

From: [Jean Knight](#)
To: [Melanie Hadden](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment for Nov 19 Board meeting, item G3
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Dear Commissioners,

When the District initially proposed a new overflow parking lot, the District indicated that a key rationale for the proposal was that the lot could also be used for Surfers Beach parking, which Caltrans must provide as part of its Highway 1 project. The recent project title change to *Pillar Point Surfers Beach Safe Parking Project* suggests the Surfers Beach parking is a priority. I appreciate the District's willingness to help. My concern is that the District appears to be proceeding rapidly toward a costly parking lot project that will provide no realistic access to Surfers Beach and no significant benefit for harbor access either.

To better understand the District's position, I reviewed Board of Commissioners' meetings, District letters, District staff reports, the RFP and winning bid proposal for the project, and the current staff recommendation for option 4. I have the following observations:

- The proposed alternatives, including option 4, are not close enough to Surfers Beach to be realistic options. They are 0.5-0.7 mile walking distance from Surfers Beach. It's unrealistic to ask people, especially seniors and families with young children, to walk that distance given the loads most carry, e.g., food, coolers, blankets, fishing gear, surfboards. Moreover, given the location of option 4 next to Sam's Chowder House, Sam's customers likely will fill many of those spaces. If the Coastal Commission accepts option 4 or another of the current alternatives to fulfill Caltrans' obligation for providing Surfers Beach parking, it may end any chance to obtain actual Surfers Beach parking.
- Option 4, the staff's recommended option, does not address the key need initially identified by the District: overflow boat trailer parking. It includes no new boat trailer spaces, only car and RV spaces. A parking survey I conducted this year found that trailer overflow events were rare, mostly related to fishing events such as the salmon opener (updated parking survey attached), and this was consistent with the District's own findings that overflow occurs 4 to 5 times per year. The State Division of Boating and Waterways advises against using such rare events as a basis for designing harbor parking capacity, so dropping additional trailer spaces from the project may be a good choice. Because the salmon and crab openers are known dates each year, a possible alternative to new trailer spaces may be to arrange overflow parking space in advance with local businesses. The District's consultant may also be able to recommend parking layout or operational changes to help with these few events.
- A new lot is unlikely to significantly benefit the harbor. The District has stated that overflow parking occurs during fishing events, holidays, sunny weekends, days when temperatures are hot over the hill, and special events. The parking survey this year included all of these situations and found trailer overflow occurred only during the key fishing events. No car overflow parking was observed during the parking survey, even

during holidays and peak summer days with high temperatures over the hill. The parking survey gives the range and average of utilization rates for each of these situations. The lot did near capacity a few of the observed times, but turnover was constant enough that cars usually found a space. Occasionally, cars parked in trailer spaces, but this practice was not always related to capacity issues, as the parking lot often had ample parking at the time. If the District must discourage this practice in order to maintain the 119 trailer spaces as trailer-only at all times, clear signage may suffice.

- Evidence for robust tourism is unclear. The District has indicated increasing tourism is also fueling the need for more parking. It would help to show the supporting data for this. The tourism data for San Francisco and the Monterey Bay area show tourism has not rebounded to pre-covid levels.
- Harbor parking needs are unclear. These observations are based on the latest version of this project; however, the project has undergone several changes in purpose to date, raising a concern that the District does not yet clearly understand its needs. The District initially identified overflow boat trailer parking as the key need, but then RFP addendum 2 directed bidders to assume car parking only. The District stated that there will be no overnight parking, but then RFP addendum 2 directed bidders to assume 72-hour parking, which in conjunction with the car-only instructions, was puzzling. The District stated that “no project” was an option, but then the RFP and winning bid did not include evaluating this option, even though this is a standard option often considered in preliminary analyses. Now there is option 4, which is RV parking and public car parking unlikely to be used for Surfers Beach due to distance. Projects are often in flux in the early stages and I understand that public opposition to the Burnham Strip options influenced the switch to option 4, but the impression is still that the District has not clearly identified its parking needs.

I urge the Commissioners to rigorously review and discuss the proposed parking project before making its decision. Please allow yourselves time to assess potential issues and whether this truly benefits Surfers Beach and the harbor. Critically, do not advance this as a partial or whole solution for Surfers Beach parking unless you can demonstrate that it is a realistic solution.

Respectfully,
Jean Knight
El Granada