

June 14, 2026

City Clerk: For Public Record

Mayor Kate Colin and Members of the San Rafael City Council and Staff
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

Re: Shoreline Path and Starkweather Trail Lighting Proposal – New Information

Dear Mayor Colin and Councilmembers:

We respectfully request that the City Council remove the proposed Shoreline Path and Starkweather Trail lighting components from the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancements Project (CNATEP).

We support pedestrian and bicycle improvements within the Canal neighborhood. However, lighting the Shoreline and Starkweather Path presents an entirely different area that is a shoreline recreational resource adjacent to sensitive tidal marsh habitat that has never been lit at night.

The Plan would permanently alter one of San Rafael's few remaining naturally dark shoreline environments and significantly change both the character and use of the corridor.

I won't go into detail about the many concerns that others have already raised—

- loss of unobstructed Bay views,
- the limited utility of lighting where adjacent trail segments remain unpaved and unlit,
- the absence of user data demonstrating a need for nighttime lighting, and
- the lack of evidence that lighting would address a documented crime problem,
- impact of sea level rise on infrastructure required to support a network of lights, and
- selective inclusion of individuals, groups and neighborhoods in the early preplanning and design of this project and exclusion of directly impacted neighborhoods.

Instead, I'm introducing a couple of new points for your consideration.

Nighttime Use Is Now Being Explicitly Considered

Historically, City parks have been closed from sunset to sunrise pursuant to San Rafael Municipal Code Section 19.20.070.

The original project documents proposed substantial lighting while continuing to reference existing nighttime closures. The Council is now explicitly discussing extending park access and modifying operating hours to allow nighttime use of the Shoreline Path and Starkweather Trail.

This development is significant because nighttime use is no longer merely speculative. This change triggers part of the policy discussion surrounding the project and needs to be evaluated accordingly. Importantly...

...CEQA Requires Analysis of the Full Project

CEQA requires agencies to evaluate the ‘whole of a project’, including reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental effects. Agencies may not segment or “piecemeal” connected actions in a manner that avoids analysis of the broader undertaking.

If the proposed lighting is intended to support expanded nighttime access, then nighttime use is not a separate future project. It is part of the overall project currently before the Council.

Potential impacts associated with nighttime use include:

- Increased nighttime pedestrian and bicycle activity;
- Additional vehicle trips and parking demand;
- Increased noise and human activity during nighttime hours;
- Artificial-light-at-night impacts to wildlife and habitat;
- Operational and maintenance impacts; and
- Cumulative impacts associated with extending public activity into nighttime hours.

Because the Council is actively considering changes to park operating hours, these impacts are reasonably foreseeable and the categorical CEQA exemption must be re-evaluated before project approval.

Questions Regarding the CEQA Exemption

The City relied on a Notice of Exemption that included shoreline lighting as part of the project description.

However, CEQA exemptions do not apply where unusual circumstances create a reasonable possibility of significant environmental effects.

The introduction of extensive nighttime lighting adjacent to sensitive shoreline habitat, combined with the City’s active consideration of expanded nighttime access raises substantial questions regarding whether the exemption adequately addresses the full scope of potential impacts.

Sensitive Habitat and Wildlife Concerns Remain Unresolved

The shoreline corridor is immediately adjacent to tidal marshes, wetlands, mudflats, and open-water habitat supporting migratory birds, shorebirds, fish, and other wildlife. We all enjoy this

aspect of having this natural resource in San Rafael. We need to protect it for generations to come.

Scientific research increasingly identifies artificial light at night (ALAN) as an ecological stressor that can affect migration, feeding behavior, nesting success, predator-prey relationships, and habitat use.

Particularly concerning is the proximity of the project to habitat associated with species that are protected by CA and Federal Fish and Wildlife. For example, the salt marsh harvest mouse is nocturnal and dependent on marsh habitat and sensitive to any changes to nighttime lighting conditions. This warrants careful biological evaluation.

To date, the City has not publicly demonstrated that species-specific analysis, consultation with resource agencies, or independent biological review has been completed regarding the effects of permanent nighttime lighting, or the impact of construction of the extensive infrastructure required to install permanent lighting.

Existing Facilities vs. New Lighting Infrastructure

A key issue is that substantial portions of the shoreline corridor currently have no pathway lighting.

This project is therefore not merely the maintenance, repair, replacement, or minor modification of existing facilities. It would introduce permanent lighting into areas that have historically remained dark.

Under CEQA, the environmental baseline is the existing condition of the site. Existing conditions along much of the Shoreline Path and Starkweather Trail include natural nighttime darkness. Introducing lighting where none currently exists represents a physical change to the environment and potentially a change in the operational use of the corridor.

The City's analysis focuses on fixture design, shielding, and light-spill reduction. However, the threshold question is whether introducing lighting into previously unlit shoreline habitat and recreational areas may itself create environmental impacts requiring additional review.

Even with modern lighting standards, conversion of a naturally dark shoreline environment into an illuminated corridor affects wildlife behavior, habitat conditions, visual character, nighttime recreation patterns, and adjacent residential views.

Conflict with Adopted Shoreline Planning Documents (1989–2023)

The proposed lighting and contemplated nighttime use are inconsistent with the City’s shoreline planning framework.

The 1989 Shoreline Master Plan envisioned the shoreline corridor as a scenic waterfront resource emphasizing public access, habitat protection, open space, and enjoyment of the Bay. It did not contemplate pathway lighting, nighttime recreational or commuter use, or conversion of shoreline parks into illuminated nighttime corridors.

Likewise, subsequent shoreline planning efforts and the 2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan do not specifically recommend lighting the Shoreline Path, Starkweather Trail, or shoreline Bay Trail segments. While the 2023 Plan identifies lighting as a general park improvement category, it does not establish a policy supporting illumination of shoreline trails, special-use shoreline parks, or wildlife-oriented waterfront areas.

The proposal therefore raises important consistency questions:

- Is extensive pathway lighting consistent with the historic planning vision for the shoreline corridor?
- Is conversion of a naturally dark shoreline environment into an illuminated nighttime corridor consistent with the recreational and environmental objectives of adopted plans?
- Is extending park hours consistent with the special-use park designation of Jean & John Starkweather Shoreline Park?
- Is nighttime operation consistent with longstanding sunset-to-sunrise park closures?
- Is expanded nighttime access consistent with Bay Trail shoreline segments that have historically operated under environmental protection and nighttime closure policies?

Because the Council is now considering extended nighttime access, this policy change should be evaluated not only for environmental impacts but also for consistency with the City’s adopted shoreline and parks planning documents.

Additional Review Is Needed

The City has acknowledged that portions of the project fall within the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). Because BCDC has responsibility for protecting Bay resources and shoreline habitat, shoreline lighting should not be approved until the regulatory review process is complete and agency findings are available for public review.

Requested Action

We respectfully request that the City Council:

1. Remove the Shoreline Path and Starkweather Trail lighting components from the current CNATEP project. Short of that, then...
2. Conduct additional environmental review addressing nighttime use, wildlife impacts, habitat impacts, and artificial-light-at-night effects.
3. Complete biological review of impacts to protected species and sensitive shoreline habitats.
4. Obtain and publicly present BCDC findings before considering shoreline lighting.
5. Evaluate non-lighting alternatives for improving safety and accessibility.
6. Review the CATP Plan for compatibility with the City's 1989 Shoreline Master Plan, subsequent shoreline planning documents, the 2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the special-use park designation of Starkweather Shoreline Park, and existing policies governing nighttime closure of shoreline Bay Trail segments.
7. Conduct additional inclusive public outreach specifically focused on shoreline lighting and proposed nighttime park use.

The Shoreline and Starkweather Paths are among San Rafael's most valued waterfront resources. Any decision to illuminate these facilities which would legitimize and extend public use into nighttime hours should be based on complete environmental review, full public disclosure, and careful consideration of long-term impacts to wildlife, habitat, neighborhood character, and adopted public policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Joni Harris, MARSH Alliance, City of San Rafael Resident

From: Dave Rhoads [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2026 2:53 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Mayor Kate <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>; Eli Hill <eli.hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; April Miller <april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati <maika@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Walk/Bike San Rafael Public Comment - June 15 CC Meeting - Item 2.a

Mayor Kate Colin and Members of the San Rafael City Council,

Walk/Bike San Rafael supports the proposed Starkweather Path Lighting Project.

The Starkweather Path is an important transportation and recreation corridor that connects residents to schools, jobs, transit, and the Bay Trail. It is particularly important for Canal residents, many of whom rely on walking and bicycling as everyday forms of transportation rather than solely for recreation. Lighting is a basic component of safe walking and bicycling infrastructure, particularly on pathways separated from streets that remain heavily used during early morning and evening hours.

We recognize that some residents have expressed concerns about impacts to wildlife and nearby homes. However, the proposed design incorporates shielded fixtures and focused lighting intended to illuminate the path while minimizing spillover into adjacent habitat and neighborhoods. The project area is already located within an urbanized environment with significant existing sources of nighttime lighting.

We were also encouraged to see that many Canal residents view the project as a way to improve safety and reduce illegal activity. The benefits of providing a safer and more welcoming path for people walking and bicycling should carry substantial weight in the Council's decision.

To balance safety and environmental considerations, we generally support the City's proposed limited operating schedule for the lighting system. However, we understand staff recommended that evening lighting operate from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Because sunset occurs well after 8:00 p.m. during much of the summer, this schedule would leave the path unlit during the very hours when many people are using it after work and before darkness falls. We therefore recommend that the lighting operate until 90 minutes after sunset or 8:00 p.m., whichever is later. This approach would preserve the City's goal of limiting overnight illumination while ensuring the lighting remains available when it is most useful to people walking and bicycling.

We urge the City Council to move forward with this project and continue investing in safe, comfortable, and accessible active transportation infrastructure for all San Rafael residents.

Sincerely,

Dave

Dave Rhoads

Co-Chair, **Walk/Bike San Rafael**, A Marin County Bicycle Coalition Local Team

P: 702-630-2423

W: www.walkbikesanrafael.org

[Follow us on Instagram](#)



Walk/Bike San Rafael
Everyday. Everywhere.



MCBC
MARIN COUNTY BICYCLE COALITION
LOCAL TEAM

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

From: Donna Saberman [REDACTED]

Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2026 3:29 PM

To: Mayor Kate <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati

<maika.gulati@cityofsanrafael.org>; Eli Hill <eli.hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey

<maribeth.bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rachel Kertz <rachel.kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>; Distrib- City

Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>; Paul Navazio <paul.navazio@cityofsanrafael.org>; April Miller

<april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>; Craig Veramay <craig.veramay@cityofsanrafael.org>; Greg Minor

<greg.minor@cityofsanrafael.org>; Grey Melgard <grey.melgard@cityofsanrafael.org>

Subject: Request for Meaningful Community Input on Starkweather Path Projects

Dear Mayor Kate Colin and all members of the City of San Rafael City Council,

My name is Donna Saberman, and I have lived and walked in the Starkweather Path area for 29 years. I'm writing because I'm concerned about the process by which the "Peoples of the Canal" art project and the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement ("Canal ATE") artificial Lighting Project have advanced.

Many of us who use this path daily learned about these projects only recently, despite the significant changes they would bring to a shared public space. This has left many community members feeling that their voices were not included in the planning process.

Specifically, I'm concerned that:

- Residents adjacent to the path were not proactively notified or consulted, raising inverse concerns
- Regular path users had limited opportunity to provide input before designs were finalized
- The scope of the project (22 permanent installations over 2 miles) warrants broader public discussion than has occurred
- Mayor Kate's commitment to transparency, engagement and direct dialogue is disappointing at best as our communities were blindsided by both projects

I'm opposed to public art and new lighting along the path. I am opposed to the amount of positive attention of this plan in that it will bring too many people to our area and change the peaceful and quiet nature of our community. I believe a project of this scale and permanence deserves a more inclusive process, one that genuinely incorporates feedback from the people who use and care for this space every day.

I respectfully request that the city reject both proposals in their current form and stand with the residents who are directly impacted by these decisions.

Sincerely,

Donna Saberman

[REDACTED]

San Rafael, Ca. 94901

From: Evan Meagher [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2026 4:28 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Public Comment - June 15 CC Meeting - Item 2.a

Mayor Colin and Members of the City Council,

I urge you to move forward with the Starkweather Path lighting project and continue investing in safe, accessible active transportation infrastructure for all San Rafael residents.

The Starkweather Path is a key transportation corridor connecting Canal residents to schools, jobs, and transit, and many of those residents depend on walking and bicycling as everyday transportation. Lighting is a basic component of safe infrastructure on pathways that see heavy use during early morning and evening hours.

I recognize concerns about wildlife and neighboring homes, but the proposed shielded fixtures are designed to minimize spillover, and the path already sits within an urbanized environment with significant existing nighttime light sources. Canal residents have also voiced that lighting would improve safety and reduce illegal activity, benefits that should carry real weight in the Council's decision.

On operating hours: staff recommended evening lighting from 5–8pm, but sunset falls well after 8pm for much of the summer, leaving the path dark during peak after-work use. I recommend the lighting operate until 90 minutes after sunset or 8pm, whichever is later, preserving the goal of limiting overnight illumination while keeping the lights on when people actually need them.

Thank you,

--

Evan Meagher

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

From: Lois [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2026 7:54 PM

To: Mayor Kate <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati <maika.gulati@cityofsanrafael.org>; Eli Hill <eli.hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey <maribeth.bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rachel Kertz <rachel.kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>; Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>; Paul Navazio <paul.navazio@cityofsanrafael.org>; April Miller <april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>; Craig Veramay <craig.veramay@cityofsanrafael.org>; Greg Minor <greg.minor@cityofsanrafael.org>; Grey Melgard <grey.melgard@cityofsanrafael.org>; outreach@marinaudubon.org; info@bccdc.ca.gov; Community Development <community.development@cityofsanrafael.org>; linda.tong@scc.ca.gov; director@wildlife.ca.gov; dallen@marinij.com; editor@marinmagazine.com; arodriguez@marinij.com; rhalstead@marinij.com; Cameron Macdonald <cmacdonald@marinij.com>; spotswood@comcast.net; annie.vainshtein@sfchronicle.com; julie.johnson@sfchronicle.com; tara.duggan@sfchronicle.com
Subject: Concerns About Environmental Impact on Starkweather Path

Dear City Personnel

My name is [YourLois Roth, and I'm a [resident of the Baypoint / Spinnaker neighborhood. I'm writing to express serious concerns about the environmental impact of the proposed "Peoples of the Canal" art installation (3'X2') and the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement ("Canal ATE") artificial Lighting Project on the 2-mile Starkweather/Bay Trail Path.

Starkweather Path runs directly adjacent to sensitive salt marsh habitat, one of the Bay Area's most fragile ecosystems. The proposal to install 22 permanent placards (3'X2') and artificial lighting proposed by the Canal ATE would:

- Disturb nesting shorebirds and migratory species that depend on this corridor
- Introduce artificial light into a naturally dark environment, disrupting nocturnal wildlife and natural circadian rhythms
- Proposal to increase foot traffic on a shared use path with constrained widths leading to pedestrian safety issues

I understand and appreciate the value of public art and cultural storytelling. However, I believe this particular location, a nature corridor with documented wildlife sensitivity, is not the appropriate setting for permanent infrastructures of this scale.

I respectfully request that the city reject both proposals in their current form and stand with the residents who are directly impacted by these decisions.

Sincerely

Lois Roth

[REDACTED]
SanRafael, Ca
94901

Sent from my iPad

From: Mark Ruch [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2026 12:50 PM

To: Mayor Kate <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati <maika.gulati@cityofsanrafael.org>; Eli Hill <eli.hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey <maribeth.bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rachel Kertz <rachel.kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>; Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>; Paul Navazio <paul.navazio@cityofsanrafael.org>; April Miller <april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>; Craig Veramay <craig.veramay@cityofsanrafael.org>; Greg Minor <greg.minor@cityofsanrafael.org>; Grey Melgard <grey.melgard@cityofsanrafael.org>

Subject: Concerns About Environmental Impact on Starkweather Path

Dear [Official Name],

My name is Mark Ruch, and I'm a resident of the Spinnaker Point neighborhood. I'm writing to express serious concerns about the environmental impact of the proposed "Peoples of the Canal" art installation (3'X2') and the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement ("Canal ATE") artificial Lighting Project on the 2-mile Starkweather/Bay Trail Path.

