



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 9654)

Report Type: Consent Calendar

Meeting Date: 10/15/2018

Summary Title: Approval of Revised Palo Alto Field and Tennis Court Use Policy

Title: Approval of Revisions to the Palo Alto Field and Tennis Court Use Policy

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Community Services

Recommendation

Staff recommends that Council approve revisions to the Field and Tennis Court Use Policy to include the addition of Pickleball.

Background

The Field and Tennis Court Use Policy was adopted by City Council in 2013 to provide clear procedures for prioritizing use of athletic fields and tennis courts by the public and organized sports leagues and clubs. When the policy was adopted tennis was the only racquet sport that used the courts for drop-in and tournament play.

The City of Palo Alto has seen an increase in pickleball players and requests for pickleball space. The Palo Alto Pickleball Club (formerly Silicon Valley Pickleball Club) has been very active in Palo Alto and is currently using Mitchell Park Tennis Courts 5,6,7 on a first-come first-serve basis, which is not supported by the City's current court policy. The Mitchell Park tennis courts are not heavily reserved for U.S. Tennis Association (USTA) match play but are used by drop in players. The courts at Mitchell Park and are the only lighted courts in south Palo Alto.

The Palo Alto Pickleball Club recently received a proclamation from City Council recognizing pickleball as one of the fastest growing sports with more than 2.5 million participants. Palo Alto also hosts the Bay Area Senior Games pickleball matches.

The City of Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) reviewed the policy revisions on Tuesday August 28, 2018. The majority of public comments came from pickleball players that are in favor of the policy change but also encouraged staff to continue to work towards designated courts for pickleball. The tennis players who spoke were generally supportive of the policy changes, but spoke against the idea of existing tennis courts being converted to designated pickleball space. The PRC unanimously approved the recommendation to move the

policy changes forward to City Council.

Discussion

With increased demand for pickleball, the Community Services Department and the Parks and Recreation Commission 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 lighted courts. The tennis community preferred a method that kept the courts available for joint use. As staff continues gathering information and creating additional proposals for permanent space it's important that policy changes are adopted to allow pickleball use of the courts while also recognizing the value of the lighted courts for the tennis community. The policy change allows for pickleball to have dedicated play time, reserve space for tournaments and provides the opportunity for evening/night play.

Staff understands that dedicated pickleball courts would provide the best solution for both sports and are working towards this resolution by evaluating different alternatives. This policy change will legitimize the use of court space for pickleball in the meantime.

Summary of Current Policy and Recommended Changes:

Issue	Current Policy	New Policy Recommendations	Comments
Court Usage	Courts are only available for tennis use.	<p>Change language to allow more flexibility on the courts rather than only allowing tennis.</p> <p>Designate priority hours for tennis and pickleball on Mitchell Park Courts 5/6/7.</p> <p>Any hours not listed in priority hours are available first come first serve</p>	<p>Priority times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennis Priority Hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4pm-10pm on Tuesday and Thursday ○ 2pm-10pm on Saturday and Sunday • Pickleball Priority Hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4pm-10pm on Monday and Wednesday ○ 8am-2pm on Saturday and Sunday

Court reservations/tournaments	Reservations only allowed for USTA Match Play and Palo Alto Tennis Club weekend/tournament use.	Allow tournament reservations for pickleball with residency requirements. Allow department to allow special events like Senior Games to reserve more than 50% of courts	Large events have been allowed to reserve more than 50% of courts in the past, this is just updating the policy to reflect current practice.
50% policy	Only 50% of tennis courts can be reserved for USTA Match Play	This policy is not being changed, however, in cases where odd number of courts exist, the extra court will be left available for drop in use.	Example: 9 available courts, 5 would be reserved, leaving 4 available. Staff will now only reserve 4 courts, leaving 5 available.

Next Steps

Staff will assess the policy again with both the pickleball and tennis community in six months or less and implement additional changes as needed.

Staff continues to identify alternatives for dedicated pickleball courts and will review the alternatives with the tennis and pickleball community and the Parks and Recreation Commission prior to bringing a proposal to City Council.

Resource Impacts

Increased usage of the courts for pickleball is not expected to impact resources.

Attachments:

- Court Usage Policy Revised With Markup
- Court Usage Policy Revised

XII. Court Usage

1. ~~1~~ Locations: Courts are available at the following locations:

- Cubberley Community Center (6)
- Mitchell Park (7 lit courts)
- Rinconada Park (9 lit courts)
- Hoover Park (2)
- Peers Park (2)
- Terman Park (2)
- Weisshaar Park (2)
- Gunn High School (7 lit courts)
- Palo Alto High School (7 lit courts)
- JLS Middle School (6)
- Greene Middle School (4)

2. ~~2~~ Multi-Striped Courts & Priority Times:

Mitchell Park Courts 5, 6, 7 are striped with both Tennis and Pickleball lines. These multi-use courts have designated hours that give either Tennis or Pickleball priority to play on the courts during that time. If courts are not being utilized by the priority sport, ~~by specific sport during the priority time,~~ then either sport may play on a drop-in basis. However, the players of the non-priority sport ~~players~~ must vacate the court within 15 minutes if players for the priority ~~timed-sport~~ wish to play during their priority time, whether as a drop-in or with an issued permit.

