

DATE: June 29, 2022

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Stephanie Lum, Senior Recreation Coordinator
Colin James, Recreation Supervisor
Kristine Crosby, Recreation Manager

SUBJECT: Pickleball Community Input Survey Results and Recommended Pilot Program

RECOMMENDATION

Review and approve staff's recommendation regarding a pilot program to add dual striping of pickleball courts on a select number of tennis courts as follows:

- Dual striping of six pickleball courts on Court Nos. 1 and 2 at Cooper Park tennis courts;
- Implement designated times of play for each sport on dual-striped Court Nos. 1 and 2— 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., seven days a week, for pickleball play only; 3:00 p.m. to sunset, seven days a week, for tennis play only; and
- Staff to monitor this pilot program for one year following implementation and return to the Tennis Advisory Board and the Parks and Recreation Commission with findings in fall 2023.

BACKGROUND

Pickleball is a racket sport similar to tennis, badminton, and ping-pong. It is played on a small court, the size of 20' by 44', using wood paddles, shortened net, and a hard plastic Wiffle ball. Pickleball is dubbed the "fastest-growing sport in America" and has grown in popularity in recent years with all age groups. This social sport can be played with two to four players with often quick rounds allowing multiple people to play in a short period.

In 2015, the Community Services Department's Recreation Division worked with a volunteer pickleball advocate to launch a pickleball program marketed through the Senior Center. The program was launched using the asphalt pad located adjacent to the ball wall area of Rengstorff Park. This program utilized one temporary court and met once a week. Due to the popularity of the program, the use expanded to add temporarily taped lines to multiple tennis courts at Rengstorff Park. Volunteer instructors brought the necessary equipment to offer the program, including nets, paddles, balls, and tape to create temporary boundary lines. Once the program

began using the tennis courts, staff received complaints from tennis players with regard to noise, residue from the tape on the courts, and court time being taken away for this program. During this time, the pickleball group requested the installation of permanent pickleball “blended lines” on two of the eight tennis courts at Rengstorff Park for designated pickleball-only play during off-peak hours. At the time, staff received input from the Mountain View Tennis Club, Cuesta Tennis operator, and Tennis Advisory Board. The Mountain View Tennis Club was not supportive of blended lines due to additional noise and distraction of the additional lines on the court. However, the Tennis Advisory Board and Cuesta Tennis operator both supported the effort to include blended lines and welcomed pickleball to be played during off-peak hours.

In 2017, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) approved staff’s recommendation to add three stand-alone, dedicated pickleball courts at Rengstorff Park, adjacent to the tennis courts, through the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP). In addition, the PRC recommended staff explore appropriate locations and policies regarding pickleball courts and using tennis courts as multi-use (Attachment 1—April 12, 2017 PRC Staff Report). Staff returned to the PRC in January 2018 following a review of potential locations for pickleball courts and completing a community survey related to multi-use on tennis courts. The PRC approved staff’s recommendation to install the three dedicated courts at Rengstorff Park and requested staff to monitor the use of these courts once installed (Attachment 2—January 10, 2018 PRC Staff Report). In August 2018, three stand-alone pickleball courts were opened at Rengstorff Park—two courts dedicated with nets and one court lined without a net to provide flexible use for pickleball or “ball wall” users.

ANALYSIS

Pickleball, like tennis, has increased in popularity since the pandemic began as it is a safe, outdoor, social, and physical activity for residents to participate in. Since the pickleball courts opened, staff, the City Council, and the PRC have received requests from the public to create additional access to pickleball through more courts, dual-striped courts on tennis courts, lighting of the existing pickleball courts, and indoor options.

In response, staff created an indoor pickleball program through the Adult Drop-in Sports program at the Mountain View Sports Pavilion in November 2021. This program expands community access to pickleball during the evening hours. The indoor program is available Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. On average, 20 people participate in this program each week. While this effort to provide more pickleball programming in the community was appreciated, staff heard that more outdoor options are highly desired compared to indoor options.

With an increase in requests for pickleball access, staff looked for appropriate ways to create recommendations for the Tennis Advisory Board (TAB) and PRC to review in an effort to increase access to pickleball. Staff created a community survey and completed court monitoring and benchmarking with other agencies to provide helpful information to the advisory bodies.

