

RECREATION & PARKS COMMISSION 9/06/2023 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Hello Chair Smith, Commissioners and Staff,

I AM Submitting the Following Comments Into the Record:

1. The Commission Is Invited to the Council Of Industries Shoreline Tour, October 6th 2023 1:00 PM, Harbormaster's Building, RSVP by September 12th.
2. Also For the Next Agenda, The Commission Should Revisit the Idea Of Having some Youth To Join

Sincerely
Cordell

Hi,

The community that has been fostered (and is growing) around pickleball at Booker T Anderson is wonderful. Many people, including seniors, get out, exercise and form bonds of friendship. It's great for mind, body and spirit!

Please do everything you can to support this community.

Warmly,

Chuck
(El Cerrito Resident)
Chuck Rockey
Relationship & Sexuality Coaching

Dear Sir or Madame,

Attached (below) is my correspondence to Mayor Martinez on August 12, 2023, concerning the subject issue.

Thank you,
Charles Thoeming
925.262.3417

5314 Barrett Avenue
Richmond, California 94805

August 12, 2023

Mayor Eduardo Martinez
Richmond City Hall 450 Civic Center Plaza Richmond, CA 94804

Dear Mayor Martinez,

I reside at 5314 Barrett Avenue, Richmond, CA 94805, and I have lived at that address since 1994. On Monday, August 7, 2023, I went to play Pickleball at Richmond's (the City's) new, resurfaced pickleball facility in the Booker T. Anderson Park (BTA) near my home, as have done for several months before the resurfacing, and weeks since. I was shocked to find BTA's new pickleball nets had been taken down. That day there were many other pickleball players at BTA sharing my surprise and disappointment.

The pickleball courts have been busy since their inauguration on June 10, 2023, frequented on average by 20 to 100 players daily as the only dedicated courts in West Contra Costa County. Youth pickleball programs conducted at Nevin, Shields Reid, BTA, Parchester Centers, Nystrom School Freedom Program, and at Grant and Stege Schools, in collaboration with the ED Fund/WCCUSD, attests to this success.

In researching the situation, it appears some level of authority in the City has ordered this disruption and cessation of pickleball for tennis at BTA. The resurfacing project was successfully spearheaded by the East Bay Pickleball Association (EBPA), and The City conceded to EBPA the power to select the contractor and enter the resurfacing contract at BTA. EBPA reasonably relied upon the City's acquiescence in these respects. The overreach and change of policy for pickleball at BTA contradicts EBPA's good faith understanding of the City's intentions regarding pickleball at BTA.

The City's change of policy at BTA appears to be a unilateral, lower level powerplay by one of City's agents. In the belief that this circumstance can be readily corrected at the top level, I write to you and request that after you investigate, consider the entire circumstances, that you direct the return of BTA to an all-pickleball facility with 6 permanent courts.

Adding the resurfaced and dedicated Pickleball courts at BTA was a tremendous improvement to outdoor recreation. My neighbors appreciated the existence of these courts, attracting.

Mayor Eduardo Martinez August 12, 2023 Page 2

many Richmond residents. The new BTA facility decreased congestion at the courts in other localities. More courts are needed throughout the region, and BTA was doing its part by providing 6 permanent courts during the summer, as the only dedicated courts in West Contra Costa County.

Closing the 2 tennis courts at BTA is unfortunate, but there are so many other tennis options in Richmond it seems equitable that BTA be allowed to have 6 permanent pickleball courts. Removing the BTA tennis courts from the Richmond tennis court inventory of 22 courts means there would be 1 court for every 5,781 Richmond residents. Compare this to having only 6 pickleball courts – which comes to 1 court per 19,273 residents. Add to this the fact that many residents able to play pickleball cannot play tennis. It is a gross imbalance of recreational options.

An argument is that portable pickleball nets can be set up at BTA to have 6 courts again, but that means someone must carry them, set them up, attend the full session and then disassemble and return home. As a reminder, the storage container originally installed and holding the 6 original pickleball nets was stolen in its entirety after a few weeks of usage – a large financial loss to EBPA. Having portable pickleball nets on site is a risky proposition.

The new pickleball nets weigh 20-30 pounds, and many of us are seniors who cannot (or are not supposed to) lift that much weight. There are about 20 pieces to assemble in a portable pickleball

net, so there is a learning curve involved. Kids cannot do this. This is why using portable nets at BTA is not a feasible long-term solution.

Please look at the big picture. The decision to allow 6 permanent pickleball courts at BTA benefits far more people than the few tennis players who now would have to travel a little further to play tennis.

I will continue to monitor these circumstances, including appearing before the City Council for any necessary hearings and writing to all levels of City government which might intercede to correct this clear reversal of policy. It is hoped this letter will begin to foster transparency into how we got here, now.

Thank you.
Charles Thoeming

To Whom it May Concern,

My request is simple. Please support and agree to having 6 dedicated pickleball courts at Booker T Anderson. For a brief period of time, pickleball players knew to come to Booker T Anderson where playing pickleball there was an extra special experience because everyone could enjoy the recently renovated dedicated pickleball courts.

I understand that 6 dedicated pickleball courts at BTA would mean a reduction of 2 dedicated tennis courts in the City of Richmond. To that point, I welcome tennis players to the City of El Cerrito where we have many public tennis courts to share. Let's all support "the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people." This is a wonderful opportunity for the City of Richmond to allow the pickleball community to have 6 dedicated courts at BTA.

I am in agreement with the points already formally stated and submitted by two of our local energetic and passionate USA Pickleball Ambassadors Darlene Drapkin and Cathy Taruskin.

Sincerely,
Connie Wong
El Cerrito Resident
double.cheers@yahoo.com

I am a Richmond resident in District 5. I am also a senior citizen and am delighted that the game of Pickleball can be enjoyed by seniors as well as the youth. I am astounded that the City of Richmond has decided to make the only Pickleball Courts in Richmond at Booker T Anderson combined use which includes tennis, especially when I've been informed there are 21 tennis courts in the City of Richmond as well as a multitude of tennis courts in adjacent cities. Not only are temporary nets heavy and difficult to set up, they fall over during windy days. I've personally used BTA since October 2022 and believe I've seen tennis players at the courts only once or at the most twice since then.

I hope the City reconsiders their decision to remove four of the six Pickleball nets and return all six to full use.

In addition I believe the City should investigate and incorporate an online reservation system to be put in place for the BTA courts such as El Cerrito, Berkeley and Oakland have for their various courts which is automated; and priority given to Richmond residents to enhance use of the courts by the local community. I would oppose the oversight of the courts by a third party group.

Please don't hesitate to contact me regarding this issue.

Sincerely

Olivia Rocha 510-529-5409 (cell)

Gosh, I was so happy to have pickleball courts to play on, since there are tennis courts everywhere in Richmond, but NO pickleball courts for me! I have been playing there. I have sent many new folks there to play and learn to play, and they all agree how great the courts are! And now ... you are taking them away???? There are plenty of places for tennis folks to play. What message are you sending to the rest of us? That tennis is elite and we don't count? Two courts only, versus 19 or so tennis courts? Booker T gave SIXTEEN people a chance to play, versus a max of 8, but more commonly, four, tennis players.

I cannot believe my city is doing this. Please consider postponing this drastic move, for further discussion.

Christie Look

59 Harborview Dr.

Richmond, 94804

510-453-0319

looksbooks@comcast.net

Richmond Park & Rec,

Please reconsider the removal of 4 of the 6 permanent pickleball nets at BTA Park. The courts have historically seen very little use for tennis compared to the number of people playing pickleball while there were 6 courts.

This is a good investment in public health that benefits a great many and diversity of people. It also will generate economic benefits for nearby businesses.

Thank you,

Bill Powning

My husband and I are 37-year residents of District 4 and write to strongly protest the actions (removal of pickleball posts/nets) taken at the Booker T. Anderson Park pickleball courts.

We have been utilizing these courts for pickleball for over two years - not as part of the EB Pickleball group play, but as individual residents looking for an appropriate space to enjoy our pickleball exercise. As the two of us played often in the mid-mornings (bringing our own net), over the two years we

only ever encountered two men playing tennis - and not an actual game, just hitting the ball back and forth for exercise. They stopped coming well before the courts were upgraded. The argument that there is a demand for use of the tennis courts is not supported by past (or present) use. We have recently started attending the organized pickleball Open Play and have been extremely impressed by its organization, attention to the community, and willingness to welcome and encourage (and instruct) new players - especially local teens and children.

The City of Richmond has plenty of other public tennis courts, but NO other public pickleball courts. The EB Pickleball group raised all the money to resurface the courts and install the nets. It is a travesty that the City took the action of removing the posts/nets and a slap in the face to the residents who play pickleball - and who raised funds for the pre-approved modification of the courts.

Lorraine Burciaga
Ray Burciaga

Dear Richmond Recreation Overlords,

I was very disheartened to see the newly renovated Pickleball courts at Booker T. Anderson park modified to accommodate the few tennis players who might actually use those courts. Come to think of it, I have never seen anyone playing tennis on those courts! On the other hand, I have seen a whole bunch of lively, committed and engaged Pickleball players excitedly enjoying that venue. That is until some grinch removed the permanent nets and restriped the lines! What could have been a premier Pickleball destination in Richmond is now a confusing "multi-use" facility more suited to those scofflaws in El Cerrito! It would be very comforting to see the Richmond Parks and Rec Commission realize their error and fully embrace the rapidly growing, diverse and generous Pickleball community!

J. Marin
El Cerrito, CA

To whom it may concern:

The Recreation Department recently removed pickleball poles and nets from four out of six courts at Booker T. Anderson park, pending further review. I am hoping that when this comes up for consideration on September 6, you will decide to restore those courts.

Richmond businesses benefit. I live in Albany, which has 20,000 people but no dedicated pickleball courts. My wife and I play at BTA 2-3x/week. Afterward, we often lunch with friends at nearby Richmond restaurants: Mi Casa Grill, the Assemble, or restaurants along San Pablo Avenue, or we'll stop at Bayview Meat & Fish (2 blocks away) to buy meats and Mexican specialties. We discovered those establishments since playing at BTA. Now, when they see us walk in at Bayview Meat, they tease us (e.g., "Did you win?").

Diversity. BTA puts to rest the notion of pickleball as a sport for retired white people. I played last Monday from 4-6 pm and there were more than 40 players, of all ages and ethnicities. It was like a snapshot of the United Nations. More women than men. Many BTA regulars play despite severe mobility issues.

It doesn't have to be tennis or pickleball. The interim decision speaks of balancing tennis and pickleball. Since the change to the courts, attendance for pickleball at BTA has noticeably dropped. It doesn't have to be that way. Richmond has 22 courts (one court for every 5,781 Richmond residents), but only six pickleball courts (one court per 19,273 residents). I have never seen a single tennis player at BTA. By contrast, probably 20-80 people play pickleball at BTA every day. Don't take my word for it. Stop by.

BTA is a jewel that reflects magnificently on your lovely city. I hope that when you complete your review, you will conclude that BTA's pickleball courts should be restored.

Very truly yours,

Will Stern

Dear Commissioners:

I play pickleball in Richmond. I drive several times a week from Berkeley to meet my Richmond friends and others to play at Booker T Anderson courts. I have supported the efforts to create the pickleball courts.

