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September 28, 2016

Chair and Members of the West County Board Adjustments
224 West Winton, #111
Hayward, CA 94544

Dear Chair and Members of the West County Board of Zoning Adjustments:

I am writing on behalf of the Early Care and Education Planning Council regarding approval for a large family child care home at 2850 Jennifer Drive, Castro Valley, Public Hearing Item 5 on the Wednesday, September 28th West County Board of Zoning Adjustments agenda. The mission of the Planning Council is to advise and make recommendations to policymakers to ensure that all children and families have access to quality child care that educates children and enriches their lives.

We do not support or oppose individual providers, however, we provide background on the need for a variety of child care options and child care and land use permitting.

Family child care homes are a critical resource for Castro Valley parents. They often provide low caregiver to child ratios, care for younger children, and offer more flexible scheduling than many centers. The Castro Valley General Plan Policy 8.5.5 clearly states intent to offer child care options throughout the community, including residential areas. For perspective, out of roughly 2300 child care programs in Alameda County, 1900 are family child care homes in residential areas and there are 18 large family child care homes in Castro Valley. Castro Valley is a high need area according to our annual review of need by zip code with 92% and 86%, respectively, of low income infants and preschoolers unserved.

Experience shows that typical initial neighbor concerns regarding parking and noise rarely materialize. Parents may be walking to child care programs, and they have naturally staggered drop off and pick up times. Often, siblings attend the program and are driven in one car. The average drop off and pick up time has been measured to average 5-6 minutes. Children also may have staggered playtimes outside and may not be outside at the same time.

Child care is essential to our working families, employers, and community because it supports employment and child development and generates local revenue. A recent Bay Area Council report estimates the return on investment for child care programs is 17 to 1.

We look forward to future work with you on policies and projects to help Castro Valley and other unincorporated areas build and retain a high quality and diverse child care supply. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Ellen Dektar

Ellen Dektar

