

# Live Oak Beach Permit Parking Causes Stir In Community

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Rumblings already have begun over the long-postponed Live Oak Permit Parking/Shuttle Bus project which begins operation Friday by prohibiting on-street beach parking.

While most of the criticisms are coming from disgruntled residents, the uprising has included everyone from Hobie-cat owners at the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor to merchants in the area.

One resident went so far as to plaster poles in the neighborhood with his own derogatory answer to permit parking.

Essentially, the project establishes "permit only" parking restrictions throughout the Live Oak beach neighborhoods. While it provides a free "park and ride" beach shuttle service from two county-owned lots, any vehicles found parked on the street come Friday without a permit will be subject to a \$25 fine.

The permit parking area will extend along the coast from the harbor to 41st Avenue, and up to a half-mile inland. The northern boundary will run along Eaton, Alice, Placer, Scriber and Merrill streets and Floral Drive.

The two-year, federally-funded, experimental program is designed to remove up to 600 cars per day from crowded beach streets. This session operates through Sept. 15.

While residents within the permit area are eligible for three free permits and two visitor permits at \$10 each, beach-goers are encouraged to use the shuttle lots at 17th Avenue and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, and 41st Avenue and East Cliff Drive. Buses will operate every few minutes to all Live Oak beaches.

Those opting not to use the shuttle may buy \$5-a-day visitor permits.

Thus far, protests have come from

those residents living in the least impacted beach neighborhoods, such as 30th Avenue.

"Who in the hell ever heard of paying to park in front of your own home?" questioned 30th Avenue resident Ed Darrah. "My daughter can't park there unless I buy a \$10 permit. I've been paying taxes for 30 years and now my daughter can't even come to see me.

"It's the most stupid thing I've ever heard of, but I better not say anymore because all I have left is too dirty to put in the newspaper."

Don Mosley, another 30th Avenue resident, complained that any parking in the area was developed by the residents themselves. "Now we have to pay when visitors come over and our street doesn't even have a problem with beachgoers."

Mosley also complained that he was never informed of the program until crews began installing the "Beach Area Permit Area" signs which have inundated the area.

Project Coordinator Neil McLaughlin, who is heading the project through the county Public Works Department, apologized for the "mailing mix-up" that occurred on 30th Avenue. He said all other residences were informed by mail.

McLaughlin stressed the program is only an "experiment." He added, "We're asking everyone to bear with us and wait until we have some experience with the program."

As far as the large size of the permit zone, he said they set the boundary purposely large partly because of the possibility of expanded problems as people park farther away and also because it's always easier to reduce the area later rather than enlarge it.

The whole purpose of the supervisors putting everything in resolution form

rather than an ordinance was so it could be changed quickly as problems arrive," McLaughlin said. "We anticipate to make changes as we go along, and if it doesn't work we'll certainly discontinue it."

The original boundary area was determined, he added, through numerous aerial photographs. "I counted cars until I almost went blind," he noted.

The large number of signs throughout the area also couldn't be avoided, according to McLaughlin, who estimated 1,000 signs are up.

"We signed very, very heavy — mainly enforcement signs — because if people don't see the signs, it can't be enforced. We're required, by law, to place them every 50 yards."

The shuttle bus lots, while being somewhat remote, are believed to be signed well enough to direct visitors to them.

McLaughlin pointed to other parking restriction programs, such as San Francisco, which don't have any exceptions.

Besides the free resident permits and available visitor permits that can be purchased, there are exceptions made for weddings, funerals and community-sponsored events. Garage sales, however, will suffer.

Also sure to suffer are visitors and boat owners at the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor.

Harbormaster Steve Scheiblauber said it would "definitely cause some problems." Boat owners and Hobie-cat renters, for example, will find it "very difficult" to park in the upper harbor parking lot when they are used to parking on the streets and walking a short distance with gear, he said.

Lucille Corbett, a Hobie-cat owner who

rents a dry storage space, was much more emphatic. "We've spent a lot of money to store it there and now we can't even get to the boat without paying a damn fee."

Merchants in the area, particularly the East Cliff Village shopping center, also have concerns. The shopping center with its large lot may be too enticing for beachgoers to pass up.

"They tell us it's up to us to police the lot," said Billie Johnson, owner of East Cliff Village Beauty Salon. "Beach people are already parking here, so we're just waiting to see what happens. It'll be great if it works, but we have our fingers crossed."

First District (Live Oak-Soquel) Supervisor Dan Forbus is also taking a wait-and-see attitude.

"I hope this settles the parking problem," said Forbus, who has heard many complaints from constituents who haven't been able to get into their driveways because of illegally parked cars. "We're really not going to be able to tell unless we try it."

Both resident permits and visitor day use permits are available at both shuttle lots. For more information, call 476-

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