

Michael Lam

From: Chelsea Mele <chelseamele@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 16, 2025 10:21 AM
To: Michael Lam
Subject: Re: Edison Way Project

******CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

The garage needs to be 20 feet back from the edge of the right of way so that they can park cars out of the right of way and or pay to widen the road before and after that parcel to eliminate the need for emergency vehicles to use that space.

On Thu, Oct 16, 2025 at 11:17 AM Chelsea Mele <chelseamele@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Michael Lam,

The submitted drawing is unclear, and I need clarification on one point immediately: **what does “PL” stand for? From the looks of the plans it is right next to the right of way not 25 feet back from it.**

More critically, I must state in the strongest possible terms that **any plan that sets the stage where the new owners will encroach upon any portion of the existing right-of-way for vehicular or material storage is unacceptable.** That right-of-way is **the only path that allows emergency vehicles to reach the property beyond.** Blocking, narrowing, or repurposing that area such that it becomes used for private use creates an obstruction that directly **threatens fire access, public safety, and my own personal safety.**

Any development concept that compromises emergency access or causes the **encroachment** of this right-of-way into a storage area will be **formally opposed and legally challenged.** I will pursue all remedies necessary, including court action, to ensure the right-of-way remains completely open and unobstructed for emergency access at all times.

Please confirm receipt of this objection, explain the “PL” notation, and provide a revised plan that clearly preserves the full width and function of the right-of-way for emergency passage.

Sincerely,
Chelsea Wagner

On Thu, Oct 16, 2025 at 10:57 AM Chelsea Mele <chelseamele@gmail.com> wrote:

That is not acceptable as there cars will block the fire escape route. That is the only place you can get past a fire truck! And you and I both know they will be parking cars in front of the garage

On Thu, Oct 16, 2025 at 10:54 AM Michael Lam <Michael.Lam@santacruzcountyca.gov> wrote:

Hello Chelsea,

The road is not paved to the full width of the right-of-way; there is 25-feet of area between the paved road and the proposed garage (see snip below). The proposed garage will be located at *edge* of the right-of-way boundaries – this means that, in the future, the road can be potentially widened to the edge of the right-of-way.





Michael Lam

Development Review Planner

Community Development & Infrastructure

D: (831) 454-3371

[701 Ocean Street, Room 410, Santa Cruz, CA 95060](#)

From: Chelsea Mele <chelseamele@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2025 6:09 PM
To: Michael Lam <Michael.Lam@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Re: Edison Way Project

******CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Thank you for your reply. I am confused with what you mean here. The proposed garage will be setback from the existing road approximately 25-feet and at the edge of the right-of-way. How can it be set back 25 feet and at the edge of the right-of-way. Are you saying that the back is 25feet and the front is at the edge? Or are you saying that it is 25 fett back measured from the edge of the right of way?

On Tue, Oct 14, 2025 at 3:03 PM Michael Lam <Michael.Lam@santacruzcountyca.gov> wrote:

Hello Chelsea,

Thank you for your comments – they will be included in the public record for this item.

In my email, dated Monday August 4th, I indicated that a public hearing will be scheduled in October. You acknowledged receipt of this email on August 6th. I apologize that you did not receive the public notice – it appears that you are just outside of the 500-foot radius that the mailing cards are sent to. The mailing list is generated in accordance with County Code Chapter 18.10.

I understand your concerns regarding the garage; however, garages are allowed in residential zone districts. This approval does not authorize the use of parking within the right-of-way. The proposed garage will be setback from the existing road approximately 25-feet and at the edge of the right-of-way. I believe this is adequate area to accommodate a vehicle pulling off to the side in an emergency. Should the road association decide to widen the road for improved emergency access, the structures will not encroach into the right-of-way.

Best,

Michael Lam



Michael Lam

Development Review Planner

Community Development & Infrastructure

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[701 Ocean Street, Room 410, Santa Cruz, CA 95060](https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/701-Ocean-Street-Room-410-Santa-Cruz-CA-95060)

From: Chelsea Mele <chelseamele@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 12, 2025 6:55 AM
To: Michael Lam <Michael.Lam@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Edison Way Project

******CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Michael Lam,

I am writing to formally express my objection to the proposed garage placement associated with the current development on Edison Street. My concern centers on the fact that the proposed garage location does **not provide usable off-street parking**, as most residents use enclosed garages for storage rather than vehicle parking. In practice, this design will push vehicles into the roadway, exacerbating congestion and limiting emergency access.

A more practical and community-oriented solution would be to allow either an **open carport structure**—which is far more likely to be used for actual vehicle parking—or to **relocate the garage under the proposed residence** that is already set back approximately twenty feet from the right-of-way. This adjustment would reduce future enforcement costs for the County, enhance neighborhood safety, and ensure long-term compliance with the intent of the zoning code.

Furthermore, **no notice** of this hearing or pending action was ever mailed to me or to other residents on Edison Street. None of us were given an opportunity to review or object to the proposal. You emailed me in the beginning of this and informed me that there would not be a formal hearing until January. I respectfully request confirmation of how the County satisfied its public notification requirements for this matter.

From a **public safety standpoint**, the current plan presents a serious hazard. In a wildfire evacuation scenario, emergency vehicles will have no place to pull off the narrow ten-foot paved road if cars are parked in the limited shoulder space that this garage layout eliminates. As we have already experienced in recent fire events, delays in fire response on steep, narrow roads can have catastrophic consequences for both residents and first responders.

