



Santa Cruz Bird Club

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September 7, 2017

From: Santa Cruz Bird Club

To: Ron Powers, City of Santa Cruz Planning Department, Santa Cruz City Council

Re: Comments on DEIR for Downtown Recovery proposed amendments/Biological Resources

Dear Mr. Powers and Santa Cruz City Council:

The Santa Cruz Bird Club (SCBC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the City of Santa Cruz Downtown Plan Amendments.

The proposal for building height allowances-along the San Lorenzo River (SLR) riparian corridor would alter the current allowable building height up to seventy feet from a current maximum of fifty feet.

The SLR is one of the city's significant natural resources and is in the Pacific Flyway. Migrating birds, protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, are known to breed, nest, raise young, rest, feed, take refuge from storms and refuel for their remaining migratory journey. The SLR corridor/open space is considered one of the more populated bird species corridors in the entire Santa Cruz County. (The citizen science ebird data lists the SLR as number thirteen of one hundred sites with most number of bird species.)

The SCBC recommends the following considerations based on the San Lorenzo's DEIR findings:

- 1). The SCBC believes that the mitigations **understate the potential negative impacts** of the proposed height increases, which are outlined in the body of the DEIR. We recommend a **"no height increase"** for any buildings above fifty feet along the SLR corridor. Evidence suggests this policy change would interfere substantially with the movement of native and migratory species of birds as well as impact the migratory corridors they use.
- 2).The SCBC encourages the strongest language possible to be added to the DEIR language as it relates to building design mitigations for any new construction at any height near the SLR. We recommend replacing wording in 4.3 mitigation from **"minimize" and "consider" to "required."**
- 3). Because of the lack of data on year-round use of the SLR habitat, the DEIR findings are insufficient to adequately determine the impact of the proposed amendments on bird wildlife.

Section 4.3.2: There are more extensive and up-dated studies on bird collision with glass available and should be included in the analysis of impacts. Refer to **Bird Collisions with Windows - American Bird Conservancy**, as well as the (Klem, March 2009, Hager et al., September 2008). https://abcbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Window_Collision_Bibliography-February-2017.pdf

Thank you for your consideration,

Lisa Sheridan

President, Santa Cruz Bird club 2016-2017