



# San Carlos News Release

For More Information, Call:

Jeff Maltbie  
Phone: (650) 802-4228  
Fax: (650) 595-6729

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E-mail: [jmaltbie@cityofsancarlos.org](mailto:jmaltbie@cityofsancarlos.org)  
Web: <http://www.cityofsancarlos.org>

## **City Council Balances Reduced House Sizes with the Needs of Growing and Aging Families**

San Carlos, CA - On Monday, October 22, 2018, the City Council introduced an Ordinance amending sections of the San Carlos Municipal Code in response to community concerns about house sizes.

Over the past two years, the City has been listening to community members who feel that some new houses and additions being built in San Carlos are too large for their lot and neighborhood. The Council tasked staff to work with two separate resident commissions to develop recommendations addressing these concerns.

Councilmember Mark Olbert reflected that, “this was the most complex issue that I have dealt with on the Council. By working together, and listening to residents, the Council came up with a reasonable compromise.”

Monday night’s vote by the Council comes after many hours of work by San Carlos residents and city staff resulting in numerous proposals. This work included recommendations from the Single-Family House Advisory Committee (“SHAC”; a 7-member City Council-appointed advisory committee), input from over 150 residents in attendance at a community open house, four public Planning Commission meetings and two City Council hearings.

As part of its deliberations, the Council invited SHAC, the Planning Commission and Good Growth San Carlos - a volunteer community group focused on reducing house sizes - to present material and respond to questions by the Council. The Council also solicited input from a local realtor and received dozens of letters and public testimony.

“The Council would like to thank the Planning Commission, SHAC, Good Growth San Carlos, and all the community members who helped collaborate with us through public forums,” said Mayor Bob Grassilli. “We tried to strike a balance between concerns over house size and planning for the future. With the help of everyone involved we’ve got a great start.”

There is no single solution to address house size and bulk that will satisfy all residents. While everyone wants San Carlos to thrive as the City of Good Living, community members have differing housing needs that also change over time. The zoning ordinance changes below reflect the Council’s careful consideration and balancing of numerous competing desires while not jeopardizing San Carlos’ future for all residential single family property owners in the face of unprecedented changes in the regional economy and housing market.

The following changes to the San Carlos Zoning Ordinance will be presented to the Council for final adoption on November 12, 2018:

1. **Maximum Floor Area:** For lots below 7,500 square feet, the maximum floor area is the greater of (a) 1,100 sq. ft. + 35% of lot area, or (b) 50% of lot area. For lots equal to or greater than 7,500 square feet, the maximum floor area is 50% of the lot size.
2. Up to 450 sq. ft. of garage space shall be exempt from floor area limits provided it is detached from the main house and located a minimum of 40 feet away from the front property line.
3. Basements shall be exempt from floor area limits provided they are located directly underneath the house and are no more than 3 feet above grade.

4. Up to 200 square feet of covered front porches, provided they have at least two sides open and the surface height is at or below the level of the front door, shall be exempt from lot coverage.
5. Up to 250 square feet of unenclosed and unroofed decks that are aligned with or below the lowest floor level shall be exempt from lot coverage.
6. For the RS-6 Zoning District, a one car garage will be permitted provided a two-car 20 foot wide driveway is available.
7. Projects subject to review by the City's Residential Design Review Committee (RDRC) will require an appropriately sized sign to be placed in a visible area of the front yard to notify passersby of the public design review hearing.

These amendments to the Ordinance will become effective 30 days after adoption (expected November 13, 2018) and codified in the San Carlos Municipal Code. The Council has directed, however, that these new provisions shall not be enforced until 180 days after adoption so as not to penalize homeowners who are in the midst of obtaining approval of their project. All projects that are not deemed complete by the Planning Division after that 180 day period would be subject to the regulations as amended and outlined above.

For more information, please visit the project website at:  
[www.cityofsancarlos.org/singlefamilyhousesize](http://www.cityofsancarlos.org/singlefamilyhousesize).

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