

# Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar*  
P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 - [www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org](http://www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org)

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Chair   Vice-Chair   Secretary   Treasurer

January 28, 2015

President Brennan and Members  
San Mateo County Harbor District Board of Commissioners  
(via email)

Subject: **Pillar Point RV Park --  
Public Coastal Views, Day-Use Parking, Restroom, Lighting**

Dear President Brennan and Members of the Commission:

The Midcoast Community Council (MCC) has always taken a strong interest in Pillar Point Harbor development and management, as it affects our community and visitors to the area. We hope to develop better communication and a closer working relationship between the MCC and the Harbor District in order to respond to and reconcile Midcoast community and Harbor District needs. We take this opportunity to bring forward some long-standing public concerns regarding the RV Park, in the hope that the time is right to work together to find and implement solutions to these issues.

## **Public Coastal Views**

The row of cypress trees and overgrown shrubs planted just behind the highway fence blocks public ocean views for the entire length of the RV Park, which does not comply with the Half Moon Bay (HMB) LCP.<sup>1</sup> The approved landscape plan<sup>2</sup> called for a row of 8-ft tall California bayberry shrubs behind the chain-link fence which sits below the grade of Highway 1. It should be noted that RVs are not permanent structures, nor are they very tall, and the lot is not often full. If landscape screening of the RV Park from the highway causes the loss of public coastal views, this is a very poor trade off. In contrast, there is zero landscaping on the west side of the RV Park to screen it from the beach and Coastal Trail, which public views are also protected in the HMB Land Use Plan.

The attached images<sup>3</sup> show that any landscaping more than a foot or two above the existing fence unnecessarily blocks public coastal views. The impaired view situation will continue to worsen whether the trees are left to grow to their mature height (40 feet), or if their health and natural form are compromised by severe, expensive, on-going pruning. We recommend the cypress trees be removed and the remaining shrubs kept pruned to a maximum 8-ft height from existing grade to comply with the approved landscape plan and

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<sup>1</sup> HMB LCP Policy 7-12-B, "landscaping species which, when mature, will not interfere with public views of the ocean".

<sup>2</sup> HMB decided the 1987 Use Permit was still in force and told the RV park lessee to proceed with development per the approved 1985 site plan and apply for building permits on an as-needed basis (Blair King, City Manager, 6/10/98). There is no CDP for the RV Park development, per HMB, CCC, lessee, HD.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/mtgs-com2015/2015-01-28-RVPark-images.pdf>

HMB LCP. It would also be desirable to provide landscaping on the west side to break up the row of RVs and at least hide the wheels and undercarriages from the beach and CA Coastal Trail.

### **Surfer's Beach Day-Use Parking Lot**

"Private Property – Tow-Away" signs and a \$10 fee have successfully discouraged public beach parking in the designated day-use lot<sup>4</sup>. More appropriate sign wording would be "Day-Use Public Fee Parking". The \$10 fee is too high<sup>5</sup> for visitors who may only stay briefly, and for a destination without typical amenities, required in the lease, such as restroom, water fountain, and picnic tables. Contrary to lease terms, and HMB/CCC goals, the lot is used for RV Park overflow and RV-towing vehicles, while public beach-goers park out front along the busy highway.

### **Public Restroom**

The Harbor District public restroom at Surfers' Beach was available to the public for decades before the lot was leased for development in 1999. The RV Park lease requires "Repair and extension of the existing restrooms to acceptable health & safety standards..."<sup>6</sup> Instead, the restroom is kept locked resulting in well-known public concern since there are no other public restrooms within convenient walking distance. HMB's installation of porta-potties at the day-use lot for the summer 2013 surf school further demonstrated the public need to have restroom access restored in the East Harbor/ Surfers' Beach area.

### **Light Pollution**

The community would prefer shielded, downward-directed lighting at the RV Park, instead of the glare from unshielded fixtures on tall poles at this view-sensitive shoreline location. In the near term, dimmer bulbs could be installed in the existing fixtures, particularly the one fixture at the entrance that is much brighter than the others.

We look forward to a productive discussion of solutions to these issues.

Sincerely,

MIDCOAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL

s/Dave Olson, Chair

cc: SMC Harbor District Acting General Manager Scott Grindy  
SMC Supervisor Don Horsley  
SMC Parks Director Marlene Finley  
HMB Community Development Director Dante Hall  
KN Properties Keet Nerhan  
CCC North Central Coast District Manager Nancy Cave

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<sup>4</sup> RV Park lease section 4.1.1 provides for "a vehicle parking area for day use visitor parking only." Site plan shows 25 spaces for day use.

[http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/issues/harbor-shoreline/1998-RV\\_Lot\\_Lease.pdf](http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/issues/harbor-shoreline/1998-RV_Lot_Lease.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> RV Park lease section 5.3 "reserves to the SMC Harbor District the power to fix and determine rates to be charged by the lessee..."

<sup>6</sup> Section 8.2.1