



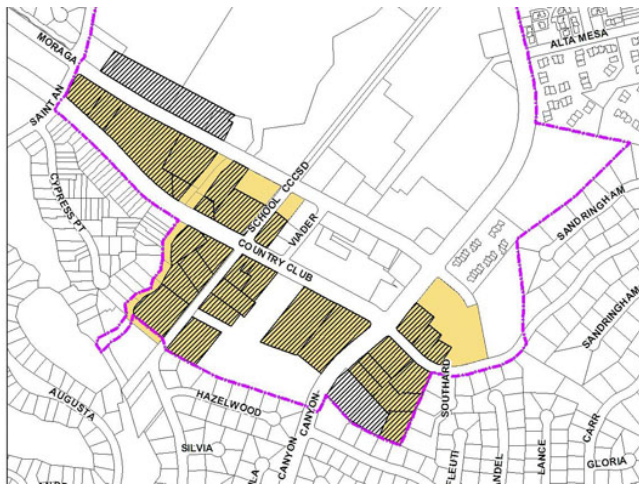
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## Specific Plan Zoning Recommended for Approval

By Sophie Braccini



Suburban office zoning modified to accommodate higher, denser housing. Image provided

Center Specific Plan and the General Plan, as amended to match the Moraga Center Specific Plan, set the development rules - while the zoning code implements the rules. Since the rules have changed, the zoning code needs to be brought into alignment to allow for the density, height, and uses permitted by the Moraga Center Specific Plan.

Moraga resident Dick Olsen pointed out the commission that this item was listed on the agenda under a cryptic description that did not allow most residents to understand what was at stake.

Chair Christine Kuckuk said she was concerned by the comment, but recognized that the commission is not a policy-making body and is tasked only with implementing the rules. In addition, she noted that the town's policy-making body, the Moraga Town Council, will make the final decision regarding new zoning and residents will have the opportunity to express their opinions when the council considers the issue. She asked staff to word the item explicitly when it appears on the council's agenda so residents will understand what is at stake.

The change of zoning will address the southern border of the Moraga Center Specific Plan and allow for offices, professional and personal services, high-density residential, certain recreation, education and public services. Most parcels are located in the Moraga Center Specific Plan area, with six additional parcels along Rheem Boulevard.

The change in zoning was recommended for approval on a 4-1 vote.

The target date for the council to consider final approval of the zoning changes is Sept. 10. The amendment targets only parts of the Moraga Center Specific Plan; other zoning modifications still need to be made.

There are inevitable, causal chains of events that can be complex to follow but are crucial in determining what type of development can and cannot happen in Moraga.

One of the essential links was created on July 21 when the Moraga Planning Commission recommended that the Town Council adopt zoning that accommodates elements of the Moraga Center Specific Plan related to density, height, and type of development in the downtown area, including a controversial multi-family home project proposed along Moraga Way.

According to planning director Shawna Brekke-Read, the commission's action was inevitable because there was no alternative other than approval.

"The amendment to the suburban office district zoning is intended to implement the Moraga Center Specific Plan," said associate planner Ella Samonsky. Brekke-Read explained that the Moraga

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