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**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 9:26 AM

**To:** parkboard <parkboard@bellevuewa.gov>

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**Subject:** Pickleball Courts information

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Dear Parks Board,

I want to thank the Board and the Parks Department for considering the inclusion of dedicated pickleball courts in the Bellevue Airfield Park.

In the last Parks Board meeting (10/11), there was lots of discussion on the construction cost of dedicated pickleball courts and the number of courts for the Airfield Park. I want to provide some information on these two items.

### **Construction Cost**

Earlier this year, our committee had done an internal study on the construction cost of 8 new dedicated pickleball courts, based on our experience on building a single court in a residential property. The cost came to about \$350k. This estimate is similar to the \$800k for building 8 courts planned for Mercer Island.

Extending this cost to 16 courts makes \$700k to \$800k. Even if you build in some additional cost due to inflation, the cost for 16 courts would be less than \$1M.

### **Number of Courts**

Questions were asked on how many pickleball courts should be constructed in the Airfield Park, and how many are needed for hosting tournaments.

Tournaments can be held for as few as 8 pickleball courts. However, a lot more is needed if we want to host sanctioned tournaments (sanctioned by national pickleball organizations). It is because these amateur tournaments have many competition events, separating players into skill levels and age groups.

A good example is the popular and successful Seattle Metro Pickleball Classic held in Shoreview Park. It has 18 pickleball courts and over 600 participants. It should be noted that most of these courts were temporarily converted from tennis courts. Another example is the smaller Founders Tournament in Bainbridge Island. It has 12 courts, half of which were temporarily converted tennis courts.

I urge the Parks Board to consider building 16 dedicated pickleball courts in the Airfield Park.

- Because of the high property value and the scarcity of land in Bellevue, the Airfield Park is likely the only chance to build a region-leading pickleball venue for many years to come.

- There is enough space in the Airfield Park to accommodate both 16 pickleball courts and the aquatic center.
- Having 16 courts will enable Bellevue to hold nationally recognized tournaments, bringing prestige and economic benefits to the city.
- There is not much difference in cost for building 16 courts versus 12 courts. We might as well “go big or go home”.
- While one might think that 16 courts are a lot of courts. But the average growth rate of pickleball in the last 5 years is 12%. At this high growth, the number of pickleball players will double in 6 years. We don’t foresee Bellevue building more courts in this period. Furthermore, there is an acute shortage of pickleball courts in Bellevue right now already.

I hope this information helps. Thank you for your time.

David Lai