Clark County Parks Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes for Special Meeting

Wednesday, September 10, 2025 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM
Via Microsoft Teams meeting only

Board Members: Jim Kautz, Janis VanWyhe, Teresa Meyer, Donald Meeks, Brandon Erickson, Jessica Barksdale, John Rafanelli

Clark County Staff: Amy Arnold, Ross Hoover, Lynde Wallick, Eric Christensen, Jennifer Coker, Kaley McLachlan-Burton, Ken Lader

Ex-Officio Members:	**School District Liaisons:**	Cale Piland (Evergreen)*, AJ Panter (Vancouver)* Rachel Best (Camas)*
	Parks Foundation:	Megan Schoenfelder*

Guests and Others: None.

4:03 PM Call to Order
Jim called the meeting to order and Advisory Board members introduced themselves.

4:04 PM Unfinished Business – Action: Presentation and consideration of Parks and Nature Fee update – Jennifer Coker/Ross Hoover
Ross and Jenny discussed a brief overview of this topic and when it was originally heard by Council, what work the sub-committee work did and the public engagement opportunities that were held, and that this will be presented to Council again at a work session on Wednesday, September 17, 2025.

Jenny discussed the importance of parks in the community and the budget forecast from March 2025 regarding the District Parks and Regional Parks funds and their deficits. Ross discussed that these are operational costs and John suggested adding percentages onto the graph to help display this data in an alternate way. Brandon, Ross, Don, and Jenny also discussed the different sources of revenue between the District parks and Regional parks. Jenny also discussed the decline scenario further and what that means for the division, as well as Council's support to create a new Regional Funding Task Team with the other city's officials. Jenny further discussed the long-term solutions such as proposing a new Partnerships Coordinator position and updating the cost recovery policy to standardize contracts and find business efficient solutions.

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Jenny discussed the history of this topic's request further and the feedback Council provided in the past, as well as why now is the time to request these fee increases again. Jenny discussed which Regional Parks the parking fees are currently being charged at and a comparable breakdown of those fees and how they differ across multiple agencies. Jenny discussed our recommendations regarding parking fee increases and she and Brandon discussed why the number of parks where fees are being charged didn't increase, as previously recommended. Jenny also discussed a proposed new program with free access days like the Washington State Parks agency is already utilizing, and Don suggested having the parking passes available at public libraries like Washington State Parks does for their Discovery Passes. Janis also suggested having options for low-income individuals to visit our parks.

Jenny discussed an analysis of the picnic shelter rental rates across multiple agencies and how they differ, and the recommendations we have regarding that. Don and Jenny discussed the permit requirements and fees for add-ons, such as amplified sound or alcohol, and Brandon, Ross, Don, and Jenny discussed the rates based on usage during the week, on the weekend, or having flat rates versus hourly ones. Jenny also discussed the meeting room rates for the Bud Van Cleve Community Room at the Luke Jensen Sports Complex compared to other agencies within the region as well as our recommendation regarding that.

Jenny discussed the revenue impacts of the proposed fees based on the operating structural deficits for each year for both the Regional Parks fund and the GCPD (Greater Clark Park District) fund, noting the impacts and shortfalls. Jenny also discussed the community engagement that was held an input that was received regarding these fee increases, and a summary of what is proposed and how this will benefit the County.

Jenny asked for the Advisory Board's feedback and Don discussed what a great presentation this is, how fees are increasing at other places within the county, and whether the revenue increases will affect the operating deficits in the future. Jessica discussed that based on the columns in the spreadsheets, another solution besides fee increases will be needed to make an impact on the operating deficit and she and Ross discussed having different times during the day for picnic shelter rentals. Don also discussed the possibility of having vendors at the Regional Parks and Ross indicated the Partnership Coordinator position will aid with this. Brandon discussed his support for the presentation as well and about wanting to see the return on investment that the Partnership Coordinator position contributes to in the future.

