



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** September 23, 2015

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Conversion of Municipal Tennis Court 11 to Accommodate Pickleball Programming

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission:

- A. Receive a presentation on the sport of Pickleball;
- B. Approve the conversion of Municipal Tennis Court 11 to create four permanent Pickleball courts; and
- C. Approve the proposed fee structure.

**DISCUSSION:**

Background

One of the fastest growing sports in North America, Pickleball was invented in the mid 1960s as a children's backyard pastime but quickly became popular among adults as a fun game for players of all skill levels. Pickleball is a racquet sport that combines elements of badminton, tennis and table tennis. Pickleball is a sport in which two, three, or four players use solid paddles made of wood or composite materials to hit a perforated polymer ball, similar to a wiffle ball, over a net.

In fall 2014, the Department was approached by a local Pickleball group to begin preliminary conversations regarding the possibility of developing public Pickleball programming at the Municipal Tennis Center. At the time, Pickleball was being conducted sporadically at several private tennis clubs, but was gaining local, regional and national popularity. Following several meetings with Pickleball players and the Santa Barbara Tennis Patrons, it was determined Municipal Tennis Court 11 could be used for temporary Pickleball courts. The Department approved the use of taped lines to designate the Pickleball court from a regular tennis playing surface to facilitate drop-in and league play. Since fall 2014, the Pickleball group has grown from 4 individuals to 78 active members.

### Municipal Tennis Facility Background

Long considered one of the premier public tennis instruction and tournament facilities in the area, the Municipal Tennis Center has a total of 12 tennis courts, including the stadium court. A recent review focused on City tennis indicates a decline in program participation since 2005. Over the last ten years, daily pass sales declined 49%, along with annual passes by 26%, adult programming by 4% and youth programming by 55%. A number of courts go unused on a daily basis, and the facility only reaches capacity during eight United States Tennis Association sanctioned tennis tournaments. Pickleball is consistent with existing tennis play and has brought a positive energy back to the facility, especially during times of the day when no tennis instruction is provided.

### Project Objectives

The primary objective is to resurface and stripe Municipal Tennis Court 11, to create 4 permanent Pickleball courts. Municipal tennis court resurfacing is currently completed on a four-year cycle, which includes 4 courts per year with one off year to address windscreen replacement and maintenance needs for the Oak Park tennis courts. The current resurfacing cycle will allow for future opportunities to revert back to a regular tennis-playing surface as recreation trends change in the future.

### Programming Objective

In an effort to grow participation and interest in Pickleball, free drop-in, league and instructional play has been conducted over the past nine months. With the possibility of creating permanent Pickleball courts, staff worked with Pickleball members to develop a fee structure which will contribute to on-going court maintenance and future resurfacing. Consistent with existing tennis drop-in and annual pass play, court use will be managed with monitors. During scheduled tennis tournaments, the Pickleball courts will be closed for use. This will alleviate potential distractions regarding the noise generated when the Pickleball is played off of the solid paddle versus a stringed racket.

## **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

### Fee Structure

To develop the proposed fee structure, staff compiled data from the United States Pickleball Association website for 223 California communities where Pickleball is conducted. Staff determined the fees for daily passes ranged from \$2 - \$5. This represents a 75% discount compared with daily tennis passes for the same

communities. A similar approach was used to establish the proposed fee structure for Pickleball passes.

Pass Type	Resident Fee	Non-Resident Fee
Daily	\$3	\$4
Annual Permit - Adult	\$33	\$36
Annual Permit - Senior	\$29	\$32

The proposed fee structure will only apply for exclusive use of the Pickleball courts. This enables annual tennis pass holders to participate in Pickleball programming as an added recreational benefit.

The Parks and Recreation Director is authorized to make upward or downward adjustments in fees and charges set by Council Resolution 15-053 to accommodate fluctuation in program cost and demand and to allow for flexibility in providing programs and services, including fee reductions associated with strategically designed, short term promotions intended to increase participation in particular programs or activities.

#### Pickleball Court Development

The total cost to complete the resurfacing and install Pickleball anchor posts and nets is estimated to be \$9,400. The Department has already allocated funds in FY 2016 to complete this work.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the conversion of Municipal Tennis Court 11 to create four permanent Pickleball courts and the proposed fee structure.

With Commission approval, the Department will schedule the resurfacing project. It is anticipated that court 11 will be ready for use by the middle of October 2015.

**ATTACHMENT:** Municipal Tennis Facility Existing Site Aerial

**SUBMITTED BY:** Rich Hanna, Recreation Manager

**APPROVED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Acting Parks and Recreation Director