



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PARKS AND SUSTAINABILITY

MEETING DATE: 02/02/2026

ITEM NO: 3

DATE: February 02, 2026
TO: Parks and Sustainability Commission
FROM: Nicolle Burnham, Parks and Public Works Director
SUBJECT: Potential Reservation Systems for Town Owned Tennis and Pickleball Courts

RECOMMENDATION: Receive a report on the Potential Reservation Systems for Town Owned Tennis and Pickleball Courts.

REMARKS:

At the October 27, 2025, Special Meeting of the Parks and Sustainability Commission staff received the direction to assess court reservation systems. This direction came after listening to the concerns of court users and residents of the La Rinconada neighborhood.

At the December 1, 2025, Parks and Sustainability Commission meeting, the Commission received a presentation on two potential options for implementing a reservation system for Town-owned tennis and pickleball courts. The two options presented were: (1) a reservation system operated by the Town's Parks and Public Works Department, and (2) a program operated by Los Gatos-Saratoga Recreation (LGSR). During the meeting, staff presented potential advantages and disadvantages of each option. Based on Commission feedback, staff conducted further research on both approaches and worked with LGSR to better understand associated costs and staffing requirements. Table 1 provides a summary of the analysis.

A reservation system operated by the Town's Parks and Public Works Department would include a reservation rate of \$25 per hour per court for tennis and/or pickleball courts. This would be for the courts at La Rinconada Park and Blossom Hill Park. While the Town has the technical ability to implement a reservation system, Parks and Public Works does not currently have sufficient staffing capacity to manage the required day-to-day, on-site oversight associated with a reservation system.

At present, the Town's Park Services Officer (PSO) works Saturday through Tuesday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with no coverage outside of these hours. Tasks of the PSO include environmental law enforcement in parks and on trails, responding to reports of homeless encampments, leash laws in parks, and field support of Town wide park reservations. Expanding

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Superintendent

on-site management responsibilities to include tennis and pickleball courts would further increase the workload of this position, which is already operating at full capacity.

The Town of Los Gatos decided some years ago not to provide direct recreation services. Los Gatos Saratoga Recreation District fills this gap in service by providing fee-based youth, adult and senior programs.

Los Gatos-Saratoga Recreation has provided a preliminary rate proposal that includes a range of potential reservation fees. Final rates would be determined if and when the Town enters into formal negotiations with LGSR. The proposed rate range for tennis court reservations is \$15 to \$20 per hour, while pickleball court reservations range from \$15 to \$24 per hour. These rates may include access to pickleball nets and assistance from LGSR staff for net setup. Lower-cost reservation options may also be available for users who provide their own nets and do not require set-up assistance.

LGSR currently operates a similar court reservation program for the City of Saratoga and has indicated that it could implement a comparable program for the Town of Los Gatos in an efficient and timely manner. LGSR has expressed a willingness to conduct a one-year pilot program to evaluate the effectiveness of operating the court reservation system on behalf of the Town. LGSR has also indicated that it has sufficient staffing capacity and operational expertise to administer the program and provide on-site staff support to help reduce potential conflicts. As part of this proposal the Town PSO would still be needed to provide enforcement if conflicts reached a level LGSR could not handle without support. There could be potential for revenue sharing between the Town and LGSR, this would be determined during the final negotiation phase. With this proposal, day to day operations of the courts would be handled by LGSR, Town staff would coordinate with LGSR but not be hands on with the program unless enforcement help is needed.

Table 1. Summary of Options

Option	Town Reservation System and Management	LGSR Reservation System and Management
Projected Use Fee (Subject to refinement)	\$25 per hour per court for either Tennis or Pickleball	\$15-\$20 per hour Tennis \$15-\$24 per hour Pickleball
Role of Town Staff	Reservation system management, payment processing, enforcement, coordination with residents; funding and delivery of capital improvements	Coordination with LGSR; enforcement of rules and Town Code
Role of LGSR Staff	Programming in accordance with use agreement	Manage and monitor all court use

Advantages	Less confusion for residents over who manages and owns court; Town would have control over court use and hours and responsiveness to residents and users	Reduced role of Town staff; Town is not adding a new service to its portfolio;
Disadvantages	Additional staffing would be needed for PPW to manage this	Town has reduced control over courts; Staff would need to mediate concerns between neighbors and LGSR; Town needs to fund capital improvements

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Los Gatos Saratoga Recreation Proposal for Court Reservation System

Proposal: La Rinconada Pickleball & Tennis Court Facility Management

Executive Summary

This proposal recommends that Los Gatos Saratoga Recreation (LGS Recreation) assume full operational management of the La Rinconada Pickleball and Tennis Court for a one-year pilot period. The intent is to provide a single, unified system for reservations, programs, customer service, and on-site coordination. Reducing confusion, minimizing conflicts, and improving the overall community experience.