Jenny discussed the next steps and timeline for this proposal regarding the regional solution, the implementation of the fees themselves, the GCPD levy, the partnerships and contracts review in the future, as well as the efficiencies on how to save on costs over time.

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Janis discussed her support for this topic too and she and Jenny discussed further about having park passes available to the public in libraries. Jim asked if the Advisory Board needs to vote on this topic and Ross indicated that their recommendation on how to move this forward to Council would be appreciated.

Time	Action Item
5:12 PM	**MOTION BY**: Donald Meeks **SECOND BY**: Janis VanWyhe
	MOTION: Motion to approve of the Parks and Nature updated Fee Proposals as-is without prejudice.
	DISCUSSION: The Advisory Board supports the Parks and Nature updated Fee Proposals to move forward to present to Council with the caveat that some of the comments discussed during the presentation be acknowledged and addressed in the next review. Comments from the Advisory Board – the fees are modest ones that won't close the gap, which leaves more room to increase them in the future; recommendation to increase the fees to match neighboring agencies; recommendation to go through a continuous process every year to evaluate the fees and propose updates in an incremental fashion; and as an example – perhaps look at charging a weekend premium for picnic shelter rentals and/or consider expanding parking fees to other Regional-style parks.
	IN FAVOR: Unanimous **OPPOSED**: None **ABSTAINED**: None

Ross and Jenny thanked the Advisory Board for their time, consideration of this, and for their feedback.

5:13 PM Adjourn

Respectfully submitted, Amy Arnold

Parks Advisory Board
Updated Fee Proposals

Follow up from January 2024 Council Work Session

Parks and Nature Division

September 10, 2025

CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

PUBLIC WORKS
PARKS AND NATURE

Clark County Parks and Nature enriches communities by creating and stewarding parks that promote health and wellness, boost economic vitality, preserve natural areas, and ensure access to the outdoors for all.

Budget Forecast – from March 2025

District Parks						
Year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Revenue	4,909,300.76	4,980,602.16	5,045,818.48	5,095,367.14	5,139,491.62	5,176,099.77
Expense	5,178,687.23	5,552,478.69	5,912,432.84	6,176,642.95	6,376,794.97	6,596,130.74
Gap	(269,386.47)	(571,876.53)	(866,614.37)	(1,081,275.81)	(1,237,303.35)	(1,420,030.97)

Regional Parks						
Year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Revenue	2,659,067.00	2,659,067.00	2,659,067.00	2,659,067.00	2,659,067.00	2,659,067.00
Expense	3,221,848.13	2,918,387.00	3,157,451.35	3,206,863.30	3,289,691.30	3,403,476.15
Gap	(562,781.13)	(259,320.00)	(498,384.35)	(547,796.30)	(630,624.30)	(744,409.15)

$832,167	**$831,196**	**$1,364,998**	**$1,629,071**	**$1,867,927**	**$2,164,439**

Decline, Sustain and Fulfill Scenarios Presented

With no new funding

- Closure of parks & amenities
- Decline in service levels
- End new park acquisition and development
- Safety and liability issues grow

Council Direction

– Create Regional Funding Task Team

Parks Operations Budget is 22% of National Median for Peer Agencies

Funding Puzzle -Long Term Solutions Underway

- **Regional Funding Task Team**
- **Strategic initiatives**

  Proposed new partnerships coordinator (2026)

