

Sport of Pickleball in Sudbury: Input into Plans Forward



Presentation to Council, April 27, 2021



Who we are:

- **GSPA is a volunteer public organization with scores of members with an elected executive.**
- **Our organization promotes the continued growth of Pickleball in Sudbury**
- **We support players of all ages, gender, physical abilities, and skill level.**
- **We want to help improve of our facilities – provide input to the City, YMCA, SITC . . . (e.g. collection to erect wind screens)**
- **We fully support the development of multi-use facilities**
- **Within the community we provide learn-to-play sessions/ coaching for novice players, schools, recreational players, and coordinate play at indoor facilities**

What the Heck is Pickleball?

- Played with a short-handled paddle and a plastic 'whiffle ball' about the size of a tennis ball
- Can be compared to a cross between of Tennis and Ping Pong
- Court is essentially Badminton court (indoor or outdoor) with the net just slightly lower than tennis
- Doubles is more popular but can also be played Singles
- It's a blast



- Recognized governing bodies.
- International Skill Ranking system.
- Many tournaments with multiple divisions.
- A number of double-A Squash players in Sudbury also now play Pickleball.





Why Promote Pickleball in Sudbury?

- **Pickleball is BIG! It is the fastest growing sport in Ontario and N. America.**
- **Very easy to learn and is fun! But can also be fast-paced and competitive.**
- **Very accessible - minimal equipment required of players**
- **As with outdoor basketball and tennis, does not require intensive maintenance or a city supervisor**
- **Makes excellent use of facilities**
- **Activity with broadest demographic participation (age/ gender/ physical abilities): Pickleball**