Starkweather Path runs directly adjacent to sensitive salt marsh habitat, one of the Bay Area's most fragile ecosystems. The proposal to install 22 permanent placards (3'X2') and artificial lighting proposed by the Canal ATE would:

- Disturb nesting shorebirds and migratory species that depend on this corridor
- Introduce artificial light into a naturally dark environment, disrupting nocturnal wildlife and natural circadian rhythms
- Proposal to increase foot traffic on a shared use path with constrained widths leading to pedestrian safety issues
- Provide very little benefit regarding nighttime access for "errands" etc., as it only lights the 1st half of the 1.4 miles between the points where the lighting begins and the only useful destination (Target?). The 2nd half of the assumed destination would require that users walk along the San Francisco Bay Trail which will continue to be unlit. This means the intended beneficiary walks for 15 minutes in complete darkness through an overgrown field. Who benefits from this? How?

I believe this particular location, a nature corridor with documented wildlife sensitivity, is not the appropriate setting for permanent infrastructures of this scale.

I respectfully request that the city reject both proposals in their current form and stand with the residents who are directly impacted by these decisions.

Sincerely,
Mark Ruch
Spinnaker Point Drive
San Rafael, CA

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2026 2:42 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Public Comment - June 15 CC Meeting - Item 2.a

Mayor Kate and Members of the City Council,
I am writing to express my support for the Starkweather Path/Bay Trail lighting project. This project was presented to BPAC a couple months ago as it's part of the Bay Trail and an important transportation and recreation corridor. The committee was and is quite supportive of the effort.

Thoughtful lighting would improve both actual and perceived safety, especially during darker morning and evening hours, and would make the path more usable for people who depend on it for everyday transportation. I appreciate staff's efforts to minimize impacts through limited lighting hours and smaller fixtures, even though my personal preference would be to have lighting continue a bit later into the night. I urge the Council to support this project.

Please support moving the Starkweather Path lighting project forward.

Sincerely,
Philip Mooney

Get [Outlook for Mac](#)

From: Stephen Bearg [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2026 7:52 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Paul Navazio <paul.navazio@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati <maika.gulati@cityofsanrafael.org>; Eli Hill <eli.hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey <maribeth.bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rachel Kertz <rachel.kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>; April Miller <april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>; Craig Veramay <craig.veramay@cityofsanrafael.org>; Greg Minor <greg.minor@cityofsanrafael.org>; Grey Melgard <grey.melgard@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: STRONGLY OPPOSED to Starkweather Path lighting project

Dear officials of the city of San Rafael:

I am a resident of the Spinnaker Point neighborhood. I'm writing to express serious concerns about the environmental impact of the proposed "Peoples of the Canal" art installation (3'X2') and the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement ("Canal ATE") artificial Lighting Project on the 2-mile Starkweather/Bay Trail Path.

Starkweather Path runs directly adjacent to sensitive salt marsh habitat, one of the Bay Area's most fragile ecosystems. The proposal to install 22 permanent placards (3'X2') and artificial lighting proposed by the Canal ATE would:

- Disturb nesting shorebirds and migratory species that depend on this corridor
- Introduce artificial light into a naturally dark environment, disrupting nocturnal wildlife and natural circadian rhythms
- Proposal to increase foot traffic on a shared use path with constrained widths leading to pedestrian safety issues

I understand and appreciate the value of public art and cultural storytelling. However, I believe this particular location, a nature corridor with documented wildlife sensitivity, is not the appropriate setting for permanent infrastructures of this scale.

I respectfully request that the city reject both proposals in their current form and stand with the residents who are directly impacted by these decisions.

Sincerely,

Stephen Bearg MD

From: Stuart Dubey [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2026 9:23 PM
To: Mayor Kate <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Lindsay Lara <lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rob Epstein <rob.epstein@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati <Maika@cityofsanrafael.org>; Eli Hill <Eli.Hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey <maribeth.bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rachel Kertz <rachel.kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>; Paul Navazio <paul.navazio@cityofsanrafael.org>; April Miller <april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>; Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rob Epstein <Rob.Epstein@CityOfSanRafael.org>
Subject: Community Petition to Protect Starkweather Path

June 14, 2026

City Clerk: For the Public Record

Mayor Kate Colin and Members of the San Rafael City Council and Staff
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

Re: Community Petition to Protect Starkweather Path

Dear Mayor Colin and City Council members,

I am a resident of Baypoint Lagoons and a volunteer with MARSH (Marin Action to Restore the Starkweather Habitat), a community group dedicated to preserving the natural character of the Starkweather Path shoreline, protecting its fragile tidal marsh ecosystem, and ensuring the long-term enjoyment and safety of this unique public resource.

To be clear - we support the goals of the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement Project to improve safety on Canal neighborhood streets, sidewalks, bicycle routes, and transportation corridors. Those improvements address demonstrated community needs and are worthy investments.

However, we oppose the City's proposal to install permanent lighting along the Starkweather Path. The Path is not a city street or urban transportation corridor. It is a special-use recreational park adjacent to a sensitive salt marsh habitat that, by City policy, is closed from sunset to sunrise. Permanent nighttime lighting is inconsistent with both the character and intended use of this shoreline environment.

We are also concerned about how this segment of the Path became included in the project. While extensive outreach was conducted within the Canal community, the more than 400 Baypoint and Spinnaker households directly adjacent to the proposed lighting area were not included in the early planning discussions. It was only later in the process

that the City conducted a public survey, which revealed significant opposition to lighting the Path.

In response to this lack of early outreach and engagement, MARSH organized to ensure that affected residents and Path users accross Marin had an opportunity to be heard before decisions are made. As part of that effort, we launched SaveStarkweatherPath.org and circulated an independent community petition regarding the proposed Starkweather Path lighting and related projects.

I respectfully submit for the record the attached petition, signed by 275 Marin County residents who oppose the proposed projects. The petition includes a demographic breakdown of participants, information about how residents use the Path, and 177 written comments directed to the City Council.

We believe this information provides valuable insight into community sentiment and request that the petition, in its entirety, be included in the public record and distributed as part of the informational materials for the June 15 City Council meeting when this item is considered.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stuart Dubey
MARSH – Marin Action to Restore the Starkweather Habitat

<http://SaveStarkweatherPath.org>

Stuart Dubey

[REDACTED]

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Protect Starkweather Park Path

Presented to the San Rafael City Council • Compiled Saturday, June 13, 2026

275 verified signatures
opposing the proposed art
installations & lighting

Join your neighbors in opposing 22 permanent art installations and proposed lighting along the Starkweather Park / Bay Trail path. These changes threaten the park's natural beauty, environmental balance, peaceful character, and the safety of the most picturesque part of our neighborhood.

Sign and share this petition to urge the City to protect Starkweather Park / Bay Trail and pursue safer, more sustainable alternatives.

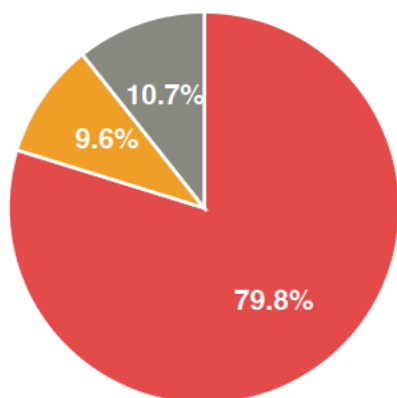
By the Numbers

NEIGHBORHOOD	SIGNERS	HOW THEY USE THE PATH	SIGNERS
Spinnaker Point	108	Walking	251
Baypoint Lagoons	58	Nature / wildlife	194
Other San Rafael	32	Birdwatching	132
Other Marin County	12	Dog walking	97
Canal neighborhood	11	Cycling	66
Downtown San Rafael	9	Running / jogging	48
Terra Linda	9	I don't use it but support its protection	26
Larkspur	8	Commuting	7
Mill Valley	6		
Gerstle Park	5		
Sun Valley	4		
Novato	3		
Corte Madera	3		

NEIGHBORHOOD	SIGNERS
Bay Area	2
Outside California	2
Other California	2
Bahia	1

What the Signers Said

Sentiment of the 178 written comments left by petition signers, coded by the campaign. (These are signers' comments, separate from the City's own Path Use Survey.) **89% explicitly oppose** the lighting and/or art in their own words; the remainder shared a personal connection to the path without stating a position.



Oppose lighting & art — 142 (79.8%)

Oppose — but art OK elsewhere — 17 (9.6%)

Personal connection / no position stated — 19 (10.7%)

In Their Own Words (177 comments)

“Hate to see artificial lighting installed and hinder dark skies and the increase possibility of crime and vandalism.”

— Susan Levine, Baypoint Lagoons

“I have two major concerns with this project and many minor concerns. This neighborhood is dense and difficult to park in already and to bring more people into the neighborhood to walk the path is going to be a nightmare. But forget about the disruption to us humans, consider the impact of Lights and birds. It affects migration and the natural cycle of life. We should not be disrupting nature by installing lights on this path in the past is supposed to be closed at Sunset anyway.”

— Jody Benson, Spinnaker Point

“I live close enough to the path to know that the light will be disturbing to me and my neighbors. But it will be worse for the birds. This area is a bird sanctuary!!”

— Rae Ann Gustafson, Spinnaker Point

“I live near Starkweather Path. I walk on it daily. I meet more people who live in the Canal on the path than anywhere else in San Rafael. It’s a great meeting area.”

Frances Michener, Spinnaker Point

“I think the signage would ruin the view and the experience of being in the natural environment. And if no one were responsible for upkeep of the already ugly signs the result would be an even greater disaster over time.”

— Peg Leach, Spinnaker Point

“These two projects are not necessary for this area and the art installation is totally inappropriate for this path. It should be put somewhere else.”

Corrie Sias, Spinnaker Point

“I’m a 28 yr resident of Baypoint and use the path daily.”

— Sally LaMont, Baypoint Lagoons

“This walking path doesn’t need Posters or sculptures. Pls leave it just the way it is, NATURAL!”

Karen Brainerd, Spinnaker Point

“I want to leave the natural beauty of the path”

— Kimberly Deffenbaugh, Spinnaker Point

“I am deeply concerned about the safety issues of added pedestrian traffic brought to Starkweather if these art installations are allowed to be installed.”

Gary Gioglio, Baypoint Lagoons

*“I am deeply opposed to the lighted path which negatively and irrevocably affects the wildlife which **DEPENDS** on our natural shoreline to reproduce, feed, thrive. A lit path would destroy the already delicate ecosystem”*

— Barbara Liss, Spinnaker Point

“Our walking path from Spinnaker point”

Anita Sirianni, Spinnaker Point

“I’m on the path daily. I’m abundantly aware of its pristine nature, the relationship between humans and wildlife, the importance of the natural balance, and the limited space available”

— Mark Fallows, Spinnaker Point

“This is one of the few accessible natural wildlife left in the city. I’m sure the art has value, but not at the expense of the wonderful bay views along the path. The bay view in the dark is wonderful. The lights will only detract from that view. I feel confident that the people I see using the path would not find the artwork complimentary to their purpose. Please don’t spoil this asset.”

Ellis Joe Simmons, Spinnaker Point

“The Path is virtually my backyard. I cannot understand how path lights and an art installation belong here. The Path is closed at sunset. Installing lights would only invite people to loiter after dark. Artwork would take up space along an already narrow walkway. Vandalism is inevitable and costly. Overall, this is a terrible idea for Starkweather Path. I’m adamantly opposed.”

— Sheri Belloni, Spinnaker Point

“The art project would not have been what the historical residents would have wanted a pristine view of the vista littered with billboards promoted by a man who doesn’t live here and wants his legacy left to impede the beauty of the bay. So far no stats from the SRPD have been provided to debate whether lights would prevent crime, they won’t even provide crime stats. Lights will increase nighttime traffic, produce more litter and interrupt clear skies to the residents and wildlife. Both of these decisions are ill planned by people who have no daily skin in the game.”

Debora Levy, Spinnaker Point

“such a beautiful natural area, don’t spoil it!”

— Samantha Webb, Spinnaker Point

“These projects are totally inappropriate for this path along the bay. The path is supposed to be closed from sunset to sunrise. Why is there a need for lighting. What about the needless electricity usage. I could go on.”

David Korzec, Spinnaker Point

“Beautiful views and peaceful place. Sometimes a fair amount of others are walking, but most are very respectful. Unruly dogs (usually leashed, but often owners struggle to control them) and electric bikes and scooters are the biggest problems. Add more people (dogs, bikes, scooters) to the mix and problems will increase.”

— Joanne Lawlor, Spinnaker Point

“Nancy Ellenbogen”

Nancy Ellenbogen, Baypoint Lagoons

“I don't support putting lights and signs along the path. It's great the way it is!”

— Joanie Ciardelli, Spinnaker Point

“It is a designated path and should remain as intended by the Starkweather donation for nature use. There are other spaces dedicated to local history such as the Marin History Museum and The Boyd House and Falkirk Mansion/Museum that house art in protected spaces. The Starkweather Path is a local treasure dedicated to nature.”

Ellen Arbit, Baypoint Lagoons

“Our home is directly across from the lagoon that shares the area with the path. It is vital to continue to protect this path, to continue to keep people from using it from dusk to early morning, to keep it as pristine as possible.”

— Susan Chardome, Spinnaker Point

“The path offers a peaceful respite from the world. The plan for art and lighting will destroy that for birds, animals, and people”

Anita Casalina, Spinnaker Point

“Friends live there & invite us to walk there”

— Pam Clair, Bay Area

"I am concerned about the lighting and the permanent cartoon plaques that are being considered for placement along the Starkweather Path. I oppose both proposals. The plaques will be targets for graffiti. and glare from the lighting will interfere with the view of the bay and of the lagoons. The lighting will not serve any purpose. The path is closed from sunset to sunrise. The police never have a presence on or near the path. So, lighting cannot serve any law enforcement purpose. I all my 16 years of use of the path I have never seen a policeman near it. If anything, the lighting will encourage illegal after hours use of the path. The lighting will also be subject to vandalism, especially because nobody wants or needs the lights which will be bothersome and a nuisance. I find it amazing that a city would want to actually create a nuisance. The proposed plaques of "artwork" do not add anything to the beauty of the area. Some of the text to go under the cartoons on the proposed plaques is not true. For example, the native Americans in this area never had horses, and no native Americans had horses until some escaped from the Spanish invaders in the 17th century."

— Edward LaBarre, Baypoint Lagoons

"For God's sake do we have to ruin every area of nature with signs and photos? This is one of the last natural bay trails in Marin. Is the view of the Bay not sufficiently attractive? This is a horrible idea."

Dennis Duff, Baypoint Lagoons

"Please Keep our beautiful natural resource natural"

— Paula Hammons, Baypoint Lagoons

"I live on the lagoon and the view from house points directly at the full width of Starkweather path that is along the Bay. I love the view at all times of day and would be extremely disappointed if that view is interrupted by path lighting. The path is meant to be closed from dusk to dawn so I do NOT understand why artificial lighting would be added. It is not meant to be a thoroughfare at night. It is a nature preserve."

Amy Wilson, Baypoint Lagoons

"My wife and I use the path multiple times per week for exercise, nature, visiting neighbors, birding and just getting out."

— John Ganem, Baypoint Lagoons

“I see no reason to mar the beautiful scenery with this art project. People come from many neighborhoods to enjoy the serenity of this path. Put the art on a website so that you have a choice of seeing it or not. It serves no purpose to disturb this natural environment.”

— Diane Connor, Baypoint Lagoons

“A dear friend lives there. We enjoy walks and nature.”

Melissa Heckman, Bay Area

“Walking the path on a daily basis is an essential part of my healthy lifestyle, both physical and mental. The unblemished nature is really very precious. It would be a shame to clutter it with signs to distract from the natural scene and possibly cause a safety hazard on this multi used path, shared by Young and Old, Dogwalkers, e-scooters and bicycles and bird watchers.”

— Anton Schneider, Baypoint Lagoons

“This would have a huge negative environmental impact on the wildlife in the area and also bring in a bad element of people in the evenings when the path is traditionally closed the walkers.”

Karen Neustadt, Baypoint Lagoons

“This path is incredibly beautiful and relaxing, and should not be polluted with any signage whatsoever. Please let the local people and anyone else who comes to visit this beautiful path enjoy the serene beauty of the bay and Lagoon with as few traces as human involvement as possible in this otherwise highly urbanized area.”

— Debbie Alstad, Baypoint Lagoons

“I live on Baypoint Lagoons and I’m lucky enough to have a view of the pathway. I’m concerned about the light pollution that will affect the ecology of the pathway. Starkweather pathway also has a graffiti problem, that I fear will damage any artwork that is proposed for the pathway.”

Karen Thomas, Baypoint Lagoons

“Walk my dog on the path twice every day, observing the birds, squirrels, mice, lizards and snakes that live in the riprap and the lagoon shoreline.”

— Don Fordham, Spinnaker Point

"I am a Baypoint Lagoons resident and frequent user on the path. I am opposed to the art installations and proposed lighting that will have a significant negative impact on our surrounding environs, natural beauty and habitat, peaceful vibe and safety on the path."