As a result, I also eat out, shop, and attend musical events in the City of Richmond. So do my friends who play with me. I live in Berkeley which welcomes all people to enjoy their parks and facilities. This is what makes the Bay Area so rich in outdoor activities.

I hope the people of Richmond see the importance of creating welcoming spaces for all. Pickleball does that. All ages can play. The learning curve is quick. The equipment is inexpensive. People do not need special clothes or shoes.

It is one of the least elitist sports on Earth. I encourage you to not only come and see us play, but join us. We welcome EVERYONE.

Sincerely,
Gina Rieger

Dear Richmond Recreation and Council Members,

I am writing to encourage you to restore the full 6 permanent pickleball nets at the Booker T. Anderson (BTA) courts. I appreciate the spirit behind making it dual-use to serve the largest community possible, but in practice removing 4 out of 6 pickleball courts to increase the number of Richmond tennis courts from ~20 to ~21 doesn't really achieve that.

For example, last Saturday afternoon I went to BTA to teach my daughter some pickleball. There were 4 groups wanting to play pickleball, and only 2 nets. One group ended up using the tennis net for pickleball (different height, no matching lines), and the others of us rotated on the remaining 2 courts. Although temporary nets can be set up during the scheduled open play times, that doesn't serve those that come at other times, e.g. to teach their kids or practice.

The opening of the newly resurfaced BTA courts on June 10 was a moment of civic pride for Richmond -- Richmond had the best public pickleball courts in West County, achieved through the direct donations and fundraising efforts of the East Bay pickleball community, and generous support from the City of Richmond, the Richmond Friends of Recreation, and the Rotary Club. For many of us, that civic pride has now turned into civic consternation, even a sense of

betrayal, that less than 3 months later 4 out of 6 of the courts have been removed to make room for one more tennis court that doesn't get nearly the amount of use that those 4 pickleball courts did.

I live just across the border in El Cerrito and I'm frequently in Richmond for eating out, entertainment, shopping, and medical care. Our cities share similar opportunities and challenges, and I want us to thrive together. I personally donated to the fundraising efforts to resurface the BTA courts and I welcome Richmond residents who play in El Cerrito. It was with a bit of good-spirited jealousy and admiration that those of us from El Cerrito had to admit that Richmond had beat us in the efforts to renovate our respective courts. Well done, but that "win" is now backsliding with the loss of 4 out of 6 courts.

Please help us restore that Richmond civic pride that we all felt on June 10 by restoring the full 6 permanent pickleball courts at BTA to best serve the community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Stephen Bailey

To Whom This May Concern,

First of all, I want to express my appreciation for the fact that the courts at Booker T Anderson park in Richmond have been resurfaced - they are wonderful to play on. I work in West Contra Costa County and live in Albany, and very much appreciate the presence of these courts that are so convenient for me and others. I play there more than anywhere else - several times a week. I have noticed and enjoyed many new players since the courts were re-surfaced - people of varied ages and ethnicities. It's a pleasure to see more people accessing this fun and welcoming sport. My husband and I have, on several occasions, shared extra paddles with kids or adults who were watching from outside the courts and enjoyed showing them the ropes. I have never seen tennis players on those courts - not once. Given the high demand for pickleball courts and the potential the sport has as one that provides a healthy, outdoor source of connection and fitness, I truly hope the rec dept and city of Richmond will replace the pickleball nets that have been taken down since the courts were re-surfaced and support the growth of pickleball in the community - it's a sport for everyone.

Sincerely,

Sharon Priven

Dear City of Richmond Parks & Rec Commission,

There are 4 reasons why we love playing pickleball so much!!

1. I love pickleball because it is a great way to stay active and have fun. It is a sport that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and skill levels. It is also a great way to socialize

with others and develop friendships. Plus, it is a fast-paced game that keeps you on your toes and provides a great workout.

2. I love pickleball because it is a fun and fast-paced sport that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and skill levels. It is a great way to stay active and socialize with others. Additionally, pickleball is a great way to exercise as it combines elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis. The rules are easy to learn and the sport can be easily adapted to any level of play. All in all, pickleball is a great way to stay active and have fun with friends and family.

3. I love pickleball because it is an easy sport to learn and it is a great way to stay active. It can be played with friends or family and it is a great way to socialize and have fun. It is also low-impact so it is easy on the joints and can help to improve muscle strength and coordination. Plus, it is an incredibly fun and competitive sport that can be enjoyed by people of all ages.

4. I love pickleball because it's a fun and social sport that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and skill levels. It's also relatively inexpensive to play and the equipment is easy to find. Most importantly, I find the game to be incredibly rewarding; I always leave with a sense of satisfaction after a good pickleball match. So, there are a lot of benefits to support Pickleball sport in Richmond, California. It helps to promote a healthy and safe environment for the neighborhood as many people come to play Pickleball every day.

Even though I live in Albany, I love to come to Richmond to play Pickleball at Booker T. Anderson Park since the their inauguration on June 10, 2023 The pickleball courts have been extremely busy, frequented on average by 20 to 100 players daily, as the only dedicated courts in West Contra Costa County.

Michelle Esquivel visited the BTA this morning with "Meet and Play with Pro". She will make Richmond a famous and interesting city.

Furthermore the Youth Pickleball programs conducted at Nevin, Shields Reid, BTA, Parchester Centers, Nystrom School Freedom Program, and at Grant and Stege Schools, in collaboration with ED Fund/WCCUSD, attests to the success.

It was unfortunate to see these four permanent Pickleball nets taken down at the beginning of August 2023. The East Bay Pickleball Associations and their volunteers have been setting up the portable nets since then in order to have enough courts for everyone who lives in Richmond and surrounding cities. Several of them are retired and have to carry the heavy portable pickleball net bags into and out of the containers, not to mention installing and removing them. My husband and I are trying to help them, but we are old and injured as well, so we greatly appreciate their effort.

We are hoping that the city would allow us to put the 4 nets back and let's people enjoy Pickleball court freely all day including all the kids and people who live around the BTA park.

Sincerely Trues,
Tom Wichitsripornkul
Albany CA

Dear Council Members,

As a Richmond resident I appreciate the opportunity to get exercise, to socialise, and to play with other pickleball enthusiasts in Richmond. I play pickleball 4 times a week and I love that I can play locally. However, there has been such a demand for pickleball that there is often a wait to play. When I play at BTA the courts are often full. I have yet to see people playing tennis. If there is so much demand for pickleball and plenty of other places to play tennis, why can't we keep designated pickleball courts at BTA? It really baffles me.

Playing pickleball is a vital part of my life as an aging resident. Please recognise the reality and urgency of our need for more places to play and for no net set up (portable nets are falling apart and the new shipping container isn't easy to operate!). I urge you to reconsider permanent nets at BTA.

Thank you,
Leigh Gronet
163 Lakeshore Court, Richmond, CA 94804

I am writing to implore you to return Booker T Anderson to all-pickleball (6 courts). The addition of the courts was a tremendous improvement to the pickleball scene in the area. As an El Cerrito resident, I can say we appreciated the fact that the existence of these courts, attracting many Richmond residents, contributed to decreasing the congestion at the courts in El Cerrito. We need more courts throughout the region, and BTA was doing its part by providing 6 permanent courts during the summer.

The loss of 2 tennis courts at BTA is unfortunate, but there are so many other tennis options in Richmond that it seems equitable that BTA be allowed to have 6 permanent courts. Removing 2 tennis courts from the Richmond **tennis** court inventory of 22 courts means that there would be **1 court for every 5,781 Richmond residents**. Compare this to having only 6 **pickleball** courts --which comes to **1 court per 19,273 residents**. Add to this the fact that many residents who are able to play pickleball are **UNABLE** to play tennis. It is a gross imbalance of recreational options.

I know the argument is that portable nets can be set up at BTA in order to have 6 courts again, but that means someone must carry them, set them up, attend the full session and then disassemble and return home. As a reminder, the storage container originally installed and holding the 6 original

nets was stolen entirely after just a few weeks of usage -- a large financial loss to the group. Having portable nets on site was a risky proposition.

The nets weigh 20-30 pounds, and many of us are seniors who cannot (or are not supposed to) lift that much weight. There are about 20 pieces to assemble in a portable net, so there is a learning curve involved. Kids are not able to do this. This is why using portable nets is not a feasible long-term solution.

Please look at the big picture. The decision to allow 6 permanent courts at BTA benefits far more people than the few tennis players who now would have to travel just a little further to play tennis.

Sincerely,

Cathy Taruskin
USA Pickleball Ambassador, El Cerrito, Albany, Berkeley

Hello,

As new residents of Richmond, we join in with our pickleball community to implore you to return Booker T Anderson to all-pickleball (6 courts). The addition of the courts was a tremendous improvement to the pickleball scene in the area and believe it or not, one of our "pros" when considering selling in Albany and moving to Richmond. Throughout Covid we enjoyed access to the 4 dedicated pickleball courts at Cedar Rose and valued having the ability to reserve courts without confusing lines or markings from other sports. It was worth the money we spent on reservations and I'm sure if Richmond instituted a reservation program, could be a solid source of income for the City. When we decided to move to Richmond, we were excited to join the community at BTA. It's been a joy to play with folks from a variety of backgrounds, age groups, and ethnicity. Courts are getting crowded everywhere and we need more courts throughout the region. We were grateful to believe that BTA was doing its part by providing 6 permanent dedicated courts.

As we can personally attest, the pickleball courts at BTA have been extremely busy since their inauguration on June 10, frequented on average by 20 to 100 players daily, as the only dedicated courts in West Contra Costa County. Furthermore, I'm told that the Youth Pickleball programs conducted at Nevin, Shields Reid, BTA, Parchester Centers, Nystrom School Freedom Program, and at Grant and Stege Schools, in collaboration with the ED Fund/WCCUSD, attests to this success.

The loss of 2 tennis courts at BTA is unfortunate, but in doing some searches in the area, there are so many other tennis options in Richmond that it seems equitable that BTA be allowed to have 6 permanent courts. I believe the research that other pickleball players have done that shows that removing 2 tennis courts from the Richmond tennis court inventory of 22 courts means that there would be 1 court for every 5,781 Richmond residents. Compare this to having only 6 pickleball courts --which comes to 1 court per 19,273 residents. Add to this the fact that many residents who are able to play pickleball are UNABLE to play tennis. It seems to be a gross imbalance of recreational options.

I know the argument is that portable nets can be set up at BTA in order to have 6 courts again, but that means someone must carry them, set them up, attend the full session and then disassemble and return home. As a reminder, the storage container originally installed and holding the 6 original nets was stolen entirely after just a few weeks of usage -- a large financial loss to the group. Having portable nets on site was a risky proposition.

The nets weigh 20-30 pounds, and many of us are seniors who cannot (or are not supposed to) lift that much weight. There are about 20 pieces to assemble in a portable net, so there is a learning curve involved. Kids are not able to do this. This is why using portable nets is not a feasible long-term solution.

Please look at the big picture. The decision to allow 6 permanent courts at BTA benefits far more people than the few tennis players who now would have to travel just a little further to play tennis.

