

PICKLEBALL

A CASE FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF PICKLEBALL IN THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

SEPTEMBER 2019



PURPOSE

- ▶ The purpose of this document is to
 - provide information on pickleball
 - outline options for advancing and promoting pickleball in the town of Amherstburg
 - outline the longer term benefits to Amherstburg in tourism and community health through developing a strong and vibrant sport based activity culture centred on Pickleball
 - Show how pickleball aligns with those ideas offered by Gil Penalosa to make Amherstburg a better place to live, work and play by:
 - “Getting cities to work for both an eight-year-old and an 80 year-old and making better use of their senior population”, and
 - Recognizing that “older people have experience and knowledge. They have more wealth and time. We need to engage them.”

What is Pickleball

- ▶ Created in 1965 in the U.S.
- ▶ Pickleball is exploding in popularity and is the fastest growing sport in North America with annual growth of 15%
- ▶ Original purpose was to provide a game that the whole family could play together
- ▶ Pickleball is a paddleball sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis. Two or four players use solid paddles to hit a perforated polymer ball, similar to a wiffle ball, over a net.
- ▶ Normally played as a doubles game with 4 players
- ▶ A pickleball court is similar in size to a badminton court
- ▶ A typical game takes 15–20 minutes
- ▶ It is a low cost alternative to many other sports, and new players can have fun playing and mastering the skill in a relatively short time

Who Plays Pickleball

- ▶ Originally became popular with Seniors as a way to stay fit, socialize & be outdoors. Now becoming popular with ALL ages and being introduced in schools as a FUN means of getting physical activity and improving social skills.
- ▶ The number of places to play has nearly doubled since 2010. For example, there are now well over 2,000 locations in the U.S with over 20,000 courts and 3 million players .
- ▶ The spread of the sport is attributed to its popularity within community centers, PE classes, YMCA facilities and retirement communities.
- ▶ The sport continues to grow with many new international clubs and national governing bodies now established in the USA, Canada, Spain and India.
- ▶ In **Canada**, there are an estimated 75,000 pickleball players. Each province has their own provincial association. Alberta has the highest number of registered players in the country with 4,000 from 23 affiliated clubs.
- ▶ The Ontario Pickleball Association has published a lesson plan for students of all ages

Health Benefits of Pickleball

- ▶ A number of studies have been made into the physical and psychological benefits of pickleball. For example, studies have found that within a short period of time:
 - pickleball is a “feasible alternative to traditional exercise that improves cardiorespiratory fitness... and positively modifies key cardiovascular disease risk factors.”
 - individuals who are focused on competitive leisure activities (such as pickleball) have lower levels of depression as older adults. This is partly believed to be because of the social connections made through games.
 - players experienced an increase in knee extensor power and vertical jump height.
- ▶ Another benefit noted was that people have a greater likelihood to adhere to a schedule for physical activity when it uses a sport-based model instead of basic exercises.

Amherstburg Facilities – Outdoor

- ▶ There are currently three outdoor facilities
 - **Malden**
 - **Anderdon**
 - **McGregor**
- ▶ Each of these facilities has 2 multi-use courts (tennis and pickleball)
- ▶ Play on these courts is available from April to October, weather permitting.
- ▶ None of the courts have lighting for evening play.
- ▶ Amherstburg players use different facilities to ensure that the courts are not overcrowded in any particular facility

Amherstburg Facilities – Indoor

- ▶ There are currently two indoor facilities

Libro Centre

- mid– April to July 31st – 6 courts
 - Monday to Friday (10am to noon)
- mid–June to July 31st
 - Wednesday 6pm to 8pm
- Drop-in cost \$5.00 per session.
- Discounted weekly, monthly and seasonal passes available for morning play

General Amherst High School

- October to March – up to five courts
 - Friday evening only (6pm to 8pm)
 - Availability subject to change
- Drop-in cost \$5.00 per session.