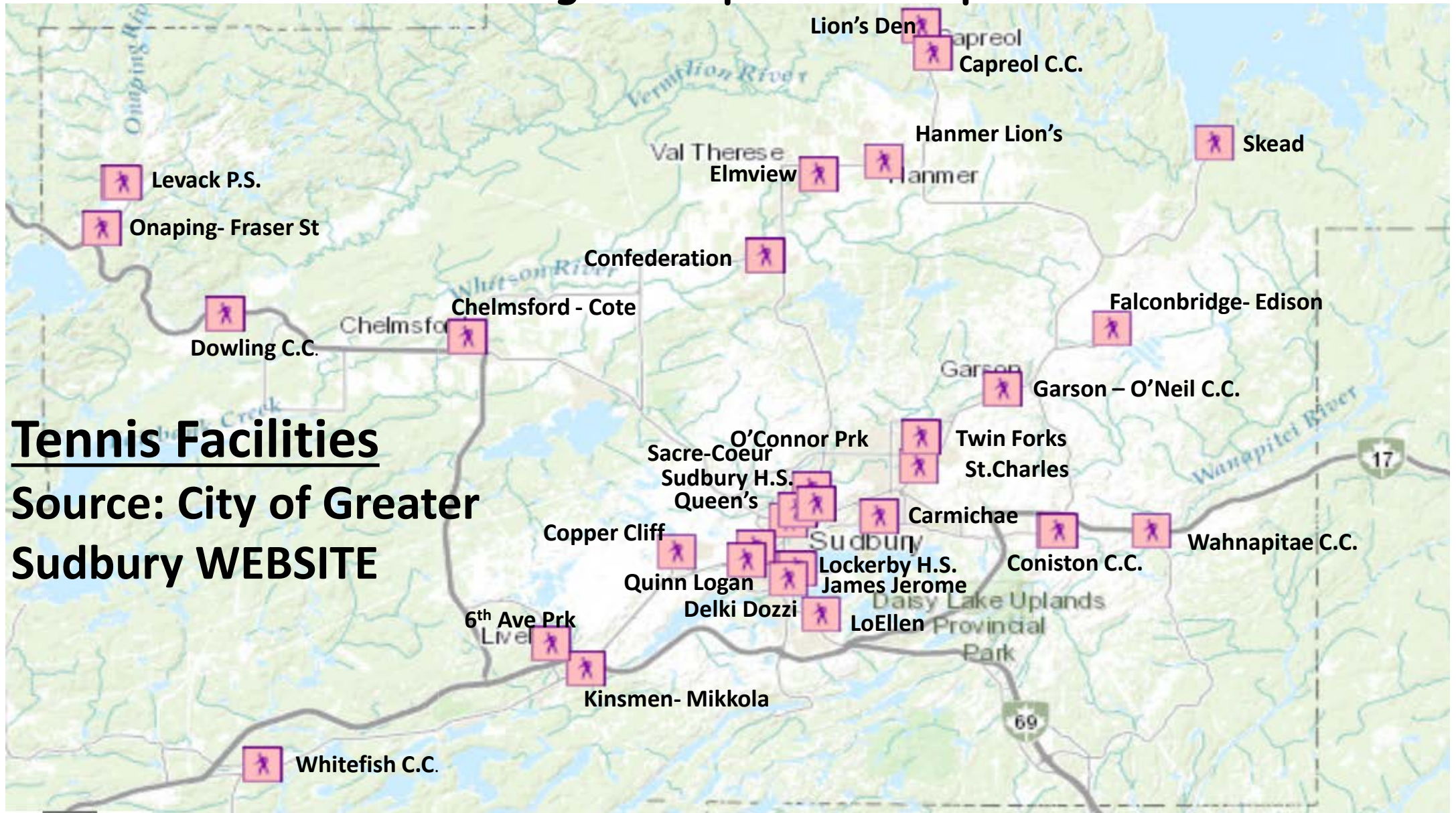


We coordinate with Sudbury Indoor Tennis Club

- We helped SITC to pilot Pickleball in 2020 - - laying out and painting court lines, lending portable nets, providing learn-to-play lessons for dozens**
- Within a few *days* of opening the facility to Pickleball (at *non-peak times & days only*), more than 70 new members paid up as Pickleball Members - - growing to over 130 within a few weeks**
- Frequently, ALL courts are in use with groups waiting to play**
- Pickleball is expected to be part of SITC's strategy for financial sustainability going forward.**



We've done some homework . . . Looking at every Tennis court through a "Pickleball Lens" and considering overlap & underlap of facilities





Where Can Pickleball Be Played?

- 28 Tennis sites with total of +60 courts, however only about half are actually playable; Two sites are set up specifically for Pickleball courts . . . O'Connor(6) & Cote(4)
- Three other sites have had Pickleball lines painted on tennis courts (Onaping, Lo-Ellen, and Carmichael); Portable nets available from community libraries.
- Only 7 sites with any playable courts have lights, of which 2 can be for Pickleball
- Indoors:
 - City had marked lines in 2 Arenas (summer only) and Community Centres (Capreol, Dowling, Falco, Onaping) have been used
 - There are also indoor courts painted in Ray Plourde & Cambrian arenas (unavailable winter months)
 - Spotty use of schools through community use agreements
 - SITC (club fees & court fees apply)
 - Curling Club (Private; summer only)



O'Connor Park - Pickleball Courts
August 31, 2018



Copper Cliff

no Pickleball lines; rough shape; no lights; kids have put in makeshift skateboard ramp

Tennis lines only; no lights; saggy net on one court; two courts out of service



Dowling



Onaping –
Fraser St.

**Pickleball Lines on one court using tennis net;
some cracks**



Community Access and Pickleball

Sudbury council and staff are committed to affordable access to recreational facilities, and supports collaboration with community partners.

The growth of Pickleball is noted and strong evidence of demand expressed at open houses has been acknowledged.

Maximizing utilization of facilities, including multi-use where possible.

