



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

**Date:** May 16, 2019  
**To:** Recreation and Park Commission  
**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

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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 elected to be included in a special new SF For All Program as proposed by the City 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 Japanese Tea Garden and the Conservatory of Flowers. All residents already have free admission to the Botanical Gardens. 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 Adult admissions and would allow discounts of up to 25% to increases of up to 50%. A table of all current fees is attached as Exhibit A.

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.

<b>Tourist Location</b>	<b>Current Adult Non-Resident Fee</b>	<b>Nonresident Visitors Per Year</b>
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 Flexible pricing would not apply to seniors or youth. All Flexible pricing would be clearly described and publicized in advance. It can include lower pricing for off peak hours and for winter season. Tourists Can Plan Trips Based on Information. In addition, rain Day discounts would be possible by using twitter to quickly notify. All implementation will be cautiously done and all adjustments must be approved by the General Manager or his designee. The maximum fee at each of these venues would be \$13.50. Fees for comparative venues in the United States can be found on Exhibit B.

The Golf Course fees have had availability for flexible pricing and, in 2019, that authority was broadened. The flexible pricing has been implemented 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 fee sections:

“The Department General Manager or his or her designee may approve the temporary increases of up to 50% and discounts of up to 25% for San Francisco Adult 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  
Conservatory of Flowers  
Friends of Japanese Tea Garden  
San Francisco Botanical Garden Society  
Richard Rothman

**Opposed By:**

Jon Golinger

# Exhibit A

## Current Admission Fees

### Conservatory of Flowers

General Public		San Francisco Resident with ID	
Adults	\$9	Adults	\$6
Youth - ages 12-17	\$6	Youth - ages 12-17	\$4
College Students - with ID	\$6	College Students - with ID	\$4
Seniors - 65 and over	\$6	Seniors - 65 and over	\$4
Children - ages 5-11	\$3	Children - ages 5-11	\$2
Children - 4 and under	FREE	Children - 4 and under	FREE

## Botanical Gardens (free for all SF Residents)

### Admission for Non-Residents:

Adults	<b>\$9</b>
Youth & Seniors (Ages 12-17 and 65+)	<b>\$6</b>
Children (Ages 5-11)	<b>\$2</b>
Toddler (Ages 4 and under)	<b>Free</b>
Families	<b>\$19</b>

(2 adults and all children under 17 residing in the same household)

# Exhibit A

## Current Admission Fees

### Japanese Tea Garden

	Resident	Non-Resident
Adult	\$6	\$9
Senior	\$4	\$6
Youth 12-17	\$4	\$6
Child (5-11)	\$3	\$3
Child (4 or less)	Free	Free
Free Admission: Mon, Wed, Fri before 10 am		

### Coit Tower Elevator (admissions to murals free)

	Resident	Non-Resident
Adult	\$6	\$9
Senior	\$4	\$6
Youth 12-17	\$4	\$6
Child (5-11)	\$2	\$2
Child (4 or less)	Free	Free

## Exhibit B

# Comparative Fees

- New York Botanical Garden \$28 weekends/\$23 weekdays
- Brooklyn Botanical Garden: \$15
- Empire State Building Elevator: \$26 value/\$40 regular
- Missouri Botanical Garden: \$14
- Atlanta Botanical Garden: \$21.95
- Dallas Arboretum: \$15
- Portland Japanese Tea Garden: \$18.95
- Philadelphia Japanese Tea Garden: \$12
- Phoenix Botanical Garden: \$24.95-\$29.95
- Richmond Virginia Botanical Garden: \$13
- Santa Barbara Botanical Garden: \$14
- Seattle Space Needle: \$32.50 to \$37.50 (summer pricing)

Our Venue Fees: Maximum \$13.50, Minimum \$6.75