



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: April 13, 2022

Report Number: SRPI.22.049

Department: Planning and Infrastructure

Division: Policy Planning

**Subject: SRPI.22.049 Response to Council Motion:
Pickleball in Richmond Hill**

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide information in response to the Council Motion approved on March 9, 2022 regarding Pickleball in Richmond Hill.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Staff Report SRPI.22.049 – Response to Council Motion: Pickleball in Richmond Hill be received for information;
- b) That staff undertake neighbourhood consultation regarding the proposed re-lining of 2 tennis courts in Morgan Boyle Park and 3 tennis courts in Grovewood Park to facilitate combined tennis/pickleball play by Q3 2023 if possible;
- c) That staff facilitate the design and installation of approximately 10 “pop-up” pickleball courts in the snow storage area of Richmond Green Park to facilitate play by Q3 2022 if possible;
- d) That staff add no volley zone lines to the badminton courts at Rouge Woods and continue to review indoor recreation programs and add further pickleball opportunities where feasible;
- e) That funding in the amount of \$172,850.00 be approved for use in 2022 to facilitate the execution of items (b),(c) and (d) above;
- f) That staff continue to move forward to deliver 4 purpose-built pickleball courts as part of the Bayview Hill Park Phase 1 Revitalization to facilitate play by Q3 2024; and,
- g) That staff investigate a suitable location for a purpose-built, multi-court, community pickleball hub and consider such an endeavor through the City’s budgeting process as soon as possible.

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Contact Person:

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Report Approval:

Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Infrastructure

Tracey Steele, Acting Commissioner of Community Services

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, Interim City Manager

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

Background:

The Parks Plan, Recreation Plan, and Culture Plan Review – Key Findings and Directions Report (SRPI.22.021, hereinafter “the Key Directions Report”) endorsed by Council on March 9, 2022 acknowledges that pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in Canada. This is likely because pickleball is a lower intensity court sport that can be played indoors in a gymnasium on badminton courts, or outdoors on dedicated or multi-use courts that are shared with tennis. Adults 55+ wishing to remain physically active are driving participation growth in pickleball, although it is recognized that the sport is also attracting younger players. The popularity of pickleball continues to spread across the Province with its prominence being further bolstered by its inclusion at the Ontario 55+ Summer Games.

The Key Directions Report provides two directions in relation to pickleball, one being to evaluate shared tennis court usage and determine a fair access policy, and the other to establish service targets for pickleball.

Comments from both the community and Council on the Key Directions Report were received at the February 23, 2022 Council meeting, the March 2, 2022 Council Workshop and the March 9, 2022 Council meeting. Comments related to pickleball generally focused on requesting that the provision of pickleball courts be advanced, that pickleball courts be geographically distributed, that additional indoor pickleball court space be provided, and that consideration be given to providing a community pickleball court hub. In response to these comments, Council approved the following resolution on March 9, 2022:

That the Member Motion of Regional or Local Councillor Perrelli, titled Pickleball Courts in Richmond Hill, be referred to staff for a report back at the Council

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meeting on April 13, 2022 in respect to all matters related to providing additional pickleball courts in Richmond Hill in 2022.

Options for advancing new Pickleball Courts:

Re-line Existing Tennis Courts to Create Multi-Use Courts

In response to the growing demand for pickleball facilities, the City has begun to re-line existing tennis court facilities to include lines that facilitate both tennis and pickleball play, creating multi-use courts. Users can choose to play either tennis or pickleball on these multi-use courts, with pickleball users using the tennis net. For example, at Town Park, pickleball lines have been painted on two existing tennis courts, facilitating either pickleball or tennis play. Community consultation on providing pickleball courts at Town Park was undertaken as part of the Town Park Revitalization Master Plan project in 2019. The City installs signage to guide the court usage for these multi-use courts, including suggested time limits for game play.

