (a) Any new development near a designated Ridgeline shall be located such that a minimum of 35 percent of the vertical distance from the crest of the Ridgeline to the toe of the slope remains visible as undeveloped open space when viewed from the Town's scenic corridors. The Town Council may grant exceptions to this requirement in unique circumstances, as defined by the Moraga Municipal Code.
- (b) Development within 200 feet of the centerline of a Significant Non-MOSO Ridgeline (measured horizontally in plan view) shall be prohibited, except as allowed by the Moraga Municipal Code (Section 8.128.030(B)).

Policy OSP-2.5: Roads Crossing Ridgelines

Allow roads to cross formally designated ridgelines if the crossing is necessary for the orderly development of the town, supports safety and evacuation plans, and complies with the applicable requirements of the Municipal Code.

Policy OSP-2.6: Existing Uses and Structures

Allow the continued use of legally established and permitted uses and structures in Hillside Areas and on and near Ridgelines. Interpret and apply Hillside and Ridgeline regulations to existing uses and structures in a manner that allows for reasonable repair and improvements consistent with applicable Town standards and regulations.

Policy OSP-2.7: Exceptions to Development Prohibitions in MOSO Open Space

Consider exceptions to hillside and ridgeline restrictions for the following activities:

- (a) Work necessary to eliminate or prevent a condition which is determined by the Town to be a menace to life, limb, or property or adversely affects the safety, use, or stability of a public way or drainage way or channel.⁵
- (b) The establishment of a fire trail approved by the Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District.
- (c) Open fences and movable equipment used for animal grazing and agricultural activities.
- (d) Trails for public access to open space.

GOAL OSP-3: PARKS AND RECREATION

SUSTAIN A NETWORK OF PARKS THAT SUPPORT HEALTHY LIVING ENVIRONMENTS, CREATE ENJOYABLE OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES, AND STRENGTHEN MORAGA'S SENSE OF PLACE.

Policy OSP-3.1: Park Design

Design parks so they are comfortable, attractive, accessible, inviting, and easily maintained. Park design should balance recreational needs with considerations such as topography, vegetation, safety, aesthetics, and adjacent land uses.

Policy OSP-3.2: Regional Parks

Coordinate with East Bay Regional Park District so that local facilities are complemented by regional facilities that maximize recreational opportunities for Moraga residents.

⁵ See the Implementation section for proposed actions related to this policy.



Policy OSP-3.3: Development-Related Improvements

Ensure that the park system is expanded as new development occurs. This may occur through land dedication and facilities within new development, the payment of in-lieu fees to acquire and improve land nearby within Moraga, or a combination of both. Park dedication and fee requirements should address the need for facilities such as playgrounds, drinking fountains, trails, restrooms, picnic tables, and natural areas, as well as the need for land. A standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents shall be used as the basis for land dedication fees. This standard will be periodically evaluated and potentially increased over the planning period.

Policy OSP-3.4: Recreation Priorities

Pursue opportunities for additional sports fields in Moraga, as well as a gymnasium and community center facility. These facilities will provide valuable space for recreation programming, social interaction, and sports activities.

Policy OSP-3.5: Maintenance

Provide a high-level of maintenance at all park and recreational facilities. Consider maintenance costs and staffing needs when designing and programming new projects and renovating existing facilities.

Policy OSP-3.6: Cost Recovery

To the extent feasible, strive for user fees for recreational facilities and programs that offset maintenance and operating costs.

Policy OSP-3.7: Accessibility

Design and manage all park and recreational facilities, including trails, so that people of all ages and abilities can access and enjoy Moraga's recreational opportunities. Facility design should be consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Policy OSP-3.8: Parking

Strive to provide adequate parking at all parks and recreational facilities.

Policy OSP-3.9: Hacienda de las Flores

Continue to use Hacienda de las Flores as an activity center, event venue, botanical garden, and revenue source.

Policy OSP-3.10: Moraga Commons

Continue to use Moraga Commons as the primary site for community events. Identify additional sites in the Moraga Center area for events, athletics, and other recreation activities as the Moraga Center Specific Plan is implemented.

Policy OSP-3.11: Commercial Recreation

Encourage private sector recreational businesses such as tennis clubs, swim clubs, and training facilities that complement public facilities and serve community needs.

(See also Program OS-E on the update on the Park and Recreation Master Plan)

Moraga Commons Park



Policy OSP-3.12: Park Carrying Capacity

Ensure that the programming of each park considers its carrying capacity and ability to accommodate the activities. Recreational facilities and activities should be compatible with their neighboring environments.

Policy OSP-3.13: Recreational Use of School Facilities

Recognize schools as an extension of the neighborhood park system and an opportunity for access to specialized athletic facilities. Pursue joint use agreements and joint facilities development to expand access to recreation.

GOAL OSP-4: TRAILS

CREATE A CONNECTED TRAIL NETWORK THAT LINKS ALL PARTS OF MORAGA AND PROVIDES ACCESS TO REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE.

Policy OSP-4.1: Regional Trail System

Encourage and cooperate with other jurisdictions and agencies to maintain a unified, connected regional trail system, including pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails. Support development of regional projects such as the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Policy OSP-4.2: Local Trail System

Improve Moraga's trail system to more comprehensively serve all neighborhoods and provide greater connectivity to the regional park system, including spur connections to the Lafayette-Moraga Trail and access to open space owned by land trusts and EBMUD.

Policy OSP-4.3: Trail Easements in New Development

Establish dedicated trail easements in the event any designated MOSO or non-MOSO open space sites are proposed for future subdivision.

Policy OSP-4.4: Creekside Trails

Consider opportunities for creekside walkways and trails, particularly in the Rheem Center and Moraga Center areas and in Hacienda de las Flores and Moraga Commons Parks.

Policy OSP-4.5: Trail Design and Maintenance

Consider the following when planning, designing, implementing and maintaining trail facilities:

- *Environmental Impacts.* Design trails to minimize their environmental impact.
- *Fiscal Impacts.* Consider the fiscal impacts of accepting ownership and maintenance responsibility of trail facilities.
- *Safety.* Separate trail routes from motor vehicle routes whenever possible.
- *Use of Fire Trails.* In undeveloped areas, improve existing fire trails for use in cooperation with landowners.
- *Recreational Needs.* Consider the need for the facility and other recreational needs that could be met on the site.
- *Accessibility.* Consider the needs of all users.

(See also policies under Goal T-5 in the Transportation Element related to pedestrian and bicycle trails, as well as actions to update the Walk | Bike Plan and pursue RM3 trail improvement grants)



GOAL OSP-5: RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

PROVIDE RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE LIFELONG HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

Policy OSP-5.1: Programming for Diverse User Groups

Provide a range of recreational facilities and programs that meet the needs of all age and ability groups. Adapt programming as needed to respond to changing demographics, user feedback, and trends in recreation and leisure.

Policy OSP-5.2: Collaborative Programming

Collaborate with other governmental agencies, service organizations, schools, Saint Mary's College, and local businesses to expand the range of recreational activities, programs, and special events available to Moraga residents.

Policy OSP-5.3: Community Education

Encourage activities from which Moraga residents can learn about the community, its history, resources, and residents.

Policy OSP-5.4: Local Leadership

Hire local residents as leaders and instructors whenever possible. Where feasible, this should include local artists, athletes, craftspeople, and health and fitness professionals.

Policy OSP-5.5: Arts and Culture

Strive to develop arts and cultural activities that provide opportunities for creative growth and expression for Moraga residents.

Policy OSP-5.6: Special Events

Encourage special events and community programs that connect residents, build a sense of community, and create civic pride.

Moraga swimming event



9.4 OPEN SPACE AND PARKS IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Program OSP-A: Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO)

Continue to implement the development standards set forth in the Moraga Open Space Ordinance, in accordance with its Implementing Guidelines. As noted earlier in this chapter and in the Land Use Element, MOSO was adopted in 1986 and governs the use of much of the Town's open space. MOSO Guidelines were prepared to facilitate implementation of the Ordinance; those Guidelines were updated as part of the 2013-2018 Hillside and Ridgeline project.

Action OSP-A1: Amendments to the Guidelines for Implementing and Interpreting MOSO. *Update the MOSO Guidelines to allow trenching for wireless facilities, water facilities and similar essential infrastructure improvements where the ground surface is restored to its original condition following construction. Consider other amendments as necessary and appropriate during this process.*

Program OSP-B: Hillside and Ridgeline Ordinance

As noted earlier in this section, the Town has adopted special regulations for Hillside and Ridgeline Areas as part of its Municipal Code. These provisions include development standards related to slope and view protection, buffer requirements, and Hillside Development Permit requirements.

(See also Action LU-H.1 in the Land Use Element regarding Hillside Development Permits)

Program OSP-C: Grading Ordinance

Implement the grading requirements of the Moraga Municipal Code, including design review and permitting requirements for grading exceeding specified thresholds.

Action OSP-C1: Grading Ordinance

Amendments. *Amend the Grading Ordinance for consistency with Policy OSP-2.3. The amendment would allow the Planning Commission to approve grading permits outside the MOSO, Non-MOSO and Rural Residential zoning districts.*

Program OSP-D: Open Space Preservation Program

Explore strategies to protect and manage the Town's open spaces and natural areas in ways that are sustainable, provide public access, and encourage stewardship of natural resources. These strategies include acquisition by land trusts and public agencies, transfer of development rights, long-term leases, easements, donations of land, and tax incentive programs such as the Williamson Act.

Program OSP-E: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

Maintain a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to evaluate recreational needs and facility condition; provide guidance for site planning, improvements, and key issues; identify recreational programming strategies; provide direction on the Town's future park system; and identify potential funding and financing opportunities. The Plan also should address management practices for the Town's open spaces, including areas appropriate for public access (e.g., trails) and areas to be protected from human disturbance.

Action OSP-E1: Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update. *Complete a comprehensive update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. As noted above, expand the scope to include open space management and trails.*





Commons Park

Action OSP-E2: Lafayette Moraga Trail Planning. Work with East Bay Regional Park District, property owners, and other stakeholders to close the gap in the Lafayette-Moraga Trail along School Street between Moraga Road and Moraga Way.

(See also Transportation Element Action T-D2 on grants for trail planning)

Program OSP-F: Park Service Standard and Impact Fees

Implement park dedication and/or in-lieu fee requirements for new development, in accordance with State law and local park acreage per capita standards.

Action OSP-F1: Update Park Standards and Fee Justification. As part of the Master Plan Update, consider increasing the per capita service standard for Moraga's parks to reflect current conditions and respond to the need for additional parkland associated with housing growth. The Town should adjust its fees based on the updated standards. However, any fee increases should consider impacts on housing costs and development feasibility, as well as the park fee amounts collected by similarly situated communities in the Bay Area. Measures to reduce fee increases for smaller, more affordable units and rental units should be considered.

Program OSP-G: Recreation Programs

Schedule year-round classes in topics such as arts, sports, fitness, music, ecology, photography, cooking, drama, video, and special interests. Maintain regular public information devices to disseminate information on the Town's programs, events, and activities.

Program OSP-H: Joint Use Agreements

Maintain Memoranda of Understanding and other Agreements with the Moraga School District, Acalanes Union High School District, and Saint Mary's College to facilitate the joint use of school and college facilities for community recreation. Update and formalize these agreements as appropriate to maximize resident access to recreational facilities and programs.





Moraga wildflowers

10

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The Conservation Element addresses Moraga's natural resources, such as vegetation, wildlife, water, and air. It identifies the natural ecosystems in the Moraga Planning Area and provides guidance for their management and protection. It provides policies to support regional, state and federal air and water quality standards and to meet state targets for solid waste diversion. This element also covers energy use in the town, emphasizing conservation and the use of renewable energy sources.

Conservation is closely aligned with the General Plan themes of sustainability and resilience. Many policies in this element are focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fossil fuel consumption, and the use of non-renewable resources. The Element addresses the connections between conservation and climate change, particularly through its policies on air, water, and energy. Additionally, the Element highlights the role of environmental stewardship in creating a more resilient community, including controlling invasive species, managing vegetation to minimize fire risks, and preserving trees, riparian areas, and woodlands. Conservation is vital for maintaining Moraga's quality of life.

The Element is organized around six broad goals:

CON-1: Protecting Natural Resources
and Ecosystems

CON-2: Water Quality and Conservation

CON-3: Improving Air Quality

CON-4: Reducing Solid Waste

CON-5: Promoting Energy Conservation and
Fossil-Free Energy

CON-6: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions



10.1 NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND SENSITIVE SPECIES

The Moraga Planning Area includes approximately equal amounts of urbanized and undeveloped lands. On open space lands, much of the native landscape has been altered by past agricultural uses, especially cattle grazing. Riparian areas along creeks and streams also have been altered. At the same time, the town still includes oak and riparian woodlands, coastal scrub, grassland, and chaparral areas, as well as urban habitat that supports plant and animal life.

Figure 10.1 shows the major natural communities in the Planning Area. Some of these communities are subject to special regulations enforced by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as they provide habitat for protected plants and animals.

- **Grasslands.** Grasslands are the most widely distributed natural community in Moraga, occurring on many hillsides and ridgelines. Grassland communities are frequently interspersed with other natural communities and are dominated by non-native annual grasses. Common plants include wild oats, brome grasses, wild barley, and foxtail fescue. Grasslands provide foraging habitat for a variety of wildlife, including raptors, small mammals, and reptiles.
- **Coastal Scrub.** There is a small area of coastal scrub on the southern edge of the Planning Area, dominated by coyote brush with a sparse understory of grasses. Coastal scrub has a moderately high wildlife habitat value and is considered one of the primary habitat areas for the threatened Alameda whipsnake.
- **Chaparral.** Chaparral is a dense shrub community that occurs on shallow rocky soils. It is composed of evergreen woody shrubs

such as manzanita and chamise. Chaparral areas form low shrublands on the hills across California, and are able to withstand frequent fires and low water availability. This natural community provides cover, foraging, and breeding habitat for many wildlife species, including the Alameda whipsnake.

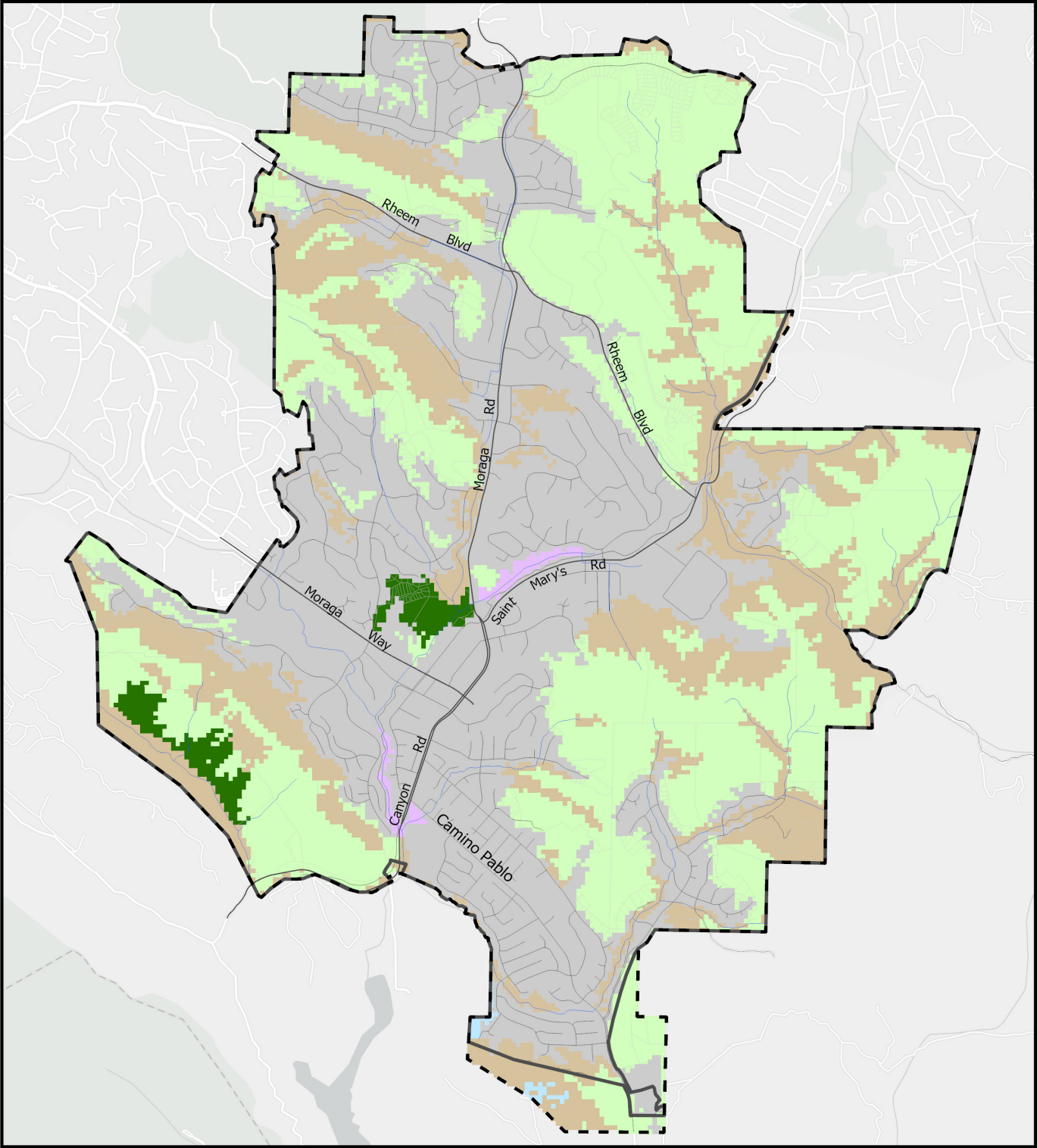
- **Oak Woodlands.** The most common oak woodland community in Moraga is dominated by coast live oaks and California bay, with an understory of grasses and poison oak. It is sometimes mixed with grassland on drier sites, and with madrone on sites with higher moisture levels. These areas are characterized by a tall, dense tree canopy with few shrubs and low-growing herbs. There are also deciduous oak areas dominated by Valley oak, black oak, and blue oak. A diverse range of species rely on oak woodlands for shelter, shade, food, and breeding habitat.
- **Riparian.** Riparian woodlands and forests are complex habitats associated with rivers, creeks, and streams. These communities are dominated by broad-leaved, winter deciduous trees such as cottonwoods, willows, elderberries, and alders. Wildlife value is typically high, as these areas provide proximity to water as well as food, cover, and breeding areas.



*Downy Woodpecker at Upper San Leandro Reservoir
Photo Credit: Becky Matsubara*

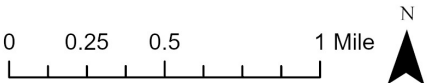


Figure 10.1: Vegetation and Land Cover



- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Town Limits | Agriculture |
| Sphere of Influence | Annual Grassland |
| Streams | Coastal Oak Woodland |
| Streets | Coastal Scrub |
| Parcels | Urban |
| | Valley Foothill Riparian |

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Wildlife Corridors

One of the greatest threats to wildlife health is fragmentation of habitat due to urban development or agriculture. Wildlife corridors—or habitat linkages—provide connections between different habitat areas that allow otherwise isolated animal populations to interact. They may serve as migration routes, connections between foraging and denning areas, and places to find food and cover. Corridors are typically continuous strips of natural areas, although landscaped areas can be used by certain species for this purpose.

Wildlife corridors can be local or regional in nature. The State of California has identified certain regional corridors as “Essential Connectivity Areas” (ECAs) and recommends that local governments use the underlying data to inform their land use plans and development decisions. Moraga lies along an ECA that extends north-south through the East Bay Hills from Wildcat Canyon in the north to Calaveras Reservoir in south. Some of the town’s open spaces are part of this network, providing habitat linkages to the regional park and watershed lands to the south, east, and west of the town. Smaller scale movement corridors exist on the town’s undeveloped ridgelines and along its streams.