Public Input Process

The public input process began on February 17, 2022 with a staff presentation to the TAB to introduce an input process, timelines, and milestones to gather more information and data for staff to return with recommendations. At this meeting, staff received 11 comments from community members: three tennis players, five pickleball players, and three dual-sport athletes.

Following the TAB meeting, staff launched a community input survey on March 11, 2022, which was open for two weeks through March 25, 2022. Staff publicized the survey by posting signs with a QR code to the survey at all tennis and pickleball court locations in Mountain View; notice was provided to all known user groups, such as the Mountain View Tennis Club, Mountain View Tennis (Cuesta Park’s tennis operator), and Mountain View Pickleball Club; and information was posted to the City website and shared via City social media channels and Nextdoor. Staff received 713 complete survey responses, and of these, 414 respondents were Mountain View residents, equating to 58% of the respondents. Out of the residents’ responses, 231 are tennis players, 118 are pickleball players, 58 play both sports, and seven do not play either sport. (Figure 1, *Survey Respondents by Sport*, shows the breakdown between residents and nonresidents by each sport.)

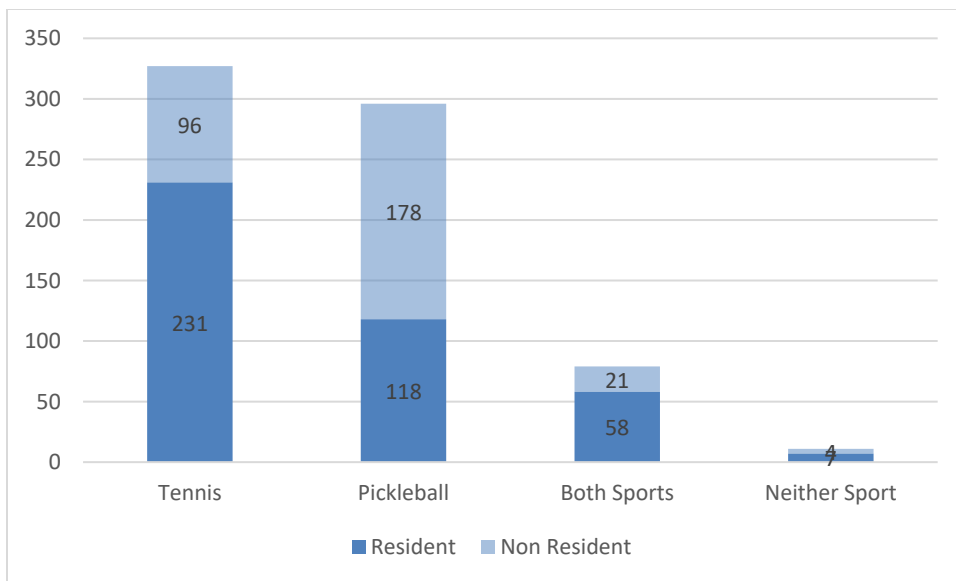


Figure 1: Survey Respondents by Sport

Survey Responses

The survey included questions related to tennis and pickleball player facility use, including location, days and times of use, dual-striped court layout and location preference, open-ended

comments, and demographic information. The following section provides information from the survey responses.

Most Preferred Location of Play

Of the six tennis court locations within Mountain View, tennis players ranked Cuesta Tennis Center as the location they primarily play most with Rengstorff Park as the second-highest location. Smaller tennis court locations, such as Stevenson, Cooper, Sylvan, and Whisman Parks, were the least preferred locations for tennis. (Figure 2 shows where survey respondents are most likely to play tennis.)

