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Town to Study Traffic Plan The area around Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard will benefit from CCTA grant

By *Sophie Braccini*

Moraga Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Read recently announced that the Town has been awarded a \$325,000 grant from the Contra Costa County Transportation Agency (CCTA) under a program called Transportation for Livable Communities.

The award document states that the grant should "fund transportation projects that improve the range of transportation choices between key activity nodes - such as shopping areas, office centers, sports arenas, and convention centers - and the transportation facilities that serve them. TLC projects add or improve pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities, and support well-designed, high density housing and mixed-use near transit." It's not a construction grant-its purpose is the creation of a plan and development of shelf-ready projects that can take advantage of other sources of funding when they become available.

"The money will serve to design a plan to make the Rheem area more inviting, to reduce congestion and slow down traffic, and also beautify Moraga Road," said Brekke-Read, noting that the timing of the grant was aligned with the Economic Development Action Team's report and the visioning that had been done with the community, recommending that the Rheem area become mixed use, more compact, and pedestrian friendly. "These objectives are also consistent with the General Plan policies," she added.

"We would also like to study how to create a sense of entry into Moraga and the Rheem area; maybe create a gateway at the intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road," said Brekke-Read.

When she presented the application for the grant to the Town Council last November, Brekke-Read did not shy away from a controversial issue-the narrowing of Moraga Road as a way to improve traffic. "There is nothing in the grant application for anything that would narrow Moraga Road from four lanes to two lanes," she said, "although in my professional opinion it would be something worth considering."

Brekke-Read's approach to the design of a plan includes community outreach. "The grant requires a lot of community input," she said. "We will organize workshops for the Campolindo High School community, businesses and the community at large." The plan requires hiring a traffic engineering firm and modeling potential designs for Moraga Road and the Rheem intersection.

Brekke-Read believes that there is enough money in the grant to also plan for an improved bicycle route between Campolindo Drive and Corliss Drive.

"The funding should become available within a month and we will start working on the plan in the fall," said Brekke-Read.

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