



## First MOSO, Now MOSPRO New Initiative Offers \$7 Million to the Town of Moraga for the Right to Build New Homes

By Sophie Braccini

A new Open Space initiative was submitted to the Moraga Town Clerk on Dec. 21, 2007. Entitled The Moraga Open Space, Parks & Recreation Ordinance of 2008 (MOSPRO 2008), it is a competing vision to Moraga's Open Space Ordinance (MOSO 2008) governing future management of the remaining 1000 acres of open space in Moraga. Town Manager Phil Vince summarizes the situation: "With two competing Open Space ordinances potentially on the ballot, 2008 will be an interesting year in Moraga."

Conceived and developed by the Bruzzone family, a major Moraga landowner, MOSPRO 2008 would directly compete with MOSO 2008 in the next election if enough signatures are obtained to place it on the ballot. The Notice of Intent to Circulate Petition, signed by Dave Bruzzone, explains: "The purpose (of this initiative is) to protect open space and ridgelines, limit development to less sensitive areas where potential visual and other environmental impacts can be minimized, and provide needed public facilities for the Town."

Council Member Mike Metcalf observed, "Voters should pay close attention to what is being proposed." While the two initiatives have similar titles, their contents differ on many counts. If MOSO 2008 is approved by voters, it would considerably limit development on two large Bruzzone properties in Bollinger Canyon and Indian Valley. In diplomatic language, MOSPRO 2008 proposes a mix of protected open space, large development areas and potential financial rewards for the Town of Moraga.

The MOSPRO 2008 initiative would amend the Moraga General Plan and transform the Bollinger Canyon area from a "Study Area" to a mix of open space and property development allowing two dwellings per acre. The land owner would be required to conduct an environmental impact report prior to commencing the project. A portion of the Indian Valley property would be dedicated to Open Space with the remainder of the property developed with two houses per acre. The total number of new homes could reach 312.

MOSPRO 2008 contains a number of financial benefits for the Town of Moraga if adopted. One benefit is the provision of up to \$4M dollars by the Bruzzone's to the Town of Moraga for the construction of a Town Community and Recreation Center on an allotted piece of their land located along Moraga Road, across from Moraga Commons Park. The Bruzzone's would also contribute up to \$2M for additional sports fields and up to \$1M for transportation infrastructure improvements. The total payment of these funds is contingent to the recordation of a final subdivision map to subdivide both Bollinger Canyon and Indian Valley.

"Staff is still reviewing the recently submitted Bruzzone initiative," said Mayor Lynda Deschambault. "Moraga residents have a strong desire to protect the Town's open space and natural areas, so I expect they'll be very interested in comparing these two measures and understanding which one best supports those goals," she continued.

The authors and proponents of MOSO 2008, an organization called Friends of Moraga Open Space, are not enamored of the competing initiative. "This new initiative pretends

it's about protecting open space, but in reality it's an attempt by the developer to buy votes so he can build hundreds of houses on open space," said spokesperson Susan McNeill.

Neither initiative will be placed on the ballot until the respective petitions are signed by 10% of registered Moraga voters (roughly 1000 signatures) and verified by the Town.

### MOSO 2008 Update:

The Board of the Moraga Country Club recently rejected an offer to compromise with proponents of the MOSO 2008 initiative. The main concern of the Board was that if passed, the ordinance would prevent the Club from purchasing land from the town for its holes 10 thru 18 and would impair its rehabilitation projects.

The proponents of the initiative, Friends of Moraga Open Space, although claiming that the Country Club would have been grandfathered under MOSO 2008 subsequently announced plans to revise the initiative "to explicitly exclude the Moraga Country Club entirely. The revisions will be relatively brief but will best reflect the interests and concerns of the majority of our Moraga residents. We will circulate a revised petition for signatures."

MOSPRO 2008 contains language the specifically protects Country Club activities.