



MORAGA

See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

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Town Council: Wednesday, Aug. 24, 6:30 p.m.
Planning Commission: Tuesday, Aug. 2, 6:30 p.m.,
Park and Recreation Commission:
Monday, Aug. 15, 7:00 p.m.,
Moraga School District Board Meetings:
TBA

Housing Element Working Draft 2023-31 heads to HCD for review



Example of a Housing Element option

Photo provided

By Vera Kochan

Every municipality in California is required to go through a process known as the 6th Cycle Housing Element Update (2023-31). The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for Moraga, as determined by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), requires the town to come up with its “fair share” of housing responsibilities to fulfill its assigned quota. In Moraga’s case the opportunity site amount is 1,118 units – nearly five times the 229 units that Moraga needed to plan for during the 2015-2023 period. Opportunity sites identi-

fied in the 6th Cycle Housing Element draft with the largest realistic capacity predominantly included areas within the Moraga Center Specific Plan mixed-use “Village” as well as sites within the Rheem Shopping Center, with increased zoning to 24 dwelling units per acre for opportunity sites, the 123-lot Palos Colordos subdivision which has been approved and recorded, and 150 units at Indian Valley (Canyon Road southwest of urban area), which is in a very high fire severity zone and is being examined by the local fire district.

Of the necessary units, 318 are for very low-income, 183 are low-income, 172 are moderate-income, and 445 are above moderate-income units.

According to the staff report presented by Planning Director Afshan Hamid and Barry Miller of Barry Miller Consulting at the July 11 Town Council Special Meeting, a state law “requires that a ‘Working Draft’ of the Housing Element be submitted to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) prior to its adoption, giving the State an opportunity to review the document and recommend revisions so that the Element complies with State law when it is adopted. Each jurisdiction must circulate the ‘Working Draft’ for 30 days before it is submitted to the state, and consider revisions based on public comment.”

In preparation for the final outcome, there have been at least six meetings involving either the town council or the planning commission, as well as two community workshops.

The 225-page “Working Draft” Housing Element was officially published on June 30 with advance copies of most of the chapters appearing on the town’s website (www.moraga.ca.us/519/working-draft-housing-element) two weeks beforehand. Goals, policies, and programs were posted on June 16, and the remaining chapters posted by June 28. The publication of the “Working Draft” is now in its 30-day review period which will end on July 30.

“The heart of the Housing Element is the ‘Housing Action Plan’, which is Chapter 6 of the document,” according to the staff report. “The Housing Plan includes seven broad

goals for housing in Moraga.” Additionally, each goal has a number of supporting policies and has a set of 42 action programs to implement the policies.

On July 13 the town council - joined by Stephanie Hagar, associate principal with BAE Urban Economics, and Karen Murphy, Moraga’s assistant attorney - met to review the redlined version of the “Working Draft”.

The meeting was spent concentrating on the Housing Plan, and performing any last minute tweaks to verbiage and content of the town’s goals, policies, and programs for the next eight years. The first goal is to anticipate housing needs by maximizing opportunities for the development of housing to accommodate anticipated growth; facilitate mobility within both the ownership and rental markets; and encourage a diverse community. The policies include fair share housing; ensuring sufficient land for a range of housing types; retaining existing residentially zoned land; and working to in-fill housing opportunities.

Programs under Goal 1 include a General Plan Update with an eye towards the year 2040; adopting amendments to the Moraga Zoning Regulations in order to meet the 1,118 units required by the RHNA (including capacity for at least 501 lower income units at densities exceeding 20 units per acre); amending Moraga’s Phase One Zoning Map changes to increase zoning capacities; adopting Phase Two Zoning text amendments within 24 months of Housing Element adoption by removing constraints to develop higher density housing; updating development activity in the Moraga and Rheem shopping centers; monitoring development activity on all Housing Opportunity Sites; maintaining and publicizing an inventory of vacant and underutilized parcels that meet or exceed the town’s RHNA; and reviewing and reporting annually on the implementation of Housing Element programs for the prior calendar year.

Goal 2 is to provide a variety of housing types and affordability levels to help meet the town’s projected housing needs.

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