



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GROUP
of the Ventana Chapter
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City of Santa Cruz Transportation and Public Works Commission
C/O Scott Ruble
809 Center Street, Room 201, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: SAN LORENZO RIVERWALK LIGHTING PROJECT

5/16/2021

Dear Commissioners,

The Sierra Club urges your Commission to take action to implement design and operational improvements to minimize the potential adverse environmental impacts of the proposed Riverwalk lighting project.

As you deliberate and vote on this project, the Sierra Club requests that you consider the following:

- This project would place 62 lights along both sides of a currently unlit stretch of the San Lorenzo River, affecting the nocturnal environment of myriad terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species.
- Partly because the project was determined to be CEQA exempt, the specific impacts of the introduced lighting on the more than 200 bird species, other vertebrates, and the many invertebrate species of this important estuarine ecosystem were not evaluated.
- Artificial light at night is well documented to have significant negative impacts on a wide variety of species.
- The proposed lighting of 3000K is more suitable for a streetscape than a path adjacent to a sensitive river habitat. Please consider the lower color temperature (below 2700K) recommended by the Santa Cruz Chapter of IDA (International Dark-Sky Association).
- We appreciate that the lighting will include wireless controls for potential dimming. Such an option, if used, would position Santa Cruz at the forefront of good lighting design. We ask that you formally include a plan to test operational characteristics of dimming the lights within a 6-12 month time frame of the lighting's installation. Other communities that have implemented dimming controls have experienced nothing but positive results, with no decrease in pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
- With the collaboration of Bike Santa Cruz County, IDA conducted a survey of bicyclists to assess, among other things, their highest rated bike paths in the city. The top two were the San Lorenzo Trestle Bridge and Arana Gulch. Both are low-lit with lights at low elevations – a strong indication that the proposed level of lighting is unnecessary.
- Bollard style lighting would be well suited for the San Lorenzo Riverwalk. We ask that you consider this option.

Thank you for considering these requests and suggestions. We hope that they will be incorporated into the final approved project, and we encourage the city to continue to work with IDA as this project moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Micah Posner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Micah Posner
Chair, Santa Cruz Group of the Sierra Club