

2026 Work Plan – Facilities, Programs and Fees Subcommittee

Purpose

This memo outlines the proposed 2026 Work Plan priorities for the Facilities, Programs and Fees Subcommittee and provides background on its policy leadership role within the Parks Division.

Subcommittee Role

The Facilities, Programs, and Fees Subcommittee was created to advise the Park Commission regarding operation standards, rules and regulations, and policies. It makes program recommendations, approves new and continuing special events, and develops policies as needed. It makes recommendations on new and updated user fees and charges and the annual schedule of fees and charges for all parks, Parks Division operated facilities, the City's golf courses and Forest Hill Cemetery. It also reviews proposed fee modifications. The subcommittee consists of seven (7) members who shall be City of Madison residents and meets as needed.

Background

In recent years, the Subcommittee has advanced several policy initiatives:

- Adoption and refinement of the Division's annual fee schedule
- Development of Fee Modification Agreements to improve documentation of park use
- Development and implementation of the Qualifying Discounts Program, modernizing how financial assistance is offered and strengthening equity and transparency
- Streamlining of the event permit approval processes to improve staff efficiency

These efforts have strengthened fiscal stewardship, improved equity in access, and enhanced governance clarity.

2026 Work Plan Priorities

1. Fee Policy Framework and Cost Recovery

The Subcommittee will focus on strengthening the policy framework guiding fee adoption and review, including:

- Balancing affordability and access with fiscal responsibility
- Evaluating cost recovery expectations
- Assessing fairness and transparency in fee structures
- Expanding and evaluating the Qualifying Discounts Program
- Identifying additional process streamlining opportunities

2. Youth Engagement Coordinator & WPCRC Expansion

As the Youth Engagement Coordinator is onboarded and the WPCRC expansion is complete, the Subcommittee may provide policy-level support through:

- Review of youth access and fee structures
- Alignment with equity and inclusion goals
- Clarification of cost recovery expectations for youth programming
- Establishment of reporting metrics and policy checkpoints

The emphasis will remain on policy guidance and governance guardrails rather than operational implementation.

The Subcommittee's continued leadership will ensure that Parks Division policies remain equitable, fiscally responsible, and adaptable to evolving community needs.