INTRODUCTION

The East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) is soliciting proposals from consultants to conduct a study of the Park District’s existing fees for services such as parking, swimming, beach access, and other entry fees, and to provide recommendations for implementing new fees that are not currently being charged.

The fee study will be comprised of two parts: 1) Comprehensive Fee Study and 2) Cost Allocation Plan. The consultant’s role includes documenting existing fee collection rates and practices, market analysis of fees charged for similar services in other public agencies, example of fee structures or policies from other agencies, cost allocation plan and developing draft recommendations and action items for the Board of Directors.

The purpose of this study is to perform a comprehensive review of existing Park District fees and conduct an analysis of the costs to provide these services to determine an appropriate level of cost recovery. Through a Cost Allocation Plan, the Park District seeks to better understand the true costs of the services it offers and to determine appropriate fees to improve uniformity in fee collection while also ensuring that park access remains available for all community members within the Park District’s service area.

PARK DISTRICT BACKGROUND

The East Bay Regional Park District was incorporated in 1934 as a California Special District and operates under Sections 5500-5595 of the Public Resource Code of the State of California. It is legally separate and fiscally independent from other government agencies, with the capacity and authority to issue its own debt.

The Park District’s purpose is to acquire, develop, and maintain parks, recreation, and open space lands within Alameda and Contra Costa County. It is the largest regional park district in the United States, comprised of over 125,000 acres in 73 parks, including over 1,250 miles of trails and 55 miles of shoreline. It is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors, elected by voters in their respective wards and serving a four-year term. The Park District has over 900 budgeted full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) and a headcount during its peak summer month of over 1,000 employees. It has an operating budget of approximately $200 million, with almost 90% of general fund revenue generated from property taxes and less than 7% generated from fees and charges. The Park District’s Adopted Budget and Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports are available on the Park District’s website: https://www.ebparks.org/public-info/budget
The Park District is guided by an environmental ethic, acting as a steward of cultural and natural resources while providing healthful recreation and environmental education to the public – including a diverse set of activities such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, guided walks, picnicking, camping, fishing, boating, and nature study.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

The Park District’s fee schedule has been developed over time and is comprised of various park specific fees. The Park District’s Board of Directors reviews and approves fees on an annual basis. New fees go into effect January 1st of each year.

The annual practice is for fee changes to be recommended by staff, and evaluated through a variety of lenses, including operating cost, fee structure updates, changes in services, and price comparisons of similar facilities operated by comparable agencies in the region. Research to ensure comparable and competitive fee ranges are vetted and reviewed by staff. Recent fee changes proposals have largely kept pace with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose area.

Fees generally fall into the following categories:
- use/access fees
- program fees
- reservation/permit fees
- administrative fees.

The Park District’s current annual fee schedule format is time consuming and cumbersome to update and it does not lend itself to easy analysis. The Park District’s fee schedule can be viewed online at: PDF of 2022 Fee Schedule. Concession fees listed in the Fee Schedule are not part of the Comprehensive Fee Study / Cost Allocation Plan.

The Park District has not previously engaged in a Comprehensive Fee Study and does not have an existing cost allocation plan in place.

SCOPE OF SERVICES AND DELIVERABLES

The Consultant will work with staff to refine the project scope, purpose, uses and goals of the Comprehensive Fee Study and Cost Allocation Plan to ensure that the study will be both accurate and appropriate to the Park District’s needs.
The scope of services and deliverables must include, at a minimum, the following:

1. Comprehensive Review of Fees and Cost Allocation Plan
   a) The consultant will research and conduct interviews with staff as needed to gain an understanding of the Park District’s current processes and operations.
   b) The consultant will identify the total costs of services for which fees are currently charged. Costs should be identified so that they can be allocated to and tracked by the appropriate department/division.
   c) For each fee, the consultant will include an analysis of current cost recovery levels.
   d) The consultant will indicate those fees for which full costs are not being recovered (or where fee waivers are being provided) and a comparison of those waivers to industry standards and those employed by comparable agencies.
   e) The consultant will conduct a comparative survey of other relevant agencies, focusing on recreation agency fees and their methods used to set fees.
   f) Based on this analysis, the consultant shall recommend appropriate fees and appropriate subsidies for when cost recovery is unrealistic, impractical, or conflicting with service delivery.
   g) The consultant shall prepare a report that summarizes this information: the actual cost for each fee and recommended targeted cost recovery.
      i. The report shall identify direct cost, indirect cost, and overhead cost for services.
      ii. The report shall identify the present fees, recommended fees, percentage change, and revenue impact and fee comparison with other comparable agencies.
   h) The Consultant shall develop a proposed 2024 Master Fee Schedule.
   i) The consultant shall work with staff and present findings at appropriate public meetings (e.g. Finance Committee, Board of Directors Meeting).

2. Final Report
   The consultant will provide the Park District with:
   a) A plan/report and presentation that will be presented to the Park District’s Executive Team and Board of Directors.
   b) A user-friendly spreadsheet or model for the Park District to use in future years, to allow for adjustments to fees based on changing needs. The format should:
      • be easily used and maintained by staff;
      • allow for analysis and tracking of fee changes into the future;
      • allow for easy publication to the public;
allow for additions, revisions, or removal of direct and overhead costs so that the full cost allocation plan can be easily adapted to a range of activities;

- allow for updates to the fee schedule from year to year and as the organization changes;

- allow for the addition of hypothetical service areas, future service amendments;

- the ability to calculate the estimated costs of providing new services.

c) A report on including possible changes to fee structure and development a fee policy and/or recommendations of approach including setting policy-based cost recovery levels.

d) A report on other matters that come to the consultant’s attention during the evaluation.

