

Date: August 12, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Brent Dennis, Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Update on the Pickleball Master Plan**

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On April 5, 2022, the City Council requested the City Manager to work with the Director of Parks, Recreation & Marine (PRM) as well as the Long Beach Pickleball Advisory Group to develop a plan for the future of pickleball in the City of Long Beach (City). The requested report was to be back to City Council within 60 days and include the following:

1. Feasibility of converting all tennis courts to dual-use courts;
2. Feasibility of creating dedicated pickleball courts;
3. Developing a minimum amount of storage at each park for pickleball equipment; and,
4. Exploration of further partnership with local schools for joint use of Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) tennis courts.

Currently, the City has one dedicated pickleball court at Bayshore Park, twenty-four tennis courts in various parks throughout Long Beach, and ten tennis courts available at Naples and Wilson schools. The two tennis centers have a total of twenty-three tennis courts, with eight at Billy Jean King Tennis Center and fifteen at El Dorado Tennis Center. There is a grand total of fifty-seven tennis courts within our park system.

Pickleball is a friendly, welcoming, social game. Many players enjoy "drop-in" play which means that individuals show up during specified hours at a pickleball center and simply put their paddle up and take their turn with three other people to play, and thereby arranging three other people to match your schedule is not needed. If one of the foursome players goes on vacation, there is no scramble to find additional players. The provision of a few pickleball centers in Long Beach with four to six permanent courts and appropriate amenities (bathrooms, drinking fountains, lights, parking, etc.) would be appropriate. These centers will reduce the pressure on neighborhood park courts where parking is limited.

To gain a greater understanding of options available, the PRM Director and several Long Beach pickleball ambassadors met with the City of Seal Beach Councilman who led the effort to introduce pickleball at the Seal Beach Tennis Center (Center). The group took a tour of the Center to understand how Seal Beach created capacity for pickleball within that recreational facility through court conversion, shared multi-purpose use, and new construction, all of which had City-supported funding. It was learned that over half of the pickleball players at Seal Beach are Long Beach residents, which spoke volumes as to the unmet need in Long Beach for pickleball facilities.

Within that context, PRM has completed its initial assessment of the four options requested by the City Council.

**1. Feasibility of converting all tennis courts to dual use courts.**

- The conversion of all existing tennis courts (57 dedicated tennis courts) to also facilitate pickleball as dual-use courts is feasible, but from a citywide perspective, may not be practical or desirable. Access and authority to improve/convert the school courts would need to be approved via joint use agreements. While the growth of pickleball has been evident in certain areas of Long Beach, the identification of courts in areas with pickleball nucleus play groups would be excellent candidate courts for initial conversion. For parks where the demand is not yet known, we recommend the dual striping of tennis courts (where there are two or more tennis courts, dual stripe at least one of the tennis courts, using bright orange [or yellow], and provide signage appropriate to encouraging both sports). The upgrade of one tennis court into a dual-use court with the addition of striping for four (4) pickleball courts requires a budget of \$3,500. The tennis court net remains and portable pickleball nets are needed to allow for pickleball play.

**2. Feasibility of creating dedicated pickleball courts.**

Several opportunities have been identified for the creation of dedicated pickleball courts. Underutilized existing tennis courts can each provide four (4) pickleball courts with or without permanent nets.

- To convert one tennis court to four (4) pickleball courts without permanent posts and nets is approximately \$8,500.
- To convert one tennis court to four (4) pickleball and provide four (4) sets of core-drilled pickleball posts, sleeves and nets is approximately \$25,000.
- Planning, design, and construction of new dedicated pickleball courts are estimated at approximately \$60,000 per court.

Should a park's vision plan allow for the incorporation of a pickleball complex consisting of multiple courts, ideally a pickleball center of twelve (12) to sixteen (16) courts would accommodate tournament play. LED lighting and fencing would be essential design elements of new courts to allow for extended play and perimeter integrity, scheduling, and safety.

**3. Developing a minimum amount of storage at each park for pickleball equipment.**

A minor but essential pickleball court amenity, a storage container for portable nets should be considered at dual use court sites. Properly sized containers range in costs from \$400 to \$700 each plus installation on existing pavement.

#### **4. Exploration of further partnership with local schools for joint use of LBUSD tennis courts.**

Successful discussions and new agreements have been advanced with key administration leadership and school campus Principals. New shared use permits that allow limited weekend access to paddleball courts, conducive to pickleball play have been created at Stanford Middle School. Similar conversations are underway to explore use agreements on the campuses of Hughes Middle School and Naples Elementary School.

Beyond agreements with LBUSD, a new partnership with the Salvation Army at its new facility on Long Beach Blvd. and Spring Street is being established inside the gymnasium with pickleball court striping being added to the gym floor. A Long Beach Pickleball League could be developed for inside play in the coming year.

The following summary of short-term and long-range plans represents a comprehensive approach to expanding access and availability to ensure we can meet the growing and diverse demand for the sport of pickleball throughout Long Beach.

#### **Short-term Pickleball Plans**

In general, for dual-use tennis/pickleball courts, it is recommended to paint four pickleball courts (two on each side of the tennis net) using a bright orange color as the line color (pickleballers typically use a yellow ball). Currently, there are four (4) established pickleball playing groups in the Long Beach, located at Bayshore, College Estates, Marina Vista, and Somerset Parks and a new incubator pickleball play group is in its infancy at Houghton Park. Evaluations and recommendations for designated courts will ensue once a critical mass of active pickleball players is established.

