

**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**



CHRIS SNEDDON
Director

Date: March 10, 2026
To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Chris Sneddon, Public Works Director

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SUBJECT: Replace Attachments A and B to the Ordinance to Amend Chapter 15A of the Santa Barbara County Code relating to Floodplain Management - Item A-23 on the February 24, 2026 agenda (File No. 26-00153)

The intent of this memorandum is to document minor additional revisions to the Ordinance amending Chapter 15A of the Santa Barbara County Code previously docketed. FEMA and CA Department of Water Resources previously reviewed the proposed edits to the ordinance, however, due to staff changes at FEMA, our region has now been staffed with a new FEMA representative that was familiarizing herself with SBCC Ordinance 15A and unexpectedly provided some additional feedback. This feedback prompted staff to make some slight modifications.

These modifications were added to the Ordinance Amending Chapter 15A (Attachment A) and the track changes document (Attachment B):

1. The definition of "FEMA Preliminary FIRM" was modified to reference a more general description.
2. The definition of "Violation" was moved and renumbered to be in the correct alphabetical order.
3. The definition of "Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Recovery Map" was removed as the County no longer utilizes this map for Floodplain Management per board action on 7-15-25.

Attachments:

Attachment A – An Ordinance amending Chapter 15A revised

Attachment B – An Ordinance amendment Chapter 15A (track changes) revised

Ordinance No. _____

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 15A OF THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
CODE RELATING TO FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT**

Sec. 15A-1. Statutory authorization.

The Legislature of the State of California has in Government Code sections 65302, 65560 and 65800 conferred upon local government units authority to adopt regulations designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizenry.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-2. Findings of fact.

- (a) The flood hazard areas of Santa Barbara County are subject to periodic inundation which results in loss of life and property, health and safety hazards, disruption of commerce and governmental services, extraordinary public expenditures for flood protection and relief, and impairment of the tax base, all of which adversely affect the public health, safety and general welfare.
- (b) These flood losses are caused by the cumulative effect of obstructions in areas of special flood hazards which increase flood heights and velocities, and when inadequately anchored, damage uses in other areas. Uses that are inadequately floodproofed, elevated or otherwise protected from flood damage also contribute to the flood loss.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-3. Statement of purpose.

It is the purpose of this chapter to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare, and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas by provisions designed:

- (a) To protect human life and health;
- (b) To minimize expenditure of public money for costly flood control projects;
- (c) To minimize the need for rescue and relief efforts associated flooding and generally undertaken at the expense of the general public;
- (d) To minimize prolonged business interruptions;
- (e) To minimize damage to public facilities and utilities such as water and gas mains, electric, telephone and sewer lines, streets and bridges located in areas of special flood hazard;

- (f) To help maintain a stable tax base by providing for the sound use and development of areas of special flood hazard so as to minimize future flood blight areas;
- (g) To insure that potential buyers are notified that property is in an area of special flood hazard; and
- (h) To insure that those who occupy the areas of special flood hazard assume responsibility for their actions.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-4. Methods of reducing flood losses.

In order to accomplish its purposes, this chapter includes methods and provisions for:

- (a) Restricting or prohibiting uses which are dangerous to health, safety, and property due to water or erosion hazards, or which result in damaging increases in erosion or flood heights or velocities;
- (b) Requiring that uses vulnerable to floods, including facilities which serve such uses, be protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction;
- (c) Controlling the alteration of natural floodplains, stream channels, and natural protective barriers, which help accommodate or channel flood waters;
- (d) Controlling filling, grading, dredging, and other development which may increase flood damage; and
- (e) Preventing or regulating the construction of flood barriers which will unnaturally divert flood waters or which may increase flood hazards in other areas.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-5. Definitions.

Unless specifically defined below, words or phrases used in this chapter shall be interpreted so as to give them the meaning they have in common usage and to give this chapter its most reasonable application.

- (1) "Accessory use" means a use which is incidental and subordinate to the principal use of the parcel of land on which it is located.
- (2) "Alluvial fan" means a geomorphologic feature characterized by a cone or fan-shaped deposit of boulders, gravel, and fine sediments that have been eroded from mountain slopes, transported by flood flows, and then deposited on the valley floors, and which is subject to flash flooding, high velocity flows, debris flows, erosion, sediment movement and deposition, and channel migration.
- (3) "Apex" means the point of highest elevation on an alluvial fan, which on undisturbed fans is generally the point where the major stream that formed the fan emerges from the mountain front.

- (4) "Appeal" means a request for a review of the floodplain administrator's interpretation of any provision of this chapter or a request for a variance.
- (5) "Area of shallow flooding" means a designated AO or AH Zone on the FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map), characterized by one or more of the following: (a) base flood depths ranging from one to three feet where a clearly defined channel does not exist, (b) an unpredictable and indeterminate path of flooding; (c) an evident velocity flow, (d) ponding or sheet flow.
- (6) "Area of special flood hazard." See "Special flood hazard area."
- (7) "Backfill" means the placement of fill material within a specified depression, hole or excavation pit below the surrounding adjacent ground level as a means of improving flood water conveyance or to restore the land to the natural contours existing prior to excavation.
- (8) "Base flood" means the flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (also called the "100-year flood"). The base flood is the national standard used by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and all Federal agencies for the purposes of requiring the purchase of flood insurance and regulating new development. Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) are typically shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).
- (9) "Base Flood Elevation" is the elevation of surface water resulting from a flood that has a one percent chance of equaling or exceeding that level in any given year. The BFE is shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for zones AE, AH, A1–A30, AR, AR/A, AR/AE, AR/A1– A30, AR/AH, AR/AO, V1–V30 and VE. If the preliminary base flood elevation in the Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) is higher than the base flood elevation in the Effective FIRM, the flood elevation that is the highest shall be used in the application of this chapter.
- (10) "Basement" means any area of the building having its floor subgrade (below ground level) on all sides.
- (11) "Board of directors" means the board of directors of the Santa Barbara County flood control and water conservation district.
- (12) "Breakaway walls" are any type of walls, whether solid or lattice, and whether constructed of concrete, masonry, wood, metal, plastic or any other suitable building material which is not part of the structural support of the building and which is designed to break away under abnormally high tides or wave action without causing any damage to the structural integrity of the building on which they are used or any buildings to which they might be carried by flood waters. A breakaway wall shall have a safe design loading resistance of not less than ten and no more than twenty pounds per square foot. Use of breakaway walls must be certified by a registered engineer or architect and shall meet the following conditions:
 - (A) Breakaway wall collapse shall result from a water load less than that which would occur during the base flood; and
 - (B) The elevated portion of the building shall not incur any structural damage due to the effects of wind and water loads acting simultaneously in the event of the base flood.

- (13) "Building." See "Structure."
- (14) "Building department" means the building and safety division of the planning and development department.
- (15) "Coastal high hazard area" means an area of special flood hazard extending from offshore to the inland limit of a primary frontal dune along an open coast and any other area subject to high velocity wave action from storms or seismic sources. It is an area subject to high velocity waters, including coastal and tidal inundation or tsunamis. The area is designated on a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as Zone V1-V30, VE or V.
- (16) "Crawlspace" is an under-floor space that has its interior floor area (finished or not) no more than 5 feet below the top of the next-higher floor. Crawlspaces generally have solid foundation walls.
- (17) "Critical feature" means an integral and readily identifiable part of a flood protection system, without which the flood protection provided by the entire system would be compromised.
- (18) "Curvilinear line" means the border on either a flood hazard boundary map or flood insurance rate map that delineates the special flood, mudslide (i.e., mudflow) and/or flood-related erosion hazard areas and consists of a curved or contour line that follows the topography.
- (19) "Development" means any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including, but not limited to, buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations or storage of equipment or materials.
- (20) "Encroachment" means the advance or infringement of uses, plant growth, fill, excavation, buildings, permanent structures or development into a floodplain which may impede or alter the flow capacity of a floodplain.
- (21) "Existing manufactured home park or subdivision" means a manufactured home park or subdivision for which the construction of facilities for servicing the lots on which the manufactured homes are to be affixed (including, at a minimum, the installation of utilities, the construction of streets, and either final site grading or the pouring of concrete pads) is completed before March 13, 1979.
- (22) "Expansion to an existing manufactured home park or subdivision" means the preparation of additional sites by the construction of facilities for servicing the lots on which the manufactured homes are to be affixed (including the installation of utilities, the construction of streets, and either final site grading or the pouring of concrete pads).
- (23) "Fill" is the placement of fill material at a specified location to bring the ground surface up to a desired elevation.
- (24) "Fill material" can be natural sand, dirt, soil or rock. For the purposes of floodplain management, fill material may include concrete, cement, soil cement, brick or similar material as approved on a case-by-case basis.
- (25) "Flood," "flooding," or "flood water" means:

- (A) A general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land areas from:
- (i) The overflow of inland or tidal waters,
 - (ii) The unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source, and/or
 - (iii) Mudslides (i.e., mudflows) which are proximately caused by flooding as defined in paragraph (A)(ii) of this definition and are akin to a river of liquid and flowing mud on the surfaces of normally dry land areas, as when earth is carried by a current of water and deposited along the path of the current; and
- (B) The collapse or subsidence of land along the shore of a lake or other body of water as a result of erosion or undermining caused by waves or currents of water exceeding anticipated cyclical levels or suddenly caused by an unusually high water level in a natural body of water, accompanied by a severe storm, or by an unanticipated force of nature, such as flash flood or an abnormal tidal surge, or by some similarly unusual and unforeseeable event which results in flooding as defined in paragraph (A)(i) of this definition.
- (26) "Flood elevation determination" means a determination by the floodplain administrator of the water surface elevations of the base flood, that is, the flood level that has a one percent or greater chance of occurrence in any given year.
- (27) "Flood elevation study" means an examination, evaluation, and determination of flood hazards and, if appropriate, corresponding water surface elevations, or an examination, evaluation and determination of mudslide (i.e., mudflow) and/or flood-related erosion hazards.
- (28) "Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)" means the official map on which the Federal Emergency Management Agency or Federal Insurance Administration (FEMA) has delineated both the areas of special flood hazards and the risk premium zones applicable to the community.
- (29) "(FEMA) Preliminary FIRM " is a draft, updated version of a community's flood hazard map formally released by FEMA.
- (30) "Flood insurance study" means the official report provided by the Federal Insurance Administration that includes flood profiles, the flood insurance rate map, the flood boundary and floodway map, and the water surface elevation of the base flood.
- (31) "Floodplain" or "flood-prone area" means any land area susceptible to being inundated by water from any source (see definition of "flooding").
- (32) "Floodplain administrator" is the flood control director or his designated agent. The floodplain administrator shall enforce the provisions of this chapter.
- (33) "Floodplain management" means the operation of an overall program of corrective and preventive measures for reducing flood damage, including, but not limited to, emergency

preparedness plans, flood control works and the administration and enforcement of this chapter.

