

**Seattle Parks & Recreation Outdoor Pickleball Study  
Online Open House**

**Wednesday, May 25, 2022**  
Zoom (Virtual)

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**Project website**

<https://www.seattle.gov/parks/about-us/projects/2021-2022-outdoor-pickleball-study>

**Meeting video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rtuhwF9zWg&feature=youtu.be>

**Meeting Notes**

Seattle Parks & Recreation (Parks) is currently conducting an outdoor pickleball study to respond to the explosion of pickleball and the high demand for the sport. As part of the public engagement process, Parks hosted a second online public meeting on May 25, 2022. There were 63 participants, and the notes below are a summary of the initial presentation on potential sites for dedicated pickleball facilities, followed by a summary of the discussion from each of the five breakout rooms, which were organized by geography: Northwest, Northeast, Central, Southeast, and Southwest.

The presentation can be found here:

[https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Projects/PickleballOpenHousePresentation\\_20220525.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Projects/PickleballOpenHousePresentation_20220525.pdf).

**Dedicated Pickleball Facilities Presentation**

Parks is considering three complementary approaches for expanding access to pickleball:

1. Dual striping to add pickleball lines only or with resurfacing (immediate)
2. Convert existing tennis courts to pickleball only (mid-term)
3. Construct new dedicated pickleball facilities (long-term)

The focus of this section of the presentation was to present the four options for this last approach – the construction of new dedicated facilities. Two options were presented in north Seattle (Magnuson parking lot, the Bitter Lake Reservoir), and two options were presented for south Seattle (Genessee Playfield, Hiawatha Playfield).

Guiding Considerations for site selection include:

- Geographic distribution
- Accessibility
- Safety
- Existing amenities (e.g., restrooms, parking, transit, lights, community centers, etc.)
- Size + capacity
- Court condition

- Court classification and use (e.g., joint use agreements)

Facilitators stressed that this is the first community-based conversation about proposed sites, and there will be outreach and engagement to understand neighborhood perspectives before any decisions are made.

### **Comments + Questions on Dedicated Facilities:**

#### **North Seattle Sites**

- The Magnuson site has no residential houses nearby, which may be an advantage over Bitter Lake.
- What about sensitive wetlands in that area of Magnuson? What impact would building in that area have?
- Any consideration of using the two seemingly abandoned courts next to 15th NE at Ravenna/Cowan Park?

#### **South Seattle Sites**

- Isn't the Hiawatha location what is used for summer concerts?
- Big votes for Hiawatha!

#### **General Comments**

- Are yellow lines possible to increase visibility?
- I totally appreciate all of the consideration and work you folks have done!
- I would like to ask Parks to consider tighter packaging of courts, e.g., current Green Lake courts could definitely support 8 rather than 6 pickleball courts. For the number of players, it makes a huge difference in capacity.
- Any dual striping arguably removes some tennis options which is what I would like not to see happen. All for adding tons of pickleball capacity, but just not at the loss of any tennis.
- Pickleball and tennis CAN coexist!! Restriping is a relatively easy solution. Opens up so many locations.
- When there is talk about ADA accommodations, who is the primary accommodation for? Persons in wheelchairs or anyone else? How about senior populations with declining vision and ability to see pickleball lines as currently painted?
- I totally appreciate all of the consideration and work you folks have done!
- I agree strongly with the comment about being careful not to use numbers as justification for prioritizing one popular sport over another. I'm not a golfer but I don't think a lot of people would be willing to lose that space to another sport even though their people/acre metric is very low.
- Blue lines on tennis courts are often used to show kid's training court outlines. That can be a source of confusion... so a different color might be okay for pickleball... but yellow? Maybe a nice seafoam green?

### **Dual Striping + Court Conversion**

Oliver gave a brief presentation on the project goals and timeline. The intent of this study is to engage with pickleball and tennis communities to balance the growth of pickleball and the existing tennis community. This work builds off 2019 Pilot Study Recommendations and previous Seattle Metro Pickleball Association (SMPA) analysis and seeks to:

- Document the growth of pickleball nationally and in Seattle.
- Refine where and how tennis courts will be dual-striped.
- Identify and recommend locations for new pickleball-only outdoor courts.

**Define immediate, mid-, long-range planning timelines:**

1. Immediate – this summer (2022) for dual striping.
2. Mid-range – depends on the context. For example, if it is a conversion, then Parks can do resurfacing and fencing in 1-2 years for court conversion and additional dual striping.
3. Long-range – dedicated facilities are likely in the next 5-10 years, depending on timeline for funding but depends a lot on the site too. Both conversion and dedicated courts depend on the site conditions.

