

Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R)

DRAFT Executive Summary

Outdoor Tennis Courts and Emerging Demand Recreation Strategy

June 28, 2021

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How can Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) plan to best meet the outdoor tennis needs of Portlanders, and how many outdoor tennis courts should we be providing? This analysis sets a strategy to establish a consistent strategic direction for outdoor tennis courts and other emerging court sports throughout Portland.

How this strategic direction will be established:

1. PP&R staff will review and update asset information including mapping of current court asset conditions. Staff will incorporate material from parks master plans and strategic documents. Status: Complete
2. Project Team work sessions and draft document of staff proposed recommendations. Status: Complete
3. Community engagement: July 2021 through September 2021

The goal of this work is to:

1. Address deteriorating existing outdoor tennis courts.
2. Respond to and accommodate emerging recreation needs such as futsal, pickleball, and other sports that could use the courts.

3. Complete targeted outreach to focus groups, including tennis users, other emerging recreation users, and neighbors of tennis courts.
4. Develop a strategic direction and messaging regarding future outdoor tennis court use, renovation, and programming. This summary of recommendations includes systemwide actions for categorization of courts, renovations and removal of courts, design, and maintenance of outdoor tennis courts, and future strategic planning.

Existing Conditions, Current Strategic Direction, and Level of Service:

Portland Parks & Recreation provides 79% of the publicly available courts in the city. The 103 outdoor PP&R courts are located within 38 parks throughout the city, with most of them in southeast neighborhoods (36%). Most of the Portland Public Schools tennis teams use PP&R courts for practice and tournaments through an Intergovernmental Agreement. Currently, 94% of households are served by tennis courts within a 3-mile service area, with an average of 2,946 households served per court (Level of Service Guidance for Developed Parks and Natural Areas, 2019). The median number of residents served by an outdoor tennis court in the United States is 9,224 for cities over 250,000 residents. PP&R serves 6,257 residents per tennis court, which means we have more courts than the national median.

Many strategic documents and policies provide direction for the PP&R tennis program, including the Parks 2020 Vision, PP&R Mission and Vision Statement, the 2035 City of Portland Comprehensive Plan, the 2008 Sport Court Technical Paper, the 2020 Guidance for Developed Parks and Natural Areas, and Park Master Plans. Currently eight park master plans identify recommendations for a total of 22 tennis courts that are captured in this analysis.

Only 30 of the 103 tennis courts in the PP&R system are considered fair, good, or excellent, and can be considered providing a playable and programmable surface with conditions that are safe and enjoyable. Only 14% of PP&R's outdoor tennis courts are in good or excellent condition; 60% of PP&R's tennis court surfaces are in poor condition and 11% have failed, as found in an assessment of outdoor tennis courts conducted by the PP&R Asset Management team in 2017 (data updated through this analysis). This is reflected by the current (2019) programming at 59 tennis courts in 16 parks by PP&R and partners including USTA and Portland World Team Tennis.

The more courts that are available at a park and the more supporting assets that are available (lighting, restrooms, benches, etc.), the more opportunity there is to host programming, tournaments, and league play. Currently 66% of PP&R parks with tennis courts only have one or two courts, making them available for local neighborhood play, but difficult for supporting recreational programming and tournaments.

Current Tennis Trends and Forecasts:

Tennis has seen an increase in players in 2020-2021 due to COVID-19 because it is possible to keep a social distance while playing. It was the first sport to reopen in the Portland area. Tennis participation in the U.S. increased by 22% in 2020, and tennis racquet sales were up 40%

from 2019. More than 21 million Americans played tennis last year. Nearly 3 million of those were first-time players, a 44% increase over new players in 2019 (USTA.com, 2/11/21). The biggest concern for the tennis industry has been in the decrease in core players. However, the total number of core youth players (those who play at least 10 times a year), grew by 6.7% from 2017 to 2018. The tennis industry came together through a collaboration in March 2020, under “Tennis Industry United,” to assist tennis providers throughout the pandemic and has pivoted towards advocating for tennis as a collective group, driving diversity and inclusion in the sport. This puts tennis in a good position to continue to grow.

The sport of tennis relies on public courts in parks as a place to be introduced to the sport, as 70% of all tennis is played at public facilities. The Pacific Northwest has the highest share of tennis players belonging to the United States Tennis Association (USTA) at 22.9%, the highest of the nine regions of the country. According to OPRD SCORP, 6.7% of the population of Oregon participates in tennis. In Portland, tennis courts are relatively popular and generally more desired than basketball courts, ballfields, sports fields, and skateparks (but less desired than playgrounds and spray play) according to recent community engagement. However, in the 2017 Community Needs Survey, tennis programs ranked low, falling only above events at Portland International Raceway and golf programs.

