



Council Agenda Report

From: Angelica Fortin, Director

Subject: Introduction and First Reading by Title Only of Ordinance No. XXX Amending Title 9 of the Municipal Code to Include Park Regulations

The City finds that this action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (c), 15061, and 15378 (b)(5).

Date: September 16, 2025

Facts

1. Currently, park and recreational facility use is regulated through a set of Rules and Regulations that was adopted by City Council in 1994. These Rules and Regulations have not been updated since that time and have not been codified in the City's Municipal Code, which is typically how park facility use is governed.
2. Codified rules and regulations establishing appropriate use of public parks and related recreational facilities promote social well-being by providing safe access to all residents and further protect against the destruction and degradation of said parks.
3. The proposed ordinance ("Ordinance") establishes rules and regulations governing the use of City parks and recreational facilities to ensure they are maintained for the enjoyment and benefit of the public while protecting public health, safety, and general welfare.
4. The Ordinance also establishes procedures for obtaining special event and facility use permits intended to facilitate safe and orderly use of the City's public parks and recreational facilities.

Options

1. Take no action;
2. Introduce for first reading by title only, Ordinance No. XXXX amending Chapter 9.04 and adding Chapter 9.55 to Title 9 of the City of Paso Robles Municipal Code to include Park Regulations;
3. Provide alternative direction to staff.

Analysis and Conclusions

Currently, the use of City parks and recreational facilities is governed by a set of Rules and Regulations adopted by the City Council in 1994. These regulations have neither been updated nor incorporated into the City's Municipal Code, the standard method for formalizing such policies. Codifying park regulations is critical to ensuring the appropriate use of public facilities, promoting equitable access, supporting community well-being, and protecting these valuable public assets from misuse or degradation.

To address this gap, the proposed ordinance ("Ordinance") introduces updated, codified rules and procedures for the use of parks and recreational facilities. Its primary purpose is to preserve these spaces for public enjoyment while protecting public health, safety, and welfare. It also formalizes the process for obtaining special event permits, supporting safe and organized public use. While the Ordinance provides

a clear and enforceable framework, it does not substantially change current policies or practices. Rather, it establishes a more effective and transparent method for their implementation.

Development and Review Process

The Ordinance was developed in close collaboration with the City’s legal counsel and shaped over the past year by resident feedback, service requests, and staff experience. Staff conducted a comprehensive review of internal policies, relevant case law, and comparable municipal codes to ensure both legal integrity and practical application. The goal is to offer a balanced approach that safeguards public spaces without placing undue restrictions on access.

A regional review revealed that Paso Robles is one of only two cities in San Luis Obispo County that does not currently codify its park regulations. In contrast, cities of similar size, both within and outside the region, have adopted such measures as part of their municipal code frameworks.

San Luis Obispo County Cities

City	Population	Park Code
Arroyo Grande	18,249	X
Atascadero	29,743	X
Grover Beach	12,534	X
Morro Bay	10,591	X
Pismo Beach	7,984	
Paso Robles	31,568	
San Luis Obispo	49,729	X

Comparable Cities Outside County

City	Population	Park Code
Banning	31,929	X
Bell	31,930	X
Goleta	32,611	X
Monterey	29,015	X
San Pablo	31,562	X
Santa Paula	31,786	X
Seaside	31,524	X

Key Provisions of the Ordinance

The City’s 1994 Rules and Regulations served as administrative guidance for park use but were not codified in the Municipal Code. They were limited in scope, lacked clear enforcement mechanisms, and did not address modern facility use needs. Organized into 20 sections, the new Ordinance introduces several significant updates, including:

- **Codification and Enforcement** – Elevates park rules from informal policy to enforceable law, with penalties defined as infractions or misdemeanors. Rules that define and address the protection of park property and disorderly conduct that could result in ejection are clearly listed.
- **Expanded Definitions** – Adds clear terms for “special events,” “inflatable attractions,” “facility use,” and other key activities.
- **Permitting Process** – Establishes formal application timelines, criteria for approval/denial, and appeal procedures for both special events and facility use. Also clearly prioritizes and protects use by permit holders from other park users and unpermitted vendors at special events.
- **Inflatable Attractions and Temporary Structures** – Newly regulated, requiring permits and insurance for community safety.
- **Fees and Insurance** – Clarifies requirements for deposits, departmental service fees, and indemnification; allows nonprofit waiver requests when events benefit the community. While the City’s existing fee schedule already governs service and facility fees, codification clarifies their intent and application. The fee schedule is reviewed annually by the City Council and amended as needed.

