

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: MEGAN BASINGER, DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: FEE ADJUSTMENT FOR RECREATION AND PARKS RELATED
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

The Housing and Community Services Department recommends that the Council, by resolution: 1) approve the proposed fee schedule for various facilities and services effective January 1, 2026; and 2) delegate authority to the Director of Housing and Community Services to set the necessary fees for seasonal program activities, excursions, special events, and athletic league fees.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Recreation Division of the Housing and Community Services Department provides a wide range of fee-based services, including facility use, admissions, and program activities. The Department is proposing updated fees to adjust to increasing expenses, support greater cost recovery and improve operational efficiencies.

GOAL

This item relates to Council Goal #1 - Achieve and Maintain Budgeting Excellence and Fiscal Stability and promotes greater cost recovery and financial sustainability for the Recreation Division.

BACKGROUND/PRIOR COUNCIL REVIEW

1. The Recreation Division of the Housing and Community Services Department offers a wide variety of services for which fees are charged. These fees help to recover the direct costs of providing facilities and services and lessen the burden on the City's General Fund.

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2. City Code Section 11-46.030 requires Council to establish park user fees by resolution. Park user fees include facility rental and admission fees for recreation programs and facilities.
3. In 1995, Council approved Resolution 22307, a list of facility rental fees, amusement activities and associated services, and delegated authority to the Director of Recreation and Parks to set the necessary fees for seasonal program activities, excursions, special events, and athletic league fees based on the City's actual costs for the activities. This practice has continued for 30 years; the fees proposed in this item are those that require Council review and approval.
4. Council approved comprehensive adjustments to the Recreation and Parks Master Fee schedule in 2000, (Resolution 24445), 2010, (Resolution 27648), 2013, (Resolution 28291), 2017, (Resolution 2017-090) and 2024, (Resolution 2024-038).
5. Council approved minor adjustments to the schedule in 2005, (Resolution 26314), 2008, (Resolution 27137), 2009, (Resolution 27411), 2012, (Resolution 28032), 2014, (Resolution 28501), 2015, (Resolution 28652), and 2016, (Resolution 28800).
6. The Recreation division is proposing an increase to user fees to ensure the long-term sustainability of recreational programming and parks operations and increase the City's cost recovery for parks and recreational facilities and services.

ANALYSIS

- Adjustments to admission and facility/equipment rental fees require Council approval.
- Fees are periodically adjusted to reflect new or revised spaces and are based on recovering a portion of the cost to operate and prepare the facilities and parks, while balancing user demand for the space and services available.
- Over the past 10 years, the Division has made only modest increases to the fee schedule while actively recovering from the revenue and participation losses caused by the 2017 Tubbs Fire and the 2020-2022 COVID-19 pandemic.
- Between 2015 and 2025, the local minimum wage increased by 98.6%, while the national consumer price index rose by 36.3% over the same period substantially increasing the cost of providing services.
- The Recreation Division currently budgets for a 47.8% recovery of direct program costs and 40.3% of total Division costs through program revenue. The Division aims to increase cost recovery in a balanced way that maintains accessibility while supporting sustainable service delivery.
- Attachment 1 outlines the proposed recreation fees, which streamline rental charges and modestly increase fees to improve cost recovery and enhance operational efficiency.
- Achieving full recovery of direct costs would require raising fees by 112%. The Division's proposal takes a more measured approach to fee increases because high fees discourage participation, reduce access to services, and will result in lower revenue.

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- Proposed fee increases across program types will result in a range of revenue increases from 10% for Sports Fees and Field Rentals to 21% for Swim Center Programs and Operations. The variation reflects several factors, including timing of the last fee adjustment, the program's current cost recovery, the level of community benefit provided, and alignment with the Department's mission. Additional considerations included participation trends, market comparisons, staffing and operational costs.
- Fee increases are one component of the broader plan to increase cost recovery for delivery of Recreation programs. Additional strategies include increasing participation, finding staffing efficiencies, and exploring alternate funding sources.

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed fee schedule, effective January 1, 2026, is expected to increase the revenues collected by the Recreation Division and deposited to the General Fund. The Recreation Division projects these fees, in combination with class and activities fees, set by the Director, to increase revenue by approximately \$140,000 in Fiscal Year 2025/2026 and \$547,000 in Fiscal Year 2026/2027.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, the recommended action is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not have a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. In the alternative, the recommended action is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution/Exhibit A – (Recreation and Parks User Fee Schedule)

PRESENTER(S)

Jeff Tibbetts, Deputy Director
Jacqui Hamann, Administrative Services Officer