

Shape Our Fremont

Latest Q&A About Housing Developments

New housing developments often bring up a new list of questions. Here are some of the latest:

Q. Are there any big housing proposals coming up?

A. There are four big development proposals in Fremont -- one has already been approved, and three more are under review.

Bay Rock Apartments at Fremont Boulevard and Capitol Avenue, was approved by the City Council in December. It will bring 248 housing units and a small amount of commercial space to the Downtown District with a five-story main building and a six-level parking structure.

In Irvington, on Osgood Road next to the tall Osgood Residences building under construction, a second project has been proposed by the same developer. The Osgood II project would have 162 for-sale condominiums and 122 rental apartments in two five-story buildings. Ground level garages for the residents would use mechanical stacking systems. This is within the Irvington BART Transit Oriented Development Overlay. This proposal is under review by city staff, and residents may email comments to staff planner Mark Hungerford at mhungerford@fremont.gov

In Centerville, the Fremont Multifamily Residential preliminary proposal for 202 apartments in five- and six-story buildings, plus 8,420 square feet of commercial space in two-story buildings has been reviewed by city staff and returned to the developer with comments. This project would be on the west side of Fremont Boulevard, opposite the intersection of Parish Avenue. Until the developer decides to submit a Formal Application, there is no further action.

Finally, the latest Grimmer Irvington Center proposal wants to build 120 rental apartments and 85 for-sale stacked flat condos in the shopping center adjacent to the Cloverleaf Bowl in Irvington. The bowling alley would not be part of the proposal at this time. All the other buildings in the shopping center would be demolished and replaced by four- and five-story mixed use buildings on Fremont Boulevard, plus nine three-story residential buildings on the remainder of the property. All parking would be on site. This proposal is under review by city staff, and residents may email comments to staff planner Mark Hungerford at mhungerford@fremont.gov

Q. A housing development near me was approved last year, but construction hasn't started. What happened?

A. Lots of things could have happened. The developer could have encountered problems in obtaining financing, or could have decided that changes in the market make the project less desirable. As a result, construction could be delayed, or the property and the rights to build the project (called the entitlement) could be sold to another developer. Sometimes construction can be delayed for several years or more.

Q. What does "affordable by design" mean?

A. Developers sometimes claim a portion of their housing proposal will be affordable by design. Usually all it means is that those housing units will be smaller than similar units and therefore will be somewhat more affordable. It does not mean the housing will qualify as affordable housing, however,

unless the developer agrees to a formal restriction. Affordable by design units are sold or rented at the prevailing market-rate.

Q. Are there any plans for the McIvors Hardware property in Mission San Jose?

A. This property stretches from Ellsworth Street to Mission Boulevard. The Ellsworth Residential proposal would demolish the hardware store and surrounding parking lots and replace them with a mixed-use development consisting of a two-story building facing Ellsworth with 3,465 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor and 4 residential flats on the upper floor. The rest of the property would have 15 three-story townhouses in four buildings. The existing buildings and plaza facing Mission would remain.

This property is in the Mission San Jose Town Center and the Historic Overlay District. It is currently zoned for Town Center Commercial, which would allow a mixed-use development. The property was also recommended for inclusion in a Primary Commercial Area along Ellsworth from Washington to Anza. This proposal is under review by city staff, and residents may email their comments to staff planner Mark Hungerford at mhungerford@fremont.gov

Q. What is a "designated neighborhood"?

A. It's a residential area where the homeowners have asked for, and been granted, special standards for the size, setbacks, and height of houses in order to maintain the character of their neighborhood. It is primarily used to prevent construction of disproportionately large "megahomes" in older single-family neighborhoods of smaller one- and two-story houses. There are several conditions that have to be met, and the process requires guidance by city planning staff.