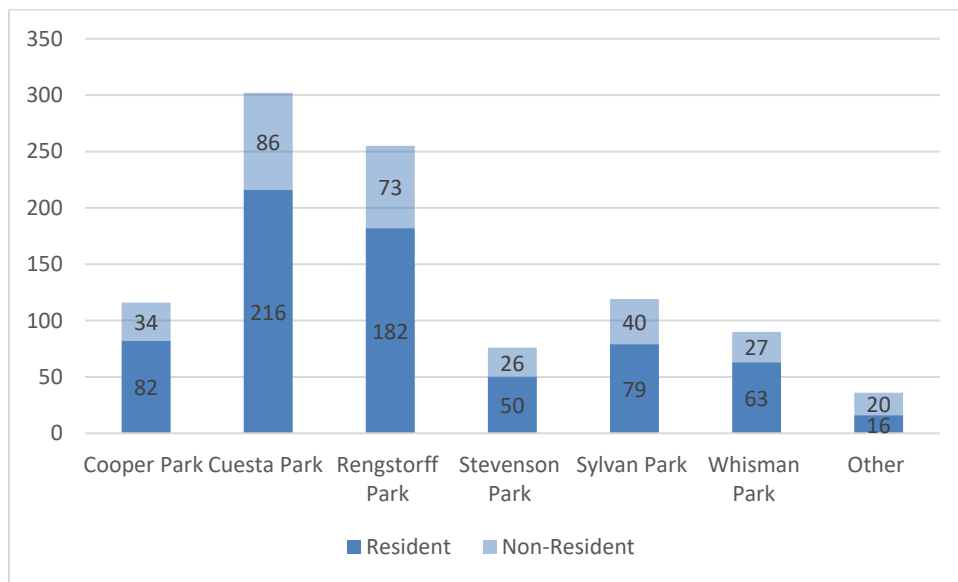


Figure 2: Locations Most Likely Played by Tennis Players

Pickleball players mostly play at the dedicated Rengstorff Park pickleball courts, while the second choice for Mountain View residents is to play in another municipality. Out of the 80 Mountain View pickleball residents who responded they play in other locations, 63 stated they play at Mitchell Park in Palo Alto. (Figure 3 details where pickleball players mostly play in Mountain View.)

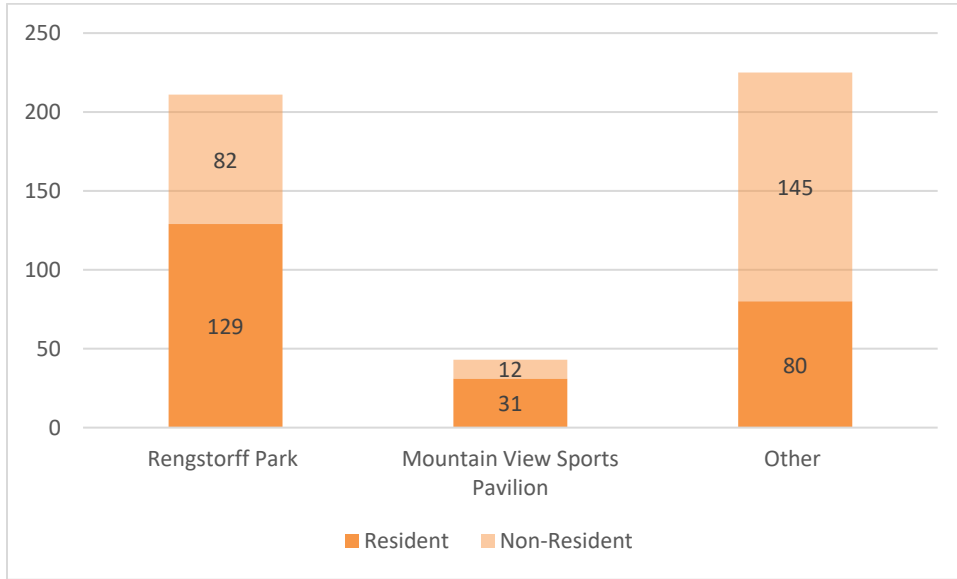


Figure 3: Locations Most Likely Played by Pickleball Players

Days of the Week

Survey respondents were asked to share which day(s) of the week they are most likely to play their sport. Of the residents who responded, Saturday and Sunday were selected by tennis players as the days they mostly play tennis, while resident pickleball players were most likely to play throughout the week with Friday having the highest concentration of play, with 118 respondents. (Figure 4 outlines when each sport is most likely to be played during the week, segmented by resident versus nonresident.)



Figure 4: Day of the Week Played by Sport

Times of Day

Survey respondents were asked to share what time of day they are most likely to play their sport. Results indicate that tennis players’ top three times to play are, in preferred order, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pickleball players’ top three times to play are, in preferred order, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Figure 5 outlines the preferred time to play by each sport, segmented by resident versus nonresident respondents.)

