

Shape Our Fremont

Niles Development Updates

Much of the Niles area is historic. It is also an area where the residents have a great deal of pride in its unique character. Recently, there have been several proposals for a variety of housing projects in the area. Here is a summary of the status of some of those proposals.

Rex Homes GPA Denied

On February 18, the City Council unanimously upheld the Planning Commission's recommendation to deny a General Plan Amendment (GPA) Request to change a vacant lot at the corner of Nursery Avenue and Niles Boulevard from open space to residential. In response to the Planning Commission's objections to the original submission of 5 single-family houses each with its own driveway, Rex Homes submitted revised plans for a Planned District on the site, with 8 smaller single-family houses with one shared driveway off Niles Boulevard, and a common open space on the corner. As with the previous proposal, many residents said that traffic was already bad in that area, and adding any new houses would make it worse and would contribute to an unsafe situation. Others felt that changing the open space designation was not justified and the proposed development did not offer enough significant benefits to the city. The council agreed with the residents and declined to consider the revised GPA request.

Niles Gateway Revised

The latest Niles Gateway proposal to build 75 two-story residential units at the southeast end of town, where Niles Boulevard curves under the railroad tracks, has been slightly revised to add more electric vehicle charging stations. The drawings also note that the developer has offered to install full bike lane street markings and signs on Niles Boulevard from Vallejo Street through the downtown area to Rancho Arroyo Parkway. In recent months, these street markings have been the source of public outcry in Niles, and some residents claim the markings are unattractive, unwanted, and confusing.

The site layout of straight rows of attached townhouses with garages facing garages has not been changed. Neither has the vehicular access or the minimal interior guest parking.

The revised proposal is tentatively scheduled to be heard by the Historical Architecture Review Board in April. Residents may send comments about the latest Niles Gateway plans to city staff planner David Wage at dwage@fremont.gov.

Louie Ranch PRP

The Fay Louie family owns much of the property in the hills above Mission Boulevard between the Union City boundary and Niles Canyon. The civil engineering firm of MacKay & Soms has submitted an application for a Preliminary Review Procedure (PRP) for the city to evaluate initial plans to build 53 attached townhouses on about 5 of those acres located at 37718 Mission.

The Hillside Residential density for the location of the townhouses is 2.3 dwelling units per acre. The Open Space density for the Louie land above the Toe of the Hill is one dwelling unit per 20 acres. The PRP plans show a density transfer of 41 units from the Open Space land added to the 12 units allowed for the Hillside Residential parcel in order to build a total of 53 units.

A density transfer of Open Space above the Toe of the Hill is very complicated. In order to be granted such a transfer, the developer has to prove first that it is feasible to design a subdivision on the land in the hills in accordance with Measure T minimum lot standards. Then they must prove that each of those subdivision lots would be able to support a dwelling unit that complies with Fremont

Municipal Code. If such a plan was approved by the City Council at a later date, the Open Space land would need an easement placed on it for no further development.

The PRP townhouse plans show eight 4-plexes, three 6-plexes and one 3-plex. They would be grouped around a curved street off Mission that would end in a cul-de-sac. The question of whether attached townhouses would be permitted in that location will be reviewed.

It is important to remember that a Preliminary Review Procedure really is just a preliminary review. The Planning Department and several other Fremont departments carefully examine the submitted PRP plans and write up a PRP Report giving feedback to the applicant as to the feasibility of the project's approval by the city.

To view the proposal plans or to make comments, contact the city staff planner Hang Zhou at hzhou@fremont.gov

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