



## **Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting**

**Date of Meeting:** February 19, 2019

**Report Number:** SRCS.19.02

**Department:** Community Services  
**Division:** Recreation and Culture Services

**Subject:** SRCS.19.02 – Community Tennis Club  
Development

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### **Purpose:**

To provide Council with information on potential locations for additional community tennis clubs based on recommendations of the approved Tennis Strategy and to have Council approve the development of a community tennis club at David Hamilton Park for 2020/21 implementation.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- (i) That Council approves the south area community tennis club location as David Hamilton Park;
- (ii) That Council approves the north area community tennis club location in the West Gormley subdivision;
- (iii) That staff conduct a public meeting on the recommended David Hamilton Park Community Tennis Club location;
- (iv) That staff report back to Council with next steps recommendations for implementation.

### **Contact Person:**

Darlene Joslin, Director of Recreation and Culture, extension 2423

Patrick Lee, Director of Policy Planning, extension 2420

### **Report Approval:**

**Submitted by:** Ilmar Simanovskis, Commissioner of Community Services

**Approved by:** Neil Garbe, Chief Administrative Officer

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), Town Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and Chief Administrative Officer. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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### **Background:**

In October 2016, per staff report SRCS.16.32, Council approved the first Tennis Strategy document for the Town of Richmond Hill. The objectives of this project were to review current tennis inventory, research best practice models in surrounding municipalities, review current community tennis club and private tennis club operations and make recommendations for the Town to implement new standards for tennis provisions accompanied by sound policies and practices. The strategy sets out the role the municipality should play with respect to the provision of tennis including indoor and outdoor courts, programs and community tennis club growth and development.

As noted in the Tennis Strategy, community tennis clubs play a significant role in growing and supporting the sport of tennis. Community tennis clubs are instrumental in delivering programs that encourage a variety of participation including spontaneous recreational play, instruction, house leagues, inter-club leagues and competitive matches. Community tennis clubs have the ability to nurture new players and connect players of all skill levels and provide for a greater sense of community through sport and camaraderie.

Based on the size of the general Richmond Hill tennis playing population, the Tennis Strategy recommended the expansion of the number of Community Tennis Clubs beyond Richmond Hill's only current Community Tennis Club (Richmond Hill Lawn Tennis Club at Crosby Park). The Tennis Strategy recommends a gradual increase in the number of community tennis clubs with an aim to provide a better geographic spread of clubs within the Town. As more community tennis clubs are created in Richmond Hill, tennis players looking for structured programs, access in their resident geographic area or increased opportunities for a social tennis environment will have a wider variety of choices than currently exists.

To ensure consistent coordination of the tennis service delivery system, the strategy recommended a Community Tennis Club Policy, attached as Appendix A. The Policy frames the cooperative relationship between the Town and community tennis clubs. The Policy addresses tennis facilities and supporting infrastructure including: the terms and conditions of the Club's use of Town tennis courts; repairs and maintenance of courts used by the Club; conditions of the Club's clubhouse; repairs and maintenance of the clubhouse; guidelines for Club operations and administration as well as obligations to preserve fair and equitable access by the general public to the facilities used by the Club.

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### Site Selection Analysis

The Tennis Strategy identified four potential locations that could possibly become future Community Tennis Clubs subject to further investigation, these are:

South:	David Hamilton Park
Central:	Mount Pleasant Park/Civic Precinct
North-Central:	McCleod's Landing Park
North-East:	Future West Gormley Park

In terms of required infrastructure for Community Tennis Clubs, the following are generally required:

- Four courts minimum with potential for additional courts;
- Colour coated asphalt construction;
- Fencing, lighting and a clubhouse;
- Available parking.

Town staff undertook investigations regarding the feasibility of developing new community tennis clubs. Staff considered the following criteria in evaluating possible locations for new community tennis clubs:

- Providing a geographic spread of clubs within the Town;
- Sensitivity of adjacent land uses to active recreation uses;
- Need for automobile parking;
- Net positive addition of tennis courts to the community;
- Consideration of the challenge of having “club” and “public” courts on the same site;
- Ability to utilize existing infrastructure.

