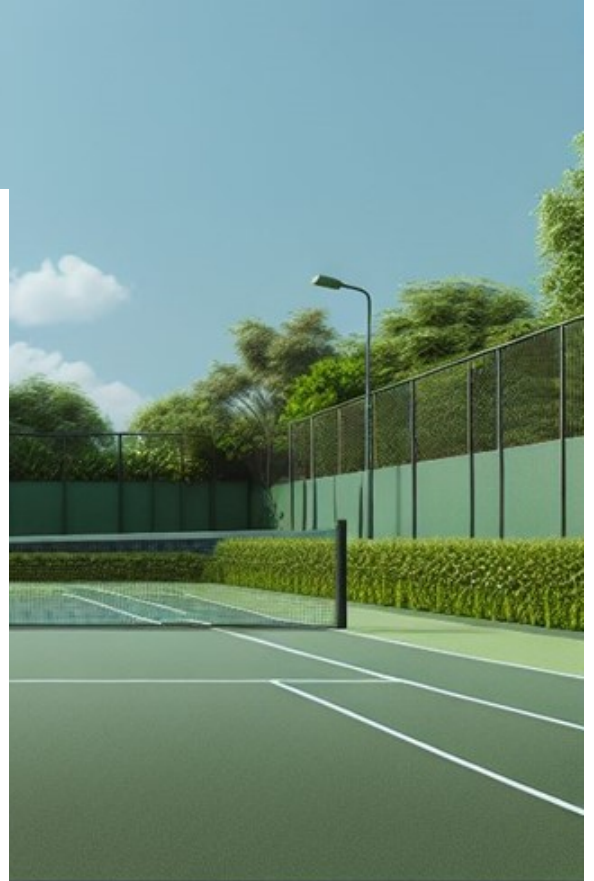


Recreation and Sports Advisory Committee Meeting



MARCH 23

**Opposition to Adding Pickleball Lines to Existing
Tennis Courts**



Tillsonburg Tennis Community

Opposition to Adding Pickleball Lines to Existing Tennis Courts

INTRODUCTION

The tennis community is thrilled to start its first full year in over a decade on dedicated courts. We thank the town for this opportunity.

This document provides information for the Recreation and Sport Advisory Committee, explaining our opposition to adding pickleball lines to the newly resurfaced tennis courts. It includes a brief history of tennis, the focus required for the sport, and specific concerns about pickleball lines.

BRIEF HISTORY OF TENNIS

Tennis has a long history dating back to the 12th century in France. The game's rules developed over the centuries, with modern tennis rules established in the late 19th century. Tennis requires concentration and focus, with players needing to maintain mental discipline and strategic thinking throughout matches. Players must be fully engaged, maintaining mental clarity and strategic awareness during each point. Distractions can impact performance, making a controlled and consistent environment important for optimal play.

While Pickleball is growing across North America, tennis has been popular for decades and has gained increased popularity recently, particularly with the success of Canadian players like Bianca Andreescu and Félix Auger-Aliassime on the international stage. According to a YouGov Canada study in 2023, nearly 5 million Canadians picked up a racquet in the past year, with youth participation (6–17-year-olds) seeing a growth of over 11% from 2022. In 2023, tennis ranked as the fourth most popular sport in terms of interest (after hockey, soccer, and basketball) and fifth for participation (after soccer, basketball, golf, and hockey) in Canada, exceeding Pickleball in both cases.

The Tillsonburg Tennis Club once thrived with many tennis enthusiasts, but decisions over the years have hindered its growth:

- Reduced courts from six to three.
- Lack of maintenance for court lights and surfaces.
- Poor materials used for court modifications that led to cracks.
- Alternating day schedules for tennis and pickleball.

These changes have created a sense of unfairness among long-time tennis players. Pickleball players have access to new courts, indoor facilities, and the JL Scott McLean Outdoor

recreation pad, which can accommodate four courts and portable nets. Despite these options, they still seek to use the resurfaced tennis courts.



June 2024- full tennis courts

CONCERNS WITH ADDING PICKLEBALL LINES TO TENNIS COURTS

Visual Interference

The addition of extra lines for pickleball can create visual clutter on the court, making it difficult for tennis players to distinguish between the different sets of lines. This can lead to confusion regarding line calls, particularly during the serve and errors during play. (See *Appendix A* for images of the extent of the visual interference)

Disturbance to Ball Bounce

Tennis balls can be affected by the additional lines on the court, leading to unpredictable bounces. This can disrupt the flow of the game and affect the accuracy of shots. (See *Appendix A* for images of the extent of the physical disturbance)

Auditory Disturbance

Pickleball is known for its distinctive, loud "pop" sound when the ball hits the paddle. This noise, along with the typical conversations and social interactions during pickleball games, can be distracting for tennis players who require a quieter environment to maintain focus.

Visual Disruption from Adjacent Games

When pickleball games are played adjacent to tennis matches, the movement and activity can be visually distracting for tennis players. This can further impact their concentration and performance.

