

Shape Our Fremont

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

City Wants Added Density in Quarry Lakes Development

Fremont is reviewing a developer's proposal to build 132 multi-story dwelling units on the 4.5-acre site of the old City of Fremont Corporation Yard at Paseo Padre Parkway and Sequoia Road.

The Granite Ridge project will have 76 apartments in a four-story building on Paseo Padre, and 56 townhouses in three-story buildings on the remainder of the property. If approved, the development will be taller and denser than anything else in the neighborhood.

City Pushes for More

According to the developer, the original proposal was for 94 townhouses, but the city staff asked that a significant number of apartments be placed on the site to increase the overall density to the maximum. The current plans call for a net density of about 29 dwelling units per acre (du/ac), which is at the upper end of the 14.6 to 29.9 du/ac range specified for this parcel in the Fremont General Plan.

Parking for the apartments will be uncovered spaces on the site, although some of the spaces may have carports. Parking for the townhouses will be two-car garages on the first floor of each townhouse. Some of those garages will be side-by-side configurations, and others will be end-to-end (tandem) arrangements. Vehicle access to the development will include one driveway off Paseo Padre, and two driveways off Sequoia.

The developer indicated that the City of Fremont had already performed an environmental review and clean-up of the site. An existing City of Fremont Landmark Tree will be preserved and incorporated into the landscaping, and more than 80 new trees will be planted. A sound wall will enclose the south end of the site adjacent to the railroad tracks, and a protective fence will run along the east side adjacent to a former gravel quarry pit.



Residents Push Back

At a recent community outreach meeting, several people noted that parking in the surrounding area was already a problem, and that adding 132 more dwellings was just going to force more vehicles onto the streets. The city's requirement for the developer to provide only 1-1/2 parking spaces per apartment was felt to be unrealistically low and would contribute to the problem.

Other concerns from residents involve the proposed height and architecture of the development, which differ sharply from the lower, more relaxed style of the surrounding neighborhoods. The boxy four-story apartment building will crowd close to the sidewalk along Paseo Padre, and the long row of three-story townhouses along Sequoia will rise straight up like some of the urban townhouse developments proposed on Fremont Boulevard.

The adjacent abandoned gravel pit with its steep, unsupported sides is another concern. According to a geotechnical report, there are areas of "slope instability" along the edge of the pit that extend up to 55 feet into the development site. Although the report indicates that none of the housing units are within the affected area, other portions of the site may be "susceptible to earthquake-induced landslide". The Hayward Earthquake Fault is less than a mile away.

And finally, some residents are upset to find that the apartments will all be one- and two-bedroom "luxury" units designed to rent at the high end, rather than more modest units in the low/medium range that we need in Fremont.

Time for Comments is Now

The proposal is expected to be ready for final review in the late-Summer or early-Fall. Because this project will conform to the current zoning for the property and is not a Planned District, the Planning Commission will be the approving body, not the City Council. Only if the Planning Commission decision is appealed would the project go to the City Council. Now is the time for residents to speak up.

To express your comments and concerns, send an email to the assigned City Staff Project Planner Bill Roth at broth@fremont.gov

To learn more about all the proposed housing developments in Fremont, go to www.ShapeOurFremont.com