In terms of the pros and cons of this approach, staff offer the following observations:

- Playability – this approach is ideal in areas of the City where existing tennis courts have lower usage. Tennis and pickleball users are required to share the same court facility with pickleball users using the tennis net to facilitate pickleball play. Creating multi-use courts offers a low-cost solution that can be completed quicker than a dedicated/purpose-built pickleball court, expanding opportunities for recreational pickleball play in a shorter timeframe.
- Cost – the cost to re-line existing tennis courts with simple line painting is approximately \$2,500/court plus \$500 for each sign guiding game play.
- Buffer requirements – a suitable buffer to the closest residential lot is required (given that pickleball generates more noise than tennis) and is best determined based on the number of multi-use courts provided.
- Public consultation – typically when the City adds new facilities to a park, public consultation is undertaken to obtain feedback on the proposed new facility, particularly if the new facility is adjacent to a residential area.
- Timing – staff have been able to re-line courts with existing staffing resources in the Spring season so that additional pickleball courts are available for the majority of the play season.
- Availability of locations – the City has 81 tennis court facilities in its existing inventory, most of which are well-used. The City currently has 2 multi-use courts (re-lined tennis courts that facilitate pickleball play) at Town Park serving central Richmond Hill.

In response to community and Council comments requesting that the provision of pickleball courts be advanced and ensuring a geographic distribution of pickleball courts, staff have reviewed parks with existing tennis courts in south Richmond Hill and north Richmond Hill that could be re-lined to become multi-use courts. Staff recommend

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that multi-use courts could be considered at the following park locations following public consultation in the fall of 2022 (i.e. for play to begin in Q3 2023):

- At Morgan Boyle Park - 2 pickleball courts could be re-lined on the 2 existing acrylic coated tennis courts to serve south Richmond Hill; and
- At Grovewood Park - 3 pickleball courts could be re-lined on the 3 existing asphalt tennis courts to serve north Richmond Hill.

“Pop-Up” Pickleball Court Hub at Richmond Green Park

In response to the comments received from both the community and Council requesting that the provision of pickleball courts be advanced and that consideration be given to providing a community pickleball hub, staff reviewed existing underused parking and flat storage areas within parks to determine a suitable “pop-up” pickleball court hub location. The location which appears to meet the majority of the size, parking, and buffer criteria required for a 10-court pickleball hub is the existing snow storage area on the west side of Richmond Green.

A “pop-up” pickleball hub with approximately 10 courts could be added to provide seasonal use in the existing flat snow storage area at Richmond Green until such time as a permanent site is found. This would require installing painted lines, temporary fencing, and obtaining portable nets and certain comfort elements such as tables with shade structures, a portable washroom, a storage area with a lock and signage. It will also require existing staffing resources to coordinate the procurement of these materials, the installation of the lines and temporary fencing, setting up the tables/shade structures, and ensuring the storage box is unlocked/locked daily. Providing a “pop-up” pickleball hub on this existing flat asphalt snow storage area could fulfill the demand for a recreational pickleball court hub until such time as a permanent location is found and a design and construction project funded and built.

In terms of the pros and cons of this approach, staff offer the following observations:

- Playability – this approach offers a low-cost solution to fulfill the demand for a recreational pickleball court hub quickly until a permanent location is found. Such a pop-up facility can be completed quicker than a dedicated/purpose-built community pickleball hub (presuming budget and products are readily available to facilitate the creation of a pop-up facility). While this solution is likely not ideal for league or professional pickleball users over the long-term, it provides a quick solution to serve recreational pickleball play quickly.
- Cost – based on the funding estimates for other recent park projects, staff estimate a cost of approximately \$150,000.00 to fund a 10-court pop-up pickleball hub at Richmond Green for 2 seasons. This pop-up pickleball hub would include a number of elements, namely: temporary fencing around the perimeter, portable nets, tables with shade structures, 2 portable washrooms (1 standard unit and 1 accessible unit), a secure storage box(s), and signage.

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- Buffer requirements –The snow storage area at Richmond Green is not located directly adjacent to a residential area. It is over 60 metres away from the closest residential lot line. For comparison purposes, the existing purpose-built pickleball courts at King’s College Park are 25 metres from the closest residential lot.
- Public consultation – when the City adds new facilities to a park, public consultation is undertaken to obtain feedback on the proposed new facility where it is directly adjacent to existing residential lots – in this case, the proposed facility is not directly adjacent to residential lots so public consultation is not required.
- Timing – staff expect that the earliest a lining consultant could be retained is likely sometime in June 2022.
- Availability of locations – The snow storage area provides a relatively flat asphalt surface that could be re-purposed seasonally to fulfill the demand for an approximately 10-court recreational pickleball hub until a permanent location is found. The snow storage area is also used periodically for various City events (i.e. Healthy Yards, training events), which would require notice to users in advance as pickleball play would not be possible when these events are occurring.

