



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0658, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Regional Parks
Staff Name and Phone Number: Meda Freeman, 707-565-2275
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Regional Parks Vehicle Parking Pass Revisions

Recommended Action:

Approve modifications to Sonoma County Regional Parks' Vehicle Entry Pass for residents who are low-income, the Distinguished Veteran's Pass for veterans with disabilities, and the Access Membership for individuals with permanent disabilities.

Executive Summary:

As part of the County of Sonoma's strategic pillar of healthy and safe communities identified in its strategic plan, Regional Parks recommends revising parking pass policies to increase park access and administrative efficiencies.

Discussion:

Increasing access to parks

Sonoma County Regional Parks strives to connect people to the outdoors to create healthy communities and enhance residents' quality of life. In collaboration with other county agencies and community benefit organizations, the department is working to increase access for lower-income individuals and families, military veterans, and people with permanent disabilities. This priority is in alignment with the County's and Regional Parks' goals and strategies related to healthy communities.

Administrative modifications to park pass programs

Distinguished Veterans Pass - Regional Parks recommends making the Distinguished Veterans Day Use Parking Pass a lifetime pass renewed every five years to verify the veteran remains a Sonoma County resident. This will offer more consistent parks access to qualifying veterans, will create administrative efficiencies for Regional Parks and the county's Veterans Services Office and will align with California State Parks' veterans pass program rules. Sonoma County's Distinguished Veterans Pass is a free parking pass for veterans with war-time disabilities of 50 percent or greater or who are former prisoners of war or are Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. The pass is currently a 12-month pass that requires annual renewal.

Vehicle Entry Pass - Regional Parks recommends modifying eligibility criteria and verification methods to increase participation in the Vehicle Entry Pass program and create administrative efficiencies. The Vehicle Entry Pass is an annual \$5 parking pass for low-income Sonoma County residents. Regional Parks will align income eligibility for the pass with the California Department of Education's eligibility guidelines for child

nutrition program free meals. Based on those free meal income guidelines, a household could qualify for a Vehicle Entry Pass through participation in CalWORKs, CalFresh, the National School Lunch Program, the federal Supplemental Security Income program or other programs that assist low-income residents. This administrative clarification will give Regional Parks more opportunities to collaborate with agencies and organizations who can verify their clients' incomes meet Vehicle Entry Pass eligibility and can collaborate with Regional Parks to facilitate the processing of Vehicle Entry Passes. This item also gives Regional Parks the flexibility to extend parks membership and promotional benefits to pass holders when feasible.

Access Membership - Regional Parks recommends modifying eligibility and verification criteria to facilitate participation in the Access Membership program and create administrative efficiencies. The Access Membership is a discounted annual parks membership for individuals with permanent disabilities. Regional Parks requires proof of permanent disability with each Access Membership application but will no longer need to require renewing members show proof of their permanent disability every 12 months. This change gives Regional Parks the option of developing a longer-term verification period for renewing Access Members. In addition, Regional Parks will clarify the Access Membership application to note that Supplemental Security Income recipients must be under the age of 65. These administrative changes will make it easier for permanently disabled residents to renew their annual parks membership, create processing efficiencies for staff, and align with the eligibility and verification criteria of California State Parks' disabled discount pass.

Prior Board Actions:

April 21, 2015: Vehicle Entry Pass - the Board of Supervisors approved the request for a \$5 annual parking pass for eligible residents based on income level.

March 11, 2008: Distinguished Veteran's Pass - the Board of Supervisors approved the establishment of a free annual Distinguished Veterans parking pass.

April 21, 2015: Access Pass - the Board of Supervisors approved the current \$29 fee for the annual Access Membership for people with disabilities.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY 22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	4,250	7,000	7,000
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	4,250	7,000	7,000
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	4,250	7,000	7,000
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	4,250	7,000	7,000

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Regional Parks is not requesting additional appropriations to implement these program changes and will absorb the cost within its existing budget.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Senior Office Assistant	\$21.92 - \$21.65	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

The administration of the program modifications will be absorbed by existing staff. Future workload will be partially offset by extending the Distinguished Veterans pass to five years and extending the verification timeline for the Access Membership.

Attachments:

None

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None