A number of the natural communities described above include wetland areas. Wetlands are inventoried by the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory and are classified based on their aquatic features. Riverine wetlands occur along streams such as Moraga Creek and Las Trampas Creek. Some of the agricultural and open space sites in

the town include freshwater forested and shrub wetlands. Wetlands are particularly important given their role in supporting wildlife, reducing flood risks, and filtering stormwater runoff.

Moraga’s diverse vegetation communities support a number of “special status species.” These are species that have been identified as rare, threatened, or endangered by the state or federal Endangered Species Acts, as well as animals designated as Species of Special Concern. There are a variety of plant, invertebrate, fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species in the Moraga Planning Area that fall into these categories.

The Moraga Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative EIR identified 64 special status plant species that are known to occur or have the potential to occur in the Planning Area or surrounding area. Most of the known occurrences have been recorded in open space areas such as Mulholland Ridge. The EIR further identified 48 special status wildlife species that are known to occur or have the potential to occur in the Planning Area or surrounding areas. The EIR may be consulted for the complete inventory of species.

Special status species are most likely to occur in open space and undeveloped areas. However, they may also occur in and along streams, wetlands, ponds and riparian areas in urban environments. Species potentially present include California red-legged frog, foothill yellow-legged frog, and western pond turtle. Several occurrences of the federally and state-listed Alameda whipsnake have been recorded in and around the town, primarily in open chaparral and scrub habitats. Several special status species of bats have also been observed in East Bay open spaces around Moraga.



10.2 WATER AND AIR RESOURCES

WATER RESOURCES

Moraga straddles the watershed divide between the San Leandro Creek watershed, which drains west to Upper San Leandro Reservoir and then west to San Francisco Bay, and the Las Trampas/Walnut Creek watershed, which drains north to Suisun Bay. Both watersheds are within the San Francisco Hydrological Region, which covers approximately 4,500 square miles in the central Bay Area. **Figure 10.2** shows watershed boundaries and creeks within the Moraga Planning Area.

The principal surface waterways in the town are Moraga Creek, Laguna Creek, Rimer Creek, and Las Trampas Creek. Runoff reaches these creeks through a combination of open channels and constructed drainage systems.

Although the town is not underlain by a groundwater basin, its landscape contributes to the recharge of nearby basins. Groundwater may be recharged through surface water infiltration through permeable surfaces, with water migrating to basins underlying other parts of the East Bay.

The Town receives its water supply from East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD). Approximately 90 percent of EBMUD's supply originates from the Mokelumne River watershed and 10 percent originates from protected lands in the East Bay Hills. EBMUD's supply system consists of reservoirs, aqueducts, treatment plants, pumping plants, and other distribution facilities that convey water from Pardee Reservoir to the EBMUD service area.

Potable water is a limited resource in California and is vulnerable to supply constraints during drought periods. EBMUD implements multiple conservation measures and programs, while State Building Codes require water efficiency in plumbing systems. Moraga has implemented

the State's Model Water-Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) requirements, which include programs to reduce water waste and focus on native and drought-tolerant plants in local landscape projects.

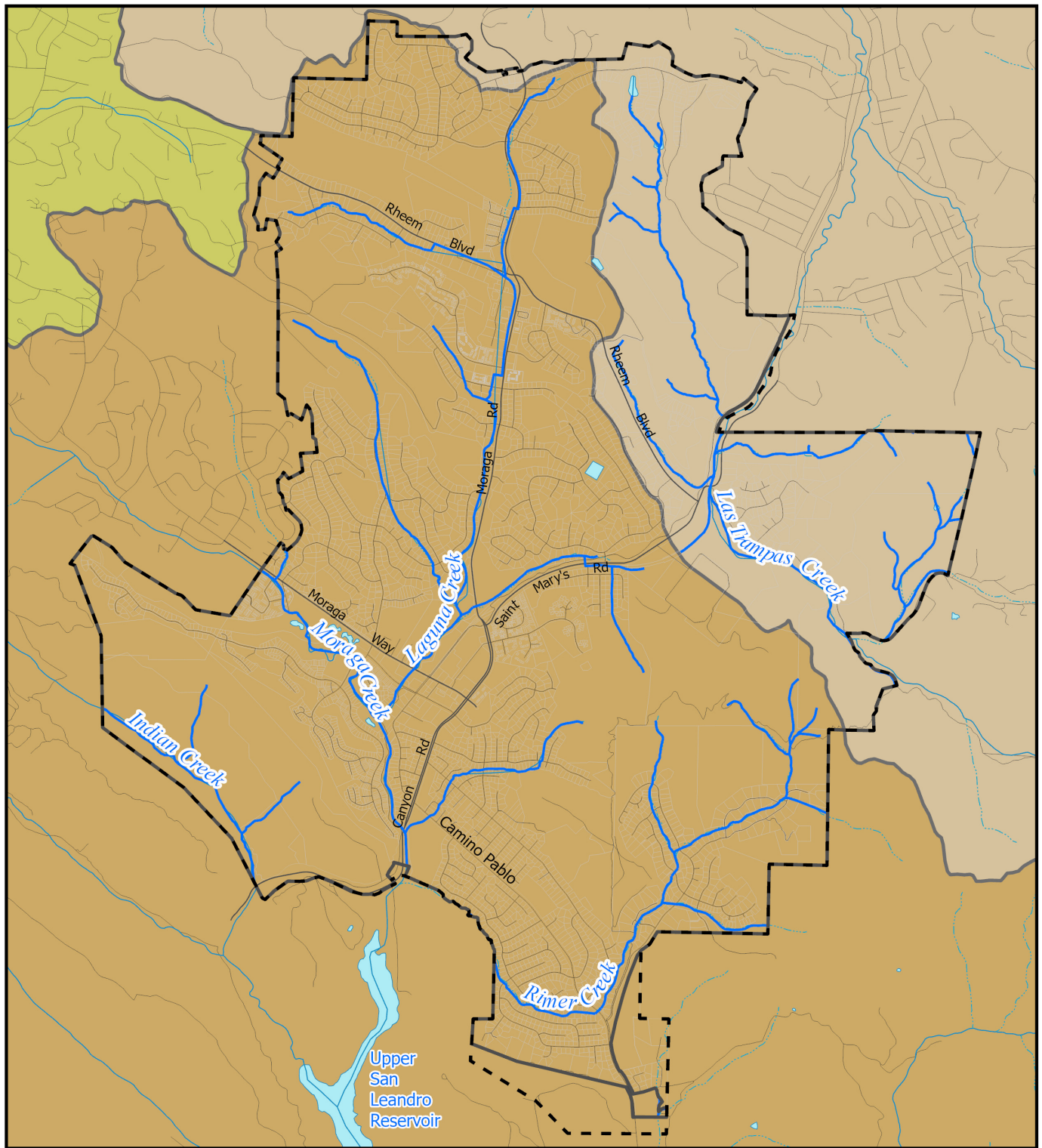
Water quality in Moraga is governed by the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, which sets standards for surface waters and groundwater in the region. This includes maximum contaminant levels and the definition of "beneficial uses" for local waterways. For Moraga Creek and Las Trampas Creek, beneficial uses include freshwater replenishment, warm and cold freshwater habitat, species preservation, fish spawning, recreation, and wildlife habitat.

The Town is a participant in regional water quality improvement programs, which primarily target urban runoff from local streets, lawns, buildings, and open space. Rainwater and outdoor water use can wash pollutants such as pesticides, fertilizers, oil, grease, and garbage into the Town's storm drain system, and ultimately into local streams, creeks, and reservoirs. Moraga is one of 21 agencies covered by a joint permit for stormwater discharge into Contra Costa County's waterways, prohibiting the discharge of anything other than rain into the local stormwater system. The County Clean Water Program includes numerous "best management practices" designed to eliminate pollution from surface runoff. Many of these practices apply to new construction. The Town has also adopted a Storm Drain Master Plan that provides direction for compliance with Clean Water program requirements.

Creek signage on Country Club Drive at Laguna Creek



Figure 10.2: Creeks and Watersheds

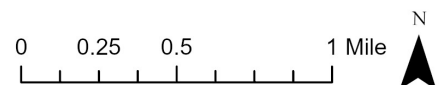


- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels

Watershed

- Las Trampas Creek
- San Leandro Creek
- San Pablo Creek
- region_road

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AIR RESOURCES

Air quality in Moraga is influenced by climate, wind patterns, and topography, as well as the presence of local pollution sources such as highways and urban development. In hot weather, the daytime flow of marine air is sometimes capped by a dome of warm air that acts as a lid over the region. The result can be unhealthy levels of smog. In the winter, inversion layers may form when cool air pools in low elevations while the air above remains warm. Air quality issues also arise during wildfires, when smoke may be a serious and persistent threat.

Air quality in the Bay Area is regulated by state and federal agencies who administer laws establishing standards for specific pollutants. Some of these pollutants are emitted directly from a source (such as a vehicle tailpipe or a smokestack) into the atmosphere. Others, like ozone, are created through chemical and photochemical reactions in the atmosphere. The text box at right provides an overview of the major pollutants of concern in the Bay Area.

Most of the responsibility for regulating emissions in California has been delegated to regional air districts. In the San Francisco Air Basin, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has the primary authority over stationary and indirect sources. BAAQMD is also responsible for air quality monitoring and enforcement.

The monitoring station closest to Moraga is in Concord. Ozone measurements at this station have exceeded federal and state standards during recent years, while particulate and fine particulate matter standards have exceeded federal standards. Air basins that are not in compliance with state and federal standards are classified as “non-attainment” areas for those pollutants and are required to adopt Air Quality Management Plans. These plans typically focus on reducing emissions from transportation, which is the biggest source of air pollution in the Bay Area.

Major Air Pollutants of Concern

- **Ozone** is formed by photochemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen and reactive organic gases. Elevated ozone concentrations result in reduced lung function, with particularly acute risks for the elderly, children, and those with respiratory conditions.
- **Carbon monoxide (CO)** is formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, with motor vehicles accounting for nearly all emissions. It is a colorless, odorless gas that can cause dizziness, fatigue, nervous system impairments, and death at high levels of exposure.
- **Nitrogen dioxide** is a reddish-brown gas formed from fuel combustion under high temperature or pressure. It is a component of smog and contributes to pollution problems such as poor visibility, decreased lung function, and acid rain.
- **Sulfur dioxide** is a colorless, irritating gas formed primarily from incomplete combustion of fuels containing sulfur. It irritates the respiratory tract, and can injure lung tissue when combined with fine particulate matter.
- **Particulate matter** refers to a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Particles up to 10 microns in diameter are referred to as PM10, while fine particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter are called PM2.5. Particulates can be directly emitted through fuel combustion, or may be formed by blowing soil, smoke, chemical reactions, and other sources. Particulates can transport carcinogens and other toxic compounds, reduce lung function and aggravate respiratory and cardio-vascular diseases.
- **Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs)** refer to a group of pollutants that are harmful in small quantities, such as benzene, formaldehyde, and hydrogen sulfide.



10.3 SOLID WASTE, ENERGY, AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

SOLID WASTE

Landfilled waste disposal contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, consumes natural resources, and can threaten environmental quality. Promoting recycling and the use of recycled goods can reduce the need for raw material extraction, save energy, decrease pollution, and contribute to a cleaner environment. It also extends the life of our landfills and promotes environmental stewardship and sustainability.

The Town of Moraga is a participant in solid waste reduction initiatives administered by the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA, or RecycleSmart), a joint powers agency serving Moraga, Lafayette, Orinda, Walnut Creek,

Danville and unincorporated areas of Central Contra Costa County. The Authority provides residential and commercial solid waste, recycling and organic services to its service area, primarily through franchise agreements with waste management vendors. Solid waste is disposed at the Keller Canyon Landfill in Pittsburg while recyclables are processed at a recycling center also located in Pittsburg. Based on CalRecycle data, Keller Canyon Landfill is anticipated to be operational through 2066.

RecycleSmart reported an annual diversion rate of 63 percent in 2023. In other words, 63 percent of the waste generated by customers in its service area was diverted from landfills. The State has set a target of diverting 75 percent of organic waste from landfills by 2025. This will require additional initiatives related to food waste reduction and recovery, education and outreach, and construction debris recycling.

Contra Costa Clean Water and Cal Recycle Educational Exhibit





Zero Net Energy

Zero net energy (ZNE) refers to a building that produces enough renewable energy to meet or exceed its annual energy consumption requirements. One major component of ZNE is to maximize energy efficiency through building design and materials, including high-performance insulation, efficient lighting, and advanced HVAC systems. The other major component is to include photovoltaics (PV) in new buildings—now mandatory in new construction in California. Creating ZNE buildings is beneficial to our climate and is also an effective way to reduce or even eliminate utility bills. It can also provide a more reliable energy source during blackouts.

ENERGY

Energy use impacts environmental quality both directly and indirectly. For centuries, we have depended on fossil fuels like oil and gas for power, transportation, and industry. These finite resources, when extracted and burned, can cause significant environmental harm. Additionally, over reliance on fossil fuels affects energy reliability, impacting both our power supply and the electrical grid.

Since 2018, residential and commercial electricity accounts in Moraga have been automatically enrolled in Marin Clean Energy (MCE), which procures power from renewable sources such as solar, wind, biogas, geothermal, and small hydroelectric plants. Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) delivers this electricity via its network of transmission and distribution lines. PG&E also supplies natural gas to Moraga, much of which comes from outside California via pipelines.

In 2022, the transportation sector accounted for about one-third of California's energy demand, with petroleum-based fuels making up 83 percent of this demand. To reduce petroleum use, alternative energy sources like electricity, hydrogen, and biodiesel are being promoted. State regulations are encouraging a shift from gasoline to low-emission alternatives.

Improving building efficiency is another cost-effective way to conserve energy. Simple upgrades, such as adding insulation and sealing ducts, can cut energy use by 20 percent. Other measures include installing high-efficiency heating and air conditioning, replacing windows and light bulbs, and using programmable timers. Recent changes to the building code have been made for new construction in order to achieve state goals for energy efficiency. These goals include zero net energy in new buildings, along with zero net carbon emissions by 2045 (see text box).

Energy demand can also be reduced through land use policies that minimize driving distance and dependence on motor vehicles. These policies involve placing developments near public transit, mixing residential and commercial land uses, and locating housing close to jobs to reduce commute lengths.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gases in the earth's atmosphere that trap heat radiated by the earth's surface. Without GHGs, the planet would be too cold for habitation. Human activities have caused an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, to the point that the planet is getting warmer.¹

The principal GHGs contributing to human-induced climate change are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxides (N₂O), fluorinated

¹ See General Plan Chapter 3 (Sustainability and Climate Change) for further information.



gases such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). Because each type of GHG has a different impact on global warming, a common reference gas (CO₂) is used to relate the amount of heat absorbed to the amount of gas emitted. This is referred to as “carbon dioxide equivalent” or CO₂e.

The GHGs generated in the greatest quantities by human activities are carbon dioxide and methane. Carbon dioxide is emitted by fossil fuel combustion while methane results from off-gassing associated with agriculture and landfills. Additional GHGs are generated in smaller quantities but some have higher CO₂e values and can be very impactful. As noted throughout this General Plan, the increase in GHG emissions and associated effects on our climate affect our water supply, wildfire vulnerability, storm frequency, sea level, health, and economy, as well as the survival of many species.

Based on the 2014 Moraga Climate Action Plan (CAP), the town generated an estimated 93,945 metric tons of CO₂e in 2005. The largest contributor to the town’s emissions was the transportation sector, accounting for 49 percent of total emissions. The next largest contributor was residential energy use with 34 percent of total emissions. The commercial sector made up 15 percent of overall emissions and included electricity and natural gas used by local businesses and schools. Solid waste sent to landfill comprised 2 percent of emissions followed by wastewater treatment, which accounted for less than 1 percent of emissions.

The 2040 General Plan recommends an update to the Moraga CAP to establish a new GHG baseline, as well as new reduction targets and strategies.

10.4 CONSERVATION GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL CON-1: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

PROTECT AND ENHANCE MORAGA’S NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECOSYSTEMS.

Policy CON-1.1: Habitat Conservation

Ensure that local planning and development decisions do not adversely affect the habitat of rare, endangered, or threatened species, and other species of special concern in Moraga and surrounding areas. When development is permitted in the vicinity of such areas, use the environmental review process to evaluate potential impacts and determine mitigation measures when necessary.

Policy CON-1.2: Areas of Natural Significance

Conserve and protect natural resource areas recognized as having significance to the Town of Moraga. These areas include but are not limited to:

- (a) The remnants of Lake LaSalle on the Saint Mary’s campus, which provide scenic value and wildlife habitat along Las Trampas Creek.
- (b) Flicker Ridge (west of Indian Valley), for its wildlife value and unique knob-cone pine forest.
- (c) The remaining laguna environment of Laguna de los Palos Colorados.
- (d) Mulholland Ridge open space.





*Cows along a Moraga hiking trail
Photo Credit: Zemi Omrom, Alltrails.com photo contributor*

Policy CON-1.3: Protecting Creeks and Waterways

Protect the habitat value and hydrologic functions of creeks, streams, and riparian areas wherever possible. New development should recognize the carrying capacity of local waterways and minimize the potential for downstream erosion, flooding, and other adverse effects.

Policy CON-1.4: Creek Restoration

Pursue opportunities to restore and/or “daylight” creeks that have been compromised by past urban development. Within the Moraga Center and Rheem Center areas, Laguna Creek should be treated as a potential amenity and open space resource.

Policy CON-1.5: Wildlife Corridors

To the extent possible, connect open space areas so that wildlife can move freely through the area, bypass urban areas, and have access to nearby regional parks and open space systems.

Policy CON-1.6: Reintroduction of Wildlife

Consider reintroduction of wildlife species into natural areas where the outcome would be beneficial for the species and not detrimental to the environment and community.

Policy CON-1.7: Reintroduction of Native Plants

Consider reintroduction of native plant species, as well as programs to manage, reduce, or eliminate the proliferation of non-native, invasive species in natural areas. Encourage the use of native plants in landscaping plans, consistent with local ordinances.

Policy CON-1.8: Woodland Areas

Preserve or substantially maintain important woodland areas, especially with respect to their value as wildlife habitat, even if development in those areas is permitted. Give preference to the retention of native trees over tree removal and replanting. Important wooded areas in the town include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Mullholland Ridge Open Space (northeast and southwest slopes), including the area behind Rheem Elementary School
- (b) Indian Ridge
- (c) Bollinger Canyon
- (d) Saint Mary’s Road, including the regional trail corridor, areas west and south of Saint Mary’s Gardens, and areas north of The Bluffs
- (e) East and west of Sanders Ranch, including the ridge south of Sanders Drive and the area east of Merrill Circle South.
- (f) North of the terminus of Camino Ricardo.



Policy CON-1.9: Tree Preservation

Preserve and protect trees on public and private property, as they contribute to the beauty and environmental quality of the Town.

Policy CON-1.10: Urban Forest

Support, and where appropriate require, the planting and private maintenance of street trees in new development. Prioritize tree planting in the Moraga Center and Rheem Park areas to create shade and improve walkability, improve aesthetics, absorb air pollution and stormwater runoff, and provide urban habitat. Select species that are appropriate for the planting area and climate, while considering maintenance requirements, view impacts, and the potential for benefits to pollinators.

Policy CON-1.11: Quarrying

Prohibit quarrying and similar activities with the potential to erode the terrain or otherwise damage ecologically sensitive areas.