— Lynne Naomi Mueller, Baypoint Lagoons

"Lights do not belong on this path!"

Ron Brown, Baypoint Lagoons

"Starkweather path has been an oasis away from the chaos for the 30 years I've lived here. The many birds and other wildlife that reside along this path are part of our sanctuary and they need to be kept safe from mankind's perpetual need to tell their story and put up distracting lights that disturb their space. Please leave them alone."

— Karen Scheder, Baypoint Lagoons

"It is a peaceful place to walk and look at the peaceful nature that surrounds the path. Lights and art work will change the surroundings"

Terry Ohleyer, Baypoint Lagoons

"I am opposing the 22 permanent art installations and the lighting along the Starkweather Park Pay trail."

— Beate ANANDI MATTESON, Baypoint Lagoons

"I live on Starkweather Path. There are many reasons not to go forward with the project. There is a horrible parking problem for residences as it is. I am very concerned about the safety of the neighborhood if the further development of lighting and all the "Art" blocking the natural view goes into the area. The closed between dusk and dawn law is very necessary for the safety of the neighborhood. Noisy gatherings with drinking and music can go on, along with fires. Lighting is not necessary for daylight access only and will only encourage people to be there after dark. It is way too close to the protected wildlife preserve, as well as the residences."

Gail Haan, Baypoint Lagoons

"I have lived in Spinnaker point for over 38 years and have enjoyed the natural setting. I also note that the city has not maintained the pathway well at all...how would they support art installations and inappropriate lighting. NO!"

— Kathleen Simmons, Spinnaker Point

“This is my backyard. I use it for my pleasure every single day.. I would like to keep it that way, without cluttered with signage and lighting that is going to interfere with the beauty of my daily walk”

— Torild Roberts, Spinnaker Point

“I am walking there on daily basis. I am enjoying every moment while walking. Some days it is so crowded with people biking around, many dogs, children without parents supervision that I have to worry about my safety instead of enjoying the nature. The new project will bring new problems to already narrow pass way”

Raisa Margolina, Baypoint Lagoons

“This will increase the current parking and traffic issues by non-residents, which City won’t fix”

— Tyler Bennett, Spinnaker Point

“I live have lived near the entrance to the path for over 20 years.”

Jeffrey Finn, Canal neighborhood

“I love in one of the houses along the path.”

— Mounira Kenaani, Spinnaker Point

“This project along with the proposed lighting will pose serious threats to our community’s quality of living here, and to the market value of our homes.”

Tim Carroll, Spinnaker Point

“I walk here on my lunch break everyday”

— Mariah Bevard, Downtown San Rafael

“I completely oppose this disruption of this natural wildlife sanctuary”

Ellen Eatough Eatough, Baypoint Lagoons

"I'm [REDACTED] years old female and live in Spinnaker Point. Due to physical limitations my only exercise is walking daily on a path with benches since I usually have to sit down every 15 to 20 minutes. Over the 20 plus years I have lived here my I've seen many a man reliving himself at a bordering house fence and once a woman defecating at such a fence behind a too small bush. The number of children and adults needing to relive themselves would increase dramatically leading to a contaminated area and polluted San Pedro bay. The current amount of usually 2 small children are tolerable since their adult can usually control their actions and I don't get knocked down. But with field trip class room trips and sitters taking their multiple charges the danger increases and I would not be able to safely get the exercise I need to stay a viable adult/senior. Placing light along that path is a bad idea since they would make homes along that path much easier for the unlawful to case and rob them. A fear that paying property taxes to San Rafael of \$900000 + should be alleviated not encouraged. What about security? It would make much more logical to place such an exhibit that already has the facilities to handle all these needs like Pickleweed Park or any other place. Please consider my issues and remember your Mother, Sister, Aunt etc. who could very well have these vital issues also. Thank You! Edie Lesieutre"

— Edie Lesieutre, Other San Rafael

"I am absolutely opposed to the lighting of the Starkweather path."

— GINETTE Kenney, Spinnaker Point

"I live on the path. Lights will bring late night traffic. The path is meant for daytime enjoyment, no need to illuminate at night to entice group congregations.. More signs will bring clutter and more graffiti, existing signs already get tagged on the path. No one reads the existing signs, already there. This will add more clutter to the beautiful path that is meant for coastal area enjoyment. Let's not ruin the environment with more junk."

— Martha Hacking, Spinnaker Point

"This plan will drive the precious wildlife away from their habitat. Let's protect the environment. No lights, no new signs. This path is meant for respectful use to enjoy the coastal environment during the day."

— Tucker Hacking, Spinnaker Point

"No light no arts display"

— Paul Garcia, Spinnaker Point

"I live across the street from one of the entrances to this amazing path along the bay. I go out almost every day with me and my daughter and we check out the abundance of wildlife and nature. I am extremely opposed to the art installation and lighting projects as they will dramatically change this pristine landscape for the worse. Please don't disrupt our lovely nature path."

— Olivia Kuhlman, Spinnaker Point

"Live in Spinnaker Point and do not want additional lighting on a path that closes at dusk."

Katharine Barry, Spinnaker Point

"I believe both the lighting and the art work will directly affect the natural beauty of the landscape in a very negative way. The lighting will result in more people being on that path late at night and likely result in more crime"

— Lisa Kuhlman, Baypoint Lagoons

"I see the path from my home, I hear the people on the path from my home and I use the path at least once daily. I am very directly affected by changes in its use as a user and nearby homeowner and environmentalist."

Kate Wanvig, Spinnaker Point

"I'm objecting to: A) having the proposed "22 permanent placards" obscuring the view of the water. Why can't they sit on the other side of the trail? Why can't the messages (tiny bits of random history) be digitally presented rather than archaically presented as art that obscures natural beauty? Are those bits of history and "art" more important than the natural view of the water? B) having 24/7 lighting installed on a path that is closed from dawn to dusk. I understand some have expressed being afraid while walking the path at night. Why are they on the path at night when it's supposed to be closed? Where are they going? To Target at midnight? IT'S CLOSED as is the path itself. This isn't the boardwalk in Santa Cruz. What's next? Concession stands and pull up bars? Who in the world would be on that path at midnight other than maybe homeless people camping in the marsh area between Spinnaker and Target? Do you WANT to invite people to that area in the middle of the night? Are police going to patrol the area? What is the purpose of this? Who are the beneficiaries? It honestly makes no sense to me."

— Mark Ruch, Spinnaker Point

"I live along the Starkweather Path and enjoy looking at the beautiful natural bay and the birds. Do not mess with nature - there is so little left to just experience."

— Barbara Lockhart, Spinnaker Point

"Richard Storek could enhance his legacy by relocating his art/ history signs to the area just north of the Spinnaker complex or in and around the Pickleweed area. The impact and readership would be greatly enhanced and the very people he is honoring (Miwok,Hokoweko,Tamalpais)(Ghosts) would quietly applaud. Don't further clutter our beloved and beautiful path!"

Jim Phelps, Spinnaker Point

"The path is a peaceful and beautiful area of San Rafael. adding walk traffic and light, especially at night would disturb greatly the neighborhood and the wildlife. It is quiet at night because the path is closed and dark. Adding light will change drastically the activities, good and bad. Also, you can solve the issue by simply concentrating the exhibit in the South part of the trail, near Target. The path needs to be restored so you would solve 2 issues at one: parking access and activities in a non-residential zone."

— Maryline Daviaud Lewett, Spinnaker Point

"I love this peaceful rustic path. Have walked it for years and a year ago had the luck to be able to move to one of the townhouses on the path by the water. Just leave it how it is!"

Cara Honigsfeld, Spinnaker Point

"I live across the street from the path, we walk it everyday with our dog. I enjoy the water, the animals and birds very much. It's hard for me to believe that such a beautiful environment would be disrupted and ruined for the wildlife that live along the path. As far as a commuter pathway seems shallow idea at best. As it is now people walk, bike and use various electric modes of transportation. Please understand that electric vehicles like bikes and scooters travel outside of any posted speed limit. (Is there a speed limit). There is a lot of dodging and keeping an eye out so there isn't an accident. Also changing the hours of the Starkweather Path is also an invitation for more partying. The drug gang members are seen on a daily basis, with their tiny bikes or ebikes etc.on the path and walking through the neighborhood. (With faces covered completely). To make a long story short I feel the lighting on the path is generally bad idea. If I wanted to take a walk at night on the path I would bring a flashlight. That disturbs no one. Theresa"

— Theresa Soule, Spinnaker Point

"I strongly object because the night time artificial lighting would invite after-hours use, increasing noise, safety concerns, and trespassing for nearby residents considering that the path is closed at sunset."

— GINETTE Kenney, Spinnaker Point

"This is one of the rare paths along the Marin shoreline abutting the Bayshore that has, thus far, remained natural and unadulterated. It was a major factor in my choosing to buy a home in Baypoint Lagoons. There are so many other places where artwork can be placed. There is no reason to install lighting along a path that is closed from dusk till dawn. PLEASE, honor the natural diurnal rhythms of shore birds and other wildlife and please honor the urgent need for humans to have a quiet, tranquil setting disconnected from the stress of 21st C life."

Anne Dunlea, Baypoint Lagoons

"I walk here regularly and Natural world is more than enough here. The lighting is even worse for the natural inhabitants of the path area! Please leave it alone!"

— Marcia King, Gerstle Park

"A big reason we moved here is because it's right on the path, looking out to the wetlands. We love the nature around us, including dark skies to see the stars and the uncluttered simplicity of a path away from cars. The last thing we want to see are signs and lights on this path that we are on every day. Please keep it the way it is!"

Roger Alstad, Baypoint Lagoons

"the lights and the "installations" will have a terrible impact on the birds and wildlife"

— Reva Revis, Spinnaker Point

"I want to protect the environmental balance and peaceful soul of our neighborhood's most beautiful shoreline from unnecessary, all-night light pollution."

Erica Sherkin, Spinnaker Point

"The area should be preserved for nature and bird life. I live right on the trail and have to deal with current issues. The people of the canal actually call this area the "quiet place" it is already enjoyed by everyone because of its beauty. We struggle with the city to keep the area clear of weeds and trash. We often pick up ourselves. This project is not worth disrupting the natural beauty."

— Janice Lee, Spinnaker Point

"I strongly object to the installation and use of lighting along the Starkweather path. The nighttime lighting will negatively impact the wildlife in this reserve area. I suspect it will also negatively impact the lives of the residents who live along this path. People purchased their homes with the knowledge that no nighttime lighting would be present. This could disturb their sleep and enjoyment of night. Furthermore, the lighting makes no sense because this path is closed between sunset and sunrise. It is a waste of money to put up lighting that is undesirable and harmful and pay for the electricity out of taxes. The money could be better spent to help the homeless. The lighting could also draw homeless enclaves to the path which would lend further destructive activity to this nature reserve/park and further cause residents to be unfairly and grossly impacted and lower their home prices dramatically. Do not put this lighting in place at any time."

— Carol Mirenda, Spinnaker Point

"I DO NOT want to see lights OR signs ruining the path. It will totally destroy nature, the ambiance, the animal/bird life and ruin the path forever. Who in the world thinks up these stupid/dumb ideas!!!! Lights all day and at night to obliterate nature and views! No, No, No!!!"

Marty Komitopoulos, Canal neighborhood

"It's a nature path not an art gallery."

— Mattie Rice, Spinnaker Point

"I own a residence in Spinnaker Point and I am absolutely opposed to both the art installations and lighting the path. The "art installations" will distract from the exquisite natural environment. The unimpeded view of the beautiful bay and its peacefulness need to be preserved! Additionally, the installations would be obstacles for pedestrians and cyclists sharing the path, creating a new hazard. As for the lighting-- Please do NOT light the path! The park is clearly marked as being closed from dusk to dawn, and any lighting would encourage after-hours use. This would compromise neighborhood safety, compound the parking shortage that worsens in the evenings, and diminish the peaceful character of the neighborhood. Please preserve the natural beauty of the path and leave it as is!"

Marian Hudacek, Outside California

"I feel the proposed lighting will diminish the value of homes in Spinnaker and Baypoint by creating light pollution in a natural wetlands area. The proposed lighting will also detrimentally disrupt and destroy bird and animal natural habitats."

— Michelle Wilcox, Spinnaker Point

“I walk this path daily and sometimes twice a day. I love the unobstructed access to the bay, nature, the lagoons. There are so few places in this area where we can have this experience. I strongly object to the idea of placing anything more that is manmade on this path that will interfere with this magnificent experience both for people and for the wildlife. And the artwork is abhorrent and inappropriate for the location. Graffiti abounds already on everything that is on this path. No, no, no to art and lighting.”

— Joni Harris, Baypoint Lagoons

“I want to see the current "closed at sunset" status of the park preserved. The wildlife along the path requires quiet human-free darkness to thrive. Lighting of any kind will be detrimental to the wildlife that is squeezed along the narrow confines of the trail that goes through the park. The idea of an art project is a good one, the proposed location is not.”

George Scott, Baypoint Lagoons

“I lived in Spinnaker Point for many years, have many friends still there and in Baypoint. I visit frequently and love this trail.”

— Jill Stephens, Other California

“I have lived in Baypoint Lagoons for 29 years and was drawn to the area for the beauty, nature and wildlife. With so much building going on in San Rafael it's important to preserve the nature/beauty of this area since there are so few left to enjoy.”

DENISE ROSALES, Baypoint Lagoons

“I walk it with a friend who lives near the path”

— paul minault, Novato

“No lights wanted or needed!”

Lisa Schuller, Baypoint Lagoons

“I support the issues brought forth by the Save Starkweather group regarding the path project. The project should be scrapped. San Rafael and the County of Marin have higher priority issues to focus on.”

— Arlene F, Larkspur

“My wife and I walk this path every day. The natural beauty is unmatched anywhere else in San Rafael. Please do not spoil it with signs and lighting.”

Richard Bernstein, Other San Rafael

“To keep the path free of signs. To maintain the beautiful view”

— Judith Gallegos, Larkspur

“Because we need to preserve the natural habitats and light pollution disrupts ecological evolution”

Tara Kline, Mill Valley

“I live on this path”

— Gregg Sherkin, Spinnaker Point

“Maintaining wetlands or at least what is left is important for those creatures who can’t speak for themselves. Nature is beauty. We don’t need so called human art cluttering a natural path.”

Sandra Wishon, Spinnaker Point

“The peaceful natural habitat needs to remain undisturbed, we have few of them left. All neighbors in Canal, Spinnaker and Bay point use this as a natural park. Gallery or lighting is intrusive. Especially for the residents bordering the path. Mine does not but it is not fair to those living on the path to have bright lights shine into their homes, or worse, have people gather on the path at night, disturbing peace and quiet. for no real gain but just vanity projects”

— Iris Melendez, Spinnaker Point

“I want my voice and that of my community heard. I want our views to count. I want the city. and its officials to pay attention and validate our concerns.”

Benna Norman, Spinnaker Point

“No more unnecessary artificial light after dark. Although one informational plaque might be welcome, the plan is overkill in an area that feels somewhat unspoiled”

— mary estes, Other San Rafael

“I am interested in the birds, and wildlife in the area, and that has been the primary purpose, so that residents in the community can have a place to enjoy it. Also any modification of the levee should be preceded by an evaluation of it, as it protects all the homes in area.”

Michael Jackson, Spinnaker Point

“I believe this will encourage promoting people fading out at night. It will be the place where they will sell drugs, where they smoke joints, where the young people party. A nightmare for residents that live in the area.”

— Elaine Keller, Spinnaker Point

“I am supporting the nature sanctuary and the neighbors. I am also supporting the need for an environmental impact review, 100%. The SR city council needs to wake up your citizens need to be heard and, more importantly, be involved in decision-making processes that impact their lives.”

Jennifer Buffalow, Larkspur

“To keep my neighborhood quiet and private. Unnecessary spending on our tax dollars!”

— Joy Li, Spinnaker Point

“Concerned about the environmental impact and increase in maintenance when path is already in poor shape with tagging and deteriorating fence and paving.”

Sandra Stone, Baypoint Lagoons

“The walking path shouldn’t affect the lives of us people living next to it. Lights aren’t necessary since the park is close at dawn we don’t want people walking, drinking and make it noise after the park is closed. It will get ruined with more garbage an it will need for the neighbors to call 911 more often”

— Aura Ghiringhelli, Baypoint Lagoons

“As a resident, I love the quiet but community oriented respite from the busy hustle and bustle of everyday life.”