- (34) "Flood protection system" means those physical structural works for which funds have been authorized, appropriated, and expended and which have been constructed specifically to modify flooding in order to reduce the extent of the area within a community subject to a "special flood hazard" and the extent of the depths of associated flooding. Such a system typically includes hurricane tidal barriers, dams, reservoirs, levees or dikes. These specialized flood modifying works are those constructed in conformance with sound engineering standards.
- (35) "Floodproofing" means any combination of structural and nonstructural additions, changes, or adjustments to structures which reduce or eliminate flood damage to real estate or improved real property, water and sanitary facilities, structures, and their contents.
- (36) "Floodway" means the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot. Also referred to as "regulatory floodway."
- (37) "Floodway encroachment lines" means the lines marking the limits of floodways on federal, state and local floodplain maps.
- (38) "Floodway fringe" is the areas of a floodplain on either side of the designated floodway where encroachment may be permitted.
- (39) "Fraud and victimization" related to section 15A-23 of this chapter means that the variance granted must not cause fraud on or victimization of the public. In examining this requirement, the floodplain administrator will consider the fact that every newly constructed building adds to government responsibilities and remains a part of the community for fifty to one hundred years. Buildings that are permitted to be constructed below the base flood elevation are subject during all those years to increased risk of damage from floods, while future owners of the property and the community as a whole are subject to all the costs, inconvenience, danger, and suffering that those increased flood damages bring. In addition, future owners may purchase the property, unaware that it is subject to potential flood damage, and can be insured only at very high flood insurance rates.
- (40) "Freeboard" means a factor of safety usually expressed in feet above a flood level for purposes of floodplain management. "Freeboard" tends to compensate for the many unknown factors that could contribute to flood heights greater than the height calculated for a selected size flood and floodway conditions, such as wave action, bridge openings, and the hydrological effect of urbanization of the watershed.
- (41) "Functionally dependent use" means a use which cannot perform its intended purpose unless it is located or carried out in close proximity to water. The term includes only docking facilities, port facilities that are necessary for the loading and unloading of cargo or

passengers, and ship building and ship repair facilities, but does not include long-term storage or related manufacturing facilities.

- (42) "Hardship" as related to section 15A-23 of this chapter means the hardship that would result from a failure to grant the requested variance. The floodplain administrator shall require that the variance be exceptional, unusual, and peculiar to the property involved. Mere economic or financial hardship alone is not exceptional. Inconvenience, aesthetic considerations, physical handicaps, personal preferences, or the disapproval of one's neighbors likewise cannot, as a rule, qualify as exceptional hardships. All of these problems can be resolved through other means, without granting a variance. This is so even if the alternative means are more expensive or complicated than building with a variance, or if they require the property owner to put the parcel to a different use than originally intended, or to build elsewhere.
- (43) "Highest adjacent grade" means the highest natural elevation of the ground surface prior to construction next to the proposed walls of a structure.
- (44) "Historic structure" means any structure that is:
- (A) Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (a listing maintained by the Department of the Interior) or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as meeting the requirements for individual listing on the National Register;
 - (B) Certified or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district registered as a historic district;
 - (C) Individually listed on a state inventory of historic places in states with historic preservation programs which have been approved by the Secretary of the Interior; or
 - (D) Individually listed on a local inventory of historic places in communities with historic preservation programs that have been certified either:
 - (i) By an approved state program as determined by the Secretary of the Interior, or
 - (ii) Directly by the Secretary of the Interior in states with approved programs.
- (45) "Landfill" means a permitted location for the disposal, placement or dumping of garbage, trash, debris, junk or waste material.
- (46) "Levee" means a man-made structure, usually an earthen embankment, designed and constructed in accordance with sound engineering practices to contain, control or divert the flow of water so as to provide protection from temporary flooding.
- (47) "Levee system" means a flood protection system which consists of a levee, or levees, and associated structures, such as closure and drainage devices, which are constructed and operated in accord with sound engineering practices.
- (48) "Lowest floor" means the lowest floor of the lowest enclosed area (including basement). An unfinished or flood resistant enclosure, usable solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage in an area other than a basement area is not considered a building's

lowest floor; provided, that such enclosure is not built so as to render the structure in violation of the applicable non-elevation design requirements of this chapter.

- (49) "Mangrove stand" means an assemblage of mangrove trees which are mostly low trees noted for a copious development of interlacing adventitious roots above the ground and which contain one or more of the following species: black mangrove (*Avicennia Nitida*); red mangrove (*Rhizophora Mangle*), white mangrove (*Languncularia Racemosa*), and buttonwood (*Conocarpus Erecta*).
- (50) "Manufactured home" means a structure, transportable in one or more sections, which is built on a permanent chassis and is designed for use with or without a permanent foundation when attached to the required utilities. The term "manufactured home" does not include a "recreational vehicle."
- (51) "Manufactured home park or subdivision" means a parcel, or contiguous parcels, of land divided into two or more manufactured home lots for rent or sale.
- (52) "Map" means the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for a community issued by the Flood Insurance Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the FEMA Preliminary FIRM.
- (53) "Market value" means, for the purposes of determining substantial improvement, the value of the structure in question. It does not pertain to the land, landscaping or any other structures on the property, but only to the structure for which the improvement is proposed. Market value shall be determined by a professional appraiser as the cost to replace the structure in new condition, adjusted by the amount of depreciation that has accrued since the structure was constructed. The cost of replacement shall be based on a square foot cost factor determined by reference to a building cost estimating guide recognized by the building construction industry. The amount of depreciation shall be determined by taking into account the age and physical deterioration of the structure and the functional obsolescence, but shall not include economic or other forms of external obsolescence.
- (54) "Mean sea level" means, for purposes of the National Flood Insurance Program, the National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) of 1929 or other datum.
- (55) "Minimum necessary" related to section 15A-23 of this chapter means the minimum necessary to afford relief to the applicant for a variance with a minimum deviation from the requirements of this chapter. In the case of variances to an elevation requirement, this means the floodplain administrator need not grant permission for the applicant to build at grade, for example, or even to whatever elevation the applicant proposes, but only that level that the floodplain administrator believes will both provide relief and preserve the integrity of this chapter.
- (56) "Mudslide" (i.e., mudflow) describes a condition where there is a river, flow or inundation of liquid mud down a hillside usually as a result of a dual condition of loss of brush cover, and the subsequent accumulation of water on the ground preceded by a period of unusually heavy or sustained rain.

- (57) "Mudslide (i.e., mudflow) prone area" means an area with land surfaces and slopes of unconsolidated material where the history, geology and climate vindicate a potential for mudflow.
- (58) "New construction," for floodplain management purposes, means structures for which the "start of construction" commenced on or after March 13, 1979. "New construction" includes any improvements to such structures on or after March 13, 1979.
- (59) "New manufactured home park or subdivision" means a manufactured home park or subdivision for which the construction of facilities for servicing the lots on which the manufactured homes are to be affixed (including at a minimum, the installation of utilities, the construction of streets, and either final site grading or the pouring of concrete pads) is completed on or after March 13, 1979.
- (60) "Non-conversion Agreement" is a legal document signed by the property owner and recorded on the property deed in Santa Barbara County Clerk-Recorder's Office, that restricts non-habitable enclosures and areas below the base flood elevation (BFE) plus two feet from being converted to a prohibited use, such as habitable living space, finished rooms, or other uses inconsistent with Floodplain Management Ordinance 15A and the terms of the issued building permit.
- (61) "Obstruction" includes, but is not limited to, any dam, wall, wharf, embankment, levee, dike, pile, abutment, protection, excavation, channelization, bridge, conduit, culvert, building, wire, fence, rock, gravel, refuse, fill, structure, vegetation or other material in, along, across or projecting into any watercourse which may alter, impede, retard or change the direction and/or velocity of the flow of water, or due to its location, its propensity to snare or collect debris carried by the flow of water or its likelihood of being carried downstream.
- (62) "One hundred year flood" or "100-year flood" means a flood which has a one percent annual probability of being equaled or exceeded. It is identical to the "base flood," which will be the term used throughout this chapter.
- (63) "Primary frontal dune" means a continuous or nearly continuous mound or ridge of sand with relatively steep seaward and landward slopes immediately landward and adjacent to the beach and subject to erosion and overtopping from high tides and waves during major coastal storms. The inland limit of the primary frontal dune occurs at the point where there is a distinct change from a relatively mild slope.
- (64) "Principal structure" means a structure used for the principal use of the property as distinguished from an accessory use.
- (65) "Public safety and nuisances" as related to section 15A-23 of this chapter means the granting of a variance must not result in additional threats to public safety or create nuisances. This chapter is intended to help protect the health, safety, well-being, and property of the local citizens. This is a long-range community effort made up of a combination of approaches such as adequate drainage systems, warning and evacuation

plans, and keeping new property above the flood levels. These long-term goals can only be met if exceptions to the requirements of this chapter are kept to a bare minimum.

- (66) "Recreational vehicle" means a vehicle which is:
- (A) Built on a single chassis;
 - (B) Four hundred square feet or less when measured at the largest horizontal projection;
 - (C) Designed to be self-propelled or permanently towable by a light duty truck; and
 - (D) Designed primarily not for use as a permanent dwelling but as temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, travel, or seasonal use.
- (67) "Regulatory floodway" means the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height.
- (68) "Riverine" means relating to, formed by, or resembling a river (including tributaries), stream, brook, etc.
- (69) "Sand dunes" means naturally occurring accumulations of sand in ridges or mounds landward of the beach.
- (70) "Sheet flow area." See "Area of shallow flooding."
- (71) "Special flood hazard area (SFHA)" means an area having special flood hazard as shown on a Flood Hazard Boundary Map (FHBM) or FIRM as Zone A, AO, A1-A30, AE, A99, AH, V1-V30, VE or V or shown in the FEMA Preliminary FIRM.
- (72) "Start of construction" includes substantial improvements and other proposed new development and means the date the building permit was issued, provided the actual start of construction, repair, reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, placement, or other improvement was within one hundred eighty days from the date of the permit. The actual start means either the first placement of permanent construction of a structure on a site, such as the pouring of slab or footings, the installation of piles, the construction of columns, or any work beyond the stage of excavation; or the placement of a manufactured home on a foundation. Permanent construction does not include land preparation, such as clearing, grading and filling; nor does it include the installation of streets and/or walkways; nor does it include excavation for a basement, footings, piers, or foundations or the erection of temporary forms; nor does it include the installation on the property of accessory buildings, such as garages or sheds not occupied as dwelling units or not part of the main structure. For a substantial improvement the actual start of construction means the first alteration of any wall, ceiling, floor, or other structural part of a building, whether or not that alteration affect the external dimensions of the building.
- (73) "Structure" means a walled and roofed building, including a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground. "Structure" also includes manufactured homes.

- (74) "Substantial damage" means damage of any origin sustained by a structure whereby the cost of restoring the structure to its before damaged condition would equal or exceed fifty percent of the market value of the structure before the damage occurred.
- (75) "Substantial improvement" means any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other proposed new development of a structure, or any accumulation thereof occurring after October 7, 2008, or within the last ten years, whichever is shorter, the cost of which equals or exceeds fifty percent of the market value of the structure before the "start of construction" of the improvement. This term includes structures which have incurred "substantial damage," regardless of the actual repair work performed. The term does not, however, include either (a) any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations or state or local health, sanitary, or safety code specifications which have been identified by the local code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary to assure safe living conditions, or (b) any alteration of a "historic structure," provided that the alteration will not preclude the structure's continued designation as a "historic structure."
- (76) "V zone." See "Coastal high hazard area."
- (77) "Variance" means a grant of relief from the requirements of this chapter which permits construction in a manner that would otherwise be prohibited by this chapter.
- (78) "Violation" means the failure of a structure or other development to be fully in compliance with the requirements and provisions of this chapter or any variances issued pursuant to sections 15A-23 through 15A-25 of this chapter. A structure or other development without an elevation certificate, other certification, or other evidence of compliance required in this chapter is presumed to be in violation until such time as that documentation is provided to the floodplain administrator.
- (79) "Water surface elevation" means the height, in relation to the North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88), (or other FEMA-specified datum) of floods of various magnitudes and frequencies in the floodplains of coastal or riverine areas.
- (80) "Watercourse" means a lake, river, creek, stream, wash, arroyo, channel or other topographic feature on or over which waters flow at least periodically. Watercourse also includes specifically designated areas in which substantial flood damage may occur.
- (Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 4698, § 2; Ord. No. 4768, § 2, 12-7-2010; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-6. Lands to which this chapter applies.

