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## SMC gets permit to upgrade baseball stadium

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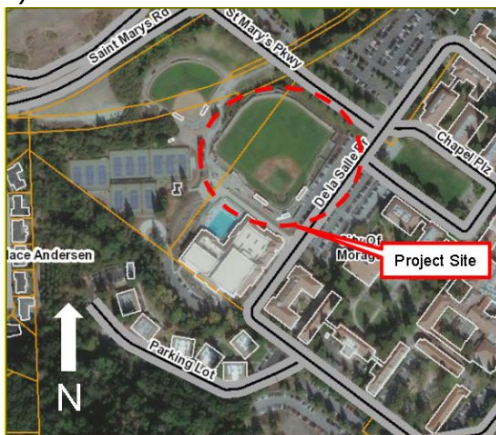


Photo provided

Good news for Saint Mary's College baseball players and their fans. Moraga's Planning Commission unanimously approved the necessary permit needed to green light the construction of a new 4,324-square foot, 21-foot 10-inch tall stadium that will include a new Entry Plaza and redesigned landscaping at 1928 St. Mary's Road.

In addition to a presentation by Moraga Assistant Planner Mio Mendez, SMC's Vice President for Facilities Sarah Speron and Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Mike Matoso were also on hand with their own presentation during the March 1 planning commission meeting.

Originally, a new stadium was anticipated in the Campus Master Plan during 2017. The vision was to build a 950-seat stadium in a grandstand-style building with spectator seating, dugouts, a press box, concession areas and 12,390 square feet of enclosed space to

include locker rooms, athletic offices, a conference room, and general storage. Matoso stressed that SMC's new stadium was meant to be built completely by donor funding. Enter COVID, which threw a wrench into donation momentum, so the college was willing to downsize from its initial plans.

Mendez's staff report states, "SMC desires to replace temporary bleachers with a more permanent structure to represent the Class A college sport facility needs. A permanent baseball facility will cement SMC as a Class A facility with the regional athletics program, attract potential donors and allow the college to be more competitive in recruitment. The existing SMC buildings are mostly Spanish Colonial Revival, and the new baseball stadium will match the campus architecture."

The modified new stadium will consist of 662 seats as a prefabricated structure, a press box and open-air seating. It will be built on the existing baseball field which stands adjacent to the Joseph L. Alioto Recreation Center and will eventually become part of the 60,000-square-foot rec center's master plan. The new 18-foot Entry Plaza will be located along the southern end of the facility, and enhanced landscaping will be placed along the eastern and western sections. Additionally, SMC has plans to install new netting and poles to a height of 65-feet for safety purposes to prevent foul balls from leaving the field area and striking anyone outside of the stadium. No additional parking will be required and there are no immediate plans to install lights for night games.

The staff report also assures that "the project design does not generate adverse conditions of noise, shade, shadow, light or glare that would be detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the campus population or the broader Moraga community."

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