Kym & Dave Sterner
1201 Brickyard Cove, #412
Richmond, CA 94801

To whom it may concern,

I have written previously but I want to be sure that my letter becomes part of the Public Comments regarding Pickleball Courts at Booker T. Anderson Park. I am a Richmond resident having lived here since 1988. I am a pickleball player and I was thrilled that after all this time, Richmond made inroads into providing healthy outdoor exercise available for senior citizens and all the residents and guests of BTA.. I utilize BTA pickleball courts a few times a week and I was frustrated, disappointed, and angry that the permanent nets were removed last month. I implore you to return Booker T Anderson to all-pickleball (6 courts). The addition of the courts was a tremendous improvement to the pickleball scene in the area. The courts brought so many people together -- people of all ages and of all backgrounds. I've played with middle school students and people older than myself and everything else in-between. There are so many tennis options in Richmond and NO OTHER pickleball options for us. Tennis players can play pickleball, and they do. Pickleball players cannot play tennis. Many were not physically active until BTA installed six courts. We get new players every single week. BTA is a fantastic location--it has plenty of parking and its near restaurants and bars, so we can spend money in Richmond following our play. Putting up and taking down temporary nets is not a long-term solution.

The pickleball courts have been extremely busy since their inauguration on June 10, frequented on average by 20 to 100 players daily, as the only dedicated courts in West Contra Costa County. Furthermore, the Youth Pickleball programs conducted at Nevin, Shields Reid, BTA, Parchester Centers, Nystrom School Freedom Program, and at Grant and Stege Schools, in collaboration with the ED Fund/WCCUSD, attests to this success.

Please, please allow six permanent courts at BTA. Everybody wins -- including the tennis people who can go to other courts and not have pickleballs errantly flying into their courts.

Sincerely,
Shoshana and Craig Grammer
Marina Bay, Richmond

Dear City of Richmond Parks & Rec Commission

My name is Astar Winoto, a resident of Richmond for 23 years. I am writing to voice my concern regarding the recent move by the Richmond Recreational Department to remove 4 of the 6 Pickleball courts at the Booker Anderson Park. Pickleball popularity has exploded recently (e.g <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/01/05/pickleball-popularity-explodes-with-more-than-36-million-playing.html>). People as young as 10 years old or as old as 80+ have participated in playing. My wife and I took up Pickleball recently and love it. Not only it is easier to play for seniors like us, but also because of the friendly and helpful Pickleball community.

During Openplay, there are regularly more than 12+ people waiting for the 6 courts (4 person/court). Thus, even 6 courts were not sufficient. With only 2 setups, someone had to bring portable nets. However, these nets are heavy and it is unreasonable to depend on someone to carry them from her/his home, to set them up and then to wait for the games to finish to take the nets home. Storing the portable nets at site openly is not possible because they were stolen before. My wife and I have also used the court regularly outside the openplay periods. There were usually others playing too, so having only 2 Pickleball courts were not sufficient. In contrast, I have never seen anyone playing at the Tennis Court in all my many visits.

The city has several other tennis courts and only one open public place for the Pickleball courts. The Booker Anderson Pickleball place is unique and is the only one with permanent setup in Richmond and the surrounding cities. Having two courts is simply not enough, given the popularity of the sport for many Richmond city residents, especially seniors. The Pickleball Community was sad to see the loss of the 4 Pickleball courts. I hope that you can reverse the decision and make the Booker Anderson a dedicated Pickleball place with 6 permanent courts so that Richmond City residents can exercise regularly to stay healthy.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Astar Winoto
4645 Setting Sun Dr, Richmond, CA94803
Please restore the use of BTA Park courts to dedicated pickleball courts. What a gem it was! Thank you. Nancy Leibowitz

I would just like to comment regarding the options for playing Pickleball in Richmond. At the moment, there are only two dedicated courts (both at Booker T Anderson Jr) park. Given the numbers of people playing Pickleball, this seems totally inadequate. When there is open Pickleball play and all 6 potential courts are in use, there are 4 people on every court with approximately 8 people or more waiting for

their turn to play. Given the options for playing other sports (e.g. tennis – where there seem to be approximately 20 dedicated courts in Richmond), the options for Pickleball seem to be far too limited.

As a senior citizen (65+), tennis is not an option for me - the court is too big and the racquet is too heavy to play for any length of time without injury. In effect, the failure to provide adequate Pickleball facilities is restricting the ability to pursue healthy activities for many people like me.

Finally, I also understand, that you want to limit the days where Pickleball can be played at Booker T Anderson park – BUT you're not providing any alternative facilities for those other days. Please reconsider and provide dedicated courts at Booker T Anderson park.

FWIW, I live on the Richmond / El Cerrito border – I find that playing at Booker T Anderson park means that I end up spending more money with Richmond businesses than I would otherwise.

Thank you

Mike Baer

I am writing to say that I'm deeply concerned regarding the notice that was posted at the courts at Booker T Anderson (BTA) park on Friday, August 4th. As a senior citizen (nearly 70) with less than perfect mobility (waiting for 2nd hip replacement), I have come to really enjoy the sport of pickleball. As far as I can tell, the posted notice is really going to cut back the opportunities for healthy exercise for seniors like me.

For me, tennis is no longer a realistic option. Pickleball is a great alternative, it allows for social outdoor exercise. The open play sessions that have been held at BTA attract good numbers - many of whom are 55+. For example, when the notice was posted, there were about 30 people participating. Is limiting that number to 2 courts really an appropriate answer?

Michael Brown

I encourage you to restore all six pickleball courts at Booker T. Anderson. Scarcity of courts in the East Bay has been a problem for the eight years I've been playing. While it's not specifically a Richmond problem it should be an issue for every municipality. Here's an activity that's healthful, socially engaging, and inclusive of all ages that's growing enormously yet has few venues to accommodate it. I know you've witnessed how much use even the two remaining courts get. So please address the need and restore these courts.

Thank you

Alan Kaplan

hello

my wife and I live in Richmond and have been playing Pickleball for two years mostly at Booker T

we love the new painted courts and were proud to help fundraise for them

we are Very disappointed the city is planning to turn some back into Tennis courts.

we play and live (pride and purpose) in Richmond and strongly urge you to KEEP OUR COURTS

thanks

sylvia
columbia ave
richmond ca 94804

Please return Booker T to being Richmond's number one park for pickleball. It is such a popular sport at this time that it is ridiculous that you would not want folks from all over to come to Richmond to play. Start charging court fees like other cities. Get on board and stop the fight to decrease courts!! Richmond could use some positive press!! Pickleball at Booker T PLEASE!!

Karen Nicola

1. On Monday morning, August 7, 2023, the City's Recreation Department removed the pickleball poles, and nets at Booker T. Anderson.

We implore you to return Booker T Anderson to all-pickleball (6 courts). The addition of the courts was a tremendous improvement to the pickleball scene in the area. We need more courts throughout the region, and BTA was doing its part by providing 6 permanent courts, as the only dedicated courts in West County.

The loss of 2 tennis courts at BTA is unfortunate, but there are so many other tennis options in Richmond that it seems equitable that BTA be allowed to have 6 permanent courts. Removing 2 tennis courts from the Richmond **tennis** court inventory of 22 courts means that there would be **1 court for every 5,781 Richmond residents**. Compare this to having only 6 **pickleball** courts --which comes to **1 court per 19,273 residents**. Add to this the fact that many residents who are able to play pickleball are **UNABLE** to play tennis. It is a gross imbalance of recreational options.

2. PICKLEBALL IS EQUITY because it can be played by people of all different diversities and ages!
3. We don't see tennis players at the BTA Courts
4. People who come to Richmond to play pickleball also stay to visit our restaurants, stores, and shop!
5. There's the argument that portable nets can be set up at BTA in order to have 6 courts again, but that means someone must carry them, set them up, attend the full session and then disassemble and return home. As a reminder, the storage container originally installed and holding the 6 original nets was stolen entirely after just a few weeks of usage -- a large financial loss to the group. Having portable nets on site was a risky proposition.

The nets weigh 20-30 pounds, and many of us are seniors who cannot (or are not supposed to) lift that much weight. There are about 20 pieces to

assemble in a portable net, so there is a learning curve involved. Kids are not able to do this. This is why using portable nets is not a feasible long-term solution.

Please look at the big picture. The decision to allow 6 permanent courts at BTA benefits far more people than the few tennis players who now would have to travel just a little further to play tennis.

6. The pickleball courts have been extremely busy since their inauguration on June 10, frequented on average by 20 to 100 players daily, as the only dedicated courts in West Contra Costa County.
7. The Youth Pickleball programs conducted at Nevin, Shields Reid, BTA, Parchester Centers, Nystrom School Freedom Program, and at Grant and Stege Schools, in collaboration with ED Fund/WCCUSD, attests to the success.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Wei
USA Pickleball Ambassador

Dear City of Richmond Parks & Rec Commission

My name is Lulu Winoto, a resident of Richmond for 23 years. I am writing to voice my concern regarding the recent move by the Richmond Recreational Department to remove 4 of the 6 Pickleball courts at the Booker Anderson Park. Pickleball popularity has exploded recently (e.g <https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cnbc.com%2F2023%2F01%2F05%2Fpickleball-popularity-explodes-with-more-than-36-million-playing.html&data=05%7C01%7Ccreation%40ci.richmond.ca.us%7C621cacb6b79e4793b42408dbae1fa57d%7C8ab93658f71f4926b380e0da1d18115a%7C1%7C0%7C638295223174181368%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=28YUBb%2BHPwsOvVMEVacVrbMRhZlZgH%2FgiXSKJE4i1z8%3D&reserved=0>). People as young as 12 years old or as old as 70+ have participated in playing. My husband and I took up Pickleball recently and love it. Not only it is easier to play for seniors like us, but also because of the friendly and helpful Pickleball community.

During Openplay, there are regularly more than 12+ people waiting for the 6 courts (4 person/court). Thus, even 6 courts were not sufficient. With only 2 setups, someone had to bring portable nets. However, these nets are heavy and it is unreasonable to depend on someone to carry them from her/his home, to set them up and then to wait for the games to finish to take the nets home. Storing the portable nets at site openly is not possible because they were stolen before. My husband and I have also used the court regularly outside the openplay periods. There were usually others playing too, so having only 2 Pickleball courts

were not sufficient. In contrast, I have never seen anyone playing at the Tennis Court in all my many visits.

The city has several other tennis courts and only one open public place for the Pickleball courts. The Booker Anderson Pickleball place is unique and is the only one with permanent setup in Richmond and the surrounding cities. Having two courts is simply not enough, given the popularity of the sport for many Richmond city residents, especially seniors. The Pickleball Community was sad to see the loss of the 4 Pickleball courts. I hope that you can reverse the decision and make the Booker Anderson a dedicated Pickleball place with 6 permanent courts so that Richmond City residents can exercise regularly to stay healthy.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lulu Winoto
4645 Setting Sun Dr, Richmond, CA94803

To Whom it may Concern,

I am writing to you to support the beautiful newly resurfaced courts at Booker T. Anderson park. The resurfacing was paid for by pickleballers like me who donated to have this work done. I am a 16 year resident of Richmond, am 68 years old, have had 2 knee replacements and pickleball is something that I can play and enjoy. Tennis is not, and will never be an option for me...It is my understanding that there are over 20 tennis courts throughout the city of Richmond but not 1 dedicated pickleball court- until recently...

