

## COMMISSION REPORT

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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE  
COMMISSION

**DATE:** 2018 June 13

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION &  
CULTURAL SERVICES

**FILE:** 02410-20

**SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FROM THE PADEL ASSOCIATION OF BC**

**PURPOSE:** To respond to the Padel Association of BC's request to develop an outdoor padel court facility in Burnaby.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** staff indicate to the Padel Association of BC that their proposal to develop a padel facility on City property cannot be supported at this time for reasons outlined in this report.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to Ms. Susie Chang, Padel Association of BC.

**REPORT**

On Wednesday, 2018 March 21, representatives from the Padel Association of BC made a presentation to Commission seeking support to develop and operate a padel facility in Burnaby. Commission requested that staff prepare a report on the feasibility of the proposal.

Although the sport of padel has existed since the 1960's and grown in other countries, it is brand new to the Lower Mainland region. The proponents are hoping to grow the sport, beginning with City support to create two courts in Burnaby for club use and public drop-in.

The delegation's proposal was forwarded to staff for report to Commission.

**Background**

The racquet sport of padel was invented in the 1960's in Acapulco, Mexico and was initially most popular in Hispanic countries such as Mexico, Argentina and Spain. It has since gained popularity in Europe and has spread to over 40 countries with 8 million

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players according to the proponent’s proposal. The sport of padel has very limited exposure in Canada and is unknown to staff associated with racquet sports. There are currently no padel facilities in the Lower Mainland or in BC. The nearest facility to Burnaby is the Calgary Padel Club which is a not-for-profit club with 2 courts and appears to be the only organized padel association in Canada.

**The Sport Locally**

The Padel Association of BC is attempting to create a facility for the players who have shown an interest in playing padel in the region. It is unclear if the association has submitted proposals in other cities, and Vancouver has indicated they are not accepting any new sport proposals at this time. It is, therefore, assumed that padel players would travel from throughout the Lower Mainland to play in Burnaby if courts were available.

The proponents estimate there are approximately 100 padel players in the Lower Mainland, with 71 followers on Facebook and 107 on Instagram. Their membership goal is 100 players in the first year of operation. The City has received no inquiries from the public for padel and the proponent is the first to approach Burnaby with their stated goal of establishing a home for the sport.

**The Sport**

Padel is typically played outdoors on a synthetic surface covered with a thin layer of sand, with side and back walls that are used during the course of play, similar to squash. The court is substantially smaller than a tennis court, and 3 padel courts can fit onto the area of one tennis court.

The sport is easy to learn and to play because of the smaller court dimensions, underhand serves, softer floor, an easy to use racquet and the use of walls. The rallies generally last longer than in tennis, and the sport has appeal to serious athletes and beginners alike.

A preliminary estimate is that the construction of one court would cost approximately \$180,000, which would include a court, walls and lighting. Considerable planning would also be required to assess a number of initial facility considerations such as business case, court location, space allocation, court walls, fencing, court surfacing, and security. A preliminary assessment indicates City investment in padel courts would be disproportionate to the demand for the sport.

**Competing Interests**

The City endeavors to provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for its residents. Demand for opportunities varies and ultimately competes for a share of City resources. A key consideration in this provision relates to justifying the resource

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required for a particular activity with the level of public demand. Service delivery and infrastructure are also allocated to meet the broadest demands and leverage cross functionality with available resources.

As an example, pickleball has become a very popular activity and has significant demand for more space and time in our indoor and outdoor facilities. Addressing these demands currently involves making selected tennis courts cross functional by adding pickleball lines to the courts for use on a first come, first served basis. The demand considerations and the cross functional opportunities on existing courts allow for a justifiable service development for pickleball. Unfortunately, the same case cannot be made for padel.

### **Conclusion**

The padel proposal has been considered in the above analysis. Based on very limited local participation in the sport and the level of investment required for a single use, purpose built facility, support for the proposal to develop a padel facility is not recommended.



Dave Ellenwood  
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES

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