

From: David Lai
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 3:18 PM
To: parkboard <parkboard@bellevuewa.gov>
Cc: Fehrman, Pamela <PFehrman@bellevuewa.gov>
Subject: Pickleball courts in Airfield Park

Dear Parks Board Members,

My name is David Lai. On behalf of the pickleball community in the Eastside, we want to thank the Parks Department for including 8 dedicated outdoor pickleball courts in the Bellevue Airfield Park.

Unfortunately I have to report that the pickleball community is disappointed by the choices provided in the last public engagement meeting on January 16. Space for 8 pickleball courts, **equivalent to 2 tennis courts**, was allocated for pickleball. This small space (about 1/3 of an acre) is inconsistent with the acute shortage of pickleball courts, the tremendous public support for more courts and the space available in the Airfield Park.

Perhaps there is a misunderstanding of the reality on the ground in Bellevue. Let me list them.

Indoor courts:

- Three community centers offer pickleball session
- Each community center provides an average of **only 7 hours a week** of pickleball sessions
- The number of players is limited for each session and frequently players have to be turned away at the door
- There are no sessions on weekends and public holidays

Outdoor courts:

- Currently there are only 5 **standard** outdoor pickleball courts in the Bellevue Parks system
 - Four of these courts have to be shared with tennis players
- There are other tennis courts with pickleball court lines but they all are **non-standard courts** with the wrong nets. Very few pickleball players go there.
- More dual-usage courts will be implemented in 2023 but they are shared with tennis
- Of course outdoor court usage is limited by weather

More than 100 pickleball supporters attended the last public engagement meeting. They showed up for the meeting because they believe in the public engagement process. Many of these participants are Bellevue residents who had voted for the 2022 Bellevue Parks Levy to ensure that the Parks have the funding it needs.

We are near the end of the Airfield Park public engagement process. We urge the Parks to make a decision to reflect our public engagement and reality on the ground to have **more than 8 dedicated pickleball courts** and have **at least 8 of them covered by a roof**. We need more than 8 courts to hold regional tournaments.

Regards,
David Lai