

EXHIBIT 1
VCPRD Revenue Generation / Fee Collection
Philosophy & Rationale
Date: November 20, 2009



Mission Statement

The mission of the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department (VCPRD) is *to meet community needs by providing an interconnected system of parks, trails, recreation facilities, and natural areas that support environmental stewardship and diverse recreational programs and opportunities.* We strive to deliver these services in a professional, courteous and cost-efficient manner, with a dedication to ethical standards and responsiveness to changing community needs and priorities.

Statement of Philosophy for Fees in Parks

The underlying principle of financing public park and recreation facilities is to insure that all citizens have equal opportunity and choice of participation. Since the demand upon the Parks and Recreation Department is greater than the tax revenues available to support the demand, it is necessary to charge fees for selected facilities, particularly in instances where the facility is utilized by individuals or groups for personal benefit.

Fees and charges provide only one source of financing for the Parks and Recreation Department. A system of fees and charges must not diminish the Parks and Recreation Department's responsibility to provide public recreation and open space for all citizens.

Vancouver's City Charter was drafted in 1951 and approved by the voters in 1952. The Charter forms the "constitution" of city government and guides its structure and operations. Within Article VIII, Section 8.04 of the Charter states,

"The city shall acquire, maintain and operate an adequate system of public parks and playgrounds and shall make ample provision for recreational facilities, supervision, and programs, and may cooperate with school districts, public bodies, public corporations, and other organizations to that end."

In addition, the goals established in the 2007 adopted VCPRD comprehensive parks plan included maintaining and enhancing existing parks and recreational facilities and *acquiring adequate funding to meet those needs.*

The City's Strategic Plan provides a framework for the scope and method of delivering local government services into the future that meets the community's needs and priorities. A fundamental financial principle is to "sustain core governmental services within available resources." As existing resources (i.e. General Fund) continue to diminish, other resource opportunities are sought to support a variety of the City's core services as reflected in its various strategic directives:

- Protect and enhance our natural infrastructure, including our tree canopy, habitat, open space and greenways to improve our air and water quality.
- Support events and activities at parks and community centers that provide a positive outlet for youth as a crime prevention tool.
- Provide a variety of safe and attractive travel options for residents, including sidewalks and trails, bicycle routes, streets and transit.
- Complete the missing links in our pedestrian, bicycle, trail, and street systems, connecting neighborhoods to work, shopping and recreational facilities.

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- Support community events and activities that create opportunities to build community and neighborhood identity.
- Support and develop programs that involve our youth in the community and teach them to be good citizens.

Similarly, additional revenue sources must be identified and pursued to cover the continuing shortfall in the county's general fund allocation to operations and maintenance of regional parks.

Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department offers significant green infrastructure through its public park system in the Clark-Vancouver region. Parks are tax-supported community assets that contribute to the overall health and welfare of Clark County. Fee generation is based on the premise that the users specifically benefiting from a facility/service should pay fees to help recover the costs of providing that facility or service and protecting its value as a public amenity. The public's access and use of the park's open space is still guaranteed as a free and accessible community asset.

While tax revenues (and thus the general taxpayers) support the overall infrastructure of parks, open spaces and their facilities, the park user specifically benefits from the opportunity to play, walk, and relax within these spaces. The exclusive use of specific facilities (such as sports fields, picnic shelters, parking & other park amenities) incurs additional costs for care, clean-up and long term maintenance. Charging a user fee to those users who specifically benefit from that park facility helps defray a portion of the maintenance and overall operational costs for those parks and their infrastructure.

Fees and charges are essential to supplement financial needs for the operation and maintenance of parks, both facilities and grounds. Significant user fees can and should be imposed to keep parks open and their grounds and facilities maintenance on a standard that ensures the long-term preservation of parks as an important community asset. The fee collection process and administration should be kept at the lowest feasible cost, targeting available efficiencies in the collection program.

