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Theme chosen for upcoming Moraga Mural

By Vera Kochan



Site of future Moraga Mural Photo Vera Kochan

In an effort to bring more outdoor art to the Moraga community, the Art in Public Spaces Committee has set its sights on turning the empty wall space located at 335 Rheem Blvd. into a mural.

"The APSC wants to increase the frequency and visibility of art performances and artworks in Moraga," stated Parks and Recreation Director Mackenzie Brady in her Sept. 27 staff report. "To achieve this goal, the APSC requested the Town Council allow them to explore the possibility of installing a mural on the wall outside of the Public Works Corp Yard/Town Council Chambers. At the March 8, 2023 meeting, the Town Council also approved APSC engaging the public in selecting a mural theme with keywords."

A survey was initiated asking the community to submit key words that generally bring to mind life in Moraga.

The survey was open for six weeks between June 19 to July 31 and received 221 responses, to which the APSC

Mural Subcommittee analyzed and condensed the information from one of the questions asking: "In 2-3 words, what defines Moraga?"

APSC compiled the results and noted that the most often used words were: "nature, open space, hills, semi-rural, and beautiful." By combining those descriptions the theme of the mural is: "Natural Beauty of the Surrounding Hills."

The next most popular running theme was "peaceful," with residents using words such as: "peaceful community", "kind", and "calm."

The "small town" theme came through with some responses bordering on the negative such as: "boring," "commercial areas old and lack character," and "isolated." However, other responses were more uplifting, using "small town feel," "home," and "small town friendliness" to describe Moraga.

"Community" popped up often with descriptions like: "active community involvement," "community spirit," and "inclusive community," while another buzzword was "safe" as in: "safe and beautiful place to raise a family."

The word "quiet" was used with: "quiet family town," and in the lengthiest description of the entire survey, "quiet oasis in the center tucked away but close to major metropolitan area of San Francisco and all the city has to offer!"

"Family" came through with descriptions such as: "family-centric," and "great for families." "Friendly" was described through "friendly people," and "friendly community." And "schools" offered high praise with "great schools," "excellent schools," and several mentions of "Saint Mary's College."

The town council approved the selected phrase of "Natural Beauty of the Surrounding Hills" during its Sept. 27 meeting, and it was noted that the phrase itself would not actually be written as part of the mural, but serve as the inspiration for it.

The next step for APSC is to issue a Request for Proposals to the public in order to have prospective applicants submit information and a rendering based on how they interpret the theme. The chosen artist's conceptual design, after APSC approval, would go the town council for final review and authorization.

The artist will also be chosen for fitting into the project's budget. Estimated costs are approximately \$10,000 for the mural (\$4,500 from Fund 134 and an additional \$5,500 fundraised), plus maintenance based on the specific medium.

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