### Centrality to the Community/Geographic Spread of Clubs:

Based on the direction of the Tennis Strategy and the ultimate growth in demand for Community Tennis Clubs, a Community Club in the south, central and north portions of Richmond Hill would be ideal. Such locations would provide opportunities to residents of different parts of the Town and help to strengthen the community spirit and identity of the area.

### Sensitivity of Adjacent Land Uses:

Generally, the Town must look toward existing parks in which to develop a Community Tennis Club. For the most part, existing parks are surrounded by homes and the residents have become accustomed to the existing levels of activity, noise and lighting within the adjacent park. In many instances, locations for potential Community Tennis Clubs may have existing tennis courts but very often the courts are not lit and in some cases additional courts would need to be created to provide a minimum threshold of

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courts to meet club needs. Such considerations must be considered in choosing a candidate location for a Community Tennis Club.

### **Need For Automobile Parking:**

The purely public tennis courts in Richmond Hill tend to serve a local neighbourhood function and are intended to be “walk-to” courts utilized by the more immediate residents. In the case of Community Tennis Clubs, they are intended to serve the broader community and will have a greater “drive-to” function. Accordingly, automobile parking will need to be provided.

### **Impact on Public Court Availability:**

Whereas, it would be desirable to see purely public court players join Community Tennis Clubs in their area, such will not always be the case. The goal in creating new Community Tennis Clubs will be to limit the amount of conversion of public courts to Community Courts without a corresponding enhancement of the purely public tennis experience. In reviewing locations for new Community Clubs where existing public courts may be utilized, regard must be held for the level of nearby purely public opportunities.

### **Challenges of Club Courts and Public Courts on the same site:**

There are challenges of having club courts and public courts on the same site. In this instance, club court members may complain that public players who are not members, may end up playing on the club courts. Conversely, when club courts are fully occupied, club members may utilize the public courts and the public may feel that the members should only utilize the club courts. Notwithstanding these challenges, the two forms of courts can exist together, however, proper signage is helpful and where the two forms of courts are immediately adjacent, fencing between the two is preferable.

### **Cost and Ease of Implementation:**

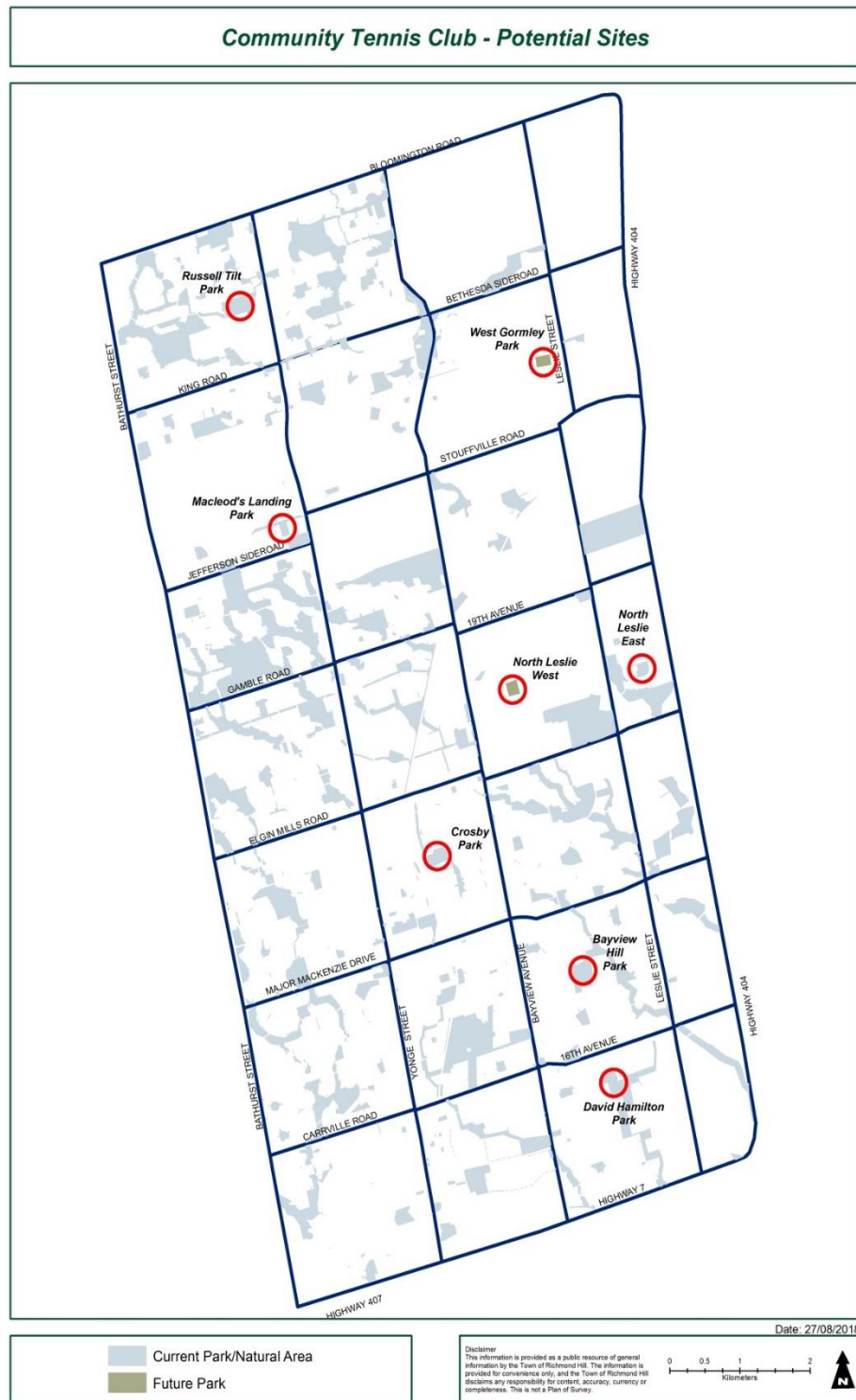
Locations of new Community Tennis Clubs should also be evaluated on the basis of the need to build completely new courts, whether there is a need to build a clubhouse and whether lights must be erected.