Animosity Between Groups

Shared use of courts has led to animosity between tennis and pickleball players. Conflicts have arisen due to differing needs and preferences, resulting in tension and disputes over court usage.

AREA NEED FOR INCREASED SPACE FOR SPORTS

Tillsonburg's population growth has prompted the approval of a feasibility study for a Multi-use Recreation Facility. This project could be located at various community sites and should include multi-use courts to maximize access. The submission for the Pickleball club stated that many communities have addressed population increases by adding pickleball and multi-use courts to existing tennis courts, but what they failed to mention was that most of these communities are already providing dedicated spaces for both tennis and pickleball and the multiuse courts are overflow options. Refer to *Appendix B* for a list of such communities, including nine of the twelve cited by the Tillsonburg Pickleball Club. The remaining three (Thamesford/Zorra, Port Rowan, and Severn) are too small to require separate courts.



Fall 2024

CONCLUSION AND REQUEST

The tennis community requests that Tillsonburg continue to respect the rights of both tennis and pickleball players to have a dedicated space to play their sports in a manner that limits interference.

Based on the overall report that the Pickleball Club submitted they are specifically requesting the tennis space next to the pickleball courts. We question why they do not consider areas with hard surfaces, like JL McLean or the basketball courts behind the arena. They seem to prefer this specific area for their core group to play together. Despite their claim of meeting diverse needs, we are curious why they are not able to schedule rotational play times to avoid overcrowding. Many tennis players have seen large groups at the pickleball courts when retired tennis players are also there. It is unfair for one group to dominate and request an alteration to the tennis courts for their personal social preference.

While pickleball is a popular and growing sport, it can be played indoors during the winter months and on many other surfaces. Our community lacks indoor tennis courts, so outdoor ones are vital for as long as the season and weather allow. It is important to keep tennis courts free of pickleball lines to avoid disruptions for tennis players.

Tillsonburg may be moving forward with a feasibility study to support the growing community. It is requested that all sport representatives are consulted before making final decisions regarding facilities, including multi-use venues at various locations, to ensure that the needs of one sporting group are not prioritized over another.

We respectfully request that the separation of the two sports be maintained indefinitely, with both areas being properly managed. Should the feasibility study indicate a need for additional courts, the town could respond by establishing tennis, pickleball, or multi-use courts in various public spaces. As the town continues to grow, this initiative-taking approach can be applied to other sports accordingly.

The tennis community would be pleased to assist in looking for funding for their sport enhancements if this is needed. There are currently [Community Tennis Grants](#) available from Tennis Canada and National Bank PLUS a [Rogers First Set](#), program designed to inspire youth and families in communities across Canada to try tennis, is poised to rollout in all ten provinces in 2024. Our Town also has service clubs who may be looking for ways to help Tillsonburg continue to grow into a vibrant and engaged community.



July 2024- Full tennis courts- empty Pickleball courts

Appendix A: Visual disturbance of pickleball lines

Visual representation of Pickleball court lines on tennis courts which clearly show the vast number of added lines that will cause visual interference and unpredictable bounces.

Please also note the Image 2 would be completely unfeasible on the Tillsonburg courts as there is only ten feet of space between courts and the direction of play would create a significant Trip and Fall hazard to adjacent courts.

