

REVISED LEGISLATIVE DIGEST
(Amended in Committee, 2/16/2022)

[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 require the Recreation and Park Department to begin waiving admission fees for Veterans at 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.

In 2022, the City enacted Ordinance No. 238-21, which waived or discounted certain Park Code fees (including admission fees at the Gardens) for veterans who are City residents. Discounts and waivers for non-resident veterans will go into effect after the City appropriates funds to pay for the waivers and discounts for one full year.

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. Also, the ordinance would require the fee waivers for non-resident veterans visiting the Gardens to go into effect immediately (but the waivers and discounts in Ordinance No. 238-21 that are not related to the Gardens would continue to be subject to a future appropriation). To help offset the costs of the waivers and discounts at the Gardens 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. The flexible pricing would differ from Ordinance No. 194-19 in that any increases would be capped at \$7, rather than being based on a percentage of the base ticket price.

Background

On February 2, 2022, the ordinance was amended at Budget and Finance Committee to add a new Section 2 to the legislation to require that the waivers for non-resident veterans at the Gardens under Ordinance No. 238-21 shall go into effect immediately rather than upon appropriation of funds. In addition, Section 3 of this ordinance was been updated to reflect that Ordinance No. 238-21 amended the tables at Park Code Sections 12.05(a), 12.34(a), and 12.46(d) to include rates for “veterans.” Those updates to the tables appear in the amended ordinance as existing text.

On February 16, 2022, the ordinance was further amended at Budget and Finance Committee to modify the flexible pricing standard to provide that any increases will not be based on a percentage of the base ticket price and instead that increases shall not exceed \$7.

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