



PO Box 1785
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

Morgan Hill, November 2010

Dear Editor:

Kudos to Mel and Char Perreir for their thoughtful and humorous letter regarding the City's plans to annex 760 acres of our greenbelt in the southeast of Morgan Hill.

The City's reasoning behind the annexation and development of these fertile county lands are speculative and premature. Most of the proposed 'projects' are vague ideas and not concrete development proposals that can be properly evaluated under the CEQA process. Given this, how can an accurate fiscal analysis be done? How do we know what it will cost the City (and ultimately, us, the taxpayer) to expand and maintain the necessary infrastructure and emergency services into this area when we have no idea what we are building?

And what of High Speed Rail? Currently the proposed East 101 alignment would run through this 'Southeast Quadrant' area, right in front of the proposed private high school and through other lands slated to be developed under the City's proposal. Why are we pursuing this project when there is a possibility that High Speed Rail will cut through all this?

Should the City be allowed to annex these lands which currently serve as our southeast greenbelt on the valley floor, they could rezone them for absolutely any use. So, it is difficult to know what will become of this area which plays a major part in the rural feel of Morgan Hill - something so many residents cherish.

The City claims that they are developing this area to help preserve our greenbelt. What needs pointing out here is that of the approximately existing 1300 acres, the City only plans to preserve less than 270 of it as 'permanent' greenbelt.

Unfortunately, this major development project is not on most people's radar. The upcoming General Plan review process would be a logical place to start getting community-wide input on the proposed changes to our city's landscape. The City has actively solicited public input in its 117 acre redevelopment of the downtown for over 7 years now, but has done almost nothing to let the general public know about its plans to allow development more than 6 times that amount in our greenbelt. Point in case, two public meetings - one for the current downtown redevelopment project and one regarding this project - are both scheduled for November 16 at 7 p.m. So, yes, Obi-Wan (Commissioners of LAFCO who ultimately get to decide whether to allow the City to annex this area) you may be our only hope.

Marieke Ruys
Thrive! Morgan Hill
thrivemorganhill.org