



Chicago Park District

Legislation Details (With Text)

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AUTHORIZATION TO CHANGE THE GENERAL ADMISSION FEE FOR THE CHICAGO ACADEMY OF SCIENCES/PEGGY NOTEBAERT NATURE MUSEUM

To: The Honorable Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District

I. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt an order authorizing an increase in the general admission fees for the Chicago Academy of Sciences/Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum ("Nature Museum"). The proposed general admission fee increase is to take effect upon approval of the Park District Board. The museum has not increased its fees since 2007.

II. Explanation

The proposed general admission fee increase is necessary to offset the increased operating costs and provide investment in new programming. The Nature Museum, like all other entities, have experienced increased labor, materials and energy costs over the last 15 years, especially in the last two years as a result of COVID and record inflation.

The Nature Museum provides 78,000 hours of hands-on teaching in Chicago schools reaching 50,000 students. The Nature Museum's Chicago Conservation Corps has worked with dozens of community partners to recruit,

train, and support a network of over 800 leaders who have led sustainability projects throughout the city of Chicago. Those leaders have contributed over 34,000 service hours and engaged over 150,000 community members since the inception of the program.

The Nature Museum maintains a 390,000 piece living and preserved collection that is also used by researchers around the world and the museum is fully accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Over 285,000 people attended the Nature Museum annually pre-COVID and admission remains free on every Thursday during the year. In addition, the Nature Museum provides complimentary admissions to Illinois Teachers, active members of the Chicago Police and Fire Departments, active duty service members, and free field trips to Illinois school groups. The Nature Museum also provides discounted admission of \$1 for those with EBT cards.

Admission fees represent less than 5% of the Nature Museum’s annual budget (fiscal year 2022 revenue was approx. \$263,000) and actual revenues of \$6.07 million for the period. In the past, the Nature Museum has worked to address finance needs from other sources of revenue rather than admission fees from multiple sources such as corporate sponsorships, grants and foundation support.

II. Explanation (continued)

The Nature Museum anticipates the changes to the admission fee structure will generate from \$125,000 to \$200,000 annually and the museum Board supports the recommended changes to the admission fee structure which is the first in 15 years.

The following is a summary of the proposed general admission increase:

	<u><i>Current Admission Fee</i></u>	<u><i>Proposed Admission Fee</i></u>
Children under 3	Free	Free
Chicago Resident		
Children ages 3-11	\$6	\$8
Seniors	\$7	\$10
Student	\$7	\$10
Adults	\$9	\$15
IL-Resident (non-Chicago)		
Children ages 3-11	\$6	\$10

Seniors	\$7\$12
Student	\$7\$12
Adults	\$9\$17
Out of State	
Children ages 3-11	\$6\$10
Seniors	\$7\$12
Student	\$7\$12
Adults	\$9\$17

In reviewing the Nature Museum’s request, we compared their proposed pricing structure with other museums in the Chicago area, as well as other science museums across the country, and concluded that the proposed pricing structure would still be below or in line with other museums.

The Nature Museum is an invaluable resource to the people of Chicago. Increased admission fees will help allow the museum to continue to provide world-class experiences for guests of all ages; therefore, we respectfully request the Board’s authorization for the requested increase.