  Operationalizing our system

- **Operational measures**

  Cost recovery policy

  Business efficiencies

  Resource sustainability

Why We Are Here

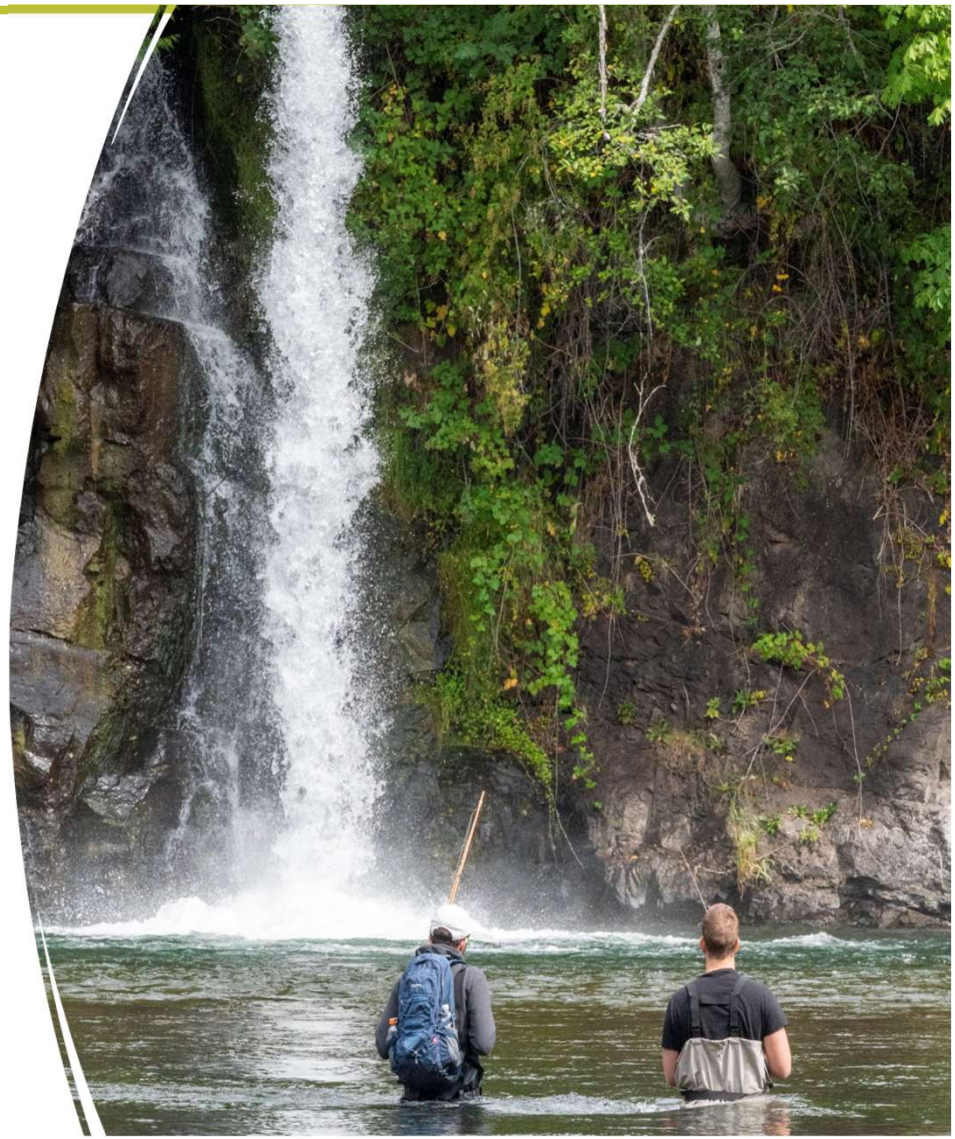
- **Fee increases proposed** at the January 10, 2024 work session to address longstanding funding deficits **were not supported by council.**

- **Key Council feedback included:**
  - Fee increases were too broad
  - Importance of ensuring equitable access
  - Desire to see more partnerships/cost sharing
  - Desire to model organizations like Metro for diversified funding

- We **listened and revised** the approach.

Part Two

Updated Fee Recommendations



Why now for Fee increases?

