

Outdoor Racket Court Facilities Master Plan



A Plan for Future Improvement of Outdoor,
Open-Play, Racket Sport Courts in Public Parks
in Lincoln, Nebraska

Adopted by Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
11/10/2022

PURPOSE:

The following master plan provides guidance for the development of outdoor, open-play racket sports facilities in Lincoln, NE, and prioritizes those improvements into near- and long-term projects.



PROCESS:

In June 2022, a Working Committee was formed to provide insight and advice to assist the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department (LPRD) in development of a plan to guide future public outdoor, open-play, racket sport court improvements and additions. These individuals represented tennis and pickleball organizations, casual players, professional coaches, and representatives of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Working Committee Goals:

- 1 Establish a Level of Service for public, outdoor, open-play Pickleball and Tennis courts in Lincoln's parks.
- 2 Analyze potential sites for public, outdoor, open-play Pickleball and Tennis improvement/expansion (both dedicated and dual striped).
- 3 Establish development standards for base level service and possible enhancements on public, outdoor, open-play courts.
- 4 Discuss management of play on public outdoor, open-play courts.

The Working Committee held four meetings over the period from June 9 through August 11, 2022. The following Master Plan was developed with input received in those meeting.

Thank you to the Working Committee

MEMBERS: William Roehrs, Vince Ganshorn, Bradley Brandt, Mark Nelson, Tammy Poe, John Reinhardt, Christopher Salem, Molly Heeney-Dunn

PUBLIC INPUT

The public was consulted at two points in the facilities master planning process. First, a survey was posted online April 18, 2022, and was held open through May 8, 2022. The survey was advertised through social media and a general press release. User groups were also contacted via email and asked to use their email lists to promote the survey. There were responses received from 1,287 individuals. A short report of the survey results is attached to this Master Plan as Appendix 1. These results were reviewed by the Working Committee at their first meeting and provided information used in developing this master plan.

The Draft Racket Court Facilities Master Plan was released to the public on August 17, 2022, for review and comment. All comments received were shared with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for their consideration.



EXISTING CONDITIONS:

In the Lincoln Parks and Recreation system, Racket Sport Courts are generally included as a part of the programming for Community Parks. These parks are larger facilities that serve an area approximately 3 miles in radius. They typically include services such as picnic areas, playgrounds, shelters, play fields, play courts, trail access, parking, restrooms, and are usually located on major streets. While they are intended to serve a larger area, they do also provide Neighborhood Park services to the immediate area.

In the past, tennis courts were occasionally included in the design of Neighborhood Parks. While they are currently not part of the standard neighborhood park program, some of these courts are still in service.

Community Parks with Racket Sport Courts

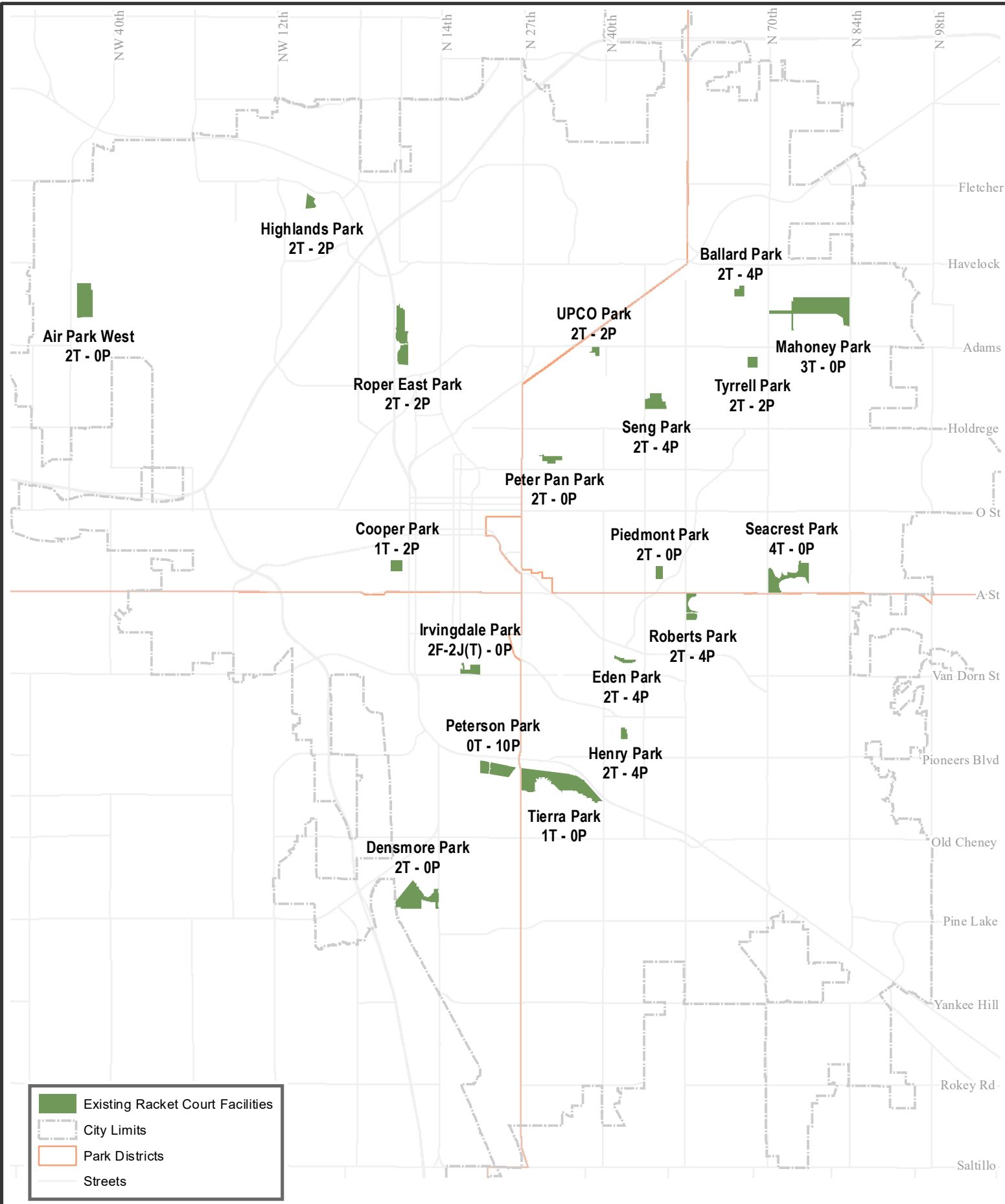
PARK NAME	TENNIS	PICKLEBALL	CONDITION	NOTES
Densmore	2	0	Good	Basketball courts adjacent not used
Tierra	1	0	Fair	Full basketball adjacent
Irvingdale	2 full, 2 jr	0	Fair	Resilient surface (aging), lighting
Eden	2	4	Good	
Seacrest	4	0	Good	Lighting, next to East High
Peter Pan	2	0	Fair	
Seng	2	4	Poor	Lighting
Ballard	2	4	Good	
Mahoney	3	0	Good	Lighting
Roper East	2	2	Good	
Air Park West	2	0	Poor	Asphalt courts
Peterson	0	10	Good	Resilient surface

Neighborhood Parks with Racket Sport Courts

PARK NAME	TENNIS	PICKLEBALL	CONDITION	NOTES
Henry	2	4	Good	Lighting
Roberts	2	4	Good	Lighting
Piedmont	2	0	Good	
Cooper	1	2	Good	
UPCO	2	2	Fair	
Tyrrell	2	2	Fair	Lighting
Highlands	2	2	Poor	Resilient surface (failed)

Scan with your phone to visit the tennis and pickleball web pages.