Protected watershed lands beyond Rancho Laguna Park

GOAL CON-2: WATER QUALITY AND CONSERVATION

PROTECT AND CONSERVE LOCAL AND REGIONAL WATER RESOURCES.

Policy CON-2.1: Water Quality

Protect the quality of groundwater and surface water in Moraga and the watersheds the town shares with other jurisdictions. Work collaboratively with other local and regional agencies to manage stormwater runoff in ways that reduce water pollution and improve water quality.

Policy CON-2.2: Stormwater Management

Ensure that new development complies with the stormwater management provisions of the Contra Costa County Clean Water Program. This includes stormwater retention facilities or other provisions to ensure that post-runoff conditions on any development site not exceed pre-development conditions, as well as measures to reduce non-point source pollution to local creeks and streams.

(See also Safety and Resilience Element policies on flooding under Goal S-4)

Policy CON-2.3: Management of Urban Runoff

Require Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce pollutants discharged to storm drains and waterways. These practices include but are not limited to reducing impervious surface coverage, respecting natural drainage patterns, using vegetation and bioswales to absorb runoff, and installing catch basins in storm drains. In new development, BMPs should consider the physical constraints of the site, potential public health and safety impacts, and economic feasibility.



Policy CON-2.4: Regulation of Pollutants

Require that activities with the potential to cause or contribute to the pollution of ground and surface waters comply with Best Management Practices and requirements to reduce water quality impacts. The accumulation, dumping, or improper discharge of trash, garbage, motor oil, and other wastes that might cause pollution shall be prohibited. In the event of a violation, require the removal of any pollutants as soon as possible.

Policy CON-2.5: Street and Gutter Maintenance

Maintain streets and gutters to prevent accumulation of debris and litter.

Policy CON-2.6: Sewer Connections

Require all development to be connected to a sewer system, with exceptions only granted where it is demonstrated that a sewer connection is infeasible, and it has been confirmed by a competent technical counsel that septic system effluent will not infiltrate underground aquifers or pollute surface waters.

Policy CON-2.7: Low Impact Development

Support the use of pervious pavement, rain gardens, bioswales, roof drains directed to cisterns, and other “low impact development” measures that capture and filter rainwater, support aquifer recharge, and reduce urban runoff.

Policy CON-2.8: Water Conservation

Require water conservation measures in new building construction and landscaping, consistent with State building codes and water-efficient landscaping requirements. Encourage other activities that support water conservation and the efficient use of water resources by Moraga residents and businesses.

Policy CON-2.9: Reclaimed Water

When and where feasible and appropriate, encourage the use of recycled wastewater (“purple pipes”) for landscape irrigation and other non-potable purposes.

Policy CON-2.10: East Bay MUD Lands

Strongly encourage the continued preservation of East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) watershed lands as open space to protect water quality in area reservoirs.



Moraga hillsides



GOAL CON-3: AIR QUALITY

IMPROVE AIR QUALITY.

Policy CON-3.1: Development Design

Minimize direct and indirect emissions of air pollutants through the design and construction of new development. For example, landscaping, energy-efficient appliances, air purification systems, and similar measures may reduce direct emissions, while sidewalks and bike lanes may reduce related transportation emissions.

Policy CON-3.2: Mitigation of Air Quality Impacts

Require mitigation of air quality impacts associated with new development in a manner that is consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act. Seek input from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) on projects with the potential for significant, unavoidable air quality impacts, and consider that input when determining mitigation measures and making findings.

Policy CON-3.3: Reducing Particulate Matter

Reduce particulate matter from roads, parking lots, construction sites, and other sources. Where appropriate, require Best Available Control Technology (BACT) measures to reduce airborne dust from construction activities, demolition, grading, stockpiled soil, and truck traffic.

Policy CON-3.4: Buffering along Major Roadways

Encourage the use of vegetative buffers and building setbacks along higher-volume roadways to reduce resident exposure to air pollutants.

Policy CON-3.5: Transportation Control Measures

Consistent with other policies in this General Plan, support actions that reduce the adverse effects of the transportation network on local and regional air quality conditions. These measures include, but are not limited to:

- Increased use of electric and zero-emission vehicles, including charging stations
- More frequent and convenient public transit service, particularly to BART
- Ridesharing and vanpool programs
- An expanded pedestrian and bicycle network
- Transportation demand management measures such as flextime and working from home
- Additional opportunities for Moraga's workforce to live locally, and for residents to find essential goods and services locally without driving to other communities

Policy CON-3.6: Indoor Air Quality

Support actions that reduce problems associated with poor indoor air quality, such as mold, second-hand smoke, and other fine particulates.

Policy CON-3.7: Wildfire Smoke

Support efforts to reduce health hazards from wildfire smoke, such as limits on outdoor activities during "Spare the Air" days, access to respirators and air filtration systems, access to clean air refuge centers, and public education.



GOAL CON-4: SOLID WASTE REDUCTION

MAXIMIZE THE DIVERSION OF SOLID WASTE FROM LANDFILLS WHILE INCREASING RECYCLING, COMPOSTING, AND THE USE OF RECYCLED MATERIALS.

Policy CON-4.1: Waste Reduction

Continue collaborative efforts to divert recyclables and organic materials from landfills. Support composting and green waste recycling by residents, businesses, and public entities.

Policy CON-4.2: Expanded Participation

Support continued participation in recycling and composting programs, especially by local businesses and multi-family housing dwellers.

Policy CON-4.3: Special Waste Pickup

Support bulk waste and e-waste pickup events to provide opportunities for residents to safely dispose of these materials. Continue efforts to ensure the safe disposal of household hazardous waste.

Policy CON-4.4: Source Reduction

Support initiatives to reduce consumption and prevent waste, including programs to encourage reuse and repair (rather than disposal), reduce food waste, advocate for extended producer responsibility, and expand markets for recycled goods and products.

Policy CON-4.5: Construction and Demolition Debris

Implement CalGreen Building Code standards for recycling of construction and demolition debris.

GOAL CON-5: ENERGY CONSERVATION

PROMOTE ENERGY CONSERVATION, FOSSIL-FREE ENERGY GENERATION, AND GREATER ENERGY SECURITY.

Policy CON-5.1: Energy Conservation

Promote energy conservation in new construction through education, incentives, and standards that incorporate passive solar design, solar space and water heating, insulation, and other measures where feasible and cost effective. Promote the weatherization and retrofitting of existing homes and businesses in ways that conserve energy and reduce energy waste.

Policy CON-5.2: Energy Efficiency Standards

Require that all new buildings and additions comply with the energy efficiency standards of the California Building Standards Code (Title 24, Code of Regulations)

Policy CON-5.3: Renewable Energy

Promote expanded use of renewable energy and phasing out of fossil fuels for building heating, cooling, and power. This should include municipal clean energy initiatives as well as programs which support renewable energy use by local households and businesses.

Policy CON-5.4: Energy Innovation

Consider innovative technologies such as micro-grids, solar with battery storage, and “smart” energy systems to reduce peak demands on the power grid and manage energy more efficiently. Emphasize strategies that decrease reliance on the energy grid in the event of power shutdowns.



Policy CON-5.5: Decarbonization

Support state and regional efforts to decarbonize the energy sector, and shift toward fuel sources that do not generate greenhouse gas emissions.

(see also Policy CON-3.5 on transportation control measures to reduce trips)



*Solar installation at Moraga Country Club
Photo Credit: Sun Light & Power*

GOAL CON-6: GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION

REDUCE MORAGA'S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AT A RATE THAT SUPPORTS ATTAINMENT OF STATEWIDE GOALS, INCLUDING CARBON NEUTRALITY BY 2045.

Policy CON-6.1: Climate Action Strategies

Pursue projects and programs such as an updated Moraga Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and establish metrics for measuring success.

Policy CON-6.2: Climate Change as a Planning Consideration

Ensure that all Town decisions related to planning, building, transportation, and capital improvements consider potential impacts associated with climate change, including potential greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy CON-6.3: Leading By Example

Undertake transportation, waste reduction, water and energy conservation, and clean energy measures for municipal operations. Identify projects supporting municipal GHG reduction, such as energy audits, LED streetlights, and cool or green roofs. Pursue grants for sustainability improvements and programs to address climate change and resilience at the local level.





Campolindo students participate in an environmental education project | Photo Credit: Save Mount Diablo

Policy CON-6.4: Transportation Sector Focus

Recognize that the primary source of greenhouse gas emissions in Moraga is the transportation sector, and that the greatest emission reduction potential is in this sector. Implement General Plan policies and programs to reduce vehicle miles traveled, improve the bicycle and pedestrian network, expand local bus service and ridesharing, support the use of electric and low-carbon emission vehicles, and implement employer trip reduction measures. Supportive policies in this Plan include CON-3.1 through CON-3.5, T-2.1 through T-2.8, and LU-1.2.

Policy CON-6.5: Buildings and GHG Emissions

Support and facilitate a transition to renewable and carbon-free energy sources in new and existing buildings, recognizing that the building sector is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Moraga. Building and construction practices for homes and businesses should include low-emissions equipment, high-efficiency and electric appliances, renewable building materials, and other measures supported by the California Green Buildings Standards Code (CALGreen) and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system.



Policy CON-6.6: Regional Partnerships

Support and participate in regional initiatives and partnerships to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including shifting to renewable energy sources such as solar and wind.

Policy CON-6.7: Climate Change Education and Awareness

Improve public education on climate and sustainability issues, including the steps each individual and household can take to reduce their carbon footprint. Support print and social media campaigns, websites and on-line “dashboards,” special events, community-based efforts, and other initiatives that raise awareness of the climate crisis.

Policy CON-6.8: Green Infrastructure

Recognize the importance of the Town’s open space network, particularly riparian and woodland areas, as “green infrastructure” that absorbs air pollutants and greenhouse gases, sequesters carbon, filters stormwater, and moderates local climate.

(see the Open Space Element for policies on open space management and maintenance)

Policy CON-6.9: Green Businesses

Consider green business programs and other recognition-based incentives that encourage private enterprises to use greener practices in their operations. Provide information to businesses about greener business practices, rebate and grant opportunities, and other available resources.

Policy CON-6.10: Local Food Production

Promote local food production, community and backyard gardens, farmers markets, and more sustainable approaches to growing and transporting food. Local food production can reduce food transportation costs, thereby reducing both food costs and related greenhouse gas emissions.

10.5 CONSERVATION IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Program CON-A: Climate Action Plan

Maintain and periodically update a Town of Moraga Climate Action Plan.

Action CON-A1: Update GHG Emissions

Baseline. Update the Town’s baseline inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Use this data to inform targets and measures for a new Climate Action Plan.

Action CON-A2: Climate Action Plan Update.

Update the 2014 Moraga Climate Action Plan to reflect new baseline emissions data and updated targets for the Plan’s horizon year. The Plan should quantify the expected GHG reduction impacts of various measures, as well as their economic feasibility and financial impacts. The Update process should include a robust public engagement program.

Program CON-B: Building Codes

Implement all provisions of the California Building Standards Code, as amended by Contra Costa County. These provisions support include Title 24 standards relating to energy and water conservation, renewable energy use, energy efficiency, and other measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additional green building measures may be considered as part of the Climate Action Plan Update, subject to consideration of cost impacts and community input.²

² The County of Contra Costa may consider “reach codes” that go beyond State requirements in the future, to the extent these requirements comply with state and federal law.



Program CON-C: Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)

Continue CCA agreements so that Moraga customers may receive energy from renewable sources while still receiving transmission and distribution service from PG&E.

Program CON-D: Biological Resource Surveys

Where appropriate, require biological resource surveys on development sites as part of the environmental review process. Identify measures to protect plant and animal life as needed.

Program CON-E: Stream Channel Standards

Implement Contra Costa County standards for the design and maintenance of stream channels, including development setbacks from top of bank, design and maintenance of storm drain systems and outlets, and standards related to vegetation removal, revegetation, and bank stabilization. These standards should be used as a guide for development review and should provide guidance to owners of streamside properties.

Program CON-F: County Clean Water Program Implementation/ Municipal Regional Permit

Continue to implement the County Clean Water Program, as required by the Municipal Regional Permit (MRP) issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit for stormwater pollution prevention. As a member agency, Moraga implements measures such as trash capture devices in storm drains and periodic street sweeping to reduce runoff pollution, and works with the County on enforcement, administration, and education related to best practices.

Program CON-G: C.3 Requirements

Implement Contra Costa County "C.3" requirements for stormwater retention and treatment on new development sites. "C.3" refers to a provision in the Municipal Regional Permit that requires local planning authorities to include source control, site design, and stormwater treatment measures in new development and redevelopment projects to address pollutant discharges and prevent increases in runoff flow.

Pollinator garden in Rancho Laguna Park



Program CON-H: Storm Drain Management and Master Plan

Implement the recommendations of the Moraga Storm Drain Master Plan. Update the Plan periodically in response to completed projects, new requirements, and changed conditions. The Plan should document current storm drain conditions, define system improvement priorities, and establish ongoing management and maintenance needs and procedures.

Program CON-I: Stormwater Management Ordinance

Implement Municipal Code provisions requiring best management practices for stormwater control, including stormwater pollution prevention plans and stormwater control plans.

Program CON-J: Recycled Water Ordinance

Implement Municipal Code provisions for recycled water, in accordance with State law.

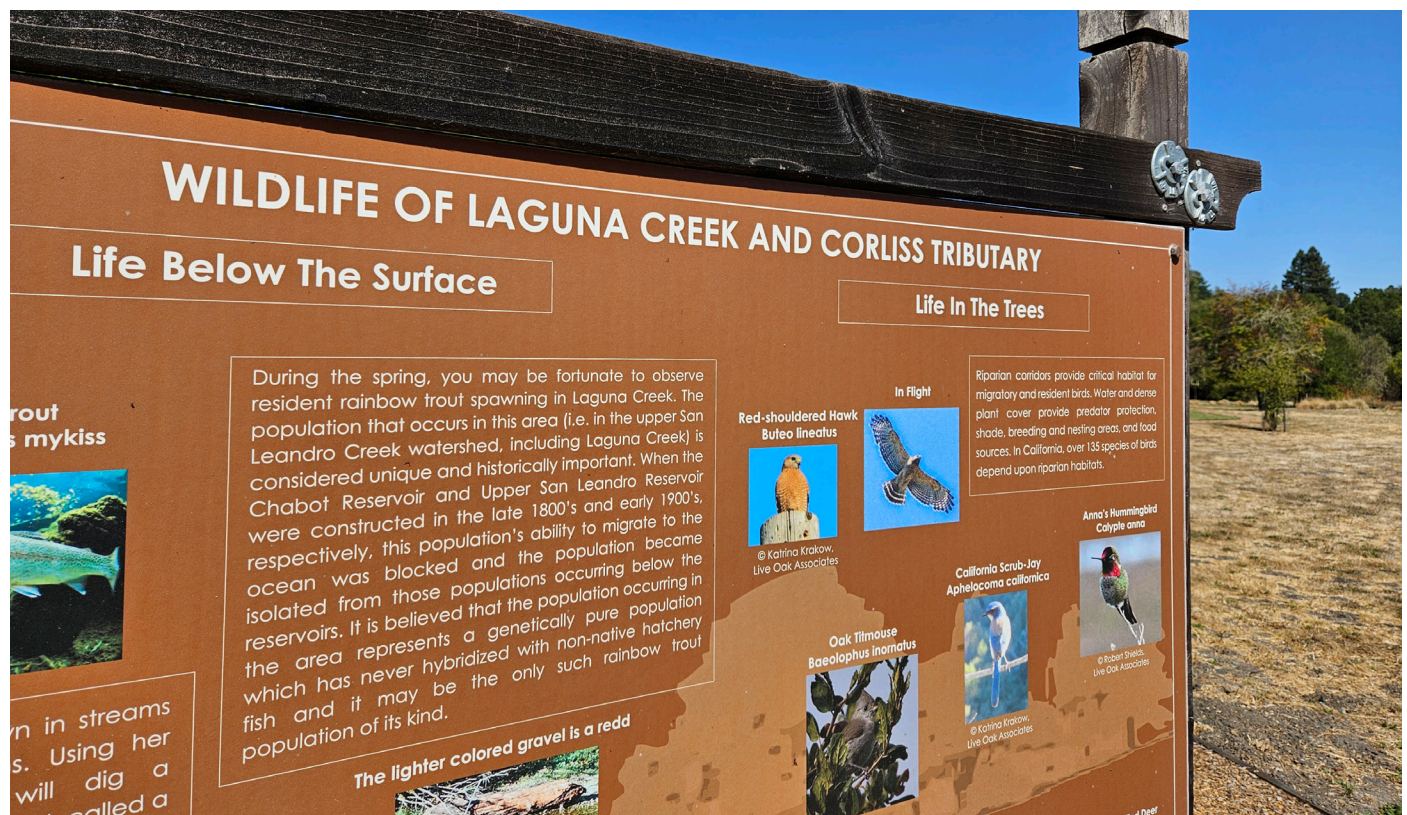
Program CON-K: Tree Preservation Ordinance

Implement and monitor the Moraga Tree Preservation Ordinance to protect Moraga's trees. Consider amendments and updates as needed to allow exceptions for hazardous trees, utility-related tree trimming, and other essential or public safety activities.

Program CON-L: Air Quality Measures

Continue to carry out Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) measures designed to attain state and federal air quality standards. At the local level, this includes transportation control measures (TCMs) aimed at reducing motor vehicle emissions, including zero emission vehicle infrastructure, improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, advocacy for improved transit, employer-based carpools, and mixed-use development in the commercial centers.

Interpretive signage on Moraga wildlife



Program CON-M: Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling Program

Continue to implement solid waste reduction and recycling program measures, including recycling and composting programs administered through the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority. Participate in education and outreach efforts related to the importance and benefits of waste reduction, and to the proper methods for sorting and handling of discarded materials such as food scraps, recyclables, and yard trimmings.

Program CON-N: Agency Outreach and Education

Support efforts by partner agencies providing solid waste, water, sewer, and energy services to expand public awareness of resource conservation, sustainability, and environmental protection issues and activities.

Program CON-O: Town Outreach and Education

Maintain a Town sustainability website, including links and resources for residents and businesses. Encourage ongoing partnerships and communication with local environmental and climate advocacy organizations, and the engagement of these organizations in civic affairs.

The following programs in other elements also implement Conservation policies (Program IDs are shown in parentheses):

- Development Review (LU-C)
- Environmental Review/ CEQA compliance (LU-E)
- Zoning Ordinance (LU-B)
- General Plan Diagram (LU-A)
- Hillside Development Permits (LU-H)
- Water Efficient Landscaping (CD-H)
- CalGreen (CD-M)
- TSM Ordinance (T-I)
- Hillside and Ridgeline Ordinance (OSP-B)
- Grading Ordinance (OSP-C)





Moraga-Orinda Fire District vehicle

11

SAFETY AND RESILIENCE ELEMENT

The Safety and Resilience Element focuses on protecting people and property from natural and human-caused hazards. These hazards include earthquakes, landslides, wildfires, and flooding, as well as health risks associated with hazardous materials and noise. The Element is particularly concerned with hazards that may worsen in the future due to climate change, including extreme heat, increasing wildfire frequency, severe storms, and drought. The Safety and Resilience Element also addresses emergency preparedness, providing a foundation for future analysis and programs related to evacuation in the event of a wildfire or other disaster.

The overarching goal of this Element is to minimize the economic and social impacts of environmental hazards. This can be achieved by considering local hazards in all land use and development decisions and by implementing policies and programs designed to reduce future losses. Effective land use planning, site design, architecture, and construction practices can significantly lower hazard levels and aid in disaster recovery.