Meeting participants broke out into group discussions, based on Seattle geography. Each room had a facilitator and notetaker that captured the highlights of the conversation. Break-out group participants were presented and provided with a map of proposed dual-striped and conversion options which also included the candidates for new dedicated courts. After the breakout room conversation, each region reported back to the group at large. The notes below captured the conversation in each of the rooms. Participants were asked:

- How do you feel about this suite of options for this part of Seattle?
- Does this strike the right balance of providing more resources for pickleball while keeping options available for tennis?
  - Why or why not?
- Is there anything about this (your) community we should know that we don't?
  - How do people use this space that would be influenced or changed if pickleball was present?
- Are there any unintended consequences like being too close to neighbors and might have noise impacts?

Facilitators stressed that this is the first community-based conversation about proposed sites, and there will be outreach and engagement to understand neighborhood perspectives before any decisions.

**Report from breakout room discussions:**

**Northwest – 12 participants**

- Group discussion reached consensus on their desire to convert Green Lake E dedicated pickleball, given the amount of pickleball that happens there. Tennis court access would likely NOT suffer.
- Mixed-use courts are inherently problematic. Yellow lines may not be very visible when using yellow balls.
- Parks has given permission to SMPA to rent the entire Green Lake batteries of courts Sat/Sun AM, 9am-11am. Drop-In tennis players w/o reservations typically leave Green Lake courts due

to the high level of pickleball play. On occasion, pickleball players offer to purchase tennis player reservations, to keep playing.

- There's a lot of underutilized space at Green Lake E.
- I like the idea of PB courts at Bitter Lake, but I am concerned about parking impacts on neighbors.
- Is there a plan for continued maintenance as newly pickleball striped courts come online?
  - Parks has a maintenance division and plan for maintaining all courts in future that are converted/dual striped.
- I like Magnuson location much better than the Bitter Lake option (and sighting noise issues at Bitter Lake a problem).
- I am concerned about losing tennis facilities. Agrees that Green Lake has already, in fact, been "converted to pickleball" due to its high pickleball use. I like the prospect of a pickleball court near the existing Lawn Bowling area – the north end of Woodlawn Park. Please consider this
- Pickleball players are used to dual striping.
- Please consider dual-striping Wallingford Playfield.
- I enjoy playing pickleball at Soundview – can nets be supplied here? On these courts pickleball is played by inter-generational groups- tennis is played less on these courts. Can Parks undertake a study to determine pickleball/tennis usage at Soundview. Pickleball better utilizes existing courts and Parks should also consider this point. Pickleball affords better use/value from each battery of courts.

#### **Northeast – 8 participants**

- Group conversation consensus that converting Magnuson tennis courts seems like a long-term solution. The proposed parking lot makes more sense because of access to parking, etc. There's also limited impact to housing (noise, parking, etc.).
- Bitter Lake Reservoir has residential very close and could be a harder sell for the public. Also, the community center is near and already has dual-striped courts.
  - Pickleball is kind of taken care of in that area of town; Bitter Lake is also not far from Shoreview.
- ADA requirements, does it influence line colors?
  - Pickleball lines should be as visible as tennis court lines; no need to compromise visibility.
- Dedicated sites need to have enough courts to create the social environment and large group dynamics.
- Is there a ranking of all these options in NE Seattle based on viability?
  - This conversation is part of determining this.
  - Laurelhurst has a dedicated court.... Seems silly to have just one.
- Shorter-term choices:
  - Meadowbrook
  - Bryant Court
  - Anywhere needs 4 courts minimum – that's most attractive. And it would make the journey in the NE area as long as there were assurances of actually playing and not waiting as long.
  - People stay and play an average of 2-3 hours.
- What are the vital amenities?
  - Water fountain
  - Restrooms

- Better lighting
- Shoreview is one of the best combination facilities of tennis/pickleball to model for Seattle:
  - 4 tennis courts
  - It's a park; lots of parking; restrooms; lacks lighting though
  - It can accommodate huge crowds and can run separate events
- Laurelhurst
  - It would be more attractive if there were more courts – having one is silly.
  - If Parks dual-strips one bank of the existing courts, it should be connected/accessible to the one existing pickleball court.
- What should we be asking regarding neighborhood court conversions?
  - Bryant neighborhood has some houses nearby.
  - Victory Heights is adjacent to homes and may be too noisy for those neighbors.
  - Don't think Ravenna has residential issues.
  - Froula has no houses next to the courts.
- Will Maple Leaf Reservoir Park expand ever?
  - Courts are ill-placed, conflicts with walkway path and bicycle path.
- Everywhere needs lights – Bitter Lake, Laurelhurst, and Meadowbrook all need lighting repair.
- I want to be able to get to pickleball courts without getting on the highway – close to home in the NE is best.

