

## CITY OF PALO ALTO

**TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**FROM: ADAM HOWARD**

**DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 2022**

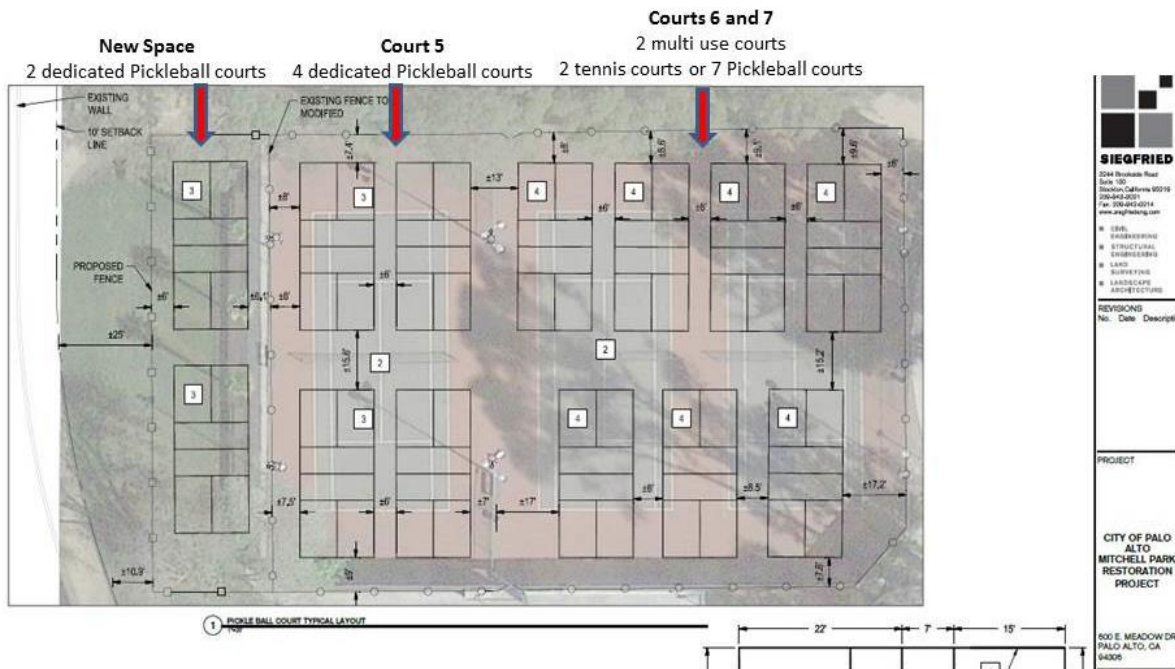
**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION REGARDING COURT USAGE AND JOINT USE COURTS**

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### BACKGROUND

Pickleball in Palo Alto started organically and the City of Palo Alto has seen an increase in the number of pickleball players and requests for pickleball space. A group of pickleball players began using Mitchell Park Tennis Courts 5, 6, 7 on a first-come first-serve basis, which was not supported by the City's [court use policy](#) but was also not creating many issues. Staff continued to see an increase in pickleball play and felt it was important to address the growing demand for pickleball space. Over the last 4 years there have been multiple changes to the policy and park space to allow for more pickleball play.

- 2018- Policy updated to allow pickleball play on Mitchell Park Courts 5,6 7 on a first come first serve basis. Temporary lines were included for pickleball use.
- 2019- With continued growth of pickleball staff and the PRC began looking for ways to provide designated space for the pickleball to be played.
  - New courts were designed and Mitchell Park courts 6 and 7 were designated as multi use courts.
    - Priority times created for the multi-use courts to address most popular times for both tennis and pickleball play.
      - Pickleball has priority 8am-2:30pm 7 days a week.
      - Tennis has priority 3pm-10pm- 7 days a week.
- 2020- New courts are open.