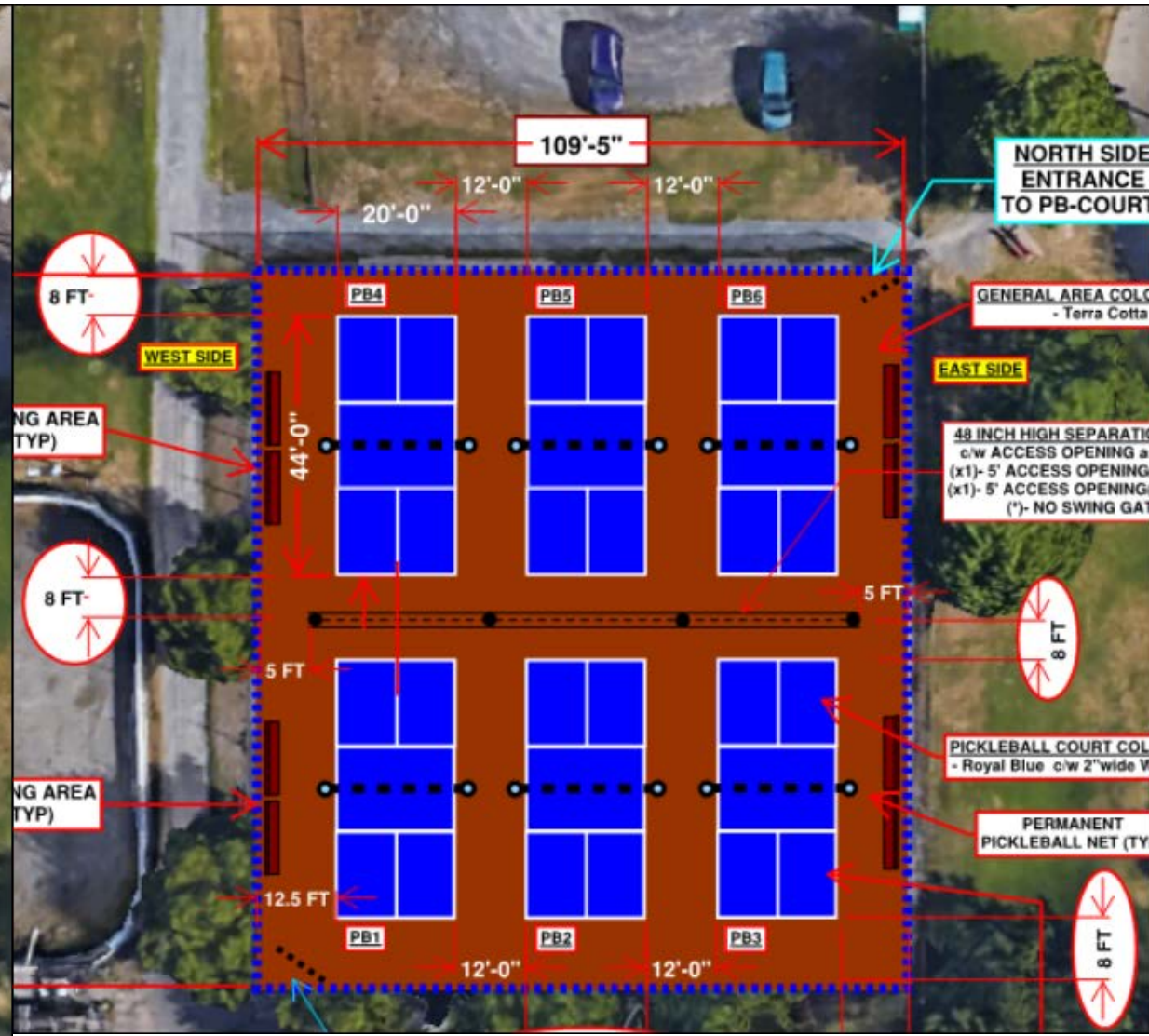
> Affordable Access Conceptual Framework Report to Council