Let's look at the larger picture; 2 tennis courts that were rarely used, in need of resurfacing, in disrepair vs. 6 brand new permanent pickleball courts that have people waiting in line to play! The logistics: 2 or 4 people playing tennis (on occasion) on 2 courts as opposed to 24 people playing regularly on 6 courts within the same area. Which is a better use of this space? I invite you to come by the courts on a Friday eve or Saturday to see and meet the number of people who come to Richmond to enjoy these beautiful new courts. Ambassadors from the pickleball community have donated their time in the local schools, art and music gatherings in the city of Richmond the past few years to introduce residents and students how to play and enjoy this exciting game. It is the fastest growing sport in America and Richmond has 6 beautiful new courts to offer the residents of Richmond.

This is truly a jewel for the residents of Richmond and surrounding communities!! There is no downside to keeping these beautiful new courts open on a permanent basis. To take away access to these new courts is punitive and behind the scenes is surely petty politics at its worst.

Please, reconsider and keep these beautiful new dedicated pickleball courts open and in use!

Sincerely,
Nora Lee
(650) 504-2636

POB 70881
Richmond, Ca. 94807

I urge you to add more permanent pickleball courts at Booker T Anderson park. Currently there are only 2 permanent courts, as several were recently removed. There are huge numbers of people wanting to play, and with only 2 permanent courts, the wait times can be long enough to discourage attendance. It is a real missed opportunity to serve the local folk, as never have any tennis players been using the spaces that once provided 4 additional pickleball courts.

I urge you to reconsider best use of this precious resource.

Sincerely,
Sharon Fleming
Resident of Kensington, Contra Costa County
520-364-7507

Greetings,

My name is Paul Priaulx, and I am a City of Richmond resident. I live on Gately Ave. and my wife and I regularly visit Booker T. Anderson Park to both walk our dogs (on leash of course) and to play pickleball.

I'm 50 years old, and have had the unfortunate pleasure of rupturing both of my achilles tendons during my 40s. Since the second one gave out, I struggled to play any of the sports I used to, and found myself spending less and less time being active, and a lot more time gaining weight. One day I read an article about pickleball, and how it had been a great sport for seniors to get involved with. While I don't consider myself a senior per se, I was certainly starting to move and feel like a man many years my current age and decided to give pickleball a shot. I was surprised and excited to learn that Booker T. Anderson park had pickleball courts to play on, so I bought a paddle and some balls and went to check it out. What I found was a very welcoming and diverse community of people, old and young, that were excited to play with a newcomer - somewhat of a rarity in my experience. The smaller court and doubles play setup was the balance I needed, and I've been playing at least one day a week (but often 2 or 3 times a week) since.

I've supported the setup and breakdown of the removeable pickleball nets at BTA, and it is not an easy task. Many times the last few players on the court are seniors who struggle with the weight of the overall unit once it is ready to be stored away. With so many partially used and/or frequently empty tennis courts available in the city, combined with the overwhelming popularity of pickleball and the limited locations available, having at least one public court dedicated to the game is a very reasonable request. Please take some time to consider making the courts at BTA park dedicated for pickleball. A growing

portion of the Richmond community will thank you for it now, and no doubt many others will thank you in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Paul Priaulx
5412 Gately Ave.

Hello,

I am a Berkeley resident who has been playing Pickleball at Booker T. Anderson park for the last two years. Solely because of playing pickleball at BTA, I have made a significant number of friends who are Richmond residents, and with them and others I have frequented a number of Richmond businesses for food, drinks and other items. I was quite pleased earlier this summer when BTA was converted to 6 pickleball courts, and I began playing at BTA more often, and hence visiting Richmond and utilizing its various businesses more often. The recent removal of the nets, and prospective changes in scheduling are disappointing, and will almost certainly result in me spending less time in Richmond. I urge the City of Richmond to return BTA to a 6-court full-time dedicated pickleball court.

Thank you for your consideration.

Frank Gilbert

Dear Recreation Commission,

I submit this letter of support on behalf of the East Bay Pickleball Association. Over the past year I have been able to watch our Richmond kids gravitate to the game of pickleball and see the importance of making more public courts available to them.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robert

Robert Bunce
Executive Director
West Contra Costa Public Education Fund
1400 Marina Way S., Richmond, CA 94804
robert@edfundwest.org
(510) 296-5814



WEST CONTRA COSTA PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND

August 31, 2023

Dear Parks & Rec Commission:

I am pleased to submit this letter of support on behalf of the East Bay Pickleball Association. Over the past year, EBPA has gone above and beyond to engage our youth in the sport. The response for kids and schools has been overwhelming positive.

Over this past year, East Bay Pickleball Association has run a Pickleball Enrichment Program for Richmond youth in partnership with the West Contra Costa Unified School District at four school sites as well as Camp Achieve and Freedom School summer camp programs. EBPA serviced roughly 240 students during their after school programs and over 350 kids during the summer from four different Richmond neighborhoods (Parchester Village, Iron Triangle, North Richmond and South Richmond).

Children that participated ranged in age from about 8 years old to about 16 years old. EBPA provided nearly 50 volunteers and paid instructors from the East Bay. Through these programs, it was clear that the "Pickler" community is dedicated to share their love of the game with Richmond youth.

Kids and program sites were highly enthusiastic about the program. Much of the focus was on developing the younger children's hand/eye coordination. Older kids that were able to pick up full game rules played full court games. The program has been a huge success and provides a real opportunity to engage our youth in physical activity across the community.

The one impediment to the program's growth is a lack of pickleball courts for kids to play on. Creating temporary pickleball courts with tape every day is prohibitive for youth participation. Further, temporary courts are time consuming, resource intensive and unsustainable. Conversely it was wonderful that Booker T Anderson Jr. Park had permanent pickleball courts. Kids could play on real courts and see and understand the full scope of the game. From the success and excitement this past year, we see an opportunity for a youth league to develop across the city. Hopefully in time with additional permanent pickleball courts, BTA could become a model for pickleball within Richmond and West Contra Costa for our kids.

We endorse EBPA and urge the city to support the fastest growing sport to our kids and our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Bunce".

Robert Bunce
Executive Director

To Richmond City Councilmembers:

We implore you to return Booker T Anderson to all-pickleball (6 courts). The addition of the courts was a tremendous improvement to the pickleball scene in the area. As West Contra Costa (El Cerrito) residents, we very much appreciate the existence of these courts, which are increasingly attracting many Richmond residents, We need more courts throughout the region, and BTA was doing its part by providing 6 permanent courts as the only dedicated courts in West County.

Further, the BTA pickleball courts are amazing. The Council has done a great job in establishing these courts and they are flat out the best in the area. Pickleball players come from many neighboring cities including Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito, Pinole, Hercules, for example, and Oakland, to play at BTA.

With BTA's high quality pickleball courts and the high demand from East Bay pickleball players, please also consider how you could generate additional revenue for Richmond Parks & Recreation. Similar to Castro Park in El Cerrito, BTA could hold round-robin fundraiser competitions with a \$25 per player entrance fee/donation. With a reservation system (duplicating the technology from other cities), BTA could charge for reserving selected courts for lessons and player meet-ups at selected times; we would still want to have a significant amount of open play time. Some Richmond restaurants and businesses may also want to do "pop-ups" at BTA during peak times of play. No doubt there are other ideas to explore here.

Please consider returning BTA to 6 pickleball courts.

Patrick Shannon & Sharon Rose-Shannon

Parks and Recreation Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Pickleball Courts at BTA. I am a recently retired State of California employee and a pickleball player. I am writing in support of the dedicated pickleball courts at Booker T Anderson (BTA) Courts in Richmond, California. During recent open play times, I have seen over 40 people at BTA. I have not seen tennis players using these courts heavily as the pickleball players.. This is the only Pickleball court in Richmond and there are many tennis courts throughout Richmond. Anyone, at any age, can learn and play pickleball. Pickleball supports socialization, strength of community and physical well being in the way no other sport has been able to achieve. Players come from surrounding areas to play at BTA, adding the extra benefit of supporting local restaurants and small businesses.

Making BTA dedicated pickleball courts will turn Richmond into a Pickleball City for people visiting the Bay Area. I urge the City of Richmond, Parks and Recreation Commission to turn the BTA into dedicated pickleball courts.

Sincerely,
Jayantha Randeni
Albany, CA

Good Morning,

I am a West Oakland resident and I have been going to Richmond for over 2 years because of the incredible pickleball community there. I remember playing at Booker T. Anderson Park before raising all the money to get permanent courts. I was absolutely thrilled to hear there would be permanent, dedicated courts rather than having to set up temporary nets every time.

When I saw the tennis lines painted over the pickleball lines I knew a tennis player with influence on the city had a personal vendetta against pickleball and had the power to undo all the hard work these community members put together. I was enraged and saddened by such a petty decision.

Everyone knows those courts are never used for tennis and there are many other tennis courts throughout Richmond. Please remove those tennis lines and put the permanent pickleball nets back up.

Sincerely,
Aakash Raghubansh

Good Afternoon,

We implore you to return Booker T Anderson to all-pickleball (6 courts). The addition of the courts was a tremendous improvement to the pickleball scene in the area. As an xxx resident, I can say we appreciated the fact that the existence of these courts, attracting many Richmond residents. We need more courts throughout the region, and BTA was doing its part by providing 6 permanent courts, as the only dedicated courts in West County.

The loss of 2 tennis courts at BTA is unfortunate, but there are so many other tennis options in Richmond that it seems equitable that BTA be allowed to have 6 permanent courts. Removing 2 tennis courts from the Richmond **tennis** court inventory of 22 courts means that there would be **1 court for every 5,781 Richmond residents**. Compare this to having only 6 **pickleball** courts --which comes to **1 court per 19,273 residents**. Add to this the fact that many residents who are able to play pickleball are **UNABLE** to play tennis. It is a gross imbalance of recreational options.

2. PICKLEBALL IS EQUITY because it can be played by people of all different diversities and ages!

3. We don't see tennis players at the BTA Courts
4. People who come to Richmond to play pickleball also stay to visit our restaurants, stores, and shop!
5. There's the argument that portable nets can be set up at BTA in order to have 6 courts again, but that means someone must carry them, set them up, attend the full session and then disassemble and return home. As a reminder, the storage container originally installed and holding the 6 original nets was stolen entirely after just a few weeks of usage -- a large financial loss to the group. Having portable nets on site was a risky proposition.

The nets weigh 20-30 pounds, and many of us are seniors who cannot (or are not supposed to) lift that much weight. There are about 20 pieces to assemble in a portable net, so there is a learning curve involved. Kids are not able to do this. This is why using portable nets is not a feasible long-term solution.

Please look at the big picture. The decision to allow 6 permanent courts at BTA benefits far more people than the few tennis players who now would have to travel just a little further to play tennis.

6. The pickleball courts have been extremely busy since their inauguration on June 10, frequented on average by 20 to 100 players daily, as the only dedicated courts in West Contra Costa County.
7. The Youth Pickleball programs conducted at Nevin, Shields Reid, BTA, Parchester Centers, Nystrom School Freedom Program, and at Grant and Stege Schools, in collaboration with ED Fund/WCCUSD, attests to the success.

Sincerely,
Aakash Raghubansh

Hello Parks and Recreation Commissioners and City Council Members,

My husband and I are Richmond Residents who enjoy pickleball in Richmond. We ask you to reconsider change the courts at Booker T Anderson park to dedicated pickleball courts.