This chapter shall apply to all areas of special flood hazards within the unincorporated area of the County of Santa Barbara.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-7. Basis for establishing the areas of special flood hazard.

The areas of special flood hazard identified by the Federal Insurance Administration of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the Flood Insurance Study dated September 1978 and the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), dated March 15, 1979, and all subsequent amendments and/or revisions, are hereby adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this chapter. Additionally, all subsequent preliminary FIRMs (and associated products) are hereby adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this chapter to be applied at the discretion of the District, when determined to be the best available information. This Flood Insurance Study and attendant mapping is the minimum area of applicability of this chapter and may be supplemented by studies for other areas which allow implementation of this chapter and which are recommended to the board of directors by the floodplain administrator. The study and Flood Insurance Rate Maps are on file with the office of the county clerk, 105 East Anapamu Street, Room 407, Santa Barbara, California; at the office of the Santa Barbara County flood control district at 130 E. Victoria Street, Suite 200, Santa Barbara, California; and the county building official at 123 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, California.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-8. Compliance.

No structure or land shall thereafter be constructed, located, extended, converted, or altered without full compliance with the terms of this chapter. It shall be unlawful for any person to violate any provision or to fail to comply with any of the mandatory requirements (including violations of conditions and safeguards established in connection with conditions) of this chapter. A violation of any of the provisions or failing to comply with any of the mandatory requirements of this chapter shall constitute a misdemeanor; except notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, any such violation constituting a misdemeanor under this chapter may, in the discretion of the district attorney, be charged and prosecuted as an infraction.

Any person convicted of a misdemeanor under the provisions of this Code, unless provision is otherwise herein made, shall be punishable by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period of not more than six months or by both fine and imprisonment. Any person convicted of an infraction under the provisions of this chapter, unless provision is otherwise herein made, shall be punishable by fine only as follows: Upon a first conviction, by a fine not exceeding two hundred fifty dollars and for a second conviction or any subsequent conviction within a period of one year, by a fine of not exceeding five hundred dollars.

Each such person shall be charged with a separate offense for each and every day during any portion of which any violation of any provision of this chapter is committed, continued or permitted by such person and shall, upon conviction be punished accordingly.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-9. Abrogation and greater restrictions.

This chapter is not intended to repeal, abrogate, or impair any existing easements, covenants, or deed restrictions. However, where this chapter, another ordinance, easement, covenant, or deed restriction conflict or overlap, whichever imposes the more stringent restrictions shall prevail.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-10. Interpretation.

In the interpretation and application of this chapter, all provisions shall be:

- (a) Considered as minimum requirements;
- (b) Liberally construed in favor of the Santa Barbara County flood control and water conservation district; and
- (c) Deemed neither to limit nor repeal any other powers granted under state statutes.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-11. Warning and disclaimer of liability.

The degree of flood protection required by this chapter is considered reasonable for regulatory purposes and is based on scientific and engineering considerations. Larger floods can and will occur on rare occasions. Flood heights may be increased by man-made or natural causes. This chapter does not imply that land outside the areas of special flood hazards or uses permitted within such areas will be free from flooding or flood damages. This chapter shall not create liability, or any duty upon which liability may arise, on the part of the County of Santa Barbara, the Santa Barbara County flood control and water conservation district, any officer or employee thereof, or the Federal Insurance Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, for any flood damages that result from reliance on this chapter or any administrative decision lawfully made thereunder.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-12. Severability.

This chapter and the various parts thereof are hereby declared to be severable. Should any section of this chapter be declared by the courts to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the chapter as a whole, or any portion thereof other than the section so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-13. Establishment of development permit.

A development permit shall be obtained before any construction or other development begins within any area of special flood hazard established in section 15A-7. Application for a development permit shall be made on forms furnished by the building division and may include, but not be limited to: plans in duplicate drawn to scale showing the nature, location, dimensions, and elevation of the area in question; existing or proposed structures, fill, storage of materials, drainage facilities; and the location of the foregoing. Specifically, the following information is required for plan submittals which propose development within any of the A or V zones:

- (a) Proposed elevation in relation to mean sea level, of the lowest floor (including basement) of all structures. In zone AO, elevation of highest adjacent grade and proposed elevation of lowest floor of all structures.
- (b) Proposed elevation in relation to mean sea level to which any structure will be floodproofed;
- (c) All appropriate certifications listed in subsection 15A-15(d)(1) of this chapter; and
- (d) Description of the extent to which any watercourse will be altered or relocated as a result of proposed development.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-14. Designation of the floodplain administrator and building official.

The floodplain administrator is hereby appointed to administer and implement this chapter. The floodplain administrator and the building official shall enter into a memo of understanding concerning the administration and enforcement of this chapter so as to ensure that the provisions of this chapter are implemented prior to issuance of a building permit by the building official.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-15. Duties and responsibilities of the floodplain administrator.

The duties and responsibilities of the floodplain administrator shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Permit Review.
 - (1) Reviewing all development permits within areas of special flood hazard to determine that the permit requirements of this chapter have been satisfied;
 - (2) Determining that the site is reasonably safe from flooding; and
 - (3) Determining that the proposed development does not adversely affect the carrying capacity of areas where base flood elevations have been determined but

a floodway has not been designated. For purposes of this chapter, "adversely affects" means that the cumulative effect of the proposed development when combined with all other existing and anticipated development will increase the water surface elevation of the base flood more than one foot at any point.

- (4) Review proposed development to assure that all necessary permits have been received from those governmental agencies from which approval is required by federal or state law, including Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972, 33 U.S.C. 1334.
- (b) Use of Other Base Flood Data. Obtaining, reviewing, and utilizing any base flood elevation and floodway data available from a federal or state agency, or other source, in order to administer sections 15A-13 and 15A-16 through 15A-25 when base flood elevation data has not been provided in accordance with section 15A-7.
- (c) Notification to Other Agencies.
 - (1) Notifying adjacent communities and the California Department of Water Resources prior to such alteration or relocation of a watercourse, and submitting evidence of such notification to the Federal Insurance Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, whenever a watercourse is to be altered or relocated.
 - (2) Requiring that the flood carrying capacity of the altered or relocated portion of said watercourse be maintained.
 - (3) Base flood elevation changes due to physical alterations:
 - a. Within six months of information becoming available or project completion, whichever comes first, of a project that implements physical measures that affect the hydrogeologic or hydraulic characteristics of a flooding source and thus result in the modification of the existing regulatory floodway, the effective base flood elevations, or the special flood hazard area the floodplain administrator shall submit or require that the permit applicant submits technical or scientific data to FEMA for a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR). Such submissions to FEMA are necessary so that upon confirmation of those physical changes affecting flooding conditions, risk premium rates and floodplain management requirements are based on current data.
 - b. If a LOMR is requested prior to issuance of a building permit, the LOMR for the proposed flood control project must be approved prior to the issuance of building permits. Building permits must not be issued based on Conditional Letters of Map Revision (CLOMR's). Approved CLOMR's may allow construction of the proposed flood control project and land preparation as specified in the "start of construction" definition.
 - c. Changes in County Boundaries. Notify FEMA in writing whenever the county boundaries have been modified by annexation or other means and include a copy of a map of the community clearly delineating the new county limits.

- (d) **Public Inspection.** Obtaining and maintaining for public inspection and making available as needed:
 - (1) The certification required by subsection 15A-16(c)(1) (floor elevations); and
 - (2) The certification required by subsection 15A-16(c)(2) (elevations in areas of shallow flooding); and
 - (3) The certification required by subsection 15A-16(c)(3)(C) (elevation or floodproofing of nonresidential structures); and
 - (4) The certification required by subsection 15A-16(c)(4)(A) or 15A-16(c)(4)(B) (wet floodproofing standard);
 - (5) The certification of elevation required by subsection 15A-18(b) (subdivision standards);
 - (6) The certification required by subsection 15A-21(a) (floodway encroachments);
 - (7) The information required by subsection 15A-22(f) (coastal construction standards).
- (e) **Boundary Determination.** Making interpretations where needed, as to the exact location of the boundaries of the areas of special flood hazards (for example, where there appears to be a conflict between a mapped boundary and actual field conditions). The person contesting the location of the boundary shall be given a reasonable opportunity to appeal the interpretation as provided in section 15A-24.
- (f) **Enforcement.** Taking action to remedy violations of this chapter as specified in section 15A-8 herein.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 4536, § 2; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-16. Standards of construction.

In all special flood hazard areas and in areas adjacent to special flood hazard areas behind earthen embankments, berms or otherwise unaccredited levees; the following standards are required:

- (a) **Anchoring.**
 - (1) All new construction, substantial improvements, and other proposed new development shall be adequately anchored to prevent flotation, collapse or lateral movement of the structure resulting from hydrodynamic and hydrostatic loads, including the effects of buoyancy.
 - (2) All manufactured homes shall meet the anchoring standards of section 15A-19.
- (b) **Construction Materials and Methods.**
 - (1) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall be constructed with materials and utility equipment resistant to flood damage to two feet above the base flood elevation (BFE)..

- (2) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall be constructed using methods and practices that minimize flood damage.
 - (3) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall be constructed with electrical, heating, ventilation, plumbing and air conditioning equipment and other service facilities that are designed and/or elevated to two feet above the base flood elevation (BFE) so as to prevent water from entering or accumulating within the components during conditions of flooding.
 - (4) Within zones AH or AO, the floodplain administrator shall require that adequate drainage paths around structures on slopes to guide flood waters around and away from proposed structures.
- (c) Elevation and Floodproofing.
- (1) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated two feet above the base flood elevation (BFE). Nonresidential structures may meet the standards in subsection (c)(3) of this section. Prior to erection of wall framing, the elevation of the lowest floor including basement shall be certified by a registered professional engineer or surveyor, or verified by the floodplain administrator to be properly elevated.
 - (2) All new construction, substantial improvement, and other proposed new development in Zone AO shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated at least two feet higher than the depth number specified, in feet, on the FIRM, or at least four feet above highest adjacent natural grade if no depth number is specified. Nonresidential structures may meet the standards in subsection (c)(3). Prior to erection of wall framing, the elevation of the lowest floor including basement shall be certified by a registered professional engineer or surveyor, or verified by the floodplain administrator to be properly elevated.
 - (3) Nonresidential construction shall either be elevated to conform with subsections (c)(1) or (2), or together with attendant utility and sanitary facilities:
 - (A) Be floodproofed two feet above the base flood elevation (BFE) so that the structure is watertight with walls substantially impermeable to the passage of water; and
 - (B) Have structural components capable of resisting hydrostatic and hydrodynamic loads and effects of buoyancy; and
 - (C) Be certified by a registered professional engineer or architect that the standards of this subsection are satisfied. Such certifications shall be provided to the floodplain administrator.
 - (4) The floodplain administrator shall require, for all new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development, that fully enclosed areas

below the base flood elevation plus two feet that are usable solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage in an area other than a basement and which are subject to flooding shall be designed to automatically equalize hydrostatic flood forces on exterior walls by allowing for the entry and exit of floodwater. Designs for meeting this requirement must be certified by a registered professional engineer or architect and meet or exceed the following minimum criteria:

- (A) Either a minimum of two openings on separate walls having a total net area of not less than one square inch for every square foot of enclosed area subject to flooding shall be provided; the bottom of all such openings shall be no higher than one foot above grade (openings may be equipped with screens, louvers, valves or other coverings or devices provided that they permit the automatic entry and exit of floodwater) Use of non-engineered vents with permanent louvers, mesh screening, or similar will require a 30% safety factor applied to the net effective open area calculations.
- (B) A non-conversion agreement must be submitted for all non-habitable enclosures and areas (except crawlspaces) below the base flood elevation plus two feet. The agreement must be recorded with the deed for the property.

