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## SMC Parking Plan Remains Under Scrutiny

By Sophie Braccini

As Saint Mary's College pursues the construction of its new recreation facility, the Alioto Center, it needs to fulfill final requirements identified during the environmental review of the project in order to obtain an occupancy permit when construction is finished. During the initial study it was determined that the parking situation on campus is not optimal, with many lots being filled to, and sometimes over, capacity. The environmental study required that the college propose mitigation measures to improve the situation and make sure that St. Mary's Road is not used for overflow parking. The plan presented to the Moraga Planning Commission in November did not completely satisfy the commissioners; they wanted to see more quantified data to support the good intentions. The college will have to report back in a year and demonstrate progress.

According to the traffic study by Walker Parking Consultants, the lots that are most impacted at this time, with a rate of more than 100 percent occupancy, are those reserved for commuter students (non-residential parking). It appears that resident students use their cars instead of walking or biking to go to classes, because the campus is hilly and also because there is no walking path from some of the residence halls to the core of the cam-

pus where classes are held.

The college proposed to reduce the average occupancy of non-residential parking lots during the week from 100 percent to 95 percent by November 2016, with a long term goal of 90 percent. It also vouched to achieve and maintain an average of 1.3 occupants per vehicle during the afternoon peak period.

The means to reach the goals include increasing parking enforcement on campus, promoting free transit programs and reinstating a car-share program for students and employees.

"What about the people from outside who visit the campus to go to the museum or the library during working hours?" asked commissioner Tom Marnane. Tim Farley, SMC's director of community and government relations, replied that the study did not suggest that visitors to the campus have problems finding parking.

Commissioner Teresa Onoda did not find the idea of additional bicycle racks to be enough. "You have a golden opportunity to show leadership in the town of Moraga and promote more bicycle use," she said. "You could implement a bike-sharing program and require that freshmen don't bring a car, as many other universities do."

Farley responded that this question would be part of the 10-year master plan that the college has started to

work on and that will address the campus' development from 2018 to 2028.

"We still have a problem with students parking along St. Mary's Road because there is no space inside," said Marnane, "and your plan does not provide enough data in the short term. Some of your objectives are set to years from now, but we want to see the beginning of quantifiable improvements sooner."

Commissioner Christine Kuckuk shared those concerns. "The parking plan has objectives until five years from now which is supposed to be when your new master plan will take effect, but what if the plan is not ready in five years?" She added that the parking plan and its intentions are good, but that it is the job of the commission to make sure that it will really work, that certain benchmarks are met.

The commissioners agreed to ask the campus to reduce the occupancy rate of the non-residential parking areas to 95 percent while maintaining residential parking at 90 percent within a year. If the goals are met, the college will not need to come back to the commission on this issue and will just check yearly with staff. If they are not met, the college will have to propose additional mitigation measures.

## Danville Pears for Moraga?



Photo provided by Seth Freeman

Moraga staff thought it would be a nice gesture to give each guest at the State of the Town event a cookie in the shape of a pear as a party favor. Some residents, however, were surprised to see that the cookies came from a Danville bakery – on an evening when everyone was urged to "shop Moraga first!"

"The choice was made for financial reasons," said parks and recreation director Jay Ingram. "One of our staff members is affiliated with that bakery and we got a discount we could not pass up."

Evidently minimal government and budgetary frugality, a trademark of Moraga, are not without their consequences.

S.Braccini

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Advertising

# Kurt Piper –Kurt Piper Group Pacific Union The "Go To Guy" in Lamorinda

Growing up in the same community he works in has earned Kurt Piper the reputation of the "Go To Guy" in Lamorinda for all of his clients' real estate needs. Kurt believes his deep real estate knowledge and involvement with the community are what earned him the solid reputation of the real estate agent that everyone in his community can go to for help and advice.

Looking back on his 20+ years in real estate, Kurt reflects on his education at UC Berkeley led him to work for Grubb and Ellis in commercial real estate and a developer in land acquisition, apartment development, and construction project management.

Reaching a crossroad in his young career at age 27, Kurt repositioned himself at Coldwell Banker in Orinda with the intention of flipping houses but found that

Kurt Piper & his family enjoying Tahoe

he was so busy selling homes, he only had time to service his clients. To date, Kurt has closed over 500 real estate transactions.

In the fall of 2012, he eventually found himself a perfect fit with Pacific Union because the firm opened up a new office in downtown Lafayette and Kurt had always admired the strong branding and Bay Area wide reputation that Pacific Union offered.

When Kurt signed on with Pacific Union, he brought a team of highly skilled individuals to work side-by-side with him. The members of KPG or Kurt Piper Group are Christine Gallegos, Leslie Piper (Kurt's sister), Scott Sans and Amy Price - all which have deep ties to Lamorinda. Kurt feels that KPG is "A company within a company" with Pacific Union as the umbrella firm. In just this past year, Kurt and his team have closed over 42 transactions, and he does not expect his business to slow down.

Coming from a philanthropic family and earning the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout, Kurt consistently gives back to the community, and has chaired a charity golf tournament that donated the profits to various local charities such as Las Trampas Inc., Xenophon and other worthy causes. Kurt

also has served on the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He is married to his high school girlfriend, Alice, and enjoys spending time with his two children, Nick and Chloe, listening to country music, BBQing, playing golf, traveling and going to Tahoe.

Kurt Piper & the Kurt Piper Group

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