



## **Staff Report**

**TO:** Board of Harbor Commissioners  
**FROM:** Jim Pruett, General Manager  
**DATE:** February 18, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Overflow Parking for Pillar Point Harbor

**Issue:**

Potential Burnham Parking Lot for Pillar Point Harbor Overflow.

**Motion:**

Authorize the General Manager to issue a Request for Proposal for design, engineering, and permitting of a project to construct a parking lot and greenspace on the Burnham Strip to include parcels owned by the Harbor District, privately owned parcels, areas owned by *Caltrans* and San Mateo County.

**Fiscal Impact:**

None

**Background:**

As discussed on December 18, 2024<sup>1</sup>, at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Harbor Commissioners, Pillar Point Harbor on a regular basis exceeds the number of available parking spaces within the Harbor itself. To address the need for an overflow parking area and the safety concerns associated with parking on the shoulder of Hwy 1, the Harbor District Staff proposed the construction of a new parking area on the Burnham Strip.

Stated again, the Harbor District would use the two parcels on the Burnham Strip that are currently owned by the District, with potential for the two additional adjoining parcels that are privately owned, *Caltrans* right of way, and County owned areas for an overflow parking lot for Pillar Point Harbor. A new crosswalk at the south end of the parking area would be required for pedestrians to gain access to the boat launch area, Coastal Trail, and Surfers Beach. The area between the north end of the proposed parking area and Capistrano is proposed as a walking park that can be used for access (including

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.smharbor.com/files/4da57c9f4/2024\\_12\\_18\\_Item\\_G2\\_Burnham+Parking+Staff+Report.pdf](https://www.smharbor.com/files/4da57c9f4/2024_12_18_Item_G2_Burnham+Parking+Staff+Report.pdf)

compliance with the ADA) to the crosswalk across Hwy 1. Access to and from the parking lot would be from Avenue Alhambra.



Following the presentation of the staff report in December 2024, the Board gave direction to Staff to continue to work on the idea of a parking lot on the Burnham Strip, taking into consideration both Board comments and public comments.

Both the Harbor Board Commissioners and members of the public made several comments concerning this issue, to include:

From the Board:

- Concerns about project cost and the impact on the District's finances.
- What other agencies, organizations, or businesses are participating in covering the cost of the project?
- Whatever shared funding agreements are made; the District will be the sole owner of the parking area.
- Who will maintain the area, trash, landscaping, lighting?
- Compliance with the American with Disability Act.

From the Public:

- There are other alternatives for parking including converting the Pillar Point Harbor RV Park at Surfers Beach to a public parking lot. (Several members of the public believe the RV park should be removed and replaced by public parking.)
- The issue of lack of parking was caused by Caltrans, and it is a Caltrans issue.
- Bike lane is a bad idea, should consider a reduced speed zone.

- Very strongly against putting a parking lot on Burnham Strip.
- A crosswalk, as proposed, is “pure madness. Traffic is clogged, adding a crosswalk would make it worse.”
- A commercial entity controlling public parking is a bad idea.
- Impact on blue herons, gophers, and other animals.
- An extra entry and exit on Avenue Alhambra will bring increased traffic.
- How will a parking lot project impact Deer Creek?
- More asphalt would mean more stormwater issues.

**Responses to the Harbor Board Comments:**

1. Board Comment: Concerns about project cost and the impact on the District’s finances.

Staff Response: The Harbor District does not currently have the funding to engineer, design, and fund a parking project in the FY24/25 Budget, nor is it expected in the FY25/26. To begin this project, the District would require outside funding.

2. Board Comment: What other agencies, organizations, or businesses are participating in covering the cost of the project?

Staff Response: Multiple agencies, organizations, and businesses would benefit from a new parking area on the Coastside and may be potential funding sources, these include:

- *Caltrans* for Coastal Development Permit requirements to provide public parking that is being eliminated by the Highway 1 Improvement Project.
- PG&E for emergency laydown yard for Coastside storm recovery. (PG&E currently uses Parking Lot C at Pilar Point Harbor.)
- The County of San Mateo for roadway and pedestrian safety in unincorporated El Granada.
- The City of Half Moon Bay for use as Surfers Beach parking.
- Granada Community Services District for parking for the proposed public park.
- Spangler’s Market for customer parking.
- Sam’s Chowder House and Oyster Bar.
- Oceano Hotel for event parking overflow.

3. Board Comment: Whatever shared funding agreements are made; the District will be the sole owner of the parking area.

Staff Response: Staff will ensure proper documentation is included in any agreement.

4. Board Comment: Who will maintain the area, trash, landscaping, lighting?

Staff Response: The Harbor District would be required to perform maintenance, upkeep, landscaping, and trash removal.

5. Compliance with the American with Disability Act.

Staff Response: Any project would be fully ADA compliant.

### **Responses to Public Comments:**

1. Public Comment: There are other alternatives for parking including converting the Pillar Point Harbor RV Park at Surfers Beach to a public parking lot. (Several members of the public believe the RV park should be removed and replaced by public parking.)

Staff Response: The real property where the Pillar Point Harbor RV Park is located is under a long-term commercial lease which the Harbor District greatly benefits from in the form of lease payments.