Susan Coe Adams, Baypoint Lagoons

“As a resident living directly along the Starkweather path, I strongly oppose the proposal to install artificial lighting. The natural darkness of this path is not a flaw to be fixed; it is a vital part of our community's character and the local ecosystem. Because the path borders the San Rafael Bay, this corridor serves as a crucial habitat for nocturnal wildlife that rely on dark nights for hunting, mating, and migration. Introducing bright, intrusive lights will disrupt this delicate balance, causing unnecessary ecological harm to the bay's environment while forever erasing the pristine beauty of our starry night skies. Furthermore, lighting the path will severely disrupt the daily lives of the residents who live alongside it. Instead of enhancing our neighborhood, artificial lighting will bring constant glare into our windows, invade our privacy, and likely invite unwanted late-night noise and activity right outside our doors. The ongoing costs of electricity and maintenance for these fixtures would be a massive waste of taxpayer funds—money that would be much better spent on essential daytime path repairs and structural upkeep. Please listen to the people who actually live here and protect our community by keeping the Starkweather path in the dark.”

— Jay Cady, Spinnaker Point

“Do not add more to San Rafael increasing light pollution especailly at this coast line and Starkweather's nature envision”

Peter Victor, Downtown San Rafael

“Light pollution will impact wildlife habitat and negatively impact the community. I will no longer be able to enjoy this natural space.”

— Stacey Lescht, Corte Madera

“I use the path for walking, exercise and enjoying the beautiful natural views. I am concerned about installing the numerous signs which will not be maintained and oppose any lighting at night when the park is closed.”

Michele Barni, Other Marin County

“Because this is just wrong!”

— Mary Webster, Larkspur

“Frightening overreach of city officials dictating policy that would severely depreciate home values, and quality of life in neighborhood. Including health and safety of individuals and personal property.”

Joel Smolen, Baypoint Lagoons

“I left the city and bought a house in this neighborhood for the peace and quiet and natural beauty it offers. Lighting the path will attract more people at night and ruin that tranquility. We already get minivans of people parking in the middle of the cul-de-sac at 9:30pm and unloading their group of 10+ people to go on night walks. This will only increase with added lighting.”

— Breanna Gunn, Spinnaker Point

“I see the path from my house all the time, day and night. I lived here for 20 years, and never seen any violence. However, if people on the pass late at night , we can hear loud voices and music. And considering that any construction will take few months, it will destruct the neighborhood. Would not be money allocated to these projects, be utilized better?! By the way, what is the estimated cost for these projects?”

Natalya Volovik, Spinnaker Point

“We live on the path and enjoy the natural surrounding. We do NOT need artwork, signage or lights!! That will ruin the serene environment and have a negative effect on the natural beauty of our precious 'back yard'!”

— Arnette Davis, Baypoint Lagoons

“Having this level of signage is visual clutter. Also the city should use funding for more important projects.”

Jannick Rosenblatt, Other San Rafael

“Signs are uglier than not”

— dennis mcneil, Downtown San Rafael

“The path doesn't need any changes. Night lights and multiple signs are totally unnecessary. It will encourage night traffic, destroy the natural ambiance, and lights will be detrimental to wildlife on land and the bay, and it's a waste of money.”

Jane Gregory, Mill Valley

“nature should not be cluttered w unnecessary signage and lights. enjoy the calm simple beauty.”

— debra link, Mill Valley

“On its face the plan is ill conceived and oblivious to the protection of the ecosystem and habitat. Not good for protecting San Rafael. Would the mayor like her name on the signs in Trumpesque fashion?”

— Sue Ryan, Other San Rafael

“We don’t need more concrete. Please keep the path as is”

Susan Gess, Other San Rafael

“The developers don't care about anything but making money. Of course the never want to talk about water infrastructure and everything else that comes with overbuilding.”

— Ronald Ciffa, Larkspur

“This light should be taking out”

Maria Cuervo, Canal neighborhood

“Preserve nature”

— Ann Burke, Mill Valley

“We don't need more light pollution and the signs, if placed should not be on the water side, they block the views and change the natural vibe of the area.”

Anita Bock, Larkspur

“I have walked there in the past a few times and found the view beautiful. Nice to have an unspoiled view in urban areas. I find the signs to be very intrusive visually. I like the ideas expressed by the project but think this is the wrong place for it. Place it somewhere where it enhances the situation.”

— Wendy Engel, Novato

“This project will ruin the Starkweather Park Path. It is a good idea but would do much better in other locations.”

Karyn O'Mohundro, Spinnaker Point

“This, though it's intentions are admirable, destroys the beauty of what diminishing open space remains in close proximity to the outskirts of our communities. These proposed elements would simply detract from the serenity of our beloved path. Think of it as a promenade, promoting a beautiful view, exercise, community, sunshine and fresh air. Please find another location to share your message, perhaps in front of the City Hall.”

— Cynthia Salvisberg-Haeuser, Other San Rafael

“It’s a beautiful path that my friends and I enjoy walking on. Please don’t needlessly change it.”

— Yolanda Hylkema, Downtown San Rafael

“This is a Bay Trail, not a civic campaign. I’ll bet not one member of the council, including the mayor, would vote to bolt these in place across from their homes, to be seen every time they looked out of their windows. Haven’t you all done enough damage to the visual nature of San Rafael by rolling over for any outrageous, mega-sized, view-disrupting construction projects proposed to you without now sharpening your knives to visually pollute peaceful bay views as well ?!?!”

NIKKI TUREEN, Other San Rafael

“I’m absolutely opposed to this. The City of San Rafael must have better ways to spend tax payer dollars. The park is supposed to be closed after sunset, lighting will only encourage night time illicit behavior.”

— Paul Simmonds, Spinnaker Point

“I enjoy walking in a nice, and uncontaminated area. Should be preserved.”

Jay Tureen, Other San Rafael

“We enjoy the peaceful and quiet views of this path. Don’t ruin the views with these ugly signs.”

— Candy Lee, Other San Rafael

“The signs are a huge (literally) eyesore and obstruct the views of nature. They don’t belong there. Nights are supposed to be dark, and pollution from the proposed lights are unhealthy for wildlife. It can also damage people (one documented form of torture involves leaving a prisoner in a cell where a light never gets turned off). It disturbs circadian rhythms. The whole project is hostile to nature as well as ugly.”

Suzanne Pinto, Other San Rafael

“I think 22 signs is absurd! And light pollution effects wildlife and people. I would hate to have all the junk clutter up the waterfront. One sign is enough. A QR code with more information from those interested in reading it. People don’t go there to read signs. What a waste of money. Put it towards something people actually need. Like housing, food, childcare.”

— Melinda Sheleng, Terra Linda

“I truly believe this place has to be preserved from this absurd and nonsense project. Nature itself is the art of this place. Wild life must be protected. There are several areas in SR this project can be placed on, not in this beautiful natural environment. It's a big NO, please!”

— Fernando M Oliveira, Spinnaker Point

“Nonsense lights when the park is closed at night. It will only disrupt nature and the night wildlife that depends on the darkness to survive, besides the signs are so out a place. If they really want this display to happen, please choose any other place like the Pickleweed location around the picnic tables and playground area it would make more sense.”

Adriana Oliveira, Spinnaker Point

“I live near the CM Eco Marsh and walk there daily. Over time, I've noticed that very few people actually stop to read the informational signs already installed — I'm sure some do, but most people today tend to look up information on their devices when they're curious. My bigger concern is the proposed lighting. Increased light pollution can disrupt wildlife that depend on darkness and natural rhythms, and it will also affect nearby residents whose homes border the path. One of the special qualities of this area is its quiet, natural environment. Although I usually walk Starkweather Path during the day, I've heard from many neighbors who walk there at night and deeply value being able to see the stars. Preserving dark skies is part of what makes this space peaceful and restorative for both people and wildlife. We all benefit from maintaining natural spaces where we can experience calm, darkness, and nature as it is. For these reasons, I support keeping the path as natural as possible and limiting additional lighting and to not put up the signs proposed by the Mayor.”

— Eleni Martinis, Corte Madera

“Signage would destroy the beauty and view along the path.”

Emilie Albertoli, Sun Valley

“I don't support the addition of signage and lights in this natural environment. We need to be removing lights not adding more. Same Rafael light pollution is a blight. It disturbs animals and people alike and we need to reverse the trend of pointless lighting. It's bad for the environment and bad for our health”

— Jena Mayer, Sun Valley

“1) If the path is closed from dusk to dawn, the lights are not needed for humans. The lights will be unhealthy for other animals that depend on the darkness. 2) Any walk in nature is more enjoyable when the area is not cluttered by unnecessary signs.”

— Paula Spencer, Other Marin County

“When I go to Target, Honda or Home Depot, I enjoy sitting and enjoying the tranquility of the beautiful quiet area. I used to walk my dog on a part of it closer to where the Marin Rod and Gun club is.”

Carol Galloway, Gerstle Park

“This is such a disaster for our wildlife habitat. At what cost are we willing to sacrifice this? Vehemently opposed to this needless project.”

— Julie Luria, Other San Rafael

“The path is just beautiful the way it is with wild life habitat . Why we always need to spend money ..lower the tax or better road or cleaning street on this area, we need more barbages and fines for the peoples who leave the tash, i pick-up every day some around and on my street. So first teach people to be respectfull before spending money and who will pay for the electricity and repair ?”

patricia GARCIA, Spinnaker Point

“I’m concerned about the city saying they are not responsible and the signage and lighting seem inappropriate.”

— Sharon Steckline, Other San Rafael

“concern about lighting”

Thomas Dembski, Terra Linda

“Please don't add lights because the birds and animals need to sleep too. So many lights are harming our natural environment”

— Laura Sommer, Other San Rafael

“The proposed changes are not only unnecessary but they will detract from the natural beauty and flow of the path. Leave well enough alone.”

Robert Muirhead, Gerstle Park

“For support”

— Laurie Pirini, Terra Linda

“I recently moved from living in that area for 19 yrs because of cars trucks congestion! The beauty of the path is peaceful family walks and dog walkers. Putting up all those plaques is a distraction and will be noisy there is already too much painting and graffiti in the canal area, will not add any value to the neighborhoods!”

— Judi Mann, Baypoint Lagoons

“We need to honor this Bay Trail - the more we can live amongst our birds, sea life and natural environment the better for everyone, including our mental health. Keep our nature natural!!!”

Erinne Mickle, Canal neighborhood

“The signs are obstructive, the lights are a huge disturbance to the wildlife. You don’t need to homogenize this path”

— Sanaz Shirazi, Larkspur

“It's a very beautiful and special part of our neighborhood--a huge plus to living here. It shouldn't be changed in any way. I'm sure the city could find other projects that are more beneficial to our community. One would be to fill in all the large mud puddles going from the Starkweather Path to Target and another muddy area at the end of the paved path that is very bad after it rains. I like to walk or ride my bike all the way past Target to the parking lot.”

Francine Rudesill, Canal neighborhood

“My walking friends live essentially next to to path and the proposed commercialization and lighting is to me just a waste of municipal funds, and daily will feed taxpayer \$\$ into the treasury of an electricity vendor. Plus night lights would likely bleep up nocturnal wildlife.”

— Ric Schneider, Other San Rafael

“I walk it. I don’t feel that more lighting on the shoreline is helpful, nor are the signs appropriate.”

Tina Lundh, Other San Rafael

“I use this path daily and have for many years. The proposed installation is only going bring more graffiti vandalism. Both making the area a target and more susceptible to attract vandals.”

— Samantha Mason, Other San Rafael

“The paths of San Rafael are too unsafe to use durring the day, we surely don't need to pay to install lights in a place where no no sane person would go after dark. Lights and wasteful signage won't make the place safe at any time of day. Spend the money on clearing the encampments or some kind of park police to make the public spaces useable as they are. This is at best a total waste of money and more likely a boondoggle or corrupt scheme to benefit donars.”

— Cherie Arnold, Other San Rafael

“I walk there every single day. I don't think this display will be beneficial. Nor will adding lighting.”

Peter Gregory, Canal neighborhood

“I don't like the looks of all those signs. One sign with all info would be much nicer and retain the beautiful views of the bay.”

— victor clark, Mill Valley

“I do not want to see the natural beauty of this path ruined by oversized signage.”

Andrew Lea, Other San Rafael

“Teaching about wildlife on signs while simultaneously destroying their migratory paths with artificial light at night is truly the height of stupidity.”

— Jami Ellermann, Other San Rafael

“Paths that are closed to the public during the night do not need to be lit up at night. Artificial lights disturb wildlife and waste energy where not needed.”

Jennifer Wolf, Other Marin County

“We need to preserve the beauty of the bay.”

— Curt Rodby, Spinnaker Point

“Not necessary to enjoy this space. We are inundated by information. Give the mind a rest. Let us enjoy nature. Place the installation elsewhere.”

Kat M Davis, Other San Rafael

"I'm concerned that this lovely and rare natural area will be ruined by putting signs that disrupt the peace and beauty of the path, and the lights will be disruptive to the wildlife. I don't understand why people would want to put this kind of thing in this location unless they really don't care or consider the impacts it will have on the wildlife and the people who enjoy the peaceful nature of the path. Please don't do it!"

— Laurey Greider, Terra Linda

"Nature preserve. Waste of money. Light pollution."

Kaya Mey, Canal neighborhood

"To implement this plan with 20+ "historical info" large placards is visually intrusive and ripe for graffiti. The proposed lighting is environmentally interruptive to our wildlife nature preserve & light pollution for the neighbors. I walk the path to get away from screens and more "information" thrown at me day in and day out. If I'm interested, I can go to google and search the historical significance. Or having 1 placard at the beginning of the path near Pickleweed can provide a brief history and QR code. Or have the info at Pickleweed library in a binder at the entrance. Lighting to create "safety" is completely unnecessary as the path is closed and those who do show up are night drinkers who keep to themselves. I don't see any signs of homeless encampments or individual sleeping bags along the path anymore. Last time was week of April 22, 2025. I have photos. Thank you SRPD for being proactive."

— Elaine Steinbrecher, Baypoint Lagoons

"Please leave this area in its natural order."

Lila Shaw, Downtown San Rafael

"Don't need placards and lighting that will impact the environment and drain money away from other more important issues in SR."

— Mark Stevens, Other San Rafael

"keep the path natural, stop the bad improvements"

tom dicker, Mill Valley

"Because I prefer to view nature in nature walks. I believe that was the path's purpose when built."

— Dennis McNeill, Downtown San Rafael

“When did we start having to make a beautiful path into an educational experience? Isn’t beauty enough? Don’t we have too much constantly attacking our brains already? A peaceful and lovely promenade allows an emotional experience of far more value than words.”

— ESTHER WANNING, Terra Linda

“This path is beautiful and serene. Night walking doesn’t need to be promoted with lighting more than any other path in the area needs lighting. It pollutes the night sky for the residents and attracts partiers while doing nothing to make anything more safe.”

David Naisuler, Spinnaker Point

“Take off all that unnecessary stuff!”

— Alina Bermudez, Spinnaker Point

“I walk this path every day. I’m a birder and I would be devastated by the harm these changes would bring to the wildlife in and around the path.”

William “Skip” Niesen, Spinnaker Point

“I am concerned about encouraging people to walk the path after dark, which is illegal (as I understand the law), adding features that need maintenance when current maintenance needs are not always met, obstructing views for all, and possibly interfering with the safety and health of the creatures who live in or migrate through this area. Also, from an educator's point of view, I do not believe that what has been proposed is the most accessible and appealing way for children (in particular) to learn about the history and ecology of the path and its surroundings. I do support opportunities for San Rafael residents to learn more about the histories and lives of Native peoples who have inhabited our region. I believe that Native values, particularly respect for the earth and its wildlife and natural resources, could be honored in a less intrusive way.”

— Elise Trumbull, Baypoint Lagoons

“The path is supposed to be closed after sunset so why is lighting needed. Lighting will send a message that it can be used at night and encourage noisy visitors. There are noisy fireworks being set off on New Year's eve and 4th of July now and this will make things worse. The art project belongs at Pickleweed Park where it is accessible to more people than out on the path. The city currently barely maintains the path. Who will maintain the art project out on the path?”

G Minhoto, Spinnaker Point

“I lived right by the path for 7 years and used it almost daily. Both the lighting and the signs would detract from the view and in nature watching experience.”

— Hank Zucker, Other Marin County

“I like the natural nature of the path and don't believe we need to light it at night. It is a park that is closed after sunset. It should remain unlit for the benefit of the natural world and to not disturb the environmental ambiance of the bay. Thank you.”

Justin Molyneaux, Spinnaker Point

“Put art where it can be seen and appreciated. This path is meant for decompressing and allowing yourself to enjoy the marvels of nature in the light, and enjoy the stars at night. I would like my tax money to go towards something better instead of adding more lights along a path that already pretty scenic. Please dont ruin it with placards and lights.”