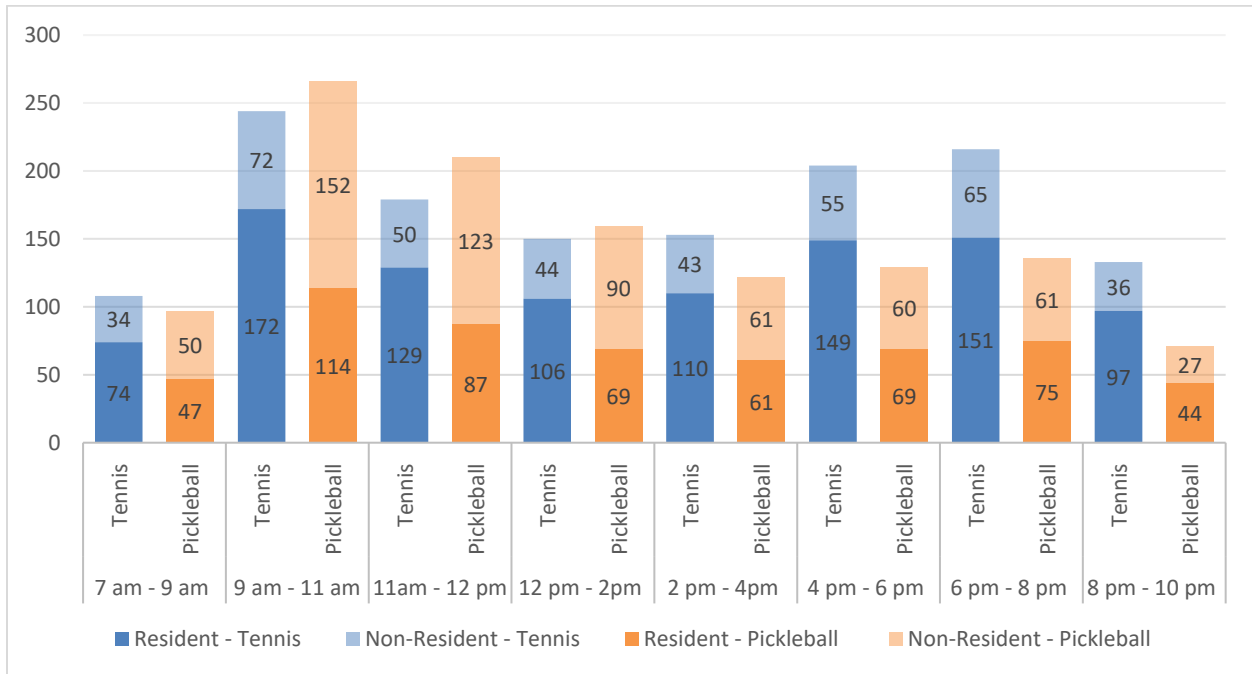


Figure 5: Time of Day Played by Sport

Designated Hours

Within the survey, staff asked if there should be designated hours for pickleball play versus tennis play if tennis courts were to be dual-striped for pickleball; 51.78% of tennis players and 59.12% of pickleball players agree that designated days and times for each sport on dual-striped courts are preferred.

Court Monitoring Program Findings

Recreation staff embarked on a tennis court monitoring program to confirm assumptions of when tennis and pickleball courts are in use. Staff utilized a software system to randomly select three times per day for staff to visit all court locations daily over a three-week time frame, March 21, 2022 through April 10, 2022. At each visit, staff recorded the number of people playing and the number of people waiting to play at each tennis and pickleball court location.

Cuesta Park tennis courts, followed by Rengstorff Park tennis courts, are the most used courts according to the court monitoring evaluation. The pickleball courts at Rengstorff Park were the third most-populated racket sports court. Table 1 shares the number of players observed at each court over the three weeks.

Table 1: Court Monitoring Observations

Court Location	No. of Players
Cuesta Park Tennis Courts (12 courts)	1,254
Rengstorff Park Tennis Courts (eight courts)	677
Rengstorff Park Pickleball Courts (three courts)	356
Sylvan Park Tennis Courts (four courts)	244
Whisman Park Tennis Courts (four courts)	218
Stevenson Park Tennis Courts (three courts)	176
Cooper Park Tennis Courts (four courts)	166

Municipal Agency Benchmarking

Staff completed a benchmarking survey with California Municipal Agencies regarding pickleball court facilities. Statewide, staff received 26 agency responses, 11 of which were from Santa Clara County. From the Santa Clara County respondents, including Mountain View, there are 22 municipal-operated, dedicated pickleball courts, 20 dual-striped pickleball courts, and 310 dedicated tennis courts. (Figure 6 shows the number of types of pickleball courts available by each agency surveyed in Santa Clara County.)

