



September 24, 2024

Council President Pro Tem Joe LaCava  
202 C Street, 10th Floor  
San Diego, CA 92101  
619-236-6611

Re: Illegal Removal of Public Beach Parking in La Jolla

Dear Council President Pro Tem LaCava,

It has come to our attention that in [late 2020/early 2021](#), several public parking spaces near the Marine Room beach access were illegally removed by the property owner at 1964 Little Street. The owner installed a large planter and two Jacaranda trees in the public right-of-way in front of their property, effectively removing 3-4 parking spots. They also removed a mature Italian Pine tree. All of this work was completed without a permit.

As an organization that fights to protect public beach access, it does not sit well with us when a private property owner illegally removes public beach parking. Worse, city staff were complicit in this illegal encroachment by giving the property owner after-the-fact permitting for their illegal encroachment.

Surfrider takes public beach access very seriously, as does the Coastal Commission, who we've notified of this issue. We would like to see the issue resolved locally. The work done stands in clear contradiction to the policies set forth in both the City's Beach Impact Overlay Zone and the La Jolla Community Plan (LJCP). Section 5C: Public Access of the LJCP states:

*The City shall **maintain**, and where feasible, enhance and restore existing parking areas, public stairways, pathways and railings along the shoreline to preserve vertical access (to the beach and coast), to allow lateral access (along the shore), and to increase public safety at the beach and shoreline areas. No encroachment into the public right-of-way should be permitted within the Coastal Zone without a permit. (emphasis added)*

In the case of 1964 Little St, encroachment into the public right-of-way took place without a permit and existing public parking areas were NOT maintained. Because the work did not maintain an existing public parking area and instead reduced it, no after-the-fact permitting



should have been granted by city staff. The after-the-fact permitting for this illegal deterioration of public coastal access follows a regrettable pattern that we see too often: wealthy coastal property owners illegally block or reduce public beach access, and are rewarded for their actions rather than being held accountable.

The case of 1964 Little St raises social justice concerns for the City of San Diego. Why have the illegal actions of a wealthy coastal homeowner been legitimized at the expense of public coastal access for everyone else? Surfrider represents thousands of beachgoers in San Diego County who have a right to enjoy a day at the beach, but cannot afford to live a block from the coast in La Jolla. On behalf of our membership, the principles set forth in the City's Local Coastal Land Use Plan and LJCP, and the public access guarantees set forth in the California Coastal Act, Surfrider demands that the work at 1964 Little St. be given additional review by the City. Public parking must be restored, along with signage that clarifies that the area in question is indeed in the public right-of-way.

Thank you for your attention to this important coastal access matter.

Sincerely,

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