

Moraga Chamber of Commerce Meeting
July 22, 2008

Lori Salamack Planning Director
Specific Plan

General overview and questions. Moraga Center specific plan is located between Moraga Way and Moraga Road. It will be an extension of School Street to create a new downtown pedestrian oriented area. It proposes mixed use space which could include new restaurants, higher density residential living space, possibly 720 new living units, new retail and office space as well as a community center. Revitalization of current Moraga Center is in the plan. One of the hopes for the creation of the new space suggested in the Specific Plan is to lower the 75% sales tax leakage.

Schedule: Town council meeting tonight for comments on plan and continue to August 1st. Presentations started in June and are winding down. Responses to comments are written and will be addressed in final environmental impact report. Oct. 22nd is earliest the Town Council will make a decision depending on amount of comments.

Questions:

Q - What is the purpose of the blue boundary on the Specific Plan map?

A - The blue boundary encompasses total boundary put forth in general plan.

Q - Will the extension of School Street become the “main street” of Moraga?

A - A designer has worked on the extension of School. There will be parallel parking, and it could become Moraga’s main street.

Q -When will the Specific Plan become a reality?

A - Oct 22nd earliest date for town council to vote.

Q - If it is a done deal then what?

A - .There is no contract with the owners to move forward.

Approval of plan does not mean construction will begin in November.

If approved, the property owners may be more motivated to act. But, they may not be. The hope is that with the Specific Plan moving forward, there is more of a possibility for new businesses to move to Moraga

Q - Could the diversion of the traffic through the extension of School Street cause speeding problems?

A - The Town can narrow roads to cause traffic to slow down. Plan calls for on street parking reminiscent of a downtown area. The Town is at the land use stage, not in specific details.

Why is the Specific Plan being worked on now?

When the community developed the General Plan, the community decided to have a plan for both centers. The people in power at that time decided they wanted to finish the General Plan and have others work on the Specific Plan for the two shopping centers at a later date

Q - Do housing units need to be built if this does not go through?

A - The town of Moraga has housing needs to plan for. Town is not obligated to build but it needs to plan in a reasonable way. There are consequences if town does not build housing.

Q Could you describe affordable housing? Will it devalue our homes?

A – The laws come from the state about affordable housing. In state law we need to plan for various income levels from 2007 to 2014. If land is specified at 24 dwellings per acre, seniors housing units as planned would satisfy state requirement.

Dick: complex relationship between housing and retail. Town has objectives of state mandated housing and the other to make plan work. First as an asset to stimulate retail with affluent seniors to spend money. Having ability to pay for infrastructure to facility rejuvenation and amenities we need to have the right kind of housing to underwrite costs to jump start program

Senior housing is for viable 55+ active seniors.

Staff and faculty housing for those that can't live on campus. Lowest income students. Faculty would be moderate income. Moraga statistics say that there will be a 75% increase in senior housing needs. If we can keep people in town, that would be the goal. All tech studies have been done and what's needed are comments and questions.

Dave T. vice mayor: points to follow August one deadline comments on environmental review

Deadline for plan will be later and there is plenty of opportunity to comment on plan. Existence of center vitalization process is very important and if its not part of planning it would not be beneficial. What should it look like and how can we pay for it. Retailers need to come forth and comment or a possible task force with punch list of what can be done. Merchants would benefit from a vitalized center. Brizzone family would possibly be given a financial incentive for fixing up the center and providing funds to do so. Chamber can have a task force to answer some of these questions and come up with provisions for financial incentives to make the improvements go faster. Brizzone family has pledged to fix up center but how do we get there. Fees need to be paid and maybe there is a way to divert impact fees to help with money for improvements for the center. There are examples of this kind of incentives to help Brizzone family with improvements. What's missing from the plan right now, he thinks, is we need more work and thought on implementation of financing improvements.