

# Shape Our Fremont

## Questions About New Housing Developments

Why does Fremont allow so many new housing developments, and why are some of the developments so dense? How are residents notified about new developments, and who can they contact with questions or concerns? How does the City deal with the impacts on traffic, schools, water, and other concerns? Who makes the final decisions on developments, and how can residents affect those decisions?

These are all good questions. Here are some answers to provide a general overview.

### Housing and Density

The Fremont General Plan defines the allowable land uses within the City. These include land designated for use as residential, commercial, industrial, public facilities, and open space. The current General Plan was adopted in December 2011 and is intended to guide developments in Fremont through 2025 or 2030.

For residential uses, the General Plan also specifies the density, as measured by the allowable number of dwelling units per net acre, or du/ac, for each site. For example, most one- and two-story, single-family houses are in the 2.3 to 8.7 du/ac range. On the other end of the scale, the density of some multi-story, multi-family apartments or condominiums can be 30.0 to 70.0 du/ac, depending on the location.

### Notification and Contacts

Shape Our Fremont maintains a website with information about all recent active, approved, and disapproved residential development proposals with details about the number of units, number of stories, amount of parking, and other issues (see [ShapeOurFremont.com](http://ShapeOurFremont.com)).

Once a proposed development is submitted to the City as a Formal Application, a large Courtesy Notice sign should be posted on the affected property. The developer may also hold one or more community meetings to present the proposal to residents and listen to comments.

For every new development, the City assigns a Planning Department staff member who will coordinate activities between the developer, city staff, and the general public. This is the best person for residents to contact with questions, comments, and concerns. The sooner in the process residents express their feelings or ask for changes, the sooner the City can respond. Planning Department contact information for each new residential development appears on the Shape Our Fremont website.

### Impacts

Most large new construction projects are subject to an Initial Study, which determines the types and severity of impacts on the environment. In some cases, a more detailed Environmental Impact Report is required. Based on the findings, the developer may be required to take certain actions to mitigate the impacts.

All new projects are also subject to City ordinances regarding the building size, as well as certain limitations, guide rules, and guidelines regarding the impacts of the project on the privacy and solar rights of adjacent properties.

And finally, the developers of all residential projects must pay the City certain fees to cover the impacts of the project on police, fire, traffic, parks, and other city services. Developers must also provide a certain amount of affordable housing or pay an in-lieu fee to the City, which can then use it to help finance affordable housing elsewhere. The City also collects impact fees for schools and water and passes them on to the school district and water district respectively.

## **Decisions**

Decisions for small residential projects that follow the General Plan and meet all the zoning requirements are made by the Zoning Administrator, who is a senior member of the Fremont Planning Department. If a project is approved, it does not go to the Planning Commission or City Council unless it is appealed.

Decisions for larger residential projects that follow the General Plan, but have some variations to the zoning requirements, are made by the Planning Commission. If a project meets the above requirements and is approved, it does not go to the City Council unless it is appealed.

Decisions for residential projects that request a General Plan Amendment, or a Master Plan, or a significant zoning change such as a Planned District are made by the City Council. These projects are first reviewed by the Planning Commission, who make a recommendation to the City Council.

All Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, and City Council meetings are open to the public. All residents within 300 feet of the proposed development site are mailed notices in advance of the meetings. The meeting dates and the specific developments on the agenda for each meeting are also announced in the *Tri-City Voice* Public Notice section. Members of the public may attend the meetings and make comments or express concerns about any development on the agenda.

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For more answers to questions regarding new housing developments, see the Process and Issues pages at **[www.ShapeOurFremont.com](http://www.ShapeOurFremont.com)**