All review and analysis of fees and costs should be framed with an understanding that the Park District is committed to ensuring equitable and inclusive park access. Consultant proposals are encouraged to propose additional deliverables and/or study questions to fully address the equity element of this study.

If the consultant feels that additional tasks are warranted, they must be clearly identified in the consultant’s proposal along with itemized costs.

**PARK DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

In their proposal, the Consultant shall define information, services and expertise needs from the Park District for the implementation of this project. Proposals may wish to include recommendations on which tasks and/or roles would best be performed by Park District staff, and those where consultant support would be most effective.

**OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Executive Summary:** An overview of the proposal, a summary of the consultant’s scope of services and approach. This item can include a description of the consultant's background, location, experience providing similar services for public agencies, as well as a list of assigned staff and their professional summaries assigned to the project, including the lead consultant.

2. **Cost summary:** Provide a fixed, not to exceed price with an itemized cost proposal based on the tasks outlined in the above scope of services included with the proposal. Work items to be performed by subcontract shall be noted and any proposed mark-up of sub-consultant costs shall be identified. A schedule of hourly labor rates and material rates shall also be provided. Any known or anticipated adjustments to billing rates shall be disclosed to the Park District in the proposal.
3. **Schedule:** A project schedule shall be included in consultant’s proposal. Consultant shall work with the understanding that the analysis and recommendations are intended to be incorporated into the 2024 Master Fee Schedule. The purpose of the schedule is to describe the anticipated duration of the tasks and milestones identified in the proposed scope of work, along with necessary meeting dates with key EBRPD staff.

4. **References:** Proposals shall include a brief summary of at least three recent reference projects that best demonstrate consultant team’s relevant experience. Project summary shall provide sufficient information for Park District to evaluate the specific contributions individual project team members had in completing deliverable items associated with a referenced project. A sample of a deliverable item shall be provided to the Park District upon request. Please keep the length of project summaries to one page.

5. **Work product format:** Draft and final deliverable work products shall be provided to the Park District in electronic files containing all text, exhibits, data, calculations and referenced documents supporting conclusions.

6. **Other format requirements:** All text, exhibits and supporting data shall be submitted in a form that is editable by the Park District. Microsoft Word format shall be included with all text submittals. Proposal shall include consultant’s proposed graphic and other software to be used to complete the project.

7. **Ownership of work:** All work products prepared by consultant shall become the property of District. There shall be no restrictions on Park District’s use, distribution or modification of work products.

8. **Acceptance of terms and conditions:** The proposal shall include a statement of Consultant’s willingness to accept the terms and conditions of the Park District’s standard Contract for Services, a copy of which is attached as Attachment A. Prospective consultants shall review the Contract for Services, note any items to which it takes exception provide alternate proposed wording and show levels of insurance coverage in each category and return the marked-up copy with the proposal.

9. **Conflict of Interest:** Throughout the term of any agreement resulting from the RFP, Consultant will not accept any employment or engage in any work which creates a conflict of interest with the East Bay Regional Park District or in any way compromises the work to be performed under this RFP or any agreement resulting from this RFP.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

The last day to submit questions is five days before proposals are due. Questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted in writing to the Business Services Manager at opsbsm@ebparks.org. We request that consultants notify the Park District (via email) of their interest in submitting a proposal for this project. The Park District’s responses to substantive questions will be shared with all consultants that notify the Park District.
**PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL PROCESS**

Please submit a digital PDF via e-mail to Acting Business Services Manager Ruby Tumber at opsbsm@ebparks.org. Proposals must be received by the Park District by no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 12th. Late proposals will not be considered.

Tentative Project Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 12, 2022</td>
<td>RFP Issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 19, 2022</td>
<td>Questions due to <a href="mailto:opsbsm@ebparks.org">opsbsm@ebparks.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>December 22, 2022</td>
<td>Responses to Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 12, 2023</td>
<td>Proposals due by 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of January 30, 2023</td>
<td>Interviews, if conducted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of January 30, 2023</td>
<td>Selected firm(s) notified</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2023 (date TBD)</td>
<td>Award of Consulting Services Agreement at Board of Directors Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>February/March 2023</td>
<td>Contract executed/work begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2023</td>
<td>Provide final report/recommendation to Board Finance Committee for recommendation to Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2023</td>
<td>Report and master fee schedule complete and presented to Board of Directors for Adoption – Fees Updated in 2024</td>
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**REJECTION RIGHTS**

The selection of a consultant for this project and any agreements for services resulting from this Request for Proposals is dependent upon the approval of the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors. District reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to re-solicit this Request for Proposals.

**COST OF RESPONSE PREPARATION**

The Park District will make no reimbursement for any cost incurred by a prospective consultant for the preparation of a response to this Request for Proposals.

**CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS**

All proposals submitted by the required deadline will be reviewed for adequacy, completeness, content, project approach, qualifications and other criteria developed during the review process. Consultants who have submitted proposals which pass the initial review may be invited for interviews approximately one week after submittal.
The Park District expects to evaluate the proposals based on evaluation criteria including the following, which are not necessarily listed in order of importance:

- Quality of proposal and responses to specific questions included in this RFP.
- Experience on similar fiscal analyses and reports for local government agencies in California.
- Relevant qualifications of key personnel assigned to this project.
- Accessibility of key personnel to the Park District’s staff during the project.
- Understanding of the Park District’s objectives.
- Reasonableness of fees and cost proposal.
- Project management capability (i.e., ability to produce high quality analysis and work product within the Park District’s desired timeline).

**EXHIBITS**

Sample EBRPD Contract for professional services.