



Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: February 1, 2021

Re: Public Hearing: Albert-Oakland Park Improvements

## Executive Summary

Public hearing for improvements to the tennis complex at Albert-Oakland Park. Specific improvements include the resurfacing and restriping the existing three tennis courts at the park to create a complex that includes one tennis court and six pickleball courts. The total project cost is \$30,000 and is funded by the Park Sales Tax Fund. This mid-year appropriation is being requested due to the unplayable surface of the existing courts. Staff had originally planned to wait until the 2021 Park Sales Tax ballot issue to fund numerous Albert-Oakland Park projects, but due to numerous citizen complaints, staff feels this is a priority project that needs to be completed in 2021. Improvements to the tennis complex will be completed using contract labor. The posts and nets for the new pickleball courts have been donated by the Columbia Pickleball Club. The resurfacing project is anticipated to be completed in spring 2021.

## Discussion

The 79.4 acre Albert-Oakland Park, located at 1900 Blue Ridge Road, contains a variety of recreational activities and amenities, including park shelters, playgrounds, baseball fields, disc golf courses, an aquatic facility, pickleball courts, tennis courts, walking trail, basketball court and sand volleyball court. The park is identified in the *2013 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* as a community park serving northeast Columbia.

The proposed improvements to the tennis complex at Albert-Oakland Park include the resurfacing of the courts to create one tennis court and six pickleball courts.

By separate legislation, staff is requesting to appropriate funds for the project and update the master plan for the park to reflect the changes to the complex and long-term needs for tennis and pickleball sports at the park.

Staff has been meeting at Albert-Oakland Park for a number of years to discuss the different improvements needed at the community park. The park is one of the oldest parks in the park system and offers a wide variety of recreational activities for citizens. Staff reviewed the proposed improvements identified in the *2013 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* and met several times with members of the Columbia Pickleball Club to discuss court needs for their athletes. Park staff held an interested parties meeting at Shelter #1 on October 13, 2020 to discuss the proposed improvements to the east side of the park that were approved by City Council on December 21, 2020, as well as the proposed changes to the tennis courts at the park. Park staff met with approximately 20 citizens to discuss the proposed plans and gain feedback about the improvements. The public had an additional



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opportunity to provide comments about the project via an online survey at [como.gov](http://como.gov) from October 6, 2020 to October 19, 2020. Staff received over 50 comments in the online survey expressing the need for additional pickleball courts at the park. All feedback from the public input meeting and online [como.gov](http://como.gov) surveys are included with this Council memo and can also be found online at:

<https://www.como.gov/parksandrec/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2020/10/IP-meeting-comments-Albert-Oakland-Park-Improvements.pdf>

Park staff's research supports the hypothesis that pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States. The Sports & Fitness Industry Association's 2019 Participation Report indicated that there are 3.3 million pickleball players in the US. While this is fairly small compared to an estimated 17.84 million tennis players, pickleball has seen a 650% growth in participation over the last 6 years while the number of tennis players increased only 0.9 percent in 2018. Locally, P&R staff continues to see numerous pickleball players on the courts compared to small numbers of tennis players. 2020 marks the 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the USA Pickleball Association, the governing body of pickleball. All court specifications will meet their standards of play. While this project will reduce the number of tennis courts at Albert-Oakland, staff believes that one court will be adequate for the amount of play; and that in the future, the two proposed tennis courts will certainly satisfy the demand. The Columbia Pickleball Club supports this project and is donating all of the nets and posts.

Park staff introduced the proposed improvements to Albert-Oakland Park to the Parks and Recreation Commission on October 15, 2020. After discussion of the project, the commissioners voted to endorse the proposed improvements and recommended that Council approve the plans as presented. After considering all citizen comments and the P&R Commission recommendation, staff believes the proposed improvements to the tennis court complex represent a consensus of park users and staff.

The proposed improvements at the park, funded by a mid-year appropriation of funds from the Park Sales Tax, will include the following:

1. Court Resurfacing. Contract labor will be utilized to complete a multi-step resurfacing process on the playing surface at the tennis complex. The steps include cleaning all court surfaces, repairing all asphalt cracks using a specialized process to seal all existing cracks, leveling all low areas using a high tensile acrylic court leveler and applying three coats of acrylic court surfacing product to restore the courts to the desired condition of Columbia's tennis and pickleball users. The final step in the process is to repaint the court lines on each court based on United States Tennis Association or USA Pickleball Association specifications. This method of resurfacing outdoor tennis and pickleball courts is estimated to return the courts to quality playing condition for five to seven years. The courts at Albert-Oakland Park have not been resurfaced since 2013.

The contractor will change the current court layout, which currently consists of three tennis courts, to a combination of one tennis court and six pickleball courts. This change



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is requested by park staff to meet the current needs of our tennis and pickleball players at the park. The park currently has six dedicated pickleball courts and the addition of six more courts will meet our needs for daily play and increase the opportunity to host pickleball tournaments at the park. The Columbia Pickleball Club has donated the nets and posts for the six new pickleball courts.

Under separate legislation staff is requesting approval of a revised Park Master Plan for Albert-Oakland Park. The new layout of courts at the existing tennis complex and proposed future amenities represent a change to the current master plan for Albert-Oakland Park. Staff feels that the proposed master plan change will serve the current needs for our tennis and pickleball players. While the reduction of tennis courts at the park will limit the amount of tennis played at Albert-Oakland Park, park staff recently completed the resurfacing of the eight dedicated tennis courts at Columbia Cosmopolitan Recreation Area (Cosmo Park). The tennis courts at Cosmo Park provide ample opportunities for tennis in the Second Ward.

Staff will also propose an Albert-Oakland Park improvement project as part of the 2021 Park Sales Tax ballot issue that will include the construction of two new tennis courts on the east side of Albert-Oakland Park. The construction of the two new tennis courts will coincide with the reconstruction of the existing tennis/pickleball complex to ultimately convert the complex into 10 pickleball courts. The change to the master plan for Albert-Oakland Park will create two new tennis courts and ten new pickleball courts at the park. Once this proposed project is completed, pickleball players will have sixteen total courts at the park and there will be two new tennis courts.

The proposed tennis court improvement project is funded by a mid-year appropriation of \$30,000 from the Park Sales Tax Fund. The project will be bid through the City's Purchasing Department, and the proposed improvements will be completed using contract labor. The resurfacing project is anticipated to be completed in spring 2021.

## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: The total project cost is \$30,000 and is funded by a mid-year appropriation of Park Sales Tax Funding.

Long-Term Impact: Park staff does not anticipate an increase in annual maintenance expenses, as staff already maintains the complex including trash collection and mowing.

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

### [Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

### [Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)



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Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities,  
Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

## Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

## Suggested Council Action

After the public hearing, approve the legislation authorizing the project, approving the Albert-Oakland Park Master Plan, and appropriating the funds for the improvements.