

From: David Lai
Sent: Wednesday, October 5, 2022 9:06 AM
To: parkboard <parkboard@bellevuewa.gov>
Subject: Response to Proposed Airfield Park Development Options

[EXTERNAL EMAIL Notice!] Outside communication is important to us. Be cautious of phishing attempts. Do not click or open suspicious links or attachments.

Dear Board members,

Attached is a report summarizing the response of the pickleball community to the three options presented in the Airfield Field public engagement meeting #2. We understand that the Parks staff will present its findings to the Board in the upcoming meeting on 10/11. We just want to make sure that everybody is on the same page.

We want to thank the Parks staff and the Board for organizing these public engagement meetings and recognizing that public inputs are essential in making the Park and Open Space system better for all.

We also want to thank the Parks for including dedicated pickleball courts in all the 3 proposed Airfield Park development options. While many people in the pickleball community voted in the survey presented in the meeting for their preferences among the 3 options, **our biggest fear** is that the survey results will be viewed as our endorsement for the limited number (up to 4) dedicated pickleball courts in the Airfield Park.

The pickleball community has expressed emphatically during the meeting to the limited number of pickleball courts in the options. We hope that this view will be recognized by the Board.

Our goal is for sharing the Airfield Park and not displacing other users. The pickleball community would support any of the 3 proposed options providing they include 8+ dedicated pickleball courts. Considering the size of the Airfield Park and the small footprint of pickleball courts, we believe that it is easily achievable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,
David Lai

Response to Bellevue Airfield Park Proposed Development Options

October 2022

Background

- Bellevue Parks is updating the Airfield Park Master Plan
- Our volunteer committee has submitted a request for the inclusion of 8+ dedicated pickleball courts in the Airfield Park
 - At Parks Advisory meeting (6/14)
 - At Airfield Park public engagement meeting #1 (7/26)
- Three proposed development options were presented by the Parks in public engagement meeting #2 (9/22)
- This report summarizes the responses to these 3 proposed options from the pickleball community

Key Points in Our Request*

- Currently there is an acute shortage of dedicated pickleball courts in Bellevue and Eastside
- Shortage will certainly become much worse in the near-future considering the double digit percentage growth of pickleball, our official Washington state sport
- Pickleball courts are an efficient use of real estate
 - 8 courts serve 32 players simultaneously but have a footprint of only 1/3 acres
- Our goal is for sharing the Airfield Park and not displacing other users
 - 8 courts constitute only 2% of the 14+ acres of the active use area of the Airfield Park
 - Even 16 courts constitute only 4% of the 14+ acres

* Airfield Parks Pickleball Courts (6-07-2022).pdf

Community Support for Our Request

- Our request for 8+ dedicated pickleball courts in Airfield Park has very strong support from the pickleball community
 - Bellevue Parks has received over 90 support emails after the 6/14 Advisory Board meeting
 - We estimated that over 90% of the ~100 participants in the in-person public engagement meeting #2 are pickleball supporters
 - Our supporters participated passionately in presenting their opinions on the 3 options in the public engagement meeting #2
- Including **ALL** public inputs (surveys and emails) is essential to transparent public engagement
 - The figures presented at the public engagement meeting #2 did not include all input received, and therefore did not adequately reflect the full level of support for pickleball

Number of Pickleball Courts in Options

- We want to thank the Parks for including dedicated pickleball courts in all three proposed Airfield Park options
- However, the number of courts (3 to 4) in these proposed options
 - Does not reflect the amount of public support we have for 8+ courts
 - Does not consider the small footprint of pickleball courts relative to the space available in the Airfield Park
 - Does not satisfy the current and near-future needs for the pickleball community

Survey on the 3 Proposed Options

- In the engagement meeting #2, a survey was conducted on the preferences for the 3 proposed development options
- This survey does not truthfully reflect the desires and needs of the pickleball community
 - Proposed number of courts is much less than what is needed and what the community requested
 - Airfield Park can easily accommodate more pickleball courts (16 courts take up only 4% of the 14+ acres of active usage part of the Park)
- Pickleball community would support any of the 3 options providing they include 8+ dedicated pickleball courts

16 Pickleball Courts in Airfield Park

- We strongly encourage increasing the number of proposed pickleball courts in Airfield Park from 4 to 16
- Having 16 dedicated outdoor pickleball courts in Bellevue would
 - Demonstrate that Bellevue Parks truly listen to public inputs
 - Catapult Bellevue into the leadership position for pickleball in the Eastside
 - Provide opportunities for holding tournaments which bring economic activities and benefits to the city

Phases of Airfield Park Development

- The multimillion dollar aquatic center will likely take many years to complete
- We propose to have pickleball courts developed in the first phase of the Airfield Park development
 - Pickleball courts are relatively inexpensive to build and maintain
- Completion of the courts would provide an early success story for the Airfield Park development which resides in an underserved subarea in Bellevue

Contact Information

- David Lai [dlai@ocean.lai@gmail](mailto:dlai@ocean.lai@gmail.com) 425-891-4346
- Leslie Wang jlw777@comcast.net
- Barbara Carey barbcarey97@comcast.net
- Lisa Tsang lisa.tsang@outlook.com
- Lynn Kaner lynnkaner@comcast.net
- Jessica Prince jgprince@hotmail.com
 - (Board member of the Seattle Metro Pickleball Association)