

February 2, 2023

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
501 Low Gap Road
Ukiah, CA 95482

Re: Gualala Community Survey Summary

In March 2022, at a regular Gualala Municipal Advisory Council (GMAC) meeting, the Council appointed an ad-hoc park sub-committee to look comprehensively into the issues surrounding the closure of Bower Park and solicit the public's input on the significance of the decision.

The committee perceived that the closure of Bower Park was the cumulative result of County decisions and actions that led to decline and dilapidation over time. The committee also sensed that the predicament of Bower Park might not be an isolated phenomenon. The committee developed an online and hard copy version of a survey to assess the public's perception of the level of County services provided to the Mendocino South Coast. The survey was available electronically on the GMAC website and distributed locally to stakeholder groups and through public contact. The announcement of the survey was listed on many local information resource sites that are popular on the South Coast. The time frame for the public submission of completed surveys ran from March to December 2022. GMAC received 83 responses by January 2023 from residents of the south coast from Point Arena to Annapolis. While this sample of respondents is neither statistically significant nor guaranteed to be representative, it does reveal some perceptions of County services afforded to the Gualala community.

Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the respondents were concerned about the current and future condition of the services provided within the community. The services identified in the questionnaire included but were not limited to parks, roads, broadband, water, sewer, fire protection, medical and support for local businesses. The majority of these services as listed are not the direct responsibility of the County of Mendocino, yet reflect a public concern about sustaining or improving the current level of services and quality of life.

The Board of Supervisors received a sixty-nine percent (69%) "not effective" rating from the respondents when asked "How effective is the County Board of Supervisors in meeting the needs of you, your family or Coastal Community?" The Gualala Municipal Advisory Council combined with other local boards (Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District and The Sea Ranch Association) received a forty-five percent (45%) not effective rating.

The survey asked the respondents to identify services or infrastructure that the County of Mendocino currently provides. Below is a consolidated list of the top five responses.

- Little/None
- Law enforcement

- Bower Park (not well)
- Roads (not well)
- Bookmobile

The survey answers highlighted concerns in regard to maintaining or improving the current level of services on the South Coast. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the respondents indicated a willingness or ability to pay more taxes, assessments or fees that would stay locally to improve the level of services and infrastructure.

Most residents were highly concerned about the equitable distribution of tax revenue collected by the County to support local services and infrastructure. Eighty-two (82%) percent of respondents indicated a willingness to support creating a more local government that would devote a portion of tax revenue to support Bower Park, safety services, and infrastructure.

To best utilize the survey as a vehicle to solicit public input, the respondents were asked to provide additional comments or improvement actions. Below is a consolidated list of the top responses.

- Equitable distribution of tax dollars to the Mendocino South Coast
- Public restroom in the downtown area
- Road maintenance
- Maintain Bower Park
- Address water issues
- Affordable housing
- Broadband service
- Streetscape & Pedestrian Infrastructure

In summation, the GMAC survey identified issues pertinent to the South Coast of which Bower Park is one part. Gualala and the neighboring communities serve as the southwest gateway to, and substantial contributor to Mendocino County. GMAC believes maintaining essential services on the South Coast is an investment in the present and future fiscal viability of Mendocino County and the quality of life in the unincorporated communities within the GMAC service area. Enclosed are the graphed results of the completed surveys and list of responses received for reference. Please contact GMAC should you have any other questions or in need of further clarification.

Respectfully submitted,

Gualala Municipal Advisory Council

Attachments

1. Community Survey Results
2. Community Survey List of Responses