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Appendix E

Tennis Court Study

To view the attachment for the Tennis Court Study report, contact the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Division.



MEMO TO: Mark Bernhardson, City Manager

MEMO FROM: Randy Quale, Parks and Recreation Manager
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DATE: June 22, 2005

SUBJECT: 3rd Draft - City of Bloomington Tennis Courts Study

Note – below has been revised to incorporate changes per May 26, 2005 meeting with City Manager.

Per an inquiry from Councilmember Harden, Parks & Recreation and Park Maintenance staffs have undertaken a study of tennis courts located in the City of Bloomington. The purpose of the study is to:

1. **Update the City tennis courts inventory.**
2. **Provide a history of past tennis court resurfacing or reconstruction.**
3. **Identify City tennis courts currently in need of resurfacing or reconstruction.**
4. **Calculate costs for undertaking tennis court resurfacing or reconstruction.**
5. **Determine level of use of City tennis courts.**
6. **Determine appropriate number and location of tennis courts to best meet community needs.**
7. **Provide recommendations for undertaking tennis court facilities resurfacing, reconstruction and maintenance.**

1. **Update the City Tennis Courts Inventory**

Attachment A includes a list of tennis courts located within the City that are available for use by the public. There are a grand total of 100 tennis courts in the City, of which 53 are City-owned courts, 24 are Bloomington School District-owned courts and 23 are owned by others. Fourteen of the City’s outdoor courts are lighted. Twelve of the 23 courts owned by others are indoor courts located at the 98th Street Racquet and Swim Club. This list does not include tennis courts that are not available to the general public such as courts located at private residences or apartment complexes.

The City of Bloomington has two classifications of tennis courts: **premier and recreational**. Premier courts have traditional tennis nets while the recreational courts utilize chain link “nets”. The chain link “nets” are more economical to maintain and much less prone to vandalism (vandals cutting nets are a continual concern). The higher skilled players are encouraged to utilize the premier courts while recreational-level players are served at the neighborhood

recreational courts. Also, premier courts are typically placed at larger park sites and consist of four or six courts per site that facilitate tournament play and lesson programs. **The City of Bloomington's premier courts include Bryant Park (four courts), Dred Scott (six courts) and Valley View (six courts).** Those residents who seek the highest quality tennis playing experience may pay a fee to utilize the indoor courts at the 98th Street Racquet and Swim Club.

2. Provide a History of Past Tennis Court Resurfacing or Reconstruction

The Parks Maintenance Division routinely maintains City-owned tennis courts. All other tennis courts in the City are maintained by their respective owners. In select circumstances, the City may assist with the maintenance of courts not owned by the City, provided the courts are made available to the public. For example, the City maintains the courts at Indian Mounds Elementary School for public usage. Also, three years ago the City agreed to split costs for resurfacing the Normandale Community College to facilitate public usage of the courts.

Attachment B includes a history of City tennis court resurfacing or reconstruction.

Resurfacing a court involves the replacement of a color-coated playing surface over the bituminous sub surface, and is typically done every three to four years. Reconstructing a court involves the complete replacement of both the color-coated playing surface and the bituminous sub-surface, and is typically done every twenty to twenty-five years. In addition, the chain-link fencing around the tennis courts needs to be replaced every thirty to thirty-five years. Of the 100 tennis courts in the City, 67 of the courts are in good condition and 33 are in average/poor condition and are in need of resurfacing or reconstruction.

3. Identify City Tennis Courts Currently in Need of Resurfacing or Reconstruction

Since tennis courts need to be resurfaced every three to four years, approximately fifteen of the City-owned courts need to be resurfaced annually. However, due to limited financial resources, resurfacing of courts is often delayed. **Of the 53 tennis courts owned by the City, ten of the courts are in immediate need of reconstruction (Brookside, Brye, Cedarcrest, Ridgeview and Westwood). An additional eight courts will need to be reconstructed within the next three years (Haeg, Kelly, Sunrise and Tarnhill).**

Regarding tennis courts not owned by the City, the Bloomington School District courts are for the most part in good condition. New courts were recently installed at the two high schools. The only School District site where courts are in poor condition are the four courts located at Olson Middle School. However, the School District is planning to reconstruct these courts within the next year.

