

POINT REYES LIGHT

Parking surveys seek data on Bolinas visitation

By

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Intent on making downtown Bolinas more safe, sane and enjoyable, a parking committee has issued two online surveys to better understand the congestion issue that bubbles nearly every weekend. Bruce Bowser, chairman of the committee, said the surveys—one aimed at locals and the other at visitors—have been active for the last two weeks and will remain so until the committee analyzes the results later this month. So far they've received over 100 responses from Bolinas residents, but have yet to receive many from visitors. "We know a lot of the parking problems are beach-driven, but we want to find out who else is visiting," Mr. Bowser said. In 2006, a committee developed a plan to boost the number of parking spots by converting some parallel spaces into diagonal parking spaces, add two-hour timed spaces and create exclusive parking for locals. Residents approved the plan and an application for a coastal permit was submitted to the California Coastal Commission, which denied it on the grounds that regulating parking would constitute a de facto denial of public access to the coast. Jennifer Blackman, the general manager of the Bolinas Community Public Utility District, said the 2006 committee, comprised of volunteers, had "run out of steam." She's confident the current committee will "keep the energy going," however. One organizer behind the 2006 plan, Vic Amoroso, who owns a shop and hotel downtown, said things have gotten worse since 2006. "Locals don't bother coming downtown on Saturday and Sunday. It's become unbearable, but we're bearing it," he said. After gathering data from the online surveys, Mr. Bowser said his committee will assess and compare the information to the 2006 plan, which is currently available at the library, and prepare a new proposal. Mr. Bowser added that the Sheriff's Office supports changes to downtown parking, but a specific loophole that plagues enforcement: parking violations can be contested and dismissed if people prove that the traffic signs were unclear. He said the recent string of vandalism to street signs was "not helping the parking situation." Locals can take the survey at www.SurveyMonkey.com/r/BolinasResidentSurvey