

Shape Our Fremont

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

Not in Our City

Public opposition to the surge of housing developments in Fremont has generated a lot of coverage in Bay Area newspapers. Contrary to what some of the articles claim, this hasn't been a case of a few neighbors crying "not in my backyard"; it's been more of a case of residents from all over Fremont saying "not in our city".

Fremont residents are proud of our schools and parks, and our established businesses and neighborhoods. Many moved here because Fremont was a great place to live. They resent that outside government bodies and business organizations are trying to force us to accept an accelerated rate of denser housing development simply to accommodate their idea of how the Bay Area should grow.

Slow Down and Think

Recently Mayor Bill Harrison stated that Fremont is the fourth-largest city in the Bay Area and we should start acting like it. That view is consistent with the fact that he supported every housing development proposal that came before the Council -- often over the recommendations of the Planning Commission and the objections of residents. Based on unofficial figures, it appears that Harrison lost the election by a significant margin.

The presumed Mayor-Elect is Councilmember Lily Mei who favored a slower, more thoughtful, more sustainable growth rate. She was joined by Councilmember Vinnie Bacon, who also favored slower growth and who easily won his bid for re-election. Many of their supporters point out that Fremont has already approved more than enough above-market-rate housing for the near future, and they don't want to look back in five or ten years and regret what happened to "our city".

An important part of sustainable growth is the need to make sure that improvements in the infrastructure of the city keeps pace with the housing. That includes our schools, roads, parking, and recreation facilities. It also includes adequate staffing levels in our police, fire, and other departments. Some people feel our present growth rate has already caused so many infrastructure problems that we need to halt all new housing developments until we can address these critical needs.

The Time is Now

The "new" City Council will not be seated until at least December 13, and may not have a full five members until January. In the meantime, housing development proposals continue to move through the system for final decisions.

Walnut Residences is perhaps the largest and most contentious of those projects. The proposal to build an urban complex of 670 high-end apartments east of the Fremont BART station has resulted in two years of heated public opposition. After a long and tumultuous City Council meeting on November 15, the project was approved with several conditions.

The most significant condition was lowering the density to 50.1 dwelling units per net acre, which would eliminate about 39 apartment units. Other conditions required by the Council called for a reduction in the height of the parking structures, and the installation of solar panels. The problem is there were so many proposed revisions to the wording that no one can confirm exactly what the conditions were or whether the developer would agree to them.

Many residents want to overturn the decision entirely in favor of a much lower density, which they say is more appropriate to the community character of the area. An effort to gather signatures for a referendum on the matter is underway.

No matter what happens, the Walnut Residences project will require a second reading of the ordinance stating the decision and conditions of approval. This is tentatively scheduled for the City Council meeting on Tuesday, December 6. This will be a public meeting, and everyone is welcome to speak on this subject.

Get Involved

With the coming change in the City Council, residents can help shape the direction and rate that Fremont is growing. Stay informed about new development proposals, talk to your friends and neighbors about your concerns, ask questions, write letters, and speak out at meetings. We are all in this together, and we all need to take an active role in how our city grows.

For more information about all proposed housing developments in Fremont, go to [**www.ShapeOurFremont.com**](http://www.ShapeOurFremont.com)

**Public Hearing
Walnut Residences
City Council Second Reading
Tentatively Tuesday, December 6 at 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 3300 Capitol Avenue**