The six tennis courts at Normandale Community College are in need of reconstruction. However, NCC is reluctant to fund the reconstruction as they only program the courts on a limited basis. NCC has made preliminary inquiries as to whether the City would be interested in a land swap or lease agreement with the City taking over ownership/operation of the tennis courts. The five courts at Old Lincoln High School are in poor condition.

4. Calculate Costs for Undertaking Tennis Court Resurfacing or Reconstruction

The costs for maintaining tennis courts can be broken into three categories: resurfacing, reconstruction and fencing. The estimated costs for resurfacing is \$2,750 per court, reconstruction is \$24,200 per court and replacement of the chain link fencing around a two-court site is \$22,700 per site.

If the City were to proceed with reconstructing the ten tennis courts that are currently in need of reconstruction (Brookside, Brye, Cedarcrest, Ridgeview and Westwood), it would cost an estimated \$242,000 (ten courts at \$24,200 per court). The estimated cost to reconstruct the eight courts that need to be reconstructed within the next three years (Haeg, Kelly, Sunrise and Tarnhill) would be an additional \$179,200 (eight courts at \$24,200 per court). The fencing at these sites does not need replacement at this time. The total estimated cost for reconstructing the eighteen courts listed above is \$421,200.

5. Determine Level of use of City Tennis Courts

While there has been no “official” study of tennis court usage in the City, Parks & Recreation and Parks Maintenance staff have observed usage patterns of the City tennis courts throughout the years. Use of City tennis courts peaked in the 1970’s and dropped off during the 1980’s and 1990’s. During the past five years, tennis court usage has shown an increase, but below the usage levels of the 1970’s.

Based on staff observations, the City’s premium tennis courts (Bryant, Dred Scott and Valley View) are heavily used, often with players waiting to access the courts (especially in the early evening and on weekends). The City’s neighborhood courts are for the most part lightly used. Neighborhood courts are often vacant during the daytime and there are only a few selected sites that get moderate use on evenings and weekends. **The following neighborhood tennis courts receive the most use: Brookside, Haeg, Hyland Hills, Kelly and Sunrise. The neighborhood courts that receive the least use are: Cedarcrest, Northcrest, Ridgeview, Southglen and Tarnhill.**

School District tennis courts are normally not available for public use weekdays during the school year. These courts are heavily used for School District programs during these times. The School District courts are available for public use during the summer months as well as evenings and weekends during the school year. However, these courts are often booked out during the summer daytime hours for lesson programs, league play and school team practices, so public access is somewhat limited. There is also a perception amongst the general public that School District tennis courts are not available for public usage.

6. Determine Appropriate Number and Location of Tennis Courts to Best Meet Community Needs

According to the United States Tennis Association (USTA), a community of 50,000 residents should have at least 50 tennis courts and a community of 100,000 residents should have at least 80 tennis courts. Since the City of Bloomington has 100 courts for 86,000 residents, we easily exceed the USTA’s national standards for tennis courts in our community. **Based on the USTA’s national standards, the City of Bloomington should have a minimum of 75 tennis courts in the community.** Also, as a “rule of thumb”, USTA national standards indicate that a community can support one indoor tennis court for every 10,000 people. Since there are twelve

indoor courts at the 98th Street Racquet and Swim Club, the City of Bloomington again exceeds the USTA's national standards.

Attachment C is a map depicting the locations of tennis courts within the City. The service area shown for each court is a one-mile radius, which is considered the maximum distance that a resident must travel to reasonably access a tennis court. The one-mile radius is the same service area as delineated in the City Comprehensive Plan for neighborhood playgrounds.

As Attachment C illustrates, the virtually all the land within the City falls within a one-mile radius of a tennis court. Accordingly, there doesn't appear to be a need for the construction of additional tennis courts in the City to properly serve the residents of our community. There are in fact several regions in the City where tennis court service areas significantly overlap. It is in these regions of significant overlap where the City should consider reducing the number of tennis courts.

