

CITY OF PALO ALTO

To: City of Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commission

From: Adam Howard, Senior Community Services Manager and Field Usage Ad-Hoc Committee

Date: December 18th, 2018

Re: Preliminary Designs for Dedicated Pickleball Courts

Action:

Staff is requesting that the Parks and Recreation Commission provide feedback on the preliminary design for designated Pickleball space. No action will be taken by the Commission.

Background: (Please reference attached map for Mitchell Park court layout)

The City of Palo Alto has seen an increase in the number of pickleball players and request for pickleball space. The Palo Alto Pickleball Club (formally Silicon Valley Pickleball Club) has been very active in Palo Alto. The club began by using Mitchell Park tennis Courts 5,6,7 on a first-come first-serve basis, which is not supported by the City's court policy. Staff saw an increase in pickleball play and felt it was important to address the growing demand for pickleball space. On August 29th, 2018, staff brought recommended changes to the Court Use Policy that would result in allowing pickleball to use Mitchell Park courts 5,6,7 on a first come first serve basis as well as providing dedicated times on evenings and weekends. These policy recommendations were supported by the Recreation Commission and approved by City Council on October 15th, 2018. Staff has also redesigned and resurfaced the small paddleball courts in Mitchell Park that were underutilized and turned them into two dedicated Pickleball courts.

Discussion:

This policy change legitimized the use of courts by pickleball and provided dedicated times for pickleball play. However, the policy change still does not provide enough designated space to meet demand. When the pickleball community uses Mitchell Park courts 5, 6, 7 they must put together nets that they have purchased, set them up and take them down. With the continued growth of pickleball, staff feels it's important to provide additional, dedicated pickleball space for the Palo Alto community to use.

The Community Services Department and the Parks and Recreation Commission Ad Hoc committee began looking into available space to provide designated Pickleball courts. With high demand on Mitchell Park Tennis Courts 5,6,7 by Pickleball, staff proposed converting those courts to permanent Pickleball courts. The proposal was met with heavy resistance from the tennis community, specifically around the idea of losing lit courts and preferring a method that kept the courts available for joint use. The below proposal is a design that minimizes the loss of

1. Continue to monitor courts and track court usage
2. Finish feasibility design work (easement from creek,)
3. Finish design work with stakeholders
4. **Approval by Santa Clara Valley Water District**
5. Create public outreach plan

