

Shape Our Fremont

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

Residents Say "Not so Fast!"

In a recent City survey of Fremont residents, almost half of those interviewed expressed serious concerns about the rate of growth and development in the city. It was a big change in attitude from the last survey in 2013, and critics say it shows a need for Fremont to slow down development activities and start dealing with the problems that have been created.

Asking the Residents

A public opinion research firm conducted a telephone survey of 600 residents between February 18 and March 2 of this year. This was the same firm that conducted similar surveys in 2012 and 2013. Interviewers read questions about various topics relating to life and issues in Fremont, and residents were asked to choose from a list of answers for each question.

While it may seem that interviewing only 600 out of 226,500 residents in Fremont was not sufficient, the firm conducting the survey stated that statistically it provided a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percent and a 95 percent confidence level, which was considered to be accurate and acceptable.

Top Concerns

According to the survey, the top three concerns for Fremont residents were the cost of housing, traffic congestion, and the rate of growth and development, in that order.

The percentage of people who identified the cost of housing as being extremely serious or very serious jumped from 56 percent in the 2013 survey to 71 percent in 2016. That figure was similar to San Francisco, where 79 percent of the residents felt it was a serious concern, and Oakland, where 81 percent felt that way.

Concerns about traffic congestion on highways and freeways rose from 56 percent in 2013 to 65 percent in 2016. Those who felt traffic congestion on local streets was a top concern took an even bigger jump from 37 percent in 2013 to 57 percent in 2016.

The most significant change was the increase in the number of people who felt too much growth and development was a major concern. Responses to that question soared from 18 percent in 2013 to 47 percent in 2016, with the majority responding the rate of growth and development were "much too fast".

Rating the City

When asked about specific city services -- such as fire, police, and parks -- most residents responded positively. However, the answers to broader questions about the city government revealed more mixed feelings.

In response to the question "How would you rate the overall job being done by Fremont city government in providing services to the City's residents?," only about half responded excellent

or good, while the other half responded fair or poor. And when asked "How confident are you that Fremont City government operates in a way that is open and accountable to the public?," only about a third of the residents said they were extremely or very confident.

Although City leaders have been touting their work on the new Downtown Fremont and Warm Springs Innovation District projects, only half of the people surveyed were even familiar with them. When asked if they thought those projects would improve the local quality of life, responses ranged from people who strongly agreed to an equal number who totally disagreed, with the rest somewhere in the middle or giving no answer. This lackluster response left the City wondering how to bolster the image of these two key development efforts.

There were no questions on the survey about specific housing developments, schools, water supplies, parking, community character, historic preservation, public art, or building heights and sizes.

Now it's Your Turn

At the Fremont City Council meeting on April 5, the council accepted the results of the survey without providing any direction for action. That means it's your turn to follow up on specific concerns with specific requests.

To express your concerns about the survey in general, or about issues that affect the overall quality of life in Fremont, contact Deputy City Manager Karena Shackelford at kshackelford@fremont.gov

To comment on the rate of growth and development in general, or about issues relating to the Warm Springs Innovation District and Downtown Fremont developments, contact Community Development Director Jeff Schwob at jschwob@fremont.gov

To comment on other proposed housing developments, contact the staff planner assigned to each project. See more contact information at [**www.ShapeOurFremont.com**](http://www.ShapeOurFremont.com)