Short-term plans recommended for communities with established pickleball playing groups are listed below:

1. Bayshore: Develop dual-striped second basketball court
2. College Estates: Operational changes to provide bathroom access on weekends and holidays and creating other court opportunities Citywide to address parking and other impacts for the surrounding neighborhood
3. Marina Vista: Designate east side, four permanent pickleball courts to compliment the recently completed west side, four dual-striped pickleball courts. Install an additional gate on the east side to keep waiting players on the grass outside and able to watch play along with updated signage recognizing pickleball play and authorize paddle racks on the fence and a storage container for pickleball equipment; and,
4. Somerset: Designate one dual-striped tennis court to create four (4) pickleball courts and four (4) permanent pickleball courts along with appropriate use signage and a storage container. Somerset has an existing side gate.

**Summary of Existing Tennis Courts for Potential Dual-Use Consideration**

Location	Type & Count	Count
<b>Parks</b>		
Cherry Avenue Park	court, tennis, 2	2
College Estates Park	court, tennis, 1; pickleball overlay, 4	1
DeForest Park	court, tennis, 1	1
Drake Park	court, tennis, 2	2
Houghton Park	court, tennis, 2	2
Los Cerritos Park	court, tennis, 2	2
Marina Vista Park	court, tennis, 2	2
Ramona Park	court, tennis, 1	1
Scherer, Herman J., Park	court, tennis, 4	4
Silverado Park	court, tennis, 4	4
Somerset Park	court, tennis, 2	2
Veterans Memorial Park	court, tennis, 1	1
	<b>Total in Parks</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Tennis Centers</b>		
Billie Jean King Tennis Center (Rec Park)	court, tennis, 8	8
El Dorado Tennis Center	court, tennis, 15	15
	<b>Total at Tennis Centers</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Schools</b>		
Naples School Tennis Courts	court, tennis, 2	2
Wilson High School	court, tennis, 8	8
	<b>Total at Schools</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>57</b>

*\*Middle School Campus Paddleball Courts at Stanford & Hughes, per joint use agreements, have additional public access potential.*

**Long-range Pickleball Plans**

Several locations have been identified for permanent, dedicated pickleball courts in the City.

**1. Billie Jean King Tennis Center (Recommended for funding in Measure A Plan)**

Adjacent to the current tennis center containing eight tennis courts is an area that could be developed to accommodate up to eight dedicated pickleball courts. The advantage of this location is the consolidation of management with the operator of the tennis center. The estimated budget for development of a pickleball complex is \$450,000 on unimproved park landscape areas.

**2. DeForest Park (Recommended for funding in Measure A Plan)**

The existing underutilized sports courts have the potential to be redeveloped into permanent pickleball courts. Four to six courts can be defined in the area and would be available for open play on a first come-first served basis. Budget for court conversion

would be approximately \$25,000 - \$35,000, depending on final amenities to be determined.

**3. Veterans Park (Recommended for funding in Measure A Plan)**

An existing paved area that formerly served as a tennis court could be re-purposed for four pickleball courts for approximately \$25,000 - \$35,000, depending on final amenities to be determined.

**4. Skylinks Golf Course Cell Phone Lot (Funding not yet identified)**

The former Long Beach Airport cell phone lot has space available to accommodate up to eight dedicated pickleball courts. These proposed courts could be added to the operational management responsibilities of American Golf, the current management company for all City golf courses, including Skylinks Golf Course. The estimated budget for development of the eight-court complex is \$350,000. Public access would be by reservation through the golf course reservation and payment system as a fee-based facility.

**5. El Dorado Park Tennis Center in El Dorado Park West (Funding not yet identified)**

Adjacent to the current tennis center containing dedicated tennis courts is an area that could be developed to accommodate 16 dedicated pickleball courts. The advantage of this location is the consolidation of management with the operator of the tennis center. The El Dorado Park Tennis and Pickleball Center would have the capacity to host major tennis and pickleball tournaments. Ideally, national tournaments would utilize the dedicated pickleball courts for competitive play and have the option to temporarily convert adjacent tennis courts into pickleball courts. As noted earlier in this report, each tennis court can accommodate four pickleball courts. Public access and special tournament use would be fee-based with revenue terms for the City added to the management agreement should this facility be developed. Capital improvement budget required would be approximately \$700,000 - \$850,000 depending on final amenities to be determined.

Any prior references to amenities could include bench and/or bleacher seating areas, shade structures, drinking fountains, wind screening on fencing, etc.

**2024 Paris & 2028 LA Olympics Opportunities**

There has been significant advancement in the formal consideration and designation of pickleball as an Olympic demonstration event for the 2024 Paris Olympics. The need for three additional countries to sign on will accomplish this official designation for 2024. However, it seems almost assured that the event could be part of the array of recognized, internationally

competitive sports. Long Beach could seize the opportunity to make a compelling case to add pickleball to the other LA28 Olympics sports and host the competitive venue.

Should the LA28 Olympics include pickleball as either a demonstration or medal-based competitive sport, significant resources may be available for the development of a world class, pickleball complex that could become a legacy facility for post-Olympic tournaments.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 570-3170.

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