



City of Ketchum Recreation Department

February 6, 2023

Mayor Bradshaw and City Councilors:

Recommendation to keep the existing four permanent pickle ball courts, two tennis courts, and one flex court available free to the public.

Recommendation and Summary

Staff is recommending that the pickleball and tennis courts at Atkinson Park stay as they are currently. This would keep four permanent pickleball courts, two tennis courts and one flex court which could be used for pickleball or tennis. Staff also recommends lowering E pickleball fence to create a gated entrance and patio pavers for waiting and viewing near the existing pickleball court. This would have to be done with permission from the BCSD and paid for by the WRPA.

“Staff recommends the council keep the existing four permanent pickle ball courts, two tennis courts, and one flex court available free to the public.”

Introduction and History

The City of Ketchum resurfaced one public tennis court at Atkinson Park to create four permanent pickleball courts during the summer of 2021 at the request of the Wood River Pickleball Alliance. Another adjacent tennis court was lined with four pickle ball courts (with temporary nets) that could also be used for tennis, creating a flex court for both uses. Two more tennis courts remain for tennis only. The Wood River Pickleball Alliance (WRPA) will be asking the city council to resurface the flex court to create four more permanent pickleball courts. Staff does not recommend this action.

- Atkinson Park has the only public and free tennis and pickleball courts in the entire North Valley of Blaine County.
- Atkinson Park tennis courts are used throughout the summer for the city’s popular junior tennis program, and by many locals and visitors to the area.
- WRPA’s request would create eight permanent pickleball courts compared to two permanent tennis courts.
- The City’s parks are there for public use for all to benefit and not just a select few.

Financial Impact

No financial impact on the City

Attachments

Presentation from WRPA

Creating Community Through the Sport of Pickleball



Creating Community Through the Sport of Pickleball

A Proposal to Improve the Courts at Atkinson Park





WHAT IS PICKLEBALL?



- A sport that combines the best of tennis and ping pong in which players use solid paddles to hit a perforated plastic “whiffle” ball over a net.
- 4 Pickleball Courts fit in the space of 1 Tennis Court.
- Primarily played in a doubles format with with 4 players to a court.
(16 players play in the space of 1 tennis court)
- The fastest growing sport in the county for the last 5 years. Played by 8.5 million players of all ages last year at least 8 times. Over 36 million people tried the sport last year.
(There is a 90-year-old member who plays regularly at Atkinson Park)



"Pickleball is nothing short of a cultural phenomenon — experiencing a meteoric rise across genders, age groups, geographies, and income levels,"
David Levy, co-CEO of Horizon Sports and Experiences.



WOOD RIVER PICKLEBALL ALLIANCE



Our Mission: Building Community through the sport of Pickleball.

Who are we & what do we do:

- **Promote** and enhance the Pickleball experience, for locals and visitors alike, through social, educational and competitive events.
- **Grow** our 500+ member list (Ketchum, Sun Valley, Elkhorn, Mid-Valley, Hailey and Bellevue), by creating valued added scheduled play, tournaments and league play, plus rotating social events.
- **Coordinate** and assist in 30+ hours/week of round robin play at AP, BCRD, Sun Valley & Gravity Fitness & Tennis.
- **Act** as governing body to govern and promote player conduct, host new and informative website, develop social media presence.





PICKLEBALL IN THE WOOD RIVER VALLEY



PUBLIC COURTS - 4 DEDICATED - 8 MIXED LINE

- **Ketchum - Atkinson Park**
4 dedicated courts / 4 mixed line courts
- **Hailey-Heagle Park**
4 mixed line courts / unsafe

PRIVATE COURTS - 47 COURTS

- **Sun Valley Resort - Membership**
8 dedicated courts
- **Valley Club - Membership**
8 dedicated courts
- **Homeowner Courts**
Elkhorn- Ownership
8 dedicated courts
& Others: 23 + courts



Out of 59 pickleball
courts in the valley...

