



Caring for Your Coast

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Gary Jones
Acting Director

Kerry Silverstrom
Chief Deputy

John Kelly
Deputy Director

April 15, 2014

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Gary Jones, Director 

SUBJECT: **2014 DEPARTMENTAL FEE REVISIONS AND NEW FEES -
DEPARTMENT OF BEACHES AND HARBORS - MARINA DEL
REY AND COUNTY-OWNED, CONTROLLED OR MANAGED
BEACHES**

In our Board letter related to the above-captioned item, we indicated that the Marina del Rey Small Craft Harbor Commission (SCHC) and Beach Commission were scheduled to consider the recommended fee revisions and new fees at their respective upcoming meetings. Furthermore, we indicated we would advise your Board of the outcome of the Commissions' actions prior to your consideration of this item at your public hearing on April 22, 2014.

At its February 26 meeting, the Beach Commission did not have a quorum; however, nine Commission members were present for discussion of the item. Specific to beach fees, six Commissioners supported all fee increases, two Commissioners supported the fee increases except for the new senior pass fee, and one Commissioner opposed any fee increase.

At its April 9 meeting, the SCHC had three Commission members present. Specific to Marina del Rey fees, they were not approved, as one Commission member opposed any fee increase. However, two Commissioners supported the fee increases subject to the following four motions, which were unanimously approved by all three Commissioners:

- Annual passes should be available for frequent Marina del Rey guests at a discounted rate.
- The increased fees should be phased in not to exceed the cost-of-living adjustment since the last adjustment in 2009.
- The WATER Program costs and proposed fees should be re-examined in order to keep the program competitive and accessible.
- If fee increases are approved, a portion of the anticipated increased revenue should be applied to the Vessel Turn-In (VTIP) and Abandoned Watercraft Abatement Fund (AWAF) Programs.

Relative to concerns identified at one or the other Commission, the Department makes the following points:

- Beach parking fee increases are only recommended for summer weekends and, even then, not at all lots. So, too, in the Marina, rate increases are only recommended during the summer, except at the launch ramp and Fisherman's Village, where the fee will be the same year-round. In all instances, the absolute dollar amounts are not unreasonable or above market. (Please refer to Attachment C.) Particularly when you consider the parking fee is one of the very few methods the Department has of securing revenue to offset beach costs, which nevertheless still cost the general taxpayer \$7 million annually without even considering the administration costs, we believe the parking fee increases are appropriate...especially when the Department likens parking fees to a user fee. Consider also the numerous fee waivers that occur and the different populations that secure free or reduced parking. Only one beach – Venice – has a rate higher than \$15 for a summer weekend day, at \$20.
- Although we recommend charging \$25 annually for the senior pass, this is not an unreasonable cost for free annual parking, which will also now be extended to include non-holiday weekend morning parking for exit before 9:00 a.m. year-round, except at lots with an automated gate entry and at six high-demand lots.
- It would not be our practice to offer an annual pass only to frequent users of our facilities, rather instead making any accommodation available to all users. We presently have an annual pass at the White Point/Royal Palms and Dockweiler Beach Grand Avenue parking lots, allowing for parking at these two lots except for weekends and holidays from Memorial Day through Labor Day before 4:00 p.m. However, we have limited annual passes to these two localized areas, because of our reliance on parking fees to offset beach costs and, again, our belief that the parking fee serves as essentially a user's fee. We plan to further evaluate the possibility of offering an annual pass to all users of parking lots.
- The WATER camp fees we are recommending are within market, even below, summer beach recreational camps operated by private operators, particularly when you consider our camps are staffed by the Los Angeles County ocean lifeguards, renowned worldwide. Furthermore, we offer financial aid to qualifying participants, based upon the same financial aid standards as the Department of Public Social Services' Food Stamps Eligibility Guidelines.
- Both the AWAFF and VTIP Programs are State grant programs, funded by the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways. We do not recommend shifting State funding opportunities to earmarked County

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responsibilities. The AWAFF program provides funds to public agencies to remove, store, and dispose of abandoned, wrecked, or dismantled vessels or any other partially submerged objects which pose a substantial hazard to navigation from navigable waterways or adjacent public property. The VTIP program provides grants to public local agencies to administer a turn-in program in their jurisdiction, an alternative for boat owners to surrender an unwanted recreational vessel.

Please let us know if we might provide any additional information.

GJ:ed

c: Each Board Deputy
Deputy Chief Executive Officer Rita Robinson