

March 1, 2024

Piedmont City Council and Staff

RE: **Comments on Moraga Canyon Specific Plan**

Thank you Mayor Cavanaugh and council members for listening to my comments this morning at your session on the above matter. I support the City's effort to make affordable housing available and believe that Moraga Canyon is a suitable place for such development.

I applaud the City of Piedmont, staff, and council, for taking the State's affordable housing requirement seriously.

I can see that housing could be 'made to fit' in the allotted space but careful planning and weighting of options can *make a good plan a great plan*. To that end, the planning is at an early enough stage and has the flexibility to re-imagine the space and not just work around existing infrastructure.

My main question: Can Moraga Avenue be moved to the south? (see sketch below)

Regardless of whether housing or recreational facilities are placed in the current "park" (I use that term loosely) the simple act of scooting the road to the south would mean that virtually *nobody*, no adults, no kids, no dogs, would need to cross this very busy road to access facilities.

On the other hand, crossing roads is a deadly risk; it's just a matter of time before there is a serious accident. Especially at the average speeds we see on the road and I don't see that changing much.

Having the road "out of the way" would mean that no pedestrian crossing (or overpass as shown in the previous EIR) would be necessary to access the facilities and walkway toward town. It would also mean a far more tranquil experience for those using these spaces. I encourage you all to think about realigning the road and don't just look at maps but go out and walk the site and *imagine* it!

Other comments:

Corp Yard: The existing corporation yard is featured in all four scenarios in pretty much the same size. I have a pretty good idea what we need to hold a soccer game but I am not familiar with the needs and constraints of the existing corporation yard. Did the City ask the public works staff what their minimum space requirements are or should be? Can a smaller yard be built elsewhere within the Canyon, or must it remain at the current size? Or could the City acquire space elsewhere for a Corporation yard which would free up space within the study area? For instance can some of the vehicle storage be shifted to another parking area, such as a gas station or could the city acquire other (more urban) lot? I understand the City needs space

to support city vehicles, principally DPW trucks, but the question is: does it need to sit on this highly desirable property and how much space is really needed?

Storm Drain: The study area is [obviously] a canyon which has been filled with soil. I have seen some storm drain manholes in the middle of the property so I wonder about the specifications of this drainage (how big; how deep?) It appears that the watershed is substantial and discharges to a storage pond on cemetery property. My question is whether the apartment buildings shown in Option 1 or other facilities shown in Options 2 and 3 can be built atop the pipeline as-is? Or whether there would need to be extensive (and expensive) work to the drain to allow construction?

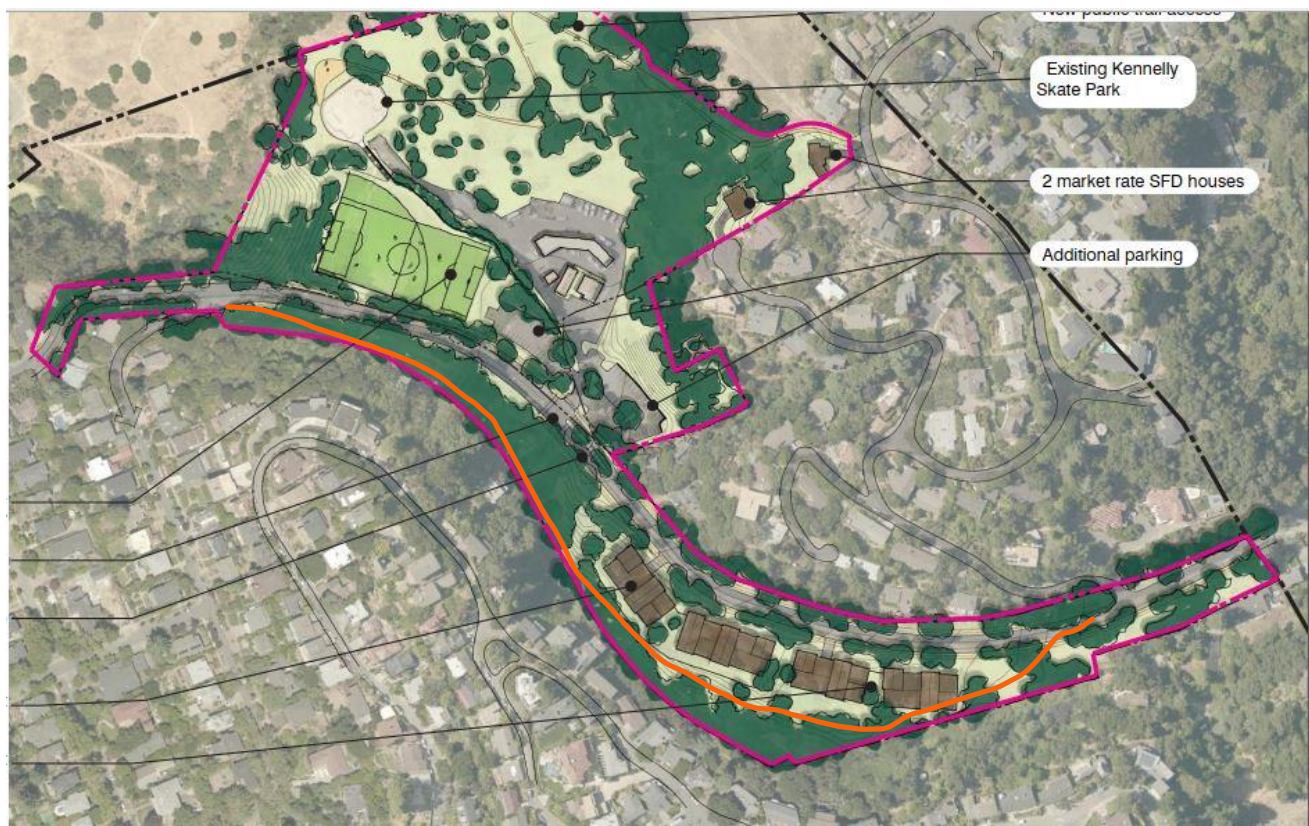
Skate Park: It should be relocated to a more central space within the city. The current location always felt forced and I know most skaters are too young to drive as it is not close enough to home for most kids to ride or skate to. I am a big supporter of skate, BMX and pump tracks (I helped build one in Joaquin Miller Park) but think they need to be centrally located and within walking or biking distance of users. They typically have a small footprint (like 3 pickle ball courts!) and though space is at a premium, I'm sure we can find room at an existing park to build a new skate facility.

Housing Mix: I think most of us have been thinking that we need to build the bare minimum of units required by the state. But it sounds as if the City allows more than the minimum of 72 units of market rate housing, the development could generate more profit and hence more money coming back to the City. How many more units could be added without the development becoming something completely out of scale with the area? I would encourage you to leave the door open to more units and run some scenarios once an option is selected.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Gandesbery



Note: New alignment is in orange. New buildings shown here would shift north. A small portion of Moraga Ave. would be retained as a driveway for the two existing residences that are adjacent to rock hill parking lot.