

SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Loch Dreizler, General Manager
DATE: April 16, 2025
SUBJECT: Discuss Street Lighting Jurisdiction, Metrics, and Tentative Public Safety Considerations Near Faraday and Sagunto Street

Proposed Motion / Recommendation

No recommendation, although staff direction would be welcome.

Policy Implications

SYCSD's authority under California Community Services District Law (Gov. Code §61000 et seq.) encompasses the acquisition, construction, improvement, maintenance, and operation of streetlights per the 2009 Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan, Section H - Outdoor Lighting Ordinance.

Fiscal Implications

- PG&E will manage the installation, and the placement of the lights will influence the cost.
- All non-exempt light fixtures necessitate a County permit for installation and must adhere to the general requirements outlined in the attached 2009 Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan, Section H – Outdoor Lighting.
- The District has a streetlight reserve. See item 9 below.
- The District maintains and operates our current streetlights (e.g., repairs, utility contracts with Pacific Gas & Electric [PG&E]), and we can propose new installations within our service area, including the downtown core of Faraday Street. We can “acquire, construct, improve, maintain, and operate” lighting, but new projects depend on county approval. PG&E has assisted us in determining the costs of alternative lighting options.

Alternatives Considered

None

Discussion

If we are going to add new lights to our responsibilities, we should consider developing a metric to determine where and why they should be located and evaluate the funding source.

Here are some standard metrics and considerations when adding lights:

1. **Community Input:** The final determination will include input from a sphere near the proposed light area.
2. **Traffic Volume:** The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count is typically a crucial metric. Roads with increased vehicle or pedestrian traffic may require street lighting to enhance visibility and safety, particularly at night.
3. **Accident History:** Crash data, particularly nighttime collisions, is analyzed. If an area has a higher-than-average rate of accidents in low-light conditions, street lighting may be prioritized.

4. **Pedestrian Activity:** Areas with significant foot traffic, such as near schools, parks, or commercial zones, often require lighting to enhance pedestrian safety and security.
5. **Road Classification:** Highways, arterial roads, and residential streets have different lighting standards. For instance, the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) offer guidelines tailored to specific types of roads and local standards.
6. **Illumination Standards:** Metrics such as luminance (the amount of light on the road surface) and illuminance (the amount of light reaching the surface) are measured in lux or foot-candles. For instance, urban roads might require 10-20 lux, while rural areas might need less.
7. **Population Density:** Urban and suburban areas with higher densities are more likely to require consistent lighting than rural areas, where lighting may be limited to intersections or hazardous spots. However, if we are adding lights, metrics will be needed.
8. **Crime Rates:** Based on local crime statistics, lighting is sometimes installed to deter crime in high-risk areas.
9. **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Not in our case now, but budget constraints could play a role in the future. There is the potential that rates may need to change to pay for new installations. The cost of installation and maintenance against the benefits of improved safety and reduced accidents may have to be considered in the future.
10. **Environmental Factors:** Dark-sky policies or wildlife considerations may limit lighting in certain areas, striking a balance between safety and ecological impact.
11. **We Watch Organization** "We Watch" is affiliated with Save Our Stars, a group based in Santa Ynez Valley dedicated to preserving dark skies and reducing light pollution. Their mission, which has been active since 2000, aligns with the goals of the International Dark Sky Association to protect night-time environments through responsible outdoor lighting. They are not a broad advocacy group but rather a local initiative, prioritizing star visibility over the proliferation of streetlights. Their activities include:
 - Educate residents, schools (e.g., astronomy programs for grades 5-8), and building professionals about light pollution.
 - Monitor local planning bodies, such as the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission and Buellton/Solvang review committees, to enforce lighting ordinances.
 - Advocate for low-Kelvin (warm, $\leq 2700\text{K}$) bulbs to minimize wildlife disruption.

Their relevance to street lighting near Faraday Street is indirect yet significant. Santa Ynez's charming rural atmosphere contributes to their vision for a "dark sky region." They would likely oppose excessive lighting, even near S.Y. Kitchen. Their influence is evident in the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, Appendix H, which restricts brightness and encourages shielded fixtures. If SYCSD or the county proposed new lights on Faraday, We Watch would advocate for dim or minimal options, citing concerns about glare and sky glow.

ATTACHMENT H

ARTICLE 35.3, Site Planning and Other Project Standards, of Section 35-1, the Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code, of Chapter 35, Zoning, of the Santa Barbara County Code, is amended to amend Section 35.30.120, Outdoor Lighting, of Chapter 35.30, Standards for all Development and Land Uses, to read as follows:

C. Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan area.

