

What a private tennis bubble would actually mean.

NYC Parks is preparing to issue a **Request for Proposals** for a private LLC to enclose part of Astoria Park's tennis courts under a seasonal inflatable bubble — a **15-year for-profit contract** on public parkland.

The Astoria RFP isn't public yet. Everything below is drawn from **McCarren Tennis Center in Brooklyn** and other comparable NYC bubble concessions — the best preview we have of what privatizing Astoria's courts would look like.

\$80-100/hr

Bubble court rental — the standard rate at McCarren, when a slot can be found at all.

~7 months

Bubble is up — mid-October through mid-April. More than half the year.

15 years

Contract length — public parkland handed to a private LLC for fifteen years.

WHAT'S ACTUALLY AT STAKE

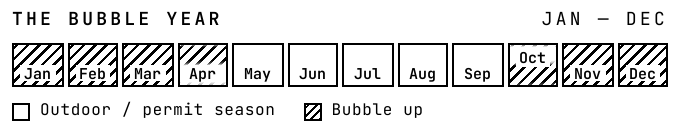
- 1 It's expensive.**
Today, playing at Astoria Park costs **\$100 for a season permit** — a court for the whole outdoor season. Off-season, the courts are free. Under a bubble, an hour at McCarren runs **\$80-\$100**; private lessons go **\$193-\$300/hour**.
- 2 Even if you'll pay, you can't get a court.**
The vendor prioritizes group classes that bring in **up to \$440/hour per court**. Public slots that remain open 7 days ahead — and disappear within seconds, much like a 2021 vaccine appointment. Many are held by season-long block bookings.
- 3 It's not a "winter" bubble.**
McCarren's bubble goes up mid-October and stays through May — **~7 months**, overlapping **three months of the official outdoor permit season** when the weather is often perfectly playable.
- 4 "Free outdoor courts" may be compromised.**
The 6 free outdoor courts are misleading: 3 get walled off by the bubble structure, 3 are only reachable by walking through the paid bubble, and 6 courts can't absorb the demand that today plays on 14.
- 5 The park and its wildlife pay the price.**
Mature shade trees come down inside and outside the courts to accommodate the bubble footprint. A pair of **red-tailed hawks** that has nested for years on the bridge above the courts loses its home to 24/7 blower noise and a lit dome through every winter night. And the build-out — admin offices, restrooms, lockers, pro shop — has nowhere to go but further into the park or onto the remaining "free" courts.

PROPOSED FOOTPRINT · FROM THE RFP

8 OF 14 COURTS ENCLOSED RFP SITE MAP



Red box = the 8 courts that would sit inside the bubble. 3 courts west, 3 courts east — the east courts only reachable by walking through the paid concession.



+ A BETTER PATH If the goal is to improve Astoria's courts, public-first models already work across NYC. **Fort Greene Park** is resurfacing all 6 courts for \$348,000 — funded entirely by community fundraising and USTA grants. **McCarren's courts** were resurfaced in 2010 through the USTA / Amex "Fresh Courts" program, designed for public courts. **City capital funding** for parks is on the table under the new administration. None of these require a 15-year private concession.

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