#### **Central – 15 participants**

- Concern about Madrona – it is a struggle to get on a tennis court and I sometimes have to go elsewhere to play. Also, there is an issue at Madrona with the lawn sprinklers that also spray the back 6' of the courts and create black mold that is slippery and dangerous.
  - This has been reported to Parks but no action has been taken to correct the sprinklers and clean the courts. If the Madrona courts were dual striped, one of the pickleball courts would be really slippery because of the black mold. It is dangerous.
  - The bottom line is that we need improvement in the surface and condition of the courts.
- There are no courts in the Denny Triangle area. I play at the Observatory. There is a congenial atmosphere there for both tennis and pickleball.
  - There are other tennis courts near to the Observatory so if you convert one of the tennis courts to pickleball, the tennis players wouldn't mind.
  - A good compromise would be to have one tennis court and devote one of the other tennis courts to four pickleball courts.
- Parks MUST clean up existing tennis courts, they are in bad shape. This is for the safety of everyone.
  - Then dual stripe. But first re-surface the courts.
  - The Lower Woodland tennis courts are really in need of resurfacing.
  - The tennis courts at Miller, Volunteer Park, Garfield and Madrona also really need re-surfacing.
- Looking at Volunteer Park, you could convert one of the tennis courts to pickleball and leave one court for tennis.
  - Also, Parks should look at the multi-surface basketball court in Pratt Park – it is covered and lighted and could be used for pickleball all day long all year. The basketball players might be concerned.

- I just moved to Seattle and live in Belltown and there are no pickleball courts downtown. I was hoping to be able to walk to pickleball courts or take the bus, but I drive all the way to Shoreline to play.
  - Shoreline courts are great. It is a great model and a great community. Dual striping and providing permanent nets are good too.
- What about using school playgrounds for pickleball courts when schools are not in session?
  - This question would need to be directed to Seattle Public Schools.
  - Pickleball will become a college sport in 9 years and it is smart to begin thinking about putting pickleball courts in schools.
- Montlake tennis courts are always empty. The court conditions are poor and that could be why. This is an area where lots of people live and want to play both tennis and pickleball and there is space but the courts must be re-surfaced.
  - There is one PB court but it is not on a tennis court and there is no fence around it. It is just outside the community center. There is room at Montlake for more pickleball courts.
- Kinneer Park has a single tennis court and it is stripped for pickleball.
- At the Observatory courts, the tennis courts but right up against some homes so there might be some concerns.
- What is the policy for permanent nets? The places where pickleball is played need heavy rollable nets that won't get stolen where there is dual striping.
- Is there punishment for "guerilla striping" on a tennis court? Does SPR have a policy on this?

#### **Southwest – 20 participants**

- People are not aware that there is a reservation system.
- Has SW community center or grassy area above the tennis courts been considered
- Has Hiawatha courts been considered for dual striping?
- Posted rules/reservations/etiquette for both tennis and pickleball at courts would be beneficial to the general public using courts.
- What is the timeline for dedicated pickleball courts? What is the timeline for dual striping?
- Do we have to wait for the resurfacing of Solstice to get dual striping there? It is important to show southwest com community that Parks is taking action this summer and not waiting for resurfacing of Solstice.

#### Dual striping options:

1. Alki-
  - a. Cons – limited parking
  - b. Pros – lights and is accessible- walkable, bikeable, and on transit lines.
2. Solstice-
  - a. Cons – possible conflict with high school usage
  - b. Pros – lights, ample parking
  - c. Could ½ of Solstice be considered for dedicated pickleball courts? It could accommodate possibly 6 pb courts.
3. Riverview-
  - a. Pros – more accessible to players from outside of the SW area than Alki.

#### **Southeast – 15 participants**

- Jefferson – please consider dual striping at this site. It's accessible, well-traveled, parking – that is why Jefferson so well used.
- The majority of courts are not in good shape and not easy to get to with parking, and the court location in park.
- Rainier Playfield is near to Jefferson and courts not in good shape this should be considered for conversion.
- Pickleball is noisy – consider that for Seward. The neighbors would come out against pickleball because of noise.
  - However, Seward Park is under-utilized.
- Rainier and Genesee are good for pickleball.
- Assessment needs to include where there are nets; if no nets then there is not a court.
  - Lakeridge is the only one with a net.
  - Courts on Luther Burbank uses tennis net.
- Miller Community raised money to provide nets. The city provides reservations and community provides nets. The City does not supply nets.
- Dearborn you have to walk through the wooded area, not easily accessible for just one court.
- Concern about neighbors because pickleball is loud. Rainier Playfield is a good idea because it is quick and already very active. Jefferson is also a good idea.
  - All the other courts close to homes are too loud.
  - Put in noise criteria for selection. Again, Rainier Playfield and Jefferson are good options.
- Rainier Playfield courts not utilized and we like these for conversion.
  - Parking is a challenge at Rainier.
  - But courts are lit and next to a community center that is a pickleball hub.
- Scheduling – please make dedicated times for pickleball.
- Please make pickleball lines equally intense as tennis. We can't see the lines. Blue does not work.

**Next Steps:**

- The Advisory Committee will reconvene in mid-June to reflect on this input and talk about next steps.
- Dual striping will begin in the summer of 2022, and there will be more conversations before dedicated or conversion happens
- Oliver will present to the Parks Board in July or August, and include recommendations for next steps for dual-striping, conversions, and dedicated facilities.
- Thank you!