

Shape Our Fremont

Maximums and Minimums -- There's a Range of Possibilities

Residential developments are subject to limits on density, lot size, setbacks, parking, and other factors. In many cases there are ranges of acceptable values, and not every development has to be built at the maximum.

Density

Density is the allowable number of dwelling units per net acre. The General Plan specifies four ranges of residential density. Any density within each range is allowable, subject to zoning standards and other considerations.

Residential developments in the City Center, Town Centers, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) areas, Historical areas, and Hillside areas may have additional density ranges.

Lot Dimensions

Zoning standards define the minimum lot size for a particular development. For example, single-family R-1-6 zoning requires all lots to be at least 6,000 square feet. R-1-8 zoning requires a minimum lot size of 8,000 square feet, and so on. If a developer proposes to build a Planned District instead of following the R-1 zoning standards, the lot sizes may vary, but the minimum must be at least 4,000 square feet. There are no maximum lot size standards.

Limits on lots widths, lot depths, and setbacks depend on zoning and are usually minimums, with no maximums. Variations may be allowed with Planned District zoning.

Parking

The amount of parking required for residential developments depends on the zoning and the number of bedrooms in each dwelling. In single-family R-1 zoning, a minimum of two covered parking spaces on the site (usually in a garage) are required for each unit with two to four bedrooms, and a minimum of three covered spaces for each unit with five or more bedrooms. There is no minimum for guest parking -- it is assumed guests will park on the street.

In multi-family R-3 developments, parking requirements depend on whether the property is inside or outside a TOD area. Parking requirements in TOD areas have both minimum and maximum limits and the range is lower to encourage walking and the use of public transportation.

Other Factors

Street widths within a residential development can vary -- public streets must be wider than private streets. A minimum amount of open space is required for each dwelling in single-family residential developments, while multi-family developments require a much smaller amount of open space for each dwelling, but compensate for it with a common open space to be shared by all. Building construction standards are set by the State of California and contain maximums, minimums, and allowable range of variations.

It's All In The Findings

All proposed developments are reviewed by the City of Fremont Planning Department staff. If staff determines that a development complies with the General Plan land use designation and meets all the applicable zoning standards, it is forwarded to the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission as is.

However, if a development proposal is requesting changes and exceptions to the General Plan or zoning standards, staff must work with the developer to justify the variations. Common requests are General Plan Amendments to change the land use designation for a specific property, and zoning changes from one type of zoning to another -- for example, changing from straight R-1 zoning to Planned District zoning in order to vary zoning standards.

The reason that a change or exception is, or is not, justified is known as a "finding". Staff presents these findings in writing in their Staff Report, and the Planning Commission or City Council reviews them to determine if they agree. The general public may express their agreement or disagreement with the findings at any time in the review process.

For example, a developer who wants to build at the upper end of the allowable density range for a piece of property may propose to build all the houses on very small lots by changing the zoning to a Small Lot Planned District. Although that may be justified under the zoning standards, it may not be justified if the houses are too large for the lots, or if the resulting project would conflict with the community character of the area or cause other problems.

The important point is that many factors in a residential development have ranges of acceptability. Not every development has to be built at the maximum, and not every change and exception has to be approved.

All residents are encouraged to learn about new residential developments in their area and to express their questions, comments, and concerns to the assigned staff planner.

For more information about new residential developments in Fremont, go to **www.ShapeOurFremont.com**