



Chicago Park District

Legislation Text

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AUTHORIZATION TO CHANGE THE GENERAL ADMISSION FEE FOR THE ADLER PLANETARIUM

To: The Honorable Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District

I. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt an order authorizing an increase in the general admission fees for the Adler Planetarium (the “Adler”). The proposed general admission fee increase is to take effect April 1, 2024, with approval of the Park District Board and only impacts the rates for city and non-city residents. The museum has not increased its fees since 2019.

II. Explanation

Since Adler’s last increase in 2019, they had experienced tremendous financial uncertainty during the pandemic as many of its operations ceased due to the physical closure of the building. However, the museum was very much “mission open” through virtual experiences.

Despite management efficiencies, it still faces significant cost pressures as they continue to recover from the pandemic. Their visitor numbers have not yet fully rebounded from the pandemic and the Adler like other institutions are facing rising labor costs, wage increases and competitive salaries and benefits. In addition, their aging facility requires capital investments and extensive repairs.

The price increase is estimated to increase their admission revenues by over \$600,000 annually. This increase in revenue will go to support programming as well as building occupancy costs.

In addition to the 52 Illinois Resident Discount Days offered every Wednesday evening, the Adler Planetarium participates in the Museums for All program, with some 23,500 guests taking advantage of the program since reopening. The Adler Planetarium also offers free guest admission to a wide variety of audiences including veterans and military personnel, teachers, Chicago Police and Firefighters, Museums in the Park members, and Association of American Museum members. From March 2022 to December 2023, over 40% of guests received free general admission to the Adler Planetarium.

The proposed price increase was approved by Adler’s Board of Trustees’ Finance Committee on April 12, 2023 and by the full board on May 11, 2023.

The following is a summary of the proposed general admission increase:

	<u><i>Current Admission Fee</i></u>	<u><i>Proposed Admission Fee</i></u>
Chicago Resident		
Child	\$6.00	\$8.00
Adult	\$17.00	\$20.00
Non-Resident (non-Chicago)		
Child	\$8.00	\$13.00
Adult	\$19.00	\$25.00

**Please note that the Planetarium in its last rate request did not request an increase for children's general admission, the price of \$5 has been in effect since 2011.*

In reviewing Alder's request, their pricing structure was compared with other museums in the Chicago area and concluded that the proposed pricing structure is in line with other museums.

The Alder provides an invaluable resource to the people of Chicago. Increased admission fees will help allow the museum to continue to provide world-class experiences for guests of all ages; therefore, we respectfully request the Board's authorization for the requested increase.