Existing Racket Court Facilities



PROPOSED DESIGN STANDARDS

Current design standards for tennis and pickleball facilities are generally based upon the accepted court dimensions as defined by the US Tennis Association and USA Pickleball. Typical facilities include a concrete surface with painted striping, perimeter fencing, and permanent/in-ground net posts with nets installed seasonally. Depending on the availability of a power source, courts located in community parks may include lighting. Input from the Working Committee lead to changes in the base level design standards for tennis and pickleball courts, in particular the importance of resilient surfacing and, for pickleball, low fencing between courts. These new base level design standards are described below.

FACILITY TYPES:

Dedicated Multi-court Tennis Facilities

These facilities include two or more tennis courts within a perimeter fence. They generally consist of concrete slab on grade with a resilient coating surface. These facilities are striped for tennis only and do not include dual striping. Facility nets are installed seasonally to permanent support posts.



Dedicated Multi-court Pickleball Facilities

Courts may vary in number or be developed in clusters to provide a larger facility. They generally consist of concrete slab on grade with a resilient coating surface. The courts are surrounded with perimeter fencing and include low height interior fencing to separate individual courts. These facilities are striped for pickleball and do not include dual striping. Facility nets are installed seasonally to permanent support posts.



Dual-use Courts

Dual-use courts include at least one tennis court with overlying pickleball court lines that allow pickleball play over the tennis net, or the use of portable nets to set up a pickleball court on each side of the tennis net. Dual-use courts may be on a resilient surface or may have striping on a concrete surface. Dual-use courts are within a perimeter fence but do not include permanent low fencing between courts. Dual use nets are installed seasonally to permanent support posts.

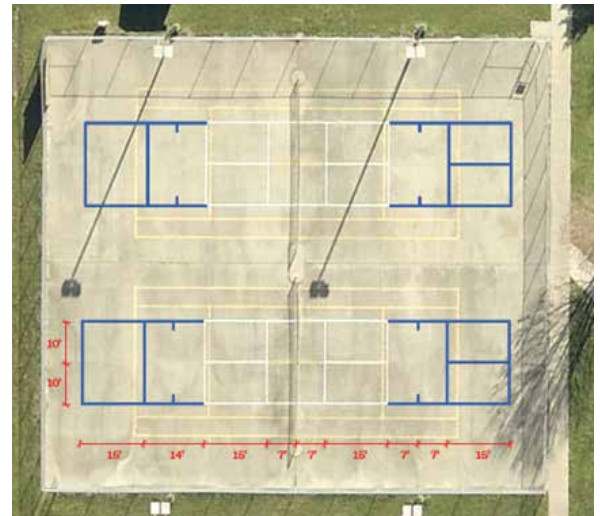


Diagram showing dual-use striping to create 2 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts

Dedicated Tennis Courts

Dedicated tennis courts include one or more tennis courts within a perimeter fence that include striping for use as a tennis court only. These courts are concrete surfaced with painted striping. Nets are installed seasonally to permanent support posts.

Dedicated Pickleball Courts

Dedicated pickleball courts include one or more pickleball courts within a perimeter fence that include striping for use as a pickleball court only. These courts are concrete surfaced with painted striping. These courts include low height fencing between courts, seasonally installed nets, and permanent support posts.

Other Dual-use Opportunities

In some cases, it may be possible to share use between other sports that require a solid surface court. Opportunity for integrating with sports such as basketball, handball, and roller hockey should be considered.

ENHANCEMENTS

The facilities described above represent the base design standards for racket courts. Enhancements such as court lighting, additional benches for seating, hard surface pads/shelters to house portable restrooms, windscreens, additional drinking fountains, shade shelters and other desirable amenities are sometimes included as part of a private fundraising campaign or as a donation from an individual or entity. When these enhancements are added, long-term maintenance and replacement costs must also be considered. Often the enhancements are coordinated through Lincoln Parks Foundation, which may also manage an endowment for their ongoing care and replacement.



RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR LINCOLN RACKET SPORT COURTS

The recommended level of service (LOS) for outdoor, open-play, racket sport courts in Lincoln, NE, is based upon provision of service in geographic regions of the City. The Proposed LOS is:

- + one multi-court dedicated tennis facility in each quadrant of the City (NE, SE, NW, SW).
- + one multi-court dedicated pickleball facility in each quadrant of the City.
- + Improvements should also be made to existing racket sport courts in community parks to include resilient surfacing and dual use courts.
- + Racket sport courts in neighborhood parks should generally remain concrete surfaced with single or dual use striping.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS AND ADDITIONS

Community Parks with Racket Sport Courts

PARK NAME	TENNIS	PICKLEBALL	NOTES
Densmore	2	6	Add resilient surface to 2 dual use, and convert former basketball area to 2 pickleball courts, add fencing to separate pickleball courts
Tierra	1	0	No change recommended
Irvingdale	3 + 2jr	2	Expansion and resilient surfacing to provide 3 full sized and 2 Jr. sized/pickleball courts
Eden	0	6	Convert to multi-court dedicated pickleball courts with resilient surface
Seacrest	4	0	No change recommended
Peter Pan	2	0	No change recommended
Seng	2	4	Reconstruct to dual-use with resilient surface, or with dual-use striping only
Ballard	0	6	Convert to multi-court dedicated pickleball courts with resilient surface
Mahoney	3	0	Convert to multi-court dedicated tennis courts with resilient surface
Roper East	2	4	Convert to dual-use courts, concrete surface
Air Park West	2	6	Reconstruct as multi-court dedicated tennis and/or multi-court dedicated pickleball courts
Peterson	0	10	No change recommended

Neighborhood Parks with Racket Sport Courts

PARK NAME	TENNIS	PICKLEBALL	NOTES
Henry	2	4	No change recommended (dual-use courts)
Roberts	2	4	No change recommended (dual-use courts)
Piedmont	2	0	No change recommended
Cooper	1	2	No change recommended
UPCO	2	4	Convert to dual-use concrete surface
Tyrrell	2	4	Convert to dual-use concrete surface
Highlands	1	2	Reconstruct as single dual-use court, concrete surface

POTENTIAL NEW FACILITY SITES

Jensen Park (Community) :

The current conceptual master plan for future development of Jensen Park in southeast Lincoln includes an area identified for a large multi-court dedicated pickleball facility (16+ courts). The plan could be amended to include a multi-court dedicated tennis facility as well should demand create the need for additional tennis courts. Both pickleball and tennis facilities could be constructed in phases and potentially share amenities such as shelters and restrooms. An access drive and parking area will need to be constructed prior to or concurrent with development of these courts.