The new pickleball courts at Booker T are simply wonderful. It's everything a Recreation Department and City would want and promote: inclusivity, movement, community, laughter, and fun filled pickleball courts each open play. For example this past Friday afternoon- 6 courts all full at 4 on each court with 10 people waiting to play. What happens when waiting to play: community building and friendships.

The City of Richmond has many dedicated tennis courts. In addition to, dedicated baseball fields, dedicated basketball courts, and with this logic perhaps all of those courts need to be multi sport courts including pickleball. I am also a tennis player. I volunteered with the City of El Cerrito to fundraise a third court at Arlington Park to ensure USTA tennis teams could have sanctioned matches and tournaments. Both sports are wonderful yet pickleball is an easy sport to learn with a low cost.

I invited you to come see what the fun is all about and how a community can come together so quickly to enjoy a recreational sport.

Thank you for your time,
Sincerely,
Renee and Rune Hoyer-Nielsen

Hello,

I am a 94805 resident and I like to play Pickleball. With dedicated Pickleball courts I can come to play anytime with a friend and just my paddle and a ball. There are so many dedicated tennis courts all over town, but none for Pickleball. Many more people are able to play Pickleball due to their physical condition and the smaller size of the courts. Please do the right thing and dedicate to Pickleball the Booker T Anderson park courts.

Thank you, Paul Simon, 1502 Palm Ave, Richmond CA 94805.

I am writing to express my hope that the 6 pickleball courts will be restored to permanent status.

I am a life-time resident of the Richmond / El Cerrito area. I was actually born at the old Brookside hospital and have many fond memories of playing at Nicholl Park and getting ice cream cones across the street from the park.

The pickleball courts build community in Richmond. After my wife and I play we often get breakfast or lunch in the area. (Most recently at Mi Casa at San Pablo and McDonald.)

I ask that you please consider making the pickleball courts permanent.

Sincerely,
Adriano (Andy) Picetti

I am a Richmond resident and a frequent visitor to Booker T. Anderson park. I have been walking my dog there for 8 years and have seen people playing tennis there not more than 5 times. Since the pickleball courts were installed, I see people there almost every time I go (3 -4 times per week). Also, as a pickleball player myself, I see the love of the sport expanding exponentially and have experienced the great demand for places to play pickleball.

Please keep the pickleball courts... the maximum number possible.

A concerned Richmonder,

Andrea Trexler
5640 Fresno Ave

Please reinstate the 6 pickleball courts at Booker T Anderson.

I live in Richmond and play both tennis and pickleball. There are plenty of tennis courts, but these are the only pickleball courts.

Thanks, Michele

5706 San Jose Ave, Richmond, CA 94804

Michele McGeoy

510-858-6885

To whom it may Concern,

I am writing to you to support the beautiful newly resurfaced courts at Booker T. Anderson park. The resurfacing was paid for by pickleballers like me who donated to have this work done. I am a 16 year resident of Richmond, am 68 years old, have had 2 knee replacements and pickleball is something that I can play and enjoy. Tennis is not, and will never be an option for me...It is my understanding that there are over 20 tennis courts throughout the city of Richmond but not 1 dedicated pickleball court- until recently...Let's look at the larger picture; 2 tennis courts that were rarely used, in need of resurfacing, in disrepair vs. 6 brand new permanent pickleball courts that have people waiting in line to play! The logisitics: 2 or 4 people playing tennis (on occasion) on 2 courts as opposed to 24 people playing regularly on 6 courts within the same area. Which is a better use of this space?! I invite you to come by the courts on a Friday eve or Saturday to see and meet the number of people who come to Richmond to enjoy these beautiful new courts.

Ambassadors from the pickleball community have donated their time in the local schools, street fairs, art and music gatherings in the city of Richmond the past few years to introduce residents and students how to play and enjoy this exciting game. It is the fastest growing sport in America and Richmond has 6 beautiful new courts to offer the residents of Richmond. This is truly a jewel for the residents of Richmond and surrounding communities!! There is no downside to keeping these beautiful new courts open on a permanent basis.

To take away access to these new courts is punitive and behind the scenes is surely petty politics at its worst.

Please, reconsider and keep these beautiful new dedicated pickleball courts open and in use!

Sincerely,

Nora Lee

(650) 504-2636

POB 70881

Richmond, CA. 94807

Hello. I am writing in support of keeping BTA courts dedicated to pickleball. There are very few places to play in the east bay, so having these courts available for pickleball has been great. They are busy all the time and tennis players have 20 other courts to use. I am at BTA at least 2 to 3 times per week and I have never seen a tennis player there.

Having these courts for pickleball is also great for the community and Richmond businesses. It's so wonderful to see the courts being used by so many folks--many from Richmond as well as from surrounding communities. Because those of us who do not live in Richmond find ourselves there so often, we are frequenting Richmond businesses much more than we use to--eating out and running errands. So again, please keep BTA courts for pickleball. So many folks are playing at BTA that they are busy 7 days a week.

nancy cosentino <nancycosentino@yahoo.com>

Dear City of Richmond Parks and Recreation,

I am writing as both a pickleball player and a Richmond resident who is concerned and dismayed about City of Richmond procedures and policies.

An energetic and capable Richmond resident took the initiative to make a proposal to the City of Richmond and had the grit and persistence to follow through. The City of Richmond does not maintain all its recreational facilities, and when Darlene Drapkin proposed to resurface two city tennis courts for pickleball, the city suggested Booker T. Anderson as the site.

I am aware that Ms. Drapkin did not follow all prescribed city procedures. If she had, I doubt we would have two resurfaced courts now. Not everyone is excited by the details of city procedure.

City procedures are your specialty. With that in mind, I would have expected Richmond Parks and Recreation – indeed the Vice Mayor and City Manager– to have welcomed and assisted her. Maybe even to have investigated the wisdom of selecting Booker T. Anderson as the potential site for the project she proposed.

I spoke to a BTA neighborhood resident who described the park as “dead” before pickleball started there. She said that the increased activity there made the park more inviting and safer for children and elderly in the neighborhood.

But, with a few exceptions, Ms. Drapkin seems to have encountered indifference at best. People did not show up to meetings, phone calls were not returned -- I have experienced it myself. Meetings are posted on the city website that do not exist. Emails with simple questions receive no replies.

The result seems to me to be that the City of Richmond seals itself off from anyone but insiders. And from new ideas. Sometimes even from facts. That’s certainly what I heard on the transcript of the last Parks and Rec meeting, in which the East Bay Pickleball Association was characterized by one participant as a “private club” and even a “business.”

I would like to see the six courts restored, but Richmond Parks and Rec seems set against it. So, some of Richmond’s elementary schoolchildren may not get the chance they would have had to enjoy the game, which is much more accessible to them than tennis is. Residents of other cities may not get a chance to

see that Richmond is more than the fearful place they hear about. And a few neighborhood tennis players will benefit from what amounts to their own private backyard tennis court.

I hear a lot about “how the neighborhood feels” but my guess is, most of the BTA neighborhood does not much care one way or the other what is played on their park’s courts. Both pickleball and tennis players are a tiny minority of neighborhood residents. That’s where the city is supposed to step in and make decisions for the good of the city.

Ms. Drapkin is a community organizer who had a great idea and the enthusiasm and skill to follow through on it. I hope the City of Richmond will think twice about how it treats people and proposals like hers in the future. Because good ideas have a way of moving elsewhere.

Richmond resident,
Jennifer Walden

I am writing regarding a very concerning issue. On Monday morning, August 7, 2023, the City's Recreation Department removed pickleball poles and nets at Booker T. Anderson that were recently installed.

We respectfully request that you to return Booker T Anderson to all-pickleball (6 courts). The addition of the courts was a tremendous improvement to the pickleball scene in the area. As a Richmond resident, I can say we appreciated the fact that the existence of these courts, attracting many Richmond residents, contributed to decreasing the congestion at the courts in other localities. We need more courts throughout the region, and BTA was doing its part by providing 6 permanent courts during the summer, as the only dedicated courts in West Contra Costa County. I’ve heard the opinion that maybe people don’t want “outsiders” coming to Richmond. My response to that is that I play in other surrounding cities (El Cerrito, Albany, Berkeley and Oakland) and I am thrilled that I am welcomed in each of these places. There are Richmond residents and West County residents that play and Booker AND there are people from other nearby neighboring cities that play at Booker. I love our city and believe it is a positive to be welcoming to whoever shows up to play as I am welcome elsewhere.

The loss of 2 tennis courts at BTA is unfortunate, but there are so many other tennis options in Richmond and neighboring El Cerrito and Pinole that it seems equitable that BTA be allowed to have 6 permanent courts at one location. Removing 2 tennis courts from the Richmond tennis court inventory of 22 courts means that there would be 1 court for every 5,781 Richmond residents. Compare this to having only 6 pickleball courts --which comes to 1 court per 19,273 residents. Add to this the fact that many residents who are able to play pickleball are UNABLE to play tennis. It is a gross imbalance of recreational options.

I know the argument is that portable nets can be set up at BTA in order to have 6 courts again, but that means someone must carry them, set them up, attend the full session and then disassemble and return home. As a reminder, the storage container originally installed and holding the 6 original nets was stolen entirely after just a few weeks of

usage -- a large financial loss to the group. Having portable nets on site was a risky proposition.

The nets weigh 20-30 pounds, and many of us are seniors who cannot (or are not supposed to) lift that much weight. There are about 20 pieces to assemble in a portable net, so there is a learning curve involved. Kids are not able to do this. This is why using portable nets is not a feasible long-term solution.

Please look at the big picture. The decision to allow 6 permanent courts at BTA benefits far more people than the few tennis players who now would have to travel just a little further to play tennis.

The pickleball courts have been extremely busy since their inauguration on June 10, frequented on average by 20 to 100 players daily as the only dedicated courts in West Contra Costa County. Furthermore, the Youth Pickleball programs conducted at Nevin, Shields Reid, BTA, Parchester Centers, Nystrom School Freedom Program, and at Grant and Stege Schools, in collaboration with the ED Fund/WCCUSD, attests to this success.

Additionally, if you refuse to reinstate the pickleball courts because of the goal to have multi-use courts, then it would seem reasonable that all tennis courts be resurfaced and striped to accommodate pickleball as well as tennis to achieve this goal.

Our community was thrilled when the courts were implemented and stunned when they were removed. We hope that you will see the benefit to reinstate them as that would be the equitable decision for all of our residents. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in America, with seniors who can no longer play tennis migrating to this sport that is less physically taxing, and for most, significantly more fun and social as well as children learning daily as the paddle is much less cumbersome for their small size than a tennis racket. I recently read a report that indicated the 18-34 y.o. age group was almost equal to the over 60 age group playing (each at about 20%). Clearly this sport draws people from all age groups.

Also one tennis court can accommodate 2 pickleball courts. Giving up the 2 tennis courts at BTA created 6 pickleball courts which allowed 24 people to play at once, a huge uptick in use. We thank you in advance for your consideration and eagerly await reinstatement after your consideration of this additional information.

I can't stress the Community Building aspect of Pickleball enough. I am always in awe how it can bring people together to have fun. I really hope the decision makers on this issue see the value for Richmond to provide the one dedicated site at Booker T Anderson for 6 PB courts as was accomplished in June of this year. I am 68 y.o. and was able to get out on the court and learn and play PB several times a week, when there is no way I could do this with Tennis (and I am a pretty fit 68 y.o). Pickleball is so much more accessible to all ages and brings people together in a positive manner and

spirit. I have lived in Richmond for 30 years and raised my kids here. This is the kind of Community spirit that I strongly urge our city leaders to support and endorse.