— Ann Molyneaux, Spinnaker Point

“This path and surrounding neighborhoods do not need lighting or other enhancements that will detract and or interfere with the flora/fauna and neighbors”

Robin Lincoln, Spinnaker Point

“It's behind my house”

— Louis Barella, Spinnaker Point

Signatures (275)

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
1	Susan Coe Adams	Baypoint Lagoons	Apr 28, 2026
2	Jacqueline Adelman	Larkspur	May 9, 2026
3	Emilie Albertoli	Sun Valley	May 8, 2026
4	Debbie Alstad	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
5	Roger Alstad	Baypoint Lagoons	Apr 3, 2026
6	Ellen Arbit	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 20, 2026
7	Cherie Arnold	Other San Rafael	May 11, 2026
8	Nasrin Barbee	Baypoint Lagoons	Mar 14, 2026
9	Louis Barella	Spinnaker Point	Jun 13, 2026
10	Michele Barni	Other Marin County	Apr 30, 2026

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
11	Katharine Barry	Spinnaker Point	Mar 12, 2026
12	Al Baylacq	Other Marin County	May 8, 2026
13	Sheri Belloni	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
14	Tyler Bennett	Spinnaker Point	Feb 27, 2026
15	Jody Benson	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
16	Barbra Bergstrom	Downtown San Rafael	Feb 20, 2026
17	Alina Bermudez	Spinnaker Point	Jun 1, 2026
18	Richard Bernstein	Other San Rafael	Apr 21, 2026
19	Joy Betterton	Bahia	May 7, 2026
20	Mariah Bevard	Downtown San Rafael	Mar 2, 2026
21	Gerald Bini	Other San Rafael	Mar 31, 2026
22	Meaghen Blakely	Canal neighborhood	May 9, 2026
23	Rob Bleetstein	Other San Rafael	May 26, 2026
24	Anita Bock	Larkspur	May 7, 2026
25	Quin Boreen	Spinnaker Point	May 3, 2026
26	Karen Brainerd	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
27	Rhea Brown	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 24, 2026
28	Ron Brown	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 22, 2026
29	Jennifer Buffalow	Larkspur	Apr 27, 2026
30	Ann Burke	Mill Valley	May 7, 2026
31	John Butler	Sun Valley	May 12, 2026
32	Jay Cady	Spinnaker Point	Apr 29, 2026
33	Lauren Cady	Spinnaker Point	Apr 23, 2026
34	Tim Carroll	Spinnaker Point	Mar 2, 2026
35	Anita Casalina	Spinnaker Point	Feb 20, 2026
36	Susan Chardome	Spinnaker Point	Feb 20, 2026
37	Albert Chen	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
38	Joanie Ciardelli	Spinnaker Point	Feb 20, 2026
39	Ronald Ciffa	Larkspur	May 7, 2026
40	Pam Clair	Bay Area	Feb 20, 2026

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
41	victor clark	Mill Valley	May 11, 2026
42	leslie colyer	Other San Rafael	Apr 23, 2026
43	Diane Connor	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
44	CAROL Copp	Novato	May 28, 2026
45	Joya Cory	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
46	Martine Crowther	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
47	Maria Cuervo	Canal neighborhood	May 7, 2026
48	Joyce Dallas	Downtown San Rafael	May 13, 2026
49	Maryline Daviaud Lewett	Spinnaker Point	Mar 19, 2026
50	Arnette Davis	Baypoint Lagoons	May 7, 2026
51	Andrew Deems	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 20, 2026
52	Kathryn Deems	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
53	Kimberly Deffenbaugh	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
54	Ruth Deleon	Terra Linda	May 8, 2026
55	Thomas Dembski	Terra Linda	May 8, 2026
56	tom dicker	Mill Valley	May 15, 2026
57	Gail Drury	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
58	Stuart Dubey	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 17, 2026
59	Erse Duderstadt	Spinnaker Point	Mar 12, 2026
60	Dennis Duff	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
61	Dennis Duff	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
62	Anne Dunlea	Baypoint Lagoons	Mar 30, 2026
63	Andy Easterlin	Baypoint Lagoons	Jun 9, 2026
64	Ellen Eatough Eatough	Baypoint Lagoons	Mar 3, 2026
65	Nancy Ellenbogen	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 20, 2026
66	Jami Ellermann	Other San Rafael	May 12, 2026
67	Christine Elmquist	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
68	Wendy Engel	Novato	May 7, 2026
69	Linda Esposito	Spinnaker Point	Apr 26, 2026
70	mary estes	Other San Rafael	Apr 25, 2026

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
71	Arlene F	Larkspur	Apr 21, 2026
72	Claire Fabbri	Spinnaker Point	Apr 30, 2026
73	Mark Fallows	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
74	S. Farrell	Terra Linda	May 8, 2026
75	Jeffrey Finn	Canal neighborhood	Mar 1, 2026
76	Sophie Fleming	Corte Madera	May 13, 2026
77	Don Fordham	Spinnaker Point	Feb 21, 2026
78	Alexander Frumkin	Spinnaker Point	Feb 20, 2026
79	Judith Frumkin	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
80	Michael Frumkin	Spinnaker Point	Apr 23, 2026
81	Shelly G	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
82	Judith Gallegos	Larkspur	Apr 21, 2026
83	Carol Galloway	Gerstle Park	May 8, 2026
84	John Ganem	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
85	patricia GARCIA	Spinnaker Point	May 8, 2026
86	Paul Garcia	Spinnaker Point	Mar 12, 2026
87	Susan Gess	Other San Rafael	May 7, 2026
88	Aura Ghiringhelli	Baypoint Lagoons	Apr 28, 2026
89	Gary Gioglio	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 19, 2026
90	Jane Gregory	Mill Valley	May 7, 2026
91	Peter Gregory	Canal neighborhood	May 11, 2026
92	Laurey Greider	Terra Linda	May 12, 2026
93	Breanna Gunn	Spinnaker Point	May 3, 2026
94	Rae Ann Gustafson	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
95	Lisbeth Gutierrez	Canal neighborhood	May 10, 2026
96	Gail Haan	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 23, 2026
97	Martha Hacking	Spinnaker Point	Mar 12, 2026
98	Tucker Hacking	Spinnaker Point	Mar 12, 2026
99	Paula Hammons	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
100	Joni Harris	Baypoint Lagoons	Apr 16, 2026

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
101	Melissa Heckman	Bay Area	Feb 21, 2026
102	Kathleen Heitmann	Outside California	Feb 22, 2026
103	Don Henn	Baypoint Lagoons	May 9, 2026
104	Alejandro Henriquez Acosta	Spinnaker Point	Jun 8, 2026
105	Peggy Hodel	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
106	Dee Holthe	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
107	Cara Honigsfeld	Spinnaker Point	Mar 22, 2026
108	Susan Hook	Other San Rafael	May 9, 2026
109	Marian Hudacek	Outside California	Apr 14, 2026
110	Yolanda Hylkema	Downtown San Rafael	May 8, 2026
111	Michael Jackson	Spinnaker Point	Apr 26, 2026
112	Elaine Keller	Spinnaker Point	Apr 27, 2026
113	Mounira Kenaani	Spinnaker Point	Mar 2, 2026
114	Linda Kendall	Spinnaker Point	Feb 20, 2026
115	GINETTE Kenney	Spinnaker Point	Mar 10, 2026
116	GINETTE Kenney	Spinnaker Point	Mar 29, 2026
117	Jennifer Kerr	Gerstle Park	May 7, 2026
118	Marcia King	Gerstle Park	Mar 30, 2026
119	Tara Kline	Mill Valley	Apr 21, 2026
120	Mark Knapp	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 20, 2026
121	Marty Komitopoulos	Canal neighborhood	Apr 12, 2026
122	David Korzec	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
123	Lisa Kuhlman	Baypoint Lagoons	Mar 12, 2026
124	Olivia Kuhlman	Spinnaker Point	Mar 12, 2026
125	Edward LaBarre	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 20, 2026
126	Sally LaMont	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 18, 2026
127	Sally LaMont	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 19, 2026
128	Kate Larson	Baypoint Lagoons	Mar 4, 2026
129	Connie Lathrop	Spinnaker Point	Apr 14, 2026
130	Joanne Lawlor	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
131	Andrew Lea	Other Marin County	Apr 22, 2026
132	Andrew Lea	Other San Rafael	May 11, 2026
133	Peg Leach	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
134	Candy Lee	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
135	Chung LEE	Spinnaker Point	Apr 11, 2026
136	Janice Lee	Spinnaker Point	Apr 11, 2026
137	Stacey Lescht	Corte Madera	Apr 30, 2026
138	Edie Lesieutre	Other San Rafael	Mar 6, 2026
139	Susan Levine	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 17, 2026
140	Debora Levy	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
141	Joy Li	Spinnaker Point	Apr 28, 2026
142	Robin Lincoln	Spinnaker Point	Jun 9, 2026
143	debra link	Mill Valley	May 7, 2026
144	Barbara Liss	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
145	Barbara Lockhart	Spinnaker Point	Mar 14, 2026
146	Nancy Long	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 20, 2026
147	Tina Lundh	Other San Rafael	May 10, 2026
148	Julie Luria	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
149	Edward Lynch	Other San Rafael	May 15, 2026
150	Kat M Davis	Other San Rafael	May 12, 2026
151	Fernando M Oliveira	Spinnaker Point	May 8, 2026
152	Dee MacKay	Spinnaker Point	Jun 7, 2026
153	Judi Mann	Baypoint Lagoons	May 9, 2026
154	Raisa Margolina	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 26, 2026
155	Eleni Martinis	Corte Madera	May 8, 2026
156	Samantha Mason	Other San Rafael	May 10, 2026
157	Beate ANANDI MATTESON	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 23, 2026
158	Jena Mayer	Sun Valley	May 8, 2026
159	Elizabeth McBrady	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
160	Cary McDonald	Terra Linda	May 7, 2026

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
161	Deirdre McDonald	Other Marin County	May 8, 2026
162	Timothy Mcdonald	Gerstle Park	May 8, 2026
163	dennis mcnell	Downtown San Rafael	May 7, 2026
164	Dennis McNeil	Downtown San Rafael	May 21, 2026
165	Magno mejia	Canal neighborhood	May 7, 2026
166	Iris Melendez	Spinnaker Point	Apr 23, 2026
167	Allison Melin	Other Marin County	May 25, 2026
168	Kaya Mey	Canal neighborhood	May 13, 2026
169	Tom Meyer	Canal neighborhood	May 11, 2026
170	Maria Michael	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
171	Frances Michener	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
172	Erinne Mickle	Canal neighborhood	May 9, 2026
173	Estelle Miller	Spinnaker Point	Jun 8, 2026
174	paul minault	Novato	Apr 20, 2026
175	G Minhoto	Spinnaker Point	Jun 7, 2026
176	Carol Mirenda	Spinnaker Point	Apr 12, 2026
177	Carol Moeller Costa	Other Marin County	May 9, 2026
178	Ann Molyneaux	Spinnaker Point	Jun 9, 2026
179	Justin Molyneaux	Spinnaker Point	Jun 8, 2026
180	Lynne Naomi Mueller	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
181	Robert Muirhead	Gerstle Park	May 8, 2026
182	Trish Murphy	Spinnaker Point	Feb 20, 2026
183	David Naisuler	Spinnaker Point	May 28, 2026
184	Karen Neustadt	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
185	William "Skip" Niesen	Spinnaker Point	Jun 4, 2026
186	Benna Norman	Spinnaker Point	Apr 24, 2026
187	Karyn O'Mohundro	Spinnaker Point	May 7, 2026
188	Terry Ohleyer	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 22, 2026
189	Adriana Oliveira	Spinnaker Point	May 8, 2026
190	Joanne Paben	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
191	Claire Parker	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
192	Maria Peracchio	Other Marin County	May 12, 2026
193	Richard Peterson	Spinnaker Point	Feb 24, 2026
194	Jim Phelps	Spinnaker Point	Mar 18, 2026
195	Judith Phelps	Spinnaker Point	Mar 19, 2026
196	Suzanne Pinto	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
197	Laurie Pirini	Terra Linda	May 9, 2026
198	Albert Pomerantz	Baypoint Lagoons	May 8, 2026
199	Gila Pomerantz	Baypoint Lagoons	May 7, 2026
200	Patty Reed	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 20, 2026
201	Sterling Reed	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 20, 2026
202	Reva Revis	Spinnaker Point	Apr 3, 2026
203	Mattie Rice	Spinnaker Point	Apr 14, 2026
204	Torild Roberts	Spinnaker Point	Feb 25, 2026
205	Curt Rodby	Spinnaker Point	May 12, 2026
206	DENISE ROSALES	Baypoint Lagoons	Apr 18, 2026
207	Jannick Rosenblatt	Other San Rafael	May 7, 2026
208	Mark Ruch	Spinnaker Point	Mar 13, 2026
209	Francine Rudesill	Canal neighborhood	May 10, 2026
210	Galina Rumennik	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
211	Sue Ryan	Other San Rafael	May 7, 2026
212	Cynthia Salvisberg-Haeuser	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
213	DORI SANKOWICH	Downtown San Rafael	May 8, 2026
214	Edmondo Sarti	Spinnaker Point	Apr 23, 2026
215	Karen Scheder	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 22, 2026
216	Anton Schneider	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
217	Ric Schneider	Other San Rafael	May 10, 2026
218	matt schoenfeld	Other California	Apr 30, 2026
219	Lisa Schuller	Baypoint Lagoons	Apr 20, 2026
220	George Scott	Baypoint Lagoons	Apr 17, 2026

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
221	Jessica Seaton	Other San Rafael	Apr 30, 2026
222	Mina Shahram	Spinnaker Point	Mar 14, 2026
223	Saeed Shahram	Spinnaker Point	Apr 23, 2026
224	Lila Shaw	Downtown San Rafael	May 14, 2026
225	Melinda Sheleng	Terra Linda	May 8, 2026
226	Patrice Shepherd	Spinnaker Point	May 7, 2026
227	Erica Sherkin	Spinnaker Point	Apr 3, 2026
228	Gregg Sherkin	Spinnaker Point	Apr 22, 2026
229	Sanaz Shirazi	Larkspur	May 9, 2026
230	Sherie Shughart	Terra Linda	May 10, 2026
231	Corrie Sias	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
232	Paul Simmmons	Spinnaker Point	May 8, 2026
233	Ellis Joe Simmons	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
234	Kathleen Simmons	Spinnaker Point	Feb 24, 2026
235	Anita Sirianni	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
236	Bonnie Smolen	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
237	Joel Smolen	Baypoint Lagoons	May 2, 2026
238	Laura Sommer	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
239	Theresa Soule	Spinnaker Point	Mar 25, 2026
240	David Spatola	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
241	Paula Spencer	Other Marin County	May 8, 2026
242	Sharon Steckline	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
243	nancy stein	Other Marin County	May 11, 2026
244	Elaine steinbrecher	Baypoint Lagoons	May 13, 2026
245	Jill Stephens	Other California	Apr 17, 2026
246	Mark Stevens	Other San Rafael	May 14, 2026
247	Sandra Stone	Baypoint Lagoons	Apr 28, 2026
248	Rich Storek	Other Marin County	May 22, 2026
249	Philippe Striffeler	Spinnaker Point	Mar 19, 2026
250	Sexton Sutherland	Spinnaker Point	Feb 24, 2026

#	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE
251	Claire Taylor	Spinnaker Point	Apr 30, 2026
252	Deborah Temple	Sun Valley	May 8, 2026
253	Karen Thomas	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
254	Janice Tomeo	Spinnaker Point	Feb 21, 2026
255	Elise Trumbull	Baypoint Lagoons	Jun 7, 2026
256	Jay Tureen	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
257	NIKKI TUREEN	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
258	Egan Valtierra	Spinnaker Point	Apr 21, 2026
259	Peter Victor	Downtown San Rafael	Apr 29, 2026
260	Natalya Volovik	Spinnaker Point	May 4, 2026
261	ESTHER WANNING	Terra Linda	May 25, 2026
262	Kate Wanvig	Spinnaker Point	Mar 13, 2026
263	Jane Watson	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
264	Samantha Webb	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
265	Mary Webster	Larkspur	May 1, 2026
266	Cynthia Welsh	Other San Rafael	May 8, 2026
267	Michelle Wilcox	Spinnaker Point	Apr 15, 2026
268	Amy Wilson	Baypoint Lagoons	Feb 21, 2026
269	Sandra Wishon	Spinnaker Point	Apr 23, 2026
270	Jennifer Wolf	Other Marin County	May 12, 2026
271	Toni Worth	Spinnaker Point	Jun 8, 2026
272	Camille Wylazlowski	Spinnaker Point	Feb 19, 2026
273	Clara Yourman Marotto	Baypoint Lagoons	Mar 1, 2026
274	Vikki Zadovsky	Other San Rafael	May 10, 2026
275	Hank Zucker	Other Marin County	Jun 7, 2026

This petition was collected at herenowlocal — the Help Save Starkweather Path community campaign. Signers' email addresses are held on file and withheld here to protect their privacy; they can be made available to the City Clerk on request. Compiled Saturday, June 13, 2026.

