

# SCHOOL BOARD GETS IDEA OF HOW CHS STADIUM LIGHTS WILL LOOK

By MARY SCHLEY

THE CARMEL Unified School District Board of Education had its first look Wednesday night at how four new LED lights between 70 and 80 feet above the athletic field at Carmel High School might look from various public spaces around the campus. Board members had asked for the renderings after discussing the project and its pending environmental impact report in late May.

The roughly \$800,000 project is set to be finished before the beginning of the 2022 school year, when a new state law mandating later start times for middle and high school students takes effect — and therefore pushes after-school activities, like sports, into the late afternoon and early evening. During the months when darkness descends relatively early, the lights

will be critical for safe practice and play, according to district officials.

The lights would also enable the school to schedule football games for Friday nights instead of holding them on Saturdays during the day, when student attendance has historically been low.

## Night simulations

“Students have identified night games as a high priority to create a new, healthy weekend social opportunity, and a chance to build even more school spirit,” district spokesman Paul Behan explained to The Pine Cone in May. “The district would limit the number of night games to be considerate of our neighbors and the community’s desire to limit light intrusion.”

At the July 21 meeting, facilities and transportation director Dan Paul shared “nighttime simulations” of “where the

lights could potentially be viewed from a public space,” not from people’s backyards or homes. The before-and-theoretically-after images were taken from four vantage points: On Highway 1 near Morse Drive just south of the campus, from Mesa Drive on the west side of Highway 1, and from the west side of Highway north of the CHS campus.

Paul said the district has also received a dozen written comments on the project that will be included in the draft EIR when it’s released early next month. Four of the letters were from government agencies or groups articulating the standard concerns about traffic, noise impacts and effects on biological resources, while the others were from community members voicing support or opposition to the proposal.

He said the 350-plus-page draft EIR will be available for 45 days for review and additional comments from the public, with the board set to receive the final EIR sometime in December or next January.

Board member Seaberry Nachbar wondered how late the lights would be on and asked if the district will make extra efforts to let the community know there are “stadium lights coming.”

Paul said outreach will come through the district’s website, The Pine Cone and a town hall meeting at the high school.

He also said Carmel High administrators are developing a policy that will ideally work for the students and the neighbors, with the lights on long enough to accommodate after-dark activities but not so late that they’ll disrupt people’s nighttime peace.

“This is something that should go out to the entire community,” board member and former CHS principal Karl Pallastrini agreed. “I hope we can get some summaries that are periodic and in user-friendly terminology in terms of what we’re doing and why we’re doing it,” considering that “it’s been a high school for 80-something years with no lights.”

## WANTED



I am looking to buy a vintage sports car from a private owner, for my collection. Prefer Porsche, Jaguar, Mercedes or similar. I will be in town and staying in Carmel from August 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Bob Luther (703) 966-0122 Virginia**



PHOTO/COURTESY 3DSCAPE

A photo rendering shows what the four new LED stadium lights proposed for the athletic field at Carmel High might look like. The lights are needed for evening practices and games.