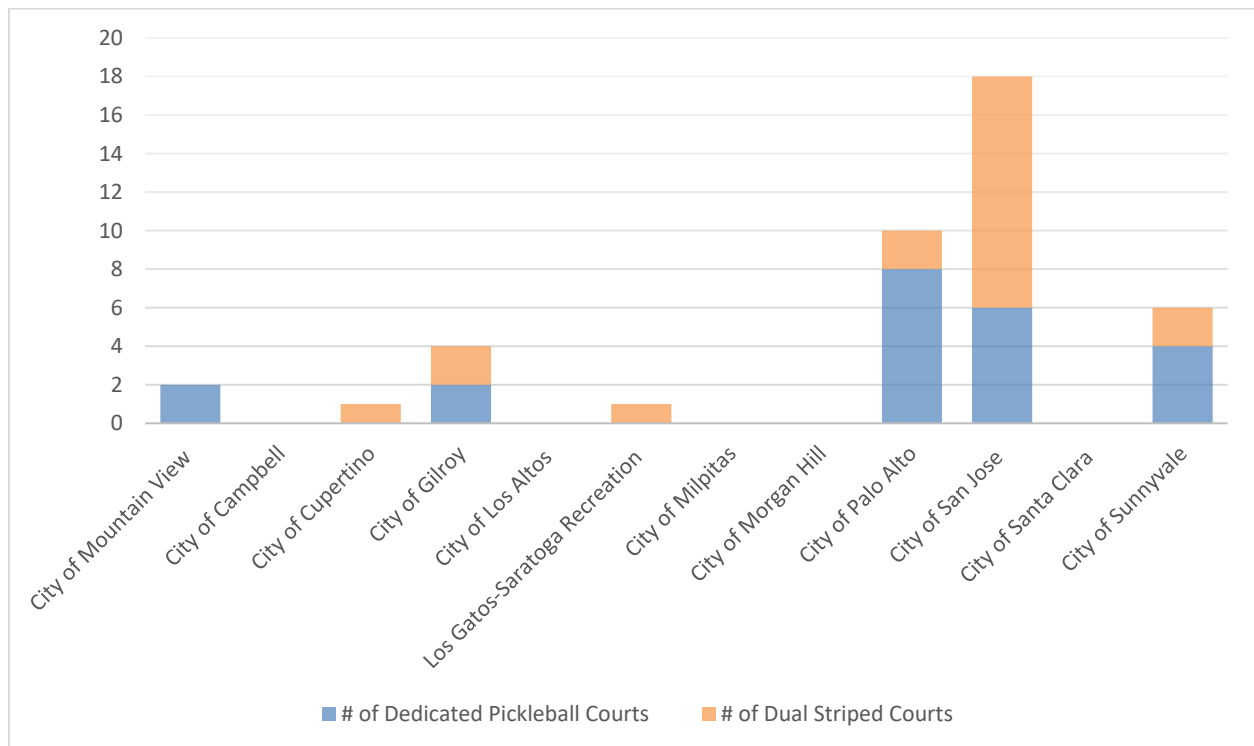


Figure 6: Pickleball Courts in Santa Clara County

For the agencies that have dual-striped pickleball and tennis courts, having designated times for each sport is a best practice. Sunnyvale, Los Gatos-Saratoga Recreation, Palo Alto, Burlingame, and Belmont all utilize dedicated times and days for each sport. Staff has learned through this survey that Los Altos and Santa Clara have received similar requests from their residents to add pickleball lines to tennis courts. San Jose currently does not have designated times for each sport but included that they have experienced issues with the first-come, first-serve model. Cupertino recently completed dual striping courts and is studying adding dedicated times.

Tennis Advisory Board Meeting—May 19, 2022

Staff brought a recommendation to the TAB for review on May, 19, 2022 for a pickleball pilot program with the following parameters:

- Dual striping a total of six pickleball courts on Court Nos. 3 and 4 at Rengstorff Park tennis courts;
- Implement designated times of play for each sport on dual-striped Court Nos. 3 and 4—7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday for pickleball play only; 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; and Saturday and Sunday from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for tennis play only; and
- Staff to monitor this pilot program for one year following implementation and return to the TAB with findings in fall 2023.