Rationale

Revenue generation from specific park uses and facility rentals should be considered to supplement the costs of maintaining and operating park amenities within the County's regional park system. Fees for facility booking, special uses, and special events could be imposed so that users specifically benefiting from a facility/service will pay fees that help recover the costs of providing that facility or service and protecting its value as a public amenity. As an integral part of the community, parks provide open spaces and facilities for special events and scheduled large group programming. These activities and intense uses increase the wear and tear on parks grounds and add maintenance tasks for park crews. Accommodating special uses increases operational expenses.

Revenue potential from vehicle entry and reservation fees can help offset the cost of maintaining and operating the regional park system. Additional funding for regional parks, in the form of user fees, represents one tool for increasing funding for maintenance efforts, thereby allowing the department to provide a consistent level of service and well maintained park facilities into the future.

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Fee Collection & Permitting Implementation Program

VCPRD implements the current parking fee collection program, shelter reservations, and special use permit applications/event coordination using both full-time and seasonal staffing. The overall revenue generation program is expected to minimally increase levels of staff time and costs. Opportunities for automating the parking fee collections and the shelter reservation system should be aggressively pursued to gain cost efficiencies and maximize the overall revenues generated for the operations of the public park system. VCPRD should advance any efforts to capturing cost reductions through tools such as parking meter/pay stations, improved shelter reservation software or other future methods or technologies to the greatest extent feasible.

General Criteria for Fee Program

The general benefit of facilities made possible through the implementation of fees and charges must exceed any detriment imposed by the fees themselves and collections must be practical. Revenues shall be returned to the park incurring the added expenses of use through budget allocation, whenever feasible. A fee will be charged when one or more of the following criteria are met.

Historic Criteria

The collection of fees within parks was adopted in 1982 by the Clark County Board of Commissioners following these two criteria:

- The park site must receive heavy enough use to generate significant revenue above and beyond the costs of collecting the fees and administering the program.
- The physical characteristics of the park site and park design must allow for reasonable control of access.

Additional Criteria

- Additional maintenance or care (special preparation or clean-up) is incurred with the use of the facility.
- Use of the facility is reserved for a group or individual's exclusive access for some period of time.
- Public parks property is used for private/commercial economic gain; therefore, the fees charged for this specific use shall be comparable to commercial rates.

Guidelines for Fee Rate Determination:

VCPRD will use the following guidelines in consideration of any rate changes, adjustments or modifications to current fee schedules to ensure a fair, reasonable and appropriate level of cost recovery for public park operations.

- Create and administer a fee structure that begins to reflect the cost of and demand for park (& recreational) services and facilities.
- Recover some of the direct and indirect costs for parks (and recreation) that can be supported by market conditions.
- At least partially, amortize the capital investment and cover maintenance and operational costs of a facility.

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- Pay for and augment operation and maintenance costs for a facility where tax appropriations (general fund) support the basic service.
- Continue to pursue the most effective methods for fee collections.
- Control use of the facility.
- Assess or evaluate user patterns to provide differential rates for peak/non-peak times, days or seasons.
- Assign a portion of the costs of the facility to users who may not be tax supporters.
- Enable the Parks and Recreation Department to provide facilities for which funds might not otherwise be available.
- Prevent closure of parks and park facilities due to lack of general fund support.

Use classification

Park and facility use may be classified into three distinct categories: public, merit and private. Where a particular use falls in this classification determines whether a fee should be assessed and at what level:

- A. **Public good** uses tend to preserve and promote a high quality of life; conservation and preservation of limited open space and natural systems; the historical heritage of the community; and provide parks and recreation facilities to groups affiliated with the community.
- B. **Merit good** uses benefit a large percentage of resident users, but others receive some indirect benefit and should financially support the use to a lesser degree.
- C. **Private good** uses benefit the participant only and should, therefore, pay the full cost of the facility.

These use classifications apply to the pricing strategy for differential rates (similar to Esther Short Park's rate level): public, private and commercial.

Authority and Responsibility

The Parks and Recreation Department shall prepare and maintain a schedule of fees and charges for those facilities and programs where such revenues are necessary to support continued use. All fee schedules shall be reviewed on a biannual basis by department management staff and shall be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Director for review, with adoption of appropriate fee resolutions by the Board of County Commissioners and/or City Council prior to implementation every other year.