



MORAGA

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

Town of Moraga:
www.moraga.ca.us
Phone: (925) 888-7022
Chamber of Commerce:
www.moragachamber.org
Moraga Citizens' Network:
www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Town Council Meetings
Wed., April 10, 6:30 p.m.
Wed., April 24, 6:30 p.m.
Planning Commission:
Tuesday, April 16, 6:30 p.m.
Park and Recreation Commission:
TBA

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Town Council accepts General Plan Implementation and Housing Element reports

By Vera Kochan

Moraga has begun its 6th Cycle Housing Element for the 2023 to 2031 period, which was adopted on Jan. 25, 2023 after achieving certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Municipalities are required by the state to submit an Annual Progress Report covering their prior calendar year in order to show whether they are on track with regards to meeting their specific Housing Element requirements. The town council accepted and adopted the 2023 Annual General Plan Implementation Report and the Housing Element Annual Report for submission

during their March 13 meeting.

The town's last General Plan comprehensive update prior to 2023 was during the year 2002. According to a March 13 staff report by Planning Director Afshan Hamid and Associate Planner Mio Mendez, "California Government Code Section 65400 mandates planning agencies to: 'Investigate and make recommendations to the legislative body regarding reasonable and practical means for implementing the general plan so that it will serve as an effective guide for orderly growth and development, preservation and conservation of open-space land and

natural resources, and the efficient expenditure of public funds relating to the subjects addressed in the general plan.'" The Code also requires these annual reports to reach the Office of Planning and Research and HCD by April 1.

The state's General Plan Guidelines include identifying seven mandatory elements such as land use, circulation, conservation, housing, noise, open space, and safety. The town added additional elements to include community design, community facilities and services, and growth management. The staff report notes that all of the town's departments

collaborated on the updating of the General Plan implementation table, including identifying goals and actions for 2024.

Moraga's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is 1,118 units which is divided into four income levels (318 very low income units, 183 low income units, 172 moderate income units, and 445 above moderate income units). Three dwelling units in the low income level have been constructed and one moderate income unit has been built, bringing the new RHNA balance to 1,114. Several Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) are currently on the hori-

zon.

Some of the Planning Department's ongoing objectives include processing major project applications/entitlements; prioritizing implementation of the programs in the certified Housing Element and working on Phase Two Zoning Text Amendments; moving the General Plan horizon year to 2040 (which includes an Economic Vitality Element); updating the Community Design Element; conducting outreach meetings to multiple community organizations, stakeholders, Planning Commission, and Town Council; and completing the Livable Moraga Road project.

Town Council opposes November's State Ballot Initiative: Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act

By Vera Kochan

The "Tax Fairness, Transparency and Accountability Act" intended for the November 2018 State Ballot was withdrawn thanks to opposition from the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and other partners. The bill was supported by the California Business Roundtable (CBRT) and would have impacted local governments' revenue authority.

Another recently filed initiative by the CBRT -- "Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act" -- was certified in February 2023, by the Secretary of State and is eligible for the Nov. 5, 2024, Statewide General Elec-

tion. According to Moraga Town Manager Scott Mitnick's March 27 staff report, the initiative is "a measure that would amend the California Constitution to change the rules with respect to how the State and local governments may impose taxes, fees, and other charges."

The League of California Cities Regional Public Affairs Manager for the East Bay Division, Sam Caygill, gave a slide presentation during the town council's March 27 meeting, noting that "CBRT is comprised of major corporations including developers, oil, insurance, pharmaceutical companies, and more." The measure, if passed, would allow corporations such as these to pay less than their share, forcing residents and taxpayers to pay more for maintained services.

Mitnick's report stated that Governor Gavin Newsom, the State Legislature, and others

filed an emergency petition in September 2023, "for writ of mandate with the California Supreme Court seeking a pre-election review of the 'Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act' and to prevent the initiative from being placed on the November 2024 Ballot. The California Supreme Court did grant a hearing to rule on the petition to withhold the CBRT measure from the ballot." Arguments are set for April, and a decision must be reached by June 27 (the ballot-printing deadline).

Caygill's presentation stated that the measure would significantly threaten local control by reducing state and local government funding by billions annually; would upend local government tax and fee authority; and would open the door to countless lawsuits against cities.

Additionally, Cal Cities' analysis indicated that over \$20 billion of

local government revenues over 10 years would be at risk; \$2 billion each year from fees and charges adopted after Jan. 1, 2022 would be in danger; and hundreds of millions of dollars of annual revenues from tax and bond measures approved by voters after Jan. 1, 2022, would be canceled.

The measure would upend local tax authority. Taxes and fees adopted after Jan. 1, 2022, that do not comply with the new rules would be void. Also, it would be more difficult for voters to approve funding for local services; city charters would not be amended to include a tax or fee; and all future taxes would contain a sunset (any measures passed after Jan. 1, 2022, without a sunset would be repealed, and general tax measures would also require the phrase "for general government use" on the ballot).

Also overturned

would be local fee authority in that, all fee increases would need approval by two-thirds of a local legislative body; fees and charges for corporations to use or lease government property would no longer be market-based; and fees and charges could not exceed the "actual cost" of providing service ("actual cost" is defined as the "minimum amount necessary").

Caygill provided a list of groups that are opposed to the measure besides Cal Cities. They include California Special Districts Association, Alliance for a Better California, California Alliance for Jobs, California Contract Cities Association, Rebuild SoCal Partnership, California State Association of Counties, and more than 250 individual cities, counties, and districts. Newly added to the list is Moraga, thanks to council members' unanimous approval of a resolution opposing the initiative.



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Two individuals in Moraga's Wells Fargo Bank mural identified

By Vera Kochan

Customers of the Wells Fargo Bank in Moraga have now grown used to the lobby's mural, reflecting some of the town's history, that was installed in January of 2020. WFB initiated their Community Mural Project back in 1998, and has since installed more than 2,400 murals in locations nationwide. More locally, there are over 175 throughout the Bay Area. The murals are not painted -- rather, they are designed by a team of graphic artists to create collage-style historical art.

Moraga's 8.7 foot wide by 4.8 foot high mural contains photos of Saint Mary's College, the iconic Moraga Center sign, the Carroll family

and their horses c.1920, a sweeping view of the Moraga Valley, and Willow Spring School's eighth grade graduating class of 1957 (11 students).

WFB had offered a special bonus regarding each of their nationally located murals. If a family member of anyone featured in the murals was able to identify their relatives, they would be presented with a framed replica of the mural as a gift. Almost exactly four years later, Lamorinda Weekly received a phone call from someone who could identify two family members in the Willow Spring School photo.

Joan (Huff) Holt, who grew up in Moraga, was able to confirm that



Photo Vera Kochan

Joan Holt receives framed replica of WFB mural that depicts her siblings in the back row (second from left) Sharron Levy and (second from right) Sam Levy at Willow Springs School in 1957

her older brother (Sam) and sister (Sharron), who were twins, were in the photo taken when they were 14 years old. Their last name was Levy from their mom's first marriage. Back in the day, Holt said that locals referred to Willow Spring School as "Old Moraga School".

Another sister had seen Lamorinda Weekly's Feb. 19, 2020 article about the mural's original installation on a social media site and forwarded it to Sam's caregiver. "He had suffered a stroke,

and his memory comes and goes," explained Holt. "When he saw the photo from the article he recognized it and knew that it was him and his sister." Sharron passed away in January 2017, but Sam will turn 81 in May, and since the photo brought him so much joy, Holt made the six hour, round-trip drive from her home in West Point, Calif. to visit Moraga and pick up the framed replica of the mural as a birthday gift for her brother.

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