## DISCUSSION

Now that new courts have been established and the multiuse court policy have been in use for two years staff thought it would be important to begin looking at the court usage and determine if the policy and spaces are working efficiently and meeting the needs of the public. When the priority times were created, it was a good compromise to give both pickleball and tennis priority during their busiest times. With continued growth in pickleball evening time has become more popular so the focus has been on nighttime activities on lit courts.

Current court counts and locations:

- 8 designated pickleball courts - 6 lit courts (with a plan in place to add lights for two remaining courts)- all in Mitchell Park
- 51 tennis courts (17 lit tennis courts)
  - Cubberley Community Center (6)
  - Mitchell Park (4) – 4 lit courts
  - Rinconada Park (9) – 6 lit courts
  - Hoover Park (2)
  - Peers Park (2)
  - Terman Park (2)
  - Weisshaar Park (2)
  - Gunn High School (7) \*

- Palo Alto High School (7)\* – 7 lit courts
- JLS Middle School (6)\*
- Jordan Middle School (4) \*

\*PAUSD courts are available during the week after 4pm, weekends and non-school days.

- 2 multi use courts (2 tennis courts, 7 pickleball courts) (all lit)- Mitchell Park

#### Pickleball feedback:

- Evening time is compacted.
- Would like additional space or some evening priority time.
- Grouping of courts is important for the community aspect of the game.

#### Tennis feedback:

- Lit tennis courts are crucial for tennis community and in high demand.
- Grouping of tennis courts also important to tennis community.
- Private lessons continue to be an issue – especially weekend days.

On January 11, 2022, staff began conducting periodic observations of the lit courts in Palo Alto (Palo Alto High School, Mitchell Park and Rinconada Park) to gather data on court usage (Attachment A). Staff counted the number of players on the courts and anyone that was waiting to play if courts were full. Staff and the PRC Ad Hoc Committee on Court Use Policy (Ad Hoc) have reviewed the Court Use Policy and the preliminary feedback from the staff observations on court use. While more data collection is necessary, staff and the Ad Hoc would like to discuss with the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and get feedback on several key questions related to the court use policy:

- What are the pros and cons of the current court use policy?
- Due to increase demand for pickleball in the evenings, should priority times be adjusted?
- Do multi-use courts need to be changed to single use courts?
- What additional data would be helpful in making changes to the Policy.

#### **TIMELINE**

Staff will continue to collect court usage data and coordinate with the Ad Hoc Committee and stakeholders to develop an update to the court use policy for the PRC's consideration in spring 2022.

## Attachment A

Court Usage Observations							
Locations	1/11/2022 (5pm-5:30)	1/12/2022 (6:45-7:15)	1/17/2022 (7pm-7:30)	1/26/2022 (6:30pm-7pm)	1/31/2022 (6:30pm-7pm)	02/05/2022 (6:45pm-7:15)	2/8/2022 (7pm-7:30pm)- 70 degrees
	Tuesday	Wednesday	Monday	Wednesday	Monday	Saturday	Tuesday
<b>Mitchell Park</b>							
Court 1	2	0	2	4	4	2	2
Court 2	4	2	2	4	3	2	2
Court 3	4	4	2	3	0	0	2
Court 4	4	4	2	2	4	2	4
Courts 6	2	2P	2P - no nets	3	2	0	2
Court 7	3	2	4	2	2	0	2
waiting				2			2
Pickleball	24	20	24	24	24	20 (courts full)	24
waiting	5	0	8	3	12		7
<b>Rinconada</b>							
court 1	2	2	3	6	4	no lights power outage	5
court 2	2	2	4	2	2	0	2
court 3	3	4	2	2	1	0	2
court 4	0	2	2	4	2	0	4
court 5	0	4	2	4	4	0	2
court 6	2	0	4	4	2	0	4
waiting				2			6
<b>Paly High School</b>							
court 1	2	1	2	3	2	0	2
court 2	0	0	4	2	0	0	2
court 3	2	0	2	2	2	0	2
court 4	0	4	2	2	0	2	2
court 5	0	4	2	2	0	0	2
court 6	0	2	4	4	0	0	2
court 7	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
waiting							