USTA members in Portland are typically white, live in NW/SW Portland neighborhoods, and are at or above the Portland median income. PP&R has worked with community partners to make tennis more inclusive and more accessible than ever, expanding diversity in the tennis program in several ways, including through the SUN community schools program and Summer Free for All programming.

PP&R Tennis Programming

Ideal court requirements to support tennis programming includes park sites with four or more courts that can host summer camps and leagues and would also provide more revenue to offset the cost of the courts. A well-maintained surface is crucial and locating courts near schools provides for partnerships with the school district for tennis teams, classes, and camps so that young children can be exposed to the sport through after-school activities. Support facilities including restrooms and lighting are also important to support programming.

PP&R Tennis Programs include afterschool programs, summer camps and free drop-in classes, youth and adult leagues, tournaments, and instruction, fitness classes, senior programs, programs for mobility device users. The PP&R Tennis Program works closely with community partners to provide these programs. Summer play at parks through programs and use of neighborhood tennis courts is the gateway to indoor play. Indoor tennis and recreation opportunities in the wet months is a necessity in the Pacific Northwest and critical to a well-rounded robust tennis program. The indoor tennis community sustains outdoor recreation in tennis. If indoor use grows, outdoor use will grow, and if both grow, the sport will grow. PP&R provides indoor programming at the Portland Tennis Center in inner NE Portland and with our partner Portland Tennis & Education at the St. Johns Racquet Center in North Portland.

Emerging Recreation Court Sports

Outdoor tennis courts are fenced and provide a solid surface to play on and provide adaptable spaces that can be used for emerging recreational sports like pickleball, bike polo, futsal, skateboarding, and other activities.

- **Bike polo** became popular in the U.S. in the late 1990s. Portland Bike Polo has been playing at Alberta Park since 2002 through a permit and has approximately 200 regular players, who play primarily in the spring and summer. Bike polo needs to be the dedicated use at a court, as it is tough on the court, with the use of mallets and hard balls hitting the court.
- **Futsal** is a modified, scaled down version of soccer, played on a flat hard synthetic surface such as that found on tennis courts and basketball courts. PP&R has three futsal courts at Colonel Summers, King School, and Montavilla Parks that are converted tennis courts. Futsal was the second-most popular new asset that people requested during the Level of Service community engagement, indicating a high demand and possibly an unmet need for outdoor courts. Additionally, as the Portland community becomes more diverse, there is more need for soccer and similar sports played worldwide. Tennis courts offer a good opportunity to play futsal as an interim use, with temporary goals brought in and the tennis nets removed.
- **Pickleball** combines elements of tennis, badminton, and ping pong. It is a quickly growing sport with several individuals and groups in Portland advocating for more places to play. It is easy to learn and provides an entry point into tennis for young children and is a great sport for rehabilitating or senior tennis players to transition into. An existing underutilized tennis court can be converted or used for four pickleball courts with netting between each court. Currently, 1.8% of Oregonians participate in pickleball (2019-2023 Oregon SCORP). Over 3.1 million people in the U.S. play pickleball, with the largest number of core participants in the Pacific Northwest. There are over 66 outdoor and 16 indoor pickleball courts offered in public parks in 11 cities in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area and over 146 locations to play pickleball in Oregon. PP&R has painted pickleball courts on the Columbia Park tennis courts and has offered pickleball programming at community centers, but there isn't a court dedicated primarily to the sport.

There are opportunities to renovate old tennis courts that are at the end of their lifecycle for these new sports, especially in areas already well served by other tennis courts in better condition. Some of these sports can share a space with tennis, at least temporarily, while others are not well suited to sharing with tennis and work best as their own dedicated spaces. PP&R should continue to work with partners to integrate these park uses into our system and transform courts in areas where new recreational trends are taking hold in strategic ways.

Community Engagement Summary:

PP&R staff analyzed previous engagement, including the PP&R 2017 Community Needs Survey and outreach conducted for the Developed Parks and Natural Areas Level of Service outreach. For the Level of Service outreach, PP&R engaged the public extensively through focus groups held with communities of color and communities with Limited English Proficiency, informal surveys, and attendance at community events. Previous PP&R master plans engagement and other engagement efforts were also used to help inform recommendations in this strategy

document. Community engagement for this Strategy will occur in July 2021 – September 2021, and a summary will be added to the final report for the Strategy.

