

Shape Our Fremont

The Latest Questions And Answers About Housing

Fremont residents continue to have lots of questions about housing developments. Here are a few of the latest:

Q. Are there any big housing projects pending?

A. Yes, there are several 100-plus-unit proposals in various stages of review. Here are the three largest. The public is encouraged to send their comments, questions, concerns, and objections about any of them.

The Silicon Sage Fremont Boulevard Mixed Use Project (PLN2017-00229) proposal to build a mix of retail space and 136 residential units along Fremont Boulevard in Centerville has been delayed after an historical resource impact study determined the project would have a significant and unavoidable impact on the existing old fire station, which is potentially eligible for historical status. As a result, an Environmental Impact Review (EIR) is required. Because many residents expressed concerns about traffic problems, the EIR will also include a traffic study to determine if the traffic impacts associated with the project can be mitigated. The EIR process is expected to take about 8 months. Contact Fremont Staff Planner Steve Kowalski at skowalski@fremont.gov

Osgood II Multifamily PRP (PLN2017-00248) is another Silicon Sage project. It proposes to build 140 units -- 70 rentals and 70 condos -- in a five-story tower on Osgood Road in the Irvington BART Transit Oriented Development area. This proposal is still in the early stages of review. Contact Fremont Staff Planner Terry Wong at twong@fremont.gov

And finally, the largest housing proposal currently under review is the Fremont Hub Mixed-Use PRP (PLN2018-00004), which plans to build a six-story building in the parking lot of The Hub. It will have ground-level retail space, an underground garage, and 303 rental units on the upper floors. The site is within the City Center Urban Neighborhood area, which allows buildings up to six stories tall. This proposal is also in the early stages of review and is open for comment. Contact Fremont Staff Planner Joel Pullen at jpullen@fremont.gov

Q. Isn't contacting the Mayor and City Councilmembers directly the most effective way to express concerns about a development?

A. Yes and no. The most effective way to express concerns when a development is in the early stages of review is to contact the assigned planner in the Fremont Planning Department. The planners will have the most accurate information and are in the best position to convey public comments to the developer in order to potentially make changes.

When the project has been reviewed and is ready for presentation to the Planning Commission and/or City Council, the public can also contact the Planning Commissioners and the Mayor and other members of the City Council directly to further emphasize or explain specific points in more detail.

All contact information can be found on the Shape Our Fremont website at www.shapeourfremont.com

Q. What is the status of the Artist Walk project in Centerville?

A. The project is currently leasing its 185 one- and two-bedroom apartments with rents starting at approximately \$2,300 per month. In the commercial section of the project, eight retailers are now set to open, including a bakery, fitness center, and three restaurants.

Q. I read in the newspaper that the solution to the housing problem in the San Francisco Bay Area is to build more housing. Is that really the solution?

A. Ask ten experts and you'll get ten answers. The real "problem" is a lack of housing that is affordable to people with a wide range of incomes, including those in the middle with moderate incomes. Unfortunately, almost all new housing being built in the Bay Area -- including single-family homes, condos, and high-rise apartments -- is sold or rented at the prevailing market rate, which is at the upper end of the affordability range.

So, building more housing in the Bay Area will only solve the problem for people who have high incomes. The rest will still have to find more affordable housing elsewhere and make the long daily commute -- thus contributing to our traffic and greenhouse gas emissions problems.

Whatever the solution, and wherever the houses are built, cities need to understand they also have to provide the supporting infrastructure -- schools, roads, parks, shopping centers, and other facilities -- at the same time. Building the houses first and trying to fill in the infrastructure later is a bad way to grow.

To learn more about all proposed housing developments and related issues in Fremont, go to www.ShapeOurFremont.com