Fleming Fields (Community) :

Per the master plan for Fleming Fields, an area in the southeast corner of this community park in northeast Lincoln has been identified for a future development of a hard surface play court(s). The area is large enough to accommodate a multi-court dedicated pickleball facility consisting of 6-8 courts. Expansion of the existing ballfield complex parking lot immediately north of this area should be included with development of these courts.

Future Northwest Community Park :

A future community park is envisioned for the northwest quadrant of Lincoln. During the master planning process for this community park, both the addition of pickleball and tennis court facilities should be considered.



PRIORITIZATION

At this time, the future Level of Service for Lincoln's public outdoor open-play racket court facilities has been set at one multi-court dedicated tennis and one multi-court dedicated pickleball facility in each quadrant of the City. To fulfill this goal, the construction of new facilities will be needed. To meet current service demand in a shorter time frame, the Working Committee was asked to prioritize the above projects for near-term planning, generally defined as approximately the next 10 years.

FIRST PRIORITY

Multicourt Dedicated Tennis Facility:

In the near term, providing a multi-court dedicated tennis facility in both the north and south halves of Lincoln was the highest priority in order to serve the community's tennis players.

Mahoney Park:

The existing tennis concrete courts in Mahoney Park (north) present an opportunity to provide a dedicated tennis facility for a relatively low capital cost. Surfacing of the existing three courts with resilient surfacing is considered a priority, as well as consideration for the addition of a fourth court that could be constructed along the east edge of the existing courts. This will require some grading, relocation of some utilities, and removal of two ash trees.

Irvingdale Park:

The existing tennis courts in Irvingdale Park (south) were surfaced with resilient surfacing in 2014 through a grant from the USTA and they are beginning to show the need for resurfacing. In 2014, the three-court complex was reconfigured into 2 full-sized tennis courts and 2 junior-sized courts. The construction of a concrete extension on the east end of the existing courts will be sufficient to expand to three full sized tennis courts and two Jr. sized tennis/pickleball courts, all with resilient surfacing. This will meet the Level of Service goal as well as provide Jr. tennis and pickleball opportunities to the community.

Multicourt Dedicated Pickleball Facility:

Pickleball has seen a great deal of growth in the past several years and is currently considered the fastest growing sport in the nation. The demand for additional multi-court dedicated pickleball facilities is extremely high. Currently, a 10-court dedicated pickleball facility is available in the southwest quadrant of Lincoln at Peterson Park. Development of two additional multi-court dedicated pickleball facilities in the southeast and northeast quadrants of the City is desirable.

Eden & Ballard Parks:

The existing concrete courts at Eden Park (southeast) and Ballard Park (northeast), both community parks, are currently striped for dual-use and considered very active for pickleball. Converting these two facilities to multi-court dedicated pickleball facilities will take advantage of an existing concrete base and fencing as well as other amenities such as parking and restrooms, without putting additional pressure on adjacent neighbors. If the availability of resources/funding result in the need to convert one of these locations to a dedicated pickleball facility ahead of the other, priority should be placed on Ballard Park. This will provide a north facility to complement the south facility already in existence at Peterson Park.

SECOND PRIORITY

Jensen Park:








As the City continues to grow to the south and southeast, the addition of community park services should be expanded to serve the new population. As a secondary priority, development of a multi-court pickleball and multi-court tennis facility at Jensen Park could serve the racket sport needs in this developing area.

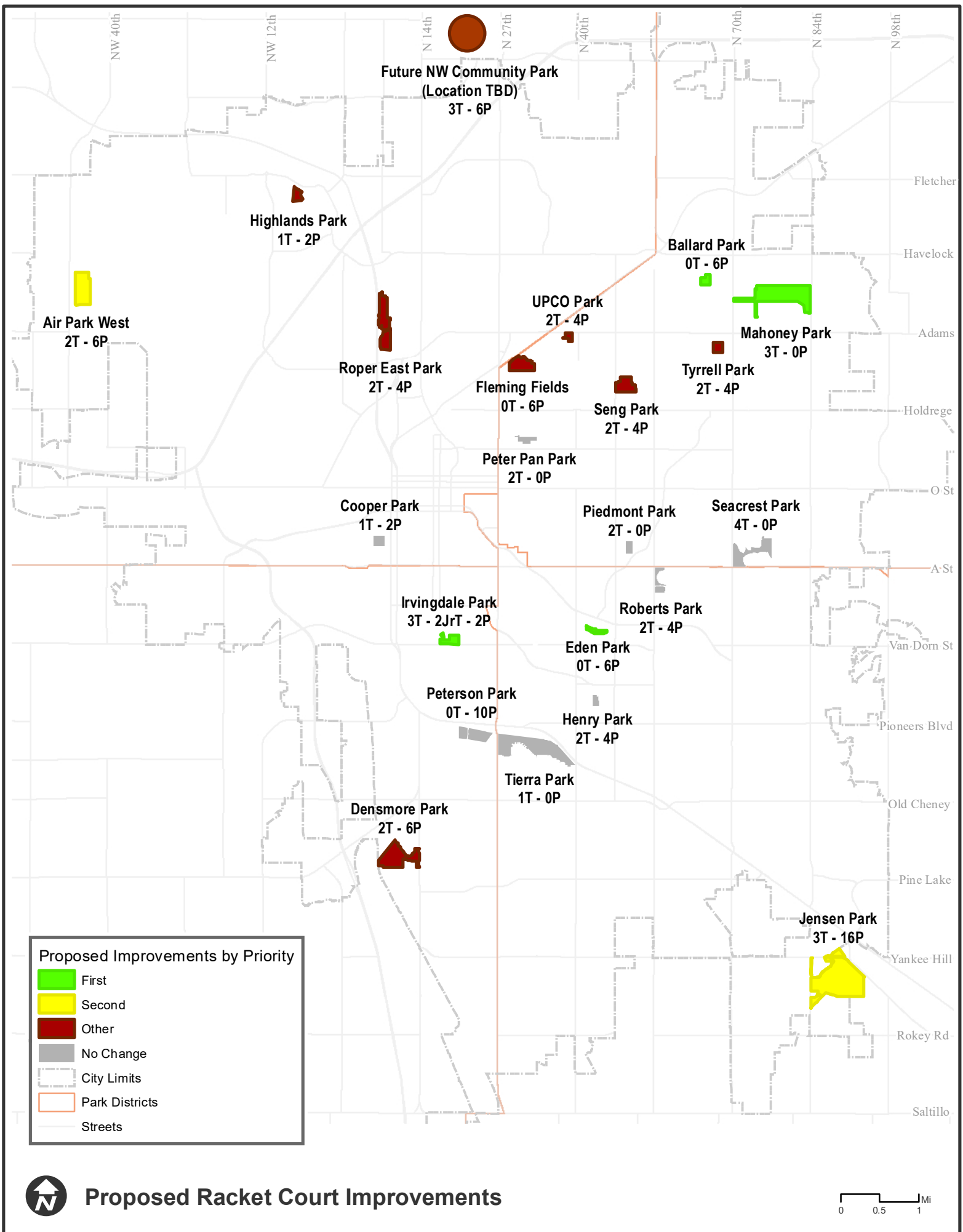
Air Park West Park:

