



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska  
**Parks & Recreation Department**

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** August 8, 2024 (Updated August 23, 2024)

**Title:** Site Analysis of Pickleball Facilities in Anchorage

### INTRODUCTION

According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, pickleball is the fastest growing sport in America. Based on public requests for new pickleball facilities, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department prepared an analysis of tennis courts in the Anchorage Bowl and their potential for new pickleball courts.

This report intends to provide 1) an update to the public on existing pickleball facilities and 2) an informed recommendation for future development of pickleball courts if funding becomes available.

### EXISTING FACILITIES

The National Recreation and Park Association collects metrics from park agencies around the country. Based on this dataset, Anchorage Parks and Recreation offers more pickleball courts per capita than is typical for a city of equal size.<sup>1</sup> In Anchorage, the department currently offers 23 pickleball courts across seven locations:

- **Spenard Recreation Center:** indoor play, hours vary
- **Fairview Recreation Center:** indoor play, hours vary
- **Bonnie Cusack Outdoor Ice Rinks:** 12 courts, managed by the Anchorage Pickleball Club under a Cooperative Use Agreement between Alaska Ice Rink, Inc. and Anchorage Parks and Recreation
- **Taku Lake Park Tennis Courts:** 4 courts
- **Scenic Park Tennis Courts:** 2 courts
- **Harvard Park Tennis Courts:** 2 court
- **Pop Carr Park Tennis Courts:** 1 court

The Anchorage Pickleball Club formed in 2020 and worked with the Department to identify parks where pickleball facilities could be added. In 2021, the club sought approval at the Parks and Recreation Commission to add 12 courts at the Bonnie Cusack Outdoor Ice Rinks (PRC RES 2021-08). The painting was completed and paid for by the user group on the existing asphalt surface.

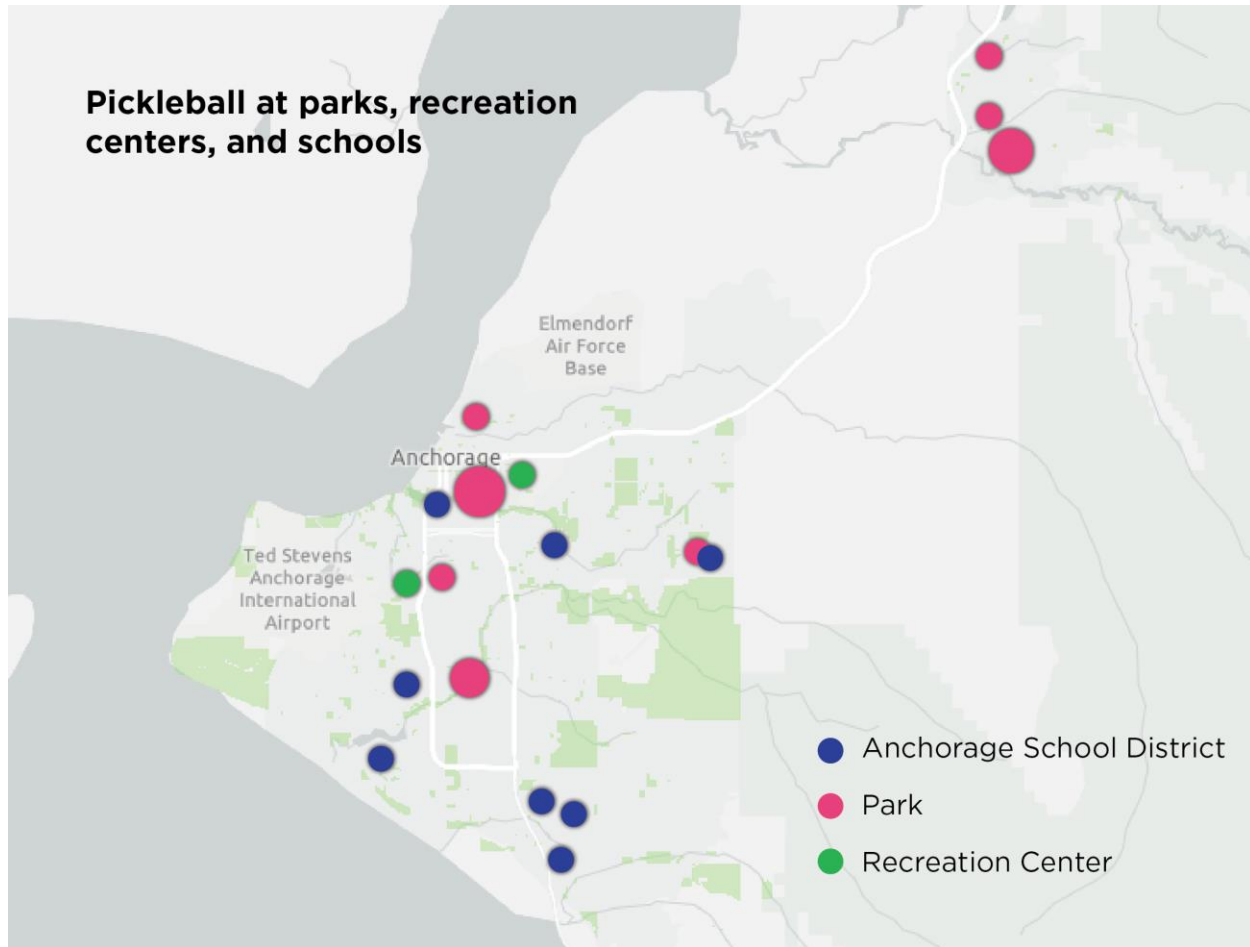
The most recent additions are two courts at Scenic Park. Through an Anchorage Park Foundation Challenge Grant, the existing two tennis courts were fully repainted with the addition of two pickleball courts. The painting was completed by Parks and Recreation staff with volunteer support and took two weeks to complete. Materials for the project cost approximately \$15,000.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.NRPA.org/APR](http://www.NRPA.org/APR)

