



London N. Breed, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

Date: May 2, 2019

To: Recreation and Park Commission
Operations Committee

Through: Phil Ginsburg, General Manager

From: Dana Ketcham, Director of Property Management, Permits and Reservations

Subject: Flexible Pricing at Specialty Gardens and Other Tourist Locations

Discussion and possible action to recommend that the Board of Supervisors authorize flexible pricing for Nonresident Fees at the following specialty gardens and tourist attractions: Japanese Tea Garden; Coit Tower Elevator; San Francisco Botanical Gardens; and Conservatory of Flowers.

Strategic Plan:

Objective 1.2: Strengthen the quality of existing Parks & Facilities

Objective 1.4: Preserve and Celebrate Historic and Cultural Resources

Objective 3.1: Increase public investment to better align with infrastructure needs and service expectations

Background:

The Recreation and Park Department (the “Department”) has recently been included on the special SF For All Pass as proposed by HAS to advance equity and improve access for low income families to San Francisco’s world-renowned cultural institutions. The proposal is now part of the citywide thinking around Financial Justice and reform of fines and fees. Approximately 225,000 San Franciscans – 25% of the City’s population – who receive either Medi-CAL, CalFresh, or CalWORKS would be admitted Free to the San Francisco Botanical Garden, the Japanese Tea Garden and the Conservatory of Flowers. These special gardens are located in Golden Gate Park and will serve as natural complements to the California Academy of Sciences and DeYoung Museum.

The Department collects admission fees at four major tourist attractions: the Japanese Tea Garden, the Coit Tower Elevator, San Francisco Botanical Gardens (nonresidents only), and the Conservatory of Flowers (collectively the “Tourist Locations”). In order to help raise revenues to fund the Department’s participation in the SF All Pass, the Department is proposing to implement flexible pricing for admissions at the Tourist Locations that apply only to Non-Resident admissions and would allow discounts of up to 25% to increases of up to 50%.

In addition, the flexible pricing could be used to help alleviate congestion at certain locations. For instance, at the Coit Tower Elevator, there are long and substantial lines at the middle of the day but relatively short lines early and late in the day. The Japanese Tea Garden is also very congested at certain hours of the



day. Attendance is also impacted by weather. Below are the nonresident adult fees and visitors per year at each site.

Tourist Location	Current Adult Non-Resident Fee	Nonresident Visitors Per Year
Botanical Gardens	\$9.00	174,000
Conservatory of Flowers	\$9.00	127,000
Coit Tower Elevators	\$9.00	143,000
Japanese Tea Garden	\$9.00	402,000

The Golf Course fees currently s for flexible pricing and in 2019, that authority was broadened. The flexible pricing has been implements only at Harding to date, but it has effectively increased revenues by more than 10%.

In order to institute the proposed flexible pricing the park code would be amended to add the following to each of the fees sections:

“The Department General Manager or his or her designee may approve the temporary increases of up to 25% and discounts of up to 50% for San Francisco Non-Resident Fees based on one or more of the following factors: the type of use, fluctuations in customer demand at particular times or on particular days or dates, and weather or facility conditions.”

Staff Recommendation: Approve.

Supported By:

San Francisco Parks Alliance
Botanical Garden Society
Conservatory of Flowers
Friends of Japanese Tea Garden

Opposed By:

None known