- Longstanding Operations Structural Deficits in Regional and GCPD
- Fee Realignment is an incremental controllable step
- Modest Fee increases will generate **$262,000/year**
- Will reduce operations shortfalls near term and are a key element of long-term financial stability

Parks Where Parking Fees are Charged

Parking Fee Comparable Analysis

Agency	Daily Fee	Annual Pass
Clark County Parks & Nature	$2 motorcycles **$3 cars** $6 trailer/$8 bus	$30
WA State Parks	$10	$45*
City of Vancouver	$6/$10	$50
Pierce County	$1/$3/$7/$15/$45	No
Oregon Metro	$5 car/$7 bus*	$10/$30/$40*

Parking Fee/Annual Pass Recommendations

Parking Fee Adjustments

- **Applies to:** 4 regional parks only (Salmon Creek/Klineline, Lewisville, Frenchman's Bar, Vancouver Lake)
- No parking fee expansion to other parks as previously proposed
- **Changes:**

  Daily parking fee: **$3 → $5**

  Annual pass: **$30 → $40**

  Estimated additional Revenue $247,300

- **Still among the most affordable** in the region

Proposed New Program - Free Access Days

Ensuring Equitable Access

Free Access Days

A New Program modeled after Metro and WA State Parks

- **12 free access days per year**
- Distributed through all seasons

Access to nature is an essential service — not a privilege

Example: WA State Parks 2025 Discover Pass Free Days

- **Jan. 1 — First Day Hikes; New Year's Day**
- **Jan. 20 — Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- **March 9 — Billy Frank Junior's Birthday**
- **March 19 — State Parks' Birthday**
- **April 22 — Earth Day**
- **June 7 — Free Fishing Weekend**
- **June 8 — Free Fishing Weekend**
- **June 19 — Juneteenth**
- **Aug. 9 — Smokey Bear's Birthday**
- **Sept. 27 — National Public Lands Day**
- **Oct. 10 — World Mental Health Day**
- **Nov. 11 — Veteran's Day**

Picnic Shelter Comparable Analysis

Agency	Capacity	Daily Fee	Comments
Clark County Parks & Nature	20	$50	
	35-100	$75	
	100-216	$150	
WA State Parks*	100	$35 + $8 reserve fee;	Rustic, not comparable
City of Vancouver	100	$83/$94/$98	Resident
	100	$104/$118/$122	Non-Resident
Pierce County	30-300	$85/$95/$100/$115/$160/$230	
Oregon Metro	50	$25/$100	Weekday/Weekend
	100	$25/$250	Weekday/Weekend
	125	$50/$215	Weekday/Weekend
	200	$50/$165	Weekday/Weekend
	300	$50/$250	Weekday/Weekend

Picnic Shelter Fee Recommendations

Picnic Shelter Fee Adjustments


Central Shelter at Lewisville Regional Park

- **Flat $10 increase** across all shelter sizes
- New rates:

  Capacity 20: $50 → $60/day

  Capacity up to 100: $75 → $85/day

  Capacity 100–216: $150 → $160/day

- **No hourly rates** or weekend surcharges
- Estimated additional Revenue - **$14,500**
- Clark County remains **most affordable** regionally

Meeting Room Fees Comparable Analysis

Agency	Fee	Site/Room	Comments
Clark County Parks & Nature	$15-$35/hr.	BVC CMR	Residency/Non-Profit Status
WA State Parks	N/A	No comparable indoor spaces	N/A
City of Vancouver	$150-$186-$198-$272/hr.	Marshall/Firstenburg	Seasonal + resident pricing, varying room sizes
Pierce County	$45-$135/hr.	Multiple sites	Wide range of options
Oregon Metro	$110-$290-$350-$640/day;	Oregon Conv. Ctr.	All rates are daily
	$175-$215-$245-$285-$460/day	Oregon Expo Ctr.	$640 rate is a combined space

