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## Moraga Center Specific Plan to be Tweaked Before Adoption

*By Sophie Braccini*

After a long evening of debate on May 28, the Moraga Town Council partially approved the Planning Commission's recommendation for the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP.) It agreed to add more flexibility to the plan, but capped the maximum number of units at 630. Staff and the specific plan sub-committee (Mayor David Trotter and Council Member Michael Metcalf) will refine the final MCSP, which will be brought back to the Council for final approval next fall.

In a written report, Moraga Planning Director Lori Salamack hypothesized development numbers based on the very flexible rules that the Planning Commission recommended. Among them was a scenario that pushed the number of single family units to the minimum (40), and the active senior housing to the maximum (760), with the addition of 100 compact family housing units, the total reached 900 housing units. That number got the Council thinking.

Town Manager Mike Segrest's recommendation was to establish development limits not according to numbers of unit, but according to a traffic envelop: "A unit can be a 5000 square foot home for a family of five or a 600 square foot condo for a senior," said Segrest, "and the impacts are drastically different. Planning with a maximum traffic impact would give us a good comfort level of what the end product will be."

"This approach makes good sense," said Mayor David Trotter, "but our community needs a number, we need a cap, with flexibility in the mix of housing." A maximum of 630 units became the consensus.

The Council also moved to ensure that development along Camino Ricardo would be only single family homes up to the ridge line. The Planning Commission had allowed the possibility of higher density housing beyond a first row of single family homes. The Council felt it was important to preserve the feeling of a homogeneous neighborhood both for the current Camino Ricardo residents and the Sonsara development, across the street from these potential new buildings.

The Council discussed the possibility of keeping a separate housing count for Saint Mary's college students and workforce. "The plan charts housing for workforce and for Saint Mary's, but the college is the largest employer in the town, so combining the two categories would make sense," said Trotter. But some Council Members disagreed and wanted to keep a separate count for the college, so it was decided that the sub-committee would ask Saint Mary's for their position.

A consensus is emerging around the recreation/gym center that perhaps none of the sites that have been considered in the MCSP for its location are optimal. The position across from St Mary's road would be at the entrance of a busy retail area and would not be conducive to attracting customers. The second site near the

Moraga Commons, along Moraga Road, would locate the center at the confluence of 3 major creeks, where the recommended Fish and Game set-back is 150 feet. The property owner, the Bruzzone family, continues to present that site as a better opportunity. It is likely that this issue will be completely re-studied after the MCSP is approved.

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

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