

Written Comments for  
**Regular Public Comment Section**  
- **Consent Agenda**  
- **Non Agenda Items**

**From:** [Lori Lisowski](#)  
**To:** [CEO BoardFeedback](#)  
**Subject:** County Parks Entrance Fees  
**Date:** Friday, July 7, 2023 5:04:26 PM

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San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

400 County Center  
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Honorable County Supervisors and County Executive Callagy,

As of July 1, Marin County is no longer charging entrance fees at its county parks. Why? Because the county supervisors recognized that the park fees were an equity issue.

Visitor surveys showed that more diverse and low-income residents used the county parks, while higher income and less diverse residents used the county's free open space reserves in their neighborhoods. Parks Director Max Korten said, "it felt like an injustice to have that disparity." (1)

We have that same equity issue in San Mateo County. The county park entrance fees are a regressive tax for low-income residents. I encourage you to follow the lead of Marin County and make all San Mateo County parks free for all users.

Thank you,

Lori Lisowski  
San Mateo

1. Richard Halstead, "Marin County makes parks free to support equity," *Marin Independent Journal*, July 5, 2023.

**From:** [HS\\_BHRS\\_MHSA](#)  
**To:** [Sara Matlin](#); [HS\\_BHRS\\_MHSA](#); [Chantae Rochester](#); [CEO\\_BoardFeedback](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Please fund comprehensive, county-wide, non-armed crisis services  
**Date:** Thursday, July 6, 2023 4:39:52 PM

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Received and recorded, we will include your public comment with the submission of the MHSA Three-Year Plan.

thank you for your comment Sara!

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**From:** Sara Matlin <sara@smatlin.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 6, 2023 3:56 PM  
**To:** HS\_BHRS\_MHSA <MHSA@smcgov.org>; Chantae Rochester <crochester@smcgov.org>; CEO\_BoardFeedback <BoardFeedback@smcgov.org>  
**Subject:** Please fund comprehensive, county-wide, non-armed crisis services

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Dear San Mateo County Mental Health Services Act Committee, Behavioral Health Commission, and San Mateo County Supervisors,

I have been a San Mateo County resident for 15 years and a Redwood City homeowner for 10 of those years. I am writing to support the MHSA and BHC recommendations to invest in comprehensive, countywide, non-armed crisis response services. Civilian responders to behavioral health crises provide the specialized support we need to make our community safer.

When a community member experiences mental health, substance use, housing insecurity, or another nonviolent emergency, dispatchers should assign unarmed civilian crisis response teams. When highly trained, unarmed crisis response teams are the default first responders sent to behavioral health emergencies, we reduce the risk of police use of force, violence against people with disabilities, and unnecessary arrests.<sup>1</sup> These teams should include an EMT and either a peer support specialist or a licensed mental health clinician. Research from across the country has shown that independent, civilian crisis response teams are more efficient and save money.<sup>2</sup>

These unarmed civilian response teams should be designed to dispatch independently, without armed officers. Unfortunately, the two-year pilot

project's "co-responder" model requires armed officers to respond first, even to nonviolent crisis situations. Instead, civilian teams should serve as first responders when there is no immediate threat of violence. In situations where a higher level of response might be necessary, law enforcement officers can be on standby.

In addition, when community members contact 911, 988, 211, or any other community-based hotlines, they should still be eligible to receive this unarmed crisis support. They should not be penalized for not knowing exactly which hoops to jump through to receive assistance from unarmed crisis response experts.

Thank you to the BHC and MHSA for your wise recommendations to fund and create unarmed crisis response services for all of San Mateo County, whenever and wherever we need them. San Mateo County Supervisors, please adopt this civilian response model to better support and protect our community.

In community,

Sara Matlin

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[1] [The Vera Institute](#), [NAMI](#), and [the ACLU](#) all recommend that unarmed crisis response teams be dispatched as the default first responders to behavioral health emergencies.

[2] For example, the CAHOOTS unarmed crisis response program in Eugene, Oregon [saves approximately \\$8,500,000 in taxpayer funds](#) each year.