

Lennar debuts conceptual renderings for Warm Springs development

By Julian J. Ramos - Fremont Bulletin | jramos@themilpitaspost.com

POSTED: 11/05/2015 04:08:01 PM PST | UPDATED: 4 MONTHS AGO



For the first time on Tuesday, representatives of developer Lennar Corp. presented conceptual renderings to Fremont City Council of its plans for a large mixed-use development in Warm Springs. Courtesy of Lennar Corp.

Nearly seven months after Fremont City Council approved a master plan for development of more than 100 acres, just north of Tesla Motors, developer Lennar Corp. this week unveiled its architectural vision for the segment of its project near the Warm Springs-South Fremont Bay Area Rapid Transit station, slated to open in 2016.

Lennar's plan, approved by the council in April, calls for 2,214 apartment, condominium and urban villages units -- 290 of them deemed below-market rate -- 1.4 million square feet of research and development and class A office space, a five-acre elementary school and a four-acre park for the school and city on 110 acres between Tesla and the BART station.

During Tuesday's city council work session on Area 4 of the Warm Springs/South Fremont Community Plan, representatives of Miami-based Lennar presented an update that focused primarily on the multi-family section of the project. The mixed-use component -- commercial space on the lower levels and apartments above -- will be located on four parcels in the southeastern quadrant.

According to city officials, the property in the Warm Springs/South Fremont Community Plan will see 6,642 residents and 4,100 jobs. Overall, the "Warm Springs Innovation District" covers 880 acres. City leaders envision 4,000 dwelling units and up to 20,000 jobs in the district, as well as up to 11.6 million square feet of commercial and office floor space.

Following approval of the master plan, Lennar has spent the last six months fleshing out the design concept for the project, said Kevin Ma, of Lennar Multi-Family. The multi-family component will consist of 966 market-rate apartments, 290 below-market-rate apartments and 27,500 square feet of commercial space across four buildings five stories high. There will also be nearly 700,000 square feet of commercial office space on 10.5 acres at the center of the project on a new street, Innovation Way.

Both the school and park north of it are now being designed, Ma said. Bill O'Brien of Lennar Homes said the agreement, which includes developers Valley Oak Partners and Toll Brothers, calls for construction of a transitional kindergarten- to fifth-grade school, could be formally approved by the Fremont Unified School District board as soon as Nov. 18 or perhaps Dec. 9.

"It looks like we are on the final lap," he said.

The apartments would range from 700-square-foot studios to 1,300-square-foot three-bedroom units, Ma said.

Vice Mayor Suzanne Chan suggested building units for aging "baby boomers" looking to downsize from their homes and millennials starting families.

Included in the area are four linear parks totaling 2.2 acres, connected to plaza areas. They are to be designed and constructed by Lennar and then dedicated to the city, said Jessica Musick of KTG Y Architects. There will also be bike paths.

At the center of the residential buildings, Lennar has proposed four parking structures to accommodate them as well as retail and commercial office employees.

"Those garages will not be seen from any of the perimeter streets, they are fully screened by the units," Musick said.

For the parking structure closest to the Bay Area Rapid Transit Plaza, Lennar envisions the ground level and second level being dedicated to the commercial component and the three upper levels dedicated to the residential units. Each residential unit will have an assigned parking stall with a secured entrance for residents via an access ramp above the commercial parking, Ma said. There will be 1.5 parking stalls per 1,000 square feet of commercial office space on the lower levels. Guest parking will also be on the lower floors.

The idea is to have shared parking after hours, perhaps from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m., and on weekends in the two lower levels, according to Musick. With city Planning Commission approval of a tentative tract map for the project in October, rough grading, depending on weather, could begin soon, said Joel Pullen, Fremont senior planner. Infrastructure work could occur this spring or summer, he added. In the meantime, the city is reviewing applications for the less than market rate and multi-family components and they could appear before the city's zoning administrator as soon as December.

Phase one of the single-family homes segment, with almost 960 for-sale residences near Grimmer and Fremont boulevards, could soon go to the zoning administrator for approval, Pullen added.

Contact Julian J. Ramos at ramos@themilpitaspost.com or 408-262-2454 or follow him on twitter.com/julianjramosmp.