



Park and Recreation Board

Meeting Date: October 15, 2025

Agenda Item: Discussion and possible action to recommend to the Common Council approval of an application to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) Grants for Local Projects program for the creation of a splash pad at Starin Park.

Staff Contact (name, email, phone): Kevin Boehm, kboehm@whitewater-wi.gov, 262-473-0122

BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

The State of Wisconsin, through the Department of Administration (DOA), has announced a competitive Non-State Grant Program to support shovel-ready local government projects with a statewide public purpose. The program provides capital funding for construction projects that enhance public infrastructure and community well-being.

The City of Whitewater Parks and Recreation Department is preparing an application for the Starin Park Splash Pad and Park Enhancement Project, a shovel-ready initiative that will construct a new, fully accessible splash pad and related amenities within Starin Park. Planned improvements include fencing, a picnic shelter, shaded seating, landscaping, and ADA-accessible connections to existing restrooms and parking areas.

This project directly responds to priorities identified in the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan (2026–2031), where community input ranked a splash pad as one of the most desired new recreation facilities. The proposed improvements will provide a no-cost, family-oriented recreation opportunity for residents of all ages and abilities while strengthening equitable access to outdoor amenities in a community with a poverty rate above the state average.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Dates, committees, action taken)

- The Parks and Recreation Board has previously discussed and supported the concept of a splash pad installation within Starin Park as part of the long-range park improvement strategy.
- Inclusion of the Starin Park Splash Pad and Park Enhancement Project has been requested in the 2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to provide local matching funds required by the DOA grant program.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

The City is currently awaiting finalized design drawings and cost estimates for the Starin Park Splash Pad and Park Enhancement Project. However, \$400,000 has been requested in the 2026/2027 Capital Improvement Program to serve as the City's local match and primary funding source.

Under the DOA Non-State Grant Program requirements, the City must demonstrate at least a 50% local match for eligibility. If awarded, the DOA grant would significantly offset local costs and allow the project to proceed on an accelerated timeline.

Staff will immediately begin a fundraising campaign to offset costs and allow for the inclusion of additional amenities such as a picnic shelter, fencing, and landscaping to further enhance the park’s usability and aesthetic value.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff respectfully requests that the Parks and Recreation Board approve a motion of support for submission of the City’s grant application to the Wisconsin Department of Administration Non-State Grant Program for the Starin Park Splash Pad and Park Enhancement Project.

Formal support from the Board will accompany the application and be referenced in the Council Resolution authorizing submission to the DOA.

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)

Draft Common Council Resolution – *Authorizing Application for State of Wisconsin Non-State Grant Program Funding*
