

Shape Our Fremont

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

Planning News from Fremont and Around the Bay

With a new year approaching, several proposed housing developments are being finalized. At the same time, opposition over a number of issues is increasing. Here are some news items from Fremont and elsewhere.

The Big One in Fremont

The Walnut Residences proposal to build a multi-story apartment complex at the corner of Walnut Avenue and Guardino Drive generated a lot of negative feelings from local residents who felt the project was too big, too tall, and didn't have enough parking. During the City Council Study Session on November 17, the developer presented a new plan to reduce the number of units from 882 to 670, lower the building heights from 4- and 5-stories to 3- and 4-stories, and increase the parking from 1.6 spaces to 1.7 spaces per unit.

That was not good enough for many people, who lined up to speak against the project. They asked the Council to consider the character of the surrounding neighborhood and demanded further changes in the height, density, and parking. Fremont's maximum limit of only 1.75 parking spaces per unit was felt to be unrealistic for this project, especially because over half of the apartments will have 2 or 3 bedrooms. Several councilmembers also had concerns over parking and felt it should be increased.

The purpose of the Study Session was to get input during the design phase, and no decision to approve or deny the project was made. Residents may continue to email their comments and concerns about the Walnut Residences project to City Staff Project Planner Bill Roth at broth@fremont.gov.

... and More in Fremont

Two developments are proposed for the empty field off Stevenson Place near Stevenson Boulevard and Mission Boulevard. The General Plan Land Use Designations of the two parcels were changed to Medium Density Residential in 2014.

Robson Homes proposes to build 46 3-story townhouses on the parcel near where Stevenson Place intersects with Stevenson Boulevard -- 12 will be detached standalone units and 34 will be paired in 17 duet buildings. Resident parking will be in garages; most guest parking will be on the street.

MidPen Housing Corporation has submitted plans for an 80-unit affordable housing apartment complex on the parcel adjacent to the railroad. It will have both 3- and 4-story buildings with a mix of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units. Resident parking will be in uncovered spaces on the site; guest parking will be both on the site and on the street. This project is partially funded by in-lieu fees collected from other new housing developments in Fremont.

Menlo Park

Like many other Bay Area cities, Menlo Park is struggling to provide affordable housing in an area where the median monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$3,700. To help address the problem,

the city has been partnering with private companies and non-profit developers to add below-market-rate housing units in what are being called "mixed-income" apartment developments.

One recent example is when Facebook, which has a business campus in Menlo Park, worked with the city and a developer to add 15 below-market units to the 22 below-market units that were already planned for a nearby apartment project. (As a comparison, the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in San Francisco is \$4,950, in San Jose it's \$2,500, and in Oakland it's \$2,212).

Walnut Creek

An all-too-familiar scenario is playing out in Walnut Creek as local residents are protesting a developer's plan to build 53 single-family homes at a density of about 10 homes per acre on land adjacent to a semi-rural residential area where the average density is only about 1-2 homes per acre. One opponent said "We're not opposed to development, but we want development that fits the area".

The conflict between maximizing new housing density and maintaining existing community character is an ongoing issue in many cities throughout the Bay Area.

Danville

Danville is proud of its small-town character. To protect that character, the City Council recently rejected a proposal to build a 3-story, 150-unit apartment building near Interstate 680. "I do not want to see this building in Danville under any circumstances," commented Councilman Newell Arnerich. "It's an urban solution, and this is not an urban environment."

Councilman Robert Storer went on to tell representatives of the developer, "With all due respect, I don't think you're listening to what the town wants."

For more information about residential developments, related issues, and ways you can make your voice heard, go to **www.ShapeOurFremont.com**