While the Town of Los Gatos retains ownership, facility maintenance, and policy oversight, day-to-day management would be centralized under LGS Recreation, which already operates comparable court systems, staffing models, and reservation technology serving this same community.

Background & Context

The Town of Los Gatos has identified the need for a formal reservation system for Town-owned tennis and pickleball courts. Two operational paths have been discussed:

- 1. Town-managed reservation system (in-house)**
- 2. LGS Recreation-managed reservation system (outsourced)**

Both approaches have merit. However, current community behavior indicates a need for clearer operational coordination. Residents and court users frequently contact LGS Recreation regarding scheduling, programming, and day-to-day operations, while nearby neighbors often reach out to the Town regarding broader community concerns.

Core Recommendation

LGS Recreation manages all court reservations, programming, and operational coordination for La Rinconada Park under a one-year pilot agreement.

At the end of the pilot year, the Town and Commission would evaluate performance using agreed-upon metrics and determine whether to:

- Continue with LGS Recreation management
- Transition to a Town-run model
- Modify the partnership structure

Why Unified Management Matters

1. Avoiding Operational Conflict

Splitting responsibilities, where the Town controls rentals and LGS runs programs creates unavoidable friction:

- Competing calendars
- Last-minute conflicts between rentals and programs
- Confusing communication for residents, and court users
- Increased staff time resolving preventable issues
- A single operator eliminates these conflicts before they occur.

2. Proven Systems Are Already in Place

LGS Recreation currently operates:

- Online facility reservations using the Explore recreation management platform
- Tennis and pickleball court scheduling for partner agencies
- Automated payments, confirmations, and reporting

There is no learning curve, no software buildout, and no need for additional Town staffing to launch.

3. Community Expectations Are Already Set

Residents already:

- Contact LGS Recreation with court questions
- Associate LGS Recreation with pickleball and tennis programming
- Expect real-time answers, not multi-department handoffs

- Changing this behavior would require retraining the public and absorbing short-term frustration without a clear operational gain.

Scope of Services (Pilot Year)

During the one-year pilot, LGS Recreation would manage:

- **Tennis court reservations**
- **Pickleball court reservations**
- **Staff-supported pickleball net setup**
- **Public-facing reservation webpage**
- **Customer service and issue resolution**
- **Usage tracking and monthly or quarterly reporting**

Reservation Framework

- Reservations in 60-minute blocks
- Real-time availability visible online
- Secure online payment
- Automated confirmations and reminders

Proposed Hourly Rental Rates (Pilot)

The following rates are proposed for the one-year pilot period and are aligned with comparable LGS Recreation facility rentals and regional market conditions. Final rates would be subject to Town review and approval prior to implementation.

Tennis Courts

- \$15-\$20 per hour, per court

Pickleball Courts

- \$15-\$24 per hour, per court
- Options could include lower rates if renters provide own nets
- LGS Recreation can provide nets (Code to access nets, or staff to set-up)

- Rates may be adjusted during or after the pilot period, subject to Town review, based on utilization data, demand patterns, and staffing requirements. Administrative fees may be applied on a per-reservation basis when enhanced staffing or operational support is necessary.

Addressing Key Commission Concerns

Town Control & Oversight

- The Town retains ownership of the facility
- Policies, priorities, and maintenance remain with the Town
- LGS Recreation provides monthly or quarterly usage and revenue reports
- Agreement can include audit and termination clauses

Transparency & Public Reporting

To ensure transparency and public trust, LGS Recreation would post monthly court usage schedules on its website and the site specific to La Rinconada Park. These schedules would be publicly accessible and updated on a regular schedule.

This approach allows residents, Town staff, and Commissioners to easily monitor how the courts are being used without requiring additional staff time or internal reporting systems.

Cost Containment

- No need for new Town staffing
- No Town-managed software implementation
- Transaction costs are predictable and contractually defined

Pilot-Year Success Metrics

At the end of one year, success can be evaluated based on:

- Reservation adoption rate
- Reduction in on-site conflicts

- Customer satisfaction and complaint volume
- Staff time required (Town vs LGS Recreation)
- Revenue consistency and predictability

Why This Is the Lowest-Risk Option

- Fast implementation
- No permanent commitment
- Real-world data instead of assumptions
- Aligns with current community behavior
- Prevents fragmented management
- Staffing support
- The community knows LGS Recreation

Next Steps

1. Agree on one-year pilot framework
2. Draft and approve MOU
3. Soft launch
4. Full public rollout