California has required the inclusion of a Safety Element in general plans since the 1960s. The requirements for this Element have evolved over time to address climate change adaptation and social equity and to align with the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), which is a federally mandated document. Since 2000, cities and towns have needed an LHMP to qualify for federal disaster funds. In 2006, California passed AB 2140, encouraging local governments to incorporate the LHMP into their Safety Element. Although Moraga's LHMP is a separate Town document, it is adopted by reference in this Element and influences other parts of the General Plan.

The concept of "resilience" is central to this Element. It refers to the ability of communities to maintain their quality of life and adapt to changing conditions, including natural disasters, climate



change, and public health emergencies. Moraga is committed to enhancing its resilience through collaborations with residents and businesses, partnerships with other agencies, its own operations, and long-term planning efforts.

This Element includes an overview of existing conditions and then presents goals and policies organized around the following eight topics:

- Hazard Reduction and Emergency Preparedness
- Public Safety and Law Enforcement
- Wildfire Hazards
- Geologic Hazards
- Flooding and Streambank Erosion Hazards
- Hazardous Materials
- Climate Resilience
- Noise

The Noise policies meet the Government Code requirement to include a noise element in the General Plan; noise contour diagrams are included in an Appendix.

11.1 HAZARD PROFILE OF MORAGA

HAZARD MITIGATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Overview

The Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) incorporates hazard mitigation principles and practices into the routine government activities and functions of the County and its cities and towns. The LHMP recommends specific actions to protect people and community assets from losses to those hazards that pose the greatest risk. The Town of Moraga is considered a municipal planning partner under the LHMP. An “annex” (appendix) of the Countywide LHMP specifically addresses hazards in Moraga.

Table 11-1 summarizes hazards in the Moraga Planning Area, and the likelihood and extent of their impacts. The greatest local hazards identified are earthquakes, landslides, wildfires, and flooding. An overview of these hazards is provided in this chapter.



Commons Park



Table 11-1: Moraga Hazard Identification Assessment

Hazard Event	Probability Factor	Geographic Extent	Vulnerability	Impact	Consequence	Total Risk Score
Earthquake	Medium	Very High	Very High	High	High	68
Landslide	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	62
Wildfire	Medium	High	Very High	High	High	58
Heavy Rainfall	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	56
Flash Flood	Medium	High	Medium	High	High	55
Severe T-Storm	High	Low	High	Medium	Medium	54
Strong Winds	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	54
Extreme Heat	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	51
Utility Disruption	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	51
Drought	Medium	Very High	Medium	Medium	Medium	50
Stream Flooding	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	47
HazMat Incident	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	41
Dam Failure	Low	High	Medium	High	High	32
Tornado	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	16
Sea Level Rise	None	None	None	None	None	0
Tsunami	None	None	None	None	None	0

Source: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Annex for Town of Moraga, 2024. Ratings correspond to numeric rankings and weighted averages based on an assessment of the likelihood of occurrence for each hazard along with its impacts on people, property, and the economy. A total score of 55 or higher is considered a high risk, a score of 25-54 is a medium risk, and a score of less than 25 is a low risk.

Public Safety

The mission of the Moraga Police Department is to create and maintain a sense of well-being and security for every resident and visitor in Moraga. The Department's responsibilities include facilitating traffic safety and lawful traffic operations, deterring crime through effective patrol services and community cooperation, responding quickly and safely to reports of crimes and apprehending those responsible, investigating crimes, and administering programs that enhance community safety and the quality of life.

Emergency preparedness and disaster response is an important part of the Police Department's mission. The Department works in collaboration with Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD),

local utilities, and other Town departments to update the Town's emergency evacuation plans, including conducting drills and training Town staff in disaster preparedness and emergency operation center (EOC) functions. It also promotes participation in community notification and warning systems and resident preparedness for disasters.

Overall crime rates in Moraga are low. Statistics in every category of reported crimes are below national and state averages. However, further growth and development in Moraga may require additional staff and investment in communication capacity and technology.



WILDFIRE

Overview

A wildfire is an uncontrolled fire in an extensive area of combustible vegetation. Primary factors that increase an area's susceptibility to wildfire include slope and topography, vegetation type and condition, and weather and atmospheric conditions. A large percentage of the Moraga planning area contains undeveloped grasslands that may be subject to wildfire, particularly during the hot summer and fall months.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) defines Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas as geographic areas where structures and other human development intermingle with wildland or vegetative fuels. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has provided land use planning guidance for WUI areas across California. OPR indicates that approximately one-third of California's single-family homes are located in WUI areas.¹ Decades of fire suppression, coupled with invasive vegetation and introduced tree species, has increased fuel loads in Contra Costa County. Today, parts of Lamorinda include forested neighborhoods with narrow roads, wood-frame homes, and combustible vegetation. MOFD has adopted special codes and regulations to address in these areas.

The direct effects of wildfire include the loss of human life, property, natural resources, and economic assets. The indirect effects are also significant. In addition to stripping the land of vegetation, soil exposed to intense heat may lose its capability to absorb moisture and support life. Exposed soils erode quickly and enhance siltation of rivers and streams, thereby increasing flood hazards, harming aquatic life, and degrading water quality. Lands stripped of vegetation are also subject to increased debris flow hazards. Wildfire smoke can create air quality problems that increase cardiovascular and respiratory health issues.

¹ Source: OPR Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory, 2022

Moraga residents have identified wildfire hazards as their leading safety concern in surveys, public meetings, and written correspondence associated with the 2040 General Plan. This is in part due to catastrophic wildfires experienced in California over the past decade, along with the anticipated increase in wildfire frequency associated with rising global temperatures. Heightened concerns are also related to the extent of urban wildland interface in Moraga, the access and evacuation constraints associated with Moraga's location and road network, and the potential for communication systems (including cell phones) to fail during a wildfire event. More recently, the availability of fire insurance and non-renewal of numerous policies in WUI areas has become an issue of serious concern for Lamorinda residents.



*Training exercise near Moraga's Painted Rock
Photo Credit: Sora O'Doherty, Lamorinda Weekly*

Factors Influencing Wildfire Risk and Behavior

Moraga's landscape is comprised of ridgelines, hillsides, valleys, canyons, and streams. The ridge and hillside landscape is mostly dry and many of the slopes are covered with grasses or oak chaparral. The relationship between vegetation and wildfire is complex. Some vegetation is naturally fire resistant, while other vegetation is



extremely flammable. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), sloped land increases susceptibility to wildfire because fire typically burns faster up steep slopes. Slopes facing south to southwest tend to be higher risk than those facing northerly to northeast, as they are warmer and drier.

Wildfire behavior depends on the type of fuels present. Surface fuels include grasses, logs, and stumps low to the ground. Ladder fuels, such as tall shrubs, young trees, and the lowest branches of mature trees, provide a path for fire to climb upward into the crowns of trees. Aerial fuels include upper limbs, foliage, and branches not in contact with the ground. Ample spacing between tree crowns and trimming of lower branches close to the ground can help prevent fire from igniting the crown of a tree or spreading from an ignited tree to adjacent trees.

Wind, temperature, and relative humidity are the most influential weather elements in fire behavior and susceptibility. Fire moves faster under hot, dry, and windy conditions. Wind may also blow embers ahead of a fire, causing its spread. Drought conditions lead to extended periods of excessively dry vegetation, increasing the fuel load and ignition potential.

Wildfire Hazards in Moraga

After the devastating Oakland/Berkeley Hills fire in 1991, the State passed legislation to minimize the effects of urban/wildland fires in the State's most at-risk areas. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is required by law to map areas of significant fire hazards across the state based on vegetation, terrain, slope, weather, density, and other relevant factors.

In State Responsibility Areas (SRAs), which are unincorporated non-federal lands, the CALFIRE maps identify Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs) using a three-tiered rating system: Moderate, High, and Very High. In Local Responsibility Areas

(LRAs), which are associated with incorporated cities and towns and all non-SRA and federal lands, the CALFIRE maps only show Very High Severity Zones. Future CALFIRE maps will also identify "High" and "Moderate" rated areas within cities and towns.

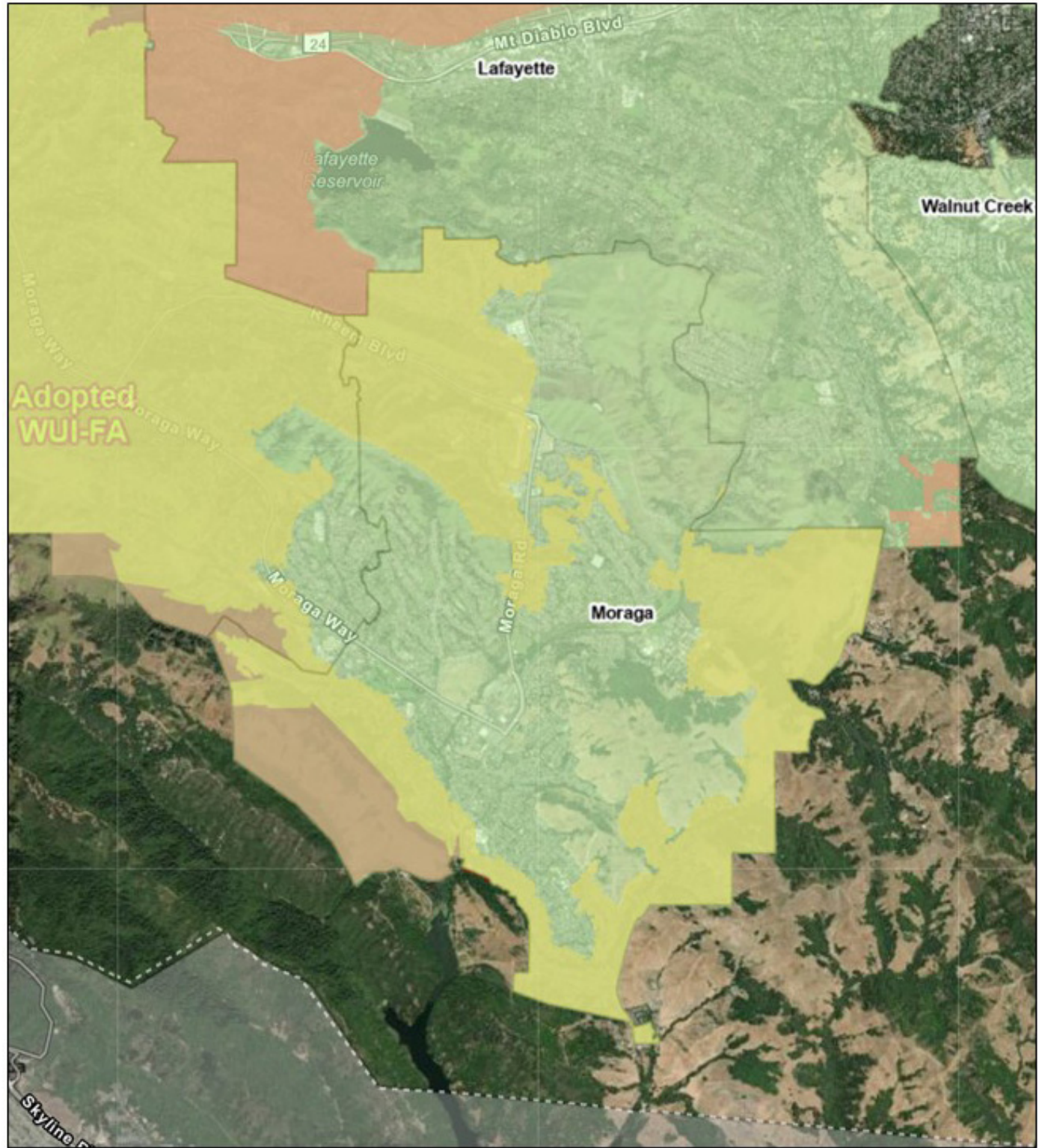
Different standards for building construction have been established for each fire hazard severity zone. Under state regulations, areas within FHSZs must comply with specific building and vegetation management requirements intended to reduce property damage and loss of life. In addition, MOFD has adopted a Wildland Urban Interface designation that triggers specific building requirements.

Figure 11.1 shows Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and Wildland-Urban Fire Areas (WUI-FA) areas in Moraga. This designation triggers heightened requirements related to fire safety. The only area in Moraga's Town limits designated as "Very High" is the undeveloped Indian Valley area on the southwest edge of town. In unincorporated Contra Costa County, the very high designation extends west into the Berkeley/Oakland Hills and south and southeast of Moraga toward Las Trampas Ridge. Unincorporated areas east of Moraga are generally designated as "High" Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

The most recent significant wildfire activity in Moraga was a 40-acre fire adjacent to Merrill Drive in Sanders Ranch in 2019. More significant fires have occurred in nearby communities including the 1991 Tunnel Fire in the Oakland-Berkeley Hills (1,622 acres) and a 1998 fire in Sibley Regional Park (200 acres). Much larger fires have affected the nine-county Bay Area in the last decade, including the 2019 SCU Complex Fire (396,000 acres) and the 2020 LNU Complex fire (305,000 acres), and the Tubbs, Nuns, and Glass Fires in Napa and Sonoma counties (2017, 2020).



Figure 11.1: MOFD Adopted Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area



- Town Limits
- WUI-Fire Area (MOFD, Ord. 20-02)
- Adopted Very High FHSZ

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Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD)

The MOFD was formed in 1997 as an integrated independent special district. The MOFD consolidated the Moraga Fire Protection District and the Orinda Fire Protection District to increase efficiency in fire protection and emergency medical services. The District provides services to Moraga, Orinda, and surrounding areas such as Canyon and unincorporated Bollinger Canyon from five fire stations located in the district. Stations 41 and 42 are located in Moraga.

The MOFD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for providing strategic leadership, fiscal oversight, and policy direction, including adoption of plans, codes, and regulations. This includes adoption of the California Fire Code (inclusive of the International Fire Code) and local amendments. In 2020, MOFD adopted regulations requiring ember resistant construction in areas classified as High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity.

In addition to wildfire prevention, suppression, and response, MOFD also responds to structure fires, accidents and rescues, hazardous material

incidents, and emergency medical calls. The District provides a range of community-based education and preparedness programs, and participates in County and State mutual aid systems. MOFD operates a number of programs to reduce the risk of fire and the potential for loss of life and property. This includes working with East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) to ensure an adequate water supply, reviewing development proposals to ensure compliance with relevant fire codes and fire prevention measures, operating a weed abatement program to reduce fire hazards, and implementing defensible space standards.

Planning for and Mitigating Wildfire Hazards

Development patterns in Moraga during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s tended to exacerbate wildland-urban interface conditions due to densities, lot patterns, and vegetation growth. More recently and through this General Plan, the Town is focusing future development in the most secure areas—primarily in accessible commercial districts located on valley floors. Today's construction and landscaping standards, as well

A 2021 fire burned 40 acres near Sanders Ranch | Photo Credit: MOFD



as ingress and egress requirements, reduce hazard levels but do not eliminate them entirely.

Additional measures have been taken to reduce wildfire hazards and improve wildfire response capacity. These include:

- Fire Safe Road Regulations, including requirements for road width, surface treatments, grade, radius, turnarounds, turnouts, structures, driveways, and gate entrances. These regulations are intended to ensure safe access for emergency wildland fire equipment and civilian evacuation.
- California Fire Code Requirements. These establish minimum requirements to safeguard public health, safety, and general welfare from hazards in new and existing buildings and provide safety for firefighters and emergency responders. The provisions of this Code apply to the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal, and demolition of every building or structure or any appurtenances connected or attached to such building structures throughout California.

The Fire Code addresses such topics as exterior materials and construction methods, interior finishes, fire protection systems, and means of egress, including fire apparatus access road width requirements. The Code also contains regulations for vegetation and fuel management to maintain clearances around structures, including requirements for ignition-resistant construction standards for new buildings in WUI areas.

- Contra Costa County and Moraga-Orinda Community Wildfire Protection Plans. The countywide plan was developed with input from many organizations and aims to reduce hazards through increased information and education about wildfires, hazardous fuel reduction, and actions to reduce structure ignitability. The Moraga-Orinda Plan is an appendix to this Plan and focuses on local actions.
- Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). Both the Town and the County have adopted EOPs related to disaster management and emergency preparedness. These are addressed in the implementation section of this chapter.



Volunteers at MOFD Station 41 practice using a water supply trailer | Photo Credit: MOFD



GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Earthquakes

The San Francisco Bay Area is one of the most seismically active regions in the United States. There are several active fault zones that affect Moraga, including the Hayward Fault (3 miles southwest at its closest point), the Calaveras Fault (2 miles east at its closest point), the Concord-Green Valley Fault, and the San Andreas Fault. There are also two fault lines that run through Moraga, but both are considered inactive.

The northern section of the San Andreas is capable of generating a magnitude 8.3 earthquake, while the Hayward and Calaveras faults can generate a 7.5 earthquake, and the Concord Fault can generate a 7.0 earthquake.² Earthquakes of this magnitude are sufficient to cause major damage to structures, foundations, and utility lines.

The major seismic hazard affecting Moraga is ground shaking. The town has been impacted by ground shaking from regional earthquakes in the past and will likely be impacted again. The severity of shaking increases with proximity to the epicenter of the earthquake. Structures on bedrock tend to perform better than structures underlain by alluvium and other unconsolidated (or fill) materials. In addition to the hazard posed to buildings, ground shaking can also damage utilities and roads, potentially affecting entry and exit routes to neighborhoods and the town itself.

Other earthquake-related hazards in the Bay Area are surface rupture, liquefaction, and landslides. Surface rupture risks occur along active fault lines, and the risk in Moraga is very low. Liquefaction is a seismic phenomenon where soils lose their strength during high intensity

ground shaking. This risk typically occurs on filled soils and along streambanks with unconsolidated sediment. Liquefaction hazards are rated “low” in most of Moraga but are rated “moderate” along the town’s creeks. Landslides occur when slopes become unstable due to ground shaking, and masses of earth material move downslope. This hazard is also associated with heavy rain events and is discussed below.