Review Indoor Programs and Add “No Volley Zone” lines to Indoor Courts

In response to the growing demand for indoor pickleball facilities, the City has been running pickleball programming at a number of Community Centres. Pickleball can be played on badminton courts and all of the City’s Community Centre gyms are lined for badminton. The only difference between a badminton court and a pickleball court is that a pickleball court requires a “no volley zone” line on the floor, located 7 feet from the net on each side of the net. The gyms in all the City’s Community Centres are well used and there are demands for a range of sport programming.

The City currently offers the following programs related to pickleball:

- Adult Pickleball League programming at Rouge Woods Community Centre,
- Adult 55+ Drop in Pickleball at Bayview Hill Community Centre, Rouge Woods Community Centre and McConaghy Community Centre,
- Adult 55+ Drop in Beginner Pickleball at Oak Ridges Community Centre,
- Adult Pickleball Lessons at Rouge Woods Community Centre,
- And various levels of Adult Drop-in Pickleball at Rouge Woods Community Centre

In response to the comments requesting additional indoor pickleball court space be provided, staff will be reviewing the indoor program offerings to determine if there are opportunities to add more pickleball programs while still meeting the needs of other sports programs.

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Staff have also investigated the cost of installing the “No Volley Zone” line on the indoor badminton courts to adapt them for pickleball. This will cost \$850/court for the 23 courts with wood finish gyms in the City’s inventory and \$3,850 for the 6 courts at Rouge Woods, for a total cost of \$23,400. Alternatively, before pickleball games, pickleball players (or City staff) can apply painters tape to the courts to add a temporary no volley line. Staff recommend that when wood finish gymnasium floors are subject to regular maintenance or repainted, the new line be added permanently. As the specialized gymnasium flooring at Rouge Woods is not subject to regular maintenance, it is recommended that the painting of the no volley line be funded and implemented at the present time.

Construct new Dedicated/Purpose-Built Pickleball Courts

In response to the growing demand for pickleball facilities, a number of the City’s Park Revitalization Master Plan projects have consulted on the provision of dedicated/ purpose-built pickleball courts like exist at King’s College Park. In addition, there are upcoming new growth park projects and park revitalization projects in the Capital Plan forecast that could seek community input on creating multi-use tennis/ pickleball courts on existing tennis court facilities or creating new dedicated/ purpose-built pickleball courts.

Park Revitalization Master Plan Projects

As part of the public consultation for on-going Park Revitalization Master Plan projects, the City has consulted on the provision of dedicated/purpose-built pickleball courts at the following parks:

- **Bayview Hill Park Revitalization Master Plan** – in August/September, 2021, the City consulted on an option that proposed to add 2 dedicated/purpose-built pickleball courts in the area to the south of the proposed updated tennis courts. Staff have reviewed this space further and have confirmed that 4 dedicated/purpose built pickleball courts could be added to this area while still maintaining a sufficient buffer to the residential properties along Spadina Road. Adding 4 dedicated/purpose built pickleball courts would respond to the comments received through the Park Master Plan consultation process requesting additional pickleball courts at Bayview Hill Park from the 2 courts shown in the option. Construction for Phase 1 of this Park Revitalization project could begin in 2023, pending Capital Budget approvals, with the new pickleball courts opening likely sometime in July of 2024. It should be noted that the Phase 1 Park Revitalization works also include a new splash pad facility that is being designed to accommodate a winter ice skating rink, fulfilling another key community desire.
- **Town Park Revitalization Master Plan** – as part of the November 2019 options consultation, the City consulted on an option that proposed to replace the existing tennis courts with 4 dedicated/purpose-built pickleball courts. These pickleball courts are proposed to be designed to facilitate a winter ice skating rink

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given the close proximity to the existing Zamboni at the adjacent Elgin Barrow Arena. The Draft Town Park Revitalization Master Plan is aiming to be brought to Council following the approval of the updated Parks Plan.

