

# Shape Our Fremont

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

## Not JUST In Your Back Yard

Why should all Fremont residents be concerned with the new housing being built throughout the city - not just what is going in nearby? How will the density, design, and location of the new developments affect your lives? And what can you do to shape them?

### City Character

The look and feel of Fremont is changing - it is not just going to be "strategically urban" in the Downtown Center and around the Warm Springs BART station - it is also being urbanized near the historic town centers of Centerville, Irvington, Niles and Mission San Jose. All this is happening despite the adoption of the Community Character Element of the General Plan that is meant to focus "on the ways in which Fremont's buildings, streets, and open spaces work together to define the City's sense of place." and "to strengthen its historic town centers".

Most of the new housing is large three-story townhouses which cost just as much as traditional single-family houses. Little is being built that can be afforded by those of moderate income. When your children start out on their own, will there be a place for them in their hometown?

### Stretching the Rules

When one developer is allowed an exception from the current zoning regulations, the next developer can claim the same right. Buildings get to be just a bit taller. A three-story house is allowed because it is "two-story in character". Buildings are set right at the street. Density limits are nudged upwards.

By stopping new rules from creeping into the regulations, you may help shape the next development that's built right in your back yard.

### Schools

If your local elementary school is not already overcrowded, it soon will be. When developments are built in areas whose schools are already full, the new students are sent to other schools around Fremont. The single elementary school being built in Warm Springs will not relieve the overcrowding of the existing schools from all the other housing units being built around the city.

By getting each new development to have less than the maximum number of housing units allowed, you may help retain the quality of Fremont schools.

### Traffic and Parking

Many more cars will be travelling Fremont streets. When you drive your kids to school or shop or go to the

doctor, you'll be in heavier traffic. The streets will deteriorate at a faster rate. Even though Fremont is promoting its pedestrian-friendly Downtown Center, you need a car to get there. And where will you park?

The "open space" provided for the new residents tends to be tiny spots crammed into unusable corners. Those residents will most likely join everyone else at Central Park where parking is already impossible on the weekends.

### Local Businesses

Developers can ask the City to change the land use designation of a single parcel and not just for a large area with a Master Plan. Commercial areas are being turned residential. The convenient shopping center nearby could become nothing but housing thus forcing you to drive elsewhere for services.

Will it become too difficult for your favorite small shops to find affordable spaces and force them to close and leave folk out of work and you with fewer choices?

### Water

The Alameda County Water District (ACWD) has planned ahead for the water use of the proposed developments - but they planned for it before this historic drought hit. New developments must now have water-efficient fixtures and the increase from personal use may well be minimal in the long run. However, establishing landscaping in the development - the trees, "open spaces" and around each house - will take a lot of water right now.

The city often allows mature trees to be cut down and replaced by new trees that are in locations more convenient to the developer. They say they'll grow up just as tall very quickly - but not without a lot of water they won't.

### Voice Your Concerns

Attend developers' Community Courtesy Meetings and express your views early on in the design process.

Shape Our Fremont has no Comments section because we feel that it is important that you contact the City of Fremont directly with your concerns. The City does not necessarily read Letters to the Editor or blog entries.

Send your comments to the City of Fremont at [cof@fremont.gov](mailto:cof@fremont.gov) or find other addresses on the Contacts page of [www.ShapeOurFremont.com](http://www.ShapeOurFremont.com).

Complaining after the buildings go up won't help shape Fremont. And don't give into the belief that the City won't listen to you anyway. If you don't try at all, then the City really won't have listened to you.