Meeting Room Fee Recommendations

Meeting Room Fee Adjustments

- **Two-tier pricing retained:**

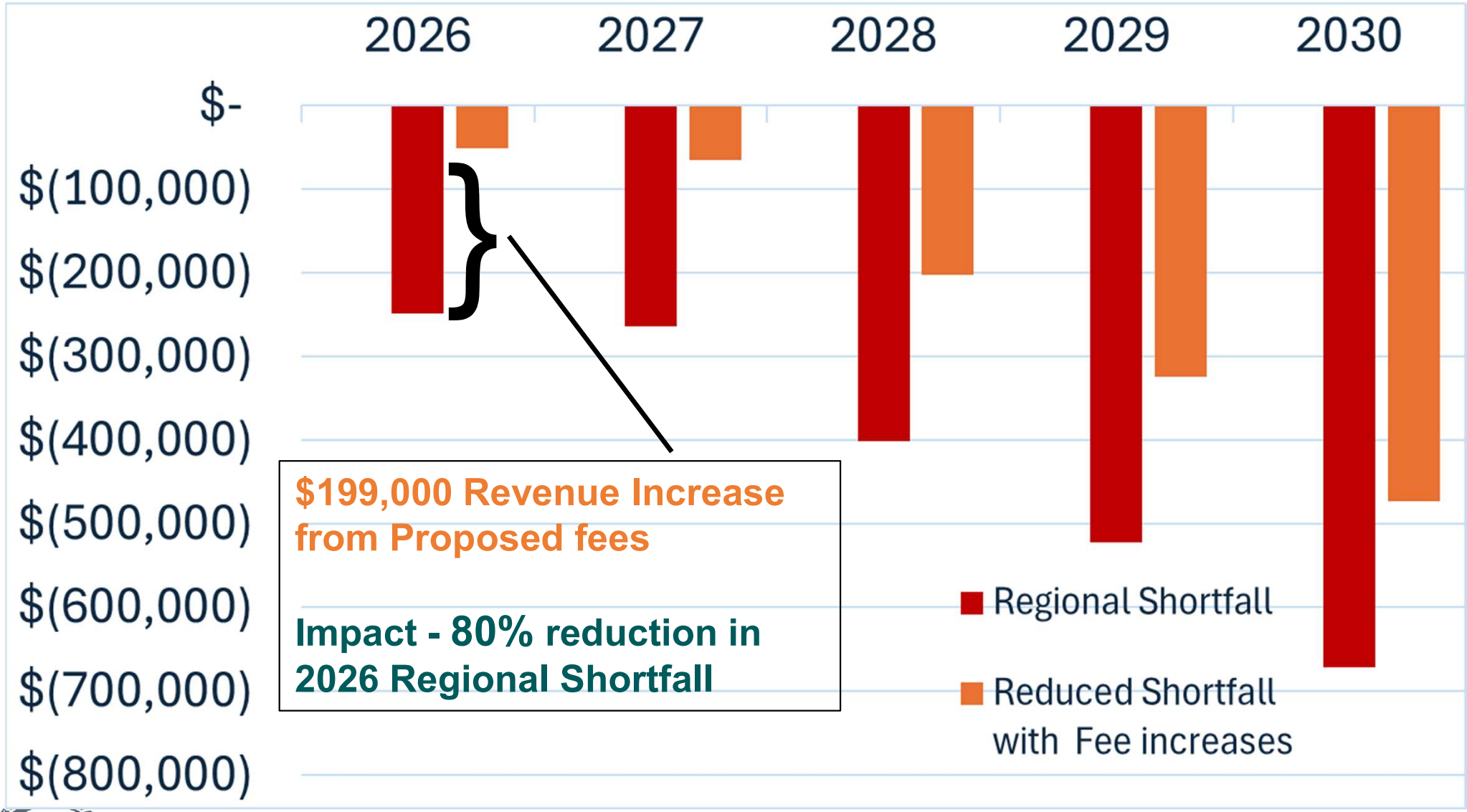
  Fee: **$35 → $150/hour**

  Residents/Non-profits: **$15–$35 → $50/hour**

- More affordable than City of Vancouver or Oregon Metro
- Prioritizes **community access** and affordability for local nonprofits
- Estimated to be revenue neutral