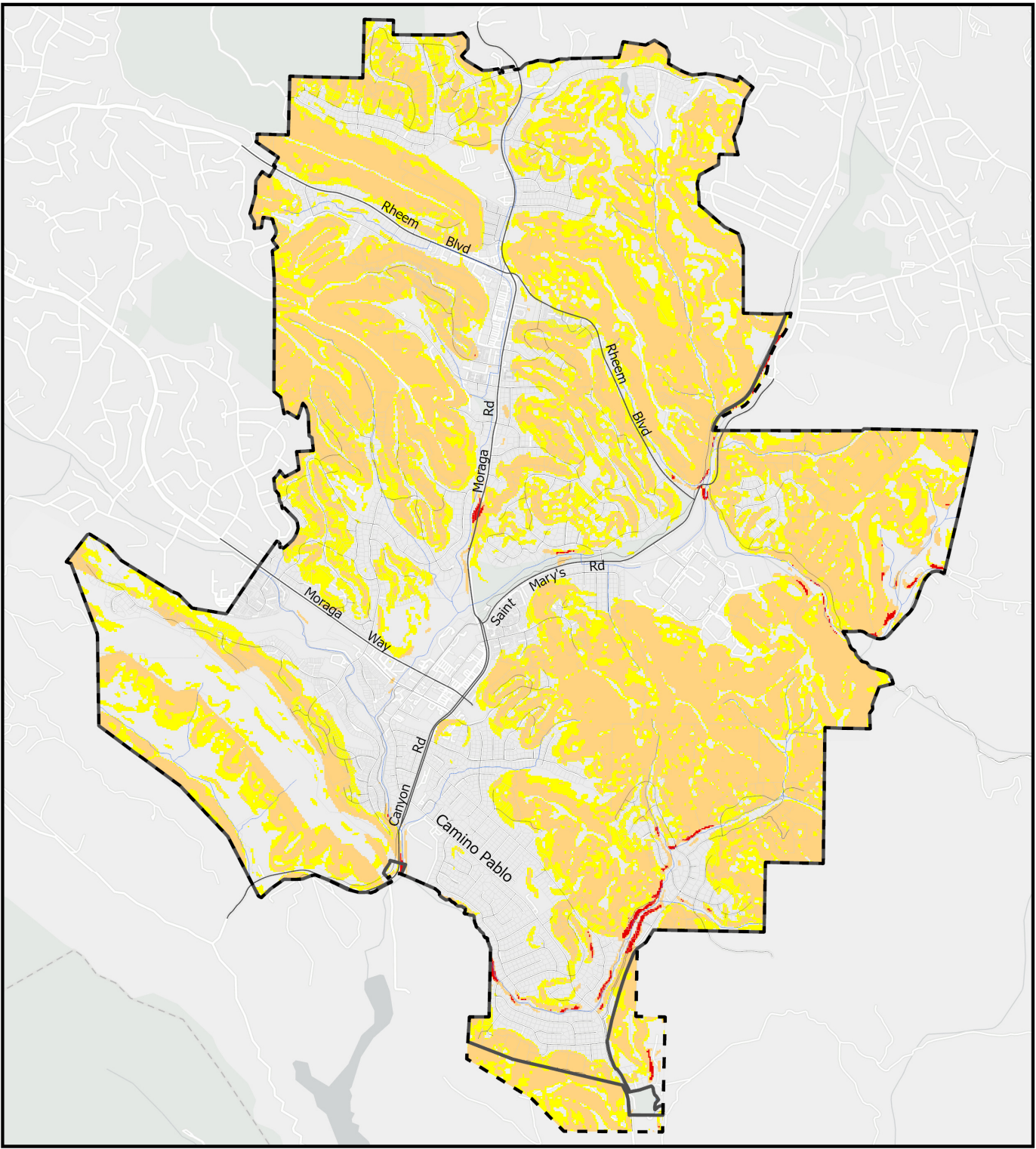
Moraga sits between the Hayward and Calaveras Faults
Source: UC Berkeley Seismology Lab

² Earthquakes are measured using the Richter scale, which assigns a numeric rating based on the value of the amplitude of the highest seismic wave. The measurements are logarithmic (i.e., a magnitude 5 quake is 10 times the amplitude of a magnitude 4 quake, and so on). A 5.0 is considered a moderate quake, while a 6.0 is considered a strong quake and a 7.0 is considered a major quake. However, even quakes of 4.0 may cause damage.



Figure 11.2: Landslide Susceptibility Ratings

Town of Moraga General Plan 2040

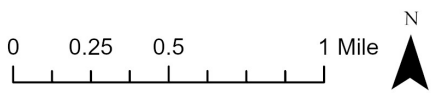


- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels

Susceptibility Classes

Yellow	8
Orange	9
Red	10

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Landslides

Like other hillside communities in the Bay Area, Moraga's hillsides are vulnerable to landslides and may become unstable when saturated with heavy rainfall. Landslides range from slow continuous movement of soil such as a slump to the rapid movement of soil such as a debris flow.

Figure 11.2 shows landslide susceptibility based on maps prepared by the California Division of Mines and Geology. Susceptibility is grouped into classes ranging from zero to ten based on rock strength and slope. Rating above seven indicate very high landslide susceptibility and include most sloped property in Moraga. Many of these slopes are undeveloped areas, but some include residential development. The Town requires geotechnical studies to determine landslide potential on development sites and requires measures to remediate hazards and reduce potential on-site and off-site damage.



*A 2023 landslide in Orinda, a few blocks from the Moraga border
Photo Credit: City of Orinda*

Other Geologic and Soil-Related Hazards

Other geologic and soil conditions affect the safety of existing development and the suitability of land for future development. These are highlighted below:

- **Expansive soils** are found throughout Moraga and are typically associated with high clay content. These soils can expand when wet and shrink when dry, causing foundations and floors to crack. Foundations constructed on expansive soils require special design considerations. Sometimes expansive soils must be removed entirely and replaced with engineered backfill.
- **Ground settlement** refers to the compression of loose soil deposits or fill over time. Settlement occurs as the material adjusts to the load (foundation and building weight) being added. The amount of settlement depends on the characteristics of the underlying soil. On fill, soft sediments, and clay soils, post construction settlement potential can be substantial and must be addressed through engineering and design.
- **Impermeability**, or the rate of percolation, can produce structural problems if water collects beneath or within the foundations of buildings. This may also occur in Moraga, and requires drainage improvements to prevent supporting soils from becoming weakened by saturation.
- **Erosion** refers to the removal of soil by water or wind and may be exacerbated by construction and grading. Factors that influence erosion include the properties of the soil, amount of rainfall and wind, length and steepness of the slope, and amount and type of vegetative cover. Erosion potential is relatively low in Moraga but may be a hazard requiring remediation near streams and on cut and filled slopes.



FLOODING

Flooding in Moraga is primarily associated with overbank flooding along local streams and standing water due to clogged storm drains after severe rain events. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood insurance maps for the town show narrow bands of 100-year flood risk along Laguna Creek, Moraga Creek, Rimer Creek, and Las Trampas Creek. Creek setbacks and buffers mitigate the potential for structure damage in most locations.

The area potentially impacted by a 500-year flood (e.g., a flood that has a one in 500 chance of occurring in any given year) is considerably larger than the 100-year flood zone. It includes portions of the Rheem Valley Shopping Center, the area along Canyon Road south of Moraga Center, and portions of the Moraga Country Club. A 500-year flood could have destructive impacts on creekside parcels and cause larger-scale flooding.

Dam failure is another potential cause of flooding, although those risks are low in Moraga. The town is not located downstream of any major dam, with runoff generally flowing to Upper San Leandro Reservoir to the south. The only water body in the town regulated by the California Division of Safety of Dams is the East Bay Municipal Utility District storage facility off Claudia Court in the Rheem Valley Manor neighborhood. If this facility were breached, it would flood between 15 to 30 homes, plus athletic fields and parking areas at Saint Mary's College.

As an inland community, Moraga is not vulnerable to tsunamis. The Town is also not directly vulnerable to sea level rise.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials are substances that can be harmful to human health or the environment. They include toxic substances, ignitable substances, corrosive materials, and reactive materials. These materials may be carcinogenic, cause burns or explosions, or produce toxic

gases. Improper handling, storage, transportation, or disposal of these wastes can contaminate soil, water, and air.

Before the 1980s, the disposal of chemicals on land was largely unregulated, leading to widespread contamination of industrial sites and public landfills. Many of these contaminated sites have been officially identified; some have been remediated and others still pose risks. Common contaminated sites include gas stations with leaking underground tanks and brownfields from past industrial activities. Both state and federal agencies maintain databases and maps of these sites. In Contra Costa County, the Environmental Health Services Division oversees hazardous materials regulations at the local level, including reporting and compliance. They also handle emergency responses to chemical spills, pipeline leaks, and illegal dumping.

Moraga does not have industrial land uses or concentrations of activities typically associated with hazardous materials. However, the town has clean-up program sites associated with dry cleaning businesses in the two shopping centers. There were also several underground storage tanks identified as cleanup sites, but they are listed as remediated.

Despite the absence of heavy industrial activity, businesses such as hardware stores, auto repair, and dry cleaners frequently use hazardous materials. Private residents also use hazardous materials in and around their homes. Household hazardous materials include cleaning products, paints, solvents, and chemicals for pools, as well as fertilizers and pesticides. Improper handling or disposal of these materials can pose health risks, and spills during transportation can create hazards.

Programs have been developed to educate the public and local businesses on the proper handling and disposal of hazardous materials. These include a disposal facility for household hazardous waste in Martinez run by the Central



Contra Costa Sanitary District. The facility accepts items such as oil, paint, household cleaners, and car batteries at no charge.

Hazardous materials also include outdated building materials with known health risks, such as asbestos (used in buildings from 1945 to 1978) and lead-based paint. Asbestos and lead can cause severe health issues, including cancer and cognitive or cardiovascular problems. Specific remediation measures are required during the remodeling, renovation, or demolition of buildings containing these materials to protect public health.



Hazmat warning at a utility enclosure in the Painted Rock Open Space

AVIATION HAZARDS

Moraga is not subject to aviation hazards, as it does not have an airport and is not in any designated airport safety zone or land use compatibility zone. The nearest airports are San Francisco Bay Oakland International and Buchanan Field, both of which are more than 10 miles away.

11.2 KEY SAFETY AND RESILIENCE ISSUES

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND EVACUATION

Moraga's location in an area prone to earthquakes, landslides, floods, and wildfires makes it essential to be prepared in the event of an emergency. The Town works collaboratively with the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD), the cities of Lafayette and Orinda, and several County agencies to reduce exposure to hazards, implement training programs for residents, and ensure effective response and recovery.

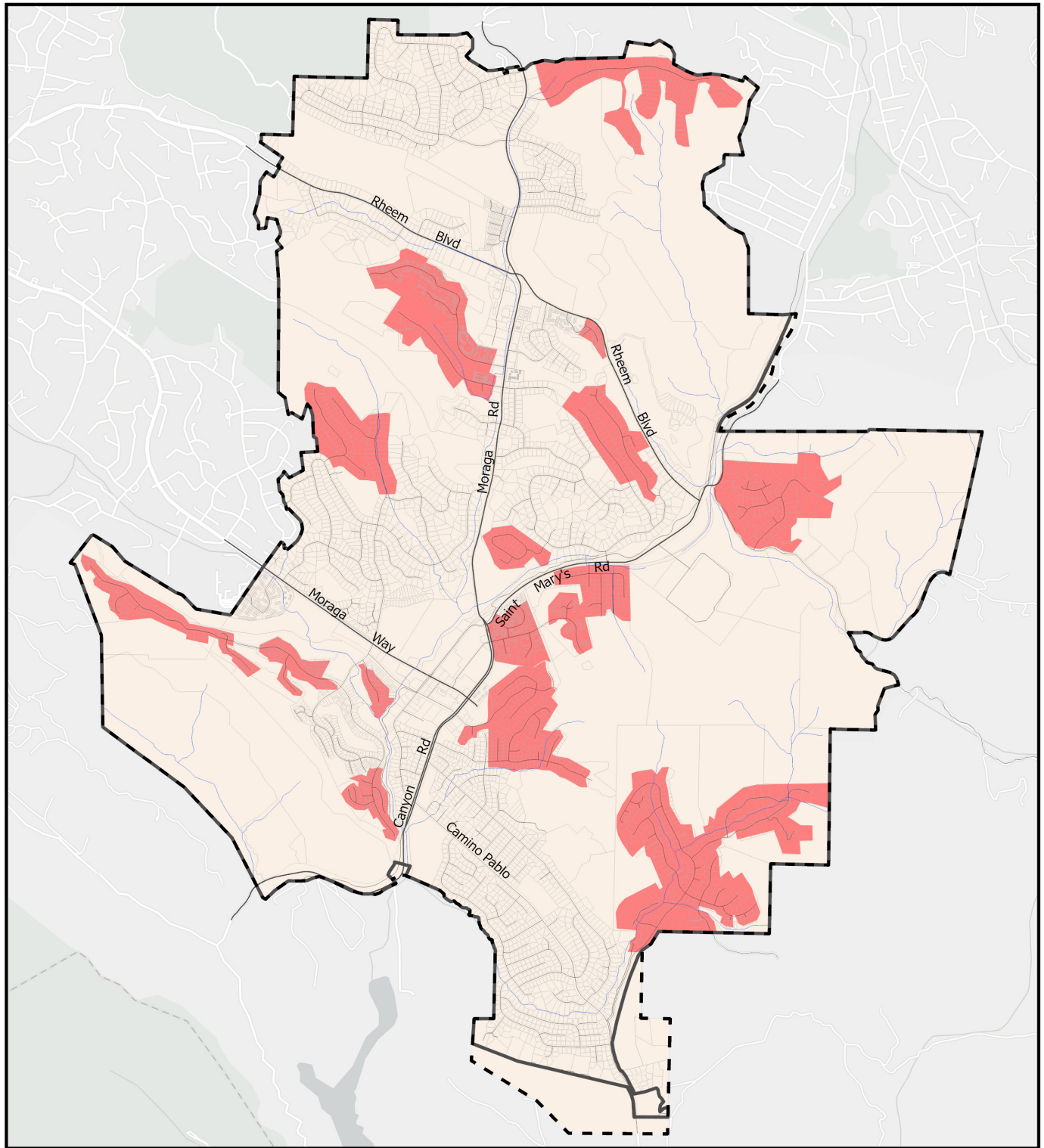
The Town has adopted an Emergency Operations Plan that assigns functions and tasks to staff consistent with California's Standard Emergency Management System, including coordination with other jurisdictions. The Plan designates an Emergency Operations Center and addresses each aspect of emergency planning (including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery). Moraga also works in collaboration with MOFD to implement a Wildfire Action Plan, including strategies for community preparedness and risk reduction. The Plan includes measures to reduce structure ignitability, as well as fuel hazard reduction standards and development standards. As noted earlier, the Town also maintains and periodically updates a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

MOFD also administers Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) for the Lamorinda area. CERT helps residents be better prepared for disasters and trains residents to assist first responders following an emergency. CERT members also help with non-emergency projects that improve readiness and community safety.

MOFD has prepared a Residents Guide for Lamorinda residents focused on wildfire preparedness and evacuation. It includes tips for what to do when a fire is near and when an



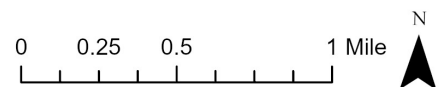
Figure 11.3: SB 99 Constrained Ingress/Egress Map



- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels

Residential areas with single point of ingress/egress serving 30+ parcels

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evacuation is ordered. Moraga is divided into 23 Evacuation Zones to aid first responders. The zones are a communication tool for fire, police, and the Community Warning System. Evacuation routes are dependent on the location of the disaster. Moraga Road, Moraga Way, and Saint Mary's Road function as the primary routes in and out of Moraga.

In 2019, the California legislature adopted SB 99, requiring the General Plan to include a map showing residential developments in hazard areas that do not have at least two evacuation routes.

Figure 11.3 shows the location of these areas in Moraga.³ They include long cul-de-sac streets with 30 or more homes, subdivisions with a single means of ingress and egress, and streets such as Donald Drive and Ascot Drive, where numerous multi-family structures are served by a single street.

Given the configuration and capacity of Moraga's road network and the community's susceptibility to wildfire, this General Plan prioritizes further evacuation analysis and planning as an implementation measure.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON SAFETY AND RESILIENCE

Many of the hazards described in this Element are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. Rising temperatures and more frequent droughts are likely to increase the risk of wildfire. Extreme storms can amplify flood hazards and landslide risks. As these events become more frequent, so do the risks to life and property. In the case of wildfire, there may also be an increase in air quality issues even when the fires are many miles away. Extreme weather events can also increase the frequency of damage to infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and utilities.

Increasing temperatures and reduced precipitation also have direct impacts on public

health, our economy, and ecosystems. Higher temperatures can result in heat-related illness and mortality, particularly among older adults. Drought often brings severe economic impacts, threatening local vineyards, orchards, ranches, and landscaping. Heat and precipitation also affect biodiversity and ecosystems, potentially resulting in the loss or migration of species.

At the same time the Town is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it is also working to adapt to the "new normal" and become more resilient. This is achieved through disaster preparedness, hardening of infrastructure, improving evacuation capacity, and limiting development in the town's most hazardous areas. Moraga has made these activities a priority and will continue to do so.

11.3 NOISE

The State Government Code requires every General Plan to identify and appraise local noise problems. Noise is a potential environmental hazard and can affect mental health, interfere with communication, disturb sleep, and cause hearing loss.

Guidelines have been developed by the State Office of Noise Control to ensure that new development considers the ambient noise environment. The focus of the State Guidelines is to avoid the exposure of new developments to high noise levels from highways, railroads, airports, industry and other common noise sources. The General Plan must include contour diagrams showing current and projected noise levels around major sources, including highways.

Moraga has a relatively quiet acoustical environment, given its distance from noise sources and predominantly residential character. The town does not have freeways, railroad, airports, or industry. The primary ambient noise source in the town is its road system, particularly arterial roads such as Moraga Road and Moraga

³ **Figure 11.3** excludes areas cul-de-sacs and dead end streets serving fewer than 30 homes.



Way. Certain land uses, such as schools and childcare facilities, are more sensitive to noise than others. The State's guidelines aim to avoid the exposure of sensitive uses to high noise levels through site selection, building design, and buffering.

Other sources of noise in Moraga include construction activity and domestic activities such as leaf blowing and lawn mowing. Residential heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems may also contribute to ambient noise. These activities and sources are regulated by the Moraga Noise Ordinance, which is part of the Town's Municipal Code. The Noise Ordinance also regulates vehicle repair and amplified sound.

Appendix A of the 2040 General Plan includes Moraga's noise contour diagrams for 2022 and 2040. Contours generally follow the town's arterial streets, and include areas where ambient noise levels exceed 60, 65, and 70 dBA.⁴ The Town does not anticipate significant increases in noise levels or new noise sources during the planning period.

Some of the development anticipated over the next 20 years is located along arterial roads where existing ambient noise levels may exceed 60 dBA. The text box at right highlights some of the ways that potential noise impacts in new development can be mitigated through building design and site planning. Acoustical studies may be required to determine the measures most appropriate on each site, based on the ambient noise environment.

⁴ Noise levels are commonly measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound pressure levels so that they are consistent with the human hearing response. The A-weighting filters out very low and very high frequencies.



Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons, Mongarort2

Reducing Noise Through Planning and Design

Some of Moraga's new housing sites are on arterial roads with high noise levels. Site planning, design, and construction measures can reduce potential interior and exterior noise levels and improve habitability. These measures include:

- Using berms and landscaping to buffer areas from noise
- Siting noise sensitive rooms such as bedrooms so they do not face the primary street, and less sensitive rooms such as garages close to the street
- Orienting buildings to shield outdoor spaces from noise
- Placing motorized equipment (such as air conditioning units) away from noise sensitive rooms.
- Installing double-paned windows and insulation to reduce the penetration of exterior noise to indoor spaces
- Increasing wall thickness and using sound-absorbing materials such as carpeting and acoustical tiles



11.4 SAFETY AND RESILIENCE ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL S-1: HAZARD REDUCTION

MINIMIZE THREATS TO PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE RESULTING FROM NATURAL AND HUMAN-CAUSED HAZARDS.

Policy S-1.1: Adoption of Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Town of Moraga Annex, including any updates approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency following adoption of this General Plan, are hereby incorporated into this Safety Element by reference, as permitted by California Government Code Section 65302.6.

Policy S-1.2: Risk Assessment

Where appropriate, require an assessment of natural hazard risks for development proposals to permit an adequate understanding of those risks and the possible consequent public costs in order to achieve a level of 'acceptable risk.' Public costs should be expressed in terms of effect on life and property. Cost data should be made available to the public for review and comment and should be used to inform decisions about the allocation of public resources.

Policy S-1.3: Development Review for Emergency Response Needs

Evaluate new development proposals to identify emergency response needs and potential constraints. Require that proposed development be located in areas with sufficient police, fire and emergency service capacity to meet project needs, or in areas where the necessary

capacity will be provided as part of the proposed development activities.

Policy S-1.4: Emergency Preparedness

Undertake emergency preparedness planning, training, and community participation programs, including multi-jurisdictional programs involving Lafayette, Orinda, MOFD, and appropriate County agencies. These programs should provide direction and identify responsibilities following a disaster.

Policy S-1.5: SEMS Response

Coordinate with local and State Emergency Management agencies using the Standardized Emergency Management System (S.E.M.S.) and National Incident Management System (N.I.M.S.) to facilitate multiagency emergency response.

