



Chair Rebecca Carey
Commissioner Cynthia Gudino
Commissioner Sally Lopez
Commissioner Jose Ramirez
Commissioner Yolanda Zamora

Recreation and Parks Commission
Agenda

Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 4:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers
110 East Cook Street
Santa Maria

“Santa Maria Recreation and Parks provides enriching opportunities to play, learn, contemplate, and build community. We promote responsible stewardship of the environment, healthy people, and a strong community.”

HOW TO ACCESS MEETINGS

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PUBLIC COMMENT (letters/emails)

(Must be received by 1:00 p.m. in advance of the meeting)

Members of the public wishing to submit a public comment or a comment on an agenda item, can email RP-Clerk@cityofsantamaria.org or mail to the Recreation and Parks Commission, Attn.: Director of Recreation and Parks, 615 South McClelland Street, Santa Maria, CA 93454. Letters/emails will not be read aloud during the meeting. All correspondence will be distributed to Commissioners, submissions received after the deadline will not be processed until the following day but will become a part of the official record.

MEETINGS

The Recreation and Parks Commission holds regular meetings on the Second Tuesday of every month. Regular meetings start at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 110 East Cook Street, Santa Maria, California. Special and Adjourned Regular meetings start time are to be determined.

POSTING LOCATIONS OF AGENDA AND/OR CANCELLATION NOTICES

Regular meeting agendas will be posted at least 72 hours before the meeting (GC§ 54954(a)(1)). Agenda and Cancellation Notices can be viewed online and are also posted at the following two locations: Santa Maria City Hall located at 110 East Cook Street, Santa Maria, California, and Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Administration Office located at 615 South McClelland Street, Santa Maria, California.

Pages

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Commission Chair Carey to call the meeting to order.

3. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

a. **Approval of Minutes**

Review and approve the minutes from the regular meeting of February 10, 2026

4

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (Not to Exceed 15 Minutes)**

Speakers may provide public comments on any matter within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission. Each speaker will be limited to 3 minutes, maximum 15 minutes for Public Comment Period. Unless a majority of the Commission objects, the Chair may provide speakers more or less time to speak. All comments or queries shall be addressed to the Commission as a body and not to any specific member thereof. Pursuant to Government Code §54954.2(a)(2), the Ralph M. Brown Act, no action or discussion by the Commission shall be undertaken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except to briefly provide information, ask for clarification, provide direction to staff, or schedule a matter for a future meeting.

5. **REGULAR BUSINESS**

a. **Seating of Commission Chair- Commissioner Gudino**

b. **Seating of Vice Chair- Commissioner Ramirez**

c. **Assign/Reassign Commissioners to the Committee List**

d. **Los Flores Ranch Parking Fee Recommendation**

The Commission will consider a \$5 Daily Parking Fee, \$85 Annual Parking Pass for Residents, and \$100 Annual Parking Pass for Non-Residents at Los Flores Ranch.

8

e. **Field Use Policy and Refunds**

6. **REPORTS BY STAFF**

7. **ORAL REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS**

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The next regular meeting is to be held on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 4:00 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chambers, 110 East Cook Street, Santa Maria, CA

93454.

I, Dennis Smitherman, hereby certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing agenda was posted not less than 72 hours at the following locations: City of Santa Maria City Hall and the Recreation and Parks Administration office made available at <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/services/departments/city-clerk-records/agenda-center-meetings-portal> on this 10th day of April 2026.

/s/ DENNIS SMITHERMAN
Interim Recreation and Parks Director

RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 10, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

City Hall Council Chambers

110 East Cook Street

Santa Maria

Members Present: Commissioner Rebecca Carey, Commissioner Sally Lopez, Commissioner Jose Ramirez

Members Absent: Commissioner Cynthia Gudino, Commissioner Yolanda Zamora

Staff Present: Recreation Supervisor Rudy Gutierrez, Business Program Leader Neville Smeda, Interim Director of Recreation and Parks Dennis Smitherman, Administrative Assistant Shannon Mendez

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Commission Chair Carey called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

3.a Approval of Minutes

Moved by: Commissioner Sally Lopez

Seconded by: Commissioner Jose Ramirez

Approved

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (Not to Exceed 15 Minutes)

Julie Sainz, representing the local Girl Scout Service Unit, addressed the Commission regarding park rental fees at Pioneer Park.

5. PRESENTATIONS

5.a Homelessness Update

Principal Park Services Officer, Ruben Ramirez, provided a presentation on homelessness impacts within the City and the role of City Rangers.

He also reported an increase in individuals arriving from Los Angeles, Ventura, and Kern Counties.

6. REGULAR BUSINESS

6.a Seating of Commission Chair- Commissioner Gudino

Item postponed to next meeting due to the absence of Commissioners Gudino and Zamora.