As I went to play this morning there were easily 25-35 people playing with no “official open play” scheduled. There are even more when open play is scheduled. I witnessed age, gender, race and ethnic diversity as I always do. In addition, as I was exiting my car to play a woman driving by stopped and said she lives on the street and is so happy to see us Pickle ball players making use of the space. She said she finds us very respectful and courteous. I was so pleased to hear this neighbor reflect back to us her positive experience of Pickleball at Booker T. Anderson.

Thank your for your attention to this issue.

Cathy Connor
6064 MCBRYDE AVE
Richmond, Ca 94805

Dear Richmond Rec department,
I'm writing to throw my full support behind getting the pickleball courts at Booker T Anderson to be permanent pickleball courts (with all 6 having permanent nets). I know it's hard to make a decision between people wanting to play pickleball and people wanting to play tennis, as both are noble goals and activities to be encouraged.

I have worked for Google as a quantitative analyst before switching to Software Engineering, so let me try to treat this from a space efficiency standpoint, to try to be more objective.

I've been playing at BTA 2/3 times a week since it opened. Other than the first week or two, when we didn't know when exactly they would be open, every single time all courts were occupied with a few people waiting. In the morning (up until noon-ish) and in the evening (starting around 5pm) on weekdays, and the full opening time during the weekends. The tennis courts, on the other hand, were never used for tennis while I was there. Not once. There were never tennis players around, even when my group stayed late and a full tennis court was available. Moreover, other tennis courts in the area are almost never full.

Tennis is mostly played 1v1 (2 players in a court) and pickleball is mostly played 2v2 (4 players in a court). To have a single tennis court available at BTA, 4 pickleball courts need to be removed or made non-permanent. Given a generous usage rate of 3 hours a day for the tennis court (on average), and the current lower bound of 8 hours per day of use pickleball courts are getting, that means the Tennis court is serving 42 hours of people playing while 4 pickleball courts would serve 896 hours of play. Rounding a bit for the occasional tennis doubles and pickleball singles, it's clear that using that space for pickleball courts would easily be 15 times more effective than using it for tennis.

The closest permanent pickleball courts available are in Berkeley (also full at almost all times, and with limited hours) and Concord (~30 minutes away in low-traffic times). There are tens of parks with public tennis courts within a 10 minute drive of BTA, some of them even at a walkable/bikeable distance. This means that the replacement for those 42 hours of tennis play would take less time for its users to get,

and also keep cars off the road of pickleball players forced to go further to play, improving traffic and pollution, two of the main issues of our time.

I don't have reliable data on the number of tennis and pickleball players in the area, nor about the frequency with which they play. If you do, and can share it with me, I'd be happy to run a more precise comparison to better inform the decision.

I'm not making this up, I myself together with many friends from the area go to both Concord and Berkeley almost every week when we know the courts at Booker T Anderson (including 4 temporary nets) will be too full for us to play. A lot of the people I play with are working full time jobs and have young-ish kids, so waiting around to rotate and only be playing half the time we are there is not really an option.

I want to reiterate that I have nothing against tennis. I agree that it's just as important for people who want to play tennis to be able to do so, than for us wanting to play pickleball to get to do our activity. However, I think the data shows very clearly that tennis courts in the area (both in Richmond and the surrounding area) are heavily underutilized, while pickleball courts are used at least 2/3s of the time they are open.

I have heard that there was a "compromise" solution offered to have the courts be shared (probably time-shared?) between tennis and pickleball. I think this is actually a false compromise. There are tens of tennis courts in Richmond and only 0-6 pickleball courts depending on the fate of BTA. Even in the case of getting all 6 pickleball courts permanently, the number of courts per resident, courts per player and usage time would still easily skew heavily towards tennis being favored. Sharing BTA is not really a mid-point compromise. A real mid-point would require not only having BTA be a full-pickleball venue, but also adding a lot of other venues (hopefully in new spaces that don't take from any other sport).

Sorry for the extension, and thanks for reading.

Best,
Pablo Heiber

I have been living in Richmond since 1990. I have raised my children here up into adulthood and now have grandchildren. I am writing to express my concerns about our local pickleball site at Booker T Anderson Park. We worked hard to raise money to resurface and make permanent courts here at this park. I was under the impression that my financial donations were going to support a dedicated pickleball court in Richmond. I was so excited to come to the inauguration party when they first opened the courts up after renovation in June this year. These courts have been very busy since that inauguration. I have seen as many as 100 players at a time there. Anywhere from 20-100 per day. I have never seen anyone play tennis at this court. It is a perfect place as it is a 5 minute drive from my home and has a playground right next door if I need to bring the grandkids with me. I was really upset when they took away our most of our permanent nets and went back on their promise to those of us who worked hard to raise money for their installation.

As a 72 year old, Pickleball has become my exercise of choice. I understand that there are a lot of health benefits to pickleball, playing outside, getting aerobic exercise, cardiovascular activity and lots of moving around. It helps me with my balance and coordination. Plus anyone can play,

it is easy to learn and players are very friendly and willing to help newcomers. I also love that it is low impact. And best of all I love the social aspect of picklball, especially meeting new people and getting to know them. This game attracts people of all ages and genders and has a diverse group of players coming and going. The players are very friendly and make people feel welcome. You should come and try it out!

In regards to Richmond, if we keep Booker T. Anderson Park as all pickleball all the time, the tennis players will already have 20 courts they can use. Which is 1 court for every 5,781 Richmond residents. Pickball with only 6 courts available (all at Booker park) there is 1 pickleball court per 19,273 residents. One tennis court can accommodate 2 pickleball courts and so serve more people than tennis. Pickleball is becoming more and more popular every day and we have very few places to play. I read that it is the fastest growing sport in the US. Personally I can't lift and put up portable nets so having this as an option does not work well for me and other older people or kids. The nets weigh 20-30 pounds and have over 20 pieces to assemble in a portable net. So if we don't have permanent nets I have to wait to play until there is someone who can set nets up. The re-surfacing of the courts looks wonderful and if the tennis lines could be taken off it would be a beautiful pickle ball site.

I really hope you will consider putting back the pickleball permanent nets we worked so hard for and that are so needed in our community. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Kathleen Haley
6064 McBryde Ave
Richmond, CA 94805
510 506-6207

In 2021, I used to play pickleball at Booker T Anderson with a portable net. It is easy to get there by bike. There were fewer people in the area to play then. In the past 18 months, the number of people who show up - often with their own nets- to play at BTA has grown so much that on a POSTED day of open play, there will be 6 courts of 4 (24 total) playing with about a third more waiting.

The only time that pickleball players lose their friendly attitude is when people crash the waiting list and just move over to another court instead of putting their paddles up on the waiting rack. Otherwise it is a space for enjoying other people's idiosyncrasies.

To keep it interesting, there are two courts designated as "challenge" courts, three courts are "intermediate" or 3.5 level, and at least one court is beginner friendly, where experienced players can play when they're feeling gimpy.

Lately there are Open play times on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The closest other courts for pickleball at those times are a mile uphill in El Cerrito- which is where I would play if it wasn't so crowded there. And since people on the El cerrito courts have to wait for so long between games, they feel more segregated when it comes to who they play with. To get away from all that, I just go to BTA.

At the Booker T Anderson courts, it is always friendly, inclusive, mixed and relaxed. Just WOW! The BEST place to play in the east bay.

Yes -of couse- Piedmont, Oakland and Berkeley have better, more modern courts and permanent nets — but who wants to drive all the way over there when there is BTA right here , a block off of Potrero.

I feel really vulnerable knowing that an important part of my life- pickleball- rests in the hands of people I have never met. Please keep Booker T Anderson friendly for pickleball and please do not put me back on the highway burning gas in traffic jams just to get to a more crowded place to play. Thank you - thank you for all the parks & rec places you provide.

Thom Dougherty
thomdougherty@me.com
(928) 301-7325

Dear Richmond City Council Members:

As of August 1 I have been a citizen of Richmond and a resident of 6049 Felix Avenue, Richmond (94805) for 30 years. I have served this community as a minister, a public school teacher, a marriage and family therapist, and a PTA member. Both of my daughters attended West Contra Costa Unified School district schools. I am writing to support all of the efforts to designate the Booker T. Anderson Park courts as Pickleball Courts. Great efforts have been made to establish, groom, and maintain the courts. Pickleball has become popular with a wide variety of people. Richmond can benefit from having an image of parks that enable a wide variety of activities, including sports like pickleball. I took my first pickleball lesson at B.T. Anderson Park last summer and have met lots of wonderful people through that game. Please support our efforts to have designated Pickleball courts at BT Anderson Park.

Sincerely,

Laurel Balyeat Morrison

Hey Folks,

If you do not know, pickleball has been the "in game" for several years. I am not knocking tennis but I live in Richmond and want Richmond to be the great place that it is. You gotta make pickleball courts a priority in my view. If you want Richmond to be on the cutting edge, pickleball courts are what Richmond needs to support.

Sincerely,

Louise Lang
Richmond Homeowner

Dear City Council and Staff,

In addition to the other points you have already heard about the importance of reinstating the permanent pickleball courts at Booker T, I would like to add one that may not have been made.

I have family and friends whose Park Departments did not need contributions from their community in order to provide dedicated Pickleball courts, and while I realize budgets are widely varied, when a community (and its neighbors) come together and works hard to supplement a tight budget, it feels incredibly discouraging to have donations squandered. This could have a dampening effect on future fundraising efforts.

I live in Kensington and have come to love the pickleball community at Booker T. Just last Friday, I met a wonderful mother and her teenage son who live nearby and came to play for their second

time. Another experienced pickleball player and I helped them out and we all had great fun. Pickleball really is remarkable in its ability to bring people of all ages together and the “open play” feature of pickleball is so good at bringing strangers together.

I sincerely hope the courts at Booker T can be “re-dedicated” to Pickleball —Richmond residents and the greater West County would benefit.

- Kathy Sprague

Gosh, I was so happy to have pickleball courts to play on, since there are tennis courts everywhere in Richmond, but NO pickleball courts for me! I have been playing there. I have sent many new folks there to play and learn to play, and they all agree how great the courts are! And now ... you are taking them away???? There are plenty of places for tennis folks to play. What message are you sending to the rest of us? That tennis is elite and we don't count? Two courts only, versus 19 or so tennis courts? Booker T gave SIXTEEN people a chance to play, versus a max of 8, but more commonly, four, tennis players.

I cannot believe my city is doing this. Please consider postponing this drastic move, for further discussion.

Christie Look
59 Harborview Dr.
Richmond, 94804
510-453-0319
looksbooks@comcast.net

As a pickleball enthusiast, I first want to very much thank the City for having 2 permanent pickleball courts at BTA and for paving the combined tennis/pickleball area. It's a beautiful place to play, which I do a few times per week on average. I also very much appreciate the new storage box, which makes it easier to have extra equipment on hand.