Policy S-1.6: Coordination with Other Agencies

Continue to cooperate with other public agencies to ensure that adequate medical and other emergency services are provided on a day-to-day basis.

Policy S-1.7: Equitable Response

Ensure that communication, educational and informational materials, assistance in preparedness activities, and evacuation and short-term recovery activities are available in multiple languages and formats appropriate for people with special needs.

Policy S-1.8: Federal and State Aid

In the event of a public health or safety-related emergency, utilize available Federal and State economic and technical aid to supplement local resources.





Lamorinda Evacuation Drill, 2023

Policy S-1.9: Evacuation Assistance for Persons with Limited Mobility

Develop and implement an evacuation assistance program, in coordination with CCTA and local community organizations and paratransit providers, to help those with limited mobility or lack of access to a vehicle to evacuate safely.

Policy S-1.10: High Risk Areas

To the extent consistent with federal or state law, prohibit development in ‘high risk’ open space areas as defined by the Moraga Municipal Code and Moraga Open Space Ordinance.

(High-risk areas occur in MOSO Open Space areas and are defined and mapped in the Open Space and Parks Element. They do not relate to fire hazard severity.)

Policy S-1.11: Development in Other Hazardous Areas

Outside of ‘high risk’ open space (see Policy S-1.10), avoid building in areas within 100 yards of active or inactive landslides, or on unstable soils such as colluvial deposits. Where it is not possible to avoid building in such areas entirely due to parcel configuration, limit development to the extent permitted by State law through density regulations, density transfer, clustering, and specific requirements for site engineering, road design, and drainage control.

Policy S-1.12: Hillside and Ridgeline Areas

Regulate land use and development in Hillside Areas and on and near Ridgelines in a manner that prioritizes the protection of residents, neighbors, and the community at large from landslides, earthquakes, wildfires, and other natural hazards.

Policy S-1.13: Control of Nuisances and Unsafe Conditions

In the event any structure is identified as unsafe or hazardous based on adopted codes, take measures to promptly remediate the hazard or remove the structure.

GOAL S-2: PUBLIC SAFETY

KEEP MORAGA A SAFE COMMUNITY WITH LOW CRIME RATES AND EFFICIENT, PROFESSIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES.

Policy S-2.1: Police Services

Provide police services to maintain the peace, respond to localized emergencies and calls for service, undertake crime prevention, enforce traffic laws, and facilitate evacuation and incident command and response in the event of an emergency.

Policy S-2.2: Level of Service

Maintain police services at or above current levels, with the number of staff expanded at a level commensurate with population and business growth. The Town should invest in the equipment and facilities necessary to ensure rapid responses time, professional service delivery, and a high level of public safety.





National Night Out | Photo Credit: Vera Kochan, Lamorinda Weekly

Policy S-2.3: Address Visibility

Support measures that help police, firefighting crews and emergency response teams respond to fire hazards or work under low-visibility conditions, such as high-visibility signage for streets and building addresses.

Policy S-2.4: Expansion of Technology and Communication Capacity

Expand technology and communication capacity in ways that detect criminal activity, improve operations and enhance the ability to deliver outstanding service to the community.

Policy S-2.5: Public Safety and Design

Ensure that the design and siting of buildings reduces opportunities for crime. Engage the Police Department in the development review process to address potential security and safety issues. Provide related information to the public on the steps residents and businesses can take to improve security and reduce crime.

GOAL S-3: WILDFIRE HAZARDS
AVOID AND MINIMIZE THE RISK OF LOSS OF LIFE, INJURY, AND PROPERTY FROM FIRE.

Policy S-3.1: MOFD Collaboration

Collaborate with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District in developing standards, guidelines, and local ordinances to ensure provision of adequate fire protection and emergency medical service for all persons and property in the community.

Policy S-3.2: Fire Stations

Work with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to ensure that at least two fire stations are maintained in Moraga, and to support an ongoing facility improvement program.

Policy S-3.3: Fire Protection

Continue to require a high level of fire protection for all new development to avoid and minimize wildfire hazards, consistent with MOFD standards.

Policy S-3.4: Fuel Breaks

Coordinate with MOFD and landowners to develop and maintain fuel breaks and fire access easements in dedicated open space areas, consistent with the State Fire Code.

Policy S-3.5: Fire Flows

Coordinate with the East Bay Municipal Utility District to maintain an adequate water supply for fire-fighting purposes in the community. Ensure that minimum fire flow requirements for new development meet the adopted standards of the Moraga Orinda Fire District.



Policy S-3.6: Fire-Resistant Construction

Reduce the potential for damage and structure loss through fire-resistant construction, interior sprinklers, and other preventative measures. This should include:

- (a) Fire safety devices in new construction, additions, and remodels, in accordance with all applicable adopted codes and standards. This may include special requirements for built-in fire protection systems based on building size, use, or location, consistent with MOFD standards.
- (b) Fire resistant roofing of Class A or better in all new construction and when replacing roofs on existing structures, regardless of CalFire hazard map designation.

Policy S-3.7: Development Review by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Continue to require Planning Department and Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) review prior to the issuance of development permits for proposed construction projects and conceptual landscaping plans. MOFD shall submit conditions of approval for such projects so that they meet adopted fire safety standards. Plans for proposed development shall include, at a minimum:

- (a) Site plan, planting plan, planting palette, and irrigation plan to reduce the risk of fire hazards, with consideration given to site conditions, slope, structures, and adjacencies.
- (b) Defensible space maintenance plan.
- (c) Multiple points of ingress and egress to improve evacuation, emergency response, and fire equipment access, and adequate water infrastructure for water supply and fire flow.
- (d) Ember-resistant vents, to the extent required, when adding a new or replacement roof.

Applicants shall further comply with MOFD and Fire Code requirements for project-specific fire prevention plans where applicable.



MOFD controlled burn | Photo Credit: Vera Kochan, Lamorinda Weekly

Policy S-3.8: Emergency Vehicle Access

Require proposed development to provide adequate access for fire-fighting and emergency vehicles and equipment in accordance with fire access standards of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and Town of Moraga Ordinances.

Policy S-3.9: Preemptive Devices at Traffic Signals

Equip all new traffic signals with preemptive devices for emergency response services. In the event an existing traffic signal will be significantly impacted by new development, require retrofit with preemptive devices at the developer's cost.

Policy S-3.10: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Areas

Apply applicable MOFD fire protection standards to all new developments in wildland-urban interface areas, as defined by MOFD. Fire prevention measures such as removal of dry grass and brush, landscaping with fire and drought-resistant vegetation, interior and exterior sprinklers, provision of adequate water supplies



and access for fire-fighting vehicles shall be required to reduce the risk of wildland fires. All new structures located in hazardous fire areas shall be constructed with fire resistant exterior materials consistent with applicable building codes and standards.

Policy S-3.11: Vegetation Management

Require that all properties be maintained in a manner consistent with MOFD standards to preclude combustible material and hazardous vegetation that permits the spread of fire from one property to another. Encourage preventive measures such as non-combustible zones around homes to maintain defensible space and reduce fire risks.

Policy S-3.12: Fire-Resistant Landscaping in New Development

Continue to uphold fire-resistant landscaping requirements for new residential and commercial development. All new residential development must comply with MOFD and CALFIRE regulations.

Policy S-3.13: Fire Roads and Trails

Require adequate fire access to open space areas in accordance with Moraga-Orinda Fire District standards.

Policy S-3.14: Evacuation Routes

Continue to identify and maintain evacuation routes, and ensure the adequate capacity, safety, and viability of those routes in the event of an emergency.

Policy S-3.15: Road and Access Improvements

Identify existing public and private roadways in fire hazard severity zones and the wildland-urban interface (WUI) that are not in compliance with current fire safety regulations, including road standards for evacuation and emergency vehicle access, vegetation clearance, and other

requirements of Sections 1273 and 1274 of the California Code of Regulations (Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Articles 2 and 3). Strive to retrofit Town-owned roadways as needed to meet current standards and require private property owners to do the same, to the extent feasible and given site constraints.

GOAL S-4: GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

MINIMIZE RISKS TO LIFE AND PROPERTY DUE TO EARTHQUAKES AND OTHER GEOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Policy S-4.1: Geotechnical Study Requirements

Require development proposals to address potential geologic hazards, including but not limited to landslides, surface instability, erosion, shrink-swell (soil expansiveness), and seismic vulnerability. Geotechnical reports shall be prepared by an independent licensed soil engineer, geologist, and/or structural engineer, approved by the Town and at the expense of the developer. All technical reports shall be reviewed by the Town and found to be complete prior to approval of a development plan.

Policy S-4.2: Development in Geologic Hazard Areas

Allow development only where and to the extent that any identified geologic hazards have been eliminated, corrected, or mitigated to acceptable levels, based on the findings of the geotechnical study.

Policy S-4.3: Densities in Hazard Areas

Minimize the density of new development in areas prone to geologic hazards such as landslides and soil instability.



Policy S-4.4: High Occupancy Structures

Do not locate community buildings or other structures designed to accommodate large numbers of people near fault lines or any area where seismically induced slides are possible.

Policy S-4.5: Public Facilities and Utilities in Landslide Areas

Prohibit the financing and construction of public facilities or utilities in potential landslide areas.

Policy S-4.6: Construction Standards

Ensure that all new construction and applicable remodeling/ reconstruction projects are built to established standards with respect to seismic and geologic safety. Periodically update codes and regulations in response to state laws and changes in technology which reduce seismic hazards.

Policy S-4.7: Construction Oversight

Adopt and follow inspection and code enforcement procedures that ensure that the design and mitigation measures identified in approved plans are incorporated in building construction.

Policy S-4.8: Unsafe Structures

Properly disclose information pertaining to structures and facilities found to be unsafe. Remove or retrofit such structures and facilities to adequate construction standards.

Policy S-4.9: Water Storage Reservoirs

Permit domestic water supply storage reservoirs only in locations that will pose no hazard to neighboring development. Support retrofitting and maintenance of existing storage facilities to minimize future hazards.

Policy S-4.10: Retaining Walls

Discourage the use of retaining walls and other engineered structures to mitigate geologic hazards, permitting them only when necessary to decrease the possibility of personal injury or property damage. When used, retaining walls shall:

- blend with the natural terrain and avoid an artificial or structural appearance
- be appropriately screened by landscaping
- avoid creating a tunnel effect along roadways
- ensure unrestricted views for vehicular and pedestrian safety
- be designed to minimize public and/or private maintenance costs.



Installation of shear walls on a hillside home can help stabilize the structure during an earthquake



Policy S-4.11: Maintenance of Hillside Areas

Facilitate successful long-term maintenance of hillside areas held as common open space.

Policy S-4.12: Public Information on Seismic and Geologic Safety

Educate the general public regarding methods to improve seismic safety. This should include information for hillside homeowners to minimize landslide and erosion hazards, as well as general information on earthquake preparedness (turning off gas, securing water heaters, anchoring furniture, etc.).

(see also Policy OSP2-2 and OSP 2-3 in the Open Space Element for regulation of grading activity)

GOAL S-5: FLOODING AND STREAMBANK EROSION

MINIMIZE RISKS TO LIFE AND PROPERTY DUE TO FLOODING AND STREAMBANK EROSION.

Policy S-5.1: Development in Flood Hazard Areas

Comply with all applicable federal requirements for flood hazard areas, including restricting new development in floodways and avoiding new structures in flood-prone areas along stream courses.

Policy S-5.2: Existing Structures in Flood Hazard Areas

Require the rehabilitation, retrofitting, or removal of structures that are subject to flooding or streambank erosion, in accordance with applicable county, state, and federal standards.

Policy S-5.3: Mitigation of Flood Impacts

Mitigate the potential for on-site and downstream flood and erosion impacts through design and site planning. This includes compliance with Countywide Clean Water Program ("C3")

requirements for stormwater retention, as well as best management practices (BMPs) to minimize runoff, avoid erosion, and stabilize streambanks.

Policy S-5.4: Flood Control

Coordinate with the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Watershed Conservation District to minimize flood hazards in Moraga, maintain flood control facilities, and utilize new flood control measures where appropriate to avoid damage to creeks, riparian areas, and unstable slopes.

Policy S-5.5: Public Information on Flood Hazard Mitigation

Educate streamside property owners regarding potential flooding and streambank erosion hazards, their responsibilities for streambank maintenance and repair, and mitigation measures that may be used to address potential hazards.

GOAL S-6: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

PROTECT MORAGA RESIDENTS FROM HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPACTS RELATED TO THE USE, STORAGE, MANUFACTURE, AND TRANSPORT OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.

Policy S-6.1: Consideration of Prior Uses

As part of the development review and approval process, consider potential risks associated with the previous uses of property that may have involved hazardous material handling, storage, or disposal. Require hazardous materials studies and remediation where such hazards exist to ensure the health and safety of future occupants.

Policy S-6.2: Hazardous Material Transport

Ensure the safe transport of any hazardous materials through Moraga. Require permits



in accordance with all applicable State and federal regulations.

Policy S-6.3: Hazardous Material Use

Continue to work with the Contra Costa County Health Services Department as the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for Moraga to ensure the safe storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials.

Policy S-6.4: Household Hazardous Waste

Support expanded public education on household hazardous waste and the locations where such waste can be safely and properly disposed.

GOAL S-7: CLIMATE RESILIENCE *PREPARE FOR THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS NEEDS.*

Policy S-7.1: Climate Informed Decision-Making

Incorporate climate projection data in any modeling of future conditions conducted as part of capital improvement programming, utility planning, engineering standards, disaster preparedness planning, and natural resource management projects.

Policy S-7.2: Prioritizing Public Safety

Prioritize capital improvements and operational procedures that improve public safety and resilience.

Policy S-7.3: Community Readiness

Collaborate with MOFD on Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs and periodic training drills and exercises that help residents prepare for disasters. Work with the County

to deploy warning systems for climate-related events, including alert and notification systems.

Policy S-7.4: Location of New Critical Facilities

Locate critical public facilities such as fire stations, schools, and Town offices, outside of flood hazard zones, very high fire hazard severity zones, and Wildland-Urban Interface zones. If facilities must be located in vulnerable areas, design and site them to minimize potential damage and increase their ability to remain operational during and after hazard events.

Policy S-7.5: Nature-Based Resilience

Use nature-based solutions, such as green infrastructure and tree planting, to improve resilience. Restore degraded ecosystems such as riparian areas and woodlands in ways that enhance their natural capacity to sequester carbon and absorb runoff.

Policy S-7.6: Utility and Energy Resilience

Work with local gas, electric, cable, water, sewer, and other utility providers to maintain and retrofit their facilities and ensure their ability to function or be quickly restored following a disaster. To the extent feasible, minimize stress on the electrical grid and provide backup sources of energy by encouraging microgrids, battery storage systems, and decentralized energy supplies. Identify grants, incentives, and other funding opportunities that help support energy storage programs, especially for essential businesses and services.

Policy S-7.7: Communication Resilience

Ensure that communication systems used by emergency responders and key Town staff have sufficient redundancy and resiliency to meet Town needs during and after a hazard event. Coordinate with the operators of telecommunications infrastructure and mobile networks to enable continuity of service or rapid restoration of service.



Community Emergency Response Team



Residents learn about the Lamorinda CERT Program

Policy S-7.8: Urban Heat Island Effects

Reduce urban heat island effects by expanding landscaped surfaces in existing and new development, incorporating cool roofs and ample tree cover in new development, and reducing expanses of heat-absorbing pavement.

(See also urban forest and street tree policies in the Conservation Element)

(See also cool roof and green building policies in the Conservation Element)

Policy S-7.9: Climate Resilience Hubs

Work with community organizations, Saint Mary's College, MOFD, and the School Districts to identify public facilities that can serve as Climate Resilience Hubs. Such facilities should be capable of providing aid to vulnerable populations during periods of extreme heat, poor air quality from wildfire smoke, utility disruptions, and other climate-related hazards.

(see also Conservation Element Policy CON-3.7 on wildfire smoke)

Policy S-7.10: Data Sharing

Ensure that the Town is able to prepare for and respond to large-scale disasters through coordination and by sharing data, experience, and strategies with other emergency management agencies in state or regional disaster planning.

Policy S-7.11: Post-Disaster Recovery

As needed, develop and update programs that enable recovery and redevelopment after a natural or human-caused disaster and that reduce future vulnerabilities through site preparation, redevelopment layout design, fire resistant landscape planning, and more resilient building design and materials.



GOAL S-8: NOISE

MAINTAIN A QUIET ENVIRONMENT WITH LIMITED EXPOSURE TO EXCESSIVE NOISE.

Policy S-8.1: Noise Levels

Ensure that noise from all sources is maintained at levels that will not adversely affect adjacent properties or the community, especially during evening and early morning hours. Exceptions may be made in the interest of public safety. Acceptable noise levels should be identified in an updated Noise Ordinance.

Policy S-8.2: Noise-Sensitive Uses

Locate uses where they will be most acoustically compatible with the built and natural environments (see Appendix A). Where ambient noise levels exceed State compatibility guidelines, include measures to reduce noise to acceptable levels.

Policy S-8.3: Noise Impacts of New Development

Ensure that newly constructed development will not raise ambient noise on surrounding properties to unacceptable levels, based on State noise compatibility guidelines. Require measures to mitigate the potential for such impacts where appropriate.

Policy S-8.4: Acoustical Studies

Where appropriate, require the submittal of acoustical data as part of the development application process so that the noise impacts of proposed uses can be properly evaluated and mitigated.

Policy S-8.5: Construction Noise

Establish standard conditions of approval for future development projects to minimize construction noise impacts on roads and surrounding properties. Typical measures include sound mufflers, signage, temporary noise barriers, and the placement of noise-generating equipment in the least impactful locations.

Policy S-8.6: Vehicle Noise

Support efforts to mitigate the effects of transportation noise on adjacent properties, including landscaping and buffering, quieter transit vehicles, and enforcement of the California Motor Vehicle Code. Exceptions may be made for emergency response vehicles.

Policy S-8.7: Public Education

Whenever appropriate, use public information programs to educate the community on the effects of noise pollution, and Town requirements related to noise-generating activities.



11.5 SAFETY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Program S-A: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)

Adopt, implement and periodically update the Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and Moraga LHMP Annex, as directed by the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Action S-A1: LHMP Adoption. *Adopt the 2024-2029 LHMP and participate in future updates.*

Program S-B: Mutual Aid Agreements

Maintain mutual-aid agreements with federal, state, and local public safety agencies as well as the private sector, to assist in:

1. Clearance of debris in the event of seismic hazards, collapsed buildings or structures, or other circumstances that could result in blocking emergency access or egress
2. Heavy search and rescue
3. Medical aid
4. Fire protection and suppression
5. Hazardous materials response
6. Temporary shelter
7. Geologic and engineering needs
8. Traffic and crowd control
9. Building inspection

Program S-C: Emergency Operations Plan

Periodically revise and update the Town of Moraga Emergency Operations Plan, including post-disaster reconstruction guidelines. The EOP specifies roles and responsibilities of Town staff and officials in the event of a disaster, including facilitating evacuation and traffic control.

Action S-C1: Communications Resiliency Plan. *Work with MOFD, Contra Costa County, adjacent cities, and the operators of telecommunications infrastructure and mobile networks to develop a communications system resiliency plan. The plan should provide for continuity of service and/or rapid restoration during and after an emergency.*

(See Action T-B1 for a description of the CCTA Evacuation Study and evacuation analysis and planning for Moraga)

Program S-D: Fire Code and MOFD Amendments

Work with the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) to implement and enforce the State Fire Code, inclusive of local amendments approved by the MOFD Board. This includes periodic Code updates to reflect new State laws and Board actions, and engagement of MOFD in the Town’s development review process. The Town will actively work with MOFD in the review of planning and building applications, including enforcement of requirements for emergency vehicle access, fire protection systems, and fire-resistant design and landscaping.

