



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET 4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR SANTA CRUZ CA 95060  
(831) 454-2580 FAX (831) 454-2131 TDD: (831) 454-2123

**TOM BURNS, PLANNING DIRECTOR**

April 11, 2006

**AGENDA DATE: April 26, 2006**

Planning Commission  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

### **SUBJECT: Proposed Amendment to Definition of Net Site Area**

Commissioners:

On March 8, 2006, your Commission held a public hearing about neighborhood compatibility issues in coastal neighborhoods that included a proposed amendment to the definition of net site area. We are returning to your Commission today with a recommendation to not include the word "arroyo" in the revised definition of net site area.

The proposed amendment that your Commission reviewed and approved reads as follows (proposed deletions shown struck-through, proposed new language shown underlined):

Site Area, Net. Outside the Urban Services Line, the total site area less ~~any~~ all  
public or private rights-of-way designated for vehicle access. Inside the Urban  
Services Line, the total site area less all public or private rights-of-way  
designated for vehicle access, coastal bluffs, beaches, arroyos, streams, land  
between stream banks, lakes, marshes, sloughs or other submerged areas.

The proposal to not allow certain areas, such as coastal bluffs, beaches, and arroyos, to be included in the calculation of net site area generated a considerable amount of comment and controversy.

Following your Commission's direction to engage in additional community outreach before proceeding to the Board of Supervisors, on March 23, the Planning Director and staff attended a community meeting about the proposed amendments at which the Planning Director participated in a question and answer session with attendees. One of the main concerns voiced was the inclusion of "arroyo" in the proposed net site area definition; that it was too broad for the purposes of this amendment. The definition of "arroyo" from County Code is as follows:

A gully, ravine or canyon created by a perennial, intermittent or ephemeral stream, with characteristic steep slopes frequently covered with vegetation. An arroyo includes the area between the top of the arroyo banks defined by a

discernable break in the slope rising from the arroyo bottom. Where there is no break in slope, the extent of the arroyo may be defined as the edge of the 100 year floodplain.

After thoughtful consideration, staff agrees that this definition is too broad to be included as an area to be excluded from the calculation of net site area. Therefore, we are recommending that the proposed definition of net site area be revised by not including the word "arroyo," to read as follows:

Site Area, Net. Outside the Urban Services Line, the total site area less any all  
public or private rights-of-way designated for vehicle access. Inside the Urban  
Services Line, the total site area less all public or private rights-of-way  
designated for vehicle access, coastal bluffs, beaches, streams, land between  
stream banks, lakes, marshes, sloughs or other submerged areas.

We believe that the intent of the proposed changes will still be met, i.e., to make house size more closely relate to useable lot area.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Commission take the following action:

1. Direct Planning staff to delete the word "arroyo" from the definition of net site area in the proposed amendments that will be presented to the Board of Supervisors.

Sincerely,



Steven Guiney, AICP  
Planner IV  
Policy Section



Glenda Hill, AICP  
Principal Planner  
Policy Section

cc: Neighborhood and Architect Representatives  
California Coastal Commission