

# Shape Our Fremont

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



## Is Fremont Creating Parking Problems?

The topic of how Fremont may be creating parking problems came up during the Planning Commission meeting on January 28. One item on the agenda was a proposal to change the Fremont Municipal Code to allow tandem parking or mechanized stacked parking for up to 30 percent of the required spaces in all new developments.

Tandem parking involves parking two vehicles in a single stall with one behind the other. It requires moving the outer vehicle out of the way to let the inner vehicle enter or exit. Mechanized stacked parking involves parking two vehicles in a single stall with one above the other. It requires a computer-controlled lift system to shuttle vehicles into place, then retrieve them as requested by the owners. Both types of parking can be inconvenient and time-consuming to use.

In response to the proposal, one resident noted that both tandem and mechanized stacked parking have significant drawbacks and will cause residents to park on nearby streets. One commissioner agreed and commented that the inner space in tandem parking garages was often used for storage. Another commissioner wondered if the proposal might actually encourage

these types of parking. Staff countered that they could not meet their density goals for new developments without using tandem or mechanized parking. After consideration, the commission recommended approval of up to 30 percent tandem or mechanized parking for multi-family developments, but not for single-family developments. The code change needs to be reviewed by the City Council, and public comments are welcome.

### Problems in the Codes

Some people say there are other places where regulations in the current Fremont Municipal Codes are creating parking problems.

For example, the minimum number of parking spaces required for multi-family housing (apartments, condominiums, and townhouses) not within a transit oriented development (TOD) district is only 1.0 space per unit for residents in one-bedroom units -- even if those units are occupied by working couples with two vehicles. Parking for guests is 0.5 spaces per unit. Although some developers choose to offer more parking, others provide only the minimum required. The result is often an

overflow of vehicles into the surrounding neighborhood.

The situation is worse for multi-family housing within a TOD, where parking is restricted to no more than 1.5 spaces per unit for residents, no matter how many bedrooms and how many people are in each unit. Parking for guests is no more than 0.25 spaces per unit. The City established the maximum limits in TODs to encourage residents to walk or use public transportation instead of driving. Critics contend people will still own vehicles, and the restrictions just mean they will have to be parked elsewhere.

As more and more parking is forced onto the adjacent streets and further away from individual residences, a host of other problems develop. Unattended vehicles are more prone to theft, vandalism, and accidental damage. Car alarms are less likely to draw responses from the owners who are far away and may not hear them. In one neighborhood, a resident complained the streets were not swept adequately because so many cars line the curbs. Enforcement of parking violations within a development is left to the homeowners association, not the police department, making it difficult to resolve problems.

## Time to Get Real

Many people feel the City's goal of maximizing housing density by minimizing parking spaces hurts the quality of life for residents in new development as well as those in the surrounding neighborhoods. They say that growth should not ignore the need to have good places to live.

Critics also say the City's goal of getting people to walk or use public transportation instead of driving is unrealistic. At a meeting for the

controversial Walnut Residences apartment project near the Fremont BART station, one nearby resident summed it up by saying "I take BART to work, but there are other places I want to go that aren't easily accessible by bus or on foot. I need a car."

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To express your comments or concerns about the pending code change to allow up to 30 percent tandem or mechanized stacked parking in new developments, contact Kristie Wheeler by emailing [kwheeler@fremont.gov](mailto:kwheeler@fremont.gov) or speak at

the City Council meeting on Feb. 16, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

To express your comments or concerns about the City's goal to get people to walk or use public transportation instead of driving personal vehicles, contact Jeff Schwob by emailing [jschwob@fremont.gov](mailto:jschwob@fremont.gov)

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To learn more about residential developments in Fremont, go to [\*\*www.ShapeOurFremont.com\*\*](http://www.ShapeOurFremont.com)