Program S-E: Vegetation Management and Fire-Resistant Landscaping

Work with MOFD on vegetation management initiatives, including enforcement of defensible space and weed abatement requirements, controlled burns, and fire-resistant landscaping requirements.





Prescribed goat grazing to reduce fire hazards | Photo Credit: Michael Leicht

Program S-F: Moraga Orinda Wildfire Action Plan

Support implementation of the Moraga Orinda Wildfire Action Plan, including its strategies for reducing risks within the Wildfire-Urban Interface areas, and its recommendations for community preparedness, fire suppression, fuels mitigation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Action S-F1: Fire Insurance Advocacy.

Participate in discussion forums and advocacy for sustainable, affordable solutions to the fire insurance crisis in Lamorinda and the State of California.

Program S-G: Geological Hazard Abatement Districts (GHAD)

Adopt Geologic Hazard Abatement Districts in accordance with State enabling legislation to mitigate geologic hazards in new development areas. GHADs are used to finance construction and maintenance of facilities to control landslides and reduce geologic hazards. A GHAD was created for the Bellavista development in 2015.

Program S-H: Building Code Safety Standards

In partnership with Contra Costa County's Department of Land and Conservation, implement the California Building Standards Code to maximize seismic safety and structural integrity, and to minimize structural risks associated with natural hazards such as landslides and erosion. This includes coordination with the County to enforce local building codes, periodically inspect critical public buildings, and inspect structures following earthquakes and other natural disasters.

Action S-H1: Soft-Story Buildings. *Develop an inventory of soft-story buildings in Moraga, and a strategy to support retrofitting these buildings to improve their seismic stability.*

Program S-I: Geotechnical Study Requirements

Require geotechnical reports for construction projects in accordance with requirements specified in the Moraga Municipal Code. This includes supplemental study and review requirements for sites with slopes greater than 20 percent. Geotechnical reports should be part



of the public record and may be referenced as benchmarks for related applications (see also Policy S-4.1).

Program S-J: Flood Control Ordinance and FIRM Maps

Maintain Flood Hazard Area regulations in the Moraga Municipal Code to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). The Ordinance establishes special permitting requirements for projects in flood-prone areas, floodways, and mudslide-prone areas, as well as standards for construction, utilities, RVs and manufactured homes, and subdivisions.

Program S-K: Hazardous Waste Management Program

Work with Contra Costa County Department of Environmental Health, in its capacity as the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for Moraga, and with other appropriate agencies, to ensure the safe management of hazardous materials in Moraga. This includes the permitting of hazardous materials storage and handling, transportation of hazardous materials through the Town, and remediation of any site-level contamination prior to development or redevelopment.

Program S-L: Noise Ordinance

Maintain provisions in the Moraga Municipal Code to restrict unnecessary, excessive and annoying noises from all sources under Town control.

Action S-L1: Noise Ordinance Update. *Update the Moraga Noise Ordinance to reflect current conditions, issues, and public input.*

Program S-M: Acoustical Study Requirements

Require acoustical studies during the development review process as required

by CEQA. Such studies should ensure that development adjacent to major arterials includes site planning, design, and construction measures that reduce noise to acceptable levels, consistent with state law. As appropriate, acoustical studies should also address the reduction of noise from new stationary sources such as mechanical equipment and HVAC systems, and the reduction of noise from project-related construction activities.

Program S-N: Public Safety Outreach and Education

Support public outreach and education on environmental hazards such as wildfires and earthquakes. In partnerships with other agencies and organizations, provide information to the community on disaster preparedness, hazard mitigation, and resources following an emergency. This includes information on earthquake preparedness, management of drainage and streambanks to reduce landslide and flood hazards, and maintenance of defensible space and fire-safe vegetation around homes. It also includes promotion of MOFD's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training for Lamorinda area residents and businesses.

The following programs in other elements also implement Safety and Resilience policies (Program IDs are shown in parentheses):

- General Plan Diagram (LU-A)
- Zoning Ordinance (LU-B)
- Development Review (LU-C)
- Environmental Review/ CEQA compliance (LU-E)
- Hillside Development Permits (LU-H)
- Hillside and Ridgeline Ordinance (OSP-B)
- Grading Ordinance (OSP-C)
- Climate Action Plan (CON-A)





Canyon Bridge Replacement Project | Photo Credit: Bridgeway Civil Construction

12

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ELEMENT

The goal of growth management is to ensure that public services and facilities can keep pace with demand as communities grow. Growth management policies also aim to fairly distribute the cost of growth so that existing residents and businesses are not unduly burdened and new development pays its way. While growth management policies are locally focused, they also support regional goals related to the efficient use of land and transportation facilities. Local growth management policies also align with state and regional goals related to climate change and hazard mitigation.

“Governance” refers to the ways in which services are delivered to residents and businesses by a public agency. This is especially important in Moraga, as the Town is a limited-service municipality that relies on other agencies and organizations for many services, including schools, libraries, fire protection, environmental health, utilities, building permitting, plan checking, and code enforcement, to name a few. Intergovernmental coordination is critical to protect the quality of life and public safety. Governance also addresses the ways in which a municipality engages with its residents, including a commitment to transparency, accessibility, and responsive communication.

For the past 50 years, Moraga’s general plans have focused on responsible growth management and efficient, effective governance. The 2040 General Plan carries that focus forward while also satisfying the Contra Costa County requirement to include a Growth Management Element in the General Plan.



12.1 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

HISTORY AND LEGAL FOUNDATION

In 1988, Contra Costa County voters approved Measure C, authorizing a half-cent sales tax for 20 years to pay for countywide transportation projects and programs. The measure was estimated to generate \$1 billion over 20 years, with a portion of those funds used for regional projects and a portion returned to municipalities for local transportation improvements and street maintenance. Receipt of the local funds (referred to as “return to source” funds) was contingent on each municipality adopting a Growth Management Element as part of their General Plan.

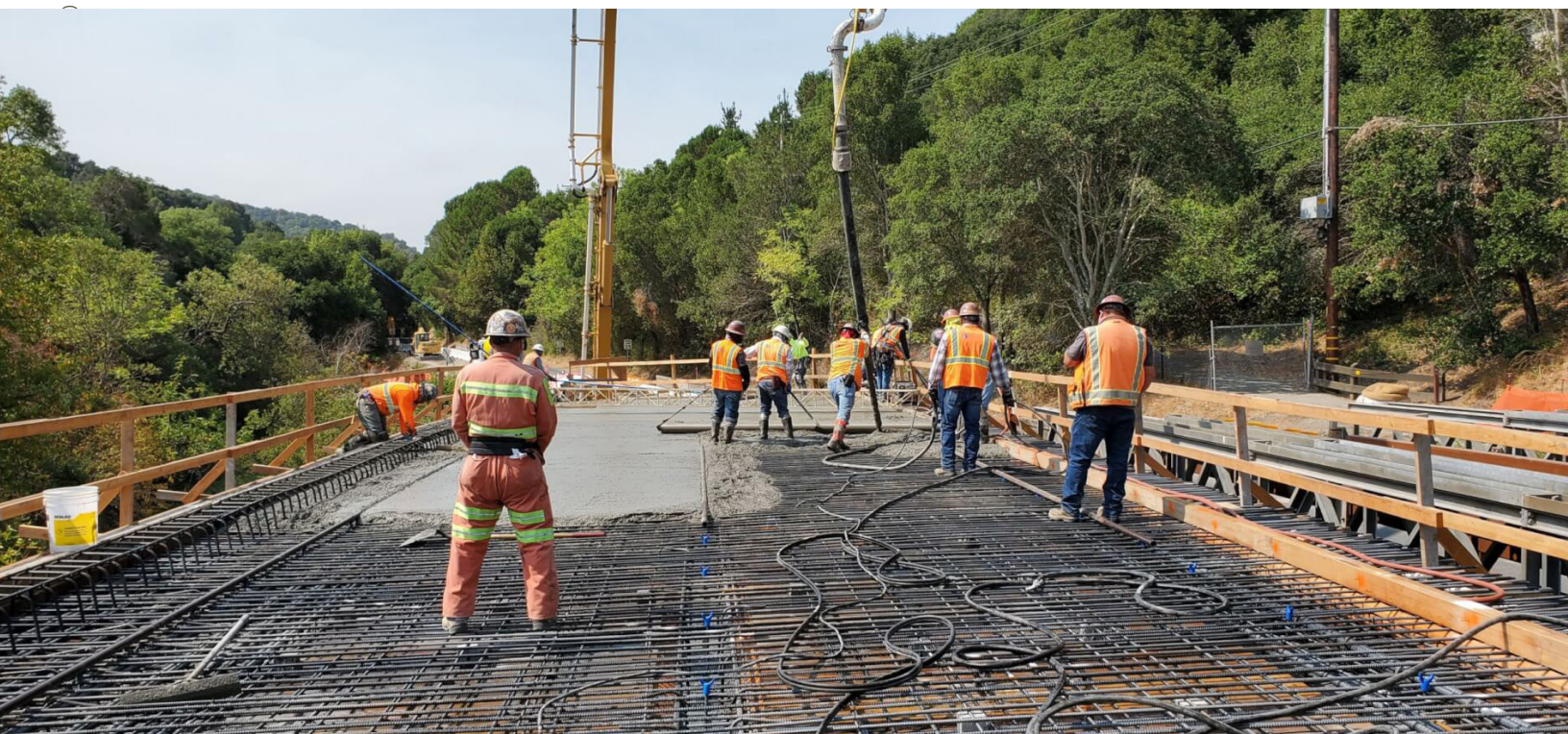
The purpose of the Growth Management Element requirement was to ensure that cities and towns could be held accountable for managing the impacts of future development and would participate in regional and subregional planning with the County and neighboring jurisdictions. Measure C created the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) to implement the growth management program and manage

regionwide transportation planning and improvements. A uniform set of requirements for the Growth Management Element was established at that time.

The Growth Management Element was not intended to limit or stop growth. Rather, its purpose was to coordinate growth with the capacity of the region’s transportation and infrastructure networks. Moreover, the Measure C requirements did not supersede the authority of local governments to regulate land use and transportation; they merely required cities and towns to coordinate their plans. In addition to the Growth Management Element, Measure C required that each jurisdiction adopt a Transportation Demand Management program, a five-year capital improvement program, and an Urban Limit Line. It further required that cities and towns work collaboratively to develop regional and subregional transportation plans (see text box).

In 2004, Contra Costa County voters approved Measure J, extending the growth management requirements through 2034. Measure J maintained the half-percent sales tax and revised transportation standards and Growth Management Element requirements. Under Measure J, mandatory standards apply only to

Canyon Bridge Replacement Project | Photo Credit: Bridgeway Civil Construction



regional transportation routes (called “routes of regional significance”) and urban limit lines. Local governments may choose to retain standards for other local facilities and services but are no longer required to do so. Measure J continues to mandate participation in multi-jurisdictional planning and also requires communities to demonstrate progress in meeting their affordable housing goals. The Contra Costa Transportation Authority continues to oversee compliance.

Measure J Background

Measure J, adopted by the voters of Contra Costa County in November 2004, requires each local jurisdiction in the county to meet the following six requirements:

- Adopt a development mitigation program
- Demonstrate progress toward meeting regional housing assignments
- Participate in an ongoing cooperative, multi-jurisdictional planning process
- Adopt an Urban Limit Line (ULL)
- Develop a five-year capital improvement program
- Adopt a Transportation Management (TSM) Ordinance or Resolution.

The Growth Management Element is a vehicle for demonstrating compliance with these mandates.

The Town of Moraga cannot enforce standards for services that it does not provide (fire, libraries, schools, etc.). As such, the Town is maintaining its previously adopted standards for parks and transportation in General Plan 2040. Transportation standards include vehicle miles traveled (VMT) thresholds for environmental review purposes (see the Transportation Element) and roadway level of service (LOS) standards for planning purposes. The Town works with other agencies, including the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, the Moraga School District, the Acalanes Union High School District, the Contra Costa County Library, County Connection, East Bay Municipal Utility District, and the Central

Contra Costa Sanitary District, to ensure that their standards are met for as plans are reviewed and new development takes place.



*The County Connection bus serves Saint Mary's College
Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons*

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

The principle of growth management is woven throughout this General Plan:

- The **Land Use** Element directs growth and density to those areas of Moraga with transportation capacity and improves the ability to travel without relying exclusively on cars. It also supports mixed use development as a way to reduce trip lengths and allow people to live, work, and shop in the same community, thereby reducing intercity travel. It also discourages urban sprawl and emphasizes developer responsibility for infrastructure improvements.
- The **Community Design** Element encourages connectivity and walkability—intended to make the transportation system operate more efficiently and with fewer environmental impacts.
- The **Housing** Element supports growth management by calling for more workforce housing, reducing the distance Moraga workers



must travel on local roads to reach their place of work. It also emphasizes the importance of housing for all income groups, which is an important growth management principle.

- The **Transportation** Element emphasizes improvements to transit and “active” transportation modes such as bicycling and walking as a way to optimize road capacity. It also underscores the importance of multi-jurisdictional transportation planning, particularly with Lafayette and Orinda. The Element includes Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) standards for transportation.
- The **Economic Vitality** Element recognizes the benefits of improving the Town’s shopping centers so that residents do not have to drive long distances for basic goods and services. This benefits the transportation system by lowering VMT and encouraging walking and bicycling.
- The **Open Space and Parks** Element includes level of service standards for parks. It also reinforces the County’s Urban Limit Line and emphasizes the importance of open space and focused growth.
- The **Conservation** Element recognizes natural constraints to growth such as steep slopes and environmentally sensitive areas. It supports water and energy conservation to reduce demand for infrastructure improvements that would be costly and have environmental impacts. It also supports greenhouse gas reduction at the local and regional levels.
- The **Safety and Resilience** Element emphasizes the need for multi-jurisdictional planning, particularly related to wildfire prevention, climate resilience, disaster response, evacuation planning, and post-disaster recovery. This Element also addresses police and fire services, and related public safety facilities.

HOUSING

Measure J expanded the requirements identified in Measure C related to housing. Every two years, the Town is required to report to CCTA on its progress in implementing its Housing Element and achieving its production targets. This requirement is met by submitting copies of the Annual Housing Progress Reports for the last two years. The Town must demonstrate reasonable progress in providing housing opportunities for all income levels.

URBAN LIMIT LINE

Contra Costa County has delineated an Urban Limit Line (ULL) to identify areas appropriate for urban expansion. The ULL boundary was approved by County voters in 2006 and local governments must abide by it in their long-range plans. Extension of infrastructure beyond the ULL is strictly limited.

All land in the Town of Moraga is within the ULL. The ULL also includes about 50 acres of unincorporated land in the Sphere of Influence east of Camino Pablo.

Local governments may adopt General Plan Map designations that focus growth in specific locations rather than building out to the edges of the ULL. Moraga has effectively done this through adoption of the Moraga Open Space Ordinance, which limits densities on much of the remaining open land in the town, even within the ULL. The Town has also increased allowable densities in its commercial districts to support infill in previously developed areas, consistent with countywide growth management goals.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Moraga adopted a TSM Ordinance in 1998 in compliance with the Measure C requirements in effect at the time. The Ordinance encourages the use of mass transit, ridesharing, walking, flexible hours and telecommuting and supports





Lafayette-Moraga Trail near Commons Park

the use of technology to improve traffic flow. The Ordinance aims to reduce vehicle trips, vehicle emissions, and traffic congestion through local and regional programs.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

As required by Measure J, the Town has adopted a five-year capital improvement program that identifies infrastructure improvements and related maintenance and repair projects. These projects are aligned with the General Plan Land Use Diagram to ensure that the location of infrastructure improvements is consistent with local growth and development plans. Capital improvements cover municipal buildings, creeks and drainage, parks and open space, and transportation.

(See the Land Use Element for a discussion of development mitigation fees)

SUBREGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

As indicated in the Transportation Element, Moraga serves on several interagency groups or boards that coordinate regional and sub-regional transportation programs and improvements. These include the Southwest Area Transportation Committee (Moraga, Lafayette, Orinda, Danville, San Ramon, and unincorporated Contra Costa County), the Lamorinda Program Management

Committee (LPMC), and the Lamorinda Fee and Financing Authority. These groups are responsible for the development of transportation plans, policies, and programs in the southwest part of Contra Costa County. The Town of Moraga will continue to an active participant in these organizations, or their successors, over the life of this General Plan.

The LPMC prepares and periodically updates an “Action Plan” for the three Lamorinda jurisdictions. The purpose of the Action Plan is for each city and town in the county to participate in a cooperative planning process to address transportation issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries. The Action Plan establishes overall goals, identifies routes of regional significance, and creates performance measures (see text box).

Regional Transportation Objectives (RTOs)

RTOs are specific quantifiable objectives that describe a desired level of performance for a component of the transportation system. They address not only the efficiency of the transportation system, but also issues such as safety, climate change, and innovation. There are 21 RTOs in the Lamorinda Action Plan. Examples include increasing the percent of trips made using transit, cycling, and walking; expanding the bicycle network, increasing the share of zero emission vehicles, and reducing vehicle miles traveled per capita



12.2 GOVERNANCE

The Town of Moraga provides general government services, public works, parks and recreation, planning, and police services to the community. Its governance structure includes a Town Council, Town Boards and Commissions, and ad hoc committees. Services provided by the Town are addressed throughout this General Plan. Community services and facilities provided by other agencies are briefly profiled below and are addressed by goals and policies in this Element.

Figure 12.1 shows the location of key community facilities.

SCHOOLS

The high quality of Moraga's schools is one of the community's most valued features. While the General Plan does not specifically address school facility improvements, it does address the relationship between projected community growth and its impacts on school facility needs. It also addresses land use issues on school properties, school-related issues such as traffic circulation and parking, and coordination between the Town and school districts, including joint use of Town and school recreation facilities.

The majority of school-age children in Moraga attend public schools. The Moraga School District (MSD) includes three elementary schools (kindergarten through grade 5) and one intermediate school (grades 6 through 8). School locations are shown in **Figure 12.1**.

The Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) serves grades 9-12. The District has four campuses in Lamorinda and Walnut Creek, plus an alternative school and adult education campus. Most Moraga high school students attend Campolindo High School (300 Moraga Road in Moraga). However, students in the southwestern part of the town attend Miramonte High School, which is adjacent to the Town limits

in Orinda. Campolindo High School also serves students in the Burton Valley area of Lafayette, while Miramonte also serves all of Orinda.

Enrollment data for Moraga's K-8 schools and Campolindo High School over the last decade is shown in Charts 12-1 and 12-2. In both instances, enrollment has been relatively flat, with year-over-year increases and decreases of less than 5 percent. Moraga School District enrollment was about 4 percent lower in 2024 than it was in 2014, while Campolindo's enrollment was 6 percent lower.¹

The Moraga School District adopted a Facilities Master Plan in 2024, including a site master plan and list of improvements for each campus. Many of the improvements address repair, replacement, and modernization, as MSD's schools are generally 55 to 65 years old. Future projects include improvements to student drop-off areas, landscaping, parking, classroom configuration, entries, restrooms, accessibility, energy efficiency, roofing, windows, mechanical units, and play areas, among others. At Joaquin Moraga School, the improvements include a new gymnasium and major renovation/relocation of athletic fields.