- **Mill Pond Park Revitalization Master Plan** - as part of the September/October 2021 options consultation, the City consulted on an option that proposed to add 2 dedicated/purpose-built pickleball courts adjacent to the existing tennis courts at Stavert Park. The Draft Mill Pond Park Revitalization Master Plan is aiming to be brought to Council in early 2023, following the completion of a number of technical studies, namely the Environmental Assessment and a Parking Strategy, which are being completed in the summer/fall of 2022.

As part of all three of the above noted consultation processes, the public expressed a desire to see the introduction of new dedicated/purpose-built pickleball courts in these parks.

Upcoming New Growth Park and Park Revitalization Projects

There are upcoming new growth park projects and park revitalization projects in the Capital Plan forecast that could seek community input on creating multi-use tennis/pickleball courts on existing tennis court facilities or creating new dedicated/purpose-built pickleball courts. For example:

- **Brickworks Park Revitalization** – design funding to begin the revitalization of Brickworks Park was approved by Council in 2022. This is a 2-year park revitalization design project as there is a Shared Use Agreement with the adjacent school board as certain of the park facilities, including the three existing tennis courts, are located on school board lands. As part of this project, one of the options could propose adding multi-use courts that accommodate both tennis and pickleball play. It should be noted that one of the reasons this park revitalization project was prioritized was to add colour-coating to the three existing tennis courts, which are identified as a “top 10” priority in the most recent Tennis Court Condition Assessment, which implements one of the directions of the Council-approved Tennis Strategy. Given other park projects that need to proceed in 2023 and the uncertainty related to the Shared Use Agreement, the earliest construction could begin is 2024, with the new multi-use courts opening in 2025.
- **New Community Park in North Leslie East** – Two new tennis courts are planned for this park to meet the tennis court needs outlined in the 2013 Parks Plan. This park block has not yet been assumed by the City as the developer of the subdivision is currently using this space for staging. Once the park block is assumed and a funding request is brought forward to initiate the design project, the options consultation could seek input on whether the public prefers dedicated tennis courts, multi-use courts, or dedicated pickleball courts in this Community Park. Given the uncertainty associated with the timing of assumption of this park

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block, the earliest construction could begin for this project is likely 2025, with the new courts opening in 2026.

To build new dedicated/purpose-built pickleball courts takes time. The City needs to consult on the proposed location, approve budget funding to complete detailed design drawings, undertake a public tendering process, and construct in an appropriate season as the acrylic colour coating requires a certain temperature to set correctly and there are a limited number of vendors available to complete the colour coating work. Typically, design and construction of dedicated/purpose-built pickleball courts takes approximately 2 years (i.e. 1 year for detailed design and tendering, 1 year to construct the works).

In terms of the pros and cons of this approach, staff offer the following observations:

- Playability – this approach is ideal as pickleball users are provided with dedicated court space, including a net and play surface.
- Cost – the cost of installing two new unlit purpose built pickleball courts is around \$110,000.00 (escalated to current dollars, based on the cost to install the two unlit pickleball courts at Kings College Park).
- Buffer requirements – a suitable buffer to the closest residential lot is required and is best determined based on the number of pickleball courts provided.
- Public consultation – when the City adds new facilities to a park, public consultation is undertaken to obtain feedback on the proposed new facility.
- Timing – typically the City’s design and construction process takes approximately 2 years (i.e. 1 year for detailed design and tendering, 1 year to construct the works).
- Availability of locations – the City is planning for ten (10) purpose-built pickleball courts at the following locations:
 - Bayview Hill Park (4 courts)
 - Town Park (4 courts)
 - Mill Pond Park (2 courts)

Develop a Community Pickle Ball Hub

In response to the comments received from both the community and Council requesting that consideration be given to providing a community pickleball hub, staff advise that a suitable location would need to be found. Such a use requires a park block that is large enough to accommodate the following:

- At least 8 dedicated/purpose built pickleball courts,
- A club house,
- A combination of on-site parking and surrounding street parking given this will likely be a drive-to facility for most residents,
- Comfort elements such as trees and other landscaping, benches, tables and umbrellas or other shade structures and potentially portable washrooms, and

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- Sufficient area to ensure the pickleball courts are buffered from any adjacent residential lots given the noise that would result from a pickleball hub.