### **Determining Recommended Locations**

Based initially on the geographic spread of potential new Community Tennis Clubs, staff considered the locations shown on Figure 1.

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FIGURE 1



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The Town's only Community Tennis Club is the Richmond Hill Lawn Tennis Club located at Crosby Park. This location covers the central part of Richmond Hill in an ideal fashion. This leaves the need to find a location for a future Community Tennis Club in the south part of Town and in the north.

### South Area Evaluation

The following table reviews the above-noted Community Tennis Club criteria for David Hamilton Park and Bayview Glen Park both of which were the only sites in the south that offered possible locations. Additionally, air photos and approximate facility fits for up to six courts are provided on Figure 2 and 3.

Criteria	David Hamilton	Bayview Hill Park
Centrality to Community	Very central	Very Central
Sensitivity of Adjacent Land Uses	Good separation from existing residential dwellings. Six lit tennis courts already exist.	Reasonable separation from residential dwellings. Five lit courts exist. Some space to add a sixth court if desired.
Available Parking	Sufficient parking exists.	Sufficient parking exists.
Impact on Public Court Availability	A 4 court club would reduce the number of public courts from 6 to 2. The community is used to a private facility during winter months (former Blackmore Tennis Club). Little opportunity exists to add new courts.	A 4 court club would reduce the number of public courts from 5 to 1. Court refurbishment of the 5 existing courts planned for 2020.
Club/Public Court Conflict	Potential conflict with 2 remaining public courts.	Slightly greater potential conflict with just one remaining public court.
Cost and ease of implementation	No new infrastructure required.	Construction of a clubhouse would be required.

Based on the analysis in the foregoing table, David Hamilton Park represents the best opportunity for a new Community Tennis Club within south Richmond Hill. Six lit tennis courts currently exist, no new court construction, light construction or clubhouse construction would be required. The neighbourhood is used to the lit tennis courts in their current location. The tennis playing public is also aware of the location's private status in the winter months when the tennis bubble is erected over the courts.

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Depending upon the size of the initial membership, staff propose to only utilize 4 of the 6 courts for club use while leaving the 2 remaining courts for purely public use. Staff will investigate the opportunities to fence and sign the public courts. Although there would be a loss of 4 public courts at David Hamilton Park, the existing 5 courts at Bayview Hill are proposed to be reconstructed with colour coated asphalt in 2020. Given the proximity of the two locations, the public tennis experience within the south part of Town will be enhanced despite the loss of 4 public courts.