Residential growth is also moving quickly in the northwest part of the City, particularly near the location of the new Northwest High School on NW 48th and Holdrege Streets. Air Park West Park is a large flat area which currently is home to ball fields, the Air Park Recreation Center, and the Arnold Heights Swimming Pool. With construction of the new Air Park Community Center near NW 48th and Cumming Streets and consideration to relocate the swimming pool to that same site in the future when the Arnold Heights swimming pool has served its useful life, Air Park West Park will be experiencing changes over time. The topography of the land lends itself well to development of racket courts and this amenity type is in low supply in the northwest quadrant.

OTHER PRIORITY PROJECTS

Completion of the above set of First and Second Priority projects will raise the community up to the recommended Level of Service. There are additional projects that are not specifically designated as priorities to meet the recommended Level of Service; however, they have the potential to yield significant benefits to the community. Should opportunities arise to fund these projects, they should be considered for prioritization.

-  Fleming Fields Park : Development of a new multi-court dedicated pickleball facility (6-8 courts).
 -  Densmore Park : Add resilient surfacing and convert tennis courts to two dual-use courts; convert former basketball area to two pickleball courts, add fencing to separate pickleball courts.
 -  Seng Park at University Place : Reconstruction of two dual-use courts with or without resilient surfacing.
 -  Highlands Park : Reconstruction of two dual-use courts to a single dual-use court with concrete surfacing.
 -  Roper Park : Convert two existing tennis courts to two dual-use courts with concrete surfacing.
 -  Tyrrell Park : Convert two existing tennis courts to two dual-use courts with concrete surfacing.
 -  UPCO Park : Convert two existing tennis courts to two dual-use courts with concrete surfacing.
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REMAINING COURTS

It is noted that this plan does not recommend changes to all the existing racket sport courts within the LPRD system. Some of the courts are recommended to remain as they are being used today, with the appropriate maintenance and repair over time.

Courts recommended to remain as dedicated tennis courts with concrete surface:

- + Cooper Park (includes 2 pickleball courts)
- + Tierra Park
- + Peter Pan Park
- + Seacrest Park
- + Piedmont Park

Courts recommended to remain as dual-use courts with concrete surface:

- + Roberts Park
- + Henry Park

Courts recommended to remain as multi-court dedicated pickleball facilities:

- + Peterson Park



LONG TERM MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Changes to the design standards for multi-court dedicated facilities and some other facilities to include resilient surfacing are envisioned to significantly improve the quality of play available on LPRD's public open-play racket courts. This is anticipated to create additional opportunities for those who are not able to participate in pay-for-play programs at public or private facilities. However, it should be noted that the addition of resilient surfacing will also add to the ongoing maintenance and repair costs of these facilities and thus an added burden to LPRD's budget.

Resilient surfacing quality is continuously being improved. Currently, most manufacturers advertise a replacement cycle of between 5 and 10 years, depending on usage, care and sunlight exposure. For purposes of this facilities master plan, an assumed life cycle of 7 years has been used. This same number of years has been assumed for striping on concrete courts. Nets also have a limited life cycle and a replacement period of approximately 8 years. Fencing, net posts and all concrete is assumed to have a life cycle of approximately 50 years. When the long-term maintenance and replacement of improvements is figured into a life cycle, costs can multiply quickly. Covering these costs so that facilities can function at their intended level throughout their life cycle is a challenge that will need to be addressed as part of the budgeting process.

MANAGEMENT OF PLAY

Like most other recreational opportunities in public parks, racket sport courts are open for play by anyone in the community. There are private groups that organize matches for their membership utilizing public facilities, and this can be done in a number of different ways.



Pickleball Lincoln Inc. (PLI) is a 501(c)(3) organization that advocates for the sport, raises funds for playing venues, provides training, and organizes competitions. PLI operates under a license agreement with the City of Lincoln which allows for priority use of specific courts during defined times. The time periods and location are negotiated as a part of the annual license agreement process. All scheduling is done through PLI in accordance with the license agreement. Courts remain open to the public outside the identified hours of priority use and can also be used by the public if they are not occupied by PLI members during the identified hours. Signage is posted at the courts included in the license agreement that identifies the available hours and protocol for rotating into open play times.



The Ace Bandage Tennis League (ABTL) is a flex tennis league that organizes matches between its members, but leaves scheduling of the time and location of the match up to the players. Because the location and time of those matches is set by the individual players, a lease agreement is not currently required for this model.



The Woods Tennis organization also uses some of the public tennis courts outside the Woods Tennis Center as part of their community outreach programming. PLI coordinates with Woods Tennis to ensure courts are available for community outreach programming. Schedules posted on PLI website include notification of court use by Woods Tennis.

Through a reciprocal agreement between the City and Lincoln Public Schools, some tennis and pickleball courts are used by the public schools. Typically schools contact LPRD and provide dates and times that a court may be used. The reciprocal agreement allows LPS properties to be used by the public in exchange for this service.

At this time, these models appear to be adequately serving their respective organizations and continuation is recommended. Should the demand for courts create conflicts that require a change to these practices, LPR will reevaluate, seek public input, and make adjustments accordingly.

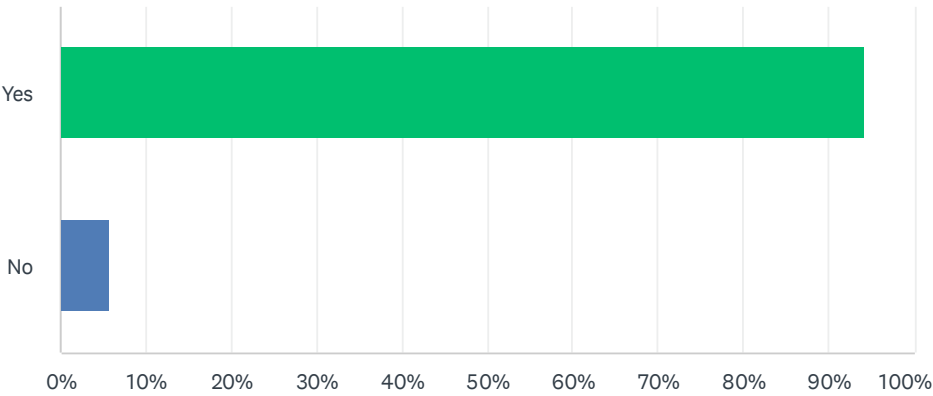
In order to provide information regarding court availability for drop-in use, the Parks and Recreation Department will gather information from PLI, Woods Tennis, and Lincoln Public Schools to post to the City's website so the public can determine court availability in advance.