(5) Manufactured homes shall also meet the standards in section 15A-19.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 4536, § 3; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-17. Standards for utilities.

- (a) All new and replacement water supply and sanitary sewage systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of flood waters into the system and discharge from systems into flood waters.
- (b) On-site waste disposal systems shall be located to avoid impairment to them or contamination from them during flooding.
- (c) Other utilities are addressed at subsections 15A-16(b) and 15A-18(d).

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-18. Standards for subdivisions.

- (a) All preliminary subdivision proposals shall identify the flood hazard area and the elevation of the base flood.
- (b) All final subdivision plans will provide the elevation of proposed structure(s) and pad(s). If the site is filled two feet above the base flood elevation, the final pad elevation shall be certified by a registered professional engineer or surveyor and provided to the floodplain administrator.

- (c) All subdivision proposals shall be consistent with the need to minimize flood damage.
 - (d) All subdivision proposals shall have public utilities and facilities such as sewer, gas, electrical and water systems located and constructed to minimize flood damage.
 - (e) All subdivisions shall provide adequate drainage to reduce exposure to flood hazards.
- (Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-19. Standards for manufactured homes.

- (a) All manufactured homes that are placed or substantially improved within a special flood hazard area on the community's flood insurance rate map (1) outside of a manufactured home park or subdivision, (2) in a new manufactured home park or subdivision, or (3) in an expansion to an existing manufactured home park or subdivision shall:
 - (1) Within Zones AE, AH and AO, be elevated on a permanent foundation such that the lowest floor of the manufactured home is elevated two feet above the base flood elevation, and be securely fastened to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement;
 - (2) Within Zone A, be elevated on a permanent foundation and securely fastened to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement.
- (b) All manufactured homes that are placed or substantially improved within a special flood hazard area on the community's flood insurance rate map (4) in an existing manufactured home park or subdivision shall:
 - (1) Within Zones AE, AH and AO, be elevated on a permanent foundation such that the lowest floor of the manufactured home is elevated two feet above the base flood elevation, and be securely fastened to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement; unless such minimum elevation is lowered by the floodplain administrator at his discretion (but not below the base flood elevation plus one foot),
 - (2) Within Zone A, be elevated on a permanent foundation and securely fastened to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement.
- (c) All manufactured homes to be placed or substantially improved on sites within Zones V and VE are subject to the Coastal High Hazard Standards in section 15A-22 and shall be elevated on adequately anchored pilings or columns and securely fastened to such pilings or columns to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement and so that the lowest horizontal portion of the structural members of the lowest floor (excluding the pilings or columns) is elevated two feet above the base flood elevation.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. 4698, § 3; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-20. Standards for recreational vehicles.

All recreational vehicles placed on-sites within a floodplain shown on the Santa Barbara County flood insurance rate map will either:

- (a) Be on the site for fewer than one hundred eighty consecutive days;
- (b) Be fully licensed and ready for highway use; or
- (c) Meet the permit requirements of sections 15A-13 of this chapter and either: (1) for zones A1-30, AH, and AE within zones A1-30, AH, AE, meet the elevation and anchoring requirements for manufactured homes in sections 15A-19(a) or (2) for zones V1-V30, V, and VE, meet the coastal high hazard standards in subsection 15A-19(b).

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-21. Floodways.

Located within areas of special flood hazard established in section 15A-7 are areas designated as floodways. Since the floodway is an extremely hazardous area due to the velocity of flood waters which carry debris, potential projectiles, and erosion potential, the following provisions apply:

- (a) Prohibiting encroachments, including fill, new construction, substantial improvement, and other new development unless certification by a registered professional engineer is provided demonstrating that encroachments shall not result in any increase in flood levels during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.
- (b) If subsection (a) of this section is satisfied, all new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall comply with all other applicable flood hazard reduction provisions of sections 15A-13 and 15A-16 through 15A-25.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 4536, § 4; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-22. Coastal high hazard areas.

Within coastal high hazard areas established in section 15A-7, the following standards shall apply:

- (a) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall be elevated on adequately anchored pilings or columns and securely anchored to such pilings or columns so that the lowest horizontal portion of the structural members of the lowest floor (excluding the pilings or columns) is elevated to or above the base flood elevation plus two feet. The pile or column foundation and structure attached thereto is anchored to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement due to the effects of wind and water loads acting simultaneously on all building components.

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Water loading values used shall be those associated with the base flood elevation plus two feet. Wind loading values used shall be those required by applicable state or local building standards.

- (b) All new construction, shall be located landward of the reach of mean high tide.
- (c) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall have the space below the lowest floor free of obstructions or constructed with breakaway walls as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter. Such enclosed space shall not be used for human habitation and will be useable solely for parking of vehicles or building-access.
- (d) Fill shall not be used for structural support of buildings.
- (e) Man-made alteration of sand dunes which would increase potential flood damage is prohibited.
- (f) The floodplain administrator shall obtain and maintain the following records:
 - (1) Certification by a registered engineer or architect that a proposed structure complies with subsection (a) of this section.
 - (2) The elevation (in relation to mean sea level) of the bottom of the lowest structural member of the lowest floor (excluding pilings or columns) of all new and substantially improved structures, and whether such structures contain a basement.
- (g) Properties within the Coastal Repetitive Loss Zone are subject to Resolution 92-138, and all subsequent amendments to said resolution.

Resolution: <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/3ea7a145-0559-468b-b2f8-451c821c2e7d>

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-23. Nature of variances.

The variance criteria set forth in this section of the chapter are based on the general principle of zoning law that variances pertain to a piece of property and are not personal in nature. Though these standards vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, in general, a properly issued variance is granted for a parcel of property with physical characteristics so unusual that complying with the requirements of this chapter would create an exceptional hardship to the applicant or the surrounding property owners. The characteristics must be unique to the property and not be shared by adjacent parcels. The unique characteristic must pertain to the land itself, not to the structure, its inhabitants, or the property owners.

It is the objective of the board of directors to help protect its citizens from flooding. This need is so compelling, and the implications of the cost of insuring a structure built below flood level are so serious that variances from the flood elevation or from other requirements in the

flood chapter are quite rare. Therefore, the variance guidelines provided in this chapter are more detailed and contain multiple provisions that must be met before a variance can be properly granted. The criteria are designed to screen out those situations in which alternatives other than a variance are more appropriate.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-24. Application for variances.

- (a) A person may file an application for a variance from the requirements of this chapter with the floodplain administrator.
- (b) The floodplain administrator shall act on and make written determinations on applications for variances from the requirements of this chapter.
- (c) In passing upon such applications, the floodplain administrator shall consider all technical evaluations, all relevant factors, standards specified in other sections of this chapter, and shall also consider:
 - (1) The danger that materials may be swept onto other lands to the injury of others;
 - (2) The danger of life and property due to flooding or erosion damage;
 - (3) The susceptibility of the proposed facility and its contents to flood damage and the effect of such damage on the existing individual owner and future owners of the property;
 - (4) The importance of the services provided by the proposed facility to Santa Barbara County;
 - (5) The necessity to the facility of a waterfront location, where applicable;
 - (6) The availability of alternative locations for the proposed use which are not subject to flooding or erosion damage;
 - (7) The compatibility of the proposed use with existing and anticipated development;
 - (8) The relationship of the proposed use to the comprehensive plan and floodplain management program for that area;
 - (9) The safety of access to the property in time of flood for ordinary and emergency vehicles;
 - (10) The expected heights, velocity, duration, rate of rise, and sediment transport of the flood waters expected at the site; and
 - (11) The costs of providing governmental services during and after flood conditions, including maintenance and repair of public utilities and facilities such as sewer, gas, electrical, and water system, and streets and bridges.
- (d) Any applicant to whom a variance is granted shall be given written notice over the signature of the floodplain administrator that (1) the issuance of a variance to construct a

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structure below the base flood elevation will result in increased premium rates for flood and (2) such construction below the base flood elevation increases risks to life and property. A copy of the notice shall be recorded by the applicant in the office of the Santa Barbara County recorder, and shall be recorded in a manner so that it appears in the chain of title of the affected parcel of land; and a conformed copy of said recordation shall be provided to the floodplain administrator as indicated in the conditions attached to the variance.

- (e) The floodplain administrator will maintain a record of all variance actions, including justification for their issuance, and report such variances issued in its biennial report submitted to the Federal Insurance Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-25. Conditions for variances.

- (a) Generally, variances may be issued for new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development to be erected on a lot of one-half acre or less in size contiguous to and surrounded by lots with existing structures constructed below the base flood level, providing that the procedures of sections 15A-13 and 15A-16 through 15A-25 of this chapter have been fully considered. As the lot size increases beyond one-half acre, the technical justification required for issuing the variance increases.
- (b) Variances may be issued for the repair or rehabilitation of "historic structures" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter) upon a determination that the proposed repair or rehabilitation will not preclude the structure's continued designation as a historic structure and the variance is the minimum necessary to preserve the historic character and design of the structure.
- (c) Variances shall not be issued within any designated floodway if any increase in flood levels during the base flood discharge would result.
- (d) Variances shall only be issued upon a determination that the variance is the "minimum necessary" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter), considering the flood hazard, to afford relief.
- (e) Variances shall only be issued upon (1) a showing of good and sufficient cause; (2) a determination that failure to grant the variance would result in exceptional "hardship" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter) to the applicant; and (3) a determination that the granting of a variance will not result in increased flood heights, additional threats to public safety, extraordinary public expense, create "nuisances" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter), cause "fraud or victimization" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter) of the public, or conflict with existing local laws or ordinances.
- (f) Variances may be issued for new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development necessary for the conduct of a functionally dependent use provided that the provisions of subsections (a) through (e) of this section are satisfied and

that the structure or other development is protected by methods that minimize flood damages during the base flood and create no additional threats to public safety.

- (g) Upon consideration of the factors of subsection 15A-24(c) and the purposes of this chapter, the floodplain administrator may attach such conditions to the granting of variances as it deems necessary to further the purposes of this chapter.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-26. Effective date.

This chapter shall take effect and be in force thirty days from the date of its passage; and before the expiration of fifteen days after its passage it, or a summary of it, shall be published once, with the names of the members of the board of supervisors voting for and against the same in a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Santa Barbara.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED, this _____ day of _____, 2026 by the following vote:

- AYES:
- NOES:
- ABSTAIN:
- ABSENT:

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

Bob Nelson, Chair, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:
MONA MIYASATO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CLERK OF THE BOARD

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
RACHEL VAN MULLEM
COUNTY COUNSEL

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Signed by:
Jennifer Richardson
By: _____
4E23C75F9F624C1...
Deputy

CHAPTER 15A FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

Sec. 15A-1. Statutory authorization.

The Legislature of the State of California has in Government Code sections 65302, 65560 and 65800 conferred upon local government units authority to adopt regulations designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizenry.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-2. Findings of fact.

- (a) The flood hazard areas of Santa Barbara County are subject to periodic inundation which results in loss of life and property, health and safety hazards, disruption of commerce and governmental services, extraordinary public expenditures for flood protection and relief, and impairment of the tax base, all of which adversely affect the public health, safety and general welfare.
- (b) These flood losses are caused by the cumulative effect of obstructions in areas of special flood hazards which increase flood heights and velocities, and when inadequately anchored, damage uses in other areas. Uses that are inadequately floodproofed, elevated or otherwise protected from flood damage also contribute to the flood loss.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-3. Statement of purpose.

