



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Item 4
July 6, 2023
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Luther Burbank Park Sport Courts Renovation: Court Configuration	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Recommend the preferred configuration for pickleball courts.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

STAFF:	Sarah Bluvas, CIP Project Manager	
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Craig Reynolds	
EXHIBITS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preferred Configuration for Pickleball Court Striping 2. Early Pickleball Court Configuration Alternatives 	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to seek the Parks & Recreation Commission’s (PRC) recommendation on the preferred configuration for the pickleball courts as part of the Luther Burbank Park Sport Courts Renovation capital project (see Exhibit 1).

BACKGROUND

The 2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS Plan) identifies the Luther Burbank Park sport courts as a preferred site for converting some tennis courts to pickleball. The Luther Burbank Park Sport Courts Renovation capital project (PA0143) was approved by the City Council with the 2023-2024 Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The project’s scope originally included repairing and resurfacing the existing court area and installing new netting and striping to provide playable courts for tennis and pickleball. On March 2, 2023, staff provided an update to the PRC on this project and sought the PRC’s support to recommend modifying the project scope to permanently stripe the courts for pickleball as the primary use, as opposed to maintaining one of the three existing tennis courts as a dual-striped pickleball/tennis court. The PRC unanimously supported the staff recommendation. ([Staff Report](#) | [Recording](#))

DEVELOPMENT OF PREFERRED COURT CONFIGURATION

In March 2023, The City contracted with DA Hogan, a leading provider of design and engineering services for sport courts and athletic fields. Design work on the project began in April 2023.

City staff reviewed preliminary court configuration concepts with the consultant in May. The configurations ranged from maximizing the existing facility footprint to creating the ideal gameplaying experience within that existing footprint.

These concepts were refined based on staff feedback and shared with the Mercer Island pickleball community for additional input in early June (see Exhibit 2). City staff received input by e-mail as well as through Dink on

Mercer Island, an online forum for community pickleball managed by Island residents. More than 100 comments were received, and primary feedback included the following:

- A majority of respondents preferred an 8-court design, which would maximize the existing footprint without compromising gameplay.
- Respondents also preferred a north/south orientation; some were concerned that an east/west orientation would make some courtsides unplayable during sunset hours (sun in the eyes, etc.). USA Pickleball also recommends a north/south orientation for pickleball court construction.
- While amenities such as picnic tables and temporary or permanent shelter on the courts would be nice, many respondents preferred either additional courts or more spacing between courts in lieu of these features. It was also noted that waiting areas already exist, such as the terrace seating located at the north entrance of the courts.
- A few respondents mentioned a desire for lighting the courts to extend playing time at night.

City staff, liaisons from the pickleball community, and the consultant reconvened in early June to review the feedback received and refine the preliminary concepts to identify the preferred alternative for the pickleball court configuration, which is included as Exhibit 1.

The preferred pickleball court configuration features striping for eight dedicated pickleball courts and a north/south orientation. The layout also follows court dimensions outlined in the USA Pickleball Official Rulebook. Per the rulebook, a standard pickleball court should measure 20' wide by 44' long for both singles and doubles matches. The minimum playing surface area should measure 30' wide by 60' long. USA Pickleball recommends that playing surface dimensions be extended to 34' wide by 64' long for new construction.

The preferred court configuration achieves the recommended 34' wide playing area for each pickleball court. However, due to the irregular dimensions of the facility's existing footprint, courts in the preferred layout only feature the standard 60' long playing area.

During the PRC meeting on Thursday, staff will present the preferred pickleball court configuration and walk through the details. Following the discussion, staff are seeking the PRC's support to move forward with a recommendation to the City Council to modify the project scope for a dedicated pickleball facility and to accept the recommended pickleball court configuration.

OTHER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Other design considerations that are outside the original scope of this capital project include placement of individual court fencing and lighting.

Individual Court Fencing

Pickleball courts often feature fencing around individual courts to keep balls within the court during play. During preliminary engagement for the preferred court layout, the City received feedback that individual court fencing would be "nice to have" for optimal gameplay. Staff are still evaluating the feasibility of adding individual fencing and will update the PRC at a future meeting. Determining the individual court fencing locations is not expected to delay the asphalt repair and resurfacing work that will be performed as part of this project.

Court Lighting

Members of the pickleball community have also expressed interest in installing lighting at the Luther Burbank Park sport courts as part of this capital project. Lighting installation was not included in the original project scope or budget, and the Luther Burbank Park Master Plan does not give specific guidance on lighting the

courts. There are also considerable operational impacts to lighting the courts and extending park hours, and these impacts would need to be carefully considered.

The addition of lighting to the project at this stage will require additional public process and funding as well as will delay the project by six months or more. Staff do not recommend considering the addition of lighting at this time. However, staff are exploring the feasibility of installing limited electrical infrastructure as part of the project should lighting be a consideration in the future.

NEXT STEPS

The PRC recommendation on the preferred pickleball court configuration and the March 2023 recommendation to modify the project scope for a dedicated pickleball facility will be presented to the City Council on July 18, 2023, for review and approval.

Upon receipt of approval from the City Council staff will complete the design work and proceed to construction, which will happen in two phases. The phased construction approach provides time for new asphalt to cure during the winter season before final court surfacing is applied. The tentative construction schedule is as follows:

- Fall 2023: Demolition, asphalt overlay, and temporary striping.
- Spring 2024: Acrylic surfacing, permanent striping, netting, and fencing.

City staff are also launching a new Let’s Talk page on this project to allow the community to track progress on the capital project.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Move to recommend the preferred configuration for the pickleball courts as part of the Luther Burbank Park Sport Courts Renovation capital project as reflected in Exhibit 1.