> Parks, Open Spaces & Leisure Master Plan Review

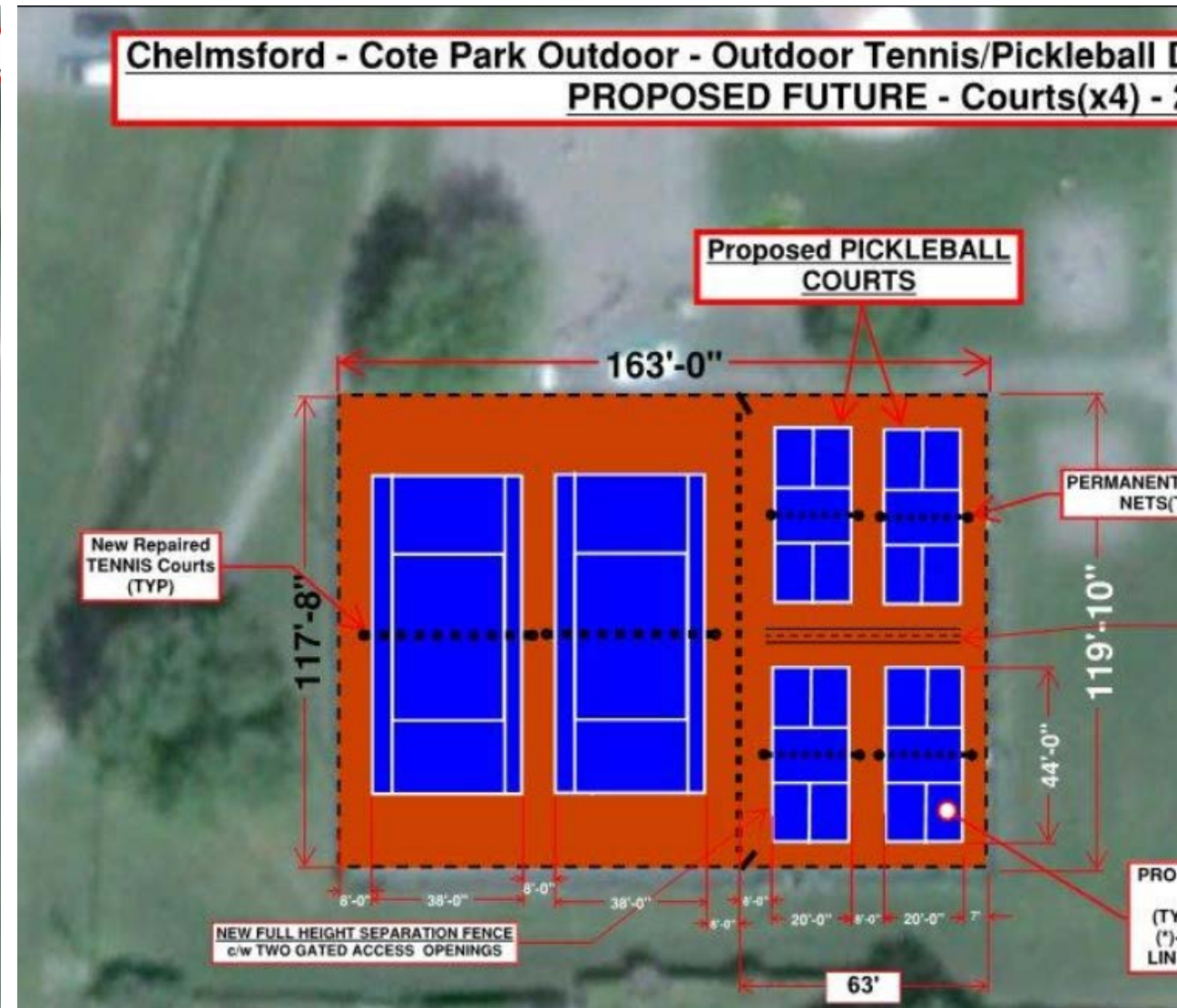
> 2021 Capital Budget Allocation

. . . Court refurbishment – extraordinary +\$4M opportunity

O'Connor Park: Before & After

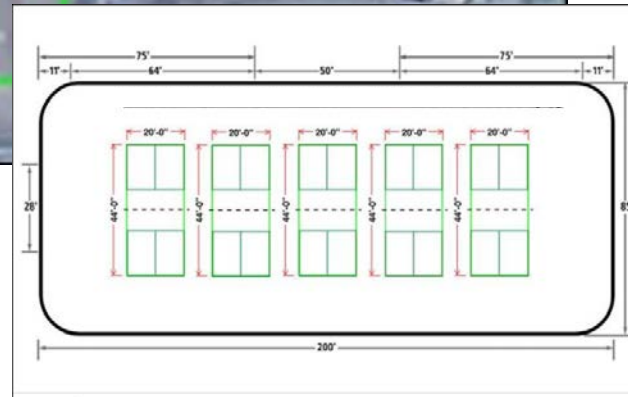
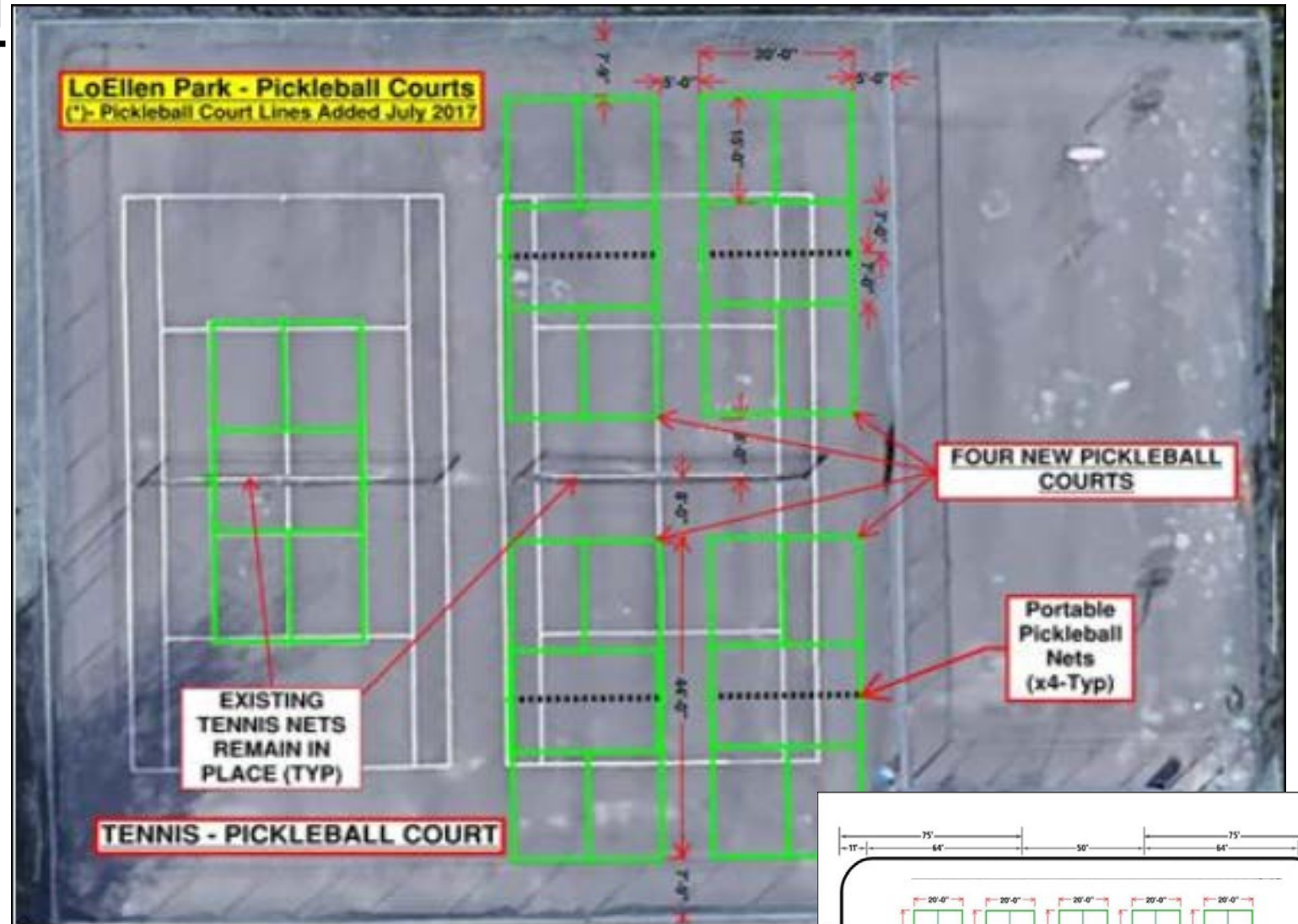


