

From: [James Pruett](#)
To: [Melanie Hadden](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: How the Harbor District invented a Parking Crisis
Date: Monday, November 17, 2025 7:03:28 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Mel,

Please add to public comment.

Thank you

Bcc: Harbor Commissioners

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** My working day may not be your working day. Please don't feel obligated to respond to my emails outside of your working hours.*

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

From: **Birgitta Bower** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Nov 17, 2025 at 2:23 PM
Subject: How the Harbor District invented a Parking Crisis
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How the Harbor District invented a Parking Crisis

The Harbor Manager, Jim Pruett, in his 'Staff Report' (dated November 19) on pages 6-7 writes that he is very appreciative of Jean Knight, El Granada, for her independent parking study. Even as he quotes it, he doesn't understand the implications of her findings: **there is no need for more harbor parking**. Please read it closely!

Jean Knight is discussing 2 options for parking: 1) the North Burnham Strip, 2) the westside lots owned by the Harbor. (Land bought by the Harbor in January 2024 for \$ 8.7 million.)

One observation in the study is that some of the highway parking could have been avoided if there were signage. Strangely there is none.

The harbor parking lots are not visible from highway 1 in either direction, even though the lot is immediately adjacent to the highway. No sign at the entrance to Capistrano alerts drivers to the existence of the lot. A "Public Parking" sign that also indicates access to the Coastal Trail could draw more drivers into the lot and possibly reduce some of the parking along highway 1.

If Caltrans and the Coastal Commission approve these sites as "Surfer's Beach" parking it would be a disservice to the public and public access to the beach:

Both proposed parking lots locations are 0.5 to 0.7 miles from Surfer's Beach, a long distance for pedestrians carrying beach gear, surfboards, fishing gear, coolers, and children. If a lot at either proposed location is accepted to fulfill Caltrans' obligation for providing Surfer's Beach parking, it could paradoxically eliminate the possibility of meaningful Surfer's Beach parking.

The author cites the **State Board of Boating and Waterways** guideline for sizing a harbor lot:

There should be a sufficient number of each type of parking space provided to meet the expected demand on a normal peak day during the boating season. Using a summer weekend holiday to establish parking demand will probably result in a facility that is overbuilt and too large for the normal daily and weekly demands during the season. It only wastes project construction funding and land use, but maintenance funds as well.

She also notes in regards to this:

Assuming the observations are representative, the current lot provides this...

The rare overflow from fishing events are the special events the guidelines warn against for sizing the lot...

All but one overflow event was for the fishing season openers, which are known dates; potentially, contract parking with local businesses could be arranged in advance.

In regards to the shortened salmon season, she refers to the **California Department of Fish and Wildlife**.

Note that such short salmon season seasons will be the norm going forward for the foreseeable future

She noted that some trailers on salmon opening day, September 4, there were trailers on highway 1:

parked for more than 72 hours, and may have needed to park there regardless because of the 72-hour limit on harbor parking.

Also on September 6:

but it was not overflow. At least 16 trailer spaces were available in the lot at the time they parked, but the drivers chose to park on highway 1 instead.

The cars parked on highway one:

Cars parked on highway 1 on most days, ranging from less than 5 to over 100 cars,

but this parking did not appear related to the harbor. The parking starts just north of Sam's Chowder house and continued to about Surfer's Beach. All indications pointed to this parking being related to businesses south of the harbor, especially Sam's Chowder House; to Surfer's Beach, including the fishing pier

My Conclusion:

Surfer's Beach needs parking: It should be located at what is now the Pillar Point RV Park (that is not in compliance with the Coastal Act). It should be located within a quarter mile of the beach stairs, it needs restrooms and shower. **Sam's Chowder House** needs parking: They should build their own parking lot and maintain it; it should not be funded by taxpayer money through the Harbor District. Suggestion, buy the lot to the north from the Harbor District, \$ 1.5 million. **The Harbor District** does not need a parking lot. When the parking is solved for Surfer's Beach and Sam's, then take a look at what the needs are in reality for the Harbor. The Harbor is conflating 3 supposed problems into 1, which does not make for an honest assesment.

Respectfully,

Birgitta Bower, El Granada

1. Harbor Manager 'Staff Report', dated 11/19/2025 [sic]

https://www.smharbor.com/files/a4ac3f166/2025_11_19_Item_G3_Safe_Parking-Project.pdf

2. **Parking Survey of Pillar Point Harbor C lot** by Jean Knight

https://www.smharbor.com/files/5de7ed1c5/2025_11_19_Item_G3_Att_14_El+Granada+Resident+Parking+Study.pdf