APPENDIX A



Q1 Do you play any racket sports?

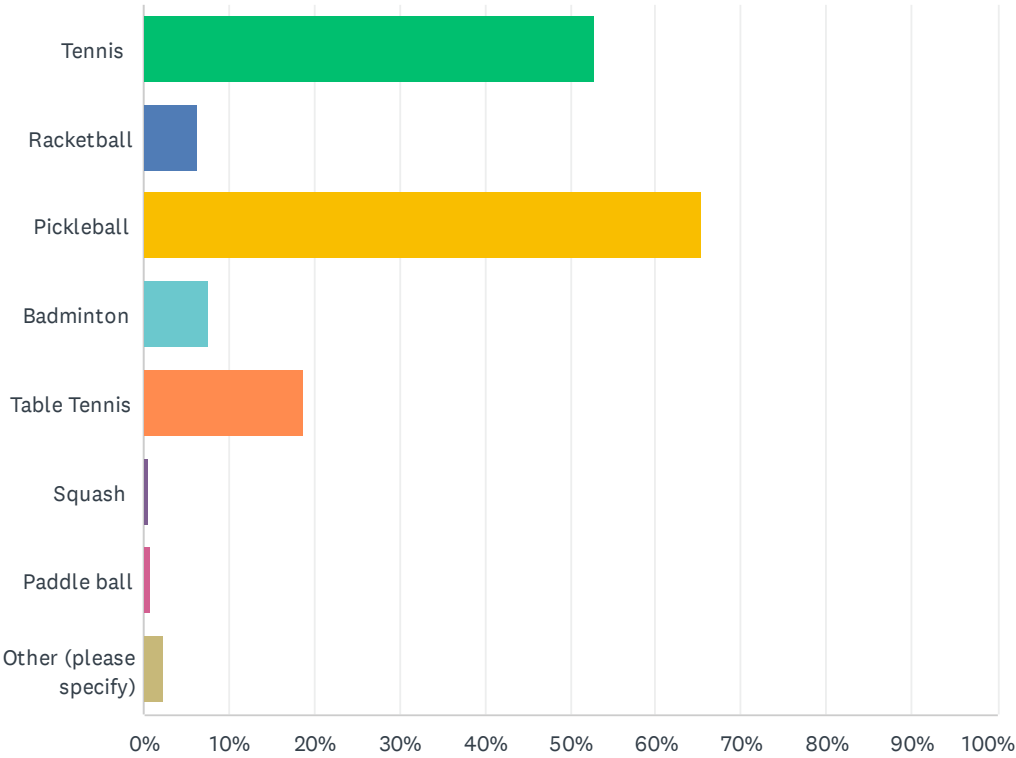
Answered: 1,287 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	94.17%	1,212
No	5.83%	75
TOTAL		1,287

Q2 What racket sports do you play? (Check all that apply)

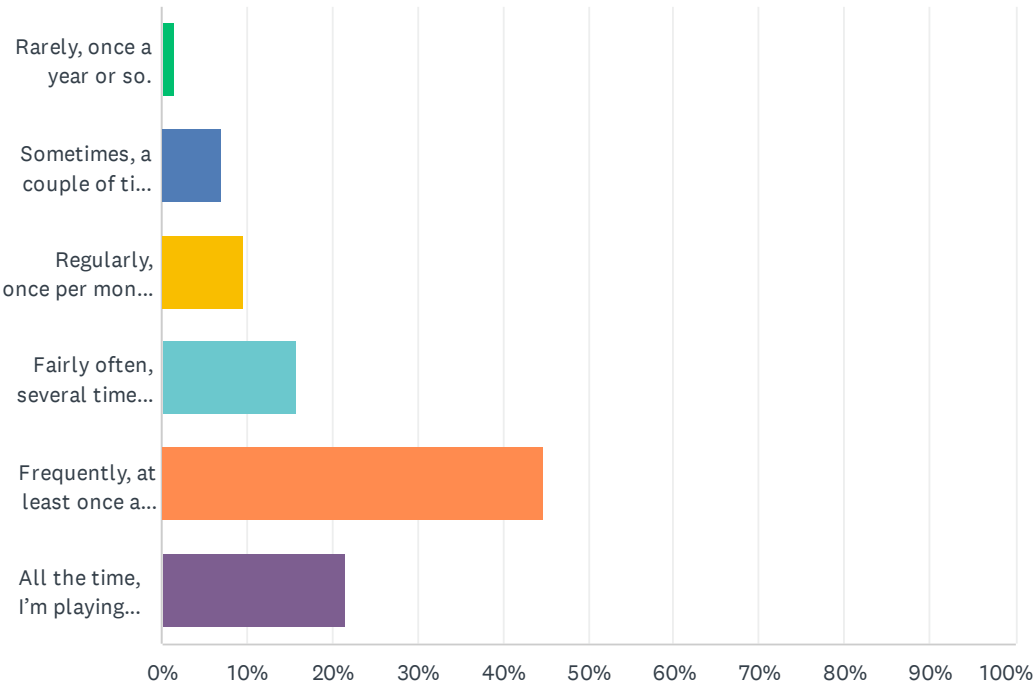
Answered: 1,149 Skipped: 138



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Tennis	52.83%	607
Racketball	6.44%	74
Pickleball	65.45%	752
Badminton	7.57%	87
Table Tennis	18.80%	216
Squash	0.61%	7
Paddle ball	0.78%	9
Other (please specify)	2.35%	27
Total Respondents: 1,149		

Q3 How often do you play? (Choose one)

