

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

The Santa Cruz County Planning Division has reviewed the project described below and has determined that it is exempt from the provisions of CEQA as specified in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.66 for the reason(s) which have been specified in this document.

Application Number: 241371
Assessor Parcel Number: 026-491-40
Project Location: 841 Capitola Road, Santa Cruz, CA

Project Description: Proposal to demolish one existing residential dwelling unit and construct 57 units, several non-habitable storage units and common amenity spaces within a five-story multifamily building, and site improvements including surface parking and fencing. The project includes a 42.5-percent Density Bonus in exchange for the provision of four affordable units (comprising of one Very-Low Income (VLI) unit and three Extremely Low (ELI) units). Requires approval of a Site Development Permit pursuant to Builder’s Remedy pursuant to Gov. Code Section 65589.5 and Density Bonus pursuant to Gov. Code Section 65915. The project site is located on the north side of Capitola Road at 841 Capitola Road (Assessor’s Parcel Number 026-491-40) approximately 300 feet west of its intersection with Jose Avenue in Live Oak.

Person or Agency Proposing Project: Clay Toombs for Workbench

Contact Phone Number: 831-227-2217 ext. 310

- A. The proposed activity is not a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.
- B. The proposed activity is not subject to CEQA as specified under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060 (c).
- C. **Ministerial Project** involving only the use of fixed standards or objective measurements without personal judgment.
- D. **Statutory Exemption** other than a Ministerial Project - Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.66
- E. **Categorical Exemption**

F. Reasons why the project is exempt:

The project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.66. This exemption applies to projects consistent with the applicable requirements of the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Pursuant to the HAA, the County is restricted from denying the project, reducing its density, or rendering it infeasible based on inconsistencies with the Zoning Ordinance or General Plan. Therefore, any existing zoning requirements and development standards that the project is not in compliance with are not “applicable” within the meaning of PRC Section 21080.66. The project is found to be consistent with the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan. Also, the approval of a density bonus, incentives or concessions, waivers, or reductions of development or parking standards shall not be grounds for

EXHIBIT A

determining that the project is inconsistent with the General Plan or Zoning Ordinance. The project also meets all other criteria. The project is a builder’s remedy “housing development project”, occurs in an unincorporated “urban area” on a site that is no more than five acres in size; is located on a project site that has been previously developed; is substantially surrounded by urban uses; contains at least a minimum density of 10 units per acre, does not involve the demolition of a listed historic structure existing as of the date of submittal of the preliminary application (Historic Evaluation by PAST Consultants LLC, dated February 22, 2023 on file with the CDI Planning Division), is not located on farmland, wetlands, in a very high fire hazard severity zone, a hazardous waste site, earthquake fault zone, flood hazard area, regulatory floodway, in an adopted natural conservation plan/habitat conservation plan/natural resource protection plan, does not contain habitat for protected species identified as candidate, sensitive, or species of special status by state or federal agencies. The biotic report (Biological Assessment memo dated March 17, 2025 prepared by Thompson Wildland Management, and a Tree Inventory and Arborist Report dated April 18, 2022 prepared by Davey Resource Group, Inc. for APN 026-491-40) concludes that the Study Area does not support habitat for federally and/or state protected plant or animal species. No special-status plant or animal species were identified in the study area. In addition, there are no locally unique biotic communities, wetlands, or riparian corridors on or immediately adjacent to the property.

A vehicle miles traveled (VMT) technical analysis (Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers, dated May 21, 2025) was provided for the proposed project. As detailed in the analysis and based on the SB 743 Implementation Guidelines for the County of Santa Cruz and the County’s TREDLite tool, the VMT for the proposed project is 14.8, which exceeds the threshold of 13.6, thus the project would not screen out of the requirement to provide a VMT analysis, thus a VMT technical analysis was provided for the project.

The County of Santa Cruz TREDLite tool was utilized to determine whether on-site transportation demand management (“TDM”) features may reduce the proposed project’s VMT to a less than significant impact. The TREDLite tool provides a 20 percent VMT reduction achieved by a project that is designed with a higher density compared to the average residential density in the U.S. The project is designed at a density of about 67 units per acre, exceeding the average residential density in the U.S (9.1 units per acre). As such, the high density of the project reduces the project VMT from 14.8 to 11.8, which is below the threshold of 13.6, thus the project’s VMT would result in a less than significant impact.

A 60-day formal tribal notification period was initiated on August 1st, 2025 and terminated on September 30th, 2025. Two tribes provided responses but formal consultations were not requested by any tribes during the notification period. Standard conditions of approval for tribal monitoring during ground-disturbing activities would apply to the project.

In conformance with PRC Section 21080.66, a condition of approval for the development has been included as part of the project approval requiring the development proponent to complete a phase I environmental assessment, as defined in Section 78090 of the Health and Safety Code.

Signed by:

C5FA19BC281A4CB...

Date: 2/11/2026

Jonathan DiSalvo, Project Planner