Draft Summary Recommendations:

The following systemwide actions were developed from analysis of the PP&R Tennis Program needs; a review of the current strategic direction resources; an analysis of the spatial level of service of courts and their condition, quality, and support facilities; and a review of emerging recreation trends in Portland. Future outreach will include work with multiple PP&R divisions and outreach to stakeholders that would be affected if these recommendations are implemented.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are draft findings for the Outdoor Tennis Courts and Emerging Demand Recreation Strategy:

Citywide Asset Recommendations:

1. **Provide 3-mile level of service.** Maintain an overall 3-mile level of service for all outdoor tennis courts.
2. **Tier system of service.** Recognize a tiered system of outdoor tennis courts, including Community Tennis Hubs, Recreational Courts, and Neighborhood Courts that provides access to tennis for all Portlanders. Close courts that do not meet these standards and evaluate them for re-use for other sports or removal. These specific actions will be necessary to ensure that this is provided:

Type	Community Tennis Hubs	Recreational Courts	Neighborhood Courts	Courts for potential re-use or removal
Service Area	3 miles	2 miles	½ mile	N/A
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated tennis courts • 4 + courts • Enhanced levels of programs, including tournaments and league play • Tournament level surfacing • Synthetic acrylic surface, with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary use is tennis • 2-3 courts • Hosts PP&R and partners’ programming and smaller activities • Some support facilities • 2nd priority for renovations and maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be shared with other court sports • 1-2 courts • Generally, not programmed by PP&R or our partners • Surfacing may be asphalt or concrete • May not have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily for other sport court uses • Where there is insufficient demand for tennis • Where service areas overlap with other courts • Where courts have reached the end of their lifecycles and do not

	<p>asphalt or concrete, and subsurface</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support facilities include lighting, restrooms, and benches, • 1st Priority for renovations and maintenance 		support facilities or lighting	meet design and safety guidelines for tennis
Number of courts at parks:	48 courts at 10 parks	17 courts at 8 parks	22 courts at 11 parks	18 courts at 11 parks
Priority for improvements, based on service equity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Glenhaven 2. Grant 3. Gabriel 4. Sellwood 5. Argay 6. Buckman 7. Washington 8. Clinton 9. Irving 10. Willamette 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parklane (opening late 2022) 2. Peninsula 3. Columbia 4. Berkeley 5. Arbor Lodge 6. Portland Heights 7. Mt. Tabor (West) 8. Laurelhurst P 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Glenwood 2. Lents 3. Fernhill 4. Kenilworth 5. Mt. Scott 6. Colonel Summers 7. Hamilton 8. Mt. Tabor (East) 9. Wallace 10. Woodstock 11. Brooklyn School 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pier 2. Essex 3. Northgate 4. Westmoreland (Master Plan recommends reuse as skatepark) 5. Lair Hill 6. Rose City 7. Burlingame 8. Creston 9. Brentwood 10. Alberta 11. Hillside
Additional Recommendations:	Identify funding to cover the four outdoor courts at the Portland Tennis Center to provide additional indoor recreational	Evaluate a location and identify funding for two new North Portland courts to replace Pier Park and Northgate Park tennis courts, both	Evaluate locations and identify funding for two new East Portland neighborhood courts where 3-mile level of service is not provided.	Work with partners to identify funding to re-use these courts for other emerging court use, including pickleball, futsal, bike polo, or a multi-sport court

	programming and classes, especially in the winter.	recommended to be reused or removed.		that would provide multiple types of programming. Or fund removal of the courts
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3. **Maintenance** – Properly maintain the 16 courts that are in excellent or good condition so that they remain usable and support tennis programming activities.
4. **Renovation** - Initiate a program to renovate the 67 courts that are in fair to poor condition, prioritizing community tennis hubs and recreational courts in underserved areas of the city.
5. **Prioritization:** Priority for renovation and maintenance should be Community Tennis Hubs, then Recreational Courts, based on their equity and household scores, and ability to support the recreation program. Neighborhood Courts will be improved as funding and support is available. Courts that have been recommended for removal will be removed from service and will be repurposed for other uses as partnerships and funding are available.
6. **Re-use or removal of courts.**
 - Establish the first pickleball courts offered by PP&R at courts identified for potential re-use or removal. This will improve PP&R’s ability to serve youth, beginning tennis and pickleball players, and seniors.
 - Add additional futsal courts to provide a citywide (3-mile) service level.
 - Renovate courts as recommended in park Master Plans (for example, Westmoreland Park recommends reuse of the courts as a skatepark).
 - Provide an additional bike polo location as funding is available from partners and in a location that is agreeable to both PP&R and partners and supports the sport.

