

**To:** David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Brian Connors, Director of Parks & Recreation

**Re:** Pickleball Courts

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**AIM**

To provide Council with a staff report regarding pickleball courts in the City of Woodstock.

**BACKGROUND**

In 2014 Park Row Park had two existing tennis courts that required resurfacing. A decision was made by staff to convert the two dilapidated tennis courts at Park Row Park to three pickleball courts in anticipation of growth in this sport.

On September 7, 2023, a delegation appeared before Council requesting more pickleball courts. This delegation brought forward three ideas to be considered for the addition of more pickleball courts. The first suggestion was to re-develop the three Park Row Park courts from three to six courts. The second suggestion was to add courts at Civic Centre Arena and the third suggestion was to add pickleball lines to Brompton tennis courts, effectively making them hybrid courts for both tennis and pickleball.

**COMMENTS**

The 2021 Recreation Facility Needs Study recommends constructing three dedicated pickleball courts at Cowan Fields. This is tentatively scheduled to be completed in 2025. As pickleball has been a relatively new sport to this country there is no industry standard based on population for the provision of pickleball courts. With the lack of objective standards, information is based on site visits to courts and community engagement encounters which are both subjective measurements.

In 2021 the hall at Cowan Sportplex was redeveloped into a gym. Once the gym was completed, more pickleball hours were instituted. Currently, there are 22.5 hours a week of pickleball scheduled at Cowan Sportplex for Fall/Winter/Spring. Starting next week an additional 12 hours of pickleball will be made available for Fall/Winter/Spring at the Community Complex, which has been recently converted from a hall to a gym.

In 2024 a new park is also scheduled to come online which is East of Shana Larson Park. This new park does have space for an athletic pad location and funding for an athletic pad has been a part of the park development plan. This new park could hold three pickleball courts. This park still needs to be officially turned over to the City before park construction can begin.

The pickleball delegation brought forward three ideas to increase the number of pickleball courts. Below are the ideas with staff comments:

*Six Pickleball Courts at Park Row Park*

Creating six pickleball courts at Park Row Park has the advantage of building more pickleball courts in a location that existing users are familiar with. The main disadvantage would be the

neighbourhood park is too small to handle the increased street parking. Another disadvantage is that the courts at Park Row Park would require full rehabilitation at approximately \$60,000 to put in the post nets and lines. However, the courts at Park Row Park were rehabilitated a mere nine years ago and have not achieved their full life cycle.

#### *Pickleball Courts at Civic Arena*

The delegation was not clear on the desire to have indoor or outdoor pickleball courts at the Civic Arena. Outdoor Courts would require Agricultural Society approval as the paved section of the Parking lot is on their land. Temporary fencing and netting systems would require storage when not in use creating an additional hurdle. Having pickleball courts inside the Arena would require staffing hours and during the summer the Civic Arena building gets very hot with no climate controls.

#### *Brompton Tennis Court*

The delegation also indicated that pickleball lines could be put in with the two tennis courts at Brompton Park. The 2024 Capital budget does have \$60,000 planned for Brompton tennis courts going through redevelopment. If staff are directed by council, pickleball lines could be added to create 2 hybrid tennis/pickleball courts. The one downside to this idea would be that some Brompton tennis players may find playing time limited because another sport is using the courts.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Woodstock City Council receives the report regarding Pickleball Courts as information.

*Authored by: Brian Connors, Director of Parks and Recreation*

*Approved by: David Creery, M.B.A., P.Eng., Chief Administrative Officer*