It's my understanding that the City is proposing a 50/50 split of tennis/pickleball usage at BTA. After going to BTA for over 6 months, I can say that from my perspective this is out of line with the demand that I have experienced. I have never seen anyone playing tennis at BTA. In contrast I have been there many, many times when all six courts are being used for pickleball and people are also on the sidelines waiting to play. This occurs regularly, particularly on weekends. So it seems to me that people have voted with their rackets/paddles, so to speak, and at BTA people prefer pickleball.

As someone who loves tennis, I'm sensitive to tennis players feeling like the courts should be shared. But it's my understanding that the City has over a dozen public tennis courts aside from BTA but no other public pickleball facilities. If that's the case, then it seems like 6 permanent pickleball courts is a reasonable compromise.

While I am not a Richmond resident, I very much enjoy visiting Richmond. Through pickleball at BTA I have discovered places that were new to me like the fabulous El Agave Azul.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Mark Priven

Dear Officers of Richmond Parks and Recreation,

I am writing to urge you to please consider keeping the permanent pickleball courts at Booker T Anderson Park.

I am a resident of Emeryville. I have been driving to Booker T. Anderson Park to play pickleball every Friday and Saturday for over 1.5 years now. I work in front of the computer as an IT engineer for long hours every day. The pickleball games at the end of the week are always the highlight of my week. I had so much fun playing with my friends.

The court at Booker T. Anderson Park is beautiful, especially after resurfacing. My friends and I were so excited at the opening ceremony after the court finished resurfacing. We thought we finally had our own court, the only court that was dedicated to pickleball.

Recently, I heard that the permanent court would not be there anymore, so we would have to share it with tennis players. It was as if a bucket of ice cold water was pouring over us from head to toe. I heard there are 22 tennis courts in Richmond and many of them are underused. I do not understand why pickleball cannot have even one dedicated court. Pickleball has become the fastest-growing sport in the US because it reaches people from 8 years old to 80 years old. I did not see tennis could do that.

Again, it is my sincere request that please help and support the the development of the pickleball community in the City of Richmond.

Sincerely,
Cindy T. Li

Hello City of Richmond Parks & Recreation folks,

My Name is Jordan Richardson, and my family and I live in Richmond, about 0.5 miles from Booker T. Anderson Park. I frequent the park on a regular basis, so I thought I'd share my experience with BTA park tennis/pickleball courts.

I use the courts to play pickleball every Friday morning with neighbors, and usually an additional day during the week to play more pickleball or to meet family friends at the playground. I've seen a wide variety of folks also using the courts, from young kids playing with their parents, to older residents enjoying their retirement. I've been to the park at least ten times since the improvements were made, each time for several hours, and not once have I seen anyone using the courts for anything but pickleball.

The work that was recently completed to improve the courts is great, but the addition of the painted tennis court lines adds a lot of confusion for pickleball players, especially when those folks are new to the sport. I was saddened to find out that four of the nets had been removed shortly after they went up. I've witnessed new pickleball players show up to the courts, only to be forced to play on the tennis court because the two pickleball courts were full. I think it is unreasonable to assume that everyone will be willing to shell out \$100 to purchase their own nets to play.

The tennis players in Richmond have a number of other tennis courts available for play, but BTA is the only spot to play pickleball. I urge you to consider transitioning the courts permanently to pickleball. The community has clearly shown they will use the facilities if they're available.

Jordan Richardson
1518 Santa Clara St, Richmond, CA 94804

Hello,

My name is Mary Hanglely, I am an El Cerrito resident and I live just on the border of Richmond.

My husband and I, along with our toddler, spend weekend mornings playing pickleball. Although we have lived in the East Bay for years, we didn't feel a sense of belonging or find a community until we began playing pickleball with EBPA.

We were thrilled to find the 2 permanent nets BTA courts last fall and enjoyed practicing there every weekday morning. Having been there dozens of times, we can only recall two occasions when the other courts were being used for tennis- and it was only one player working on his serve.

I find it embarrassing for the Richmond community that there was a huge celebration at the opening of the permanent pickleball courts, only to have them removed less than two months later.

This was not a secret or fly by night operation. This project was the City of Richmond's idea! When asked which tennis courts could be used for pickleball, the city of Richmond told EBPA that the courts at Booker T Anderson Park were in need of some TLC and weren't being used very often. In addition to Richmond choosing which courts for EBPA to revitalize, they even awarded an ECIA grant to help fund this project.

What a misuse of public resources to have them removed. Was there any due diligence on the part of Richmond before the courts were constructed?

On a personal note, it's no surprise how expensive the Bay Area is. Being an essentially single income family is difficult in 2023. Nonetheless, our family donated money each week to help with the expenses of court conversion. The City of Richmond threw our money away by taking down the permanent nets.

One can only guess what type of fiscal mismanagement is happening if this is how public resources are being handled for some lowly pickleball courts.

Mary Evelyn Hanglely
516 567 1456
MaryEvelynHanglely.com

I am a Richmond resident. I was so proud when I attended the inauguration of the new Richmond pickleball courts, as the only dedicated courts in West County. As a recently retired WCCUSD Special Ed teacher, I'd observed several underutilized tennis courts, and courts in disrepair at Kennedy HS (where I once taught) and at Richmond HS.

Pickleball is a sport I can actually play as a senior citizen. More importantly, I can share it with my special ed students, who are frequently slower to pick up new skills. Pickleball is great for hand/eye coordination. Because WCCUSD has been short on teachers, I've been substituting. I have found my students connect to pickleball in a way I've never seen before!

I was flabbergasted to discover that on Monday morning, August 7, 2023, the City's Recreation Department removed the pickleball poles, and nets at Booker T. Anderson. The sign said it was in order to share with the tennis players. What tennis players? I've seen tennis players once. When I did, I showed them the pickleball paddles, and they asked where I bought them because they agreed pickleball looks easier and is much more fun!

The loss of 2 tennis courts at BTA is unfortunate, but there are so many other tennis options in Richmond that it seems equitable that BTA be allowed to have 6 permanent courts.

When my friends visit BTA to play with me, afterwards we go to Ans, Factory Bar, or Agave Azul and they spend money. I think that's good for Richmond, for people outside of Richmond to visit our City and associate it with something positive.

We implore you to return Booker T Anderson to all-pickleball (6 courts). The pickleball courts were extremely busy. This week less people came. This past Saturday, a man came by and said we couldn't even put up portable nets because we needed to leave the court alone, in case a tennis player showed up. Really? This makes Richmond seem so unfriendly.

Sincerely,
Ken Lindgren
Felix Ave, Richmond 94805

Dear Councilmembers –

As residents of Richmond, we are writing to request your support for the dedicated pickleball courts at Booker T. Anderson Park.

We are very confused as to why the newly established courts were relined and nets were removed. It's disheartening after all of the grassroots efforts in the community to create opportunities for the rapidly growing pickleball community in the city.

Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the country for several compelling reasons: it's fun, accessible, and highly social. We don't know if you've had a chance to visit the BTA courts yet, but if you drop by you will see a vibrant, diverse, and welcoming community of players. No other activity is bringing as many people into our parks so this is something to celebrate for both the health benefits and the social cohesion it brings to Richmond.

The community worked hard to raise the funds and follow the rules to establish these courts. We urge you to respect the efforts of our residents and to honor the promises made to create this shared space enjoyed by so many of us.

Thank you -
Robin Alderson
Matthew Hermann
2627 Grant Avenue

Richmond, CA 94804

To whom it may concern

My name is Ana Nakamura and I work at Stege Elementary School as a School Community Outreach Worker (SCOW).

Recently, I visited Booker T. Anderson Park to play at the pickleball court and I noticed that the pickleball poles and nets have been removed from the courts. I later contacted EBPA to find out why the equipment was no longer there and I was informed that the city's Recreation Department removed them.

I'm writing this letter to share with you how Stege School and the after school program that WCCUSD offers to Stege students were so pleased with EBPA. When Ms. Darlene Drapkin contacted us at Stege and offered to practice playing pickleball with our students, not only the kids became excited but the teachers as well. As educators, the teachers recognized that the courts bring so many benefits to our community. We all know that physical activity is important for the growth, development, and health of young children.

The skills developed from playing pickleball at a young age will benefit them in their personal and professional future. From toddler and teen to young adult and middle age, social skills and motor skills are essential parts of everyday life. In addition, our pickleball courts are located in a safe environment and provided for the community at large at Booker T Anderson Park, which is very important.

During the school year, the pickleball program got initiated in our school courtyard (see picture 1). The children love it because it's easy for them to play and they learned something new. They also engaged with classmates and practiced the social skills that were taken from them during the COVID period. Then, with the newly resurfaced courts and nets at BTA this summer, the children could walk over to the park (see pic 2). As a very social sport, playing pickleball helps our students develop their communication and social skills. And most importantly while playing, kids learn that being active is fun. This lesson is crucial to their physical, mental, and emotional health and the earlier they associate exercise with enjoyment, the they are more likely to remain active throughout their life. EBPA suggests that we start a junior league and the children are very excited. At the inauguration, EBPA gave free paddles to many of the children.

EBPA not only supports our school with pickleball practice but also, EBPA held a trick-or-treat event last year at BTA just for Stege students. (see picture 3 &4)

We are asking that the pickleball poles and nets be re-equipped at Booker T Anderson for all six courts.

The loss of two tennis courts at BTA is unfortunate, but there are so many other tennis options within Richmond that it seems equitable that BTA be allowed to have six permanent pickleball courts for our kids.

Thank you in advance.

Ana Nakamura (She/Her)
School Community Outreach Worker

Stege Elementary ***Home of The Stars***
4949 Cypress Ave
Richmond, CA 94804
(510) 231-1425 ext 24500

To all you fine people who serve the city of Richmond:

My name is Andrew Hecht. I have been a resident of Richmond for 12 1/2 years. I absolutely love it here and feel very grateful every day that I get to live in this city.

I started playing Pickleball in February, so I'm fairly new to the sport, but I enjoy it immensely and feel blessed to have been introduced to it and lucky to be able to play here in Richmond.

In the same year I moved to Richmond, I had a horrific cycling accident which landed me in the hospital with a broken hip. The recovery was long and painful, But the worst part was it deprived me of my main athletic activity. I can still ride a bike, but it doesn't feel the same any more. For many years, I struggled with ways to get exercise into my life. Then the pandemic hit and basically everything ended. I stopped going to the gym, I started losing my fitness. Then I discovered Pickleball. It's a safe, outdoor sport that anyone can play without lessons in a socially distanced way that limits exposure to Covid while providing important physical and social activity.

The first time I played was at Booker T. Anderson park here in Richmond, which was set up for tennis, but had 6 temporary pickleball nets. I have played tennis and racquetball in my youth, but there's something different about the way pickleball is organized and played. You don't need a partner. You don't need to schedule a game. You just show up. The people who play are generous, helpful, eager to include you in the community. It's something that Richmond should endeavor to promote and foster.

In fact, Richmond has an opportunity to be a Pickleball mecca for the Bay Area. There are many tennis courts in Richmond that are underutilized. Courts, like the ones at Booker T. Anderson, see renewed life being converted to full time pickleball courts.

When I first began playing at BTA, the court was in terrible shape. It wasn't level. There were cracks everywhere. As I mentioned before, the nets were temporary, which is less than ideal. You could barely see the court lines. But a few months back, the court saw some well needed improvements. Court lines were repainted. Permanent nets were installed. And, most importantly, for me anyway, the court was resurfaced. It was beautiful. It still needs some attention. The fencing is old, rusty and should be replaced. The lights don't work. But progress is progress. And the newly improved courts are amazing.