6.b Seating of Vice Chair- Commissioner Ramirez

Item postponed to next meeting due to the absence of Commissioners Gudino and Zamora.

6.c Recommendation to City Council to place Alexander "Alex" Posada on the Eligibility List for Future Park and Facility Naming

Staff presented a recommendation to place Alex Posada on the eligibility list for future park and facility naming and forward the recommendation to City Council.

Moved by: Commissioner Jose Ramirez

Seconded by: Commissioner Sally Lopez

Approved

6.d Assign/Reassign Commissioners to the Committee List

Committee assignments were not addressed and will be postponed until the next meeting.

6.e Canceling the Commission Meeting of March 10, 2026

Moved by: Commissioner Jose Ramirez

Seconded by: Commissioner Sally Lopez

Approved

7. REPORTS BY STAFF

Interim Recreation Manager, Rudy Gutierrez, gave an update on the recreation division.

Breakfast & Big Ideas (January 31): Teen-led enrichment event at Able Maldonado Youth Center; 35 students participated. Featured six local professionals and focused on career exploration and leadership development.

Rec Ready Mentorship – Cohort 3: 12-week partnership with Allan Hancock College connecting recreation students with City mentors. Participants will complete capstone projects benefiting the department.

Los Flores Ranch Park: Operating days adjusted to Friday–Sunday (low Thursday usage); hours 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., expanding to 8:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. in spring/summer.

Upcoming Event: Cupid’s Pajama Breakfast Bash at Elwin Mussell Senior Center, supporting senior programs.

Recreation Guide: New bilingual (English/Spanish) print and digital guide released; includes QR access. Commissioners commended the design and presentation.

Business Manager, Neville Smeda, provided an update on the department budget:

Budget Overview: Approved General Fund & Measure U budget totals approximately \$15.7 million. \$1 million in reductions already approved; department directed to identify an additional \$2 million in cuts for FY 2026–27. Approximately 67 percent of the budget supports salaries and benefits.

Positions Eliminated: Teen Outreach Coordinator, Recreation Supervisor (Youth Center), two Recreation Coordinators, Program Specialist, one City Ranger vacancy, part-time laborer, and 30,000 hours of limited-service staff.

Impacts: Reduced youth prevention programming, fewer recreation offerings and facility hours, decreased park safety presence, longer maintenance response times, and potential aquatics reductions.

Additional Information: Several vacancies remain unfilled. Staff noted long-term sustainability concerns and advised that all program areas may be affected if additional reductions proceed. Commission encouraged to communicate community priorities to City Council.

Staff emphasized commitment to maintaining core services while exploring revenue opportunities.

Interim Director, Dennis Smitherman, gave an update on the Parks Division and the Department:

Japanese Community Center: Exterior and landscaping nearly complete; interior lighting and ADA improvements underway. Grand opening anticipated Spring 2026.

Sports Park: Earthwork largely complete; irrigation installation in progress. Minor storm delay. Anticipated opening Spring 2027.

Dog Park: Administrative delay addressed; contractor coordination ongoing for amenities installation. Opening anticipated Spring 2026.

Budget reductions remain a priority.

Budget Committee to reconvene to review programs, operations, and fee structure.

Fee-setting authority amendment clarifies City Council retains final approval.

Commission will hold public hearings and recommend fees.

Ordinance anticipated for March 3 Council meeting; implementation follows 30-day adoption period.

Japanese Community Center fees tied to ordinance update.

8. ORAL REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Lopez: Attended District 5 Supervisor kickoff; active with Boys & Girls Club 60th Anniversary Committee and Mexican Ladies Social Club; reported \$15,000 raised for Boys & Girls Club.

Commissioner Ramirez: Attended District 5 Supervisor campaign kickoff.

Chair Carey: Attended Buena Vista Beautifiers meeting, Friends of the Library luncheon, County Parks Master Plan workshop, and Mayor's Youth Task Force meeting (planning Los Angeles educational trip).

A concern was raised regarding use of a motorized remote-control boat at Jim May Park and potential wildlife impacts; staff to review applicable ordinance and enforcement options

9. ADJOURNMENT

Commission Chair Carey adjourned the meeting at 5:12 p.m.

Dennis Smitherman, Secretary

COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

TO: Recreation and Parks Commission

FROM: Dennis Smitherman, Interim Director of Recreation and Parks

DATE: April 14, 2026

SUBJECT: Adoption of the Fee Schedule for Parking at Los Flores Ranch

Description:

Consideration of a \$5 Daily Parking Fee, \$85 Annual Parking Pass for Residents, and \$100 Annual Parking Pass for Non-Residents at Los Flores Ranch.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend approving fee schedule of \$5 daily parking fee, \$85 annual parking pass for residents, and annual \$100 parking pass for non-residents at Los Flores Ranch.

