

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA**

**LIZ KNISS, CHAIR  
FIFTH DISTRICT SUPERVISOR**



THIS RELATES TO:

**FEB 15 2005** Item No. 14

Supplemental Information No. 3

**To:** Members, Board of Supervisors

**From:** Liz Kniss, Board Chair, Fifth District Supervisor

**Date:** February 15, 2005

**Re:** Follow-up to December 14, 2004 Referral Regarding "Monster Homes"

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**Background**

On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004 I referred to Administration on off-agenda report back on homes that are typically referred to as "Monster Homes," including a definition, the number built in County pockets in the past ten years, issues surrounding home size, and a comparison of local cities home size restrictions. I have attached the report prepared by the Planning Department. Staff is completing a follow-up report as an addendum that will contain further results of their research.

The report received January 28<sup>th</sup>, outlines the definition of a "Monster Home" or Large Structure Home as one that does not fit within the context of a neighborhood or the topography of the lot because of its size or architectural character. The number of homes that would fall under this definition is still being compiled, based upon building permit data for single-family homes from 1995-2004. Attachment C of the report is a house size restriction profile for all cities in Santa Clara County.

Current General Plan policies and Zoning Code ordinances do not provide the County with the necessary tools to adequately address the size of homes, or protect the ridgelines of Santa Clara County. There is a need for stronger regulations and specific development standards.

While the County has enacted a number of house size regulations that address certain issues regarding Large Structure Homes, they have been directed at specific instances rather than an overall approach to a growing concern in the community.



**Recommended Action**

As an extension of my previous referral, I am requesting that staff develop policies and ordinances to address the following.

1. Direct Staff to develop a draft zoning code ordinance that defines size restrictions for homes in unincorporated areas of the County. This ordinance should also address view-shed issues and ridgeline protection as it pertains to home size.
2. Direct Staff to develop a draft zoning code ordinance that ties unincorporated properties within a city's sphere of influence to that city's home size restrictions.
3. Direct Staff to identify how the County can strengthen its existing General Plan so that development on ridgelines is explicitly prohibited.
4. Direct Staff to determine costs to the County for services or other expenses related to development in the Foothills.
5. Direct Staff to develop a work plan for the above actions for report to the HLUET Committee and subsequently, the Board of Supervisors.

The work plan and all subsequent reports related to this referral should be reviewed by the Housing Land Use Environmental and Transportation (HLUET) Committee for consideration prior to being forwarded to the Board. Following the Board policy on referrals, the work plan should be submitted to the first HLUET Committee after the 45-day referral period, which would be the meeting of April 21, 2005.