

Subject: A Plea to Keep Balboa Park Parking Free for All

Dear Mayor Todd Gloria and Members of the San Diego City Council,

I am writing with deep concern regarding any proposal to begin charging for parking at Balboa Park. Balboa Park is not just another city amenity, it is a cornerstone of San Diego's cultural, educational, and recreational life. It belongs to everyone, and access to it must remain equitable and open.

Introducing parking fees would create real and unnecessary barriers for the very communities who benefit the most from the park. For single parents, the elderly, and families living on modest or fixed incomes, even small additional costs can be prohibitive. Many households are already struggling to make ends meet rising rent, food, gas, and utility prices are stretching pocketbooks thinner than ever. To add a parking fee on top of these burdens would mean some residents would simply stop coming.

Balboa Park is a public park, meant to be accessible to all. To impose parking charges is, in practice, elitist privileges those with disposable income while excluding those without. The impact falls disproportionately on communities of color and lower-income residents, making this policy not only inequitable, but one that amplifies systemic inequality.

The irony is that Balboa Park itself is a source of free or low-cost enrichment that uplifts the quality of people's lives. Families come for community events, children explore art and science, seniors find companionship, and countless residents benefit from the programs offered through Parks and Recreation. But if parking becomes a financial hurdle, these opportunities will no longer be within reach for many.

Balboa Park is often called the "crown jewel" of San Diego. That jewel should not be behind a paywall. To charge for parking would erode the very spirit of the park as a welcoming space for all San Diegans regardless of income, race, or background.

I urge you to protect the integrity and accessibility of Balboa Park by keeping parking free. To do otherwise would send a damaging message: that only those who can afford it deserve access to San Diego's most treasured public space.

Respectfully,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Address or Neighborhood]

[Your Contact Information]