The District has already installed 8 ADA parking spaces and six unrestricted spaces at the RV park. The ADA spaces provide unimpeded access to the Coastal Trail and beaches.

Adding additional public parking in the limited space would not bring any revenue to the Harbor District.

2. Public Comment: The issue of lack of parking was caused by Caltrans, and it is a Caltrans issue.

Staff Response: While it is true the Caltrans Hwy 1 project will eliminate parking on the shoulders, the primary reason Staff has recommended an additional parking area was to handle overflow parking from Pillar Point Harbor.

In addition, parking on the shoulder of a heavily used state highway is inherently dangerous. While California law permits it, it is highly discouraged for safety reasons.

That is not to say that the *Caltrans* project did not serve as the impetus for the District to begin exploring parking solutions. Because of the *Caltrans* project, the Harbor District was looking to take advantage of potential funding sources to assist the Harbor District. For example, as part of the permitting process, *Caltrans* will be required to identify additional parking as mitigation for the lost parking caused by their project. If our parking area meets the requirements, *Caltrans* could take credit for the public parking area to satisfy the permitting requirements. In return, *Caltrans* would be expected to assist the District in funding our project.

Likewise, Sam's Seafood Restaurant and Oyster Bar will lose their main parking availability for their establishment, i.e. the shoulder of Hwy 1. Without a parking option for their customers, it is Staff's opinion that it would be very difficult to survive at that location. A new public parking area as proposed by Staff would solve the parking crisis for Sam's Restaurant. In return, it would be expected that Sam's Restaurant would assist in funding the new parking area.

Finally, PG&E is interested in assisting the District with the project to mitigate the impact on parking caused by the storm response on the Coastside. As they have in the past, and as recently as this month, PG&E utilizes Parking Lot C in Pillar Point Harbor as a laydown yard for emergency response, taking up 119 launch ramp parking spaces. This project will provide enough parking to mitigate the loss of parking in the Harbor.

Likewise, the County of San Mateo, the Granada Community Services District, and City of Half Moon Bay would all benefit from a new parking area.

3. Public Comment (also voiced by a Harbor Commissioner) Bike lane is a bad idea, should consider a reduced speed zone.

Staff Response: This issue is outside the scope of the Harbor District.

4. Public Comment: Very strongly against putting a new parking lot on Burnham Strip.

Staff Response: San Mateo County has zoned the parcels as "EG": El Granada Gateway District<sup>2</sup>. "The purpose of the "EG" District is to provide for low intensity development at the "Burnham Strip" in El Granada, which preserves, to the greatest degree possible, the visual and open space characteristics of this property."

The purpose of the Gateway District is to provide for low intensity development at the "Burnham Strip" which preserves, to the greatest degree possible, the visual and open space characteristics of this property. The low intensity development includes:

- Linear Parks and Trails
- Public Parking for Surfers Beach

The proposed parking area can serve as "public parking" for Surfers Beach, as well as Hotel Beach, and Pillar Point Harbor and boat launch ramp.

The landscape design can also be used to reduce and/or improve the visual impact of a developed parking area.

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 12.6, Section 6229 of the San Mateo County Zoning Regulation dated October 17, 2023

The Harbor District would also be open to GCSD or SAM constructing underground storm water storage facilities beneath the parking area, as permitted under zoning “EG.”

5. Public Comment: A crosswalk, as proposed, is “pure madness. Traffic is clogged, adding a crosswalk would make it worse.”

Staff Response: A crosswalk on the south side of the parking lot across Hwy 1 would be required for access to the Coastal Trail, Surfers Beach, and the launch ramp at Pillar Point Harbor.

A traffic study will be conducted and considered prior to any approvals for a crosswalk to ensure all are aware of any potential impacts a new crosswalk would have.

6. Public Comment: A commercial entity controlling public parking is a bad idea.

Staff Response: Any parking lot or area constructed will be owned, operated, and managed by the San Mateo County Harbor District. The parking that is being proposed is “public parking.” As “public parking” it would be available for use by customers of commercial establishments.

7. Public Comment: Impact on blue herons, gophers, and other animals.

Staff Response: The appropriate professionals will be consulted, and required permits will be obtained, with respect to wildlife.

8. Public Comment: An extra entry and exit on Avenue Alhambra will bring increased traffic.

Staff Response: A traffic study will be conducted and considered prior to any approvals to ensure all are aware of any potential impacts of a new parking area.

9. Public Comment: How will a parking lot project impact Deer Creek?

Staff Response: This will be addressed in the design and engineering phase.

10. Public Comment: More asphalt would mean more stormwater issues.

Staff Response: Any parking lot developed on the Burnham Strip will comply with the zoning requirements of EG Gateway District. This includes the following requirement:

“Impervious Surface Area The amount of parcel area covered by impervious structures less than eighteen inches (18”) in height is limited to ten percent (10%)

parcel size. The runoff equivalent of 10% (parcel size) could be achieved by directing runoff to on-site porous areas or through the use of detention basins. Impervious structures include, but are not limited to, non-porous driveways, decks, patios, walkways and swimming pools.”

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