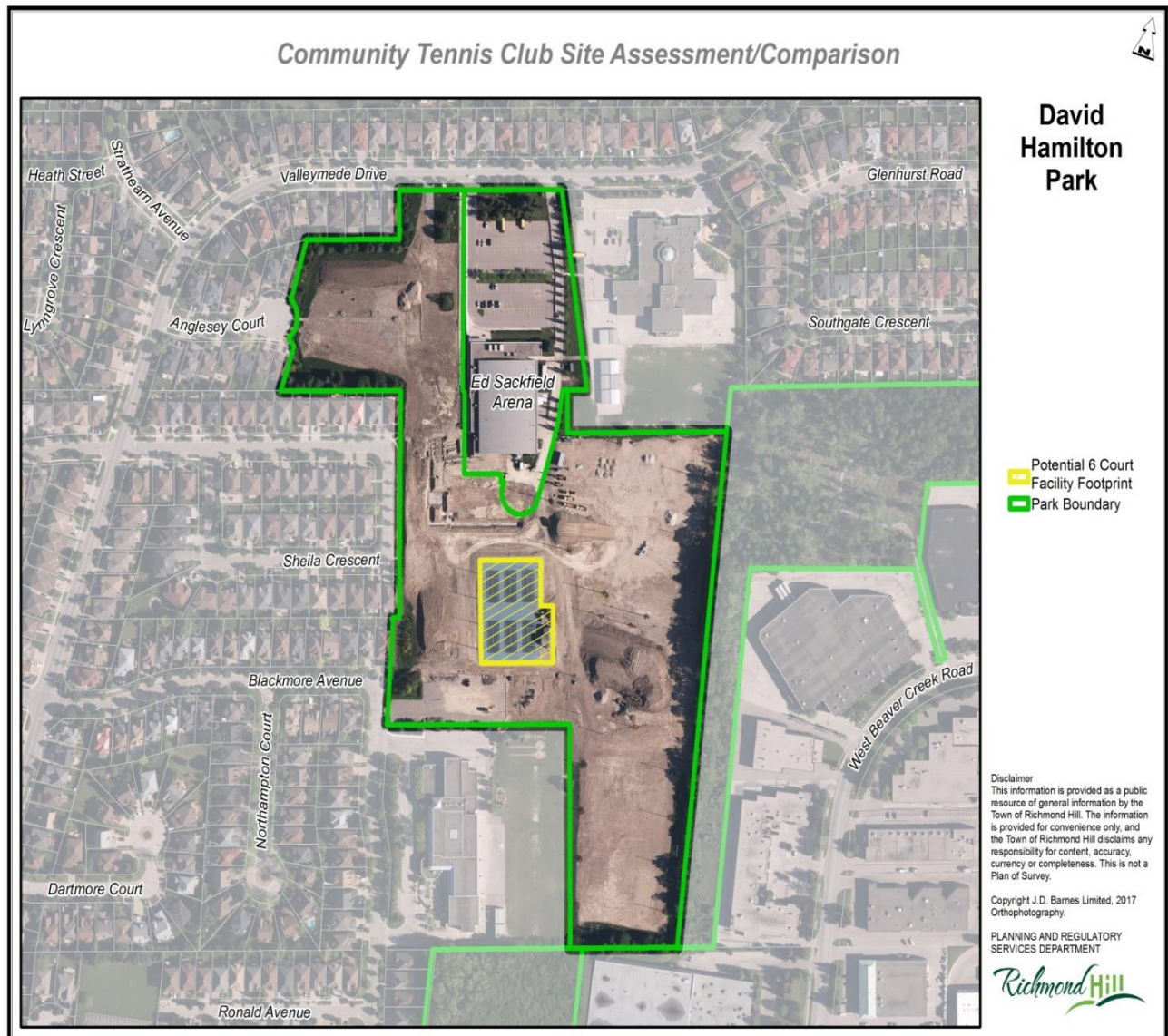
**Figure 2**





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Figure 3





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### North Area Evaluation

The following reviews the same Community Tennis Club criteria for north Richmond Hill. Air photos/plans and approximate facility fits for up to six courts are provided on Figure 4 and 5.

