

LOCAL BALLOT MEASURE REVIEW FORM

Instructions: Sierra Club endorsement of or opposition to a city, county or district ballot measure requires decisions both at the chapter and State level. To request Local Ballot Measure Review Committee approval for a position, please fill out this form and submit it by e-mail, together with a copy of the ballot measure, to all of the individuals listed on the last page of this form.

Members of the review committee will check to see that your proposed action is consistent with Sierra Club policies; you should receive a response from the committee about the review process in about two working days.

Please note that any plan for fund-raising or expenditures by the Sierra Club in connection with a proposition, initiative, or referendum must be separately approved as described at the end of this form.

Thank you for your work to give the Sierra Club an effective voice,
Steve Birdlebough, Chair

Date: 10/7/2021 **Chapter submitting:** Ventana Chapter

Name of ballot measure: Our Downtown, Our Choice

Summary: *Our Downtown, Our Choice* is a signature driven initiative that would amend the General Plan of the City of Santa Cruz to:

- Mandate that building on City Parking Lots downtown (some 10 sites), may only be comprised of affordable housing above the ground floor.
- Prioritizes the creation of a permanent Farmer's Market and common space for events.
- Mandate renovation, and not destruction and relocation, of the current library site. Voters have already passed bond money for this purpose.
- Sets policy to use excess parking revenue (some 1.4 million annually) for: affordable housing downtown, renovating the library (in the case of cost overruns), programs to mitigate parking demand including free bus passes for permit holders, expenses to improve the Farmer's Market Lot.

The full language of the initiative is attached.

City, County, or Special District involved:

Election date for vote on measure: November 2022

Proposed Position: Support 6 Oppose 0 . There are 8 members of ExCom at present. One was absent and one abstained, stating that they didn't know enough about Santa Cruz.

Date of Chapter vote: 9/27/2021

Which Sierra Club Policies were reviewed in considering whether to recommend a position?

Below and in bold are principles of the new Sierra Club Infill Policy and how the initiative relates to them. Information on the Infill Policy is from the Sierra Club website in a posting from Steve Birdlebough.

- **Affordable housing that is accessible to all-** The Initiative would mandate affordable housing on upper floors of 10 City parcels. It would have no effect on private property downtown.
- **Transit, bike and pedestrian-first approaches to transportation –** The Initiative would discontinue the subsidy of automobile transportation by stopping City plans to spend some 50 million dollars to add 300 parking spaces for cars. The project would heavily subsidize permits for the spaces, with the City losing net 1.4 million dollars a year on the garage. If the initiative passes the funds would be redirected to support transit via free bus passes for downtown employees and residents as well as other incentives to walk, ride or take the bus (this program is already under way but has no dedicated funding), and to build affordable housing downtown, thus allowing employees to live near the many service jobs available downtown.
- **Expanded opportunities for all residents to participate in the local economy and civic decisions** By supporting the Initiative early on, the Sierra Club would be encouraging the discussion around how to have a green, livable, downtown.
- **Living-wage jobs;** See below.
- **A balance between employment opportunities and housing;** Downtown Santa Cruz has a surplus of jobs, especially low paid service jobs, but due to a lack of affordable housing, employees commute from places up to a 100 miles away with cheaper housing and use subsidized City parking. This Initiative would create affordable housing for people who work downtown, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions produced by the County's largest source, Highway One.
- **Access to education, services, amenities and recreation that improves overall quality of life;** This Initiative would preserve and expand a very popular Farmer's Market, offering fresh produce within walking distance of thousands of residents.

The Farmer's Market accepts 'food stamps'. It would allow and encourage other civic events on Lot 4 at other times of the week. It would preserve 22 heritage trees that the City plans to remove to create the garage.

- **Measures and policies that increase climate resilience.** As stated above, the Initiative would preserve trees and reduce automobile commuting by providing affordable housing near employment. It would also directly reduce emission created by destroying the library and hauling it to the dump and rebuilding it as part of a 7 story concrete parking garage. The Initiative is supported by local Climate Action Groups including Santa Cruz Climate Action, and Santa Cruz Youth for Climate Justice.

Group or section involved, if any: Santa Cruz Group of the Ventana Chapter

Date of vote: 9/8/2021

Chapter Vote on its recommendation: Yes: 6 No: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

Group or Section Vote: Yes: 6 No: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 2

If two or more people voted "No" please describe the basis for dissent - use a separate sheet if necessary, and include names and contact information for dissenting members:

No

Please describe chapter campaign plans and attach any proposed publicity regarding the measure:

During the signature gathering phase of the campaign, the Group would share information with Sierra Club members and encourage them to sign the petition and to help gather signatures.

When the initiative qualifies for the ballot, we will ask members to support it via email and snail mail and allow the Sierra Club logo to be used on mailings and other materials put out by Our Downtown, Our Future, a registered campaign committee supervising the initiative.

With your permission, we will also encourage Sierra Club members to contribute financially to the Campaign Committee. All donations will pass directly from the member to the Campaign Committee.

Your chapter spokesperson on this measure:

Name: Micah Posner, Chair of the Santa Cruz Group.

E-mail address: micahposner@cruzio.com

Mailing address: 732 Riverside Ave., Santa Cruz, Ca., 95060

Phone and text: 831 227 4772

Please e-mail this form together with a copy of the ballot measure and all other supporting materials to the below individuals. Any questions or concerns may be addressed to the chair.

Steve Birdlebough, Chair scbaffirm@gmail.com (707) 576-6632

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NOTE: Please observe the following requirements if your chapter, group, or section plans to raise or spend money on any local ballot measures!

Election campaign contributions and fundraising are governed by State and federal regulations. Sierra Club California and all chapters are collectively restricted by the caps described below. Please e-mail all plans for Sierra Club election contributions or fundraising to all of the individuals listed above. Questions can be directed to Ruth Muzzin, rmuzzin@FRIEDMANSRING.COM, Compliance Officer for Sierra Club California.

The chapters and Sierra Club California may not spend \$50,000 or more in total Club funds on state/local ballot measures in California this year, or \$100,000 or more in any 4-year period. This includes in-kind contributions like staff time. Exceptions to this rule include money spent on member communications; and staff time for people who dedicate less than 10% of their time per month on CA state/local ballot measures.

Form last revised December 10, 2017