- ▶ No indoor courts are available for daytime play in the fall or winter months
 - Players must go to LaSalle (Alliance Church) or other alternative facilities

Player Numbers and Growth

- ▶ There are approximately 60 players that play in Amherstburg
- ▶ Some players often play in neighbouring towns that provide better indoor facilities
- ▶ Most play is between April and October
 - Indoors: April to July
 - Outdoors: July to October
- ▶ **Issues Impacting Growth**
 - No dedicated central outdoor “hub”
 - No indoor daytime facilities in the summer, fall or winter months
 - Limited indoor evening facilities in the fall or winter months

Comparison to other Communities

	AMHERSTBURG	KINGSVILLE	TECUMSEH
Outdoor Courts – Current	6 PB/Tennis courts 3 locations	4 PB/Tennis courts 1 location	4 DPB courts 1 location
Outdoor Courts – Planned	TBD	8 DPB courts	Additional 10 DPB courts
Indoor Courts – Current	6 courts on ice pad April – July: M–F 10am – noon (Libro Centre) Up to 5 courts 1 day a week October –March 6pm to 8pm (High School)	4 on ice pad spring/summer 1 year round	NIL
Indoor Courts Planned	TBD	No Change	6 DPB courts
Costs – Outdoor	NIL	\$5 drop in fee \$75 season pass	\$26 season key
Costs – Indoor	\$5 drop – in fee. Weekly monthly and seasonal discounts for morning play at Libro Centre	\$3 drop – in fee	N/A
Players	60	70	160
		PB – Pickleball DPB – Designated Pickleball	

Options for Further Development

1. Establish a single location for outdoor pickleball courts with additional dedicated courts
 2. Increase availability of indoor pickleball courts year round
 3. Make Libro Centre the main pickleball hub for Amherstburg
 4. Work with town and businesses on marketing
 5. Promote Amherstburg Pickleball Association
 6. Seek options to modify the fee structure, attract new players and reduce overall costs
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1. Establish Dedicated Outdoor Facility

▶ Proposal

- Build a minimum of 8–12 dedicated pickleball courts with lights for evening play at either the **Libro Centre** or **Malden Centre**

▶ Benefits

- Solidifies pickleball awareness
- Provides more options for play for different skill levels on one location
- Provides better coaching and player development opportunities
- Enables summer camps for different age groups
- Facilitates an increase in competitive tournament play
- Better integration with other area pickleball clubs
- Provides increased tourism marketing opportunities
- Shows the town's commitment to physical activity for all age groups

2. Increase Indoor Pickleball Courts

▶ Proposal

- Provide for a minimum of 4 indoor pickleball courts year round for daytime and evening play
 - Libro Centre, High School or other facility
- Minimum Monday–Friday (could be expanded to Saturday/Sunday in winter)

▶ Benefits

- Keeps players in Amherstburg
- Increases awareness and new player interest
- Provides additional opportunities for year round physical activity
- Allows for on–going skills development
- Facilitates expansion of tournament play

3. Make Libro Centre the Dedicated Hub for Pickleball

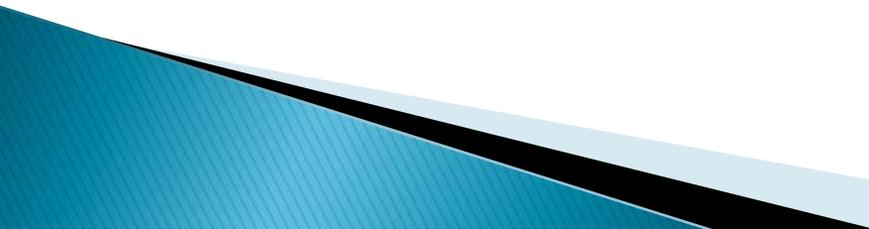
▶ Proposal

- Develop a premier pickle ball hub at the Libro Centre with 12 dedicated outdoor and 6 dedicated indoor courts
- The existing soccer field could be used for the indoor courts