BACKGROUND

Los Flores Ranch is an approximately 1,800-acre ranch owned by the City of Santa Maria and operated and maintained by the Recreation and Parks Department. The department desires to open the ranch to the public for day use seven days a week beginning in July 2026 to celebrate the 15-year anniversary of the park. Opening the park seven days a week will expand public access to recreation opportunities that are not available anywhere else in the Santa Maria Parks System. The City does not currently charge a parking fee at Los Flores Ranch, but desires to do so to offset General Fund budget reductions and expand park use.

Staff met with the Recreation and Parks Commission Budget Committee on March 27, 2026, where the proposed fees were discussed in preparation for the Public Hearing on April 14, 2026. The noticed Public Hearing has been scheduled to receive public comments and consider the proposed schedule. The Public Hearing scheduled for April 14, 2026, will be the first reading, and the second reading will be held on May 12, 2026.

DISCUSSION

In order to expand recreation opportunities at the ranch, maintain minimum operations, and to close the budget gap due to ongoing General Fund budget reductions, the department proposes adopting a new fee schedule. The department proposes a \$5 daily parking fee (day use only), a \$85 annual parking pass for residents of Santa Maria, and a \$100 annual parking pass for non-residents.

Implementation of a \$5 daily parking fee at rural recreation sites represents a modest, widely accepted pricing strategy that balances affordability with revenue generation. This fee level is consistent with comparable park systems and is unlikely to deter

visitation while providing a sustainable funding source for maintenance, operations, and capital improvements. Specifically, the proposed parking fee is intended to offset expenditures related to ongoing operations and maintenance costs for Los Flores Ranch, including site upkeep, trash removal, infrastructure repairs, habitat management, and staff support.

Importantly, the additional revenue generated from this fee will allow the City of Santa Maria to open Los Flores Ranch to the public 365 days per year, rather than the current limited schedule of four days per week, providing greater public access and recreational opportunities while maintaining financial sustainability.

At \$5 per vehicle, even low to moderate usage sites can generate meaningful revenue. For example:

- 20 vehicles/day = \$100/day (\$36,500 annually)
- 50 vehicles/day = \$250/day (\$91,250 annually)
- 100 vehicles/day = \$500/day (\$182,500 annually)

The implementation of an annual pass fee will further support regular visitors to the Los Flores Ranch through the economy of scale use. A \$85 parking pass will pay for itself after 15 visits.

Alternative(s)

- Approve the fee structure to provide funding for operations and maintenance while expanding park access and use.
- Do not approve the fee structure which would restrict park access and use due to the inability to maintain safe trails and infrastructure.

Environmental Determination

This proposal is in alignment with the appropriate use of Los Flores Ranch as described in the Environmental Impact Report adopted April 20, 2010 by the City of Santa Maria.

Fiscal Considerations

The City of Santa Maria is currently preparing the upcoming biennial budget that includes General Fund budget reductions. Adoption of parking fees at Los Flores Ranch allow the ranch to continue to operate and stay open to the public and have extended hours for use.

Impact to the Community

Approval of this award and funding request will allow the City to continue to deliver unique outdoor opportunities to residents and visitors of the City of Santa Maria. Access outdoors promotes health and wellness, and the special program offerings at the ranch enrich learning about the natural environment. The inability to financially support ranch operations at the level needed to provide for safe trails and infrastructure will likely result in the indefinite closure of the ranch, and no access to ranch features for the public.

ATTACHMENT(S)

A: Resolution- Los Flores Ranch Parking Fees

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-XX

A RESOLUTION OF THE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANTA MARIA RECOMMENDS ADOPTION OF THE PARKING FEE SCHEDULE FOR LOS FLORES RANCH.

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department operates and maintains Los Flores Ranch for public recreational use; and

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department will expand Los Flores Ranch Park access and day use; and

WHEREAS, staff has completed a market analysis comparing regional facilities and developed a proposed rental rate structure reflecting fair market value, accessibility, and cost recovery; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Parks Commission held a duly noticed Public Hearing on April 14, 2026, to receive public comments and consider the proposed rate schedule; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that the recommended rates are consistent with the City’s recreation service philosophy and equitable pricing policies.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Recreation and Parks Commission of the City of Santa Maria:

Hereby recommends that the City Council approve the Los Flores Ranch fee schedule as presented in the staff report dated April 14, 2026.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Recreation and Parks Commission of Santa Maria, California, held this 14th day of April 2026.

Ayes: _____

Noes: _____

Absent: _____

CITY OF SANTA MARIA, CALIFORNIA

By: _____
Cynthia Gudino, Chair

ATTEST:

By: _____
Dennis Smitherman, Interim Director/Secretary