

Subject:
Access Fee Policy

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Section 1: Board Findings. During periods of declining tax revenues, user fees represent an important source of funding for the operation, maintenance and improvement of park facilities. A user fee structure encourages judicious use of our scarce park resources. It also demonstrates the value that parks users place on continuing community investment in park facilities. User fees help support the intensified use of parks facilities by various user groups. All groups that use parks facilities should be treated equally in setting and paying fees.

Section 2: Definitions.

- An **access fee** is the amount paid to VPD for exclusive use of all or a portion of a park facility during a pre-scheduled time period.
- **Commercial events** use park facilities for commercial purposes like company picnics, for-profit classes and camps, or business gatherings.
- **Incidental use** is the non-exclusive, normal and customary use of outdoor park facilities by the public for picnics, hiking, nature walks, casual sporting activities, etc. A use is not incidental if: (a) a registration fee is charged to the user, (b) a fee is charged to persons viewing the activity, (c) an instructor or coach leads the activity, (d) the activity is provided under the auspices of a non-profit or commercial organization, (e) the facility being used is subject to controlled admission (i.e. indoor spaces, the pool, etc.), *or* (f) a group consists of 5 or more players on athletic field facilities (does not apply to non-athletic facility parks).
- **Non-profit events** use park facilities for activities operated by a non-profit organization, including youth sports leagues, adult sports, artistic presentations, etc. An organization is considered nonprofit under this policy only if it is a 501(c)(3) corporation (or if it is registered as a nonprofit with the State of Washington), and the group is governed by a local board of directors.
- A **park facility** means any facility owned by VPD or leased by VPD for public use, including the Vashon Commons properties.
- **Private events** use park facilities for private purposes like family reunions and weddings.
- **Public events** are activities that are sponsored by Vashon Park District for the benefit of the general public, including events like Concerts in the Park, Low Tide Festival, and Shakespeare in the Park.

Section 3: Access Fees. All access fees charged under this section shall be used to defer VPD’s operational costs in providing facilities for public use in accord with the park district annual budget. The fees charged under this section shall replace and supersede any prior fee schedules, including fees collected under the facility improvement fund. Any existing facility improvement fund fees will be maintained on account by VPD until spent in accord with prior policy.

a. **General Access Fees.**

(1) **Fee Schedule.** Each year, during the budget process, the executive authority of the Vashon Park District shall present an access fee schedule, along with proposed normal operational hours, for approval by the Board of Commissioners. The recommendation will be based on the cost to rent similar facilities on Vashon, and/or other area facilities located near Vashon. The fee schedule shall differentiate between non-profit, private and commercial events.

(2) **Access Fees.** With the exception of public events offered directly by the Vashon Park District, activities operated by the Vashon School District utilizing school properties, incidental uses, stewardship events, or as provided below, all programs, events or activities that use park facilities shall pay an access fee in accord with the fee schedule approved under Section 3(a)(1). In order to minimize administrative costs, the Vashon Park District executive authority may charge a user a lump sum payment that approximates the charge that would be incurred under the fee schedule.

b. **Special Access Fees**

(1). **Youth Sports Activities.** In lieu of a general access fee under Section 3(a), a non-profit organization operating a youth sports activity may opt to pay an alternative access fee per player per regular sports season, which shall cover access costs for up to two practices per week plus all games that are scheduled within normal operational hours. A “regular sports season” means any consecutive four month period during which the activity operates. Where a youth sports activity has multiple seasons, it may opt to pay the alternative fee for each season. Otherwise, all use outside the regular season or use that exceeds the two practice limitation shall be charged under Section (3)(a). Youth sports will have priority scheduling over all other activities during their “regular sports season.”

(2). **Pool Fees.** The executive authority of the Vashon Park District shall establish a separate fee schedule for this facility that shall maximize usage while staying within amounts appropriated by the Board of Commissioners for facility operations. For this facility, the executive authority shall present a fee schedule to the Board of Commissioners for approval on an annual basis. The alternative access fee established under Section 3(c)(1) is not available for use of the pool due to the required presence of paid staff and high operational costs.

(3) **Incidental Use.** A fee will not be charged or collected for incidental use of park facilities by community members.

d. **Use Outside Normal Operational Hours.** In addition to access fees for use of the facility, any use of a park facility outside normal operation hours where the presence of access staff is necessary shall pay all access costs associated with the extra staff time (i.e. overtime wages, etc.).