- Tennis Priority Hours
 - 4pm-10pm on ~~Monday, Wednesday and Friday~~ Tuesday and Thursday
 - 2pm-10pm on Saturday and Sunday
- Pickleball Priority Hours
 - 4pm-10pm on ~~Tuesday and Thursday~~ Monday and Wednesday
 - 8am-2pm on Saturday and Sunday
- Hours outside of the priority times are available for first-come first-served play of either sport.

(See: Section XII, #5)
- Entire court should be used for one sport. No playing Pickleball and tennis on the same court.
- During priority times, reservations can only be made for the sport that has priority, unless approved by CSD Director.

3. ~~3~~ Courts are available for reservation for Palo Alto Tennis Club ~~and~~ USTA tournament/match use only. Mitchell Park Courts 5, 6, 7 are available for reservation by Pickleball organizations but only for approved tournaments ~~and only during Pickleball priority hours.~~ Tournaments may reserve more than 50% of available court space but require approval from Recreation Department.

B:-A: Court Fees-fees for reservation:

- a-i. Residents: \$5.00-\$10.00 per court per hour
- b-ii. Non-residents: \$7.00- \$20.00 per court per hour

4. ~~4~~ Courts are not available for reservation by individuals for private use, including private lessons, picnics and individual play. No person shall provide or offer ~~T~~tennis or Pickleball lessons for compensation on City-owned tennis courts except as part of and approved as a City-sponsored program.

4.

~~5.~~ ~~5.~~ Courts are available for drop in use on a **first-come, first-served basis** ([with the exception of priority hours, see Section II](#)). ~~with the exception of Mitchell Park courts 5, 6, 7.~~ Each court use is subject to a one-hour time limit whenever there are others waiting to use the court.

~~5.~~

~~6.~~ The City brokers all City and District tennis courts (district courts available weekends, holidays and after 4pm on school days)-.

~~7.~~ ~~3.~~ Only 50% of the available courts at any location can be reserved at the same time and date [unless permitted by the Recreation Department for special requests/tournaments.](#) All other courts will remain open to the general public.

~~8.~~ ~~6.~~ Courts are for ~~raquet~~[racquet](#) sports only- unless expressly allowed via permit issued by the Community Services Department. No rollerblades, skates, skateboards, or pets are permitted on any court.

~~8.~~

~~9.~~ No individual may solely occupy and use a court if other individuals are waiting to play on that court.

~~9.~~

~~8.~~ All steel raequets must have guards.

~~10.~~

~~11.~~~~10.~~ Only non-marking soled shoes are allowed on the courts.

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~~○~~ ~~Weisshaar Park (2)~~

~~○~~ ~~Gunn High School (7)~~

~~○~~ ~~Palo Alto High School (7)~~

~~○~~ ~~JLS Middle School (6)~~

~~○~~ ~~Greene Middle School (4)~~

B:) Multi-striped courts:

~~_____ Mitchell Park courts 5, 6, 7 are stripped with both tTennis and Pickleball lines. These multi-use courts have designated hours that give either tennis or Pickleball priority to play on the courts during that time.~~

~~●~~ ~~Tennis priority hours~~

~~○~~ ~~4pm-10pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday~~

~~○~~ ~~2pm-10pm on Saturday and Sunday~~

~~●~~ ~~Pickleball priority hours~~

~~○~~ ~~4pm-10pm on Tuesday and Thursday~~

~~○~~ ~~8am-2pm on Saturday and Sunday~~

~~●~~ ~~Hours outside of the priority times are available for first_come first_served play.~~

~~●~~ ~~Reservations can only be made during priority hours and only for the sport with priority during those times.~~

~~●~~

XIII. Permit Rules & Regulations

1. Permits cannot be transferred or assigned to any other person, group or organization for any reason.

1

2. Users must pick up and remove any trash generated by their activity.

2

3. The misuse of City or District facilities or the failure to conform to facility regulations, established policies (including the Wet Field Policy) and procedures or any other Federal, State, or local law, rule regulation or ordinance shall be sufficient grounds for the immediate revocation of the permit and/or the denial of any future applications. No refund will be granted.

3

4. Permit holders shall restrict their use to only those fields or courts specifically reserved and paid for, as designated in their permit. Other fields or courts may be scheduled by other groups and may not be available. Permit holders must be in possession of their Use Permit in case there is a need to address the question of who has priority use or reservation for the field or court in question. If the permit holder cannot use a field or court due to unauthorized use by another party, the permit holder should contact the Palo Alto Police Department at 650-329-2413.

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Complaints from surrounding neighborhood residents as to the permittee's activity noise level, litter and debris, and/or disregard of parking regulations could lead to the cancellation of the permit or reservation, the forfeiture of the security deposit, and the denial of facility use in the future.

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waiting to use the court.

- 6.** The City brokers all City and District tennis courts (district courts available weekends, holidays and after 4pm on school days).
- 7.** Only 50% of the available courts at any location can be reserved at the same time and date unless permitted by the Recreation Department for special requests/tournaments. All other courts will remain open to the general public.
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