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Lafayette Not Keen on Potential Traffic Impact of New Moraga Plan

By Cathy Tyson

Concerned about traffic impacts on their roads from the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP), the Cities of Lafayette and Orinda shared the cost of hiring TJKM, a transportation consulting firm, to analyze data from Moraga's traffic consultant, Fehr and Peers (F & P). Basically the TJKM review does not agree with the figure for external trips - that is the number of trips outside of Moraga that F & P found, by approximately 50%. In a nutshell, how many drivers are staying within Moraga to pick up kids from school, go grocery shopping and so on - and how many of those drivers will be exiting town via Orinda or Lafayette?

□ The Lafayette City Council recently drafted a letter to Moraga's Mayor noting, "Lafayette continues to have serious concerns regarding the EIR's methodology, assumptions, conclusions and mitigation measures and maintains that the EIR fails to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) The EIR fails to fully analyze impacts on the streets and intersections in Lafayette and offers unrealistic or ineffective mitigation measures that are inconsistent with the Lafayette General Plan."

□ At issue is the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) of the Moraga Center Specific Plan. On April 20th, the Moraga Planning Commission recommended Alternative 4 which consists of 560 residential units, 90,000 square feet of retail, 50,000 square feet of office space and a small hotel as well as an assisted living facility.

□ "Based on standard ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers) trip generation rates, TJKM estimates that the Moraga Center Specific Plan would generate approximately 522 inbound and 488 outbound trips during the p.m. peak hour. However, F & P's projected trip generation shows 251 inbound and 243 outbound project trips during the p.m. peak hours. These EIR project trip increments are approximately 50 - 52 percent less than the comparable outbound and inbound trips respectively based on standard ITE rates. This indicates that the MCSP project is likely underestimating the impacts of the project," notes the May 8, 2009 report of TJKM to the City of Lafayette.

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