It is the purpose of this chapter to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare, and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas by provisions designed:

- (a) To protect human life and health;
- (b) To minimize expenditure of public money for costly flood control projects;
- (c) To minimize the need for rescue and relief efforts associated flooding and generally undertaken at the expense of the general public;
- (d) To minimize prolonged business interruptions;
- (e) To minimize damage to public facilities and utilities such as water and gas mains, electric, telephone and sewer lines, streets and bridges located in areas of special flood hazard;
- (f) To help maintain a stable tax base by providing for the sound use and development of areas of special flood hazard so as to minimize future flood blight areas;
- (g) To insure that potential buyers are notified that property is in an area of special flood hazard; and
- (h) To insure that those who occupy the areas of special flood hazard assume responsibility for their actions.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-4. Methods of reducing flood losses.

In order to accomplish its purposes, this chapter includes methods and provisions for:

- (a) Restricting or prohibiting uses which are dangerous to health, safety, and property due to water or erosion hazards, or which result in damaging increases in erosion or flood heights or velocities;
- (b) Requiring that uses vulnerable to floods, including facilities which serve such uses, be protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction;
- (c) Controlling the alteration of natural floodplains, stream channels, and natural protective barriers, which help accommodate or channel flood waters;
- (d) Controlling filling, grading, dredging, and other development which may increase flood damage; and
- (e) Preventing or regulating the construction of flood barriers which will unnaturally divert flood waters or which may increase flood hazards in other areas.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-5. Definitions.

Unless specifically defined below, words or phrases used in this chapter shall be interpreted so as to give them the meaning they have in common usage and to give this chapter its most reasonable application.

- (1) "Accessory use" means a use which is incidental and subordinate to the principal use of the parcel of land on which it is located.
- (2) "Alluvial fan" means a geomorphologic feature characterized by a cone or fan-shaped deposit of boulders, gravel, and fine sediments that have been eroded from mountain slopes, transported by flood flows, and then deposited on the valley floors, and which is subject to flash flooding, high velocity flows, debris flows, erosion, sediment movement and deposition, and channel migration.
- (3) "Apex" means the point of highest elevation on an alluvial fan, which on undisturbed fans is generally the point where the major stream that formed the fan emerges from the mountain front.
- (4) "Appeal" means a request for a review of the floodplain administrator's interpretation of any provision of this chapter or a request for a variance.
- (5) "Area of shallow flooding" means a designated AO or AH Zone on the FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map), characterized by one or more of the following: (a) base flood depths ranging from one to three feet where a clearly defined channel does not exist, (b) an unpredictable and indeterminate path of flooding; (c) an evident velocity flow, (d) ponding or sheet flow.
- (6) "Area of special flood hazard." See "Special flood hazard area."
- (7) "Backfill" means the placement of fill material within a specified depression, hole or excavation pit below the surrounding adjacent ground level as a means of improving flood water conveyance or to restore the land to the natural contours existing prior to excavation.
- (8) "Base flood"~~,-also called advisory flood elevation-~~ means the flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (also called the "100-year flood"). ~~If the advisory flood elevation in the FEMA Recovery Map is higher than the base flood elevation in the FIRM Map, the flood elevation that is the highest shall be used in the application of this chapter.~~ The base flood is the national standard used by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and all Federal agencies for the purposes of requiring the purchase

of flood insurance and regulating new development. Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) are typically shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).

(9) "Base Flood Elevation" is the elevation of surface water resulting from a flood that has a one percent chance of equaling or exceeding that level in any given year. The BFE is shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for zones AE, AH, A1–A30, AR, AR/A, AR/AE, AR/A1– A30, AR/AH, AR/AO, V1–V30 and VE. If the preliminary base flood elevation in the Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) is higher than the base flood elevation in the Effective FIRM, the flood elevation that is the highest shall be used in the application of this chapter.

~~(9)~~(10) "Basement" means any area of the building having its floor subgrade (below ground level) on all sides.

~~(10)~~(11) "Board of directors" means the board of directors of the Santa Barbara County flood control and water conservation district.

~~(11)~~(12) "Breakaway walls" are any type of walls, whether solid or lattice, and whether constructed of concrete, masonry, wood, metal, plastic or any other suitable building material which is not part of the structural support of the building and which is designed to break away under abnormally high tides or wave action without causing any damage to the structural integrity of the building on which they are used or any buildings to which they might be carried by flood waters. A breakaway wall shall have a safe design loading resistance of not less than ten and no more than twenty pounds per square foot. Use of breakaway walls must be certified by a registered engineer or architect and shall meet the following conditions:

- (A) Breakaway wall collapse shall result from a water load less than that which would occur during the base flood; and
- (B) The elevated portion of the building shall not incur any structural damage due to the effects of wind and water loads acting simultaneously in the event of the base flood.

~~(12)~~(13) "Building." See "Structure."

~~(13)~~(14) "Building department" means the building and safety division of the planning and development department.

~~(14)~~(15) "Coastal high hazard area" means an area of special flood hazard extending from offshore to the inland limit of a primary frontal dune along an open coast and any other area subject to high velocity wave action from storms or seismic sources. It is an area subject to high velocity waters, including coastal and tidal inundation or tsunamis. The area is designated on a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as Zone V1-V30, VE or V.

(16) "Crawlspace" is an under-floor space that has its interior floor area (finished or not) no more than 5 feet below the top of the next-higher floor. Crawlspaces generally have solid foundation walls.

~~(15)~~(17) "Critical feature" means an integral and readily identifiable part of a flood protection system, without which the flood protection provided by the entire system would be compromised.

~~(16)~~(18) "Curvilinear line" means the border on either a flood hazard boundary map or flood insurance rate map that delineates the special flood, mudslide (i.e., mudflow) and/or flood-related erosion hazard areas and consists of a curved or contour line that follows the topography.

~~(17)~~(19) "Development" means any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including, but not limited to, buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations or storage of equipment or materials.

~~(18)~~(20) "Encroachment" means the advance or infringement of uses, plant growth, fill, excavation, buildings, permanent structures or development into a floodplain which may impede or alter the flow capacity of a floodplain.

~~(19)~~(21) "Existing manufactured home park or subdivision" means a manufactured home park or subdivision for which the construction of facilities for servicing the lots on which the manufactured homes are to be affixed (including, at a minimum, the installation of utilities, the construction of streets, and either final site grading or the pouring of concrete pads) is completed before March 13, 1979.

~~(20)~~(22) "Expansion to an existing manufactured home park or subdivision" means the preparation of additional sites by the construction of facilities for servicing the lots on which the manufactured homes are to be affixed (including the installation of utilities, the construction of streets, and either final site grading or the pouring of concrete pads).

~~(21)~~(23) "Fill" is the placement of fill material at a specified location to bring the ground surface up to a desired elevation.

~~(22)~~(24) "Fill material" can be natural sand, dirt, soil or rock. For the purposes of floodplain management, fill material may include concrete, cement, soil cement, brick or similar material as approved on a case-by-case basis.

~~(23)~~(25) "Flood," "flooding," or "flood water" means:

(A) A general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land areas from:

(i) The overflow of inland or tidal waters,

(ii) The unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source, and/or

(iii) Mudslides (i.e., mudflows) which are proximately caused by flooding as defined in paragraph (A)(ii) of this definition and are akin to a river of liquid and flowing mud on the surfaces of normally dry land areas, as when earth is carried by a current of water and deposited along the path of the current; and

(B) The collapse or subsidence of land along the shore of a lake or other body of water as a result of erosion or undermining caused by waves or currents of water exceeding anticipated cyclical levels or suddenly caused by an unusually high water level in a natural body of water, accompanied by a severe storm, or by an unanticipated force of nature, such as flash flood or an abnormal tidal surge, or by some similarly unusual and unforeseeable event which results in flooding as defined in paragraph (A)(i) of this definition.

~~(24)~~(26) "Flood elevation determination" means a determination by the floodplain administrator of the water surface elevations of the base flood, that is, the flood level that has a one percent or greater chance of occurrence in any given year.

~~(25)~~(27) "Flood elevation study" means an examination, evaluation, and determination of flood hazards and, if appropriate, corresponding water surface elevations, or an examination, evaluation and determination of mudslide (i.e., mudflow) and/or flood-related erosion hazards.

~~(28)~~ "Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)" means the official map on which the Federal Emergency Management Agency or Federal Insurance Administration ([FEMA](#)) has delineated both the areas of special flood hazards and the risk premium zones applicable to the community.

~~(26)~~(29) "[\(FEMA\) Preliminary FIRM](#) " is a draft, updated version of a community's flood hazard map formally released by FEMA.

~~(27)~~(30) "Flood insurance study" means the official report provided by the Federal Insurance Administration that includes flood profiles, the flood insurance rate map, the flood boundary and floodway map, and the water surface elevation of the base flood.

~~(28)~~(31) "Floodplain" or "flood-prone area" means any land area susceptible to being inundated by water from any source (see definition of "flooding").

~~(29)~~(32) "Floodplain administrator" is the flood control director or his designated agent. The floodplain administrator shall enforce the provisions of this chapter.

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- ~~(30)~~(33) "Floodplain management" means the operation of an overall program of corrective and preventive measures for reducing flood damage, including, but not limited to, emergency preparedness plans, flood control works and the administration and enforcement of this chapter.
- ~~(31)~~(34) "Flood protection system" means those physical structural works for which funds have been authorized, appropriated, and expended and which have been constructed specifically to modify flooding in order to reduce the extent of the area within a community subject to a "special flood hazard" and the extent of the depths of associated flooding. Such a system typically includes hurricane tidal barriers, dams, reservoirs, levees or dikes. These specialized flood modifying works are those constructed in conformance with sound engineering standards.
- ~~(32)~~(35) "Floodproofing" means any combination of structural and nonstructural additions, changes, or adjustments to structures which reduce or eliminate flood damage to real estate or improved real property, water and sanitary facilities, structures, and their contents.
- ~~(33)~~(36) "Floodway" means the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot. Also referred to as "regulatory floodway."
- ~~(34)~~(37) "Floodway encroachment lines" means the lines marking the limits of floodways on federal, state and local floodplain maps.
- ~~(35)~~(38) "Floodway fringe" is the areas of a floodplain on either side of the designated floodway where encroachment may be permitted.
- ~~(36)~~(39) "Fraud and victimization" related to section 15A-23 of this chapter means that the variance granted must not cause fraud on or victimization of the public. In examining this requirement, the floodplain administrator will consider the fact that every newly constructed building adds to government responsibilities and remains a part of the community for fifty to one hundred years. Buildings that are permitted to be constructed below the base flood elevation are subject during all those years to increased risk of damage from floods, while future owners of the property and the community as a whole are subject to all the costs, inconvenience, danger, and suffering that those increased flood damages bring. In addition, future owners may purchase the property, unaware that it is subject to potential flood damage, and can be insured only at very high flood insurance rates.
- ~~(37)~~(40) "Freeboard" means a factor of safety usually expressed in feet above a flood level for purposes of floodplain management. "Freeboard" tends to compensate for the many unknown factors that could contribute to flood heights greater than the height calculated for a selected size flood and floodway conditions, such as wave action, bridge openings, and the hydrological effect of urbanization of the watershed.
- ~~(38)~~(41) "Functionally dependent use" means a use which cannot perform its intended purpose unless it is located or carried out in close proximity to water. The term includes only docking facilities, port facilities that are necessary for the loading and unloading of cargo or passengers, and ship building and ship repair facilities, but does not include long-term storage or related manufacturing facilities.
- ~~(39)~~(42) "Hardship" as related to section 15A-23 of this chapter means the hardship that would result from a failure to grant the requested variance. The floodplain administrator shall require that the variance be exceptional, unusual, and peculiar to the property involved. Mere economic or financial hardship alone is not exceptional. Inconvenience, aesthetic considerations, physical handicaps, personal preferences, or the disapproval of one's neighbors likewise cannot, as a rule, qualify as exceptional hardships. All of these problems can be resolved through other means, without granting a variance. This is so even if the alternative means are more expensive or complicated than building with a variance, or if they require the property owner to put the parcel to a different use than originally intended, or to build elsewhere.
- ~~(40)~~(43) "Highest adjacent grade" means the highest natural elevation of the ground surface prior to construction next to the proposed walls of a structure.