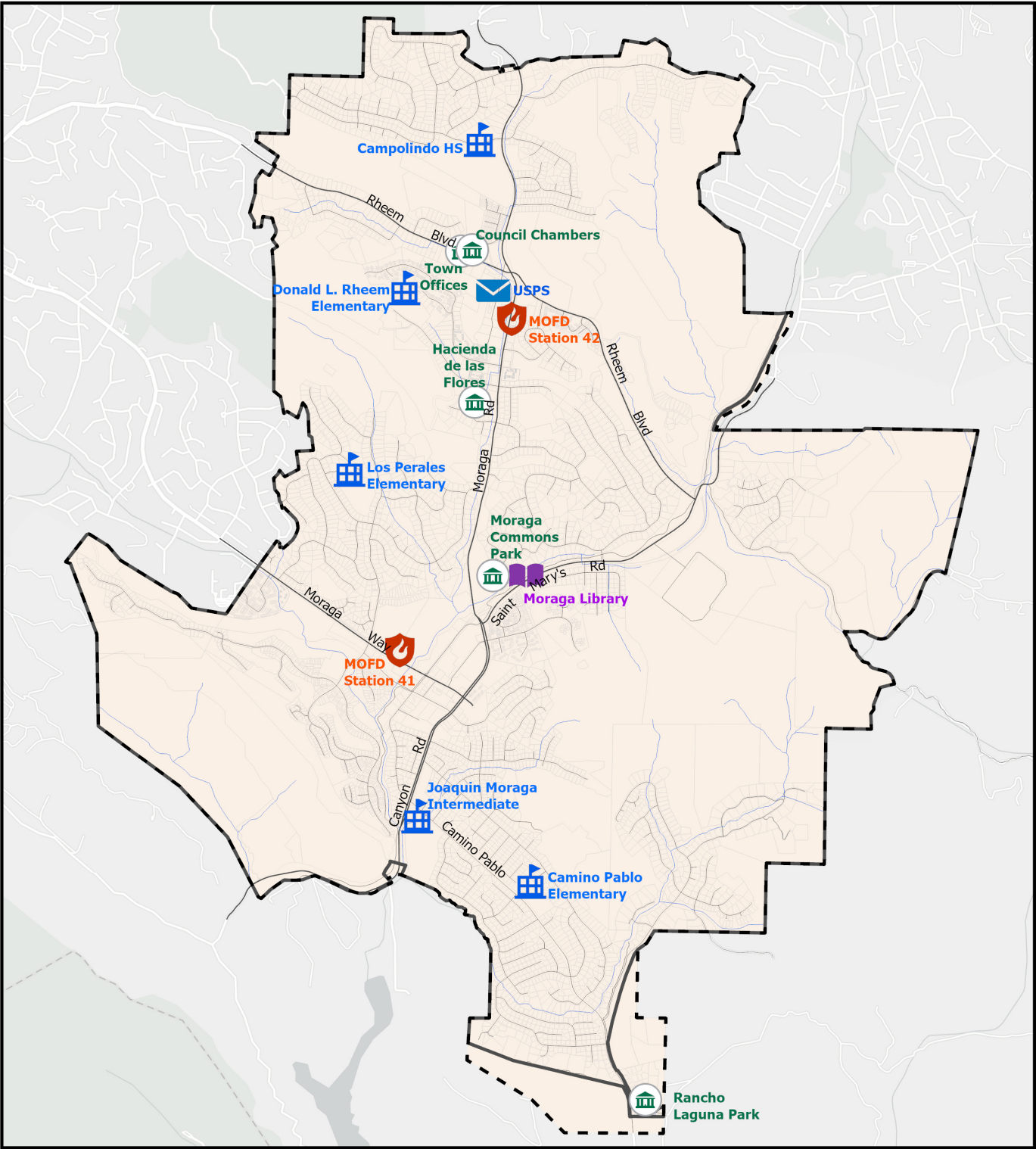
Campolindo HS campus from Painted Rock



¹ Enrollment at Miramonte High School increased by 5 percent between 2014 and 2024.



Figure 12.1: Public Facilities



- Town Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Streams
- Streets
- Parcels
- Fire Station
- Library
- Post Office
- School
- Town Facilities

Town of Moraga, California
General Plan Update

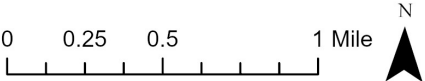


Chart 12-1: Moraga K-8 School Enrollment, 2014-2024

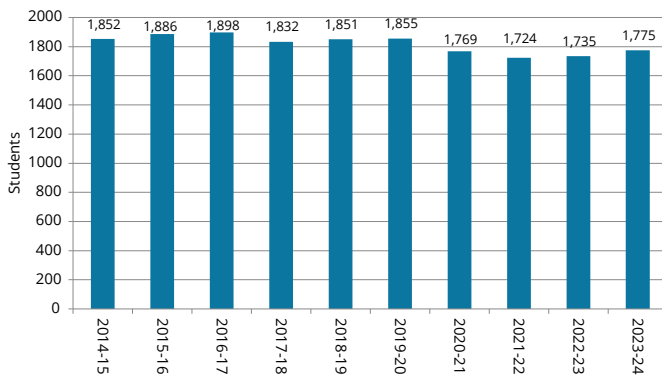
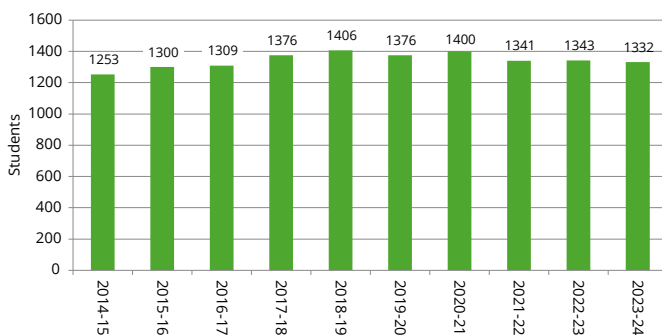


Chart 12-2: Campolindo High School Enrollment, 2014-2024



The population growth anticipated by this General Plan will likely result in increased school enrollment in the next 20 years. Even without new housing development, schools must regularly invest in modernization, safety, and technology improvements. Facility needs are also impacted by classroom size decisions and changes in the learning environment.

To offset a future project's potential impact to schools, Government Code 65995 (b) establishes the base amount of fees a school district can collect from development projects located within its boundaries. Fee justification studies may be prepared by a district to collect higher fees. In the case of Moraga School District and AUHSD, these fees may be used to fund the maintenance and/or expansion of school facilities. Future school bond measures may provide an additional source of funding for capital facilities and maintenance/repair projects.

The Town works collaboratively with the School Districts on issues of mutual interest, including land use, transportation, facility planning, public safety, emergency preparedness, and recreation. Each campus serves not only as a center for education but also as a gathering place and focal point for the community around it. The Town and Schools partner on programs such as Safe Routes to Schools, and the use of school facilities for athletics and other recreational activities.

MORAGA LIBRARY

The Town of Moraga owns the Moraga Library building at 1500 Saint Mary's Road. Contra Costa County operates the facility under a long-term lease and maintenance agreement. The library has almost 65,000 books, audio books, music items, and DVDs. It also has public computers and free Wi-Fi available. The library includes the offices of the Moraga Historical Society, as well as a community room.

A 28-member advisory commission, representing the incorporated towns and cities of Contra Costa County, provides policy direction for the library. Support is also provided by Friends of the Moraga Library, a local nonprofit that contributes to the library's materials budget and programming and keeps the facility a welcoming destination for all.



Moraga Library on Saint Mary's Road



FIRE PROTECTION

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) was formed in 1997 as an integrated independent special district. MOFD consolidated the former Moraga and Orinda Fire Protection Districts to enable more efficient fire protection and emergency medical services. The MOFD service area is 42 square miles and had a population of 38,500 in 2024.

Please see the General Plan Safety Element for additional information about MOFD and fire prevention and protection services in Moraga.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The following agencies provide transportation and infrastructure services to Moraga:

- Contra Costa County Transportation Authority (County Connection) provides bus service
- Moraga is located in the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) service area, with the nearest stations in Orinda and Lafayette
- East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) provides potable water
- Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (Central San) is responsible for the collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater
- Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority is responsible for solid waste collection and disposal

Additional information on these service providers may be found in the Transportation and Conservation Elements. In addition to the public agencies listed above, a range of private, non-profit, and investor-owned utilities provide energy and telecommunication services to Moraga residents and businesses.

12.3 GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL G-1: GROWTH MANAGEMENT

MANAGE MORAGA'S GROWTH TO ALIGN WITH LONG-TERM REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITY PLANS, ENHANCE REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY, AND INCREASE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

Policy G-1.1: Measure J Compliance

Comply with Contra Costa County Measure J, which requires each city and town in the county to adopt a growth management program as a condition of receiving its share of countywide transportation sales tax proceeds.

Policy G-1.2: Countywide Transportation Plan

Participate in the preparation of Contra Costa Transportation Authority's (CCTA) Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the ongoing countywide transportation planning process.

Policy G-1.3: Transportation Impacts

Consider the impacts that Moraga's land use policies have on the local, regional, and countywide transportation system, including the level of transportation capacity that can be provided. This should include participation in an on-going multi-jurisdictional process with CCTA and nearby jurisdictions to manage the impacts of growth. It further includes working with the Lamorinda Program Action Committee (LPMC) and Southwest Area Transportation Committee (SWAT) to develop and maintain an Action Plan



that identifies transportation priorities and establishes Regional Transportation Objectives (RTOs).²

Policy G-1.4: Travel Demand Model

Use CCTA's travel demand forecasting model and Technical Procedures to evaluate proposed General Plan Amendments (GPAs) and developments exceeding thresholds specified by CCTA for their effect on the regional transportation system. Provide information to CCTA on proposed development and transportation projects, including those in Moraga's Capital Improvement Program, to keep the travel demand model current.

Policy G-1.5: Regional Mitigation Program

Participate in a regional program to establish fees, exactions, assessments or other measures to fund regional transportation improvements. This includes regular review of CCTA's project lists, fees, and plans, including Subregional Transportation Mitigation Programs (STMPs).

Policy G-1.6: Urban Limit Line (ULL)

Adopt an Urban Limit Line that is consistent with the voter-approved countywide boundary. To the greatest extent possible, areas outside the urban limit line shall be retained in open space and rural uses, consistent with County policy.

Policy G-1.7: Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Prepare and maintain a capital improvement program that outlines the capital projects needed to implement the goals, policies, and programs of the General Plan for the next five years. Projects necessary to maintain and improve traffic operations shall be included. The CIP shall include an analysis of the costs of

² The Southwest Area Transportation Committee (SWAT) addresses transportation issues in Moraga, Lafayette, Orinda, Danville, San Ramon, and nearby unincorporated areas. RTOs are earlier in this chapter.

proposed projects as well as a financial plan for providing the improvements. Funding sources and project phasing should be identified (see also Transportation Program T-A).

Policy G-1.8: Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Ordinance

Consistent with countywide policy, maintain Municipal Code provisions for transportation systems management (TSM). These provisions should promote the use of mass transit, carpools, vanpools, park-and-ride lots, and telecommuting as alternatives to solo driving.

Policy G-1.9: Use of Measure J Funds

Use County Measure J transportation improvement funds for any eligible transportation purpose. In no case, however, may Measure J funds replace private developer funds for transportation projects determined to be required to mitigate the impacts of a specific private development.

Policy G-1.10: Biennial Report

Prepare a biennial report for CCTA to demonstrate compliance with the Growth Management Program requirements. As required by Measure J, the biennial report should include a section on Moraga's progress in meeting regional housing targets. The report should reference specific programs in the adopted Housing Element and illustrate how Moraga's General Plan and zoning regulations are facilitating the improvement and development of sufficient housing for persons of all income levels.

Policy G-1.11: Conflict Resolution

Participate in CCTA's conflict resolution process as needed to resolve disputes related to the development and implementation of Action Plans and other growth management programs.





Annual street rehabilitation project

Policy G-1.12: Infrastructure Planning and Maintenance

Participate in efforts by water, sewer, electric, gas, and telecommunication service providers to maintain and upgrade utility infrastructure. Share information on anticipated development with service providers for their use in long-range facility planning.

GOAL G-2: MITIGATION OF PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

ENSURE THAT NEW RESIDENTIAL, BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL GROWTH PAYS FOR THE FACILITIES REQUIRED TO MEET THE DEMANDS RESULTING FROM THAT GROWTH.

Policy G-2.1: Development Mitigation Program

Adopt and implement a development mitigation program to ensure that new growth is paying its fair share of the costs associated with that growth. The program shall include:

- (a) A local program to mitigate impacts on local streets and Town facilities.
- (b) A regional program to fund regional and subregional transportation projects, consistent with the Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan, subregional Action Plans, and adopted programs of the Southwest Area Transportation Committee.
- (c) Measures to ensure that new development contributes or participates in the improvement of parks, fire, police, sanitary sewer, water, and storm drainage systems in proportion to the demand generated by the project.

Policy G-2.2: Conditions of Approval

Require that conditions of project approval have been satisfied at the time of project occupancy, including improvements to transportation facilities and other capital projects.



Policy G-2.3: Traffic Levels of Service

Establish the following Level of Service (LOS) standards for Moraga's roads:

- (a) On routes of regional significance, which include Moraga Road, Moraga Way, and Saint Mary's Road, the LOS shall be defined by the most recent Lamorinda Action Plan, prepared in accordance with CCTA requirements.
- (b) On all other routes, LOS shall be high "C" (0.75 to 0.79 volume to capacity ratio).

While VMT is the applicable metric for environmental review documents, LOS standards may be used for transportation planning purposes.

Policy G-2.4: Sustainability Focus

As part of the development review process, support the accommodation of transportation priorities related to safety, climate change, and equity. This should include development standards and approval processes that support transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access.

Policy G-2.5: Interjurisdictional Review

For projects with the potential to impact neighboring jurisdictions, circulate traffic impact analyses to these jurisdictions and affected transportation agencies for review and comment.

Policy G-2.6: Water and Sewer Facilities

Prior to the approval of new development projects, require:

- (a) Verification from East Bay Municipal Utility District that adequate water supply, treatment, storage, and delivery capacity is available to serve the proposed development.
- (b) Verification from Central Contra Costa Sanitary District that adequate wastewater collection, treatment and disposal capacity is available to serve the proposed development.
- (c) Verification from the Town of Moraga Engineer that adequate storm drainage facilities will be provided, and that runoff from the proposed development will generally not exceed pre-development conditions.

Celebrating art at Rheem Elementary School



GOAL G-3: SCHOOLS

SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.

Policy G-3-1: Mitigation of Development Impacts

Work with the Acalanes Union High School District and Moraga School District to ensure that potential impacts on school enrollment and facilities are considered when development is proposed. Facilitate the collection of impact fees to offset the costs of school facility improvements, in accordance with state law.

Policy G-3.2: School Facility Improvements

Support efforts by the Acalanes Union High School District and the Moraga School District to modernize and replace school facilities to ensure student safety and meet long-term academic needs. Participate in school master facility plans to ensure that planned residential development is considered in enrollment forecasts and master planning.

Policy G-3.3: School Campus Issues

Work with local schools and adjoining neighborhoods to address traffic, parking, safety, and land use issues on and around school campuses.

(See also Policy T-1.3 on school traffic safety)

Policy G-3.4: Schools as Community Centers

Collaborate with the school districts to strengthen the role of schools as community centers and to provide public access to school facilities for neighborhood and community activities.

(See also Policy OSP-3.14 on recreational use of school facilities)

GOAL G-4: TOWN OPERATIONS

MANAGE TOWN OPERATIONS IN AN EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE, FISCALLY PRUDENT, AND TRANSPARENT MANNER.

Policy G-4.1: Efficient Service Delivery

Maximize efficiency in service delivery, keeping capital expenditures and operating costs to a minimum while still responding to community needs and priorities. Continue to seek improved methods of governance that are cost effective and avoid increases in expenses.

Policy G-4.2: Contract Services

Continue to contract out services that require specialized expertise or that can be more economically performed by other agencies such as Contra Costa County.

Policy G-4.3: Town Library

Continue to work closely with the Contra Costa County Library System and Friends of the Moraga Library to improve and enhance library services, modernize facilities, and adapt to trends and technology in library science.

Policy G-4.4: Citizen Expertise

Solicit and utilize the expertise of Moraga residents in volunteer and special service functions, including citizen committees and Town Boards and Commissions. Such groups should reflect Moraga's demographics and be representative of all segments of the community.

Policy G-4.5: Transparency

Maintain transparent public processes that provide opportunities for the community to stay informed and easily participate in Town government.



Policy G-4.6: Annexation

Consider annexation of areas within Moraga's sphere of influence where urban services such as water and sewer will be provided.

12.4 GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Program G-A: Measure J Implementation

Comply with the growth management requirements of Contra Costa County Measure J, including:

- (a) Adoption of a development mitigation program to ensure that new growth is paying its share of the costs associated with that growth. This program includes a local program to mitigate local street impacts and a program to mitigate regional impacts (Lamorinda Fee and Financing Authority). (See Policies G-1.5 and G-2.1)

- (b) Participation in sub-regional transportation planning (See Policy G-1.3)
- (c) Adoption of an urban limit line (See Policy G-1.6)
- (d) Preparation of a five-year capital improvement program (See Policy G-1.7)
- (e) Adoption and maintenance of a transportation systems management (TSM) Ordinance (See Policy G-1.8, plus Program T-I in the Transportation Element)
- (f) Submittal of a biennial progress report to CCTA, including the Town's annual housing progress reports for the prior two years and a discussion of how the General Plan supports the attainment of regional housing goals (See Policy G-1.10)
- (g) Participation in CCTA's conflict resolution process (See Policy G-1.11)

Program G-B: Annual General Plan Review

Conduct an annual review of the General Plan as required by State law and prioritize implementation measures based on the findings. To the extent possible, this review should occur before adopting the Town budget so the findings can inform budget decisions.



Library supporters celebrate Moraga



Program G-C: Annual Town Budget

Prepare, review and adopt an Annual Budget to identify and fund ongoing Town programs, services, activities, and projects, including capital improvement projects. Capital improvement projects should include park and recreation facility improvements; public safety improvements; and improvements to the circulation system that are necessary to maintain and improve traffic operations.

Program G-D: Coordination with School District

Work collaboratively with the leadership and staff at the Moraga School District and Acalanes Union High School District to address issues of mutual concern, as described in Policies G-1 through G-4.

Program G-E: Coordination with Utility Providers

Work collaboratively with utility service providers to support ongoing maintenance and service improvements, as well as resiliency and sustainability improvements. See also Policy G-2.6.

Program G-F: Coordination with Adjacent Jurisdictions

Coordinate land use planning, transportation planning, evacuation planning, housing, and development review activities, with the cities of Lafayette and Orinda, and the County of Contra Costa. This should include:

- (a) Referral of all subdivisions of more than 10 lots or within one mile of an adjacent jurisdiction to that jurisdiction for review and comment; and
- (b) Referral of Town Council and Planning Commission agendas to adjacent jurisdictions regarding proposals that may be of interest to the jurisdiction.

Program G-G: Facility Planning and Capital Improvements

Conduct periodic assessments of Town facilities as a way to identify and prioritize capital improvements and respond to community needs and priorities

Program G-H: Town Facility Management

Perform regular maintenance and repair to Town facilities to avoid future deferred maintenance expenses and to enable facilities to operate at the highest standard achievable.

Program G-I: Information for Homeowners Associations

Provide regular outreach to Moraga's HOAs, service organizations, interest and advocacy groups, and neighborhood groups, including information on Town activities and issues.

Program G-J: Citizen Participation

Continue to encourage citizen participation in all Town activities, including ongoing review and management of the General Plan and development-related decision-making. Residents and businesses should also be involved in economic development planning, evacuation and safety planning, recreation programming, and climate change/ sustainability activities. In addition, the Town will continue to support the appointment of Moraga residents to Town commissions and committees. Each commission or committee shall have a designated charge and shall be involved in the review and discussion of relevant issues, including making recommendations to the Town Council as appropriate.







TOWN OF MORAGA
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