From: Stuart Dubey [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2026 5:13 PM
To: Mayor Kate <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati <maika.gulati@cityofsanrafael.org>; Eli Hill <eli.hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey <maribeth.bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rachel Kertz <rachel.kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>; Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: warren@marinbike.org; Kelly Abey <kelly.abey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Matthew Hartzell <mhartzell@wtb.com>; Paul Navazio <paul.navazio@cityofsanrafael.org>; Greg Minor <greg.minor@cityofsanrafael.org>; Grey Melgard <grey.melgard@cityofsanrafael.org>; April Miller <april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Response to Marin County Bicycle Coalition Letter Supporting the Starkweather Path Lighting Project

June 12, 2026

Please Enter Into Public Record for 6/15/26 City Council Meeting

RE: Response to Marin County Bicycle Coalition Letter Supporting the Starkweather Path Lighting Project (attached)

Mayor Kate Colin and Members of the City Council,

We appreciate the Marin County Bicycle Coalition's commitment to improving bicycle and pedestrian safety throughout San Rafael. We share the goal of creating safer routes within the Canal neighborhood and support investments in lighting, sidewalks, crossings, and other safety improvements along streets and established transportation corridors.

However, Mr. Wells' June 5 letter (see attached) overlooks several important facts about the Starkweather Path, its history, and its intended purpose.

The Starkweather Path Was Established as a Shoreline Recreation Park, Not a Transportation Corridor

The Starkweather Path is not a city street, sidewalk, or transportation corridor. It is a shoreline recreational trail that traverses a flood-control levee through a tidal marsh ecosystem.

For decades, the pathway has functioned as part of a shoreline park and Bay Trail recreational network where nighttime use has been prohibited. City park rules designate the area as closed between sunset and sunrise. The existing expectation for users has been that the path is a daytime recreational facility, not a 24-hour transportation route.

This distinction is fundamental.

The City is not merely proposing new infrastructure. It is proposing a change in how this shoreline park functions by encouraging nighttime use in an area that has historically remained dark.

The Project Area Was Preserved Because of Its Environmental Significance

The tidal marshes surrounding the Starkweather Path are not vacant land awaiting urbanization. They are among the remaining fragments of historic San Francisco Bay tidal wetlands that have been protected and restored over many decades.

Numerous public agencies, including state and federal wildlife agencies, BCDC, regional park and trail organizations, and local governments have invested substantial resources in preserving shoreline habitat throughout San Francisco Bay. One of the most basic and effective habitat protections has been maintaining natural nighttime conditions wherever possible.

The Bay Trail's own Design Guidelines specifically advise agencies to "avoid any lighting near sensitive habitat or areas where migrating birds are expected." The Guidelines further discourage broadly illuminating shoreline trail corridors. The proposed Starkweather lighting project is inconsistent with this guidance because it introduces permanent lighting directly adjacent to tidal marsh habitat.

The fact that nearby roadways and commercial properties generate light does not eliminate the ecological value of preserving darker conditions along the marsh edge itself.

Environmental policy has never operated on the principle that because an ecosystem has already experienced impacts, additional impacts no longer matter.

Community Participation Should Be Respected, Not Discounted

Mr. Wells suggests that survey responses from Baypoint Lagoons and Spinnaker Point should carry less weight because those residents are "wealthier neighbors" or participated at a higher rate than residents elsewhere.

We respectfully disagree.

Public participation should be evaluated based on the merits of the comments received, not the income level of the neighborhood from which they originate. Residents adjacent to the project area possess direct experience with the path, the marsh, and its existing conditions. Their participation rate reflects engagement, not a reason to discount their input.

Public outreach is intended to gather informed input from affected stakeholders. The fact that nearby residents took the time to become informed and participate should be viewed as a strength of the process, not a reason to discount their views.

Existing Light Pollution Is Not a Justification for Additional Lighting

Mr. Wells argues that because nearby highways, streets, and commercial uses already contribute light pollution, the proposed lighting would have negligible impact.

This argument is inconsistent with standard environmental review practice.

Environmental review evaluates incremental impacts. A project's effects are not dismissed simply because other impacts already exist nearby.

The relevant question is whether introducing permanent lighting directly adjacent to marsh habitat will increase nighttime illumination, alter existing conditions, and affect wildlife behavior. The answer is self-evidently yes. The remaining question is whether those impacts are justified by a demonstrated public need.

The burden should not be on residents to prove that lighting causes harm. Rather, the City should demonstrate why introducing a new source of illumination into a sensitive shoreline environment is necessary.

Before any final decision is made, the City should publicly release and discuss:

- ATP grant application materials and project justifications.
- Biological assessments prepared for the project.
- Lighting photometric studies and light-spill analyses.
- Agency consultation records with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, BCDC, and Bay Trail staff.
- Documentation regarding park operating hours and nighttime access policies.
- The complete public survey methodology and results.

Providing this information will allow the public and decision-makers to evaluate the proposal based on evidence rather than assumptions.

Bay Trail Segments Through Sensitive Shoreline Habitats Are Not Illuminated

The letter asserts that bollard lighting is "widely used across the Bay Trail network." No evidence is provided for this claim. Bay Trail guidance instead emphasizes context-sensitive design and specifically advises avoiding lighting near sensitive habitat and migratory bird areas.

While some Bay Trail segments are illuminated, they are overwhelmingly located in urban waterfront districts, commercial areas, downtown promenades, and developed transportation corridors. Examples include portions of the Embarcadero in San Francisco, Jack London Square in Oakland, and other heavily urbanized waterfronts.

By contrast, Bay Trail segments traversing marshes, levees, wildlife refuges, shoreline preserves, and open-space habitats remain unlit. This reflects a long-standing planning

principle: urban waterfronts are appropriate locations for nighttime lighting, while sensitive shoreline habitats are not.

The Starkweather Path more closely resembles the latter category than the former.

The Project May Create New Safety Risks Rather Than Solving Them

Supporters argue that lighting improves safety. While this is generally true in urban environments, the circumstances here are more complicated.

The proposed lighting covers only a small portion of the overall Bay Trail corridor. Users traveling beyond the illuminated section will immediately encounter long stretches of unlit trail, including sections that are narrower, unpaved and less developed. As a result, the project may encourage increased nighttime use without providing a continuous safe route.

The City has not demonstrated how creating a brightly lit island within an otherwise dark trail network improves overall corridor safety. In fact, the project could create a false expectation that the Bay Trail is suitable for nighttime travel when most of the surrounding trail system remains unlit.

A Better Alternative

Rather than introducing permanent lighting into a sensitive shoreline marsh environment, the City should focus available resources on locations where the safety benefits are greatest and environmental impacts are minimal.

These priorities include:

- Canal neighborhood streets and intersections.
- School routes and Safe Routes to School improvements.
- Transit stops and transit access corridors.
- Sidewalk gap closures.
- Bicycle boulevard connections.
- Crosswalk visibility improvements.
- Areas with documented nighttime collision histories.

These investments would directly improve transportation safety while avoiding unnecessary impacts to one of San Rafael's most unique shoreline resources.

Support Lighting Where It Belongs

The City's own proposal acknowledges that the lighting project is intended to encourage nighttime use of the path. That represents a significant policy change from the path's historic role as a recreational shoreline trail located within a sensitive tidal marsh environment.

The Council should carefully consider whether that change is appropriate.

The question before the City is not whether lighting is beneficial on urban streets. It clearly is.

The question is whether a recreational shoreline path, located on a levee through a fragile marsh ecosystem and historically closed at night, should be transformed into a permanently illuminated nighttime-use corridor.

We respectfully urge the Council to preserve the Starkweather Path's longstanding character as a shoreline recreation facility and maintain the dark nighttime environment that remains one of the defining features of this unique public resource.

Sincerely

Stuart Dubey

MARSH – Marin Action to Restore Starkweather Habitat

Stuart Dubey

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Stuart Dubey.

This email message is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply email and destroy all copies of the original message.



June 5, 2026

Re: Starkweather Pathway Lighting Project

Mayor Kate and Members of the City Council,

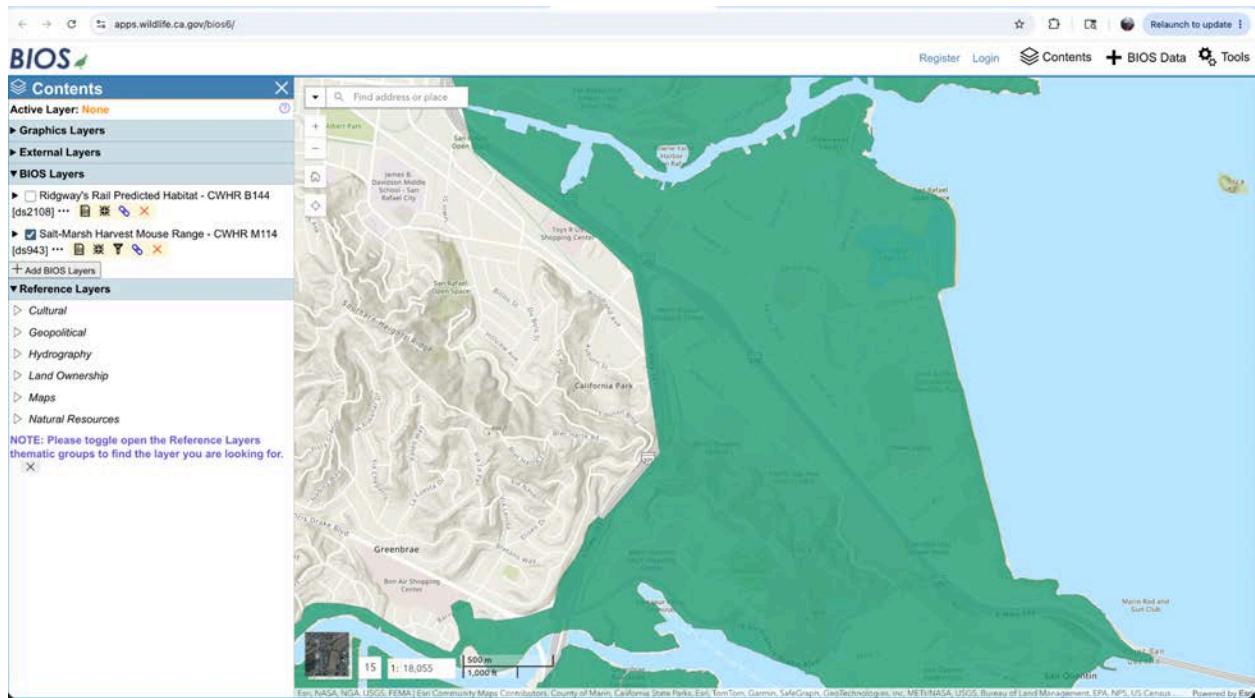
We at the Marin County Bicycle Coalition and our colleagues at WTB-TAM write to you in support of the proposed Starkweather Path Lighting project. This project, which is part of a larger effort to improve lighting and public safety throughout the Canal Neighborhood, is one that we have supported and written in favor of several times in recent years, starting with the state Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant that funded the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement Project.

Lighting is a critical component of safe streets infrastructure. Without it, many people do not feel safe traveling at night, particularly those who are more likely to be victims of crime or harassment, such as women and girls. By lighting our bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, particularly trails that are somewhat secluded from the rest of the transportation network, we improve perceived and actual safety. In this, we were pleased to see that the San Rafael Police Department is in support of this project as part of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Potential Wildlife Impacts

We acknowledge that there is a vocal group of residents from nearby neighborhoods who do not support lighting on the Starkweather path. Their main argument is that lighting would negatively impact wildlife. They cite two federally threatened species specifically — the ridgway's rail and the salt marsh harvest mouse, with the statement that artificial lighting disrupts critical feeding and breeding patterns.

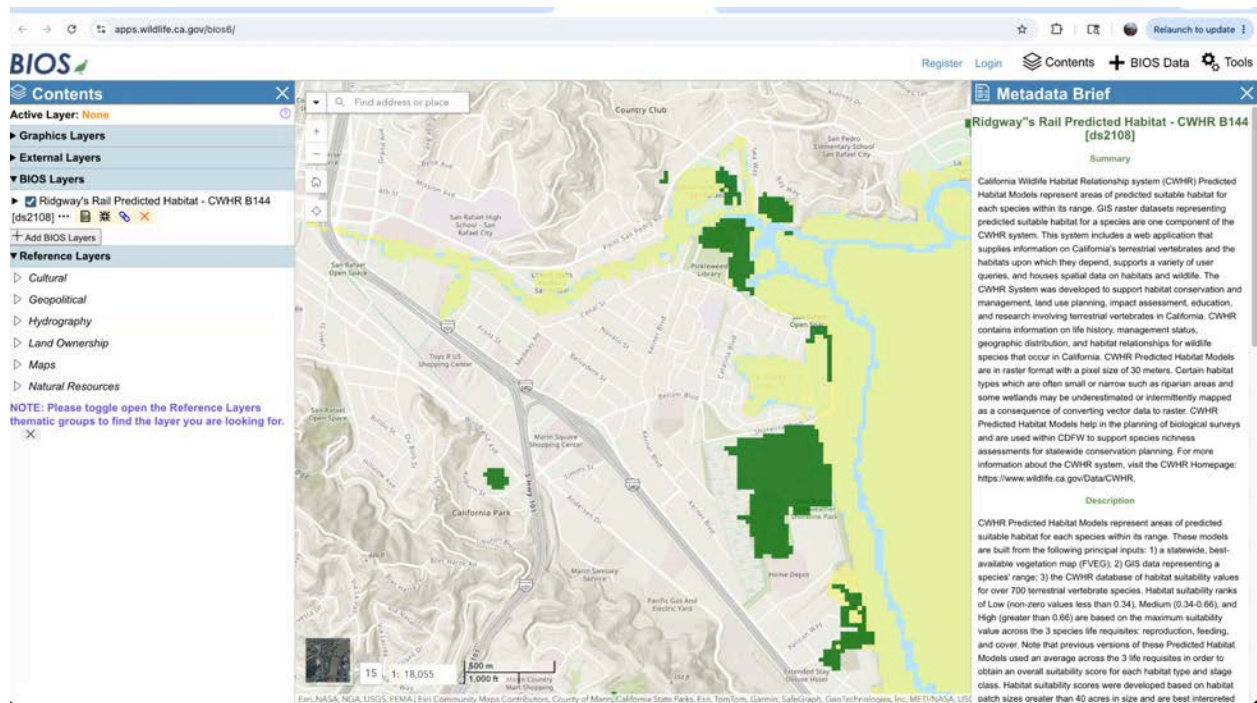
We think the residents may be referencing this map of the salt marsh harvest mouse range (source: California Department of Wildlife BIOS mapping system).



The Starkweather Path is indeed within the salt marsh harvest mouse range. As is Larkspur Landing, San Quentin, and all of East San Rafael. The freeways, local streets, and institutional and big box uses are already major sources of light pollution. The luminosity of the proposed lighting, designed specifically with flares to illuminate the pathway and not the night skies, is negligible next to the existing conditions. Furthermore, the shaded area in the map does not mean that the salt marsh harvest mouse lives everywhere shaded green. It just means the mouse may look for its den within this zone. It will naturally seek out darker, tucked away spaces within the zone.

In this map of the ridgeway rail's habitat areas (source: California Department of Wildlife BIOS mapping system), the dark green areas represent prime habitat areas and critical marsh. The Light green-yellow areas represent low suitability for ridgeway rail habitat. The Starkweather Path is located in the light green-yellow zone. There are no dark green zones adjacent to the

portion of the Path along which lighting is proposed.



Lighting can, and should, be designed in such a way as to not impinge on the residences of nearby neighbors or negatively affect wildlife. As we understand it, the city is committed to down-shielded fixtures or defensive lighting design. The only lighting that will be near any homes will be of the low, bollard-type lighting widely used across the Bay Trail network. The larger, overhead lighting fixtures will not be closer than half a football field from any residences, which seems to be a more than adequate buffer.

Lighting Design

The following is a reference image from the City's presentation on the lighting project. It shows roughly the style of lighting to be used in the bollard section, with the caveat that the chosen design will include back shields not depicted in this image. The back shields will keep the light focused on the path and away from the shoreline, with even less light impact than what is seen in this image.



Public Outreach Survey

Staff will present the findings of public outreach at the June 15th City Council meetings and the results should be read carefully. As is typically the case, project opposition is more organized than support. As such, residents of the Spinnaker Point and Baypoint Lagoons neighborhoods responded at far higher rates than residents of the rest of the Canal.