- 1. General.** The regulations contained in this Subsection C. shall be known and referred to as the “Outdoor Lighting Regulations for the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan Area”.
- 2. Purpose and intent.** The purpose of this Subsection C is to create standards for outdoor lighting that minimize light pollution, glare, and light trespass caused by inappropriate or misaligned light fixtures. These standards conserve energy and preserve the nighttime sky while maintaining night-time safety, utility, security and productivity. The County recognizes that the unique development patterns and environment of the Santa Ynez Valley make it an ideal area for astronomical observation and enjoyment of the nighttime sky. The County, through the provisions contained herein, intends to preserve and protect the nighttime environment of the Santa Ynez Valley by regulating unnecessary and excessive outdoor lighting.
- 3. Definitions.** For the purposes of this Subsection C, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them by this Subsection. The illustrations of the defined words or phrases are merely illustrative. If any conflict exists between the text of a definition and the corresponding illustration, the text shall govern.

Directional Lighting Methods. Direction of light downward, rather than upward or outward, with the intention of directing light where it is needed; on the ground. Downward lighting also prevents unnecessary and unwanted spillover of light to adjacent areas and properties.

Fossil Fuel Lighting. Fossil fuel light produced directly by the combustion of natural gas or other utility-type fossil fuels, for example: gas, propane and kerosene lighting.

High Intensity Discharge Lamp. High pressure sodium, mercury vapor, metal halide, low pressure sodium, and other similar lamps.

Light Pollution. Any artificial light which causes a detrimental effect on the environment, astronomical research, enjoyment of the night sky or causes undesirable glare or light trespass.

Light Trespass. Artificial light that produces unnecessary and/or unwanted illumination of an adjacent property.

Luminous Tube Lighting. Gas filled glass tubing which when subjected to high voltage becomes luminescent in a color characteristic of the gas used (neon, argon, etc.).

Outdoor Light Fixture. Artificial Illuminating Devices, outdoor fixtures, lamps and other similar devices, permanently installed or portable, used for flood lighting, general illumination or advertisement. Such devices shall include but are not limited

to outdoor lighting for:

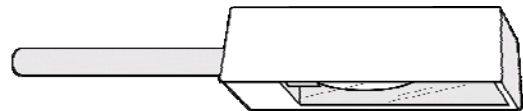
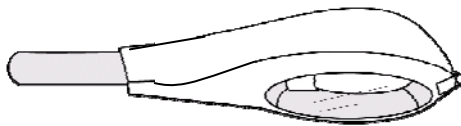
1. Landscape lighting.
2. Parking lots.
3. Recreational facilities.
4. Signs.
5. Street Lighting.
6. Structures.
7. Walkway lighting.

Outdoor Recreation Facility. An area designated for active recreation, whether publicly or privately owned, including baseball and softball diamonds, soccer and football fields, equestrian arenas, golf courses, tennis courts, skateboard ramps and swimming pools.

Shielding. A barrier around a fixture that helps to conceal the lamp and control light distribution.

Fully Shielded (full cutoff). Outdoor light fixtures with a solid barrier that emit no light rays above the horizontal plane and effectively obscure the visibility of a lamp.

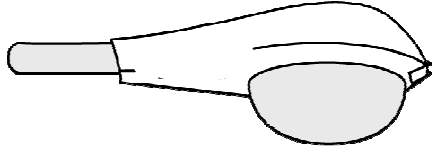
Fully Shielded (full cutoff) Fixtures



Partially Shielded. A fixture that may allow some light to pass through a semi-translucent barrier, and/or may allow visibility of the lamp from certain perspectives.



Unshielded. Unshielded means light fixtures lacking any means to restrict light emitted above the horizontal plane.



- 4. Approved materials and methods of installation.** The provisions of this Subsection are not intended to prevent the use of any design, material or method of installation not specifically proscribed by this Subsection provided any such alternate has been approved by the County. The Department may approve any such alternate provided that the proposed design, material or method:

 - a. Provides approximate equivalence to the specific requirements of this Subsection C.
 - b. Is otherwise satisfactory and complies with the intent of this Subsection C.
- 5. Prohibited lights.**

 - a. All illuminated advertising signs shall be off between 11:00 p.m. and sunrise, except that on-premises signs may be illuminated while the business is open to the public.
 - b. All outside illumination that is not fully shielded (full cutoff) of any building and/or surrounding landscape, public or private, for aesthetic and decorative purposes is prohibited between 9:00 p.m. and sunrise.
 - c. No outdoor recreational facility with lights that are not fully shielded (full cutoff) shall be illuminated between 9:00 p.m. and sunrise except to complete a specific organized recreational event, in progress and under illumination in conformance with this Subsection C at 9:00 p.m. Fully shielded (full cutoff) lights are not subject to a time restriction.
 - d. Search lights, laser source lights, or similar high intensity lights shall not be permitted except in emergencies, by police and/or fire personnel, or for the purposes of gathering meteorological data.
 - e. Mercury Vapor lights.
- 6. Exemptions.** The following are exempt from the provision of this Subsection C.

