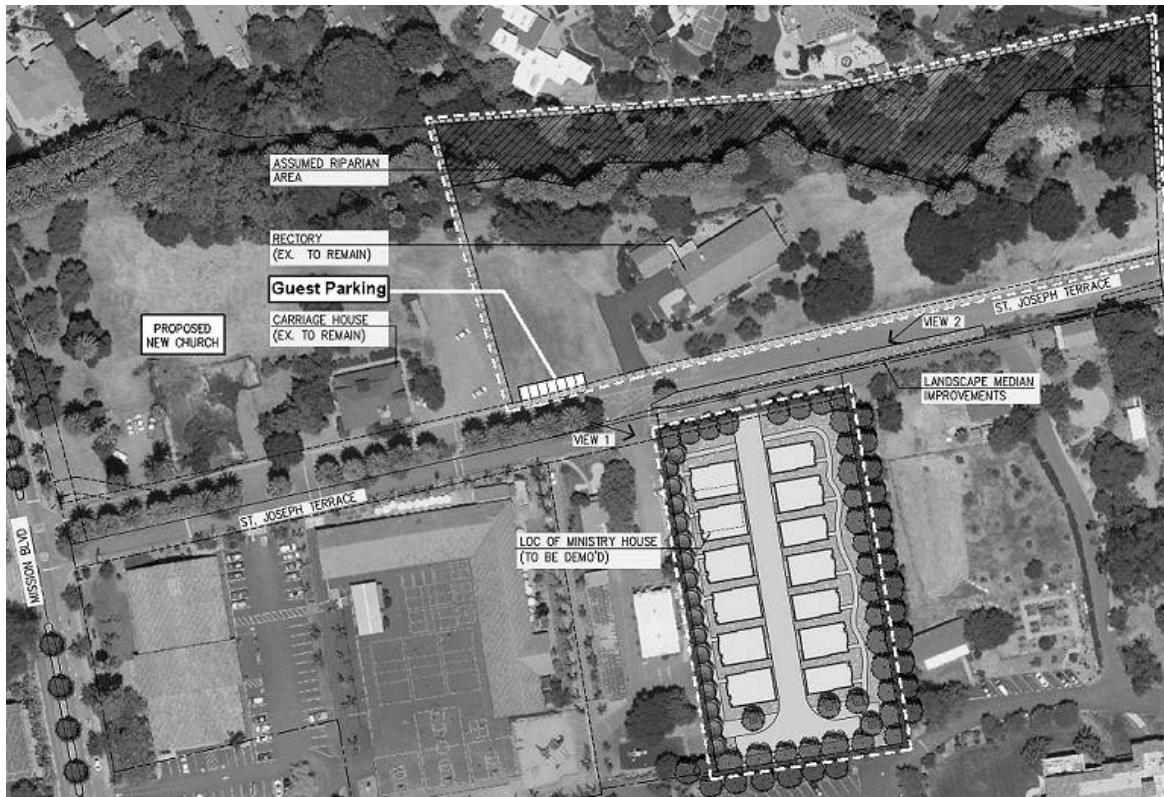


# Shape Our Fremont

## St. Joseph Homes GPA in Detail



Westgate Ventures, on behalf of the St. Joseph Parish in Mission San Jose, has submitted a General Plan Amendment (GPA) Screening Request to determine if the City would consider changing the General Plan to allow residential development on a portion of the parish property. The Planning Commission is scheduled to hear this request on August 27, and the City Council will hear it on September 15.

The development would be a planned district that includes two separate parcels along St. Joseph Terrace. One parcel would have 13 new houses clustered on 1.3 acres behind the existing St. Joseph school on the south side of the street. The applicant is asking whether Fremont would change the land use designation of that parcel from Hillside Residential, which sets a maximum density of 2.3 dwelling units per acre and a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet, to Low-Medium Residential, which would allow a density up to 14.5 dwellings per acre and individual lot sizes as small as 4,000 square feet.

On the north side of the street, opposite the residential parcel, a 3.5-acre parcel would be set aside for no further residential development, beyond the existing large parish rectory. The rectory parcel would remain as Hillside Residential.

The proposed market-rate houses would all be two stories with a height of about 34 feet. They would be arranged side-by-side in two long, straight rows with the garage doors facing each other across a private street, and the fronts facing a common walkway that encircles the development. There would be no back yards, no driveways, and no street parking. Guest parking would be located on the rectory lot.

### Concerns, concerns

The biggest concern about this proposal is that it does not comply with Fremont's Hillside Ordinance. On the property where the houses are to be built, the density would be far larger than the maximum allowable, and the lot sizes would be far smaller than the minimum. The applicant

acknowledges both of these points in the GPA request, but claims that grouping all the houses in one area would achieve a more desirable result that better follows the intent of the ordinance. So the question for the city is whether they should adhere to the Hillside Ordinance density and lot size restrictions that have been in effect for decades, or allow major variances based on an interpretation of the intended results.

Traffic is another concern. The only vehicle access to St. Joseph Terrace is from an unsignaled intersection with Mission Boulevard at a well-known traffic bottleneck. There are also questions about the claim that prohibiting further residential development on the rectory lot would actually help maintain the rural character of the area, since there is already a large house there.

## **Decisions**

Given these concerns, the Planning Commission and City Council will have to consider how the proposed development would fit with the General Plan, the Hillside Ordinance, and the historic character of the area. They would also consider whether it would set an undesirable precedent, and what real benefits the residents and the city as a whole would receive by considering it?

Residents may send their comments and questions to staff team lead Courtney Pal at [cpal@fremont.gov](mailto:cpal@fremont.gov)