

Shape Our Fremont

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

Walnut Residences City Council Hearing

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the Walnut Residences proposal to build 670 luxury apartments at the corner of Walnut Avenue and Guardino Drive on September 22nd. Although the City Council hearing would normally follow three or four weeks later, the City has tentatively set the City Council hearing date out to Tuesday November 15th.

This is after the November 8th election and before the newly elected City Council will be seated in mid-December. Residents are trying to get the hearing date postponed until it could be heard by the mayor and councilmembers that they elect this year.

Too Dense

Carmel Partners plans to build at a density of 53 dwelling units per net acre (du/ac). That will fill the entire 13.7-acre property with high-rise buildings and it is far more dense than the surrounding residential neighborhoods. It is also far more dense than the existing Planned District zoning which has a maximum density of 35 du/ac, which is already above the Urban Residential density minimum.

At the Planning Commission hearings, outside groups promoting high density housing near BART failed to see that these high-end apartments would primarily be leased by those from San Francisco and Silicon Valley looking for cheaper rents. It will most likely not be affordable to those currently driving in from the Central Valley and thus the project would not reduce emissions by eliminating long commutes.

Too Much Traffic

There will be 1,040 bedrooms in this complex and there could easily be 2,000 residents. That is a lot of potential traffic!

Carmel Partners was required to submit a full residential Transportation Demand Management (TDM) with its proposal. "The primary purpose of any TDM plan is to reduce the amount of vehicle traffic generated by a development by creating measures, strategies, incentives, and policies to shift residents and employees from driving alone to using other travel modes including transit, carpooling, cycling, and walking."

This TDM's traffic reduction target is 15 percent. At the Planning Commission hearing, it was brought out that merely being near BART would already reduce traffic by 15 percent compared to a development not near mass transit.

The proposed TDM lists primarily informational measures - information that already exists on the Internet. There is a measure to allow car sharing companies to use Walnut Residences parking spaces yet there is no word on increasing the number of parking spaces in the garages. The only measure that will add a cost to the project is proving a Clipper Card with up to \$40 in the welcome package for new residents.

No shuttles will be provided. They say that there must be a shared destination for shuttles to be effective. Will the target millennial renters take AC Transit buses to Pacific Commons? They say parents can create groups to walk their children to school. Since Parkmont most likely won't be their school, do they think parents will walk their kids to Gomes or Hirsch?

Too Tall

The long, solid mass of four-story buildings proposed for Walnut Residences overpowers the existing neighborhood of two- and three-story buildings. The very ends of the buildings along Litchfield and on the east side would be three stories, but the rest of the buildings will be a full four stories surrounding five- or six-level parking garages.

Too Close to the Street

The General Plan has designated Walnut Avenue between the BART tracks and Mission Boulevard as a Landscape Corridor. That is a special roadway category requiring deep setbacks, wide medians, abundant trees and landscaping, a varied development pattern, and primarily low rise buildings.

The existing buildings along this stretch of Walnut have a variation in heights and placement on the lot with large setbacks from the street to comply with these requirements. The proposed Walnut Residences buildings form a long line of tall buildings positioned too close to the street which does not comply.

Not What We Need

The Walnut Residences development is designed to be a luxury apartment complex with all 670 units renting at, or above, the market rate. Fremont already has fulfilled its housing quota of Above Moderate Income housing for the next 10-15 years.

At the current zoned density of 35 du/ac, a developer could build 440 condominium flats for Low or Moderate Income levels and fill Fremont's true housing needs.

Last Chance to Speak Out

The City Council hearing will be the final chance for the residents of Fremont to stop the Walnut Residences project. This development will impact traffic, parking, schools, and the community character of our entire town. Attend the City Council hearing and speak out!

**Tentative Date for City Council Meeting
Tuesday November 15th
Watch for any hearing date changes at
www.ShapeOurFremont.com**