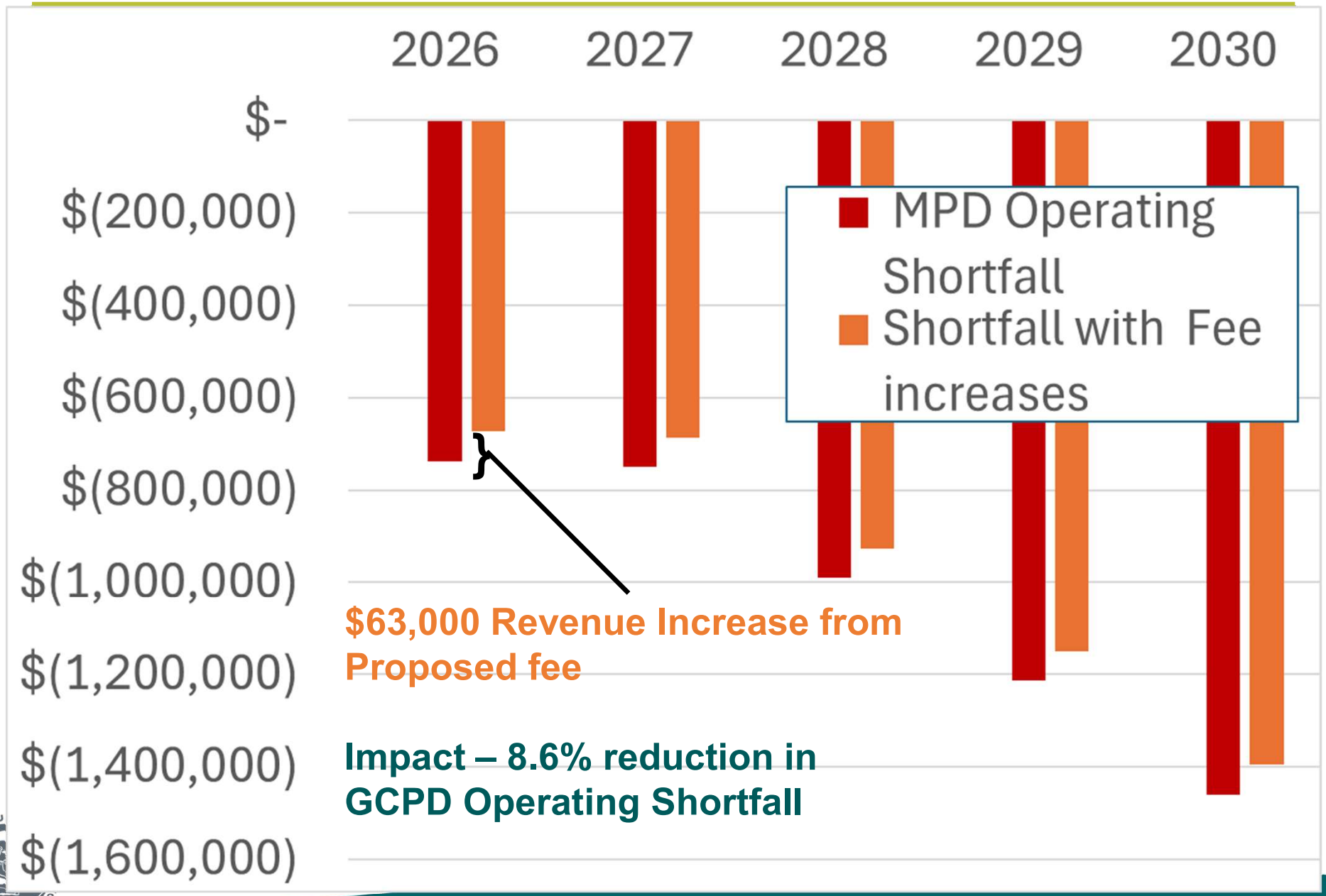
Regional Parks - Revenue Impact of Proposed Fees