▶ Benefits

- Provides a central hub for all indoor and outdoor pickleball
- Establishes a permanent home of the Amherstburg Pickleball Association
- Courts will be available in all weather conditions
- Increases awareness for APA activities including membership drives, summer camps, beginner orientation, player development and coaching programs
- Provides opportunity for significant economic impacts through hosting regional, provincial and national tournaments
 - Canadian National Pickleball Championships coming to Kingston – expected to create \$2 million in economic spin-offs.
 - Tecumseh announces plans for \$54 million complex with expanded pickleball facilities

4. Work with Town and Businesses on Promoting Pickleball Activities

- ▶ Develop first class vibrant central pickle ball hub
 - ▶ Increase visitors through pickleball tourism initiatives
 - ▶ Work with local businesses and new hotels to sponsor and support year round tournament play
 - ▶ Work with schools to develop student training programs and provide coaching assistance
 - ▶ Raise community awareness and promote beginner clinics for all ages
 - ▶ Develop summer training camps
 - ▶ Add pickleball to the many attractions for visiting/relocating to Amherstburg
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5. Promote Amherstburg Pickleball Association (APA)

- ▶ APA recently formed
- ▶ Facebook page developed
- ▶ Web site under consideration
- ▶ Need to link with publications and other web sites to gain traction
- ▶ Membership campaign will begin shortly outlining initiatives
 - Two years ago, Pickleball Association had 20 members; now they have 160 members

6. Options for Modified Fee Structure

- ▶ **Members of Amherstburg Pickleball Association**
 - Annual pass
 - \$50 covers both indoor and outdoor play (payable to Town)
 - This is the equivalent of 10 current indoor sessions
- **Non-members of Amherstburg Pickleball Association**
 - Must pay a drop in fee of \$5.00 for indoor play.
 - Must purchase a season key (\$10–\$20) for outdoor play (could be waived for students and 65+)
 - Play times are limited to designated times outside of member posted times
- ▶ **Benefits**
 - Lower overall costs to APA members
 - Ability to promote and attract new pickleball players and members to APA because of lower costs
 - Increased projected revenue to the town

Testimonials

- ▶ 11 year old Remi and his 14 year old brother played like the pros while providing incredible court coverage entertainment.
 - Their grandparents were beaming with pride.
- ▶ 11 year old Robbie plays competitively with mom, grandma, and of course, all of us.
 - As a pre-teen, he sleeps in during the summer school break, of course.
 - However, if grandma says pickleball tomorrow, he will set an alarm clock to wake up early!
- ▶ 12 year old Ryan is a pickleball champion in the making.
 - During the week of Aug 19 – 23, he (and 2 kindergarten girls) was taking tennis lessons at Malden. Whenever it was the turn for the 2 girls to be taught, he would come to our net to watch intently.
 - Then he came to play with us during their 15 – minute snack break...
 - Next week, he was relieved that the tennis lessons were over.
 - On Monday morning he came with grandma, both with newly purchased paddles and balls.
 - Now they are the first ones to show up at the court every morning !
 - This is a boy who has won multiple tennis tournaments in Ontario.

Sources of Additional Information

Pickleball Canada	https://pickleballcanada.org/
Pickleball Ontario	https://pickleballontario.org/
Pickleball Lesson Plan	https://pickleballontario.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/PickleballLessonPlan_FINAL_rev.pdf
Town of Tecumseh Pickleball	https://www.tecumseh.ca/en/things-to-do/pickle-ball.aspx
Tecumseh Pickleball Association	http://tecumsehpickleball.ca/
Renowned urbanist looks to improve Amherstburg	https://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/renowned-urbanist-looks-to-improve-amherstburg
Windsor Star - Tecumseh \$54 million Sportsplex	https://beta.windsorstar.com/news/local-news/we-are-so-ready-tecumseh-applying-for-funding-for-54m-sportsplex/wcm/764088cb-9100-4b30-a355-edc1828bbb4b/amp/

Questions?

Next Steps?