Census Tract 1122.02, Block Group 1, which includes Spinnaker Point and Baypoint Lagoons is home to roughly 1,900 people. Between Spinnaker Point and Baypoint Lagoons, there were 223 survey responses, nearly 60% of all responses received, representing an almost 12% completion rate. These respondents were *far* more likely to indicate that the lighting would “negatively affect the surrounding environment” or “block the path” (the latter being an assertion we find perplexing). On the whole, they did not believe that lighting would improve safety or prevent illegal activities.

Contrast that with the responses from people who indicated they lived in the Canal Neighborhood. This presumably refers to Census Tract 1122.03 (population 2,180), 1122.04 (population 4,280), and 1122.02 Block Groups 2 (population 845) and 3 (population 3,515). Collectively these areas are home to over 10,000 San Rafael residents, or roughly 5x the population of the Spinnaker Point/Baypoint Lagoons neighborhoods. Roughly 2/3rds of these respondents indicated that the lighting would improve safety and reduce illegal activity, with only 1/3rd saying it would negatively affect the environment. But critically, only 93 Canal

neighborhood residents completed the survey, less than 1% of the total population, meaning that the Spinnaker Point/Baypoint Lagoons residents completed the survey at 12x(!) the rate as their neighbors.

We urge the City Council to take this large disparity in response rates into consideration when choosing a path forward. The preferences of residents of the Canal neighborhood, we feel, should be weighted appropriately with respect to their far greater population than the adjoining, wealthier neighbors, as well as the respective response rates of both groups. A survey is not an electoral referendum, and the responses should not be treated as indicative of anything like “the will of the people” (for perspective, according to the city’s usage data, more than twice as many people use the path *every single night* than filled out the survey).

We believe that the pathway lighting will improve safety and access on Bay Trail. The present controversy, like many controversies before it, will almost certainly be forgotten within a short time, leaving generations of San Rafael residents to enjoy a safer, more accessible path.

Sincerely,

Warren J. Wells, AICP
Policy & Planning Director
Marin County Bicycle Coalition

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Warren Wells".

Matthew Harzell
Director of Planning
WTB-TAM

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew Harzell".

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

From: STEVEN FRIEDMAN [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2026 7:45 PM

To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>

Subject: Public Comment - June 15 CC Meeting - Item 2.a

Mayor Kate and Members of the City Council,

As a San Rafael resident and avid cyclist, I wholeheartedly support the Starkweather Path lighting project. It's important for safety reasons and should be part of the city's ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life for everyone.

Thank you,
Steven Friedman

Sent from my iPhone

From: GIOGLIO Levine [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2026 8:07 PM
To: Mayor Kate <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati <Maika@cityofsanrafael.org>; Eli Hill <Eli.Hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey <maribeth.bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rachel Kertz <Rachel.Kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: April Miller <april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>; Grey Melgard <grey.melgard@cityofsanrafael.org>; Lindsay Lara <lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org>; GIOGLIO Levine [REDACTED]
Subject: Protect the Natural Character of Starkweather Park - Consider a No-Lighting Option

Good evening, Mayor and Council members,
June 13, 2026

Please Enter into Public Record for 6/15/26 City Council Meeting

My name is Susan Levine, and I live in Baypoint Lagoons. I respectfully urge you to reject permanent lighting on the Starkweather Path and direct staff to preserve the path without any lighting.

The most concerning aspect of tonight's agenda is that staff has not presented the option that many residents have consistently requested: **no lighting at all**. Instead, you are being asked to choose between more lighting and less lighting, while the alternative of preserving the path in its current state has been excluded from consideration.

The Starkweather Path was intended to be a passive shoreline resource that supports wildlife habitat and provides opportunities for recreation and nature appreciation. Its purpose is fundamentally different from that of an urban transportation corridor. It is also officially closed from sunset to sunrise, making permanent lighting inconsistent with its intended use and changing both the character and expectations for the path.

The 1989 Master Plan emphasized protecting the shoreline's diverse habitats and native wildlife, including two federally threatened species: the Ridgway's Rail and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse. Introducing permanent lighting is inconsistent with those goals and raises legitimate concerns about impacts on sensitive species and the surrounding environment.

Even the City's own survey found that the **most frequently selected response** regarding the proposed project was that lighting would negatively impact the environment. Recreation and enjoying nature were also among the top reasons people use the path, demonstrating that residents value it as a natural shoreline experience.

In addition, organizations and advocates with environmental expertise including Marin Baylands Advocates, supporters of the Marin Conservation League, the Golden Gate Bird Alliance, Audubon advocates, and DarkSky supporters have expressed concerns about introducing lighting into this sensitive habitat.

I respectfully ask the Council to acknowledge the substantial public opposition, require staff to conduct appropriate due diligence, and direct them to return with a genuine third alternative: **preserve the Starkweather Path without permanent lighting.**

Please vote to include and support a third option—**no lighting on the Starkweather Path.**

Thank you,

Susan Levine
MARSH - Marin Action to Retain Starkweather Habitat

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

From: GIOGLIO Levine [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, June 15, 2026 7:13 AM

To: Mayor Kate <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati <Maika@cityofsanrafael.org>; Eli Hill <Eli.Hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey <maribeth.bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rachel Kertz <Rachel.Kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>

Cc: April Miller <april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>; Grey Melgard <grey.melgard@cityofsanrafael.org>; GIOGLIO Levine [REDACTED]

Subject: Fwd: Letters of support

> ----- Original Message -----

> From: GIOGLIO Levine <sueblevine@comcast.net>

> To: "lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org" <lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

> Cc: GIOGLIO Levine <sueblevine@comcast.net>

> Date: 06/15/2026 7:11 AM PDT

> Subject: Letters of support

>

>

> Please enter into Public Record:

> Good evening, Mayor and Council Members,

>

> I wanted to share several letters from environmental organizations and a biologist that support our position to eliminate all proposed lighting from the Starkweather Path.

>

> These materials reflect concerns about the potential impacts of permanent lighting on the shoreline environment and reinforce the importance of preserving the path's natural character.

>

> As this issue is discussed tonight, we hope to once again present our research, along with the survey results and other evidence that we believe support preserving the Starkweather Path without lighting. In particular, we believe the public feedback demonstrates significant concern about the environmental effects of the proposal and strong support for maintaining the path as a natural shoreline resource.

>

> I thought these materials might be helpful as you continue requesting your staff to provide a third alternative of not lighting the Starkweather Path.

>

> Thank you for your time and consideration.

>

> Susan Levine

> Marsh - Marin Action to Retain Starkweather Habitat



MARIN BAYLANDS ADVOCATES

P.O. BOX 2598

MILL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA 94942

March 31, 2026

April Miller, Public Works Director
Mayor and Councilmembers
City of San Rafael
1400 Fifth Street
San Rafael, CA 94901
Via email: public.works@cityofsanrafael.org, city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org

RE: Request to exclude Starkweather Path lighting from Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancements Project

Dear Ms. Miller, Mayor Colin, and Councilmembers,

Marin Baylands Advocates (MBA) is a volunteer organization dedicated to permanently protecting baylands along the eastern shoreline of Marin County and baylands throughout San Pablo Bay and the San Francisco Estuary.

We urge San Rafael to exclude from the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancements Project the proposed lighting improvements along the San Francisco Bay Trail (Starkweather Path) that lies adjacent to marshes, baylands and the waters of San Francisco Bay. Significant impacts to wildlife in the habitats adjacent to the pathway are likely to occur from dusk to dawn due to nighttime lighting from the proposed overhead and bollard style light fixtures. The Path's lighting plan has not received environmental review and should, prior to advancing the Project if it is not excluded.

Artificial light at night is known to adversely impact many species of wildlife. Impacts include effects to reproduction, navigation, and communication. San Francisco Bay is an important migratory route and a crucial stopover and breeding site for millions of birds. Nighttime lighting poses a known threat to birds. Artificial night lighting also impacts pollination and predation and contributes to habitat degradation and loss of biodiversity including to insects and mammals.

The Starkweather Path should remain a naturally dark corridor, part of an ecological network of habitats that foster nocturnal wildlife and preserve the nocturnal biodiversity of the adjacent marshes and baylands of the Bay, especially for sensitive species.

In considering artificial lighting for the Path, the city must first question how useful the lighting will be on the Starkweather Path, located in a park that according to City regulations is closed from dusk to dawn; then determine whether adding lighting will just encourage more nighttime use which it does not allow. We urge the City to weigh the usefulness of the proposed installation against the likely impacts it will create for fauna and flora and to human health of local residents.

Marin Baylands Advocates requests that San Rafael exclude the Starkweather Path from plans for lighting in the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancements Project.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vicki Nichols". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vicki Nichols



June 12, 2026

Mayor Kate Colin

kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org

RE: Opposition to the Proposed Lighting of the Starkweather Path – Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation

Dear Mayor Kate Colin,

We are writing to express our concerns surrounding the proposed lighting segment of the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Lighting Project along the Jean & John Starkweather Shoreline Park Path in San Rafael. We urge the City to exclude the Starkweather Path segment from the proposed lighting plan. Furthermore, we recommend [DarkSky Approved](#) lighting fixtures in any project, including this one, where lighting is required.

Golden Gate Bird Alliance is a non-profit organization whose mission is to inspire people to protect Bay Area birds and our shared natural environment. For over 100 years we have been a leader in bird conservation and habitat protection. Our 7,000 members and supporters envision a world where birds, wildlife, and all people flourish together.

The Jean & John Starkweather Shoreline Park Path lies adjacent to tidal marsh and shoreline habitats that support a diverse array of wildlife, including resident and migratory birds that utilize San Francisco Bay as part of the Pacific Flyway.

While we understand the desire to improve transportation infrastructure and public safety, we believe the installation of new nighttime lighting in this location would create unnecessary ecological impacts that are inconsistent with regional conservation goals and the growing body of scientific literature regarding artificial light at night.

Millions of birds pass through the Bay Area annually as they travel between breeding and wintering grounds. Many of these species migrate at night, relying on natural light cues, including the moon and stars, to navigate. Artificial lighting has been shown to disrupt these natural behaviors by attracting, disorienting, and altering the movements of migratory birds.

Recent research has demonstrated that artificial light at night is one of the strongest predictors of migratory bird stopover density. Horton et al. (2023) found that skyglow, the landscape level illumination of the night sky caused by artificial lighting, was a top predictor of increased migratory stopovers. This effect can draw birds into developed areas where they face increased risks from collisions, predation, vehicles, pollution, and other anthropogenic hazards. Even relatively localized lighting installations contribute cumulatively to regional skyglow and can influence bird behavior across broad landscapes.

Research has also shown that artificial lighting can cause birds to alter their migratory routes, increasing travel distances and energy expenditures. Migratory birds operate within narrow energetic margins, and disruptions that force birds to expend additional energy can reduce survival and reproductive success.

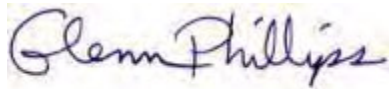
Beyond birds, artificial lights at night negatively affect insects and other wildlife. Numerous nocturnal insects are attracted to and trapped by artificial lights, leading to increased mortality and disruption of natural ecological processes. Because insects are a critical food source for birds and many other animals, these impacts can reverberate throughout the food web. The ecological value of marsh habitats depends not only on the habitat itself, but also on the natural nighttime conditions that sustain these interconnected relationships.

Importantly, the Starkweather Path traverses an area where natural darkness remains an ecological resource.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the City of San Rafael remove the Jean & John Starkweather Shoreline Park Path segment from the proposed lighting project. Doing so would help protect migratory birds, preserve the ecological integrity of adjacent marsh habitats, reduce contributions to regional skyglow, and demonstrate the City's commitment to balancing public infrastructure improvements with environmental stewardship.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss wildlife-friendly alternatives that meet community needs while minimizing impacts to the Bay's natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Glenn Phillips". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Glenn" and last name "Phillips" clearly legible.

Glenn Phillips
Executive Director



Marin Audubon Society

P.O. Box 599 | MILL VALLEY, CA 94942-0599 | MARINAUDUBON.ORG

March 30, 2026

April Miller, Public Works Director
City of San Rafael
1400 Fifth Street
San Rafael, CA 94901

ATT: Grey Shankel Melgard, Civil Engineer

RE: Comments on the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement Project Lighting

Dear Ms. Miller,

This is to convey the Marin Audubon Society's comments on the lighting component of the Transportation Enhancement Project (TEP) on city-owned property along the Jean and John Starkweather Path. As described in the March staff report, there would be up to 23+ 16-foot tall overhead light fixtures and 137 bollard style light fixtures on either side of the trail within the boundaries of the Tiscornia Marsh Project and also adjacent to the Canalway seasonal wetland. The project staff report indicates that the city has not yet made a decision on the lighting component of the project and the report does not present any alternatives to the proposed lighting. As discussed below, MAS opposes the use of tall lighting fixtures near the wetlands.

Background

MAS owns a portion of the levee/trail adjacent to Tiscornia Marsh and a section of the levee adjacent to Canalways. If the city intends to install lighting on MAS property, it will require an easement or other form of agreement with MAS.

For more than five years, MAS has been working with the city to design and build the Tiscornia Marsh Restoration and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project that includes Marin Audubon's property (the tidal marsh and path along the southern boundary) and city property, which includes the remainder of the path to the west and the diked marsh. The Project includes restoring tidal circulation to the diked marsh and relocating the perimeter path landward between the existing diked marsh and the soccer field.

Several years ago, MAS and the city discussed lighting at the interface with of the city's plans for Pickleweed Park improvements and the Tiscornia Marsh Restoration Project. At that time, we had discussed and understood the city had agreed to installing very low lighting fixtures along the trail adjacent to the new basketball courts. We now see that a 16-foot fixture has been installed, not low lighting.

Adverse Environmental Impacts

The staff report contains little information on environmental impacts of lighting, except for direct impacts from the installation of the fixtures. The city needs to consider adverse impacts from the light and glare on wildlife and the tidal marsh habitat. Ridgway's rails, a state and federally listed endangered species, and California black rails, a state listed threatened species, have been observed using the marsh and could be affected by the proposed lighting.

Artificial lighting is widely recognized as adversely affecting birds and other wildlife by interfering with nocturnal activity, breeding, and navigation, by disrupting natural sleep-awake cycles, and distorting predator-prey relationships by attracting insects. On a broad scale, lighting can disrupt migratory patterns and lead to death. In addition, the tall fixtures would provide perches for raptors and encourage predation on these sensitive species.

MAS discussed the city's proposed lighting associated Park improvements and its potential impacts on listed species with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service many months ago. The Service indicated that it prefers the shorter light fixtures, and that fixtures should include shades that direct any light away from the marsh and measures that prevent raptors from perching on light structures. In addition, the service recommends that any benches should not have back rests, which also provide raptor perches.

Environmental Review Inadequate

The MAS has concerns about the city's proposed CEQA exemptions. Specifically, if portions of the project encroach onto MAS's property, then Public Resources Code Section 21080.25 may not apply. This statutory exemption applies to bicycle and pedestrian projects "within the public right of way." MAS questions whether the proposed lighting along the levee paths, including Pickleweed Park, Tiscornia Marsh, the Bay Trail, and the Starkweather Path meet the definition of public right of way. Even if these paths are considered public right of way, MAS owns portions of the levees along Tiscornia Marsh and Canalways, which are definitely not a public right of way.

MAS also questions the use of the proposed categorical exemption for the proposed project. CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 applies to existing facilities that do not result in expansion of existing use. However, the project proposes to improve the existing levee paths by installing lighting, which is an addition to the facility that does not currently exist. The addition of lighting will also encourage an expansion of existing use at night.

Finally, MAS is concerned that the project has a reasonable possibility of significantly affecting biological resources and exception 15300.2(c) prevents the use of a categorical exemption. Specifically, as LSA noted in its analysis, that the California Ridgway's rail (a state and federally listed endangered species), California black rail (a state listed threatened species), and the saltmarsh harvest mouse (a state and federally listed endangered species) are potentially present on the site and within the adjacent marshes. However, LSA's analysis only considers direct impacts of installing the light fixtures on existing habitat and ignores potential indirect impacts of artificial light on the feeding and breeding behaviors of wildlife, including the listed species described above, within the adjacent salt marshes. In addition, LSA's analysis does not consider the impact on these listed species from increased use of the paths at night.

LSA's environmental analysis fails to provide sufficient information to support the conclusion that the project does not have a reasonable possibility of having significant adverse impacts on endangered and

threatened species. Therefore, exception 15300.2(c) prevents the use of a categorical exemption in this case.

No Demonstration of Need

The staff report provides only a general statement of purpose that applies to all of the proposed transportation "enhancements" proposed by the project: "improve the mobility, equity, safety, and comfort of the people walking, biking, and using transit in the canal neighborhood." The staff report does not discuss any safety problems along the trail that would warrant such extensive lighting. Have there been aggressive incidents or attacks along the path? Considering the significance of the potential adverse impacts of the lighting and the public controversy, at minimum, there should be a report of the number and nature of incidents that have occurred along the path in recent years warranting this environmentally damaging installation, provided to decision-makers and the public.

