



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 6, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor Todd Gloria

FROM: Council President Pro Tem Kent Lee, District 6 
Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera, District 9 

SUBJECT: Response to Balboa Park Permit Portal Release — Request to Suspend Paid Parking Fees for San Diego Residents

We are concerned with how the City has launched the online portal and kiosk payment system for Balboa Park parking passes, and are writing to urge the administration to waive parking fees for residents until key problems are fixed and the public has had time to adapt to this new program.

The resident discount portal is the only method for San Diegans to receive discounts on Balboa Park parking, yet it was introduced mere days before paid parking began on Monday, January 5th – a haphazard rollout that will surely lead to San Diegans missing out on their resident discount and paying higher parking rates than they have to.

There has been an inadequate effort to educate the public on how to use this new system, especially given the extensive feedback and heightened concerns leading up to this implementation – with a news release distributed the day after the New Year holiday being the extent of the communication from the City. As a result, San Diegans have not been clearly informed about:

- When the resident portal would be accessible
- How to register in and use the new system
- The inability to purchase discounted parking passes in person
- When enforcement will actually begin

The fact that San Diegans can only qualify for the resident discount if they register their vehicles 48-hours *before* their first visit to Balboa Park, and purchase passes *in advance* of each subsequent visit, underscores why ample time for public education is so important.

Additionally, as the administration is aware, there was a scramble recently to affix information regarding resident discounts to the parking payment kiosks. There is also a rush to manufacture signs to inform visitors they can park for free for three hours in the lower Inspiration Point parking lot — essential information that is currently missing from the park.

The fact that these critical steps are being taken at the last minute, including the signs, which won't be ready for days if not weeks, shows a clear example that this program is not yet ready for prime time. San Diegans should not have to deal with the impacts of a system that is not yet optimized for public use.

For these reasons, we urge the administration to immediately suspend paid parking fees for all residents until these changes are implemented, and residents have more time to register their vehicles in this new system.

cc: Paola Avila, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Matt Yagyagan, Director of Policy, Office of the Mayor
Sara Kamiab, Chief of Staff, Office of the Council President Pro Tem Kent Lee
Molly Weber, Chief of Staff, Office of Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera