

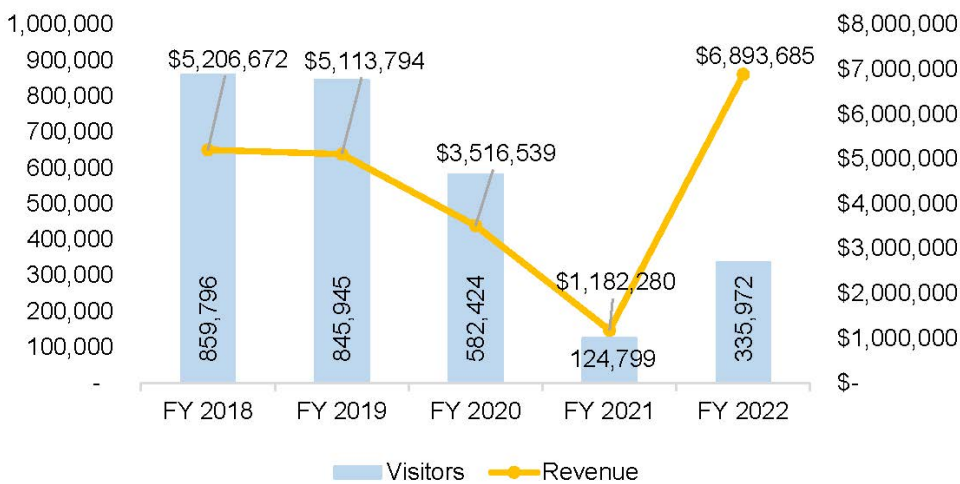
# City Auditor's Highlights

Audit of the Hanauma Bay Online Reservation System  
Report No. 23-01



Hanauma Bay was closed to the public in March 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, in accordance with City Council Resolution 20-207, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) sought to establish a reservation system to accurately count and control visitors to Hanauma Bay, for the preservation of the bay's natural resources as well as to commit to social distancing mandates. In December 2020, Hanauma Bay reopened. Our audit sought to determine whether DPR is maximizing the online system to effectively facilitate the reservation process. We found that the Hanauma Bay reservation system has successfully facilitated new entry procedures for the bay, placing limits on the number of daily visitors allowed, and has also led to an increase in admission revenues. While the reservation system technically fulfills its purpose, we found that there are changes the department could implement to improve the reservation process, the experience for visitors, and the environmental preservation of the bay.

**Hanauma Bay Visitors & Revenue**



Along with the new reservation system, fees for admission and parking were raised.

**Visitor Capacity:**

- Previous limit: ~3,000 visitors
- Current daily limit: 1,400 visitors

**Admission Fees:**

- \$25 for non-residents ages 13+
- Free for all residents, minors, and active duty military personnel

**Parking Fees:**

- \$1 for residents
- \$3 for non-residents
- \$10-\$40 for commercial vehicles

**The reservation system may disadvantage certain populations**

- In the current reservation process, visitors have to *race* to select their desired time and amount of tickets, and to enter personal information before their tickets are temporarily held for payment.
- This *race* may be inequitable to certain populations of visitors that are elderly, disabled, and/or otherwise technologically disinclined.
- The department collects complaints made by visitors, but doesn't track or otherwise review them for resolution or improvement to such issues in the reservation process.

**Hanauma Bay's policies differ from other State & National Parks in Hawai'i**

- Hanauma Bay is the only park that starts the temporary ticket hold time after visitors type in their personal information. In addition to inequity issues, this *race* can lead to increased mistakes, and potentially lost revenue.
- Hanauma Bay's advance reservation window is the shortest, at only two days prior to visiting.
- Hanauma Bay does not have an online Frequently Asked Questions page for visitor convenience and travel tips.
- Hanauma Bay does not have an online parking payment option.

**DPR does not have official benchmarks to measure its conservation efforts**

- DPR needs to define what successful conservation means, as well as establish goals for ongoing conservation efforts.
- DPR does not have metrics to track what impact its changes to visitor capacity policy have on the Hanauma Bay marine ecosystem.
- Without clearly defined goals or metrics, the department is unable to definitively say whether its policies are effective or if the resulting effects are desirable for the future of Hanauma Bay.

**We made eight recommendations to DPR to improve the efficiency of the reservation process and to support the preservation of the natural resources at Hanauma Bay. The department expressed general agreement with the report's findings and recommendations.**



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