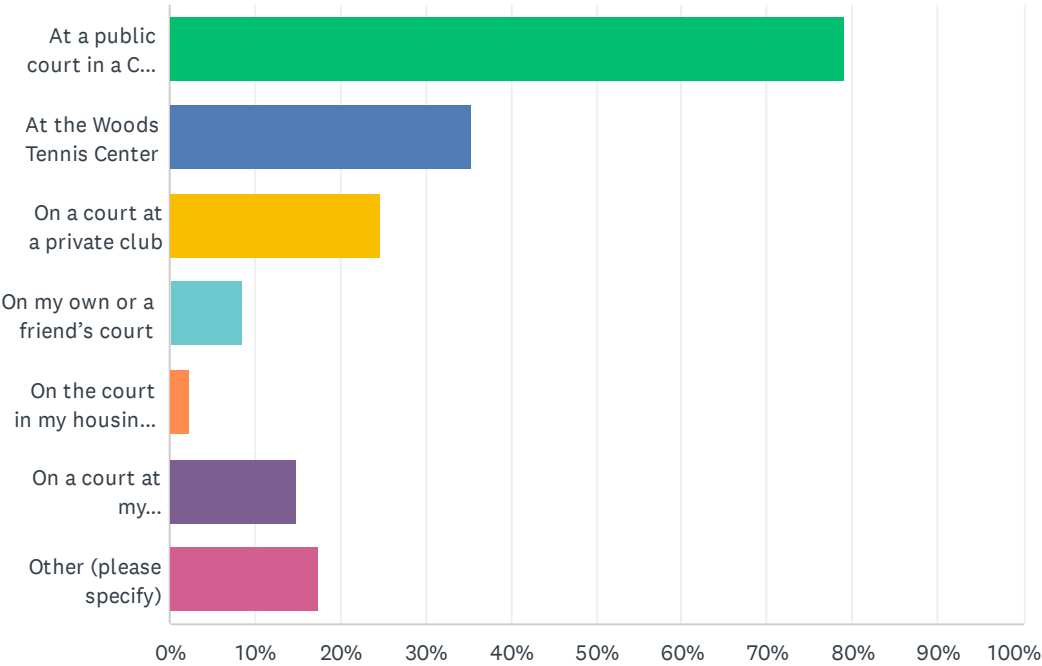
Answered: 1,146 Skipped: 141



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rarely, once a year or so.	1.40%	16
Sometimes, a couple of times per year.	7.07%	81
Regularly, once per month or so.	9.69%	111
Fairly often, several times per month.	15.71%	180
Frequently, at least once a week.	44.68%	512
All the time, I'm playing right now!	21.47%	246
TOTAL		1,146

Q4 Where do you typically play? (All that apply)

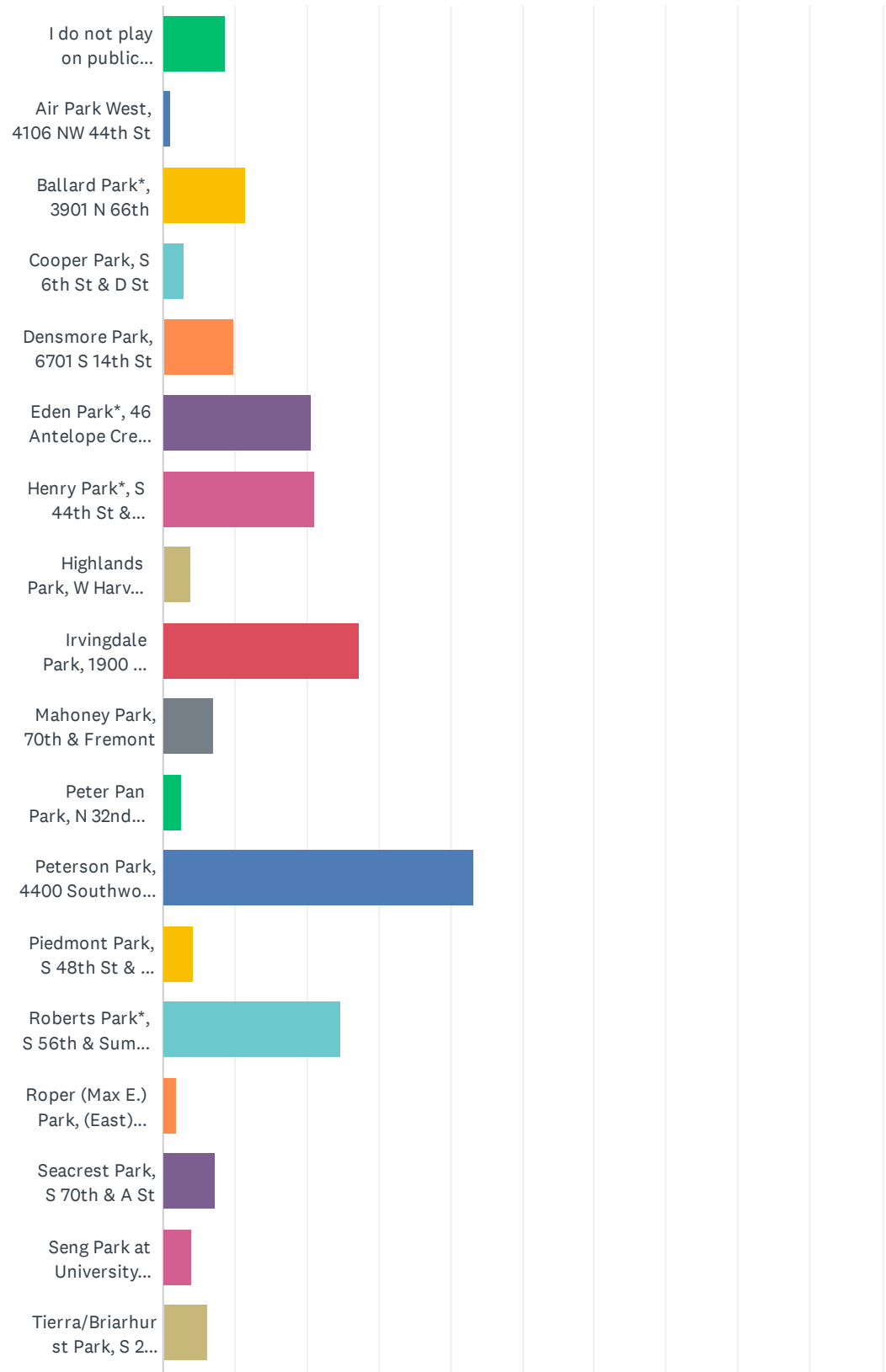
Answered: 1,145 Skipped: 142



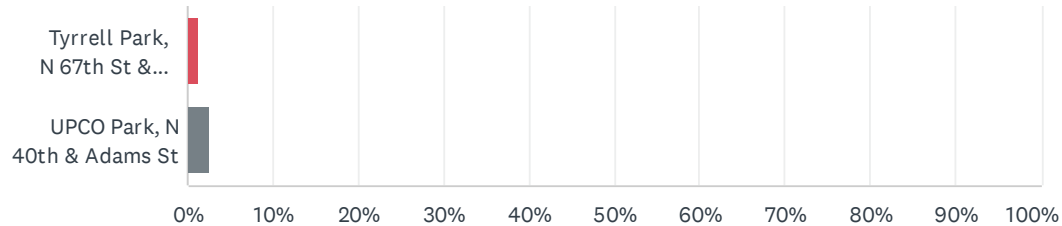
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
At a public court in a City Park	79.04%	905
At the Woods Tennis Center	35.37%	405
On a court at a private club	24.80%	284
On my own or a friend's court	8.56%	98
On the court in my housing development or apartment complex	2.45%	28
On a court at my school/university/place of employment	14.85%	170
Other (please specify)	17.55%	201
Total Respondents: 1,145		

Q5 If you play on courts in a public park, in which park do you most often play? (select all that apply)