Cote Park: Before & After



Options for Pickleball

1. Convert one (or more) tennis courts into four Dedicated Pickleball courts each
2. Mark up Pball court at centre of Tennis Court with option to have a tether to pull net down to proper height
3. Simply Paint the four Pball courts to be used with own or borrowed Portable Pball Nets
4. Use OTHER under-utilized facilities entirely in select areas:
 - Indoor Community Centres or Arenas (e.g. Dowling, Lionel Lalonde, Ray Plourde Arena)
 - Outdoor paved Hockey rinks





GSPA's Suggestions for Consideration

Enable at least some opportunity for Pickleball to be played within ALL communities across Sudbury
Provide distributed access to Indoor venues, especially during winter months.

1. Convert ONE court for Pickleball at each of the following multi-court sites:
 - Elmview, Lo-Ellen (alt: James Jerome), Lively 6th Ave., Lorne Brady (alt: Twin Forks), Onaping Falls, Delki Dozzi; . . .
Facilities to be re-surfaced & lights installed where applicable
2. For ALL Remaining 'playable' Tennis Courts: repair cracks/ fencing & paint Pickleball court lines for dual-use; (four-court layout &/or centre-court with net tethers); add lights at selected facilities (& enable user access to lights, especially where there is opportunity to share with basketball &/or skateboarding)
3. Rationalize unplayable/ unused facilities to ensure maintenance is sustainable.
4. Collaborate to provide access to appropriate underutilized facilities for Pickleball play :
 - Select Arena facilities in summer, Select paved/ concreted Outdoor Rinks (summer), and especially Community Centres in winter

Tennis: plan would achieve ± 35 fully playable courts at 18 outdoor sites (est'd one per 4600 pop.)

Pickleball: plan would achieve ± 60 courts at 18 outdoor and 6 indoor sites (est'd one per 2500 pop.)



You are Invited! *(post Covid lockdown):*

Greater Sudbury Pickleball Association intends to offer free outdoor learn-to-play / coaching clinics for the public. We'll extend a special invitation for all our city councillors to participate.



THANK YOU! See you ^{on the} ~~in~~ Court!



Reference info only

Reference Forecast – Population by Age Cohort (2001-2036)

Age Cohort	2001	2006	2011	2021	2031	2036	Growth (2011-2036)	
Children (0-9)	18,990	16,940	16,410	16,350	17,400	16,410	0	0%
Youth (10-19)	21,850	21,650	19,990	17,490	17,360	18,380	-1,610	-8%
Young Adult (20-34)	33,540	30,030	32,770	37,230	34,310	33,450	680	2%
Mature Adult (35-54)	47,990	50,610	48,970	41,660	45,940	47,910	-1,060	-2%
Older Adult (55-69)	23,360	27,240	30,140	35,640	29,350	25,610	-4,530	-15%
Senior (70+)	15,870	17,330	18,050	23,380	31,480	35,040	16,990	94%
Total	161,600	163,800	166,300	171,800	175,900	176,800	10,500	6%

Outdoor Basketball Court Inventory, Compared to Priority Market (ages 10 to 19 years)

Community	Current Supply			Current 2014 Per Capita Ratio (ages 10-19)	Projected 2036 Per Capita Ratio (ages 10-19)
	Half Courts	Full Courts	Full Court Equivalents		
Sudbury	3 (1.5)	9	10.5	1,059	1,089
Capreol	2 (1)	1	2	225	180
Nickel Centre	5 (2.5)	2	4.5	378	280
Onaping Falls	2 (1)	1	2	250	220
Rayside-Balfour	0	3	3	557	477
Valley East	3 (1.5)	2	4	974	686
Walden	4 (2)	3	5	228	212
Total	19 (9.5)	21	30.5	655	603

Note: In calculating per capita ratios, rural residents have been distributed to existing communities in proportion to population.

