

February 3, 2021

Subject: Comments on the Fairfax County Park Authority Pickleball Study
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/planning-development/pickleball-study>

To: Ryan Stewart, Project Manager, Fairfax County Park Authority
(Ryan.Stewart@fairfaxcounty.gov)

CC: Jeffrey McKay, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
(Chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov)

Dear Mr. Stewart,

The Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations promotes the interests of our Homeowner, Civic, and Community organizations to further the common good and general welfare of all Fairfax residents. The Federation membership represents households and communities throughout Fairfax County.

The Federation Board is aware of the ongoing Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) pickleball study and its request for public comments. Because of the growing popularity of the game among Fairfax residents, we submit these comments for your consideration.

1. We are aware that the FCPA has, to date, no outdoor courts dedicated for pickleball. Instead, the County has painted several tennis courts with additional lines for dual use of tennis and pickleball, using the tennis net for both sports. This compromise in court design (e.g., multiple boundary lines; incompatible net heights; game court size) leads to confusion and complaints by both tennis and pickleball players. Many other Virginia jurisdictions have clustered, dedicated pickleball court venues that are heavily used for recreational enjoyment as well for hosting occasional tournaments. For example, Prince William County recently converted two tennis courts to eight dedicated pickleball courts located at their A. J. Ferlazzo Building in Woodbridge. Because of the popularity of this venue, Prince William County has added additional pickleball courts at their Veterans Memorial Park.
2. Although there are a few indoor pickleball courts at some Fairfax Rec Centers and Community Centers, the County has significantly fewer pickleball court hours available than our smaller neighbor Arlington. Furthermore, Fairfax court times often do not include weekend and evening hours that would allow playing opportunities for residents who work during the day. This is causing long wait times and frustration for Fairfax players.
3. Pickleball is popular with all ages, but is particularly popular with older adults, the growing demographic in the county. A venue that has multiple, dedicated pickleball courts,

as opposed to compromised tennis courts, encourages game scheduling, community drop-in play, and the opportunity for players to socialize. This opportunity will be a welcome resource supporting the many active older adults who want to age in place in their Fairfax community.

4. Very few neighborhoods or homeowners associations have their private tennis courts lined for pickleball. Therefore, county built public courts would provide more opportunities for county residents to play this increasingly popular recreational activity.


5. Pickleball is easy to learn and inexpensive to play. This makes participation in the sport ideal and accessible for all socioeconomic and age groups.

In conclusion, the Federation recommends that Fairfax County develop pickleball courts to meet the needs of the growing numbers of pickleball players. To accomplish this, the Fairfax County Park Authority in coordination with the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services should:

- (1) identify locations that can accommodate more indoor courts hours,
- (2) build new pickleball courts as a long-term solution,
- (3) convert underused and decaying sports courts to multiple, dedicated pickleball courts as a short-term solution.

Thank you in advance for your favorable action on this community issue.

Sincerely,



William S. Barfield

President

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<http://www.fairfaxfederation.org>