There are only 4 public
dedicated courts

Atkinson Park has the only
PUBLIC dedicated Pickleball courts in the Valley



PICKLEBALL AT ATKINSON PARK



- Open Dusk – Dawn late April to late October
- 2 Tennis Courts
- 4 dedicated Pickleball Courts
- 1 Tennis Court lined with 1 Tennis and 4 Pickleball courts
- Social drop-in rotational play Tues/Thurs/Sat morning 9 am - 11am
- Competitive drop-in rotational play Tues/Thurs evening 5-dusk
- Typically, 20-40 players show up in peak months
- All other times open without reservations for self organized play



**Atkinson Park is the Heart of Pickleball in the Valley
If you play pickleball you have played at Atkinson's.**

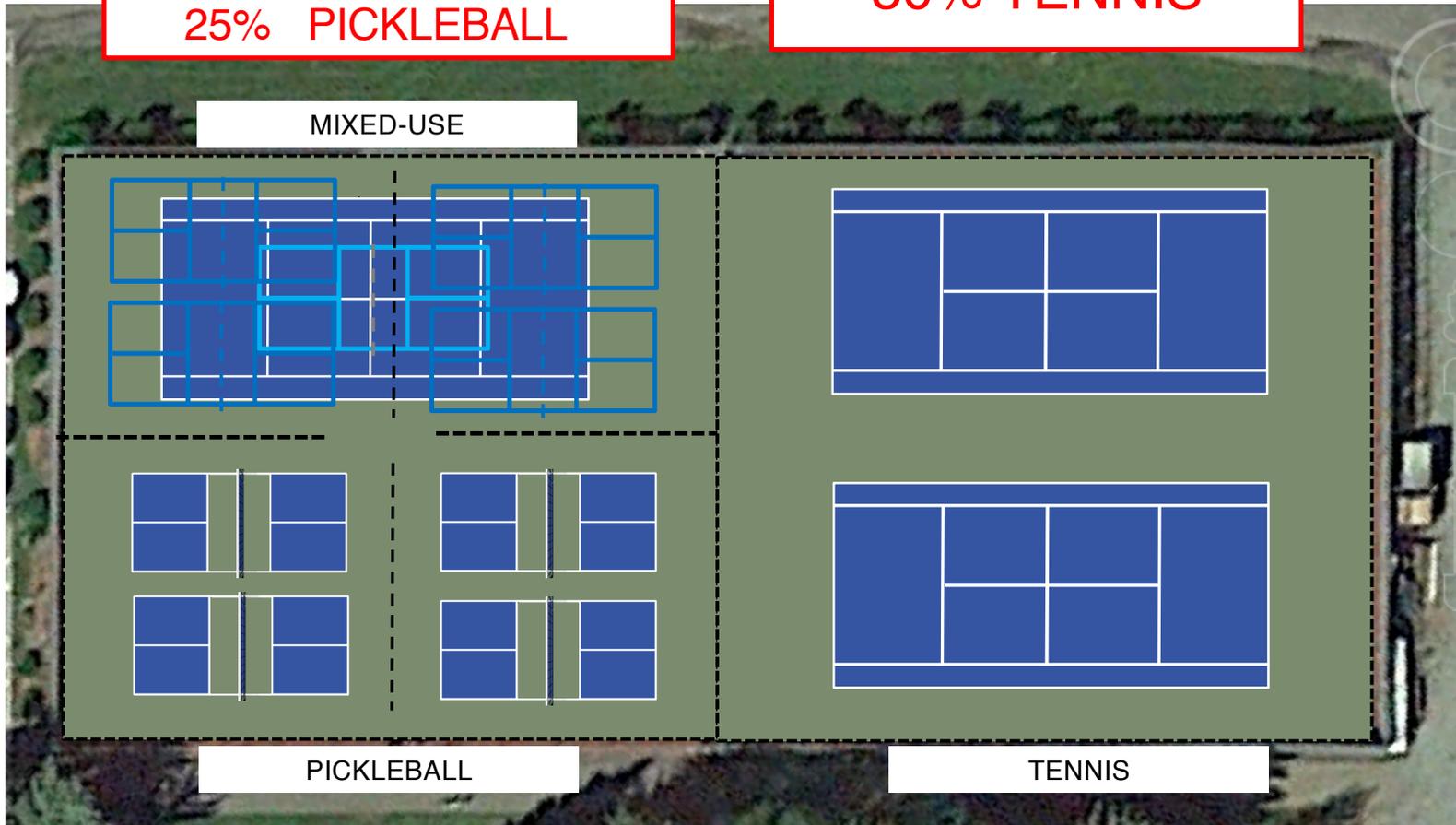


CURRENT COURT USE AT ATKINSON PARK



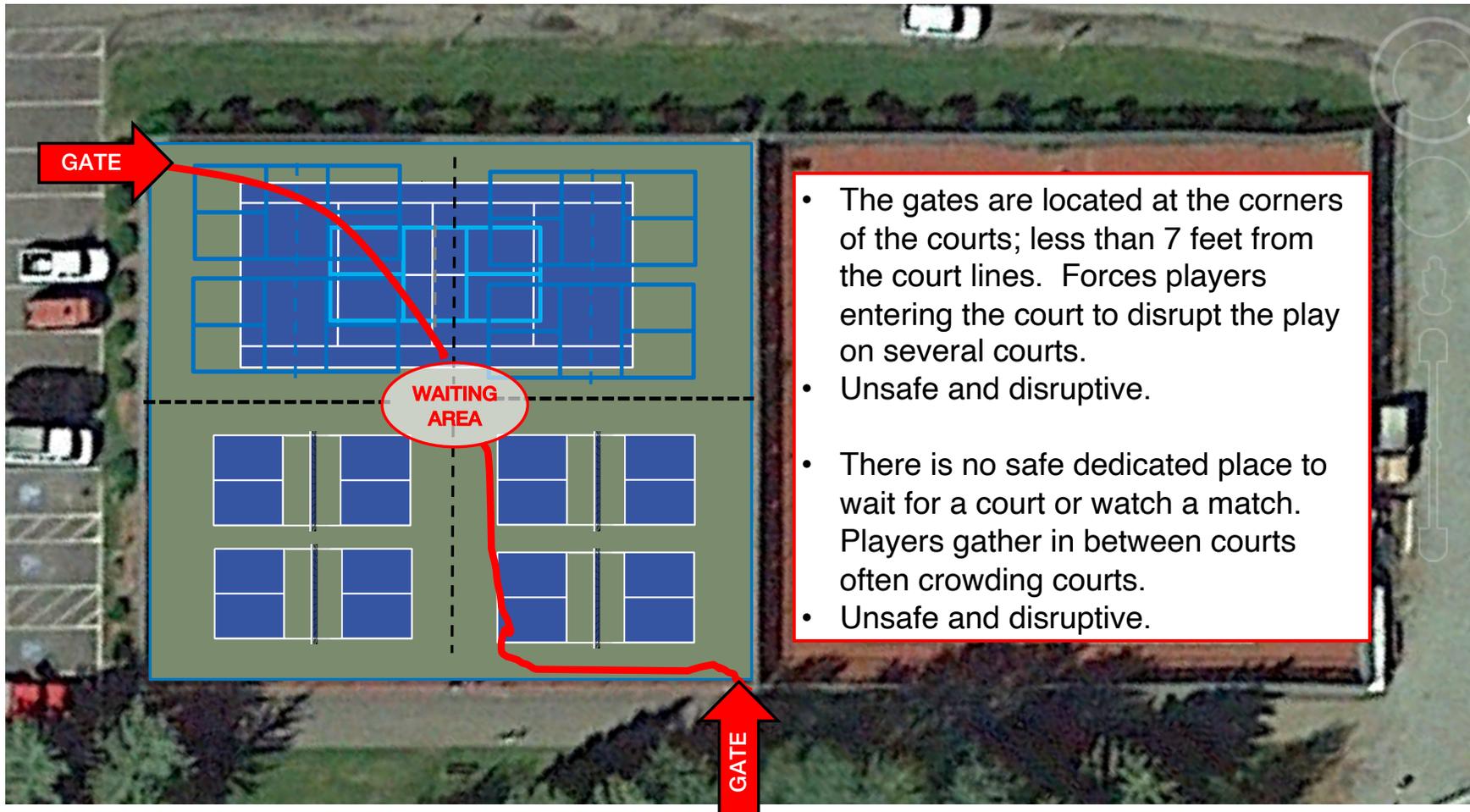
25% MIXED USE
25% PICKLEBALL

50% TENNIS



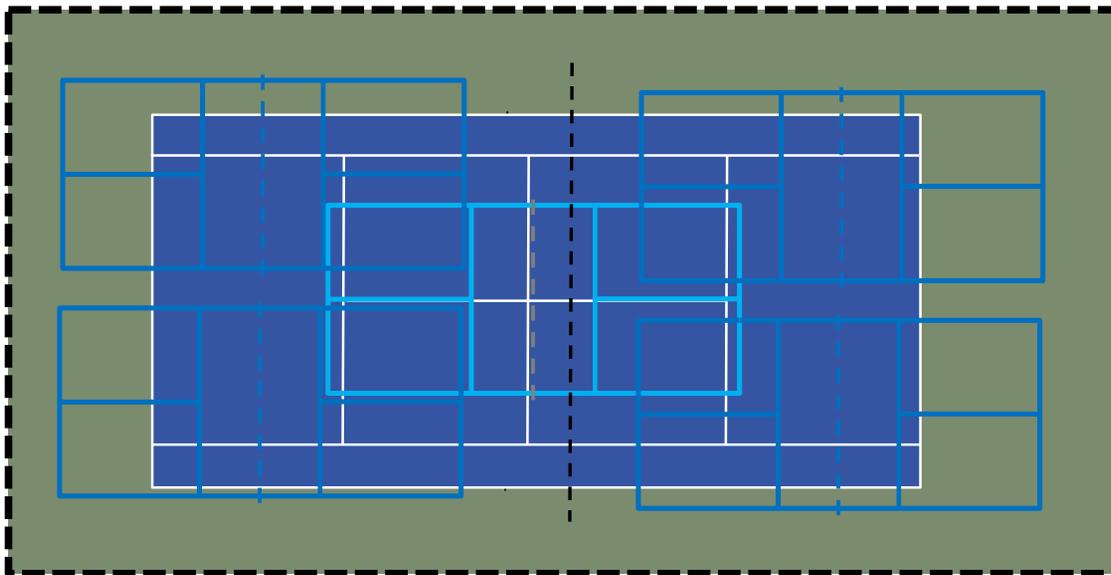


CURRENT ISSUES AT ATKINSON PARK





CURRENT ISSUES AT ATKINSON



LINES ON THE MIXED-USE COURT

- The mixed-use courts have multiple lines with 5 pickleball court lines & 1 tennis court lines making it confusing to play on and very troubling for beginner Tennis or Pickleball players.
- Courts are full during drop in with long wait lines to play. Players will often show up and not have a court to play on.
- The mixed-use courts are **RARELY USED FOR TENNIS.**



PLAYERS WAITING TO PLAY BUT ELECTING NOT TO PLAY ON MIXED LINED COURT

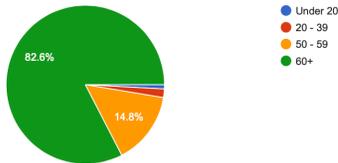


POLLING RESULTS: 115 Responses

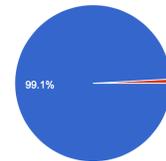


DEMOGRAPHICS: 50+ years old, live in Ketchum, play pickleball

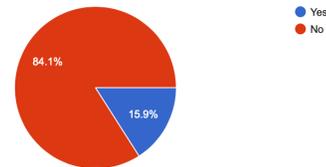
1. What is your age?
115 responses



2. Do you live in the Wood River Valley in the summer?
115 responses



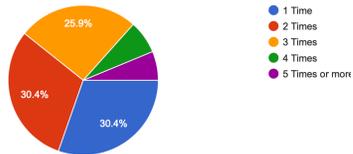
3. Do you play tennis regularly?
113 responses