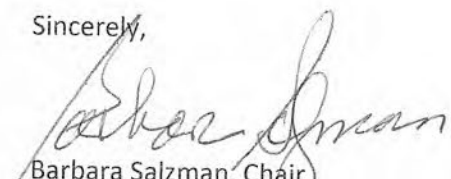
MAS Position

MAS position is based on protection of the tidal marsh and threatened, endangered, and other wildlife species that inhabit the marsh. Our position is:

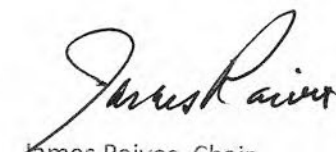
- To not install any lighting along the paths adjacent to marsh habitat.
- Should the city decide that some lighting is necessary, it should be low to the ground. Light fixtures should have shades directing light away from the marsh and any above several feet tall include measures to prevent raptors from perching.

We request that our discussions on this important issue and others related to the marsh and the Tiscornia Marsh project be resumed. Thank you for considering our concerns and scheduling a time for us to talk.

Sincerely,



Barbara Salzman, Chair
Conservation Committee



James Raives, Chair
Real Property Committee

Cc: Mayor Kate Colin
RWQCB
BCDC
USFWS
CDFW

June 2, 2026

Re: Proposed Lighting of the Starkweather Path – Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Lighting Project

Dear Mayor Kate Colin,

This letter is regarding our concerns surrounding the proposed lighting segment of the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Lighting Project along the Jean & John Starkweather - Shoreline Park Path in San Rafael.

We urge the City to exclude the Starkweather Path segment from the proposed lighting plan.

We are deeply concerned because permanent nighttime lighting in this location does not demonstrate a clear public safety benefit and instead introduces significant environmental, community, and quality-of-life impacts, including:

- Conflict with the 1989 Master Plan goal to “protect, maintain, and support the existing diversity of wildlife habitats and species native to the San Francisco Bay”
- Impacts to sensitive shoreline habitat supporting two federally threatened species: the Ridgeway’s Rail and Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse
- Increased skyglow, glare, and light trespass that will disrupt wildlife feeding, breeding, and migration patterns
- Environmental and sea-level-rise concerns associated with introducing artificial lighting adjacent to tidal wetlands and Bay habitat
- Questions regarding the adequacy and neutrality of the lighting survey process, including whether safer street-route alternatives were fully evaluated
- Lack of adequate notice and meaningful opportunity for comment from directly impacted neighborhoods
- Lack of publicly presented crime statistics or incident data demonstrating a need for nighttime lighting in a park closed after dark
- Lack of permit from the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and questionable CEQA exemption

We believe there are strong shared interests among all stakeholders in excluding the Starkweather Path segment from the lighting plan, including:

- Avoiding lighting of a pathway that is legally closed at night where lighting will encourage more use and more potential for negative environmental and wildlife impact
- Preserving the rare open-space character and Bay views of this passive-use shoreline park
- Protecting wildlife habitat and endangered species

- Preventing unnecessary skyglow, light clutter, and light trespass into nearby homes
- Reducing light pollution that affects human well-being, wastes energy, and contributes to climate impacts

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Arndt, Co-Founder of DarkSky West Marin

A fiscally sponsored program of Sustainable Marin, a 501 (c)3charitable organization

www.DarkSkyWestMarin.com

www.DarkSky.org

June 12, 2026

San Rafael City Council
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

Re: Proposed Night Lighting Along the Starkweather Path

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

My name is Joe Mueller. I am a biologist and educator at College of Marin, and I am writing to express my strong concern regarding the proposal to install permanent nighttime lighting along the Starkweather Path adjacent to the San Rafael Canal, tidal marshes, and San Pablo Bay shoreline.

As both a scientist and educator, I have spent many years studying and teaching about the ecological importance of Bay Area wetlands and tidal marsh ecosystems. These habitats are among the most productive and biologically significant ecosystems in California, supporting a remarkable diversity of fish, birds, mammals, reptiles, invertebrates, and native plant communities. They are also among the most fragile and heavily impacted habitats in the region.

Artificial nighttime lighting is increasingly recognized as a significant environmental stressor in coastal and wetland ecosystems. While lighting may appear to be a minor infrastructure improvement, extensive scientific research demonstrates that even relatively low levels of nighttime illumination can disrupt ecological processes that have evolved over thousands of years under natural cycles of darkness, moonlight, and seasonal patterns.

The marshes adjacent to the Starkweather Path provide habitat and movement corridors for numerous wildlife species, including shorebirds, waterfowl, herons, egrets, raptors, bats, and a wide variety of aquatic organisms. Many of these species depend upon darkness for foraging, navigation, predator avoidance, breeding behavior, and seasonal migration.

Permanent nighttime lighting can produce several ecological impacts:

- Disruption of bird behavior. Many migratory birds navigate using natural celestial cues and can become disoriented by artificial light. Night lighting may alter feeding patterns, roosting behavior, and migration routes.
- Increased predation pressure. Artificial lighting can give visual predators a significant advantage, altering natural predator-prey relationships and increasing stress on fish, small mammals, amphibians, and invertebrates.
- Impacts on fish and aquatic species. Light spilling into the canal and marsh channels can alter movement patterns, feeding behavior, and habitat use by juvenile fish and other aquatic organisms that rely upon darkness for protection.
- Effects on bats and insects. Many native insects are attracted to artificial lights, creating ecological traps that reduce reproductive success and alter food-web dynamics. Changes in insect abundance can subsequently affect bats and other insect-eating species.
- Fragmentation of habitat. Continuous illumination effectively creates a corridor of disturbance that wildlife may avoid, reducing the functional connectivity of adjacent marsh habitat.

The San Rafael shoreline and canal marshes are particularly important because they represent one of the remaining natural interfaces between urban development and the San Pablo Bay estuary. Regional conservation efforts have invested millions of dollars in wetland restoration and habitat enhancement throughout the North Bay. Introducing permanent lighting immediately adjacent to sensitive marsh habitat runs counter to the broader goal of protecting and restoring ecological function.

Beyond the direct biological impacts, darkness itself is an increasingly scarce environmental resource. Natural nighttime conditions support wildlife, seasonal bird movements, and the phenological rhythms of the bay in a way that is becoming rare in urbanized regions. Once lighting infrastructure is installed, the loss of natural darkness is effectively permanent.

Importantly, I am not aware of evidence demonstrating that installation of permanent lighting along the Starkweather Path is necessary to address a documented public safety problem. Before introducing a long-term ecological disturbance into a sensitive shoreline environment, the City should carefully evaluate whether less damaging alternatives could achieve any legitimate safety objectives. Such alternatives might include targeted maintenance, vegetation management, improved sight lines, increased patrol presence, emergency call systems, or limited-use lighting activated only when needed.

I respectfully urge the City Council to apply the precautionary principle in this case. When a project has the potential to adversely affect sensitive ecological resources and the benefits remain uncertain or unproven, the prudent course is to avoid irreversible impacts whenever possible.

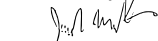
The tidal marshes, shoreline habitats, and wildlife communities along the Starkweather Path are valuable public resources that deserve careful stewardship. The Starkweather Path currently provides an uncommon opportunity to experience the shoreline in a relatively natural state. The absence of permanent lighting is not a deficiency; it is part of what makes the corridor ecologically valuable.

Future generations will benefit far more from preserving the ecological integrity of these habitats than from adding permanent nighttime illumination to an already urbanized landscape.

For these reasons, I urge the City Council to reject the proposed installation of permanent lighting along the Starkweather Path and instead pursue alternatives that protect both public access and the ecological health of the San Rafael shoreline.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Joe Mueller
Professor of Biology
College of Marin

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Federation of San Rafael** <federationofsanrafael@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Jun 12, 2026 at 3:53 PM

Subject: Starkweather Path, SF Bay Trail, and the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement Project

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>, <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>, City Council, Mayor, Department Heads <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>, Rachel Kertz <rachel.kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>, Maika Llorens Gulati <maika.gulati@cityofsanrafael.org>, Eli Hill <eli.hill@cityofsanrafael.org>, Marybeth Bushey <maribeth.bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>

Cc: Paul Navazio <paul.navazio@cityofsanrafael.org>

Hi Lindsay,
Please include the attached letter (below) in the Council's packet for the June 15 meeting.

Thanks,
Amy

Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods
PO Box 151485
San Rafael, CA 94915-1485

Dear Mayor Colin and Council members,
Cc: Paul Navazio, Interim City Manager, Lindsay Lara, City Clerk

June 12, 2026

Re: Shoreline Park (the Starkweather Path), the San Francisco Bay Trail, and Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement Project

Tonight the Council is being asked to choose between two alternatives regarding lighting along Starkweather Path. The first is to "include only waist-high bollards" and the second is "to continue with the scope of work for the proposed lighting as previously presented," which is "a mix of 15-foot high overhead small area lights."

We ask that the Council consider a third alternative - that of no lighting at all.

The Starkweather Path is part of the San Francisco Bay Trail overseen by the [Metropolitan Transportation Commission \(.gov\)](https://www.mtc.ca.gov/) whose "guidelines provide goals and direction for site planning and trail design to facilitate achievement of the Bay Trail vision." This policy applies to the City of San Rafael's planning of the Starkweather Trail, mandating, "*that trail development respect[s] wildlife habitats...*"

The Federation is voicing its concern that the Spinnaker Point and Bay Point Lagoon neighborhoods were not included in the development of these two options even though their residences are adjacent to the path in question. Additionally, a subsequent survey indicated that the majority of the respondents from those neighborhoods and the Canal Neighborhood agreed that, "*lighting will negatively impact the surrounding environment.*" (Staff report)

All of San Rafael's neighborhoods are important and should be included in the planning regarding any project directly affecting them. The City has committed to inclusivity and transparency and the Starkweather Path project is another example of where this commitment should be exercised. The City, responsible for a portion of the San Francisco Bay Trail, should include a study of the impact of lighting on wildlife in this fragile environment.

Sincerely yours,

Amy Likover
Federation of San Rafael President

From: GIOGLIO Levine [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2026 10:04 AM
To: Grey Melgard <grey.melgard@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: GIOGLIO Levine [REDACTED] Maika Llorens Gulati <Maika@cityofsanrafael.org>; April Miller <april.miller@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Request for Clarification Regarding Starkweather Pathway Lighting Agenda Item

Hi Grey,

In reviewing the agenda report, “**Consideration of Next Steps Related to Proposed Starkweather Pathway Lighting Implemented by the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancement Project,**” for the June 15 City Council meeting, we are concerned that the staff recommendation presents only two lighting alternatives and does not include a third option for **no lighting** on the Starkweather Path.

Given the significant public opposition expressed through written correspondence, public comments, and the results of the City's own lighting survey, we respectfully question why preserving the path without lighting is not being presented as an option for Council consideration.

Could you please clarify the rationale for excluding a no-lighting alternative from the staff recommendations? We believe it would provide the Council with a more complete range of choices and allow elected officials to fully consider the concerns raised by residents and other stakeholders.

I would appreciate any clarification you can provide prior to the meeting.

Thanks so much,
Susan Levine

Marsh - Marin Action to Retain Starkweather Path

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council consider the following options:

1. Direct staff to modify the scope of work for the proposed lighting along Starkweather Path for the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancements Project to include only waist-high bollards and to reduce hours of operations for the lighting (Staff's recommendation).

OR

2. Direct staff to continue with the scope of work for the proposed lighting along Starkweather Path for the Canal Neighborhood Active Transportation Enhancements Project as previously presented.

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

From: Susan Nawbary [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2026 8:27 PM

To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>

Subject: Public Comment - June 15 CC Meeting - Item 2.a

Mayor Kate and Members of the City Council,

The lighting infrastructure is crucial for the path and the residents will realize their fears about light spillover are unfounded. The city is doing the right thing, with adequate and thoughtful mitigations for light spillover. Keep up the good work and keep beautifying our city with these projects.

Sent from my iPhone

June 12, 2026

San Rafael City Council
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

Re: Proposed Night Lighting Along the Starkweather Path

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

My name is Joe Mueller. I am a biologist and educator at College of Marin, and I am writing to express my strong concern regarding the proposal to install permanent nighttime lighting along the Starkweather Path adjacent to the San Rafael Canal, tidal marshes, and San Pablo Bay shoreline.

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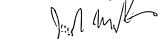
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Future generations will benefit far more from preserving the ecological integrity of these habitats than from adding permanent nighttime illumination to an already urbanized landscape.

For these reasons, I urge the City Council to reject the proposed installation of permanent lighting along the Starkweather Path and instead pursue alternatives that protect both public access and the ecological health of the San Rafael shoreline.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Joe Mueller
Professor of Biology
College of Marin



CENTER for
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT and
PARTNERSHIPS



June 15, 2026

Re: Joint Letter of Support for the Starkweather Path Lighting Project

Dear Mayor Colin, Councilmembers Llorens-Gulati, Kertz, Hill, and Bushey, and Team San Rafael:

Canal Alliance and Dominican University of California's Center for Community Engagement and Partnerships write jointly in strong support of the Starkweather Path Lighting Project. Our organizations have a shared goal in uplifting the voices of Canal residents to support the equitable transformation of southeast San Rafael, and lighting along the Starkweather Path has been a consistent priority Canal residents have raised over many years.

Canal residents have long identified lighting as a core public safety need.

In a 2022 community survey of 131 Canal residents and 85 recorded testimonies collected across seven priority routes, residents identified darkness on neighborhood paths and bayfront routes as a top barrier to safe mobility, exercise, and the ability to return home from work after dark. The patterns were consistent. Women and older residents described avoiding paths and bay access points entirely once darkness approached. Workers described shortened evenings, longer detours, and lost time with family because unlit corridors feel unsafe.

The following quotes are drawn from some of those testimonies most relevant to the Starkweather alignment:

- *"My hope is that they put lights on the streets that look very dark so that one can walk safely... sometimes you come home late from work and you don't have time to do your errand... it's scary when it's dark."*
- *"Having lighted places helps in the winter months to be able to walk and exercise in the afternoons. It is very nice to go for a walk to the Bay... but in the winter months it is almost impossible because it gets dark very early. This would help us to be able to enjoy these areas for more time."*
- *"People can no longer walk like that to go to the Bay or somewhere because it stays really dark there... as a woman, she can't go there anymore. If this project is carried out, it would be a great blessing for everyone."*
- *"I would like that all the streets had good lighting, let's be safer, especially for women, because there are many women who work at night or early in the morning."*

Rooted in the lived experiences of Canal area residents, this evidence prompted the City's 2022 allocation of \$100,000 toward lighting improvements. The Starkweather Path Lighting Project is a direct continuation of that commitment.

Ensuring all neighborhood voices are reflected in the decision.

We appreciate the care the City has taken to gather community input on this project, and we share an interest with all neighboring residents in getting the details right. We also want to lift a consideration raised in the June 5, 2026 joint letter from the Marin County Bicycle Coalition and WTB-TAM regarding response patterns in the recent survey. Spinnaker Point and Baypoint Lagoons, with a combined population of roughly 1,900, generated nearly 60% of survey responses, while the broader Canal neighborhood, home to well over 10,000 people, was more modestly represented. We respectfully ask Council to consider this imbalance alongside the long record of input from Canal residents who walk the path daily, so that the perspectives of those most affected are fully reflected in the final decision. Centering the voices of Canal residents in decisions that shape their surrounding neighborhood is what equitable transformation of southeast San Rafael looks like in practice.

The proposed design is sound, and a reasonable hours compromise can keep the project moving.

We appreciate the City's commitment to down shielded, back shielded bollard fixtures consistent with Bay Trail standards, with larger overhead fixtures sited well away from residences and sensitive habitat. The design is aligned with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles supported by the San Rafael Police Department. If a compromise on operating hours is necessary, we support the staff recommended early morning and evening illumination approach, and we join MCBC's recommendation to extend the evening window to approximately 10:00 p.m. so that lighting is available when Canal residents return home from work and transit.

Our request.

We respectfully urge Council to approve the Starkweather Path Lighting Project and to honor the City's prior commitments to invest in safer, more equitable infrastructure for the Canal neighborhood. Canal Alliance and Dominican will continue to support residents through implementation, in language community education, and post installation feedback, so that this investment delivers on what Canal residents have asked for over many years.

We thank the City for its continued partnership and look forward to working together to make southeast San Rafael safer and more accessible for everyone.

Sincerely,



Omar Carrera
Chief Executive Officer
Canal Alliance



Julia van der Ryn
Executive Director, Center for Community Engagement & Partnerships
Dominican University of California