

Shape Our Fremont

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

Dwelling Units

Allowable housing density in Fremont is defined as dwelling units per net acre. However, not all dwelling units are the same.

Each of the following is a single unit:

- § A 400 sq. ft. studio apartment
- § A 1,000 sq. ft. two-bedroom condominium flat
- § A 2,000 sq. ft. three-story four-bedroom townhouse
- § A 3,000 sq. ft. two-story four-bedroom single-family house with a detached garage that has a studio apartment above it for a total of five bedrooms

The unit count of a proposed development does not reflect the number of bedrooms, the massing, the height of the buildings, or anything about how the project as a whole would fit with the Community Character.

Townhouses

A townhouse style building can have individual three-story units or it can have what are called stacked flats, which are two units with one unit's living space on each upper floor and both units' garages on the ground level. Two units can take up the same ground space as one.

Many of the three-story townhouses have a bedroom on the ground level with the garage. Developers claim those bedrooms make the unit ADA accessible. However, there is no access to the living space on the second floor.

Condominium Flats and Apartments

The square footage of units in a building of condominium flats or apartments will determine the size of the building rather than the dwelling unit count. The level of amenities, such as pools or fitness centers, also affects how the project appears. To fit larger units with luxury amenities on the parcel, developers often build five-story buildings that have little setback from the street.

Single-Family Houses

The proliferation of "mega mansions" around Fremont, and the fight against them, illustrates the differences in single-family house units. A single-family house can be a one-story house taking up 40 percent of the lot, or a two-story house with a total square footage of 60 percent of the lot. It can be over 30 feet high at the street with a columned entrance (height is measured to the mid-point of the roof) even if it is one story. If there is a detached garage with a studio apartment above it, that living space is considered as part of the single-family housing unit. A small cottage or bungalow is considered one unit and so is a six-bedroom mansion.

Layout and Design

The overall layout of a development can affect perceived density. Long straight lines of townhouses with their garages facing narrowed private streets and their "front doors" facing rear walkways is an easy way for developers to pack in units to the top of the density range. Designated Open Space is often a small rectangular area off in the corner of a project on land that is restricted from building use.

Past multi-family developments around Fremont placed buildings at various angles to curving private streets and had multiple Open Space areas and landscaped entrances. Drive around the area

bounded by Mission Blvd., Stevenson Blvd., Guardino Dr., and Mowry Ave. (if you can fight the traffic) and compare the old and new.

Long straight lines of identical tall single-family houses with minimal side-setbacks gives a feeling of being in a multi-family development.

For any residential project, straight vertical stucco exterior walls look blocky. Clapboard siding, a varied roofline and articulated sides with inset windows or balconies can make a building look far less imposing.

Defining Density

Each of Fremont's General Plan Land Use designations has a density range. That unit-count range could be directly tied to the massing of the proposed buildings or square footage of the units. The overall intensity of a project could determine which end of the density range was acceptable.

If Fremont's density definition was revised to count bedrooms rather than units, it would better reflect the number of people who would be living on the parcel and their impact on traffic, city services, school attendance and water supply, etc.

Merely looking at the unit-count density figure of a development application is not enough to conclude that it is too intense or will have too many people living there.

Find information about proposed housing developments at **www.ShapeOurFremont.com**