

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT POLICY/ORDINANCE
INTERPRETATION**

Interpretation No.: C-FP-01
Effective Date: 9/27/2006
Originally Issued: N/A

Question:

Is a second story commercial or residential unit addition to an existing commercial building allowed in the floodplain or floodway?

**Applicable Ordinance Section(s)
And/or General Plan/LUP Policy(ies)**

16.10.070(f)3
16.10.070(g)1

INTERPRETATION:

A second story commercial or residential unit addition (that is defined as “substantial improvement” according to 16.10.040.3(m)) to an existing commercial building is allowed in the floodplain or floodway only if:

1. An engineering analysis of the first story demonstrates adequate support and foundation for the second story addition for all loads (hydrostatic, hydrodynamic, and point loads caused by debris) associated with the 100 year flood event;
2. There is no new encroachment into the floodway that will cause any increase in the base flood level;
3. The first story is floodproofed; and
4. No new septic system or increased capacity of an existing septic system located in the flood hazard area is needed.

A second story commercial or residential unit addition (that is not defined as “substantial improvement” according to 16.10.040.3(m)) to an existing commercial building is allowed in the floodplain or floodway only if:

1. There is no new encroachment into the floodway that will cause any increase in the base flood level;
2. No new septic system or increased capacity of an existing septic system located in the flood hazard area is needed.

This interpretation does not apply to properties subject to wave run-up or other coastal inundation as designated on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) as Zones V1-V30, VE or V.

Reason:

The flood hazard area regulations require new structures to be located outside of the floodplain, where such area exists on the property. The regulations also prohibit new structures within the floodway. Some commercial structures are located within the floodplain and/or floodway that

pre-date (before April 15, 1986) these regulations. The question arises as to whether second story additions may be added to these structures without compromising public health and safety.

Commercial buildings are generally located within urbanized areas, near to fire stations and other emergency services. Notification of impending flooding will be timely allowing evacuation, if appropriate. Additions to those structures proven, through an engineering analysis, to be adequate to withstand flooding should not result in a threat to public health and safety.

This policy cannot apply to those areas subject to wave run-up or other coastal inundation, as adequate notification of impending flooding is less likely.

Tom Burns
Planning Director

Date