

# Shape Our Fremont

## Downtown Keeps on Rising

On August 5, the Zoning Administrator will hear the latest development proposal for Fremont's rising Downtown District. The proposal, known as Bay Rock Apartments, would include a 5-story building with 248 market-rate apartment units and 5,625 square feet of commercial retail space on Capitol Avenue near Fremont Boulevard. Parking would be in a 6-story parking structure adjacent to the main building and extending into part of the parking lot now used by customers of Bill's Cafe, Falafel etc, and other businesses in Gaslight Square. The existing Fremont Bank building on the site is proposed to be demolished.

A separate proposal to build a new Fremont Bank in a 6-story commercial building at the corner of Fremont and Capitol is under review by the Planning Department and would be presented at another date.

### Downtown is Different

The Downtown District is bounded by Mowry and Walnut Avenues, and by Fremont Boulevard and Paseo Padre Parkway. According to the Fremont General Plan, the Downtown is intended to be "... a mixed-use, sustainable, pedestrian oriented destination for Fremont and the region". High-rise buildings are part of that plan. The Paragon residential complex on Walnut was one of the first projects to be built there, followed by the State Street project, which is currently nearing completion. Eventually, a new Fremont City Hall and Community Center is planned to be built in the growing Downtown.

One of the biggest differences for developments in the new Downtown District is that they are governed by a different set of design standards than other developments. Buildings can be up to 8 stories tall, and the concept of maximum density, or dwelling units per acre (du/ac), doesn't apply. For example, the proposed Bay Rock Apartments would have a net density of about 122 du/ac, compared to a maximum of 70 du/ac allowed in many Transit Oriented Development (TOD) areas around BART stations, or 50 du/ac allowed in other urban areas of the city.

The approval process for developments in the Downtown District is also different. As long as a development complies with the Downtown Community Plan and Design Guidelines, it can be approved by the Zoning Administrator, who is a Planning Department senior staff person. It would not be heard by the Planning Commission or City Council unless the Zoning Administrator's decision is appealed.

### Residents Can Speak Out

Zoning Administrator meetings are similar to those held by the Planning Commission or City Council. Residents may send emails with their comments prior to the meeting and may speak during the meeting. Speaking time is usually limited, depending on the number of speakers.

Residents may email their comments about the Bay Rock Apartments proposal to City Staff Planner David Wage at [dwage@fremont.gov](mailto:dwage@fremont.gov) or attend the Zoning Administrator meeting on Monday, August 5 at 3 p.m. in the Rancho Higuera Conference Room on the ground floor of the Fremont Development Services Center at 39550 Liberty Street.