- **Public Health and Safety** – Expands prohibition of public urination to include **public defecation**; strengthens disorderly conduct rules, harassment protections, and grounds for ejection.
- **Environmental Compliance** – Makes CEQA findings, clarifying the ordinance is not a project subject to CEQA review.

Overall, the Ordinance transforms the City’s park regulations from basic operational guidelines into a comprehensive legal framework that is transparent, enforceable, and aligned with best practices.

Violations of the Ordinance are subject to penalties aligned with Municipal Code Chapter 1.02. Previously, penalties were not defined, which has resulted in confusion for staff and the public. Fines include:

- \$100 for the first infraction
- \$200 for a second infraction within the same year
- \$500 for any additional infractions within the same year
- Misdemeanors may result in a \$1,000 fine or up to six months in jail; however, the City Attorney may pursue misdemeanors as infractions when appropriate.

Additional Code Amendment

An amendment to Municipal Code Chapter 9.04 is also proposed. Section 9.04.120, which currently addresses public urination, would be updated to include a prohibition on public defecation.

Implementation

On August 11, 2025, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee unanimously recommended that the City Council adopt the proposed Ordinance. If approved, Recreation Services staff will launch a communication plan that includes:

- **Park Signage Updates:** Existing park signage is inconsistent, deteriorating, and does not reference the relevant municipal code. If the ordinance is approved, signage will be updated to ensure consistency, improved condition, and inclusion of applicable code references.
- **Website Review and Updates:** Staff will conduct a comprehensive review of the website to ensure all content is accurate, up-to-date, and consistent with current policies and ordinances.
- **Bilingual Special Event and Facility Use Applications:** These applications are currently being revised to provide clearer guidance and site-specific information. Once finalized, they will also include references to the newly adopted municipal code.
- **Bilingual Materials for User Interactions:** Informational guides currently provided during permit application and on-site interactions will be updated to reflect the municipal code and include more detailed, user-friendly content.
- **Policy Development:** All existing policies will be reviewed and updated to reference the municipal code. In addition, a new comprehensive policy on the use of inflatables and temporary structures will be developed to address community safety, minimize risk, and ensure consistent enforcement.

Impact to Users

The new ordinance improves the public’s park experience by making facilities safer, cleaner, and more predictable to use. Clearer rules on conduct, sanitation, alcohol, and event permitting reduce conflicts and help maintain welcoming spaces for families, seniors, and children. Formalized reservation and permitting processes ensure fair access to facilities while large events are better coordinated, minimizing disruption to everyday users. For example, a resident planning a large birthday party or community fundraiser in a City park will notice little change in the overall process, as permits have long been part of

facility use. What the ordinance provides is clearer timelines, defined responsibilities, and added safeguards. Hosts will still apply for a permit, but they now benefit from clearer guidance on requirements such as insurance, setup of tents or inflatables, and coordination of services like trash and restrooms. This ensures fewer surprises for organizers, smoother events, and a more consistent experience for both attendees and other park users.

Overall, the ordinance creates a more enjoyable, equitable, and reliable park experience for all residents.

Fiscal Impact

There is no significant fiscal impact associated with recommending adoption of Ordinance No. XXXX amending Chapter 9.04 and adding Chapter 9.55 to Title 9 of the City of Paso Robles Municipal Code to include Park Regulations. Existing budgeted funds will be utilized to update signage across the City's 14 park locations at an estimated cost of \$1,500.

CEQA

The City finds that this action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (c), 15061(b)(3) and 15378 (b)(5). Here, the Ordinance introduces general park rules and regulations, such as prohibited disorderly conduct and applicable permitting procedures for special events, that will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Further, because the Ordinance constitutes an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in a physical change in the environment, it is therefore not subject to CEQA.

Recommendation

Introduce for first reading by title only, Ordinance No. XXXX amending Chapter 9.04 and adding Chapter 9.55 to Title 9 of the City of Paso Robles Municipal Code to include Park Regulations.

Attachments

1. Ordinance No. XXXX Amending Title 9 of the Municipal Code
2. Summary of Amendments to Chapter 9 of the Municipal Code
3. 1994 Rules and Regulations for the Operation of City Parks and Recreational Facilities