

Rheem Valley Shopping Center on track for new grocery store

By Vera Kochan

It appears that Moraga Shopping Center's Safeway is going to have some competition in the not-so-distant future. The Planning Commission approved a partial redevelopment of the Rheem Valley Shopping Center during its Dec. 12 meeting, and basically gave a green light for the proposed 17,404-square-foot grocery store. Additional development involves two new free-standing pad buildings (a pad is a commercial space that is next to or adjacent to an already existing building), parking lot changes, and new landscaping.

President and CEO Jay Kerner of U.S. Realty Partners, Inc., the property owner/applicant, told the commission, "We do have an overall big vision for what we hope the Rheem Valley Shopping Center will become, and we're looking at this as basically a catalyst in order to get the ball rolling and get the momentum."

While there has been much speculation as to which grocery store will move into Moraga, and key figures did not mention the store by name during the presentation, the mystery was subliminally revealed during a quick slide presentation by Senior Entitlement Manager Veronica Vargas of Grocery Outlet. Several bullet points disclosed facts that were verified online (including Vargas' affiliation), and the name Grocery Outlet appeared once during Vargas' discussion of franchises.

In addition to reconstructing the existing building north of CVS, the applicant requests the construction of two new pad buildings (Building A adjacent to Moraga Motors and Building B, adjacent to Starbucks), the removal of 75 parking spaces, new landscaping in front of the grocery store and elsewhere, removal of 20 trees to replant 31 new trees, and a grading permit for approximately 2,346 cubic yards.

According to the Dec. 12 staff report by Moraga Principal Planner/Project Planner Brian Horn, the



Images courtesy Moraga Planning Dept

Architect's rendering of new Rheem Valley Shopping Center grocery store.

applicant had submitted partial redevelopment plans to the town in July. After review, the Planning Commission feedback was as follows: "Update the new shopping center elevations so they complement the existing shopping center or interpret it in an updated way, for example, through materials. If the existing shopping center colors change, they should match/compliment the new buildings; avoid grey cinderblocks; new architecture should stand out more, and the designs should push boundaries, not be generic, and the new design should set the tone for future development and/or remodeling of the remaining shopping center; add visual appeal, especially for the pad buildings and create more differentiation between the different tenant spaces in the pad buildings. Pad building B could set a new architectural tone for a Gateway building."

Additional feedback included: "Provide gathering places and/or spaces for public art; activate the spaces, create some unique outdoor spaces. Have covered indoor/outdoor spaces. Break up the architecture to create these spaces. Marin Country Mart was cited as an example; avoid trees that drop fruits or berries; incorporate the history of Moraga - but with a modern take; appreciated the proposed public gathering area adjacent to the grocery store and requested more en-

hancements; and keep some parking areas open for public events."

While the applicant owns a majority of the property in Rheem's shopping center, any storefronts south of CVS, such as Luna Gymnastics, HomeGoods and smaller tenants, along with those west of the Park Gallery Building, such as the Rheem Theatre, Amoroma, and Sushi Fighter are not theirs. Stand alone buildings F45 and Rheem Valley Automotive are also independent of the applicant.

Town staff recommended that the Planning Commission approve a few additional design proposals by adding gro-

cery cart corrals (minimum of two); adding a paving pattern at the grocery store plaza; making certain the bike racks, bollards and all outdoor furniture are complementary to the design language; and upgrade landscaping to key existing areas of the primary shopping center access from Moraga Road and within other parking lot areas.

The Commission still had some issues with the façade of the grocery store building and the landscaping between the pad buildings, but agreed to discuss this at a future date in order to allow the applicant to proceed with approved plans.



Aerial view of potential changes to Rheem Valley Shopping Center.

MOFD announces annual reorganization of board and committees

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District recently announced the annual reorganization of members of its board of directors, as well as members of its standing committees and district liaisons, effective Jan. 1, as follows:

Board of Directors

President: Mike Roemer (District 4)
 Vice President: Greg Hasler (District 1)
 Secretary: Craig Jorgens (District 5)
 Treasurer: Steven Danziger (District 3)
 Director: John Jex (District 2)

Standing Committees

Audit Committee: Director Hasler and Director Jex

Ad Hoc Committees

Joint Fire Prevention with the City of Orinda: Director Jorgens and Director Roemer

District Liaisons

Local Agency Formation Committee (LAFCO): Director Danziger
 Orinda City Council: Director Jorgens
 Moraga Town Council: Director Hasler

TG HARDWOOD FLOORS
 Moraga California
 DESIGN • REFINISHING • INSTALLATION
 925-376-1118
 Lic # 924653

CALL TOM FOR A FREE ESTIMATE

Since 1993!
 Tom Gieryng,
 owner and operator

When I say "good," you say "neighbor."

Mike Rosa
 Agent
 925-376-2244
 Insurance Lic. #: OF45583
 346 Rheem Blvd., Suite 106
 Moraga

Now that's teamwork.
 CALL FOR A QUOTE 24/7

State Farm
 P097314.1 State Farm Home Office, Bloomington, IL

Rat proofing

Ratman Pest and Termite Control

Local family-owned business.

All pests & termites. Mice, rats, raccoons, skunks, and squirrel-proofing. Attic/Subarea clean up. Duct/Insulation repair.

Customer service is my #1 priority.

Serving the LaMorinda area for 10 years as former branch manager of Coulson-Moseley/ Detailed Pest Control.

Free inspections schedule TODAY

1044 Stuart St., Lafayette
 (925) 338-9304
 877-7RATMAN

BAD INC. Bay Area Drainage, Inc.

Have You Checked Your Crawlspace Lately?

- French Drains
- Underfloor Drains
- Downspout Systems
- Subdrain Systems
- Sump Pumps
- Retaining Walls
- Pavestone Driveway & Walkways

A General Engineering Contractor
 Locally owned and Operated
 Contractor LIC # 762208

925•377•9209

visit our website
www.bayareadrainage.com

Certech Environmental Services

www.certechpest.com
 (925) 300-1094

CERTECH PEST PREVENTION & TERMITE PROTECTION

ONE MONTH FREE
 MONTHLY & BIMONTHLY ANNUAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS

WINTER SPECIALS \$50 OFF
 MENTION THIS AD ONE TIME SERVICES

Tamplen Plastic Surgery now in Orinda

Cosmetic Surgery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facelift • Facial Implants • Neck Lift • Nose Surgery • Brow Lift • Eyelid Surgery • Ear Surgery 	Laser & Non-Surgical Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOTOX® Cosmetic and Dysport® • Cosmetic Removal of Moles & Skin Tags • Fillers (JUVÉDERM®, JUVÉDERM VOLUMA®, Restylane®) • Fraxel Re:Store Laser Treatment 	Before After
Skin Care Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical Peels • Obagi® Consultation 		

Dr. Matthew Tamplen, who grew up in Lafayette and is a nationally recognized Double Board-Certified Facial Plastic surgeon, opened a private practice in Downtown Orinda to better serve Lamorinda patients. Specializing entirely in the face, Dr. Tamplen's expertise is nationally recognized for providing patients with beautiful, elegant, and natural results.

Matthew Tamplen, MD
 Orinda Office: **NEW LOCATION**
 96 Davis Road, Suite #5, Orinda, 925-444-0824
TamplenPlasticSurgery.com

TAMPLEN PLASTIC SURGERY
 Double Board-Certified Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon.