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Beach User Fee Increase Background and Summary

The City of Corpus Christi (City) is seeking an increase for beach user fees charged on the gulf beaches. The proposed increase is from \$12.00 annually to \$20.00 annually for 2027 upon terms set with the City of Port Aransas and Nueces County per the Interlocal Agreement (ILA). The city has not requested a beach user fee increase since 2004, and during that time the cost of goods and services has increased by almost 76.29% based on a comparison of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Simply stated, to provide the same level of services to the same number of beach visitors as recorded on the Gulf Beaches in 2004, the city is required to spend almost 76.29% more on funding beach operations. This number does not consider the annual increase in beach visitors to the city over the past 20 years. Based on permit sales from 2020 to 2025, visitors to beaches within Nueces County have increased by 30%.

To keep up with the increase in visitation, the city has added additional programs and staffing on the gulf beaches. These additions include; a free trash bag program that consists of handing out over 40,000+ bags a year, creating a USLA certified Beach Rescue Division that has increased the total number of lifeguards on the beach year around, and added a beach safety coordinator position that performs public outreach in local schools, on the beaches, and at special events to help promote beach safety.

The city recently took over the maintenance of the 1-mile-long Michael J. Ellis Seawall on North Padre Island and is working on upgrading the well-worn seawall with a \$15 million dollar project. The upgrades will include recapping the entire seawall with concrete to repair decades of wear and degradation while also providing additional amenities at the Windward parking lot for an improved visitor's experience. In addition, the project will address decades-long accessibility issues by including additional staircases and ADA ramps to provide better access from the seawall to the beach. Moving forward, the city's Beach Operations division will now be responsible for maintaining the seawall and all new amenities.

Additional city projects serving the Gulf Beaches include adding new public restrooms and beach rescue headquarters on Zahn Road, and a new beach access road along SH 361. Each of these projects has resulted in an overall increase in the amount of funding needed to maintain the services and facilities provided to beach users. City beach operations are funded by Beach User Fees and State Hotel Occupancy Tax and do not receive the benefit of property tax collections. Therefore, there is an urgent need to increase beach user fees to offset the increased cost of services due to inflation, continue to upgrade amenities, and to maintain the current services provided for all beach users.

Beach User Fee Approval Checklist

Texas Administrative Code Chapter 15.8 Requirements

Requirements	Included in Proposal (Y/N)	Comments
1. Description of current beach access system	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
2. List and description of beach user fees currently assessed by jurisdiction	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
3. Citations of all legal authorities for the collection of beach user fees	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
4. Analysis of consistency with Open Beaches Act	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
5. Analysis of how the beach user fee relates to beachfront construction, vehicular controls, parking and dune protection	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page

6. Statements regarding short-term and long-term goals relating to the expenditures based on beach user fees	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
7. Reciprocity of Fees with other local governments authorized to charge BUF's	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page

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Beach User Fee Plan - 2026

Checklist Narrative

Description of current beach access system.

The city maintains public beach access on Mustang and Padre Island with eight (8) public access roads to our 7.8 miles of public beaches. Many of these access points provide both pedestrian and vehicular beach access from Port Aransas city limits at beach marker 62 to Kleberg County at BM 252. The city has two areas that do not require a permit, south of Access Road 2 to Mustang Island state park and the parking lot on Windward at the Michael J. Ellis seawall.

List and description of beach user fees currently assessed by jurisdiction.

Access rd.	Park Location	Camping free with parking permit	Annual
2	4 Miles off Access Rd. 2	<i>Not allowed</i>	\$12.00
New Port Pass	New Port Beach	<i>Allowed</i>	\$12.00
Zhan Rd	JP Luby Park	<i>Allowed</i>	\$12.00
3A	3A North	Allowed	\$12.00
	Seawall	Not allowed	\$12.00
Whitecap	Whitecap Beach	<i>Not allowed</i>	\$12.00
4	Whitecap/County	<i>Not allowed</i>	\$12.00
6	South Beach	<i>Allowed</i>	\$12.00

*Camping is allowed for 3 days in length

The city operates a beach parking permit system requiring a \$12.00 parking permit fee (\$12.00 since 2004) annually for all vehicles.

Citations of all legal authorities for the collection of beach user fees.

The City of Corpus Christi Municipal Ordinances Part III Chapter 10 Article VIII Fees Sec. 10.86 give the city its legal authority to sell permits. approved by the general land office under § 15.8(e) of Title 31

of the Texas Administrative Code. Sec10. 87 set how the fee is spent. Sec. 10.88 to 90 are the remainder of the fee sections.

Analysis of consistency with Open Beaches Act.

The city is in full compliance with the Texas Open Beaches Act (TOBA) and is continually seeking innovative methods to bring new and diverse visitors to the beach. The city is seeking to expand and enhance the access points beyond the existing access roads by building a new access road toward the north end of the city limits on 361. This addition will improve beach user access and emergency response along with the additional amenities provided at each access road. As a component of the fee increases, the city will increase staff observations and reporting capabilities that will help to maintain and improve services, and at the same time, serve to provide additional protections for the beach and dunes from activities not consistent with the Open Beach Act (OBA) or the Dune Protection Act, (DPA).

Analysis of how the beach user fee relates to beachfront construction, vehicular controls, parking and dune protection.

The beach user fees collected by the City are directly related and essential to the provision of beach-related services. The City administers beachfront construction, dune protections, vehicular controls, and parking regulations within the City; these services and administrative costs are offset through the collection of permit fees. The city does not collect beach user fees to increase its “bottom line” or to maintain a given fund balance; given the level of expenditures detailed below it does not appear possible that user fees will result in “turning a profit” especially when considering the breadth and scope of recent and future beach restoration projects.

The City of Corpus Christi Municipal Ordinances Part III Chapter 10 Beachfront Management and Construction regulate all-beach activities and construction of any structure on or near the dunes. In addition, the city follows The Corpus Christi Gulf Beach Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) for the Maintenance of the Gulf Beaches within the city limits. The City developed this plan in accordance with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Beach Maintenance Permit, to maintain the area between the toe of the dunes and the Gulf of Mexico. The development of this plan was motivated by the desire for the project team to maximize productivity by improving the beach and working to restore the area to its natural state while keeping it clean and drivable for beach users. The AMP additionally helps the city address beach nourishment issues within what is allowable by the USACE permit.

Over the past five years the city has contributed staff time and funding to plan and implement major beach nourishment projects on North Padre Island by using BUDM from Packery Channel and the fillets on the North and South side of the channel.

Statements regarding short-term and long-term goals relating to the expenditure based on beach user fees.

The city's Beach Operations and Beach Rescue divisions are funded by State Hotel Occupancy Tax and Beach User Fees and are not supported by property or sales tax income. These funding sources place a significant emphasis on the importance of conducting ongoing short- and long-term planning based on expected beach user fee revenues and hotel occupancy. If the city is unable to maintain the beach and the services provided, the impacts will be of decreasing value for the public, resulting in a direct loss of program income that would require the city to ultimately cut budgets that support services and staff on the beach.

Short-term Goals

The city recently assumed the maintenance of the 1-mile-long Michael J. Ellis Seawall on North Padre Island and is working on upgrading the seawall with a \$15 million dollar project. The upgrades will include recapping the entire seawall with concrete to repair decades of wear and degradation while also providing additional amenities at the Windward parking lot for an improved visitor's experience. In addition, the project will address decades-long accessibility issues by including additional staircases and ADA ramps to provide better access from the seawall to the beach. Moving forward, the city's Beach Operations division will now be responsible for maintaining the seawall and all new amenities. The city will need to increase staff and equipment to provide the service. (approximately \$265,000 in the first year and \$185,000 annually)

Additional City projects serving the Gulf Beaches include adding new public restrooms and beach rescue facility on Zahn Road, and a new beach access road along SH 361. Each of these projects has resulted in an overall increase in the amount of funding needed to maintain the services and facilities provided to beach users.

The city will be providing portable toilets by the access road and will have to maintain trash pickup along the road along with the installation of a free trash bag box. The city will also have to install and maintain all safety signage and rules placed at the new beach access road. (approximately \$10,000)

Additional surveying will need to be added to the current survey contract to extend across the entire 7.8 miles of City maintained beach and will need to include the 5 miles of the Mustang Island state park. The additional surveys and broader coverage will help to gather a better understanding of where the shoreline erosion issues are and how to best provide a solution. (approximately \$50,000)

There is a need to replace the aged and storm damaged vehicle storage building at the Beach Operations maintenance yard to help protect the equipment purchased with Beach user fees. (approximately \$1,000,000)

Due to the corrosive environment and daily use, the city will need to replace several pieces of equipment in the next 5 years. (approximately \$600,000)

The recently added Beach Rescue division is expected to keep improving and growing in their capabilities and coverage and will need to add staff and equipment. (approximately \$1,500,000)

Long-term Goals

The city is working on long-term goals that include plans for future beach nourishment projects that include upland sand sources on North Padre and Mustang Island, dredging the filets on the north and south side of the Packery Channel jetties, and dredging the Packery channel when enough sand is available for collection. The city is also looking at offshore areas to best determine future amendments of the two USACE permits held by the city. (approximately \$25,000,000)

The city will also be looking at areas along the beach to add additional public restrooms and parking. This may include purchasing land to help provide these improved amenities. (approximately \$2,000,000)

Reciprocity of Fees with other local governments authorized to charge BUF's.

An interlocal agreement is currently in place between the City of Corpus Christi, City of Port Aransas, and Nueces County.

The agreement was established in 2004 and states that each of the entities collecting beach user fees within Nueces County (Nueces County, City of Corpus Christi, and City of Port Aransas) have agreed that due to the distinct boundary between the City of Corpus Christi, City of Port Aransas, and Nueces County they will all maintain the same permit and split the proceeds by miles of beach maintained.

Starting in 2027, a new agreement will take effect between the City of Corpus Christi, City of Port Aransas, and Nueces County, that will allow each entity to keep what they sell within their designated areas but will continue to maintain one permit for all beach users. Due to the previous agreement, and historically low permits sales from Nueces County, the City of Corpus Christi and the City of Port Aransas will provide Nueces County with 16% of the total permit sales. This agreement will provide Nueces County with a similar revenue to what they collected under the previous agreement.

Beach User Fee Approval Checklist Other Preferred Provisions

Requirements	Included in Proposal (Y/N)	Comments
1. Statement regarding whether fee will unfairly limit access.	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
2. Responsibility assigned for tasks related to certifying amendments.	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
3. Projections or analysis of beach usage and parking issues.	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
4. Analysis of cost for providing services and facilities (Information is needed to determine reasonableness of proposed rates).	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
5. Budgetary analysis including revenue projections.	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
6. Acknowledge of quarterly report filing.	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
7. Comparative analysis regarding services and fees at other comparable facilities.	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page

8. Statement regarding local businesses' sales price of permits purchased at a reduced price.	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page
9. Analysis reflecting how fee was derived.	Y	Please see narrative discussion on the following page

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Checklist Narrative

Statement regarding whether fee will unfairly limit access.

The proposed beach user fee increase will not unfairly limit access, and the city will continue to maintain the free parking areas that are currently provided to all users. The city will also continue to provide a free permit to Veterans with 50% disability.

In addition, the city is working on implementing a free beach day once a year to invite beach users to enjoy a day at the beach without a parking permit.

Responsibility assigned for tasks related to certifying amendments.

The City implements beach related activities through the City of Corpus Christi's Parks and Recreation Department. The Corpus Christi Parks and Recreation Department has sufficient staff, leadership capabilities in the Director and two Assistant Directors, legal counsel, and the City Council to provide policy direction. The Parks Director coordinates with the City Manager to ensure potential amendments are pursued according to TAC guidelines.

Projections or analysis of beach usage and parking issues.

The city sells approximately 142,000 parking permits per year, and this number is expected to increase as Mustang Island and North Padre Island continue to be further developed. Along with local development, the state of Texas has been a leader in population growth with an estimated 2.6 million people moving to Texas since 2020. This growth has brought many new beach users looking for recreational activities on the coast and an experience worth repeating. Fitting with this demand is the need to improve the beach user's experience with upgraded amenities and services.

Analysis of cost for providing services and facilities (Information is needed to determine reasonableness of proposed rates).

The city is requesting an increase in permit fees to help maintain current services and amenities and assist with beach nourishment and infrastructure projects. Current and future planned nourishment and infrastructure projects will help improve visitor safety and improve the beach user experience along all 7.8 miles of City managed beaches.

Expenses have steadily risen for the city, while attempting to meet the demand from the public for new and/or increased services, and to provide those services in the context of environmental stewardship while visitation continues to reach all-time highs. If a fee increase is not approved, and the city must maintain operations at the same revenue level, the increased costs for staffing, equipment, and fuel will require the city to cut back on some services that may ultimately deter visitors.

In addition to maintaining the required level of services, the increased number of visitors to the city will require additional staff and equipment to complete the necessary daily maintenance items within the "dormant" hours of the day while maintaining compliance with state and federal guidelines.

Another factor affecting the operating budget of the city is the future unknown cost of compliance with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to obtain and maintain the permits to conduct the necessary ongoing beach maintenance activities. It is unknown at this time what the final cost of this will be, or the amount of the ongoing activities required to maintain the permit.

Budgetary analysis including revenue projections.

The City has the internal staffing and financial oversight positions to manage the general budget line items of all Gulf Beach operations. The city is entirely dependent on the collection of beach user fees and State HOT tax and does not receive any revenue from the collection of sales or property tax.

A review of previous budgets has found a distinct increase in the cost of providing services. The city has not increased beach user fees since 2004, and since that time the cost of maintaining the existing level of services has increased by almost 76.29% based on a comparison of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The revenue projections for the city, with the increase using 2025 numbers and subtracting the amount provided to Nueces County, will be \$2.3 million.



Beach User Fee Plan - 2026

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Total Permits Sold	110,652	120,052	130,723	118,021	141,251	(April 2026) 106,269	(Projected) 133,055
Revenue	\$ 1,360,828	\$ 1,431,828	\$ 1,483,899	\$ 1,341,110	\$ 1,658,684	(April 2026) \$ 672,151	(Projected) \$ 2,195,424
Expenditures	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Beach Operations/ Permit Sales Personnel	\$ 800,882	\$ 842,078	\$ 854,012	\$ 907,890	\$ 912,393	\$ 936,3698	\$ 1,115,000
Beach Operations/ Permit Sales Operating	\$ 823,763	\$ 800,418	\$ 818,513.00	\$ 705,173.00	\$ 697,890.00	\$ 680,106.00	\$ 903,000
Beach Rescue Personnel	\$ 242,336	\$ 288,658.00	\$ 311,593.00	\$ 342,570.00	Moved to SHOT not enough BUF	Moved to SHOT not enough BUF	\$ 172,000
Beach Rescue Operating	\$ 156,432	\$ 135,922.00	\$ 158,204.00	\$ 137,988.00	Moved to SHOT not enough BUF	Moved to SHOT not enough BUF	\$ 150,000

Acknowledgement of quarterly report filing.

The city acknowledges and is aware of the requirement to submit quarterly financial reports and supporting information that is due within 60 days of the close of the State of Texas fiscal quarters being September - November; December - February; March - May; and June - August of each fiscal year.

Comparative analysis regarding services and fees at other comparable facilities.

The City of Corpus Christi, City of Port Aransas, and Nueces County will maintain the same permits at the same price for all three jurisdictions per the interlocal agreement.

Compared to other jurisdictions along the Texas coast, the cost of a permit in Corpus Christi at the new rate will continue to be one of the most affordable.

Statement regarding local businesses' sales price of permits purchased at a reduced price.

Parking permits are available at the administrative offices of the city, at local park offices, and on the beach. They are also available at 29 locations around the city through various vendors. The vendors purchase permits for \$.50 less than the sales price and receive that amount on every permit sold.

Analysis reflecting how fee was derived.

The city has been operating on a budget shortfall and drawing more from the State HOT tax funds due to an increased cost of services and expanded operations. With new projects being implemented, and the increasing demand to provide additional and enhanced amenities, the city determined it will be unable to maintain beach services at the current revenue from permit sales.

A review of total permit sales and current budget shortfalls determined an increase to \$20 annually would be required to maintain services. The proposed increase was reviewed and approved by the local chapter for the Surfriders Foundation, the Corpus Christi Water, Shore and Beach Advisory Committee, and a group of stakeholders involved with local beach management.

Prior to 2024 all Gulf Beach lifeguards operated under the Beach Operations division with minimal staffing that was primarily utilized during the summer season. In 2024 the Beach Rescue Division was created, and operations were expanded to employ over 50 full and part time positions comprised of lifeguards, senior guards, supervisors, a beach safety outreach coordinator, lifeguard training officer, and a superintendent. In 2025, the Beach Rescue division became a certified agency of the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) and is the designated lifeguard service for the city. The mission of the Beach Rescue division is to protect the millions of people who visit the city beaches each year, respond to aquatic emergencies year around, educate the public about beach safety, and be a good community partner.

The Beach Rescue division has been a valuable addition to all operations on the Gulf Beaches but has only further stretched the funding available to maintain services and pay for large projects like beach nourishment.

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Beach Operations and Beach Rescue Services

The following activities are a list of beach-related services the City's Beach Operations and Beach Rescue divisions provide during routine beach activities on all beaches within the City of Corpus Christi.

- Litter service and dumping 250 96-gallon trash cans serviced daily.
- Hand out over 40,000 free litter bags to the public.
- Participation in and support of the Adopt-a-Beach program semi-annual beach clean-up events. Including providing sponsorship and logistical support to facilitate the removal of collected debris.
- Beach cleaning division crews are trained in endangered species awareness and are equipped with cell phones or radios to make emergency or species location notifications.
- Maintain the necessary administrative infrastructure to support payroll, required reporting for governing agencies and independent internal comptroller staffing to ensure fiscal compliance.
- Minor loading and/or raking of sargassum, especially during peak seasons or extraordinary circumstances, as identified in the city's USACE Permit.
- Minor grading of beachfront for emergency service access points.
- Create and maintain a stockpile of sand or a combination of sand and seaweed to help repair dune tidal impacts and outfall drainage scour.
- Minor grading and/or raking beaches to level sand drift, fill holes and reduce hazards to the public.
- Maintenance of signage at beaches, along seawall, and at access points, regarding species awareness, public safety, water quality, and accessibility.
- Removal of graffiti.
- Removal of driftwood debris.
- Foreign debris removal such as metal and plastic drums, gas cylinders, building materials, etc. Removal takes place after notification of proper authorities including the local fire department, TGLO, Coast Guard, TCEQ, and other resource agencies.
- Deceased marine animal removal such as dolphins, turtles, and large fish. Said removal will only occur after notification of proper authorities; i.e., Marine Mammal Stranding Network, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Coast Guard etc., and taking actions based on their instructions.

- Level and repair beach washouts to reduce hazards to the public and improve public safety.
- Mechanical and hand picking of trash and litter.
- Beach Rescue patrol activities and promoting beach safety; coordinate daily colored flag messaging system to inform the public regarding surf conditions or potentially dangerous weather conditions, presence of potentially dangerous marine life, and general warnings.
- Response to citizen complaints/concerns via direct contact with onsite staff, and via electronic media both telephone and email.
- Provide approximately 20 portable toilet facilities at remote locations on all beaches, additional units are added during special events and holidays.
- Coordination of multiple special events including Spring Break activities, Holiday events, and community outreach efforts for beach safety awareness.





Beach User Fee Plan - 2026

The city has 41,131.2 linear feet (approximately 7.8 miles) of public beach that it maintains on North Padre and Musting Island and within that geographic area includes the management and operation of ADA accessible public parking, restroom and shower facilities, the Packery channel jetties, and the Packery channel boat ramp and overlook areas.

In addition to the designated park locations on North Padre and Musting Island and the maintenance of their associated beach access points, the city has assumed the operation and maintenance of the Michael J, Ellis North Padre Island Seawall.

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Supporting Documents Provided:

- 1.) 2002 Interlocal Agreement with City of Port Aransas and Nueces County
- 2.) 2004 Interlocal Agreement Amendment
- 3.) 2026 Interlocal Agreement Amendment
- 4.) Chapter 10 City Code of Ordinance Beach Management
- 5.) City of Corpus Christi Beach Adaptive Management Plan