~~(41)~~(44) "Historic structure" means any structure that is:

- (A) Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (a listing maintained by the Department of the Interior) or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as meeting the requirements for individual listing on the National Register;
- (B) Certified or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district registered as a historic district;
- (C) Individually listed on a state inventory of historic places in states with historic preservation programs which have been approved by the Secretary of the Interior; or
- (D) Individually listed on a local inventory of historic places in communities with historic preservation programs that have been certified either:
 - (i) By an approved state program as determined by the Secretary of the Interior, or
 - (ii) Directly by the Secretary of the Interior in states with approved programs.

~~(42)~~(45) "Landfill" means a permitted location for the disposal, placement or dumping of garbage, trash, debris, junk or waste material.

~~(43)~~(46) "Levee" means a man-made structure, usually an earthen embankment, designed and constructed in accordance with sound engineering practices to contain, control or divert the flow of water so as to provide protection from temporary flooding.

~~(44)~~(47) "Levee system" means a flood protection system which consists of a levee, or levees, and associated structures, such as closure and drainage devices, which are constructed and operated in accord with sound engineering practices.

~~(45)~~(48) "Lowest floor" means the lowest floor of the lowest enclosed area (including basement). An unfinished or flood resistant enclosure, usable solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage in an area other than a basement area is not considered a building's lowest floor; provided, that such enclosure is not built so as to render the structure in violation of the applicable non-elevation design requirements of this chapter.

~~(46)~~(49) "Mangrove stand" means an assemblage of mangrove trees which are mostly low trees noted for a copious development of interlacing adventitious roots above the ground and which contain one or more of the following species: black mangrove (*Avicennia Nitida*); red mangrove (*Rhizophora Mangle*), white mangrove (*Languncularia Racemosa*), and buttonwood (*Conocarpus Erecta*).

~~(47)~~(50) "Manufactured home" means a structure, transportable in one or more sections, which is built on a permanent chassis and is designed for use with or without a permanent foundation when attached to the required utilities. The term "manufactured home" does not include a "recreational vehicle."

~~(48)~~(51) "Manufactured home park or subdivision" means a parcel, or contiguous parcels, of land divided into two or more manufactured home lots for rent or sale.

~~(49)~~(52) "Map" means the Flood Insurance Rate Map ([FIRM](#)) for a community issued by the Flood Insurance Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the FEMA [Recovery Map, Preliminary FIRM](#).

~~(50)~~(53) "Market value" means, for the purposes of determining substantial improvement, the value of the structure in question. It does not pertain to the land, landscaping or any other structures on the property, but only to the structure for which the improvement is proposed. Market value shall be determined by a professional appraiser as the cost to replace the structure in new condition, adjusted by the amount of depreciation that has accrued since the structure was constructed. The cost of replacement shall be based on a square foot cost factor determined by reference to a building cost estimating guide recognized by the building construction industry. The amount of depreciation shall be determined by taking into account the age

and physical deterioration of the structure and the functional obsolescence, but shall not include economic or other forms of external obsolescence.

~~(51)~~(54) "Mean sea level" means, for purposes of the National Flood Insurance Program, the National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) of 1929 or other datum.

~~(52)~~(55) "Minimum necessary" related to section 15A-23 of this chapter means the minimum necessary to afford relief to the applicant for a variance with a minimum deviation from the requirements of this chapter. In the case of variances to an elevation requirement, this means the floodplain administrator need not grant permission for the applicant to build at grade, for example, or even to whatever elevation the applicant proposes, but only that level that the floodplain administrator believes will both provide relief and preserve the integrity of this chapter.

~~(53)~~(56) "Mudslide" (i.e., mudflow) describes a condition where there is a river, flow or inundation of liquid mud down a hillside usually as a result of a dual condition of loss of brush cover, and the subsequent accumulation of water on the ground preceded by a period of unusually heavy or sustained rain.

~~(54)~~(57) "Mudslide (i.e., mudflow) prone area" means an area with land surfaces and slopes of unconsolidated material where the history, geology and climate vindicate a potential for mudflow.

~~(55)~~(58) "New construction," for floodplain management purposes, means structures for which the "start of construction" commenced on or after March 13, 1979. "New construction" includes any improvements to such structures on or after March 13, 1979.

~~(59)~~ "New manufactured home park or subdivision" means a manufactured home park or subdivision for which the construction of facilities for servicing the lots on which the manufactured homes are to be affixed (including at a minimum, the installation of utilities, the construction of streets, and either final site grading or the pouring of concrete pads) is completed on or after March 13, 1979.

~~(56)~~(60) "Non-conversion Agreement" is a legal document signed by the property owner and recorded on the property deed in Santa Barbara County Clerk-Recorder's Office, that restricts non-habitable enclosures and areas below the base flood elevation (BFE) plus two feet from being converted to a prohibited use, such as habitable living space, finished rooms, or other uses inconsistent with Floodplain Management Ordinance 15A and the terms of the issued building permit.

~~(57)~~(61) "Obstruction" includes, but is not limited to, any dam, wall, wharf, embankment, levee, dike, pile, abutment, protection, excavation, channelization, bridge, conduit, culvert, building, wire, fence, rock, gravel, refuse, fill, structure, vegetation or other material in, along, across or projecting into any watercourse which may alter, impede, retard or change the direction and/or velocity of the flow of water, or due to its location, its propensity to snare or collect debris carried by the flow of water or its likelihood of being carried downstream.

~~(58)~~(62) "One hundred year flood" or "100-year flood" means a flood which has a one percent annual probability of being equaled or exceeded. It is identical to the "base flood," which will be the term used throughout this chapter.

~~(59)~~(63) "Primary frontal dune" means a continuous or nearly continuous mound or ridge of sand with relatively steep seaward and landward slopes immediately landward and adjacent to the beach and subject to erosion and overtopping from high tides and waves during major coastal storms. The inland limit of the primary frontal dune occurs at the point where there is a distinct change from a relatively mild slope.

~~(60)~~(64) "Principal structure" means a structure used for the principal use of the property as distinguished from an accessory use.

~~(61)~~(65) "Public safety and nuisances" as related to section 15A-23 of this chapter means the granting of a variance must not result in additional threats to public safety or create nuisances. This chapter is intended to help protect the health, safety, well-being, and property of the local citizens. This is a long-range community effort

made up of a combination of approaches such as adequate drainage systems, warning and evacuation plans, and keeping new property above the flood levels. These long-term goals can only be met if exceptions to the requirements of this chapter are kept to a bare minimum.

~~(62)~~(66) "Recreational vehicle" means a vehicle which is:

- (A) Built on a single chassis;
- (B) Four hundred square feet or less when measured at the largest horizontal projection;
- (C) Designed to be self-propelled or permanently towable by a light duty truck; and
- (D) Designed primarily not for use as a permanent dwelling but as temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, travel, or seasonal use.

~~(63)~~(67) "Regulatory floodway" means the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height.

~~(64)~~(68) "Riverine" means relating to, formed by, or resembling a river (including tributaries), stream, brook, etc.

~~(65)~~(69) "Sand dunes" means naturally occurring accumulations of sand in ridges or mounds landward of the beach.

~~(66)~~(70) "Sheet flow area." See "Area of shallow flooding."

~~(67)~~(71) "Special flood hazard area (SFHA)" means an area having special flood hazard as shown on a [Flood Hazard Boundary Map \(FHBM\)](#) or FIRM as Zone A, AO, A1-A30, AE, A99, AH, V1-V30, VE or V or shown in the FEMA [Recovery Map as a "high hazard area".Preliminary FIRM.](#)

~~(68)~~(72) "Start of construction" includes substantial improvements and other proposed new development and means the date the building permit was issued, provided the actual start of construction, repair, reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, placement, or other improvement was within one hundred eighty days from the date of the permit. The actual start means either the first placement of permanent construction of a structure on a site, such as the pouring of slab or footings, the installation of piles, the construction of columns, or any work beyond the stage of excavation; or the placement of a manufactured home on a foundation. Permanent construction does not include land preparation, such as clearing, grading and filling; nor does it include the installation of streets and/or walkways; nor does it include excavation for a basement, footings, piers, or foundations or the erection of temporary forms; nor does it include the installation on the property of accessory buildings, such as garages or sheds not occupied as dwelling units or not part of the main structure. For a substantial improvement the actual start of construction means the first alteration of any wall, ceiling, floor, or other structural part of a building, whether or not that alteration affect the external dimensions of the building.

~~(69)~~(73) "Structure" means a walled and roofed building, including a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground. "Structure" also includes manufactured homes.

~~(70)~~(74) "Substantial damage" means damage of any origin sustained by a structure whereby the cost of restoring the structure to its before damaged condition would equal or exceed fifty percent of the market value of the structure before the damage occurred.

~~(71)~~(75) "Substantial improvement" means any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other proposed new development of a structure, or any accumulation thereof occurring after October 7, 2008, or within the last ten years, whichever is shorter, the cost of which equals or exceeds fifty percent of the market value of the structure before the "start of construction" of the improvement. This term includes structures which have incurred "substantial damage," regardless of the actual repair work performed. The term does not, however, include either (a) any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations or state or local health, sanitary, or safety code specifications which have been identified by the local code enforcement

official and which are the minimum necessary to assure safe living conditions, or (b) any alteration of a "historic structure," provided that the alteration will not preclude the structure's continued designation as a "historic structure."

~~(72)~~(76) "V zone." See "Coastal high hazard area."

(77) "Variance" means a grant of relief from the requirements of this chapter which permits construction in a manner that would otherwise be prohibited by this chapter.

~~(73)~~(78) "Violation" means the failure of a structure or other development to be fully in compliance with the requirements and provisions of this chapter or any variances issued pursuant to sections 15A-23 through 15A-25 of this chapter. A structure or other development without an elevation certificate, other certification, or other evidence of compliance required in this chapter is presumed to be in violation until such time as that documentation is provided to the floodplain administrator.

~~(74)~~(79) "Water surface elevation" means the height, in relation to the North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88), (or other FEMA-specified datum) of floods of various magnitudes and frequencies in the floodplains of coastal or riverine areas.

~~(75)~~(80) "Watercourse" means a lake, river, creek, stream, wash, arroyo, channel or other topographic feature on or over which waters flow at least periodically. Watercourse also includes specifically designated areas in which substantial flood damage may occur.

~~(76) "Violation" means the failure of a structure or other development to be fully in compliance with the requirements and provisions of this chapter or any variances issued pursuant to sections 15A-23 through 15A-25 of this chapter. A structure or other development without an elevation certificate, other certification, or other evidence of compliance required in this chapter is presumed to be in violation until such time as that documentation is provided to the floodplain administrator.~~

~~(77) "Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Recovery Map" means the Recovery Map provided by FEMA to the County on June 11, 2018 that mapped the Montecito and Carpinteria areas after the 1-9 Debris Flow, providing flood profiles and advisory flood elevations.~~

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 4698, § 2; Ord. No. 4768, § 2, 12-7-2010; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-6. Lands to which this chapter applies.

This chapter shall apply to all areas of special flood hazards within the unincorporated area of the County of Santa Barbara.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-7. Basis for establishing the areas of special flood hazard.

The areas of special flood hazard identified by the Federal Insurance Administration of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the Flood Insurance Study dated September 1978 and the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), dated March 15, 1979, and all subsequent amendments and/or revisions, are hereby adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this chapter. ~~Additionally, all subsequent preliminary FIRMs (and associated products) are hereby adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this chapter to be applied at the discretion of the District, when determined to be the best available information.~~ This Flood Insurance Study and attendant mapping is the minimum area of applicability of this chapter and may be supplemented by studies for other areas which allow implementation of this chapter and which are recommended to the board of directors by the floodplain administrator. ~~On June 19, 2018, the board of supervisors and board of directors considered and approved the recommendation of the floodplain administrator to supplement the flood insurance study with the~~

~~FEMA Recovery Map~~ The study and Flood Insurance Rate Maps are on file with the office of the county clerk, 105 East Anapamu Street, Room 407, Santa Barbara, California; at the office of the Santa Barbara County flood control district at 130 E. Victoria Street, Suite 200, Santa Barbara, California; and the county building official at 123 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, California.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-8. Compliance.

No structure or land shall thereafter be constructed, located, extended, converted, or altered without full compliance with the terms of this chapter. It shall be unlawful for any person to violate any provision or to fail to comply with any of the mandatory requirements (including violations of conditions and safeguards established in connection with conditions) of this chapter. A violation of any of the provisions or failing to comply with any of the mandatory requirements of this chapter shall constitute a misdemeanor; except notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, any such violation constituting a misdemeanor under this chapter may, in the discretion of the district attorney, be charged and prosecuted as an infraction.

Any person convicted of a misdemeanor under the provisions of this Code, unless provision is otherwise herein made, shall be punishable by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period of not more than six months or by both fine and imprisonment. Any person convicted of an infraction under the provisions of this chapter, unless provision is otherwise herein made, shall be punishable by fine only as follows: Upon a first conviction, by a fine not exceeding two hundred fifty dollars and for a second conviction or any subsequent conviction within a period of one year, by a fine of not exceeding five hundred dollars.

Each such person shall be charged with a separate offense for each and every day during any portion of which any violation of any provision of this chapter is committed, continued or permitted by such person and shall, upon conviction be punished accordingly.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-9. Abrogation and greater restrictions.

This chapter is not intended to repeal, abrogate, or impair any existing easements, covenants, or deed restrictions. However, where this chapter, another ordinance, easement, covenant, or deed restriction conflict or overlap, whichever imposes the more stringent restrictions shall prevail.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-10. Interpretation.

In the interpretation and application of this chapter, all provisions shall be:

- (a) Considered as minimum requirements;
- (b) Liberally construed in favor of the Santa Barbara County flood control and water conservation district; and
- (c) Deemed neither to limit nor repeal any other powers granted under state statutes.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-11. Warning and disclaimer of liability.

The degree of flood protection required by this chapter is considered reasonable for regulatory purposes and is based on scientific and engineering considerations. Larger floods can and will occur on rare occasions. Flood heights may be increased by man-made or natural causes. This chapter does not imply that land outside the areas of special flood hazards or uses permitted within such areas will be free from flooding or flood damages. This chapter shall not create liability, or any duty upon which liability may arise, on the part of the County of Santa Barbara, the Santa Barbara County flood control and water conservation district, any officer or employee thereof, or the Federal Insurance Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, for any flood damages that result from reliance on this chapter or any administrative decision lawfully made thereunder.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-12. Severability.

This chapter and the various parts thereof are hereby declared to be severable. Should any section of this chapter be declared by the courts to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the chapter as a whole, or any portion thereof other than the section so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-13. Establishment of development permit.

A development permit shall be obtained before any construction or other development begins within any area of special flood hazard established in section 15A-7. Application for a development permit shall be made on forms furnished by the building division and may include, but not be limited to: plans in duplicate drawn to scale showing the nature, location, dimensions, and elevation of the area in question; existing or proposed structures, fill, storage of materials, drainage facilities; and the location of the foregoing. Specifically, the following information is required for plan submittals which propose development within any of the A or V zones:

- (a) Proposed elevation in relation to mean sea level, of the lowest floor (including basement) of all structures. In zone AO, elevation of highest adjacent grade and proposed elevation of lowest floor of all structures.
- (b) Proposed elevation in relation to mean sea level to which any structure will be floodproofed;
- (c) All appropriate certifications listed in subsection 15A-15(d)(1) of this chapter; and
- (d) Description of the extent to which any watercourse will be altered or relocated as a result of proposed development.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-14. Designation of the floodplain administrator and building official.

The floodplain administrator is hereby appointed to administer and implement this chapter. The floodplain administrator and the building official shall enter into a memo of understanding concerning the administration and enforcement of this chapter so as to ensure that the provisions of this chapter are implemented prior to issuance of a building permit by the building official.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-15. Duties and responsibilities of the floodplain administrator.

The duties and responsibilities of the floodplain administrator shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Permit Review.
 - (1) Reviewing all development permits within areas of special flood hazard to determine that the permit requirements of this chapter have been satisfied;
 - (2) Determining that the site is reasonably safe from flooding; and
 - (3) Determining that the proposed development does not adversely affect the carrying capacity of areas where base flood elevations have been determined but a floodway has not been designated. For purposes of this chapter, "adversely affects" means that the cumulative effect of the proposed development when combined with all other existing and anticipated development will increase the water surface elevation of the base flood more than one foot at any point.
 - (4) Review proposed development to assure that all necessary permits have been received from those governmental agencies from which approval is required by federal or state law, including Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972, 33 U.S.C. 1334.
- (b) Use of Other Base Flood Data. Obtaining, reviewing, and utilizing any base flood elevation and floodway data available from a federal or state agency, or other source, in order to administer sections 15A-13 and 15A-16 through 15A-25 when base flood elevation data has not been provided in accordance with section 15A-7.
- (c) Notification to Other Agencies.
 - (1) Notifying adjacent communities and the California Department of Water Resources prior to such alteration or relocation of a watercourse, and submitting evidence of such notification to the Federal Insurance Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, whenever a watercourse is to be altered or relocated.
 - (2) Requiring that the flood carrying capacity of the altered or relocated portion of said watercourse be maintained.
 - (3) Base flood elevation changes due to physical alterations:
 - a. Within six months of information becoming available or project completion, whichever comes first, of a project that implements physical measures that affect the hydrogeologic or hydraulic characteristics of a flooding source and thus result in the modification of the existing regulatory floodway, the effective base flood elevations, or the special flood hazard area the floodplain administrator shall submit or require that the permit applicant submits technical or scientific data to FEMA for a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR). Such submissions to FEMA are necessary so that upon confirmation of those physical changes affecting flooding conditions, risk premium rates and floodplain management requirements are based on current data.
 - b. If a LOMR is requested prior to issuance of a building permit, the LOMR for the proposed flood control project must be approved prior to the issuance of building permits. Building permits must not be issued based on Conditional Letters of Map Revision (CLOMR's). Approved CLOMR's may allow construction of the proposed flood control project and land preparation as specified in the "start of construction" definition.

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- c. Changes in County Boundaries. Notify FEMA in writing whenever the county boundaries have been modified by annexation or other means and include a copy of a map of the community clearly delineating the new county limits.
 - (d) Public Inspection. Obtaining and maintaining for public inspection and making available as needed:
 - (1) The certification required by subsection 15A-16(c)(1) (floor elevations); and
 - (2) The certification required by subsection 15A-16(c)(2) (elevations in areas of shallow flooding); and
 - (3) The certification required by subsection 15A-16(c)(3)(C) (elevation or floodproofing of nonresidential structures); and
 - (4) The certification required by subsection 15A-16(c)(4)(A) or 15A-16(c)(4)(B) (wet floodproofing standard);
 - (5) The certification of elevation required by subsection 15A-18(b) (subdivision standards);
 - (6) The certification required by subsection 15A-21(a) (floodway encroachments);
 - (7) The information required by subsection 15A-22(f) (coastal construction standards).
 - (e) Boundary Determination. Making interpretations where needed, as to the exact location of the boundaries of the areas of special flood hazards (for example, where there appears to be a conflict between a mapped boundary and actual field conditions). The person contesting the location of the boundary shall be given a reasonable opportunity to appeal the interpretation as provided in section 15A-24.
 - (f) Enforcement. Taking action to remedy violations of this chapter as specified in section 15A-8 herein.
- (Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 4536, § 2; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-16. Standards of construction.

In all ~~all~~ special flood hazard areas and in areas adjacent to special flood hazard areas behind earthen embankments, berms or otherwise unaccredited levees; areas of special flood hazards the following standards are required:

- (a) Anchoring.
 - (1) All new construction, substantial improvements, and other proposed new development shall be adequately anchored to prevent flotation, collapse or lateral movement of the structure resulting from hydrodynamic and hydrostatic loads, including the effects of buoyancy.
 - (2) All manufactured homes shall meet the anchoring standards of section 15A-19.
- (b) Construction Materials and Methods.
 - (1) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall be constructed with materials and utility equipment resistant to flood damage to two feet above the base flood elevation (BFE).
 - (2) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall be constructed using methods and practices that minimize flood damage.
 - (3) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall be constructed with electrical, heating, ventilation, plumbing and air conditioning equipment and other service facilities that are designed and/or elevated to two feet above the base flood

~~elevation (BFE) located~~ so as to prevent water from entering or accumulating within the components during conditions of flooding.

- (4) Within zones AH or AO, the floodplain administrator shall require that adequate drainage paths around structures on slopes to guide flood waters around and away from proposed structures.
- (c) Elevation and Floodproofing.
- (1) ~~All n~~New construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated two feet above the base flood elevation (BFE), ~~unless such minimum elevation is lowered by the floodplain administrator at his discretion (but not below the BFE).~~ Nonresidential structures may meet the standards in subsection (c)(3) of this section. Prior to erection of wall framing, the elevation of the lowest floor including basement shall be certified by a registered professional engineer or surveyor, or verified by the floodplain administrator to be properly elevated.
 - (2) ~~New~~All new construction, substantial improvement, and other proposed new development in Zone AO shall have the lowest floor, including basement, ~~elevated two feet above the highest adjacent grade, at least two feet higher than the depth number specified, in feet, on the FIRM, or at least two feet above adjacent grade if no depth number is specified unless such minimum elevation is lowered by the floodplain administrator at his discretion (but not below the BFE).~~ elevated at least two feet higher than the depth number specified, in feet, on the FIRM, or at least four feet above highest adjacent natural grade if no depth number is specified. Nonresidential structures may meet the standards in subsection (c)(3). Prior to erection of wall framing, the elevation of the lowest floor including basement shall be certified by a registered professional engineer or surveyor, or verified by the floodplain administrator to be properly elevated.
 - (3) Nonresidential construction shall either be elevated to conform with subsections (c)(1) or (2), or together with attendant utility and sanitary facilities:
 - (A) Be floodproofed two feet above the base flood elevation (BFE) so that the structure is watertight with walls substantially impermeable to the passage of water; and
 - (B) Have structural components capable of resisting hydrostatic and hydrodynamic loads and effects of buoyancy; and
 - (C) Be certified by a registered professional engineer or architect that the standards of this subsection are satisfied. Such certifications shall be provided to the floodplain administrator.
 - (4) The floodplain administrator shall require, for all new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development, that fully enclosed areas below the lowest floor base flood elevation plus two feet that are usable solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage in an area other than a basement and which are subject to flooding shall be designed to automatically equalize hydrostatic flood forces on exterior walls by allowing for the entry and exit of floodwater. Designs for meeting this requirement must ~~either~~ be certified by a registered professional engineer or architect ~~or and~~ meet or exceed the following minimum criteria:
 - (A) Either a minimum of two openings on separate walls having a total net area of not less than one square inch for every square foot of enclosed area subject to flooding shall be provided; the bottom of all such openings shall be no higher than one foot above grade (openings may be equipped with screens, louvers, valves or other coverings or devices provided that they permit the automatic entry and exit of floodwater) Use of non-engineered vents with permanent louvers, mesh screening, or similar will require a 30% safety factor applied to the net effective open area calculations. ~~or~~

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- (B) ~~Be certified to comply with a local floodproofing standard approved by the Federal Insurance Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency. A non-conversion agreement must be submitted for all non-habitable enclosures and areas (except crawlspaces) below the base flood elevation plus two feet. The agreement must be recorded with the deed for the property.~~

(5) Manufactured homes shall also meet the standards in section 15A-19.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 4536, § 3; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-17. Standards for utilities.