Answered: 1,107 Skipped: 180



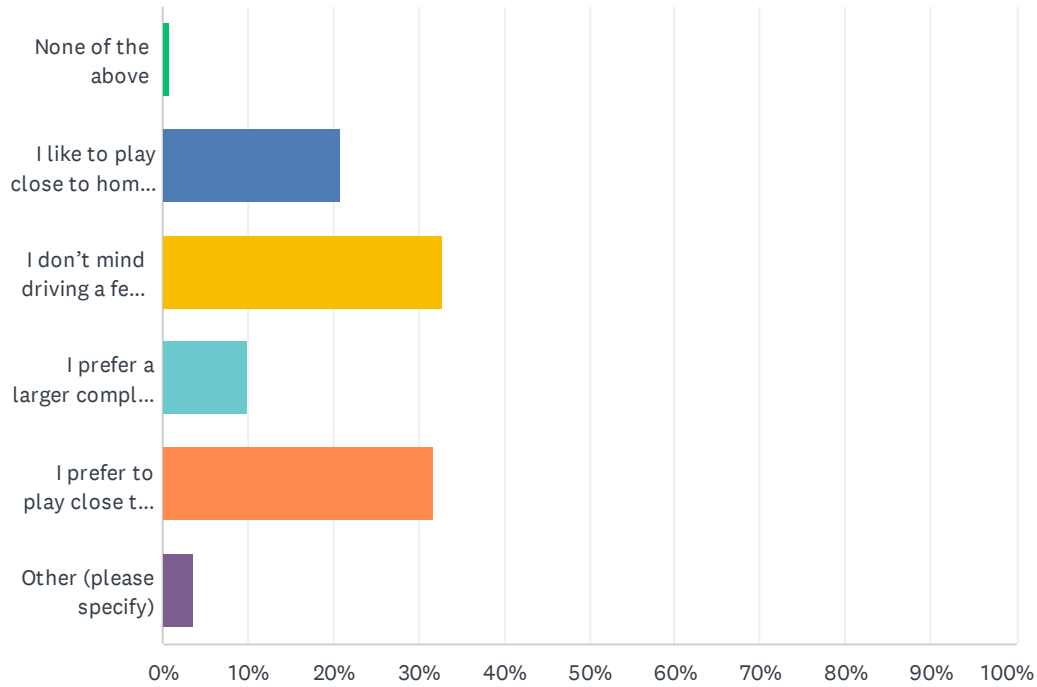
Lincoln Parks & Recreation Racket Sports Community Survey



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not play on public courts.	8.67%	96
Air Park West, 4106 NW 44th St	0.99%	11
Ballard Park*, 3901 N 66th	11.47%	127
Cooper Park, S 6th St & D St	2.98%	33
Densmore Park, 6701 S 14th St	9.76%	108
Eden Park*, 46 Antelope Creek Rd	20.69%	229
Henry Park*, S 44th St & Prescott Ave	21.14%	234
Highlands Park, W Harvest Dr	3.88%	43
Irvingdale Park, 1900 Van Dorn St	27.19%	301
Mahoney Park, 70th & Fremont	7.14%	79
Peter Pan Park, N 32nd & W St	2.62%	29
Peterson Park, 4400 Southwood Drive	43.27%	479
Piedmont Park, S 48th St & S Cotner Blvd	4.34%	48
Roberts Park*, S 56th & Sumner St	24.75%	274
Roper (Max E.) Park, (East), N 8th & Judson St	1.90%	21
Seacrest Park, S 70th & A St	7.23%	80
Seng Park at University Place*, N 49th & Garland St	3.97%	44
Tierra/Briarhurst Park, S 27th & Tierra	6.14%	68
Tyrrell Park, N 67th St & Baldwin Ave	1.17%	13
UPCO Park, N 40th & Adams St	2.53%	28
Total Respondents: 1,107		

Q6 What part does the proximity of your preferred court location to your home play in your decision to play? (check the one that best applies)

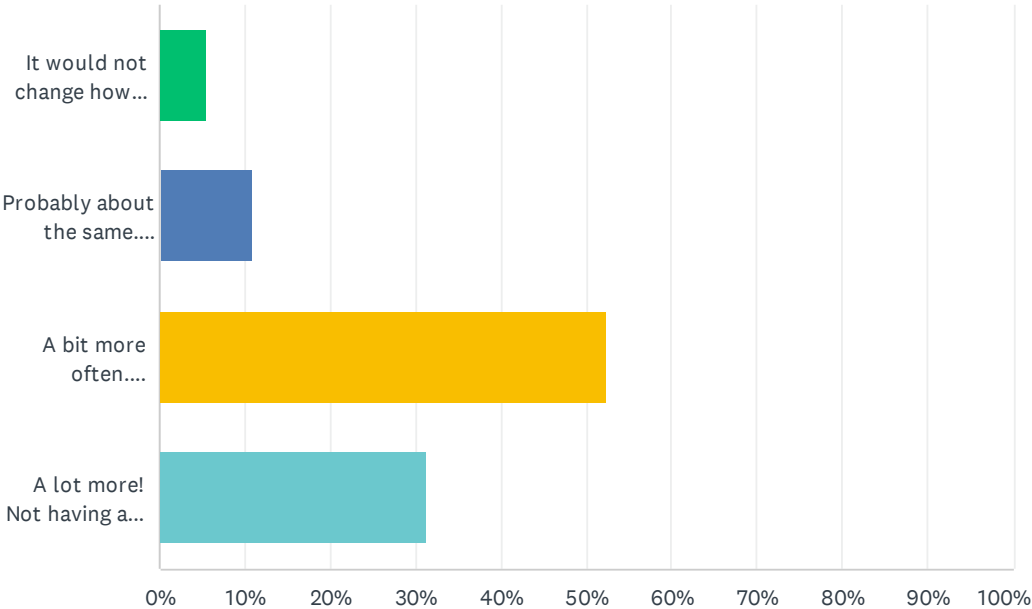
Answered: 1,145 Skipped: 142



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	0.87%	10
I like to play close to home, within walking or biking distance	20.87%	239
I don't mind driving a few minutes to get there.	32.84%	376
I prefer a larger complex and will drive across town to get there.	10.04%	115
I prefer to play close to home, but I will drive across town for a good court.	31.70%	363
Other (please specify)	3.67%	42
TOTAL		1,145

Q8 If more public courts were available, how often would you play?
(choose one)