What will it take to provide these recommended actions?

- The total estimated cost to implement these recommendations is approximately \$7.73M (2021).
 - \$3,730,000 is growth projects that would provide a higher level of use, and would be eligible for System Development Charges (SDCs) or other growth funding, including covering the Buckman Field/Portland Tennis Center Courts and building new courts in areas that don’t have service.
 - \$3,100,000 is for maintenance, major maintenance, or complete renovation of approximately 60 courts. Without proper sufficient funding, many more of these courts will go into disrepair and be no longer usable. PP&R currently has a major maintenance funding backlog of \$450M and a difficult time maintaining facilities.
 - \$900,000 is the hard costs for demolition of 18 courts at 11 parks (or funding towards renovation and re-use of the courts for other court sports).
 - The estimated lifecycle for a tennis court if maintained well is 25 years.
- Total annual costs, if properly maintaining the current 103 outdoor tennis courts in the PP&R system, is estimated to be approximately \$2,000,000 (2020 estimate).

Implementation of Asset Recommendations can occur in the following ways:

- PP&R has implemented a **Sponsorship & Fundraising Partnerships Opportunities** program which allows for funding partners to choose from high-priority projects that currently do not have dedicated funding, based on scoring and equity considerations. This list of prioritized recommendations would be added to this list of projects. Other projects can be reviewed by **Portland Parks Foundation** or the PP&R Volunteer Program. An example of a successful partnership is when the Alex Rovello Memorial Foundation assisted PP&R with renovating the Berkeley Park courts and signed an agreement for maintenance of the courts including maintaining the nets, blowing leaves off the courts, and ensuring that they are free of trash, allowing Parks staff to focus on maintaining other courts throughout the city.
- PP&R staff should evaluate sources of funding for renovation, removal, and reuse of the tennis courts as necessary, during the annual capital growth and maintenance funding process. Funding sources include major maintenance funding, grants, future bonds or levies, and partnerships with sports or community organizations. This will ensure that the focus remains on prioritizing the tennis courts that best provide for recreational programming, serve the greatest number of users, and provide equity to city residents.

Design & Maintenance Recommendations:

1. Develop the appropriate asset management and maintenance plans for tennis courts that shows what needs to be done, by who, and when. Better integration around maintenance of the courts could assist in better maintaining outdoor courts.
2. Establish minimum design and site standards for each type of new and existing tennis courts. PP&R should evaluate the opportunity to design new or renovated courts with new technologies that decrease major maintenance needs.
3. Provide at least two courts for all new tennis facilities and prioritize capital investment in areas where two or more courts are currently present.
4. Address the location of trees in proximity to the courts when locating new courts or prioritizing renovation of current courts.

Programming & Marketing Recommendations:

1. PP&R recognizes, understands, and encourages the celebration of the differences that surround us. Diversity and equity are vital to PP&R's ideals and values. Our priority will be focusing programming and services based on equity, diversity, and inclusion, as outlined in the 2020 Parks Local Option Levy and other strategic documents.
2. Develop a more strategic approach to coordinate all PP&R's tennis permits, programs, and court use to ensure quality and consistency in course content.
3. Continue partnerships with private providers to offer programs and services at outdoor tennis courts at the parks.
4. Investigate offering outdoor court reservations for a small use fee at Community Tennis Hubs. This would help to keep court usage equitable by decreasing lines of people waiting to play at courts and assist with maintenance funding. Recreational courts and/or neighborhood courts would continue to provide free walk-on play.

5. Develop a Marketing Plan for tennis, with the goal of providing more information regarding tennis courts, handball/practice walls, and locations to take part in emerging trends in recreation on the PP&R website and through onsite signage.

Near-term Recommendations

1. An initial estimate of \$200,000 a year for major maintenance and improvements could be possible with available capital, parks bond, or major maintenance funding. This would allow for four Community Tennis Hub Courts (that are currently rated a 4) to receive improvements, beginning with the Glenhaven courts in year one.
2. Using the PP&R Capital Improvement Plan Equity Score, the following park courts should be prioritized for improvements in following years and/or as funding is available. These courts would provide for recreational and neighborhood-level play: Peninsula, Columbia, Glenwood, Lents, and Fernhill Parks.

ATTACHMENTS:

Outdoor Tennis Courts Recommendations Summary Map

Emerging Recreation Court Sports in Portland Map