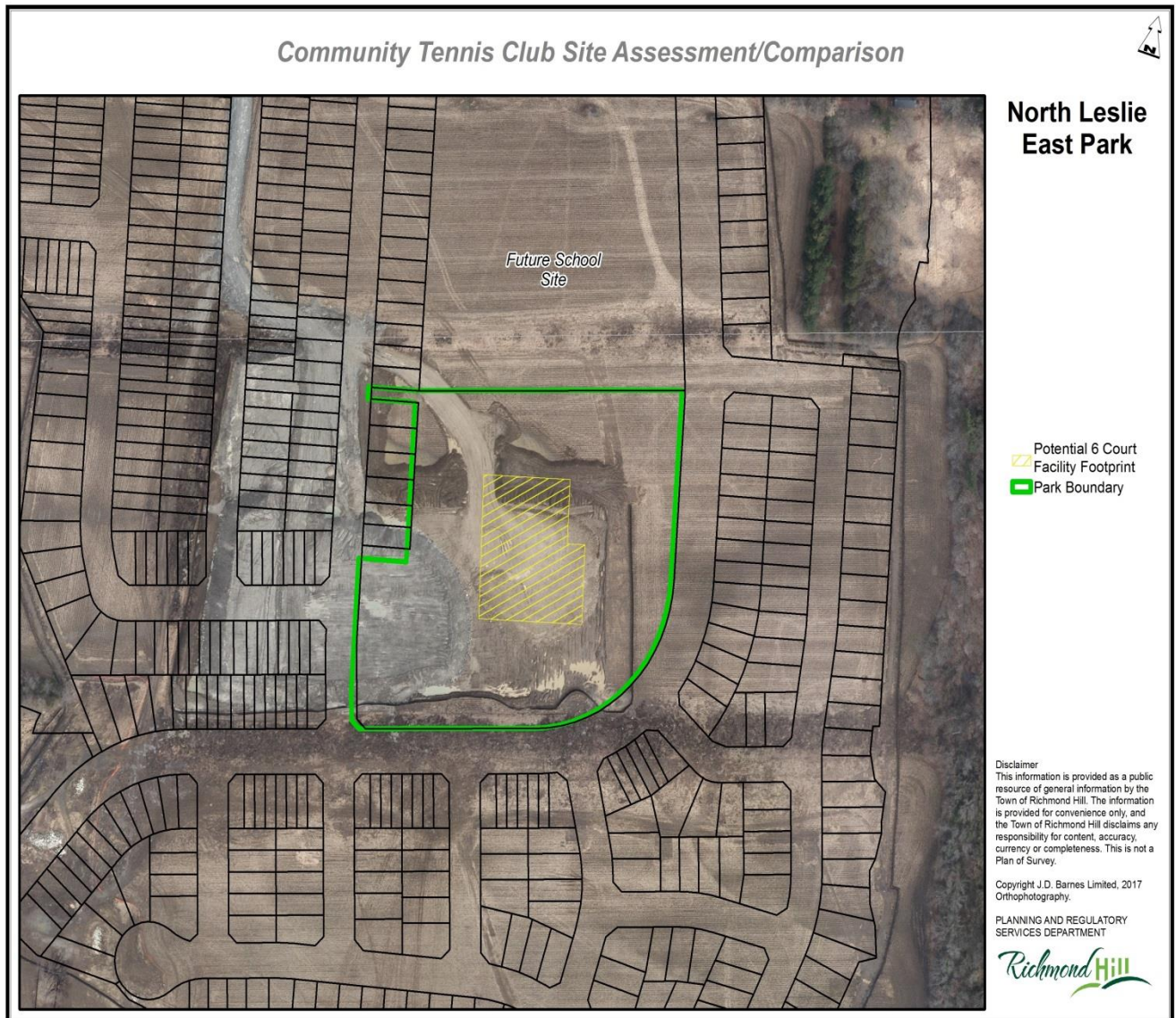
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Un-built North Leslie West Park</b>	<b>Un-built North Leslie East Park</b>	<b>Un-built West Gormley Park</b>	<b>McCleod's Landing Park</b>	<b>Russell Tilt Park</b>
Centrality to Community	Very good to support the new North Leslie community but somewhat distant from existing residents.	Very good to support the new North Leslie community but somewhat distant from existing residents.	Serves new West Gormley community well. Serves existing residents better than both un-built North Leslie Parks.	Well suited to serve north/central area, closer to existing residents.	Serves existing residents well. Less so for north/central area and North Leslie/West Gormley.
Sensitivity of Adjacent Land uses	No existing development.	No existing development.	No existing development.	Existing 4 unlit courts are very close to residents.	Existing 3 unlit courts are very close to residents.
Available Parking	Can be constructed or shared with adjacent proposed school.	Can be constructed or shared with adjacent proposed school.	Can be constructed or shared with adjacent proposed school.	Existing parking shared with adjacent McCleod's Landing Public School.	Existing parking shared with adjacent Bette Stephenson Education Centre.
Impact on Public Court Availability	None	None	None	If the existing courts were converted no public courts would remain.	If the existing courts were converted, no public courts would remain.
Club/Public Court Conflict	None	None	None	None	None

