



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: PARKS COMMISSION

File #: 20-387

Board Meeting Date: 6/4/2020

To: Parks and Recreation Commission

From: Nicholas J. Calderon, Parks Director

Subject: Elimination of the Vehicle Entrance Fee at Flood County Park

RECOMMENDATION:

7.4 Make a recommendation to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to amend the San Mateo County Parks Department fee schedule by eliminating the vehicle entrance fee at Flood County Park.

BACKGROUND:

The San Mateo County Parks Department ("Department") is evaluating the feasibility of eliminating vehicle entrance fees at County parks. Vehicle entrance fees can serve as a barrier to access. To assist in its evaluation, the Department hired CHM Government Services to prepare a vehicle entrance fee analysis. The analysis will inform the Department on how to assess the financial impact of eliminating vehicle entrance fees as well as how to recuperate lost revenue by adjusting other user fees. While this analysis is still underway, the Department finds it important to eliminate the vehicle entrance fee at Flood County Park ("Flood Park") so it may better serve the residents of southern San Mateo County.

Flood Park is a 21-acre municipal park that is located in the City of Menlo Park. Due to its location, it primarily serves residents from Menlo Park, North Fair Oaks, East Palo Alto, and Redwood City. Flood Park is popular for its playgrounds, picnic sites, reservation sites, sports fields and courts, and open grassy area. However, since the SFPUC's Hetch Hetchy waterline replacement project, the baseball field has been unusable. Additionally, due to a desire to improve the entire park, minimal improvements have been made to park facilities in recent decades. Flood Park is the only municipal park in southern San Mateo County that charges for vehicle access.

In Fiscal Year ("FY") 2018-19, Flood Park served approximately 114,200 visitors, and generated \$148,763 in revenue from charges for services. Of this total, \$79,918 was from vehicle entrance fees.

DISCUSSION

Pursuant to Section 2.63.020 of the County Ordinance Code, the Parks Commission "shall adopt, and forward to the Board of Supervisors, recommendations regarding fees to be charged for the use" of parks. Further, Article 3 of the Parks Commission's bylaws states that "[t]he Commission shall adopt, and forward to the Board of Supervisors, recommendations regarding fees to be charged" in

County parks.

The Department is proposing the elimination of the vehicle entrance fee at Flood Park in an effort to make the park more accessible. With the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn occurring simultaneously, expanding access to greenspace and parks is more important than ever. By eliminating the vehicle entrance fee, the Department can eliminate a barrier to access, and better serve residents of southern San Mateo County.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Department estimates that it would experience a \$90,000 a year reduction in revenue due to the elimination of the vehicle entrance fee at Flood Park. In developing the Department's FY 2020-21 Preliminary Recommended Budget, Department staff assumed that Flood Park would be closed all of FY 2020-21 due to construction. The revenue loss associated with this closure was offset by reductions in the Department's operating budget. No changes were made to these previous assumptions during the FY 2019-21 budget cycle, therefore no additional adjustments would be needed in FY 2020-21 if the park entrance fee at Flood Park was eliminated.

In FY 2021-22, Flood Park will likely be closed for construction of the Reimagine Flood Park project, and no revenue would be generated from entrance fees during this time. When the park is reopened, revenue is expected to increase significantly due to the Department's ability to once again charge reservation fees, programming fees, and facility rental fees.