 - a. All outdoor lighting fixtures existing and lawfully installed prior to the effective date of this ordinance are exempt from the shielding requirements of this

Subsection C. Existing lighting fixtures shall be subject to the remaining requirements of this Subsection C including the requirements of Subsection C.5 above, requiring lights that are not fully shielded (full cutoff) be turned off at 9:00 p.m. Fully shielded (full cutoff) lights are not subject to a turn-off time.

- b. Fossil fuel lights.
 - c. Traffic control signs and devices.
 - d. Street lights installed prior to the effective date of this ordinance.
 - e. Temporary emergency lighting (e.g., fire, police, public works).
 - f. Moving vehicle lights.
 - g. Navigation lights (e.g., airports, heliports, radio/television towers).
 - h. Seasonal decorations with individual lights in place no longer than 60 days.
 - i. Lighting for special events as provided by Subsection C.9 (Temporary exemption).
 - j. Temporary lighting for agricultural activities of a limited duration, not including unshielded arena lights.
 - k. Security lights of any wattage that are controlled by a motion-sensor switch and which do not remain on longer than 10 to 12 minutes after activation.
 - l. Projects with approved construction plans prior to the effective date of this Subsection C are excluded from compliance with this Subsection in the initial installation only.
 - m. Solar walkway lights.
- 7. General requirements.** All non-exempt light fixtures requiring a County permit for their installation shall be subject to the following general requirements:
- a. All outdoor lighting fixtures installed after the effective date of this Subsection C and thereafter maintained upon private property, public property, or within the public right-of way shall be fully shielded (full cutoff).
 - b. All replaced or repaired lighting fixtures requiring a permit shall be subject to the requirements of this Subsection C.
 - c. Light trespass and glare shall be reduced to the maximum extent feasible through directional lighting methods.
 - d. Externally illuminated signs, advertising displays and building identification shall use top mounted light fixtures which shine downward and are fully shielded (full cutoff).
 - e. Outdoor light fixtures used for outdoor recreational facilities shall be fully shielded (full cutoff) except when such shielding would cause impairment to the visibility required in the intended recreational activity. In such cases, partially shielded fixtures and downward lighting methods shall be utilized to limit light pollution, glare, and light trespass to a reasonable level as determined by the Director.

- f. Illumination from recreational facility light fixtures shall be shielded to minimize glare extending towards roadways where impairment of motorist vision might cause a hazard.

8. Submittal of plans and evidence of compliance. For any permit required by the County for work involving outdoor light fixtures (except for exempt fixtures in compliance with Subsection C.6) the applicant shall submit evidence that the proposed work will comply with this Subsection. The submittal shall contain:

- a. Plans showing the locations of outdoor lighting fixtures.
- b. Description of the outdoor lighting fixtures including, but not limited to manufacturers catalog cuts and drawings. Description and drawings should include lamp or bulb type, wattage, beam angle, and shielding.

The above plans and descriptions shall be sufficiently complete to enable the plan examiner to readily determine whether compliance with the requirements of this Subsection C has been met.

9. Temporary exemption.

- a. The Director may grant a temporary exemption, as defined herein, for such activities, including, but not limited to circuses, fairs, carnivals, sporting events, and promotional activities, if he first makes all of the following findings:
 - (1) The purpose for which the lighting is proposed is not intended to extend beyond 30 days.
 - (2) The proposed lighting is designed in such a manner as to minimize light pollution as much as feasible.
 - (3) The proposed lighting will comply with the general intent of this article.
- b. The application for a temporary exemption shall at a minimum include all of the following information:
 - (1) Name and address of applicant and property owner.
 - (2) Location of proposed fixtures.
 - (3) Type, wattage and lumen output of lamp(s).
 - (4) Type and shielding of proposed features.
 - (5) Intended use of lighting.
 - (6) Duration of time for requested exemption.
 - (7) The nature of the exemption.
 - (8) Such other information as the Department may request.