And people responded. BTA went from being an East Bay pickleball backwater to the premier court in the area attracting many dozens of players 4-5 times a week. It has completely been resurrected for a lively and important community activity.

Many of the players come from Richmond, of course. And we are all grateful and proud of BTA and pleased to have this facility in our backyard. But many players come from all over the Bay Area to play. These players add to the economic vitality of the city. They spend money. The city benefits from so many people coming from outside Richmond to our city.

Now I understand that some people want to maintain BTA as a multi-use location for tennis. And I get that. Tennis is important. I grew up playing tennis. I still have a racket. We need places for people who play tennis to play tennis. However, there are already many courts throughout Richmond, all over the place. In Marina Bay, where I live, there are 4 courts that are used frequently. There is Nichols Park on MacDonal and many, many more. So there is no shortage of places for tennis players. And in all the time I have been playing at BTA, I have only seen 2 tennis players there. 2. Compare this to 100s of pickleball players. There is no comparison.

A few weeks back, when I went to play at BTA, I saw a note on the entry gate about the reconfiguring of the court so that tennis players and pickleball players can play at the same time. While I understand where this is coming from, it doesn't make a lot of sense. First, as I mentioned, there are no tennis players at BTA. And there never will be. They have many other, better places to play. Second, the park went from having 6 permanent nets to having only 2.

Now 4 temporary nets had been set up, and while it's better than not having them, it's problematic. That day it was very windy at BTA, which is common. It was so windy, the net on the court I was playing on kept blowing over. It's both annoying and dangerous. Someone could get hurt. On city property. And for what? So Richmond can accommodate phantom tennis players? It's doesn't make much sense.

So implore you to do the following:

- 1) Embrace and support pickleball. The city of Richmond will benefit mightily.
- 2) Restore the 4 permanent nets that were taken down from BTA.
- 3) Remove the tennis lines at BTA. They serve no purpose as no one plays tennis there and just distract from the pickleball experience.
- 4) Designate money to replace the exterior fencing, which is old, rusty and dangerous.

thank you and sincerely,

Andrew Hecht
Marina Bay, Richmond, CA

I write to support continued Pickleball at Booker T. Anderson park. It's a growing sport accessible to many more in the community than tennis as it is less physically demanding and yet packs in a lot of fun and community building. I think the sport will continue to grow and can be taught in recreation and after school programs to become inclusive to the whole community. I think the City has a great opportunity for use of the courts at Booker T. and the improvements did not come at City expense since the courts were resurfaced and improved significantly by private donation.

Please continue Pickleball at Booker T. There are no other Pickleball courts in Richmond that I know of and the El Cerrito and Berkeley courts are becoming very crowded as the sport gains popularity. Berkeley courts are also a significant drive to get to through Berkeley streets and then you have to sit and wait for quite a while in order to get a turn to play.

These courts provide a great opportunity for the Richmond Rec department to introduce the community of Richmond to the fastest growing (for a reason) sport in the US today.

Thanks for listening!
Nancy T. ntaylorph123@gmail.com>

Dear City Council and Staff:

I am writing regarding a concerning issue. On Monday morning, August 7, 2023, the City's Recreation Department removed pickleball poles and nets at Booker T. Anderson that were recently installed.

I know you've heard from many of our community members regarding the number of tennis courts vs pickleball courts and the courts per resident. Likely you've read about how difficult and onerous it is for the seniors amongst us to set up and break down portable nets. You've possibly even heard about pickleball being the fastest growing sport in America, particularly for seniors. All this is true.

I'd like to add that I am a former Richmond resident and current El Cerrito resident. I play pickleball 4-6 times a week. I divide my time between BTA and Castro courts in El Cerrito. The community between these courts overlaps and includes a very diverse set of ages and is starting to become more diverse in terms of race and socioeconomic statuses. I truly enjoy playing pickleball for multiple reasons, not the least of which is that I'm outside, getting exercise, and laughing with this community. It is a welcoming community that includes many who devote time and energy to help newcomers understand and become more proficient at the game at both courts.

All that said, in the 3 years I've been playing pickleball at these courts, I can count on one hand the number of tennis players I've seen there. Conversely, in one hour of open play, the number of picklers exceeds the number of digits I have on my appendages multiple times over.

Please return Booker T Anderson to all-pickleball (6 courts).

Thank you for taking the time to consider this matter,

Marni Deshong

Recreation-Parks-Commission,

In all my years of playing sports I have never seen such enjoyment, positivity, and sense of love of the game shared by all as I have with pickleball. It has changed the way I thought about playing and interacting with others. More importantly pickleball has brought new life and energy to the community of Richmond as hundreds flock to the courts at Booker T Anderson every day. Prior to pickleball being played there I had seen tennis played only once years before. It would be a shame to have the courts fall to disuse and neglect as had happened previously. I urge you to reconsider and allow the use of permanent pickleball nets as well as allow daily use of the courts for the game so many in the Richmond community are learning to love

KC

We urgently need your support for permanent Pickleball Courts at Booker T Anderson Park!

The City of Richmond and Richmond Parks has the opportunity to be leaders in the fastest growing sport of pickleball, please don't let it slip away after you already have made the investment along with East Bay Pickleball Association!

Please put back all 6 permanent Pickleball at BTA, Please!

We were excited that the City of Richmond invested in making permanent pickleball courts at BTA and how many people were using them!

The new permanent courts were beautiful, only to be dismantled! Such a waste of time and money.

Many players have been going to open play weekday mornings and all 6 courts always in use. Never has a tennis player showed up looking to play tennis!

Chance conversations with neighbors who were happy to see the space being used and interested in learning to play!

6 Pickleball courts allow 24 people to play at a time where 2 tennis courts only allows 4-8 people max.

Pickleball is easy to learn and can be played together by many generations which makes it the perfect activity for family and friends!

There are 20 other tennis courts in Richmond

It is so frustrating to have the permanent courts at BTA taken away after all the time and money invested in the conversion. There is the demand for pickleball and having permanent courts at BTA welcome people in Richmond AND from other communities, thus showing you are forward thinking about the fastest growing sport that crosses many generations.

Thank you,
Lisa Brodsky

Please dedicate all courts at Booker T Anderson park to pickleball. We utilize the courts weekly and have yet to see a tennis player come by to play at all. Given the US Open, you'd expect to see others come by, but we have not. We've actually seen more people come by and bring their own pickleball nets instead.

As a Richmond resident (2882 Hilltop Mall Rd), we love the pickleball courts and would be disheartened to lose access to the courts.

-Jonathan Espinosa

I am a pickleball player who enjoys playing at BTA courts in Richmond. Besides all the known benefits of pickleball on individuals and community I will also add a personal experience relative to courts availability: half of my family are recreational tennis players and every time they want to spontaneously organize a play, they never worry if they don't have a reservation

because they always find a court in Richmond or El Cerrito. Even during weekends or holidays it was never difficult to find one because many of the tennis courts in these cities are rarely (if at all) used at capacity.

This is to emphasize once more the necessity of more permanent pickleball courts available all the time.

Sincerely,
Mariana Rusa

Hello,

My name is Will Bryan, and I live in El Cerrito. For the past year, my wife Mary and I, along with our young son Hugh, have been playing pickleball at Booker T. Anderson Park multiple times a week. Every time we took part in open play there or at the Castro Park courts, we paid a donation to East Bay Pickleball Association, in the hopes of there being permanent pickleball courts at BTA.

My understanding was that if EBPA was able to front the money for the renovation, that the city would make it happen, and we as a group were able to hold up our end of the bargain. I attended the grand opening of the new courts at BTA with my family, and it truly was a lovely event, the way the community came out for the ribbon cutting was terrific. This feeling of goodwill was dashed when I found out some time later that several of the courts were taken down to accommodate a tennis court. I have seldom seen anyone using those courts for tennis, and when I have, it's a single person practicing his serve and doing calisthenics. There are many dedicated tennis courts in Richmond alone, not to mention across the East Bay.

The City of Richmond taking money from EBPA, and by proxy, my family, to build these courts, only to tear them up again after a short time, feels like a major misappropriation of funds. I have to wonder if the city has a plan to reimburse EBPA for the funds they ended up not using, because the money was not really used to create permanent pickleball courts, and that was the reason the money was given to the city in good faith.

In conclusion, I am writing to voice my displeasure in this decision, and hope that the condition of the courts is returned to the previous arrangement that was agreed upon by the city and EBPA. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
-Will

Dear Recreation Commission,

My name is Robert Wong and I am a San Pablo resident and a Pickleball Coach. I have been coaching at the Elementary Schools in the Richmond Unified District for the past year. I taught the game of pickleball over hundreds of kids. I also teach adult seniors. We often use the BTA courts at Richmond as it's the only one available.

Pickleball is a fun sport for kids and seniors. We really need more courts for the City! I encourage the city to keep BTA open for everyone to use!

Sincerely

Robert Wong

City of Richmond,

As a long time resident of Richmond and tax payer, I am writing to support Pickleball courts at Booker T. Anderson Park and any other available and underutilized courts in our wonderful city. I have volunteered many hours weekly to coach kids and adults alike. It brings multi generational families and friends together for socializing and exercise like no other activity. I find it incredibly satisfying to see how it brings the community together .

Warmly,

Sanford Chan

To Richmond City Council, Recreation committee and to All Whom This Concerns

Hello,

Please take into consideration what a huge difference it makes to have dedicated Pickleball Courts versus shared courts.

With dedicated courts, Pickleball is open and easily accessible to everyone in the whole community. Especially to seniors, youth, low income community members and others who do not have the capacity or knowledge to set up nets (seniors, youth, others with physical challenges) and / or the funds to buy their own nets, or the social connections to know the locker combo for any equipment.

Pickleball is a unique sport focusing on community building versus individual court time. Community time periods are scheduled where everyone of all levels are welcome and players rotate on and off the courts. Players are welcomed from nearby communities. For years Richmond members have been playing at Berkeley, Oakland, El Cerrito courts and beyond. We, the growing pickleball community, focused on being inclusive and welcoming.

There are many many dedicated tennis courts throughout the nearby East Bay. Dedicated Pickleball courts are extremely rare. Please also take into consideration that the BTA courts were repaved, designed, etc primarily (if not all???) through the organizing and fund raising of the local Pickle Ball Community, including many from outside Richmond.

I am a senior living in El Cerrito, but enjoying and spending money at many Richmond businesses and locations.

Pickle ball has truly changed my life , providing great exercise and a sense of community.

Taking everything into account, especially the hard work organizing and fundraising on behalf of the BTA courts, the free lessons provided monthly and for youth, the inclusivity of the sport, it seems right and appropriate that these courts return to being dedicated Pickleball courts as **originally planned and decided.**

Thank you for your consideration

Susan Fraimow-Wong
El Cerrito

I am a Richmond resident and strongly support making bta permanent pickleball courts. If that is not possible, could half of them be permanent? Most of us do not have our own nets and they are relatively heavy for those of us who are older and enjoy playing. There are so few courts in our area that are marked for pickleball use- and there are more and more pickleball players every day. Please support making bta permanent pickleball courts.

Ruth Goldenberg
354 Pacific Ave
Richmond Ca 94801
