

Shape Our Fremont

Where Fremont residents can learn about shaping proposed housing developments...

Changing Course

Congratulations to Fremont's new mayor Lily Mei!

Condolences to Mayor Mei who will have to try to change the course of this heavy-laden ship that was steered towards rampant housing growth by our previous mayor.

Of the over 6,600 housing units approved in the last four years, just over 400 have been built. That means we will be seeing the impact of the remaining 6,200 units even if no more developments are approved. Traffic, parking, and school overcrowding will get worse before they get better.

How We Can Help

Let's start afresh trying to improve Fremont now that we have a City Council that has pledged to listen. Let's help by submitting creative solutions to our housing and infrastructure problems.

There's talk of holding Town Hall meetings where residents could comment on issues regarding life in Fremont. Attend the meetings and speak out.

The latest topic on Open City Hall on the City's website asks how you would prioritize project funding for the Capital Improvement Plan Update. Submit your opinions.

Planning Commission

There will be two new Planning Commissioners come January. Hopefully, with this new City Council, the Planning Commissioners will feel confident that their opinions are being heard.

We have seen a shift away from development applications that require City Council's subjective approval and towards projects that follow the regulations so they will only need Planning Commission's objective approval of a Design Review Permit (DRP).

So, it is important that Planning Commissioners delve into the details, ask questions, and make recommendations to improve projects. They should no longer have to worry that the City Council will just override their rulings or ignore their recommendations.

Strengthening Rules

Our zoning rules need review. If DRP's are to become common, then the rules need to reflect the shift in the development policy of the City Council. Directions to Staff need to be clear and followed-up.

City guidelines need to be strengthened so that they are required rather than recommended. The General Plan's Community Character and Landscape Place Type elements need to be enforced. Subjective terms like "superior design" and "in character" need to be removed from the City ordinances.

Planned District zoning should not be allowed to merely get around regulations or substitute for General Plan Amendments. The ordinances defining Planned Districts should be reviewed and be more strictly defined.

Other Suggestions

§ Revise the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay boundaries from an arbitrary one-half-mile circle around a transit center to only those sections of the circle where urban development makes sense considering the existing neighborhoods and distance to shops.

§ Plan for use of Traffic Impact fees at the time of a development's approval and not wait until after the foreseen problems arise.

§ Revoke the policy that if a nearby intersection is already bad, a development may not be denied for traffic reasons.

§ Improve public transportation along all Urban Corridors with shuttles or subsidized bus service.

§ Create public parking lots around the border of the Downtown Center area for the benefit of both residents from the outlying Fremont neighborhoods and visitors from out of town.

§ Require individual water meters for each dwelling unit in new multi-family housing to encourage and enforce water conservation.

§ Allow public rebuttal to developers' rebuttal at Planning Commission meetings.

We all need to continue being active and aware of what is happening to Fremont! We all have a stake in our city's future course.

Find information about all proposed housing developments in Fremont at www.ShapeOurFremont.com

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Walnut Residences Approved

The Walnut Residences project was given final approval at the December 6th City Council meeting with Mayor Harrison, Vice Mayor Jones, and Councilmember Chan in favor and Councilmember Mei and Councilmember Bacon opposed.

At the November 15th hearing, the City Council voted to decrease the unit count to 632, lower both parking structures, and have some solar panels be installed before occupancy.

At the December 6th hearing, several speakers argued that there were no published plans showing those changes before the vote. The developer said they had designed the new parking structures with one level removed and that they were now no higher than the roof of the four-story residence buildings. They were still working on how to remove 38 units from the plan and the location of solar panels. Community Development Director Schwob said that revised plans would be posted online.

There may be a referendum to overturn this approval. Referendum forms must be submitted within 30 days. Watch for signature collectors and add you name.