In addition to pickleball courts available at recreation centers and parks, the Anchorage Pickleball Club has worked with the Anchorage School District to add pickleball court lines at outdoor ice rinks around town such as Romig Middle School and Bowman, Huffman, Rabbit Creek, and Lake Otis Elementary Schools. Private organizations also offer indoor play such as The Dome, O'Malley Sports Center, and Arctic Rec Center, which are not included in this facility assessment.

Chugiak/Eagle River Parks and Recreation also manages eight courts at Eagle River Lions Park and four at Firehouse Lane Park. Schroeder Park in Eagle River is currently under construction and will include new pickleball-only courts in replacement of tennis courts.



Above: Site analysis of public pickleball court facilities across Anchorage and Eagle River. Pickleball courts are typically added at existing tennis courts, gymnasiums, or outdoor ice facilities.

### SITE ANALYSIS

Anchorage Parks and Recreation conducted a site analysis to plan for future pickleball court development at existing tennis court facilities. Using existing facilities avoids costs of new asphalt and fence construction and can revitalize underused parks. Criteria that the Department considered when planning for potential future outdoor pickleball locations included:

- Number of courts,
- Whether the court was asphalt or a specialty paint surface,
- Presence of portable restroom,
- Off-street parking,
- Frequency of permitted tennis use, and
- Geographic distribution.

Nunaka Valley North is an excellent candidate for new pickleball courts. This park has three tennis courts that are infrequently permitted and are within walking distance of many homes. If courts were developed, a portable restroom should be added. Pop Carr is another candidate with four tennis courts, off-street parking, and a restroom on site. There is one court already present, but the site could support six to eight pickleball courts total. Forsythe Park is another candidate on Hillside with two separate double tennis courts.<sup>2</sup>

Park	Pickleball Courts	Tennis Courts	Surface	Restroom	Parking	Council	Permitted days, 2023
Pop Carr	1	4	Paint	Yes	Lot	Spenard	-
Forsythe	-	4	Paint	No	Lot	Hillside	1
Nunaka Valley North	-	3	Asphalt	No	Lot	Northeast	-
Bonnie Cusack Outdoor Rinks	12	-	Asphalt	Yes	Lot	Fairview	-
Delaney	-	8	Paint	No	Street	Downtown	101
Oceanview	-	2	Paint	Yes	Street	Oceanview	102
Taku Lake	4	2	Paint	Yes	Lot	Taku	-
Creekside	-	2	Paint	Yes	Street	Northeast	7
Kiwanis Fish Creek	-	2	Paint	No	Lot	Turnagain	-
Harvard	2	2	Paint	No	Lot	Gov Hill	-
Lyn Ary	-	2	Paint	Baseball fields	Street	Turnagain	5
Minnesota	-	1	Paint	No	Lot	Spenard	-
Scenic	2	2	Paint	No	Street	Scenic Foothills	-

<sup>2</sup> The Hillside Community Council ranked resurfacing of the tennis courts on their 2024 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list.

## PUBLIC PROCESS

Before making changes to park facilities, the Department would carry out a public process to confirm community support for new use of existing facilities. The basic steps are outlined below.

1. **Department Support.** This site analysis was completed due to a high number of individual inquiries about new pickleball courts.
2. **Fundraising.** There is currently no funding identified for the addition of pickleball courts. With heightened public interest, user groups may be eligible for grants in order to hire a professional contractor to paint new pickleball courts.
3. **Community Consultation.** Presentation to the Community Council with information about proposed changes to park uses and introduce a resolution or letter of support.
4. **Support from the Community Council.** Return to the Community Council to earn a letter or resolution of support.
5. **Support from the Parks and Recreation Commission.** Present to the Commission to earn resolution of support.
6. **Implementation.** Hire contractor to complete work.



Above: Example of two pickleball courts laid out on one side of a tennis court. This allows for multi-use play.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

If funding is identified, the Department would support the addition of pickleball courts at the Nunaka Valley North courts and Forsythe Park, to expand the number of courts at Pop Carr Park. The Department would recommend overlaying pickleball courts on existing tennis courts (for example, one pickleball court on each side of the tennis court) to maximize public benefit. The Department also recommends using court outlines rather than specialty paint to reduce costs and maintenance burden.