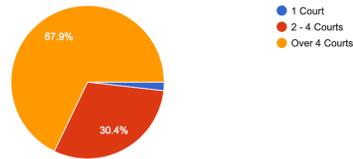
ACTIVITY/USE: Play Pickleball at AP often, PB courts were full and multi-use court rarely used for Tennis

Please answer the following questions about **LAST SUMMER** pickleball play

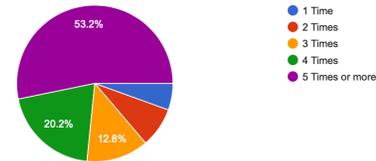
9. How many times per week did you play Pickleball at Atkinson Park?
112 responses



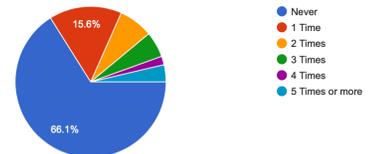
10. On average, how many Pickleball courts were being used at Atkinson Park courts when you were playing? (please give your best estimate)
112 responses



11. Last summer, how many times in a typical week would you say that all four dedicated Pickleball courts were being used at Atkinson Park?
109 responses

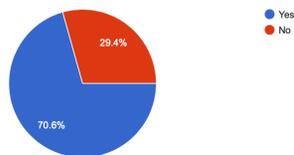


3. Last summer, how many times a week do you remember the mixed used overflow court (the courts with both tennis and pickleball lines) being used for ENNIS at Atkinson Park? ?
09 responses

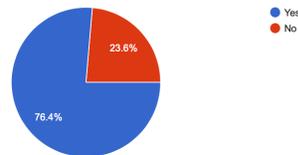


SAFETY: 70 %+ think the current layout is disruptive and unsafe

19. Did you feel it was unsafe or distracting for players to wait in between the permanent and mixed used overflow pickleball courts at Atkinson Park?
109 responses



20. Did you feel it was unsafe and or distracting to play when players entered your court from the side or rear gates at Atkinson Park?
110 responses





PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AT ATKINSON



50% PICKLEBALL

50% TENNIS



1. Lower the fence on park side and provide a single safe entrance gate to courts.
2. Provide a patio area for players waiting to play and spectators.
3. Resurface the mixed-use court with dedicated pickleball lines with new nets to match existing nets.



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AT ATKINSON



THE CHALLENGE OF PROGRAMING PUBLIC SPACE

- We understand that recreational space management demands a balance between providing flexible space and fulfilling a demand for specific activities
- It's important to have flexible space for youth programing because kids create play in different ways. For adults it is important to have specific facilities because it is easier and safer for the older population to have clearly defined courts.
- Flexible spaces have value, however when a flexible space is not being used, is not meeting any demand, then it's time to look at better use of such a limited resource.
- After 2 years of having the mixed-use court with multiple lines, this court has shown that it is not meeting the needs of either Tennis players or Pickleball players





SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS AT ATKINSON



THE CHALLENGE OF PROGRAMING PUBLIC SPACE

- The mixed-use courts are rarely used for tennis. Pickleball players that have access to other courts will often choose to leave than play on mixed-use lined courts.
- Resurfacing the mixed-use court for pickleball will not reduce the functionality of the court in the future. The nets can still be moved. If the demand changes, so can the court. In the meantime, resurfacing the court will meet the growing demand for high quality public pickleball courts in Ketchum.

After all what is the the point of having flexible space if it's not being used?



THE MULTIPLE LINES MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR BEGINNERS AND PLAYERS ON ALL AGES



ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPROVEMENTS



Lower park side fence and new entry gate*	\$5,000
Paved patio waiting/viewing area* (approx. 17 x 25')	\$15,000
Resurface southwest court	\$15,000
Four new steel movable nets	\$10,000
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TOTAL	\$45,000
Private donations through the WRPA	\$30,000
Allocation of City funds	\$15,000

**67% Private Donation - 33% Public Funding
to create a great public amenity**

*All proposed improvements to be approved in detail by John Kearny
for exact placement and materials