

Moraga Prepares for Anticipated Development

By Steve Angelides

In anticipation of future development, the Town of Moraga is preparing to impose development impact fees, and has applied for Priority Development Area status for the Moraga Center Specific Plan Area.

Last month the Town Council received a consultant's study on the development fees and heard countervailing arguments from developers. The study is a prerequisite to the imposition of the fees.

The study covers public safety, storm drainage and traffic fees, plus the Lamorinda regional transportation fee that is already imposed on new development in Moraga. Considering all four fees, the study recommends residential development fees ranging from approximately \$5,000 for a unit of senior housing to \$14,000 for a detached single family home. The recommended non-residential fees average approximately \$39,000 per acre of land plus \$3,000 per 1000 square feet of construction.

Public Works Director and Town Engineer Jill Mercurio said she expects that the public safety and storm drainage fees will be brought back to the Council for action soon, but that the traffic fees will require further study based on the comments at the meeting. Mercurio said the Town is also considering public building and park facilities fees, but the studies for those fees are still pending. None of the new fees will apply to the Palos Colorados development, which has already committed \$17 million to cover the impact of the development on Moraga.

At least as interesting as the technicalities of the fee calculations are the assumptions regarding future development upon which those calculations are based. Mercurio said the Town staff spent six months last year developing those assumptions, by "taking a snapshot while looking into our crystal ball." That "snapshot" is the source of the information on the map which accompanies this story.

Mercurio said some of those assumptions are already outdated. For example, last year Town staff anticipated 501 new housing units and 60,000 square feet of non-residential development in the Moraga Center Specific Plan Area. But the specific plan project description adopted by

the Town Council this year includes up to 720 new housing units and 140,000 square feet of non-residential development.

Because of the size of that area, the amount of infill housing anticipated there, and the presence of public transit, Town staff filed an application with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to have the Moraga Center Specific Plan Area designated as a Priority Development Area. Such a designation would make Moraga eligible to apply for future grants for the area.

The Town Council ratified the application by a 3 to 1 vote, with Councilmember Ken Chew absent. Vice Mayor Lynda Deschambault, who dissented, said she supported the specific plan, but opposed the application because "to ask ABAG to be put on a transportation corridor is ludicrous."

Deschambault and other councilmembers asked the Town staff to consider applying for designation of specified areas in Moraga as Priority Conservation Areas. The deadline for such applications is August 17.



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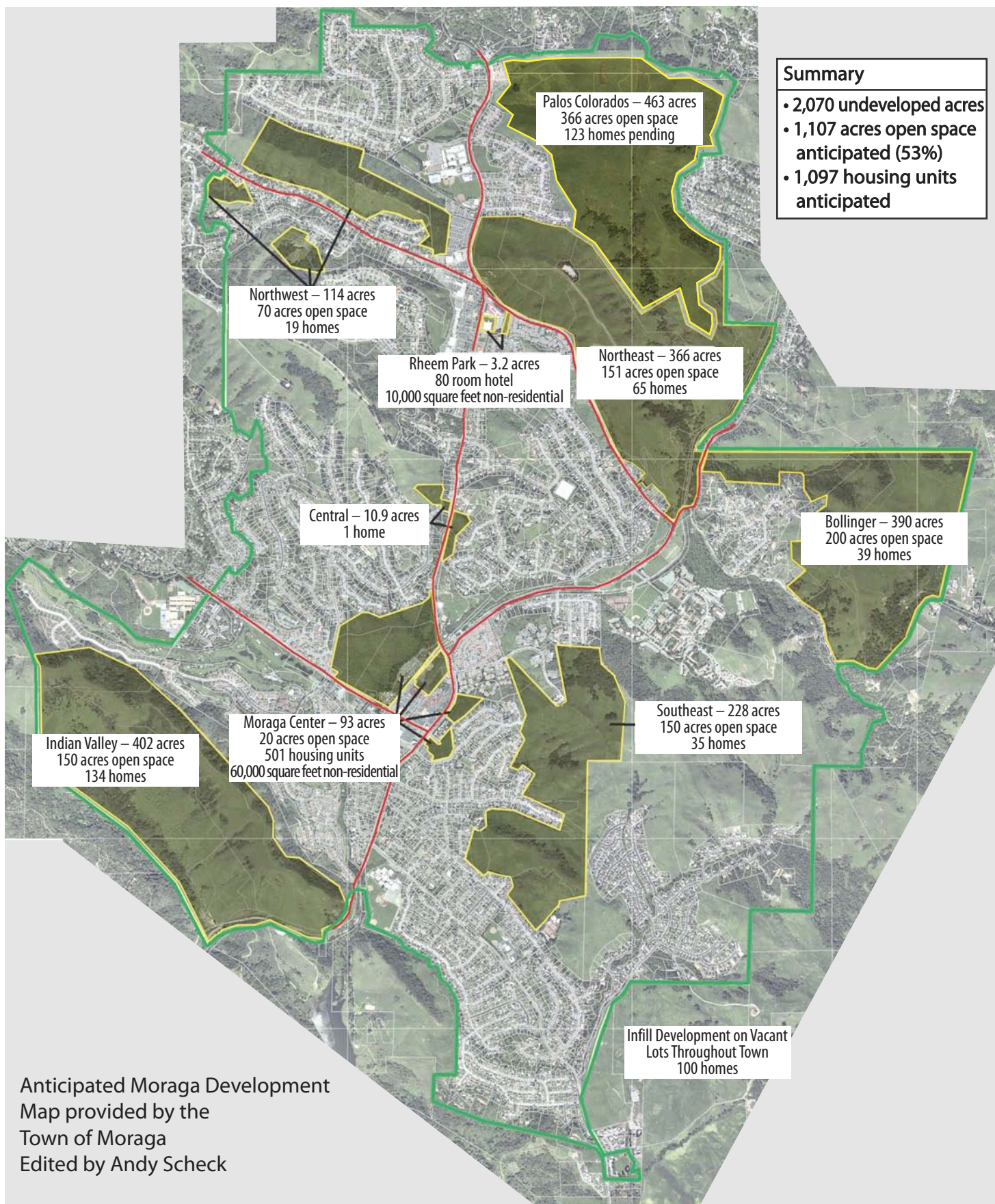
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Summary

- 2,070 undeveloped acres
- 1,107 acres open space anticipated (53%)
- 1,097 housing units anticipated

Anticipated Moraga Development
Map provided by the
Town of Moraga
Edited by Andy Scheck

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