7. **Provide recommendations for undertaking tennis court facilities resurfacing, reconstruction and maintenance**

Based on the information provided in this report and the referenced attachments, staff offers the following recommendations for City tennis courts facilities resurfacing, reconstruction and maintenance.

- A. Since the number of tennis courts within the City greatly exceed USTA national standards, the City should consider reducing the number of tennis courts. This will in turn reduce the City's annual maintenance costs for resurfacing and reconstructing courts. In order to maintain a number of courts that continues to reasonably exceed USTA national standards, staff recommends removing no more than eleven tennis courts in the community.
- B. Tennis courts that are removed may either be replaced with natural green spaces or another desirable park amenity, such as a basketball court. Since basketball courts consist of a bituminous pad without color coating, it is less expensive to maintain than a tennis court (no need to resurface the color-coated surfacing every three to four years).
- C. Removal of tennis courts should occur only in the regions of the City where there are significant overlap of tennis court service areas. This will minimize the impact on residents who play tennis. Also, it is recommended that removal should occur only when the selected courts have reached their useful life and are in need of reconstruction (no sense in removing a court that is in playable condition). Staff recommends the removal of the following courts:
 - i. Old Lincoln High School – immediately remove the five courts from the list of public-accessible tennis courts. The Lincoln courts are in a region of significant tennis court service area overlap. Also, there is no use agreement in place with the property owner so public access to these courts is not officially permitted. Plus the courts are in great disrepair so they are seldom used. It is also quite doubtful that the owners of the courts will provide any funding to reconstruct the courts.

- ii. Reservoir Park – immediately remove the two courts at this location. This is in a region of significant tennis court service area overlap. Plus the City’s Utilities Division supports the removal of the courts due to ongoing security issues with the 82nd Street water reservoir. The estimated cost to the City for the removal of the two Reservoir Park tennis courts is \$6,900. This work would include the removal of the tennis net posts and perimeter fencing (the concrete playing surface would be left in place).
- iii. Cedarcrest Park – immediately remove the two old tennis courts and replace with a single tennis court and a basketball court (the courts and perimeter fencing are in immediate need of reconstruction). This is in another region of significant tennis court service area overlap. Funding for this work including demolition of the old courts and fencing has already been approved by the City Council as part of the overall Cedarcrest Park improvement project. The estimated cost to the City for this work is \$63,000.
- iv. Ridgeview Park – remove the west tennis court and replace with natural green space by 2007 (this is when the courts are due for reconstruction). This is in another region of significant tennis court service area overlap. The estimated cost to the City for this work is \$16,100. This work would include the removal of the west tennis court (\$6,900), planting turf grass and trees (\$3,400), and installation of new perimeter fencing along the west side of the east court (\$5,800).
- v. Brye Park – remove the west tennis court and replace with natural green space by 2007 (this is when the courts are due for reconstruction). This is in another region of significant tennis court service area overlap. The estimated cost to the City for this work is \$16,100. This work would include the removal of the west tennis court (\$6,900), planting turf grass and trees (\$3,400), and installation of new perimeter fencing along the west side of the east court (\$5,800).
- vi. Tarnhill Park – remove the east tennis courts and replace with a basketball court by 2008 (this is when the courts are due for reconstruction). This is in another region of significant tennis court service area overlap. The basketball court would consist of a bituminous pad without color coating, thereby reducing the cost for resurfacing the court every three to four years. The existing tennis court is of a substandard size and is co-located in the parking lot. This is in another region of significant tennis court service area overlap. The estimated cost to the City for this work is \$13,700. This work would include the removal of the tennis net posts (\$1,000), removal of the color coated surfacing (\$4,000), striping a basketball court on the bituminous pad court and installation of two basketball backboards with support posts (\$8,700).

