

Madison Parks Division

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October 7, 2025

To: Board of Park Commissioners

From: CJ Ryan, Assistant Parks Superintendent

Re: Summary of 2026 Park Fees

The Board of Park Commissioners establishes Park Fees on an annual basis. On September 15, 2025, the Facilities, Programs, and Fees Subcommittee reviewed the proposed 2026 Park Fee changes. As part of an improved process this year, each work unit submitted its proposed changes along with a presentation summarizing the proposed changes and their anticipated impacts. After review and discussion, the Subcommittee recommended approval of the proposed fees, with minor revisions noted in the meeting minutes.

Table 1 provides a summary of the proposed fee changes by program area. The October 8, 2025, Board of Park Commissioners agenda includes links to each detailed fee proposal and staff presentation for further reference.

Table 1. Summary of Proposed 2026 Park Fee Changes

Program Area	Fee Summary
Warner Park	New fees for expanded programs and facilities. Fees for existing
Community and	spaces remain the same.
Recreation Center	
Forest Hill Cemetery	3% increase for all fees. Administrative fee increase to offset software
	costs.
Athletics	Cricket Pitch fees adjusted to align with comparable facilities. Policy
	updates regarding change/transfer requests and weather-related
	cancellations.
Shelter Reservations	New year-round shelter at the Imagination Center
	Policy updates for reservation changes and transfers.
Permits (Dog, Disc,	Fee increases to align with 2026 Dane County fees.
Mooring, etc.)	
Aquatics Program	Resident fees remain unchanged.
	Slight reductions to select non-resident fees.
Recreation Services	New ski poles-only rental option. Increase Winter Family Prom to \$10
	per family. All other fees remain unchanged.
Special Event Permits	Increase in "Damage to Property" fee to reflect higher labor costs.
	Clarified weekly Farmer's Market fee structure.
Olbrich Botanical	Increase room rental rates to reflect labor costs and enhanced service
Gardens	levels. Addition of new small-event spaces. Updated photo permit
	structure to accommodate larger groups.
Golf Program	Fee increases refelcting market rates and cost adjustments. New rate
	category established for junior golfers.

In developing the 2026 Park Fee proposals, the Parks Division sought to maintain affordability while addressing rising operational and labor costs. Overall trends in the proposed changes include:

- Introduction of new fees for new programs and facilities.
- Adjustments to reflect increased labor and operational costs.
- Modest or no increases in many areas to preserve accessibility for residents.

Some proposals include related policy updates. For example, the Athletic and Shelter Reservation policies introduce a new option for partial refunds when cancellations are due to major weather events, based on National Weather Service data.

All individual fee proposals and supporting presentations are included in the Board of Park Commissioners agenda materials for your review.