Analysis

Basketball is a popular sport amongst teens and outdoor courts provide opportunities for unstructured play, particularly as the activity is easily incorporated into neighbourhood-level parks, thus allowing easy access (by foot or bicycle). In fact, basketball ranks behind only soccer in terms of number of teens (ages 12-17 years) participating across Canada (ahead of hockey, football, tennis, golf, and baseball).

The degree to which the City's basketball courts are used is unknown; the same can be said for many other unstructured amenities. To help the City prioritize capital funding, it is recommended that an "observation project" be undertaken to document usage of unscheduled and casual use park amenities,

Inventory & Background

There are 59 public tennis courts in the City of Greater Sudbury, 39 of which are lit for evening play. School courts may also be available in some areas. Although this implies an increase over the supply listed in the 2004 Master Plan, not all courts are netted as many are in disrepair or used for other uses (e.g., ball hockey, skate park, etc.). No municipal tennis courts have been developed in several years.

Outdoor Tennis Court Inventory

Community	Current Supply			Current 2014 Per Capita Ratio (all ages)	Projected 2036 Per Capita Ratio (all ages)
	Unlit Courts	Lit Courts	Total Courts*		
Sudbury	9	15	24	4,216	4,377
Capreol	0	4	4	938	950
Nickel Centre	0	7	7	1,731	1,893
Onaping Falls	7	0	7	613	657
Rayside-Balfour	0	3	3	4,370	4,783
Valley East	2	4	6	3,895	4,250
Walden	2	6	8	1,060	1,281
Total	20	39	59	2,819	2,997

* Not all tennis courts may have nets

Note: In calculating per capita ratios, rural residents have been distributed to existing communities in proportion to population.

Analysis

Tennis courts are inclusive facilities that accommodate most age groups and a variety of skill levels. Interest in tennis has varied considerably in the past, but a passionate base of players in some communities. Many municipalities across the province are dealing with a surplus of courts and new court development is generally only occurring within new residential areas.

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While there is some evidence that baby boomers are creating a small boost in tennis participation after years of the sport being in decline, the fastest growing sport in Canada is actually pickleball, a lower intensity paddle sport that can be played on modified tennis courts (it requires a badminton-sized court with a net that is slightly lower than tennis height). Pickleball recently debuted at the Ontario Senior Games and is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players. Notable demand for pickleball was expressed at the public open houses and the City should consider converting selected tennis courts to accommodate this growing activity.

The 2004 Master Plan identified a provision target of one tennis court per 5,000 persons, which each of the City's communities are currently meeting. In fact, the City is currently supplying one tennis court for every 2,819 residents, nearly double the provision target. Some of this inefficiency is a result of the City's size and the need to provide courts on a community or neighbourhood basis, as well as the fact that many courts are in poor condition due to lack of use. Based on a 1.0 km service radius (see Appendix C), there are two modest gaps in tennis court distribution in Sudbury (New Sudbury/Barrydowne and the South End).

Nonetheless, there is currently a sizable surplus of tennis courts, particularly in Onaping Falls, Capreol, Walden, Nickel Centre, and to a lesser degree Sudbury. Based on a 1.0 km service radius, overlaps in tennis court distribution are noted between the following parks, all within the former City of Sudbury:

- James Jerome Sports Complex and Lockerby Playground
- O'Connor Playground and Sacre Couer Soccer Fields
- Quinn & Logan and Delki Dozzi

Despite a small number of gaps, no additional courts are required in any area of the City during the timeframe of this Plan. This is further supported by the online survey data that indicates low levels of support for investment (tennis courts ranked nineteenth out of 22 facility types).

Further, the backlog of deferred maintenance on City tennis courts is significant and growing even though the City undertakes court repairs (e.g., resurfacing, lighting, fencing, etc.) as funding allows. There is also a sense that many tennis courts are not well used. To determine actual usage of casual park amenities, an observation project of City parks is recommended (see outdoor basketball court section); the findings of this initiative would assist the City in identifying key sites for capital improvements and/or decommissioning.

Action Plans

34. No additional courts are required in any area of the City during the timeframe of this Plan. The City should convert under-utilized tennis pads in over-supplied areas to other alternative uses (e.g., pickleball) or remove the courts entirely to mitigate capital requirements.