



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

November 18, 2021
Item 6

TITLE: REVIEW LOCATION OPTIONS FOR PICKLEBALL COURTS IN PLEASANTON

SUMMARY

The sport of pickleball has increased significantly in popularity over the last decade. Pickleball play in Pleasanton has also increased and the construction of dedicated pickleball courts was identified as a need in Pleasanton in the FY 2021/22 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Workplan process, but no funding was allocated.

The City is considering the construction of dedicated courts as part of the annual 2022/23 court resurfacing project. Staff conducted research, discussed pickleball with other cities that have active pickleball communities, and reviewed potential pickleball locations within Pleasanton to determine an appropriate location. Staff recommends locating pickleball courts at Muirwood Community Park.

RECOMMENDATION

Review staff research, location options, and recommend locating pickleball courts at Muirwood Community Park.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

There is no direct financial impact resulting from a Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation. No funding is currently allocated for the construction of pickleball courts.

BACKGROUND

Pickleball was invented in the 1960s in Washington and slowly increased in popularity until the early 2010s when the popularity grew by 650 percent over a 6-year period. The game is similar to tennis but played with a whiffle ball on a badminton-sized court. About four pickleball courts fit in the same approximate area as one tennis court.

The City's tennis vendor, Lifetime Activities, started holding pickleball games in 2017 at Tennis and Community Park and hosts drop-in play, classes and clinics at the Pleasanton Middle School gym. Over the last couple of years, the City has heard from multiple residents that there is a need for dedicated pickleball courts that are available during park hours and free to residents, similar to the basketball and tennis courts in our park system. One of the residents of the Muirwood neighborhood has particularly advocated for pickleball courts at Muirwood Community Park.

The need for pickleball courts was identified as a priority near the end of the City's 2021/22 – 2024/25 CIP Workplan process. While City Council expressed support for the construction of a pickleball court, no funds were budgeted in the capital improvement program for that purpose. Because of the stated support, City staff is now considering including the design and construction costs for pickleball courts within the annual court resurfacing budget, to potentially be completed in conjunction with the 2022/23 court resurfacing project. This would amount to adding the necessary lines to play pickleball on existing tennis courts when they are resurfaced as part of normal maintenance.

DISCUSSION

Staff took a similar approach to determining an appropriate location for pickleball as with the skatepark and all abilities playground and reviewed the following sites, which have existing tennis courts that could also be used or potentially be converted to pickleball courts:

- Muirwood Community Park
- Pleasanton Middle School
- Owens Plaza Neighborhood Park
- Fairlands Neighborhood Park
- Stoneridge Creek Neighborhood Park.

The City also considered locating pickleball courts at Tennis and Community Park, Centennial Community Park, and Bernal Community Park. There is one tennis court at Tennis and Community Park which is currently striped for pickleball, but there is a fee associated with the use of the court. Any future courts would also include a fee to use them so no further evaluation was performed. Centennial and Bernal Community Parks do not have existing tennis courts that could be converted nor was pickleball considered in the master plan for either park, so no further analysis of those parks was conducted.

Muirwood Community Park

City staff analyzed Muirwood Community Park and determined it to be the best option for pickleball as:

- Pickleball is a rather loud sport, but Muirwood Community Park is directly adjacent to I-680 so the noise from pickleball play would not be so pronounced

(staff is also researching sound mitigating panels that could potentially be added to the courts to help reduce noise)

- There are four existing tennis courts so converting one or two of them would still leave two or three tennis courts
- The tennis courts are already scheduled for resurfacing and the cost to convert one or two of the courts to pickleball would be minimal
- There are multiple gates so pickleball players and tennis players would be able to access the courts separately
- There is already a public restroom
- There is a large amount of available on-street parking
- There are minimal neighboring homes.

Based on staff observation, the four tennis courts are rarely all in use at the same time. Additionally, there are two private tennis courts at the nearby Stoneridge Townhouse complex less than half a mile away and nine tennis courts at Foothill High School less than one mile away.

Staff recommends converting one or two of the tennis courts at Muirwood Community Park to four to eight pickleball courts.

Pleasanton Middle School:

Pleasanton Middle School was analyzed as a potential pickleball court conversion because it has two existing tennis courts and Lifetime Activities is already running drop-in pickleball at the gym on Saturdays.

The City and the School District have a shared-use agreement for the existing courts, but the proposed pickleball courts wouldn't be on City property and the potential hours of play and access would be limited to non-school hours. Due to the demand and limited use of the courts at Pleasanton Middle School, staff did not pursue this location further. However, if this is a desired location, the City will need to engage the District in further conversations to determine whether they program tennis at the existing courts or would be open to converting one or both courts to pickleball.

Owens Plaza Park:

Owens Plaza Park was analyzed as a potential pickleball court location because it has an existing tennis court that could potentially be converted to pickleball. However, it is the only tennis court at this location so tennis would be eliminated from the park. The court is also surrounded by apartments, there is no restroom, and there isn't much parking.

Fairlands Neighborhood Park:

Fairlands Neighborhood Park has two existing tennis courts, so it was considered as a potential pickleball conversion candidate. The courts are also due for resurfacing so conversion costs would be minimal. However, Fairlands is a neighborhood park, does not have a restroom, and the City hasn't heard support for pickleball in this park but has heard the need for renovated tennis courts.

Stoneridge Creek Park:

City staff analyzed Stoneridge Creek Park because it has two existing tennis courts that could potentially be converted to pickleball, it has a restroom, and it doesn't have any nearby homes. However, the tennis courts have beveled corners so it is not likely that one tennis court could be converted to four pickleball courts and the park has limited parking and is somewhat isolated at the very eastern edge of the City.

Next Steps:

A notification was sent out to all residents within 500 feet of Muirwood Community Park regarding the staff recommendation being presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission so that residents have a chance to review the proposal and/or discuss any concerns regarding pickleball.

Staff is seeking policy direction from the Parks and Recreation Commission on the potential location of pickleball courts. Staff will present the recommendation from the Commission to City Council for approval and create a Request for Qualifications for a consulting firm to assist with the following:

- Review the location to determine opportunities and constraints
- Provide conceptual designs that can be vetted with the community and various committees, commissions, groups and City Council
- Assist with public outreach
- Develop construction documents
- Develop an implementation plan and next steps.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION

Any action determined by the commission.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Gruber". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Matt Gruber
Landscape Architect, Engineering Department