Operating Budget Deficit



GCPD - Revenue Impact of Proposed Fees

Operating Budget Deficit



Stakeholder and Community Input 2022-Present

Engagement Activities

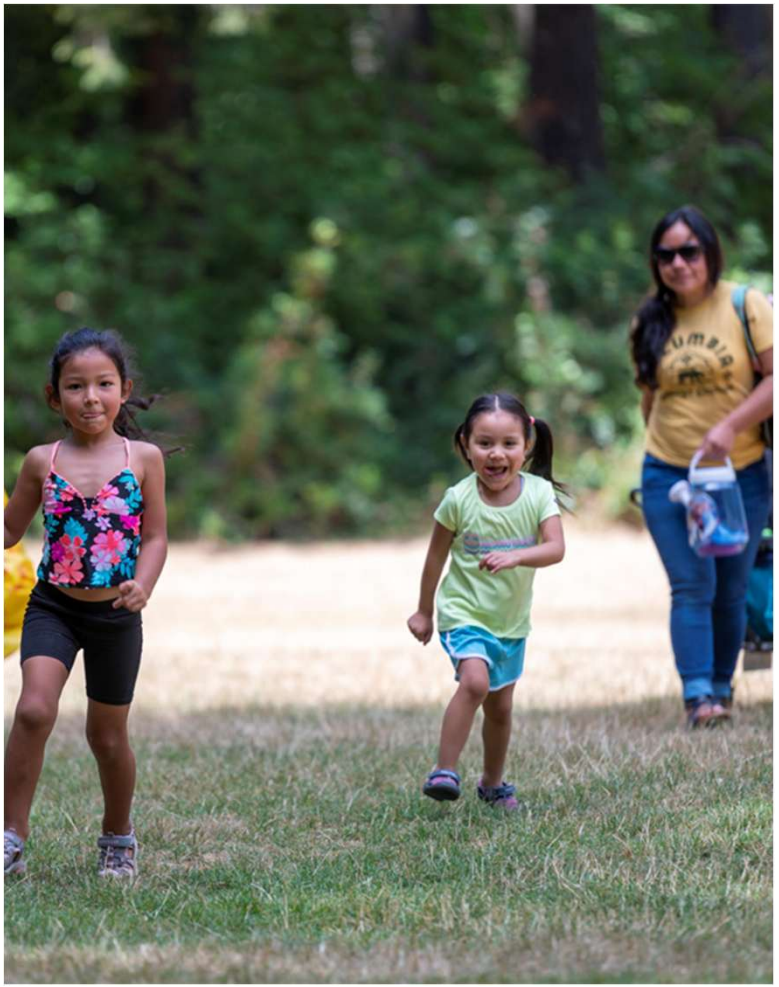
- 4 Subcommittee meetings Spring 2022
- 3 Public meetings
- 30-day public comment period June 2023 (19 comments)
- Stakeholder meeting with nonprofits & community partners
- Parks Advisory Board Meeting 9/10/25

Summary

- **New Free Access Days** supports equitable community access
- Modest rate adjustments **reduce operations budget deficits**
- Conservative revenue estimates assume **$262,000 in additional funding,** assuming 15% drop in bookings
- **Parks and Nature** remains the most affordable in the region
- Fee adjustments are part of the overall funding puzzle to address operating budget shortfalls

Advisory Board Feedback

Does this refined approach to fee adjustments feel aligned with previous direction and values?



Next Steps/Recovery Plan

Revenue Source	2025	2026	2027	2028
🏛️ **Regional Solution**	Phase 1 – Committee Fo rms (Q4)	Regional Funding Committee Recommendation (Q2)	Regional Levy Vote (Q3)	Implementation Begins
🅿️ **Fees**	Fee Analysis	Fee Increases (Parking, Picnic Shelters)	Permit fees, other fees reviewed	Continued monitoring of fee program
🧮 **GCPD Levy**	1% Levy not approved	1% Levy + Banked Capacity	1% Levy	1% Levy
🤝 **Partnerships**		Partnerships Development	Partnerships Revenue	Partnerships Revenue
📄 **Contracts**	Contracts Reviews	Council Cost Recovery Policy	Adjustments Begin	Adjustments Continue
💧 **Efficiencies**	Irrigation Reduction	Irrigation Reduction	Irrigation Reduction + Parking Kiosks	Continued Reductions