- vii. The total cost to the City to undertake the work described above is \$115,800. Considering the \$22,400 cost to reconstruct a tennis court and the one-time \$16,100 cost to remove a court, it is obviously more cost effective to remove the tennis courts described above than reconstruct them.
- D. The City should strive to provide sufficient funding in the Parks Maintenance budget to properly maintain the City-owned tennis courts. The recommended tennis court maintenance schedule is: resurfacing courts every 3.5 years, reconstructing courts every 22.5 years and replacing chain-link fencing around the courts every 32.5 years. Below are five options to consider for maintaining City tennis courts.
- i. Option #1 - Status quo - retain all 55 existing City-maintained tennis courts and provide maintenance of the courts at the current funding level of approximately \$61,000 per year. This would result in the City continuing to fall behind the recommended tennis court maintenance schedule (the City would only be able to undertake approximately 50% of the annual recommended tennis court maintenance.) **Attachment D shows the maintenance schedule for tennis courts at the status quo funding level.** At a funding level of \$61,000 the City can annually reconstruct two courts and resurface six courts.
- ii. Option #2 - Provide maintenance of all 55 existing City-maintained tennis courts according to the recommended maintenance schedule. In this option, the City would have be able to reconstruct 2.44 courts per year at cost of \$59,048, resurface 15.7 courts per year at a cost of \$43,175 and replace tennis court fencing on 1.69 courts per year at a cost of \$19,182. The total annual cost to maintain the 55 courts according to the recommended maintenance schedule would be \$121,405, nearly double the current funding provided annually for tennis court maintenance (\$61,000). **Attachment E shows the maintenance schedule for the 55 City-maintained tennis courts according to the recommended maintenance schedule.** At a funding level of \$121,405 the City can annually reconstruct two courts and resurface sixteen courts.
- iii. Option #3 - Remove the six City-owned courts described in 7.C. above and maintain the remaining 49 City-maintained tennis courts at the current funding level of approximately \$61,000 per year. This would result in the City continuing to fall behind the recommended tennis court maintenance schedule, although at a lesser extent than in Option #2 above (the City would only be able to undertake approximately 57% of the annual recommended tennis court maintenance.) **Attachment F shows the maintenance schedule for maintaining 49 tennis courts at the current funding level of \$61,000 annually.** At a funding level of \$61,000 the City can annually reconstruct two courts and resurface six courts.

- iv. Option #4 - Remove the six City-owned courts described in 7.C. above and provide maintenance of the remaining 49 City-maintained tennis courts according to the recommended maintenance schedule. In this option, the City would have to reconstruct 2.17 courts per year at cost of \$52,048, resurface 14 courts at a cost of \$38,500 and replace tennis court fencing on 1.5 courts per year at a cost of \$17,025. The total cost to maintain the 49 courts according to the recommended schedule would be \$107,405 annually. **Attachment G shows the maintenance schedule for maintaining 49 tennis courts according to the recommended maintenance schedule.** At a funding level of \$107,405 the City can annually reconstruct two courts and resurface twelve courts.
 - v. Option #5 - Proceed immediately with reconstructing the ten tennis courts that are in immediate need of complete reconstruction (two each at Brookside, Brye, Cedarcrest, Ridgeview and Westwood) at an estimated cost of \$242,000. Also, reconstruct an additional eight courts by 2008 (two each at Haeg, Kelly, Sunrise and Tarnhill) at an estimated cost of \$179,200. The total estimated cost for reconstructing the eighteen courts listed above is \$421,200.
- E. The six courts at Normandale Community College are in need of reconstruction. However, NCC is reluctant to fund the reconstruction as they only program the courts on a limited basis. NCC has made preliminary inquiries as to whether the City would be interested in a land swap or lease agreement with the City taking over ownership the tennis courts. The estimated cost to reconstruct the six courts would be \$145,200. There may be additional costs to address poor soil conditions under the courts. With six courts at one location, the site would serve as an excellent site for tournaments and lessons programs. Staff recommends that the City enter into discussions with NCC to determine whether it is desirable for the City to take over ownership/operations of the NCC courts.
- F. Staff recommends that this report be reviewed with key stakeholders (e.g. School District, USTA, community tennis program administrators, Normandale Community College, etc.) prior to presentation to the City Council at a Council study meeting. We'd also like your take on whether the PARC should review the report prior to presentation to Council.

Paul and I are available to meet at your convenience to discuss this study.