

# Developers dive into downtown Fremont housing boom

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Within a year of submitting a proposal to build 275 apartments in downtown Fremont, Fore Property kicked off construction — an almost unheard of timeline in the Bay Area.

The fast turnaround to get the project underway proves that Fremont is serious about revamping its downtown into an urban oasis in suburbia, said Mark Pilarczyk, vice president of Northern California at Fore Property.

“The City of Fremont paved the way,” he said. “The ability to have the entitlements and construction documents done quickly was critical in being able to maintain the project budget and get the project going.”

Fore develops apartments nationwide with a track record of about 23,000 homes spanning 40 cities across 17 states.

Fore’s Fremont project, designed by MVE + Partners, involves a five-story building containing studios, one- and two-bedroom units and 11 penthouses on the top floor.

Contractor Johnstone Moyer, Inc. expects to wrap up the project in late 2021.

While the project moved fast, it took more than a decade of city planning to make that happen.

Fremont city leaders and staff spent years crafting a specific plan to create a downtown. In 2012, the city council adopted the plan, which calls for up to 5.2 million square feet of development, including up to 2,500 housing units and up to 2.5 million square feet of office space and 500,000 square feet of retail.

The idea all along was to give Fremont a downtown that it never had, as the city is a conglomeration of five towns that were previously unincorporated. [Still, bringing housing downtown near BART has incited a backlash.](#)

“The city has done a good job of tailoring the density in the downtown area,” Pilarczyk said. “They’ve put a lot of effort into transforming this area and you’re starting to see their plan coming to fruition.”

In October, the city began construction on a \$25.4 million public plaza and 13,400-square-foot event center. The project, designed by Studios Architecture and built by Zovich & Sons Inc., encompasses one acre of land at 39102 State St.

Nearby Fore’s project, [SummerHill Homes is building out a 157-unit community at 39155 State St.](#) with prices starting around \$650,000 for a condo and \$900,000 for a townhome.

Other projects in the works include a proposal from Bay Rock Residential for 250 apartments at 39150 Fremont Blvd. and Kimco Realty’s plan to add 303 apartments to the Fremont Hub shopping center at 4020 Fremont Blvd.

“We saw it as a classic, high-quality infill site that’s consistent with SummerHill’s business,” Katia Kamangar, managing director at SummerHill, told the Business Times in 2017. “It has proximity to jobs, transportation and retail.”

Mark Pilarczyk said Fremont itself has a strong base and has also started attracting people who work in Silicon Valley who see the city as a more affordable place to live.

Future residents of the Beacon Avenue project will be able to reach the Fremont BART platform within a 10-minute walk. Access to transit is a key selling point for many renters, especially couples who work in different parts of the Bay Area.

Pilarczyk said Fremont is known for having high development fees, but the city was clear about the fees from the start. That, along with the speedy approval process, made it easier to move the project forward.

“Our hard costs are rising throughout the Bay Area, so every month that goes by, hard costs go up,” he said. “Any shrinkage in time will save you on the hard cost numbers helps to keep your project alive.”

Fore expects to deliver the Fremont apartments in late 2021. The developer is also working on 128 homes in Burlingame that are under construction and will hit the market in 2022.



MVE + PARTNERS

Fore Property is building 275 apartments in downtown Fremont.

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