



May 3, 2022

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Temporary Outdoor Pickleball Courts - Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide context and information regarding misleading media reports from earlier this year ([CBC Article](#); [Daily Hive Article](#)) regarding the creation of temporary pickleball courts. A brief synopsis of next steps in the provision of short term pickleball courts is also provided.

Background

In 2016, Park Board staff created the first outdoor pickleball courts, shared with tennis, by painting lines on tennis courts in Queen Elizabeth Park. Between 2017 and 2021, an additional seventeen (17) shared courts were created at various parks across the city (Brewers, Cedar Cottage, John Hendry, Memorial West, and Pandora), increasing the total number of outdoor pickleball courts to twenty-one (21). In 2019, staff transformed the Queen Elizabeth Park location from the original four (4) shared courts to eight (8) dedicated pickleball courts with temporary nets.

In response to noise complaints from residents, the lines at the shared courts at Memorial West Park and one (1) dedicated court at Queen Elizabeth Park were removed. The removal of pickleball courts at a time when this sport is rapidly gaining in popularity at the local, provincial and North American levels was not well received by members of the Vancouver Pickleball Association (VPA) and pickleball enthusiasts from the community. Correspondence expressing displeasure at court removal and offering suggestions for short and long term solutions has been received and responded to in recent months.

In a letter sent to the president of the VPA in November 2021, staff identified a commitment to undertake a long term plan to comprehensively address the type, number, and location of future shared and dedicated pickleball facilities through a Sport Court Strategy. Staff also offered to assist with short term solutions, including the exploration of temporary 'test' courts. Locations of any temporary courts would be determined based on a number of factors, including ensuring they are an appropriate distance from residential areas as guided by recommendations from a recently commissioned [acoustical study](#).

On February 9, 2022, staff met with members of the VPA and toured potential sites at various locations throughout the city to assess the suitability of converting some of the tennis courts to 'pop-up' pickleball courts for the upcoming spring and summer seasons. Assessments have been completed and the Pickleball Working Group is reviewing the proposal for implementation some time this spring. Should these pop-up locations prove successful, it is anticipated that they could be repeated until the longer term Sport Court Strategy is completed.



Misleading Media Reports

On February 16, 2022, news articles, based on a statement released by a member of the VPA, announced plans to provide thirty-six (36) pop-up pickleball courts in Vancouver. The content was inaccurate and misleading and Park Board staff contacted the publications to request the information be corrected. The VPA President also apologized and indicated that this action was not approved by their organization.

As a result of the media reports, staff received and responded to numerous complaints from the tennis community regarding their perceived loss of tennis courts to pickleball conversion.

Next Steps

Work will continue on identifying suitable locations to introduce pop-up pickleball courts. Sites will be determined based on the acoustical study recommendations, VanPlay equity zones, and the equitable distribution of sites throughout the city. A number of tennis courts will remain at any location identified for pop-up courts, and those with pickleball lines can continue to be used as tennis courts.

Once the potential locations have been confirmed by the Pickleball Working Group, Recreation staff will implement a pilot program from May to September 2022. Once the pilot program has been assessed, an evaluation report will be presented to the Board with recommendations on next steps.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Donnie Rosa". The signature is fluid and somewhat abstract, with several loops and a long tail.

Donnie Rosa (*they/she*)

General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

is/em/mm

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
Michael Marousek, Project Manager II, PB Strategic Initiatives
Erica McDonald, Manager, Recreation Strategy and Innovation
Ian Stewart, Manager, Park Development
PB Communications