In terms of the pros and cons of this approach, staff offer the following observations:

- Playability – this approach provides a centralized hub for pickleball users and would require a combination of on-site parking and surrounding street parking as it would likely be a drive-to facility for most residents. Such a hub would offer the opportunity to create a “community pickleball club” which could host leagues and lessons similar to “community tennis clubs”.
- Cost – Once a site is found, a cost estimate could be prepared.
- Buffer requirements – a suitable buffer to the closest residential lot is required and is best determined based on the number of pickleball courts provided.
- Public consultation – when the City designs and constructs a new park project, public consultation is undertaken to obtain feedback on the proposed design.
- Timing – typically the City’s design and construction process takes approximately 2 years (i.e. 1 year for detailed design and tendering, 1 year to construct the works).
- Availability of locations – as noted above, a suitable location would need to be found.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

In order to provide 15 additional pickleball courts that are geographically distributed across the City as shown on Map 1 funding in the amount of \$172,850.00 is required. This estimate includes:

- \$5,500.00 to create 2 multi-use courts with a sign to guide user play at Morgan Boyle Park,
- \$8,000.00 to create 3 multi-use courts with a sign to guide user play at Grovewood Park,
- \$5,500.00 for public consultation in the fall of 2022 on the above two new facilities being added to these parks given the proximity to residential lots, HST and other surcharges that may result given the on-going pandemic,
- \$150,000.00 to create a 10-court pop-up pickleball hub at Richmond Green with removable nets and various comfort elements.
- \$3,850.00 to paint the no volley zone line on the specialized gymnasium flooring at Rouge Woods.

To fund these works, Council would need to approve additional budget funding in the amount of \$172,850.00 from the Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Reserve Fund.

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Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

Balancing Growth and Green

Providing multi-use courts and seasonal pop-up facilities in response to demand and ensuring that such facilities are geographically dispersed aids the City in accommodating the needs of its changing demographics while using parkland efficiently.

Fiscal Responsibility

Providing multi-use courts and pop-up facilities is a fiscally responsible approach in advance of being able to provide purpose-built facilities.

Sense of Belonging

Providing facilities in response to demand and ensuring an appropriate public consultation process aids in maintaining a sense of place within the community.

Getting Around the City

Creating geographically dispersed facilities makes it easier for residents to recreate across the City.

Climate Change Considerations:

The way we plan and design parks and the facilities within them impacts the City’s larger greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and how vulnerable the City and its residents are to the impacts of climate change. The Key Directions Report endorsed by Council on March 9, 2022 recommends that a climate change lens be applied to the development and redevelopment of parks including facilities like those noted in this staff report. For example, by considering the need for umbrellas or other shade structures in areas where new pickleball courts are added, the impact of the urban heat island on residents using these facilities is mitigated. Additionally, re-purposing existing tennis court facilities to create multi-use courts is appropriate from a climate change perspective as it minimizes the creation of new hard surfaces within parks.

Conclusion:

In response to the growing popularity of pickleball in Richmond Hill, this staff report provides information on how the City is addressing this growing demand and provides recommendations for how additional multi-use and pop-up pickleball courts could be provided in the short-term, pending budget approval, to facilitate recreational pickleball game play. It also recommends that staff continue to review indoor recreation programs and add further pickleball opportunities where feasible, that staff continue to move forward to deliver purpose-built pickleball courts as part of Bayview Hill Park Revitalization, and that staff investigate a suitable location for a purpose-built, multi-court, community pickleball hub and consider such an endeavor through the City’s budgeting process as soon as possible.

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Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Map 1 – Location of Existing, Proposed and Planned Pickleball Courts

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPI.22.049 - Response to Member Motion - Pickleball Courts in Richmond Hill.docx
Attachments:	- Map 1_Location of Existing_Proposed_and Planned Pickleball Courts.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 3, 2022

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

Patrick Lee - Mar 30, 2022 - 10:50 AM

Kelvin Kwan - Mar 31, 2022 - 11:01 AM

David Dexter - Apr 1, 2022 - 11:28 AM

Darlene Joslin - Apr 3, 2022 - 10:11 AM