- (a) All new and replacement water supply and sanitary sewage systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of flood waters into the system and discharge from systems into flood waters.
- (b) On-site waste disposal systems shall be located to avoid impairment to them or contamination from them during flooding.
- (c) Other utilities are addressed at subsections 15A-16(b) and 15A-18(d).

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-18. Standards for subdivisions.

- (a) All preliminary subdivision proposals shall identify the flood hazard area and the elevation of the base flood.
- (b) All final subdivision plans will provide the elevation of proposed structure(s) and pad(s). If the site is filled **two feet** above the base flood elevation, the final pad elevation shall be certified by a registered professional engineer or surveyor and provided to the floodplain administrator.
- (c) All subdivision proposals shall be consistent with the need to minimize flood damage.
- (d) All subdivision proposals shall have public utilities and facilities such as sewer, gas, electrical and water systems located and constructed to minimize flood damage.
- (e) All subdivisions shall provide adequate drainage to reduce exposure to flood hazards.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-19. Standards for manufactured homes.

- (a) All manufactured homes that are placed or substantially improved within a special flood hazard area on the community's flood insurance rate map (1) outside of a manufactured home park or subdivision, (2) in a new manufactured home park or subdivision, or (3) in an expansion to an existing manufactured home park or subdivision, ~~or (4) in an existing manufactured home park or subdivision~~ shall:

(1) Within Zones AE, AH and AO, be elevated on a permanent foundation such that the lowest floor of the manufactured home is elevated two feet above the base flood elevation, ~~unless such minimum elevation is lowered by the floodplain administrator at his discretion (but not below the base flood elevation)~~, and be securely fastened to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement;

~~(1)(2)~~ -Within Zone A, be elevated on a permanent foundation and securely fastened to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement.

(b) All manufactured homes that are placed or substantially improved within a special flood hazard area on the community's flood insurance rate map (4) in an existing manufactured home park or subdivision shall:

(1) Within Zones AE, AH and AO, be elevated on a permanent foundation such that the lowest floor of the manufactured home is elevated two feet above the base flood elevation, and be securely fastened to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement; unless such minimum elevation is lowered by the floodplain administrator at his discretion (but not below the base flood elevation plus one foot),

(2) Within Zone A, be elevated on a permanent foundation and securely fastened to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement.

~~(b)(c)~~ All manufactured homes to be placed or substantially improved on sites in an existing manufactured home park or subdivision within Zones V and VE that meet the Coastal High Hazard Standards in section 15A-22 on the community's flood insurance rate map and are not subject to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section are subject to the Coastal High Hazard Standards in section 15A-22 and shall be elevated on adequately anchored pilings or columns and securely fastened to such pilings or columns to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement and so that the lowest horizontal portion of the structural members of the lowest floor (excluding the pilings or columns) is elevated two feet above the base flood elevation.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. 4698, § 3; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-20. Standards for recreational vehicles.

All recreational vehicles placed on-sites within a floodplain shown on the Santa Barbara County flood insurance rate map will either:

- (a) Be on the site for fewer than one hundred eighty consecutive days;
- (b) Be fully licensed and ready for highway use; or
- (c) Meet the permit requirements of sections 15A-13 of this chapter and either: (1) for zones A1-30, AH, and AE within zones A1-30, AH, AE, meet the elevation and anchoring requirements for manufactured homes in sections 15A-19(a) or (2) for zones V1-V30, V, and VE, meet the coastal high hazard standards in subsection 15A-19(b).

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-21. Floodways.

Located within areas of special flood hazard established in section 15A-7 are areas designated as floodways. Since the floodway is an extremely hazardous area due to the velocity of flood waters which carry debris, potential projectiles, and erosion potential, the following provisions apply:

- (a) Prohibiting encroachments, including fill, new construction, substantial improvement, and other new development unless certification by a registered professional engineer is provided demonstrating that encroachments shall not result in any increase in flood levels during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.
- (b) If subsection (a) of this section is satisfied, all new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall comply with all other applicable flood hazard reduction provisions of sections 15A-13 and 15A-16 through 15A-25.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 4536, § 4; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-22. Coastal high hazard areas.

Within coastal high hazard areas established in section 15A-7, the following standards shall apply:

- (a) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall be elevated on adequately anchored pilings or columns and securely anchored to such pilings or columns so that the lowest horizontal portion of the structural members of the lowest floor (excluding the pilings or columns) is elevated to or above the base flood elevation plus two feet level. The pile or column foundation and structure attached thereto is anchored to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement due to the effects of wind and water loads acting simultaneously on all building components. Water loading values used shall be those associated with the base flood elevation plus two feet. Wind loading values used shall be those required by applicable state or local building standards.
- (b) All new construction, shall be located landward of the reach of mean high tide.
- (c) All new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development shall have the space below the lowest floor free of obstructions or constructed with breakaway walls as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter. Such enclosed space shall not be used for human habitation and will be useable solely for parking of vehicles or building-access.
- (d) Fill shall not be used for structural support of buildings.
- (e) Man-made alteration of sand dunes which would increase potential flood damage is prohibited.
- (f) The floodplain administrator shall obtain and maintain the following records:
 - (1) Certification by a registered engineer or architect that a proposed structure complies with subsection (a) of this section.
 - (2) The elevation (in relation to mean sea level) of the bottom of the lowest structural member of the lowest floor (excluding pilings or columns) of all new and substantially improved structures, and whether such structures contain a basement.
- (g) Properties within the Coastal Repetitive Loss Zone are subject to Resolution 92-138, and all subsequent amendments to said resolution.

Resolution: <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/3ea7a145-0559-468b-b2f8-451c821c2e7d>

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-23. Nature of variances.

The variance criteria set forth in this section of the chapter are based on the general principle of zoning law that variances pertain to a piece of property and are not personal in nature. Though these standards vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, in general, a properly issued variance is granted for a parcel of property with physical characteristics so unusual that complying with the requirements of this chapter would create an exceptional hardship to the applicant or the surrounding property owners. The characteristics must be unique to the property and not be shared by adjacent parcels. The unique characteristic must pertain to the land itself, not to the structure, its inhabitants, or the property owners.

It is the objective of the board of directors to help protect its citizens from flooding. This need is so compelling, and the implications of the cost of insuring a structure built below flood level are so serious that variances from the flood elevation or from other requirements in the flood chapter are quite rare. Therefore, the variance guidelines provided in this chapter are more detailed and contain multiple provisions that must be met before a variance can be properly granted. The criteria are designed to screen out those situations in which alternatives other than a variance are more appropriate.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-24. Application for variances.

- (a) A person may file an application for a variance from the requirements of this chapter with the floodplain administrator.
- (b) The floodplain administrator shall act on and make written determinations on applications for variances from the requirements of this chapter.
- (c) In passing upon such applications, the floodplain administrator shall consider all technical evaluations, all relevant factors, standards specified in other sections of this chapter, and shall also consider:
 - (1) The danger that materials may be swept onto other lands to the injury of others;
 - (2) The danger of life and property due to flooding or erosion damage;
 - (3) The susceptibility of the proposed facility and its contents to flood damage and the effect of such damage on the existing individual owner and future owners of the property;
 - (4) The importance of the services provided by the proposed facility to Santa Barbara County;
 - (5) The necessity to the facility of a waterfront location, where applicable;
 - (6) The availability of alternative locations for the proposed use which are not subject to flooding or erosion damage;
 - (7) The compatibility of the proposed use with existing and anticipated development;
 - (8) The relationship of the proposed use to the comprehensive plan and floodplain management program for that area;
 - (9) The safety of access to the property in time of flood for ordinary and emergency vehicles;
 - (10) The expected heights, velocity, duration, rate of rise, and sediment transport of the flood waters expected at the site; and
 - (11) The costs of providing governmental services during and after flood conditions, including maintenance and repair of public utilities and facilities such as sewer, gas, electrical, and water system, and streets and bridges.
- (d) Any applicant to whom a variance is granted shall be given written notice over the signature of the floodplain administrator that (1) the issuance of a variance to construct a structure below the base flood ~~level~~elevation will result in increased premium rates for flood ~~insurance up to amounts as high as twenty-five dollars for one hundred dollars of insurance coverage~~ and (2) such construction below the base flood elevation~~level~~ increases risks to life and property. A copy of the notice shall be recorded by the applicant in the office of the Santa Barbara County recorder, and shall be recorded in a manner so that it appears in the chain of title of the affected parcel of land; and a conformed copy of said recordation shall be provided to the floodplain administrator as indicated in the conditions attached to the variance.

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- (e) The floodplain administrator will maintain a record of all variance actions, including justification for their issuance, and report such variances issued in its biennial report submitted to the Federal Insurance Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-25. Conditions for variances.

- (a) Generally, variances may be issued for new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development to be erected on a lot of one-half acre or less in size contiguous to and surrounded by lots with existing structures constructed below the base flood level, providing that the procedures of sections 15A-13 and 15A-16 through 15A-25 of this chapter have been fully considered. As the lot size increases beyond one-half acre, the technical justification required for issuing the variance increases.
- (b) Variances may be issued for the repair or rehabilitation of "historic structures" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter) upon a determination that the proposed repair or rehabilitation will not preclude the structure's continued designation as a historic structure and the variance is the minimum necessary to preserve the historic character and design of the structure.
- (c) Variances shall not be issued within any designated floodway if any increase in flood levels during the base flood discharge would result.
- (d) Variances shall only be issued upon a determination that the variance is the "minimum necessary" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter), considering the flood hazard, to afford relief.
- (e) Variances shall only be issued upon (1) a showing of good and sufficient cause; (2) a determination that failure to grant the variance would result in exceptional "hardship" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter) to the applicant; and (3) a determination that the granting of a variance will not result in increased flood heights, additional threats to public safety, extraordinary public expense, create "nuisances" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter), cause "fraud or victimization" (as defined in section 15A-5 of this chapter) of the public, or conflict with existing local laws or ordinances.
- (f) Variances may be issued for new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development necessary for the conduct of a functionally dependent use provided that the provisions of subsections (a) through (e) of this section are satisfied and that the structure or other development is protected by methods that minimize flood damages during the base flood and create no additional threats to public safety.
- (g) Upon consideration of the factors of subsection 15A-24(c) and the purposes of this chapter, the floodplain administrator may attach such conditions to the granting of variances as it deems necessary to further the purposes of this chapter.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)

Sec. 15A-26. Effective date.

This chapter shall take effect and be in force thirty days from the date of its passage; and before the expiration of fifteen days after its passage it, or a summary of it, shall be published once, with the names of the members of the board of supervisors voting for and against the same in ~~the Santa Barbara News Press~~, a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Santa Barbara.

(Ord. No. 3898, § 1; Ord. No. 5058, § 2, 8-28-2018)