

October 29th, 2024

Attn:

Nicholas Polsk, Planning Commission Chair
Alexis Mapel, Planning Commission Vice Chair
Ben Helber, Planning Commissioner
Brenda Luster, Planning Commissioner
Eric Lentell, Planning Commissioner
Graham Thiel, Planning Commissioner
Marcus Bode, Planning Commissioner

Brian Horn, Principal Planner
Afshan Hamid, Planning Director.
Scott Mitnick, Town Manager

The Housing Action Coalition (HAC) is pleased to endorse Outdo Country Club Drive LLC and Form4 Architectures Inc's Moraga project at 1600 School St. After a detailed presentation, HAC's Project Review Committee has determined this project meets our high standards in addressing the regional housing shortage, affordability, and displacement crisis.

We review projects with eight criteria in mind: land use, affordability, density, parking/alternative transportation, urban design, environmental features, community benefits, and community input.

Our committee was particularly impressed with the project for its excellent land-use in an area that is lacking in multi-family housing. The project will add 66 new homes to a low density area of residential housing near small commercial corridors and outdoor space. Five of the new homes have been reserved as below market-rate housing. Additionally, the project is 49 ft. in height, which exceeds 45 ft. height limit within the surrounding area and town. The project will also retain some existing commercial space, maintaining the mixed use character of the area.

The committee also gave high marks to the project's urban design. The project design blends well into the surrounding area utilizing nearby greenery, trails, and a new courtyard to match the neighborhood character, while bringing new life to the area. The project includes a large bike room on the north side with a dedicated building entrance/canopy that opens directly to the public trail path, encouraging green transportation, outdoor recreation, and well-designed resident access. The project team has also included a living sidewalk to invite a positive pedestrian experience of the building. This will provide access to paths, landscaped areas, and greenery in order to activate a social environment for both residents and neighbors.

The committee commends the project team on going through numerous rounds of community input – from multiple meetings with the Planning Department over the past two years to holding a public information session. From this input, the project team reduced the building height and redesigned the roof

shape, entry plaza, and living sidewalk in order to more accurately capture what the public wants to see in their neighborhood. The improved massing and building façade will create a friendly building that promotes a more inviting streetscape.

Overall, we are proud to support this project. With its creative land use, impressive urban design, and commitment to receiving and incorporating community input, 1600 School St. in Moraga is an example of the type of housing project that the region desperately needs.

Sincerely,



Corey Smith, *Executive Director*