

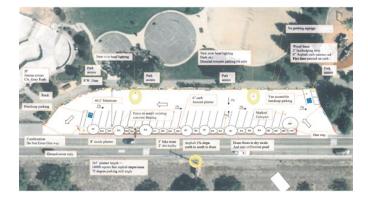
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More Parking at the Commons: How and with what Money?

By Sophie Braccini



Town map of a new parking area Image provided

John Haffner and David Kruegel agree on at least one issue: there is not enough parking at the Commons. The Parks and Recreation Commissioner and the President of the Friends of the Moraga Library, respectively, both asked for creative solutions during the Moraga Town Council meeting on March 23rd. The occasion was a presentation by Town Engineer and Public Works Director Jill Mercurio of a plan to construct parking stalls along Moraga Road by the skate park. Mercurio sought direction on a conceptual design from the Council, so she could go back to the cities of Lafayette and Orinda, which will each be asked to contribute 25% of the cost.

Right now there are about 14 parking spaces in the dirt between the road and the park. The new plan proposes 29 spaces, at an angle with Moraga Road, with an eight-foot planting strip providing a visual shield. Since the parking would primarily serve the skate park that was built with, and is jointly maintained by, Lafayette and Orinda the cost would be shared by the three jurisdictions.

"Two months ago we asked the two cities for their positions," stated Jill Keimach, Moraga Town Manager. "They both indicated that they were in the middle of a budget cycle and had already made cuts. They asked that we come back with a final plan before July."

Keimach recommended that after the Council decided on a final plan, no more staff time be spent on this project until Lafayette and Orinda make their decisions. Estimated construction costs are \$254,000; Moraga would pay half (because the parking would also serve special events), using Quimby Act Park Development Impact Fees.

Some safety questions were raised at the hearing. "There are concerns with public access and public safety," said Haffner, who asked the Council to consider other parking areas. Left turns from the existing parking area are prohibited; the new plan could allow them.

Ellen Beans, of the Moraga Citizens Network, suggested that the bike lane be eliminated along the parking area, as a safer alternate bike path already exits inside the park, for north-bound bike traffic. Chief of Police Priebe called the idea brilliant. He was not opposed to authorizing left turns with the new parking configuration.

"The Park's Master Plan calls for 201 parking spots," said Kruegel, "there are 38 available in the Park today, and no additional parking for the Commons was planned when the Town adopted the Moraga Center Specific Plan. We urge you to approve these."

"Parking at the Commons is a big problem, we need to chip away at this problem whenever we can," said Council Member Mike Metcalf. The Council asked staff to present the plan (as shown) to Orinda and Lafayette and come back with their responses.

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