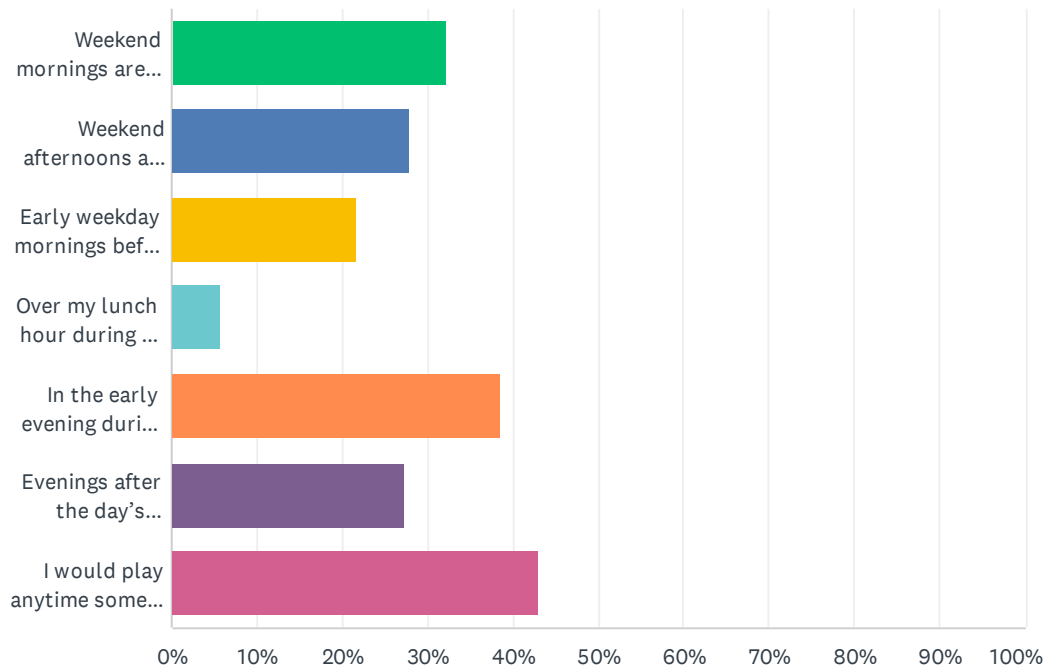
Answered: 1,125 Skipped: 162



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
It would not change how often I play.	5.51%	62
Probably about the same. Availability of court time is not a factor.	10.84%	122
A bit more often. Increased court availability would make it more convenient.	52.36%	589
A lot more! Not having a court to play on is the biggest factor in the frequency of play for me.	31.29%	352
TOTAL		1,125

Q9 What times and days would you prefer to play? (Choose up to three)

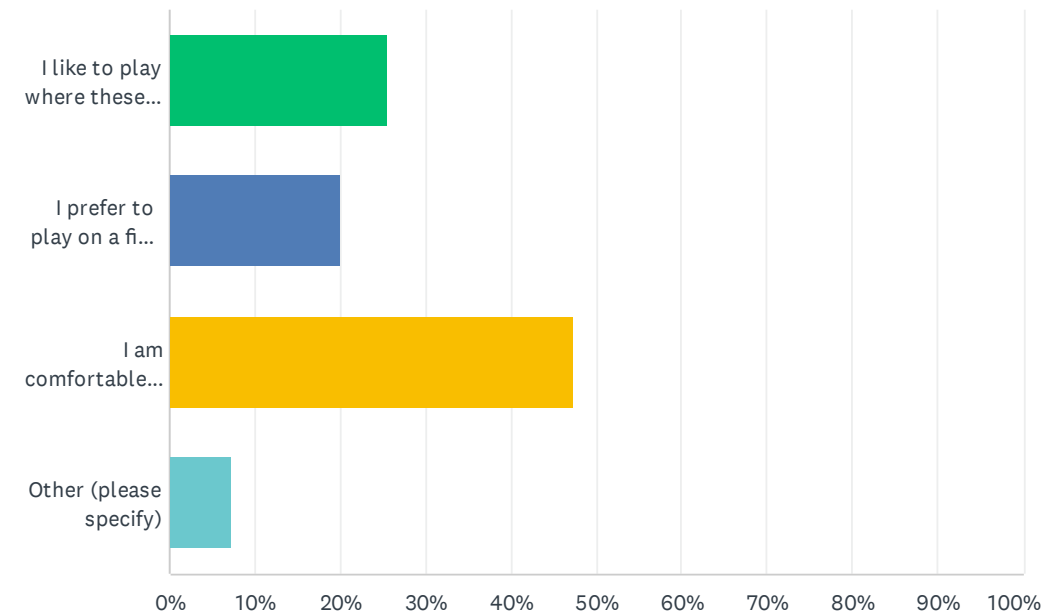
Answered: 1,132 Skipped: 155



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Weekend mornings are my favorite.	32.24%	365
Weekend afternoons are the best for me.	27.92%	316
Early weekday mornings before work or school.	21.73%	246
Over my lunch hour during the week.	5.83%	66
In the early evening during the week.	38.52%	436
Evenings after the day's activities are done are best for me.	27.39%	310
I would play anytime someone is up for a match!	43.02%	487
Total Respondents: 1,132		

Q10 Some courts have designated procedures in place (such as putting your paddle/racket in a specific spot) to accommodate multiple players. What part does this play in your court choice?

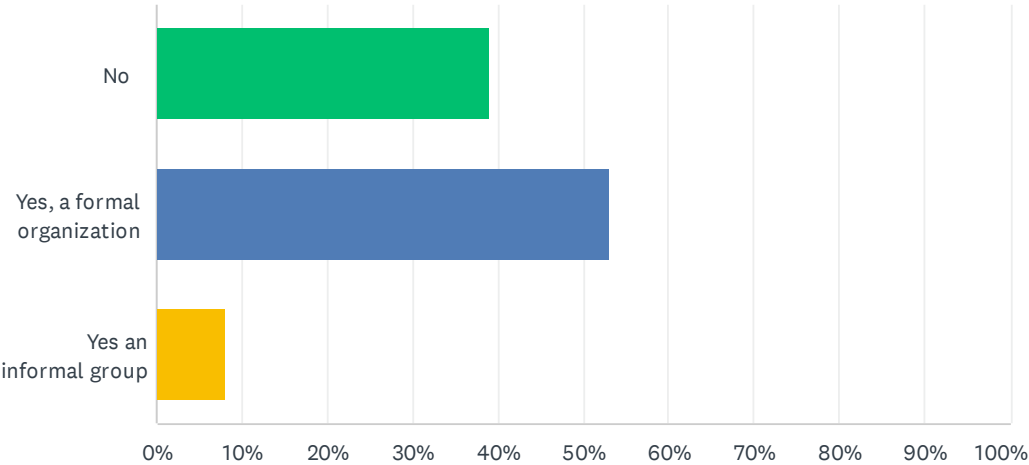
Answered: 1,122 Skipped: 165



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I like to play where these procedures are being followed because everyone gets a turn.	25.58%	287
I prefer to play on a first come, first served basis.	19.96%	224
I am comfortable with either of the above. This plays no part in my choice of courts.	47.24%	530
Other (please specify)	7.22%	81
TOTAL		1,122

Q11 Are you a member of or associated with any organized or informal racket sports groups? (all that apply)

Answered: 1,121 Skipped: 166



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	38.98%	437
Yes, a formal organization	52.99%	594
Yes an informal group	8.03%	90
TOTAL		1,121



Lincoln Parks and Recreation
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Mayor:

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Tom Beckius
James Michael Bowers
Richard Meginnis
Jane Raybould
Sandra Washington
Bennie Shobe

Lincoln Parks and Recreation Director:

Maggie Stuckey-Ross