In my opinion, approving a variance that allows the garage to encroach toward the right-of-way places **both life and property at unnecessary risk**. It also guarantees ongoing enforcement issues and staff costs for the County.

Given the procedural defects in notice, the foreseeable safety risks, and the negative community impacts, I believe this matter requires immediate reconsideration. Should the project move forward as proposed, I intend to pursue all available legal remedies to ensure the County addresses these issues appropriately.

Please confirm receipt of this letter and include it in the public record for the Edison Street project.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Wagner

[185 Edison Way](#)

[Soquel CA 95073](#)

831 331 1280 Chelseamele@gmail.com

Michael Lam

From: Nathan Sigler <nathan.sigler@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 3:21 PM
To: Michael Lam
Subject: Re: 115 Edison Way

******CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

A riparian corridor which this applicant is varying the setback for—and therefore encroaching upon—is by definition a sensitive environment, and thus removes the application of the single family exemption. This disqualification is in CEQA 15300.2(a). The sensitive environment is defined in Santa Cruz County Code §16.30.030.

You should update your report as the single family exemption does not apply.

- Nathan

On Oct 15, 2025, at 9:39 AM, Michael Lam <Michael.Lam@santacruzcountyca.gov> wrote:

Hi Nathan -

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) evaluates whether a project will have significant impacts (as defined by CEQA) on the environment. The Act contains an exemption for single-family dwellings on legal lots of record; this exemption is commonly used for most single-family dwellings throughout the County and is consistent with the requirements of the Act. Projects that are not categorically exempt from CEQA are typically ones that have significant impacts on air quality, noise, traffic, cultural resources or biological resources.

The project is not anticipated to have significant impacts to the environment, as the project does not propose removal of any riparian habitat or trees.

The CEQA review is separate from the reviews conducted by Environmental Planning and Environmental Health; both agencies have reviewed and approved the proposed project.

Best,
Michael Lam

Michael Lam
Development Review Planner
Community Development & Infrastructure
D: (831) 454-3371

701 Ocean Street, Room 410, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

-----Original Message-----

From: Nathan Sigler <nathan.sigler@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2025 1:43 PM

To: Michael Lam <Michael.Lam@santacruzcountyca.gov>

Subject: Re: 115 Edison Way

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Thanks. All else considered, You should not allow a home of this size in this location, much of it in the road setback. It violates the intent of the zoning.

You did not address my comment re: CEQA exemption?

Nate

On Oct 14, 2025, at 1:37 PM, Michael Lam
<Michael.Lam@santacruzcountyca.gov> wrote:

Thank you for your comments, Nathan - they will be included in the public record for this item. I will address your concerns at the public hearing for this item.

Those previous comments were based on a smaller building envelope in 2006. A subsequent application in 2011 approved a larger development envelope, allowing for a larger structure to be constructed.

Unfortunately, I cannot make changes to the report once it has been published.

Best,
Michael Lam

Michael Lam
Development Review Planner
Community Development & Infrastructure
D: (831) 454-3371
701 Ocean Street, Room 410, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

-----Original Message-----

From: Nathan Sigler <nathan.sigler@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, October 10, 2025 5:38 PM

To: Michael Lam <Michael.Lam@santacruzcountyca.gov>

Subject: 115 Edison Way

****CAUTION:This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Hi Michael,

As a concerned neighbor, I reviewed the published staff report.

I am concerned about the recommendation for a CEQA exemption. I saw no support for that conclusion. The following are the facts as I understand it:

- 1) the request is for a riparian setback exemption
- 2) the building envelope / footprint sits directly adjacent a seasonal creek that functions every year to move water east and then south down the road, and again east, to Soquel creek 0.7 miles away
- 3) the intended septic system will literally cross said seasonal creek
- 4) the average slope across the building footprint is 50% slope or more (based on the drawing you shared)

Is it not well established and straightforward that CEQA analysis is required in this scenario, because the site is thusly a sensitive environment (riparian and waterflow) that has not been developed yet?

Also, I was disappointed to see the lack of inclusion of my concern about the size as related to the zoning intent. My concern we spoke about is that the 2,250 sq ft house and additional garage, both sitting in the setback about 15 ft off the edge of the paved road (a full 100 feet of brand new metal buildings sitting right aside the 12 ft-wide road), are outside the conceptual intent of the current zoning. Not to mention larger than, and out of character for, the neighborhood.

My neighbor found a comment from the previous planner about the site stating that it was “unlikely any structure over 1000ft would ever be built.” Why did she say this?

I know that you all carry your mission to ensure responsible, environmentally smart development seriously. I do not wish to stop all development at the site, but the size of the house is frankly comic book proportions for the lot. The only way it fits at all is the setback variance; it should be recommended that the buildings be resubmitted at reasonable size.

Can you please pull your report and re-publish it as related to CEQA component and to reflect our real concerns?

Thank you,

Nathan

Riley Rhodes

From: Michael Lam
Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2025 1:38 PM
To: Riley Rhodes
Subject: FW: 115 Edison Way

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Public comments for my 10/17 ZA item 241362.

Thanks!

Michael Lam
Development Review Planner
Community Development & Infrastructure
D: (831) 454-3371
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Nathan

Riley Rhodes

From: Michael Lam
Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2025 1:39 PM
To: Riley Rhodes
Subject: FW: Edison Way Project

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

More public comments for 241362.

Thanks!
-Mike



Michael Lam

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From: Chelsea Mele <chelseamele@gmail.com>
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Chelsea Wagner

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