



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Planning and Development
Department No.: 053
Agenda Date: October 21, 2025
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from: N/A
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director(s): Lisa Plowman, Director, Planning and Development
Contact: Travis Seawards, Deputy Director, Planning and Development
SUBJECT: Report on Case No. 25EMP-00004: Alta Community Investment XI Demolition
Emergency Permit, 6757 Del Playa Drive, Isla Vista, Third Supervisorial District

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file this report on Emergency Permit Case No. 25EMP-00004, approved by the Director of Planning & Development on August 20, 2025, which authorized demolition of a two-story residential duplex deemed unsafe due to active bluff erosion; and,
- b) Determine that receiving and filing this report is not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), as it is an administrative government activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

This Board item is a report on the Alta Community Investment XI Demolition Emergency Permit for work in the Isla Vista Community. Section 35-171 of Article II authorizes the Director of the Planning and Development Department (P&D) to temporarily defer standard permit requirements of Article II and issue an Emergency Permit when an emergency action is warranted. Pursuant to Article II Section

35-171.6, the Director of P&D (Director) is required to report in writing to the Board of Supervisors the nature of the emergency and the work involved. This report satisfies that requirement.

Background:

The parcel is a 0.32-acre parcel, zoned Medium Density Student Residential (SR-M), and located at 6757 Del Playa Drive. The site is currently developed with a two-story duplex, rear patio, and driveway. The duplex is currently unoccupied.

In 2020, the property owner at 6757 Del Playa Drive received a notice pursuant to the Isla Vista Bluff Policy. The policy is intended to mitigate the safety hazard posed by bluff erosion on buildings and their occupants. The owner received the notice because the existing two-story duplex is located approximately 10 feet from the bluff edge.

Per the policy, site specific geologic studies to establish maximum single-event failure for properties within 20 feet of a bluff to assess site stability are required. No such studies have been completed, and a Bluff Monitoring case remains active on the parcel. Between 2022 and 2024, several building violation cases were opened, with the most recent being Case No. 24BDV-00009, citing unsafe and unsecured conditions on the property and ongoing inconsistency with the Isla vista Bluff Policy.

Discussion:

Significant coastal bluff erosion at 6757 Del Playa Drive has compromised the safety and structural integrity of the rear patio and adjacent duplex. Although the site is currently unoccupied, local students are known to loiter on the property, and it presents a clear public safety hazard. The proximity of the existing structures to the actively eroding bluff edge creates a high risk of structural collapse, with the potential for falling debris to injure individuals on the beach below.

The Emergency Permit application, filed by Alta Community Investment XI, was accepted for processing on July 10, 2025. The Director verified the facts, including the existence and the nature of the emergency (per Article II Section 35-171.4) being a threat to property and to the health and safety of the public. Verbal authorization to demolish the duplex and patio was given by the Director on July 21, 2025. The Emergency Permit was issued on August 21, 2025. The approved scope of work includes demolition of a 2,401-square-foot two-story residential duplex, and removal of approximately 1,652 square feet of concrete walkway and patio pavers. This action addresses existing safety hazards to the property, nearby residents, and the public beach below. Furthermore, it enables future development on the legal parcel in a manner consistent with long-term bluff retreat planning and coastal resource protection policies. No new development has been proposed at this time. The project is anticipated to be completed within 30 days of Emergency Permit issuance. The applicant worked with a Soils Engineer to evaluate potential risks and determine the necessary precautions for initiating demolition near the bluff. This assessment helped establish safety guidelines to protect the public prior to the commencement of demolition activities.

Pursuant to Article II Section 35-171.5.1, a notice was mailed to the surrounding property owners and residents. Additionally, three placards notices were placed on the subject property. Public comment by phone, email, and mail was accepted up until the date of the decision for the Emergency Permit project. P&D did not receive any public comment regarding the issuance of the Emergency Permit.

Pursuant to the Article II Section 35-171.5.3, an Emergency Permit does not constitute an entitlement for demolition, and an application for the applicable planning permit must be submitted within 30 days following the granting of the Emergency Permit. A Coastal Development Permit with a public hearing (CDH) is required in order to permit the work described in the Emergency Permit. The CDH application was submitted on July 22, 2025 (Case No. 25CDH-00025), and staff is currently reviewing the application.

Issuance of the Emergency Permit was consistent with Article II, as the action provided an immediate response to an emergency situation in the interest of health, safety, and public welfare. The Director's issuance of the Emergency Permit was statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(a), which exempts projects that are a clear and imminent risk to life and property. As discussed above, the existing site development posed an immediate safety hazard to the public due to active bluff erosion. A copy of the Emergency Permit CEQA Exemption is included herein as Attachment B to Attachment A (Emergency Permit Case No. 25EMP-00004). The Board's receipt and filing of this report on Emergency Permit Case No. 25EMP-00004 is an administrative activity under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5) that does not constitute a separate project for purposes of environmental review.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

County staff costs for preparing the Emergency Permit are reimbursed by the applicant in conformance with the current Board-adopted fee ordinance. The estimated total cost to process this Emergency Permit is approximately 20 staff hours, which equates to \$6,040.00. Funding for this project is budgeted in the Planning & Development's Permitting Budget Program, on Page 307 of the County of Santa Barbara Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Adopted Budget. Costs associated with processing the Emergency Permit, as well as future permitting costs associated with this project, will be borne completely by the applicant.

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	FY 2025-26	Total
General Fund		
State		
Federal		
Fees	6,040.00	6,040.00
[Other Source]		
Total		6,040.00

Attachments:

Attachment A – Issued Emergency Permit 25EMP-00004

Attachment B – Site Plans

Contact Information:

Kathleen Volpi

Planner

volpik@countyofsb.org