

Shape Our Fremont

More Questions and Answers About Housing Developments

There have been a lot of questions about housing developments in Fremont. Here are the answers to a few common questions:

Q. I saw a big Courtesy Notice sign on a vacant lot. Does that mean a new development has been approved for that location?

A. No. It just means that a formal Development Application has been submitted to the City for review. The review usually takes four to six months, or sometimes more, before the project is submitted for final approval. During this time, residents are welcome to express their objections and questions.

Q. There's a new housing project under construction near my neighborhood. I don't remember seeing an announcement of any Planning Commission or City Council meeting for this development. What's going on?

A. There could be several reasons for "mystery" developments. If a development is very small and complies with the General Plan and meets the Zoning Standards, it is only reviewed by the Zoning Administrator, who is a senior member of the Fremont Planning Department. It does not go to the Planning Commission or City Council unless the decision is appealed.

Another reason may be that once a project is approved, the developer has several years to actually start construction. If the economy changes during that period or the developer decides to sell the project entitlement to another company, the project can be granted one or more extensions. One development in Fremont was approved more than ten years ago, but construction only started recently.

Q. If a housing project is approved today, does the developer have to pay the current level of impact fees for schools, traffic, parks, etc?

A. The developer has to pay all impact fees at the time the building permit is issued, not at the time the project is approved. That could be many months, or years, after approval. If the fees are higher or lower then, the developer pays those higher or lower fees.

Q. I heard the City wants to build a lot of new housing along Osgood Road near the proposed Irvington BART station. Doesn't the Hayward Earthquake Fault run through that area?

A. Yes. The Hayward Fault runs north and south through the entire length of Fremont. One portion of the fault lies just to the east of Osgood Road from Washington Boulevard to a point opposite Blacow Road. California's Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act prohibits construction of new dwellings within a certain distance of a fault centerline -- usually 50 feet on either side. It does not apply to parking lots or structures. Beyond that, specific building construction standards may apply to minimize or prevent structural damage.

Q. Why are there so many new housing projects near the downtown Centerville area?

A. All property within a one-half mile radius of the ACE and AMTRAK train station in Centerville is designated as a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Area. An AC Transit bus line also runs along Fremont Boulevard. Because public transportation is available to move a large number of people to and from jobs and other destinations, the housing in a TOD is allowed to be taller and denser than in other areas. At least that's the theory.

The Artist Walk project with 185 units is currently under construction. Four other new housing projects with a total of 160 more units have been approved in the Centerville TOD, and one of them is now under construction. The proposed Silicon Sage Fremont Boulevard project with 136 units on Fremont Boulevard between Peralta Boulevard and Parish Avenue is still under review by the Fremont Planning Department. So the big question is how many are too many?

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Q. Whew! How can I keep track of new housing developments being proposed in my part of Fremont?

A. Easy. Go to **www.ShapeOurFremont.com** for the latest information and updates. This site includes details about each proposed project and the person to contact with questions and concerns.