

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Park Code - Admission Fees at the Gardens of Golden Gate Park]

Ordinance amending the Park Code to waive fees for admission by San Francisco residents to the Japanese Tea Garden and the Conservatory of Flowers; to authorize the Recreation and Park Department to waive or discount other admission fees at these facilities as well as at the San Francisco Botanical Garden (all three collectively, “the Gardens”); to fund these changes by reauthorizing the Recreation and Park Department to set admission fees for non-resident adults at the Gardens through flexible pricing, based on certain factors and to ensure consistency among all three Gardens; and affirming the Planning Department’s determination under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Existing Law

The Park Code sets different rates for children, adults and seniors to be admitted to the Japanese Tea Garden the Conservatory of Flowers, and San Francisco Botanical Garden. San Francisco residents receive discounts at the Japanese Tea Garden and Conservatory of Flowers, and do not pay any fees at the Botanical Garden.

In 2019, the City enacted Ordinance No. 194-19, which, among other things, authorized the Recreation and Park Department (“RPD”) to set non-resident adult admission fees for the Gardens through a defined system of flexible pricing. Under this system, RPD could increase non-resident adult admission fees once per year by up to 50% (at certain times only), and could authorize decreases of any amount, based on factors such as public demand, facility conditions, and rates at comparable facilities. This system was to remain in place until at least June 30, 2021. In 2021, the City extended flexible pricing at the Gardens by enacting Ordinance No. 131-21, which provided that flexible pricing could continue until December 7, 2021, unless extended by ordinance.

Amendments to Current Law

The ordinance would waive all admission fees for San Francisco residents at the Japanese Tea Garden and Conservatory of Flowers, to make the fees at those facilities consistent with the Botanical Garden. The ordinance would also authorize RPD to develop further waivers and discounts in order to allow for coordination among the Gardens with respect to special conditions and exhibits. To help offset the costs of these waivers and discounts and to cover general expenses, the ordinance would also re-authorize flexible pricing for non-resident adults at the Gardens, at any time following notice to the public.

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