

Shape Our Fremont

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



More Hillside Homes Along Mission Boulevard?

One of the last open hillside properties along Mission Boulevard may be bulldozed into history to make way for the proposed Hobbs Residential development. Horse stables will give way to houses, and the view of the hills will disappear behind a concrete sound wall.

Robeson Homes has submitted plans to build 56 new single-family, two-story houses on a 9-acre parcel along the east side of Mission Boulevard, south of Palm Avenue. Most of the homes and all of the horse stables will be demolished. Many of the trees will be removed. An elevated sound wall will be constructed along the Mission Boulevard frontage.

The historic 1896 Rodrigues farmhouse at 41948 Mission will be restored and sold separately. Its lot will be reduced in size, and the tankhouse will be renovated for other uses. Further south, the property at 42054 Mission is not part of the project and it will be surrounded on three sides by the new development.

Pros and Cons

The proposed development will have a density of 6.3 dwelling units per acre (du/ac), which is above the midpoint of the General Plan residential low density range of 2.3 du/ac to 8.7 du/ac for the property. Although the density is the same as the Dias development immediately to the south, some critics point out that the broad and open site deserves a lower density.

The developer is also proposing to make this a planned district, which allows variations in lot sizes and other standards. For example, 19 of the houses closest to Mission Boulevard, or about one-third of the total number, will be on lots as small as 4,000 to 5,000 square feet. Overall, the average lot size will be consistent with the R-1-6 baseline, but the large number of very small lots seems disproportionate for the site.

To add to the problem, many of the small lots will be only 40 feet wide, which means the houses themselves will be narrow and deep, extending nearly all the way to the rear of the property. For the houses that back on Mission Boulevard, that will produce a closely spaced wall of second-story rooflines that are higher than the sound wall. This portion of Mission Boulevard is designated as a

scenic route in the Fremont General Plan, and some people say the lot sizes and layout of the houses should be altered to open up the views of the hills beyond.

Traffic is another issue. Several nearby residents who already have to deal with the daily traffic snarls on Mission Boulevard point out that the motorists exiting from both the Hobbs and the Dias developments will have to go north on Mission and then make a U-turn at Palm Avenue before they can go south. Likewise, motorists who need to enter the site from southbound Mission will have to drive under I-680 and make a U-turn at Mission Pass Road before heading back north. Residents contend this awkward situation will cause further traffic backups and say the City's traffic analysis doesn't adequately address or resolve the traffic problems.

What's the Answer?

So what do all these numbers mean, and what's the best answer to resolve all the pros and cons? The Fremont Planning Department and the Planning Commission will make their recommendations, and the City Council will make the final decision.

Before that happens, the residents of Fremont have the opportunity to express their thoughts, concerns, objections, and suggestions about what would be best for the site. Would this be a better development if there were fewer houses? Would it improve the open look and feel if the lots were larger, and the spaces between the houses were greater? Should the sound wall be lower to give better views of the hills, or should there be any sound wall at all? Does the traffic problem need a better solution?

And finally, at a time when Fremont is struggling to provide more affordable starter houses for first-time buyers, should we be approving any more above-market-rate housing at all?

To comment, send emails to Bill Roth, Planning Department, at broth@fremont.gov not later than January 4.

The Planning Commission hearing on the Hobbs Residential development is scheduled for Thursday, January 12, at 7 p.m.

Find information about all proposed housing developments in Fremont at [**www.ShapeOurFremont.com**](http://www.ShapeOurFremont.com)