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Cost and ease of implementation	Four new courts, lights and clubhouse required.	Four new courts, lights and clubhouse required.	Four new courts, lights and clubhouse required.	Clubhouse and lights to be constructed.	One new court, clubhouse and lights to be constructed.
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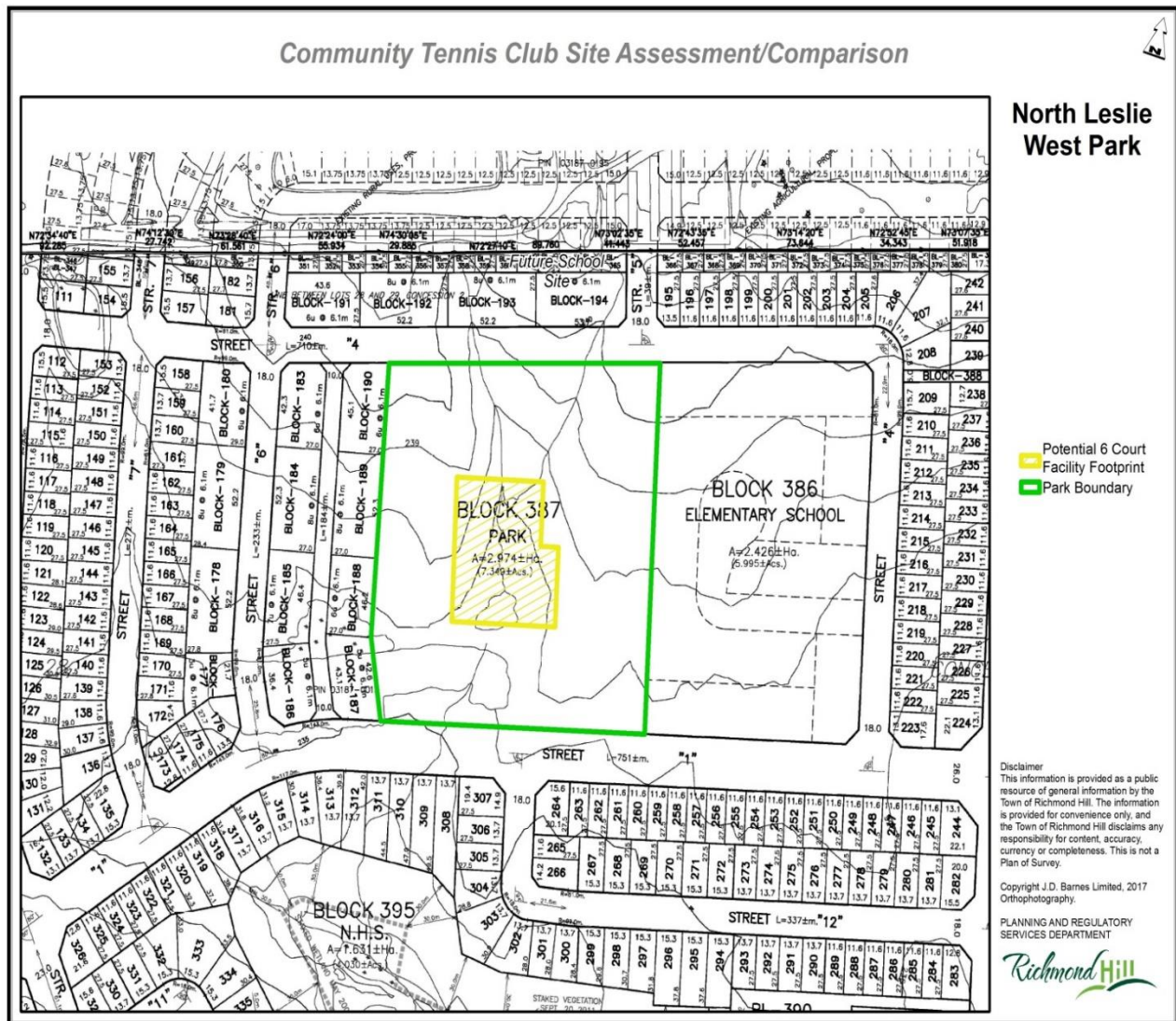
Based on the foregoing, the recommended location for a new Community Tennis Club in the north part of Town is the future West Gormley Park. This location serves the new West Gormley community very well and, also the north/central area. It would not service the existing population as well as Russell Tilt Park. This location does not have any existing residents. New residents can be placed on notice that there will be an active and lit recreation use to be constructed in the park. Parking can either be on site or shared with the future adjacent school to be built. There would also be no public courts converted to club courts. Construction of the new courts would be integrated into the design and cost of the new park itself. The new West Gormley community park is proposed to be constructed in 2022.

