

# Shape Our Fremont

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

## Planning News in Fremont and Beyond

Over the past few months, several development-related activities have taken place in and around Fremont without much public attention. Here are a few of them.

### Irvington BART Study Area

On June 16, the Fremont City Council approved the establishment of an Irvington BART Station Study Area adjacent to the proposed station. Development of properties within the Station Study Area will be subject to special review and possible delay to ensure they do not conflict with the land needed for parking, access, and utility routing related to the station.

Establishing the Study Area is a key step in Fremont's push to have a portion of the Measure BB funds prioritized for design and construction of the Irvington BART station. Voters approved Measure BB to provide funding for a wide range of transportation-related projects in Alameda County, and there is concern that higher-priority projects may deplete the funds before work on the station can begin.

Meanwhile, development of properties outside the Station Study Area, but within the Irvington BART Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Area, will be subject to the normal development review process. One proposal for a five-story condominium building on the west side of Osgood Road, south of the station, has already been approved.

### Designated Neighborhoods

Fremont Planning Department staff met with several residents on June 24 to discuss concerns regarding second-story additions to existing one-story houses in their area. Some of the concerns involved issues of privacy, building setbacks, second-story massing, and solar rights.

During the meeting, staff discussed the possibility of making the area a "designated neighborhood" with special, more restrictive design standards aimed at preserving the original scale and character of the neighborhood. Fremont already has two designated neighborhoods – Glenmoor Gardens in the Centerville Area, and Mission Ranch in the Mission San Jose Area. Houses in those neighborhoods have stricter standards regarding architecture, second-story additions, building heights, setbacks, floor areas, and roof pitches.

City staff is currently reviewing the criteria for establishing designated neighborhoods, as well as the types of design standards that might apply to address specific concerns. A preliminary report is expected soon.

### Solar Rights

The concept of "solar rights" comes up when a multi-story structure is proposed to be built next to an existing single-story dwelling that is equipped with solar panels. If the proposed new

construction is going to shade the solar panels, does the affected homeowner have the right to demand full access to the Sun?

Fremont has been a strong advocate of solar energy, so it's an important issue that needs to be addressed. That's exactly what the Planning Department staff is doing right now. A report is expected later this year. Currently, there are no city or state definitions or regulations regarding solar rights.

### **Post-War Historic Review**

The Fremont Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) met on August 6 to discuss criteria for evaluating architecture and developments built in the 1945-1970 period. Fremont grew rapidly during the post-war years, and a great number of potentially historically significant structures from that era are still standing.

All structures that are 50 years old or older are eligible to receive a preliminary evaluation by city staff. If a structure is deemed to potentially have some historical architectural value, staff will ask HARB to conduct a more detailed evaluation and make a recommendation on the structure's preservation. In order to properly evaluate post-war structures in Fremont, an outside consultant was hired to prepare a document covering just that period.

A report on the results of this meeting will appear in Shape Our Fremont.

### **News in Other Cities**

According to an article in the June 17 issue of the *San Jose Mercury News*, the Pleasanton City Council "has stopped planning for housing development on the last big empty parcel in town at least until the drought ends." They "decided to suspend planning for at least two years on an environmental report on housing options for the so-called East Side Specific Plan."

On July 28, residents in Walnut Creek were upset when the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors approved construction of a six-story apartment building next to the Pleasant Hill BART station. Opponents pointed out that the project had originally been presented to the public and entitled as a four-story condominium building back in 2001 after a group of local residents had requested more for-sale units near the BART station. That project failed to move forward at the time, but residents claim the original design should have been followed with the new project to address the public concerns.

To learn more about planning issues and proposed housing developments in Fremont, go to **[www.ShapeOurFremont.com](http://www.ShapeOurFremont.com)**