

**POLICY STATEMENT FOR LOT SIZE CONSISTENCY
OF SINGLE FAMILY SUBDIVISION IN CASTRO VALLEY**

Recommended for approval by the Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council, July 15, 1991

Recommended for approval by the Alameda County Planning Commission, July 22, 1991

Approved by the Board of Supervisors, August 1, 1991

New single-family parcels must be consistent with the existing land use pattern of the surrounding neighborhood. Even though subdivision proposals may meet the minimum zoning requirement for lot size or median width, they may not create lots substantially smaller or narrower than the prevailing lots in the neighborhood.

Background: The purpose of this policy statement is to clarify, enhance, and reaffirm the existing General Plan policies listed below. This policy statement applies community-wide to neighborhoods with R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning with any attached combining district (e.g. R-1-B-10), and also any area zoned PD based on a R-1 District, where proposed subdivision would be incompatible with established single family development patterns.

The 1985 Castro Valley Plan includes the following principles regarding suburban and low density residential land-uses:

Page 57 Within predominantly single-family residential areas, the density of new suburban and low density residential development should be approximately the same as that of surrounding residential uses.

Page 58 Suburban and low density residential projects may include attached and/or detached residential units, provided that the development is other wise compatible, in scale, bulk, and siting with surrounding residential uses....

Most of the new residential development in Castro Valley has been provided through infill development. Infill allows more intensive land uses in existing urbanized and suburbanized areas where public services such as water, sewer, and fire protection are readily available. However, in certain cases, infill development can result in changes overall aesthetic appearance of a neighborhood through on-street parking, alteration of natural topography, and removal of mature vegetation. Other factors, such as increased traffic, the placement of easements and demands to public utilities can also change neighborhood character as a result of infill. This policy statement gives guidance to decision makers while deciding when and where infill development should take place. It is not intended to preclude infill development which meets County policies.

Infill development in Castro Valley is primarily regulated by the County General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and the Subdivision Ordinance. It should be noted that the Zoning Ordinance sets a minimum lot size, and does not guarantee a right to that size. Under state law, subdivisions are required to be consistent not only with the Zoning Ordinance, but also with all the policies in the General Plan. Other factors or policies, such as the guidelines discussed below, may influence the ultimate size of a newly created lot.

Definitions: The “surrounding neighborhood” to be used in determining the prevailing lot size, both area and width should be determined by the following three methods.

- A discreet Tract which was developed at one time and which functions as a cohesive neighborhood.
- An area defined by physical features both natural and human-made including creeks, ridges, and roads. These features function as barriers and define an integral area.
- A discreet unit of similarly sized lots which are contiguous and have an established pattern of large single family lots larger than the minimum zoning requirement.

The existing “prevailing lot” on which is based the appropriate lot size both are and width, for ant new subdivision should be determined by one of the following two methods:

- Predominant lot size (the lot size that occurs with the greatest frequency within a neighborhood); or
- Average area of lots within a surrounding neighborhood.

In addition, during the review process, the decision-making body shall evaluate neighborhood character and external influences which affect that character prior to approval of infill development applications. Drastic changes to the neighborhood character based on this evaluation shall be grounds for denial of projects. This evaluation should address the following issues:

- Traffic conditions, street width, and parking
- Public services and utilities
- Building height
- Natural features such as mature vegetation and creeks
- Slopes and excessive grading
- Retention of existing areas of contiguous open space

-- END OF POLICY --