

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain

To: All Interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

This is to give notice that the City of Santa Cruz, under Part 58, has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is to be partially funded by 20 HUD Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs). The proposed project is located at 136 River Street in Santa Cruz, County of Santa Cruz, CA, and is within the floodplain.

The proposed project is a 50-unit affordable multifamily rental project with ground-floor commercial space to be contained in one 6-story building built on two parcels (Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 008-311-06 and 008-311-07) totaling 0.25 acres located at 136 River Street on the northeast side of River Street in the City of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County, California. The project site is located in Zone A99 – Special Flood Hazard Area Without Base Flood Elevation (BFE) determined. The project will be floodproofed to at least 2 feet above BFE. Additionally, the project site area is being redesignated due to the construction of a new levee. It will no longer be in the floodplain once that process is complete.

Santa Cruz has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing floodplain: Three alternatives were considered: Alternative #1 – No Project Alternative – not building the project on this site; Alternative #2 – Build Proposed Project at an Alternative Site – locate a new site to build the project on; Alternative #3 – Build Proposed Project at this Site with an Alternative Project Design.

Alternative 1 was determined not to be a practicable alternative due to the significant need for low-income housing in the area – a need that would go unmet if this project were abandoned. Alternative 2 was determined not to be a practicable alternative because abandoning this project site and area and seeking another site outside of this area of the county bordering the city located outside of the floodplain fails to address the significant need for quality affordable housing within the project area on a site in proximity to transportation and amenities. This site has considerable city and county support. Alternative 3, Build Proposed Project at this Site with an Alternative Project design was chosen, which consists of removing the residential unit from the first floor and floodproofing the first floor two feet above BFE.

The City of Santa Cruz has reevaluated the alternatives to building in the floodplain and has determined that it has no practicable alternative to floodplain development. Environmental files documenting compliance with Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, are available for public inspection, review, and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplains and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplains can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplains, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the City of Santa Cruz at the following address on or before September 29, 2025 (or within 7 days of posting of this notice if posted on a later date): City of Santa Cruz, Economic Development Office, 337 Locust Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 and 831.482.5108, Attention: Jessie Bristow, Development Manager. A full description of the project may be reviewed online at the City of Santa Cruz website:

<https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/downtownlibraryaffordablehousing> Comments may also be submitted via email to jbristow@santacruzca.gov.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting the person listed above. Comments may also be submitted via email at the above address.

Posting Date: September 22, 2025