Image 1

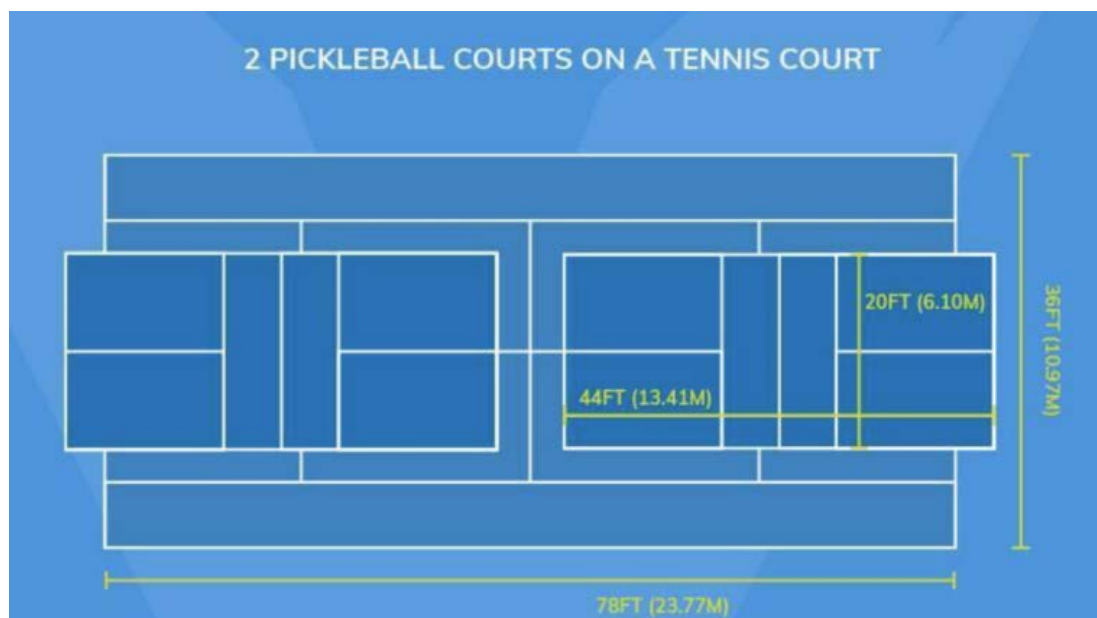
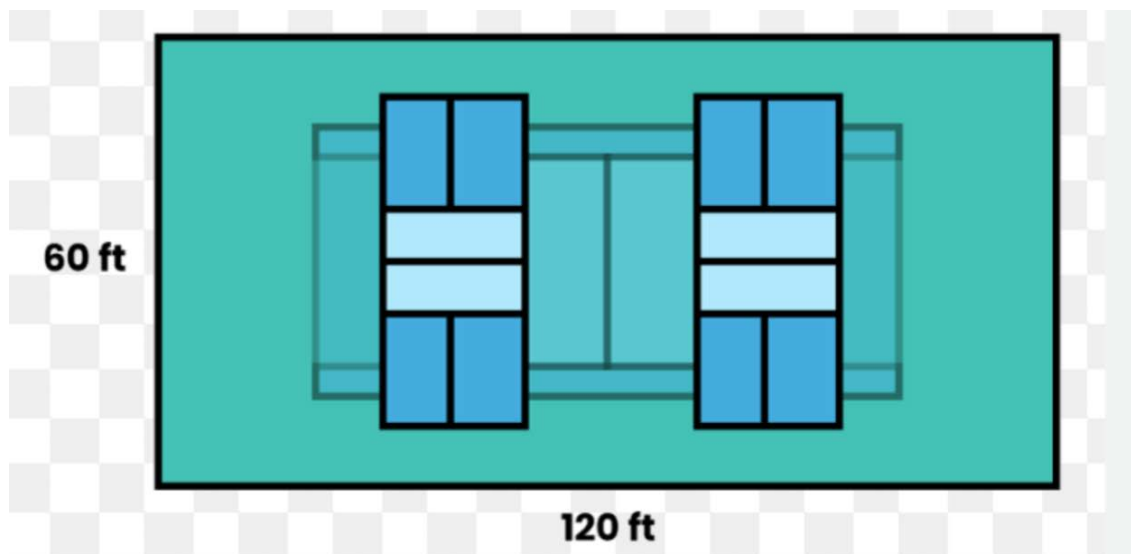


Image 2



Appendix B: Tennis and Pickleball courts

Below is a list of the larger communities referenced in the *Proposal to the Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee* document submitted by the Tillsonburg Pickleball Club where it stated that these communities have embraced the model of multi-use courts. As you can see, in addition to embracing multi-use courts, **they also heavily support and invest in both Tennis and Pickleball with dedicated sporting surfaces.**

Brantford

- Tennis Courts: Brantford has 5 tennis court facilities, including the Dufferin Club and Steve Brown Sports Complex
- Pickleball Courts: There are 31 pickleball courts in Brantford, with locations such as Doug Snooks Eagle Place Community Centre and Lions Park

Stratford

- Tennis Courts: Stratford has 3 tennis court facilities, including the Stratford Tennis Club
- Pickleball Courts: Stratford has 14 pickleball courts, with locations like the Stratford Rotary Complex and Pinnacle Field House

Fort Erie

- Tennis Courts: Fort Erie has 6 tennis courts at the Fort Erie Tennis Club
- Pickleball Courts: Fort Erie has 10 pickleball courts, including locations like Albert Street Park

Vaughan

- Tennis Courts: Vaughan has 134 tennis courts across 60 locations
- Pickleball Courts: Vaughan has 34 pickleball courts across 15 outdoor locations

Cambridge

- Tennis Courts: Cambridge has 20 tennis courts, including public and semi-private clubs like Victoria Park Tennis Club and Hespeler Tennis Club
- Pickleball Courts: Cambridge has 16 pickleball courts, with locations such as John Dolson Centre and Riverside Park

Mississauga

- Tennis Courts: Mississauga has over 100 tennis courts, including public parks and private clubs.
- Pickleball Courts: Mississauga has 40 pickleball courts, with locations like the Mississauga Valley Community Centre and Churchill Meadows Community Centre.

North Bay

- Tennis Courts: North Bay has 6 tennis courts at the North Bay Tennis Centre
- Pickleball Courts: North Bay has 10 pickleball courts across various locations, including the North Bay Granite Club and KTP Racquet Club

Uxbridge

- Tennis Courts: Uxbridge has 11 tennis courts, including those at the Uxbridge Tennis Club
- Pickleball Courts: Uxbridge has 11 pickleball courts, with locations such as Bonner Fields

Norfolk County

- Tennis Courts: Norfolk County has 9 tennis courts, including those at the Port Dover Tennis Club
- Pickleball Courts: Norfolk County has 6 indoor pickleball courts, with 9 multi- use (pickleball and tennis) courts