**Figure 4**



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Figure 5



## Consultation

Town staff met with the Richmond Hill Lawn Tennis Club executive in May of 2018 to gain their insight to future Community Tennis Club Development in the Town. Generally, the club executive were very supportive of the goal of expanding organized tennis in Richmond Hill. They were supportive of a model of ultimately having a club in the north, central and south part of Town. They indicated that travel and distance for Inter-County league play would be reduced with the introduction of new Community Tennis Clubs. The executive suggested that the Town should strive to provide as many courts per Community Club as possible in order to facilitate larger house leagues which are popular with members.



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Staff has reviewed the information contained within this report to the Richmond Hill Lawn Tennis Club who has confirmed their support of the recommendations.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Whatever location(s) are chosen by Council, where there are established neighbourhoods, public consultation will be undertaken by staff and the local ward Councillor will be advised accordingly. Staff will report back to Council with the results of the public consultation to assist in the determination of the final locations.

Once approval has been provided to proceed, the Recreation & Culture Division will facilitate the formation of the additional community tennis club. The recommended process of formulating a new community tennis club is described in the Community Tennis Club Policy (Appendix A) and through applicable Town practices and procedures.

### **FINANCIAL/STAFFING/OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no anticipated costs to the public consultation phase of this initiative.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The recommendation to develop new community tennis clubs is in keeping with the recommendations of the approved Tennis Strategy. The recommendations also align with Goal 1 of the Corporate Strategic Plan, “Stronger Connections in Richmond Hill”, specifically by “responding to the changing needs of the community by adapting services and programs. This recommendation also aligns with Goal 2, “Better Choice in Richmond Hill”, specifically by “developing and promoting a range of organized and information sports, recreation and cultural programs, with an emphasis on alternatives that people will use throughout their lives”.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The process of developing the Tennis Strategy has yielded a clear vision for the growth and development of tennis within the community of Richmond Hill. The strategy reflects community input from over 1200 residents and community tennis club members. As stated in the Tennis Strategy, an overarching theme that flowed through the consultation process is that community tennis clubs play a significant role in growing and supporting the sport of tennis and should be recognized as an important participant in the development and implementation of a multi-faceted tennis program. Staff have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of opportunities available in the current parks inventory of the Town to facilitate the growth of two additional community tennis clubs. The recommendations of the two new site locations, David Hamilton (South) and West Gormley (north) will complement the current club location at Crosby Park (central). Based on the anticipated timing of the development of a board of directors for the new south community tennis club and the required commitment of a sufficient membership to



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make the club viable (as per the Tennis Strategy), the earliest opening for the new club would be approximately 2020/2021.

### **Attachments:**

Appendix A – Community Tennis Club Policy

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.19.02 Community Tennis Club Development1.docx
Attachments:	- Community Tennis Club Policy - approved 2016.docx
Final Approval Date:	Jan 28, 2019

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Darlene Joslin - Jan 17, 2019 - 9:28 AM**

**Ilmar Simanovskis - Jan 24, 2019 - 2:10 PM**

**Neil Garbe - Jan 28, 2019 - 1:34 PM**