



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GROUP

Of The Ventana Chapter

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July 12th 2018

State of California
Department of Transportation
Division of Local Assistance
P.O. Box 942874, MS-1
Sacramento, CA 94274-0001

July 12th, 2018

Dear ATP Grant Selection Committee,

The Santa Cruz Group of the Sierra Club supports the City and County of Santa Cruz's Active Transportation Program application for *Santa Cruz Rail Trail Segment 8 and 9 Construction*. This project for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail will construct over two miles of completely separated, car-free multiuse trail. Segments 8 and 9 run from near the Santa Cruz Wharf, across the San Lorenzo River to 17th Avenue, and parallel to the Santa Cruz Branch Line railroad tracks acquired by the public in 2012. Segment 8 will connect with Segment 7, a portion of which is slated to begin construction later this year.

The proposed bike-ped trail segments will facilitate bicycle commuting to downtown Santa Cruz employment sites and provide a safer car-free biking and walking route to popular community destinations such as Twin Lakes State Beach, Schwann Lagoon, the Boys and Girls Club, and Simpkins Swim Center. The dedicated bicycle and pedestrian trail will encourage users to leave their automobiles behind and bike or walk to their local destinations. This improves air quality, reduces carbon emissions, and provides a healthy alternative to being stuck in local traffic congestion. It will encourage children and families to be lifelong active transportation users.

In supporting this grant funding, we expect that Santa Cruz City and County officials will work constructively with the Sierra Club to respond to issues identified during environmental review of the project, so that the path is designed to protect and enhance habitat value for the many sensitive species identified as occurring in the area.

In sum, we urge you to support this valuable project. The *Santa Cruz Rail Trail Segment 8 and 9 Construction* is an important next step to connect the schools, employment, and daily needs of Santa Cruz residents via a safe, connected, separated transportation corridor.

Sincerely,

Gillian Greensite, Chair
Sierra Club, Santa Cruz County Group
Ventana Chapter