The TAB received 24 comments from community members on this agenda item—12 members from the tennis community and 12 from the pickleball community. The tennis players who spoke expressed concerns around dual-striped courts at the Rengstorff Park tennis courts due to the concentration of tennis play and USTA matches that occur at the Rengstorff Park facility. According to the USTA, official USTA matches cannot be played on dual-striped tennis courts, and Rengstorff Park tennis courts are Mountain View Tennis Club's official home courts where many USTA matches are played. The pickleball community members who spoke were supportive of the staff recommendation due to its proximity to the dedicated courts at Rengstorff Park. The pickleball players also requested the hours of play for the pilot program to be extended to weekends and/or nights to allow playing for those who work or go to school during the week. Both groups of community members who spoke agreed that dedicated pickleball courts are a priority over dual-striped courts.

After deliberation, the TAB members made a motion which included implementing dual striping at Cooper Park on Courts Nos. 3 and 4 and maximizing designated hours of play to 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., seven days a week.

Recommended Pilot Program

After careful analysis of the data collected from the Community Survey, Agency Benchmark, Court Monitoring, and recommendations from the TAB, staff has developed the following recommendations for the PRC to consider for the implementation of a pickleball pilot program:

- Dual striping of six pickleball courts on Court Nos. 1 and 2 at Cooper Park tennis courts;
- Implement designated times of play for each sport on dual-striped Court Nos. 1 and 2— 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., seven days a week, for pickleball play only; 3:00 p.m. to sunset, seven days a week, for tennis play only; and
- Staff to monitor this pilot program for one year following implementation and return to the TAB and the PRC with findings in fall 2023.

The above recommendation is in alignment with the TAB's recommendation to the PRC for various reasons. During the public comment at the TAB meeting, pickleball players expressed a desire for weekend access. This recommendation increases the amount of time provided to pickleball play from five days a week to seven days a week. By implementing the pilot program at Cooper Park, it avoids disruption to any USTA matches held at Rengstorff Park and avoids impacts from the upcoming construction projects of the Magical Bridge Playground and Maintenance/Tennis Building projects near the tennis courts at Rengstorff Park. In addition, the court monitoring process showed Cooper Park as a less-utilized location for tennis play. When discussing which courts at Cooper Park to dual-stripe, the TAB indicated the courts on the right side of the facility, which are Court Nos. 1 and 2.

Staff is aware Cooper Park tennis courts are located in a residential area where the noise of the pickleball paddle and ball may be a concern for neighbors. If Cooper Park is approved for the pilot program, staff will take proactive steps to mitigate sound concerns by installing noise-reducing screening on the tennis court fencing. This type of screening reduces the noise factor by absorbing direct sound of the paddles and ball.

In addition to the above recommendations for the pilot program, the City Council provided direction through the April 12, 2022 Study Session on the Fiscal Year 2022-23 CIP to develop a feasibility study to review potential locations to add dedicated pickleball courts. The CIP will be brought back to Council on June 28, 2022 for adoption. Should funding be approved, Community Services Department staff will work with the Public Works Department staff to begin this feasibility study in fall 2022 with anticipated study completion in spring 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT

Staff estimates the total expenses for the pickleball pilot program will be approximately \$9,000, which includes the cost to add pickleball lines to Tennis Courts Nos. 1 and 2 at Cooper Park, the noise-reduction screening, and supplies for portable pickleball nets for use on the dual-striped courts. These expenses can be absorbed within the Community Services Department's existing operating budget.

NEXT STEPS

Following direction from the PRC, staff anticipates dual striping to occur this summer to Court Nos. 1 and 2 at Cooper Park tennis courts with pickleball lines and begin the pilot program. Staff will monitor the use of the courts over the coming year to provide an update to both the TAB and PRC in fall 2023.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to the standard agenda posting, postcard notices were mailed to all residents within 750' of the Copper Park tennis courts and meeting notices were posted at each tennis and pickleball facility at Cooper Park, Cuesta Park, Rengstorff Park, Stevenson Park, Sylvan Park, and Whisman Park. In addition, the notice was posted to the City website, City social media channels, and Nextdoor. Staff sent notifications to Mountain View Tennis Club, Cuesta Park's tennis operator, Mountain View Tennis, and all pickleball players that have contacted the City in the past year.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Suggest different tennis court locations to install pickleball lines.
2. Recommend not dual-striping pickleball lines on tennis courts.
3. Provide other direction to staff.

SL-CJ-KC/1/CSD
209-06-29-22M

- Attachments:
1. April 12, 2017 PRC Staff Report
 2. January 10, 2018 PRC Staff Report