



PROPOSAL FOR CONVERTING LOW GAP TENNIS COURTS TO PICKLEBALL COURTS

September 6, 2021

Executive Summary

On behalf of pickleball players in and around Ukiah, we propose that the two tennis courts at Low Gap Park be converted into six pickleball courts. The Ukiah Pickleball Club is prepared to help plan and execute the conversion, with donated labor and money.

Background

In January of 2021, The Economist magazine ran a story with the following headline:

“Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in America”

The Sport and Fitness Industry Association says pickleball participation grew by 21% in 2020, partly because it is a safe outdoor activity for players of all ages, even during a pandemic.

For cities and counties trying to keep up with growing populations, this trend is great news. Why? Simple math. The same patch of parkland that can accommodate two tennis courts can house six pickleball courts. Plus, pickleball is almost always played as a doubles sport, so 24 people can play at the same time instead of just 4 to 8.

The Ukiah Area Is Sorely Lacking in Pickleball Facilities

There are currently no dedicated pickleball courts in the Ukiah area. The less popular tennis, on the other hand, has six courts at the college, six at the high school, three at Oak Manor, two at Low Gap, and scattered other, mostly private, courts. More than 50 players signed the attached petition, demonstrating the widespread desire for more courts.

Where do we play currently? Pickleball lines have been superimposed on tennis courts in two locations, Oak Manor Park and Low Gap Park, for a total of five courts. (The double set of lines is confusing for both pickleball and tennis players. Also, the net height must be adjusted depending on which sport is being played.)

Currently, because Low Gap has only two courts, the Ukiah Pickleball Club hosts drop-in play at Oak Manor three mornings each week. On a recent Saturday, at the peak time, 23 players were gathered at Oak Manor, eager to play, but half of them had to wait for a court at any given time. Our Facebook page has 92 followers, more than a few of whom have simply stopped coming to drop-in play because of long wait times. Several players travel south to Sonoma County each weekend, where there are dedicated pickleball courts.

Players come from Ukiah, Redwood Valley, Potter Valley, Willits, and even from the coast and Lake County. Occasionally, visitors from out of town join us, after finding out about play times via our website

(ukiahpickleball.org). Nearly every week, a new player joins in the fun. Even out-of-town firefighters have played with us.

While we have players of all ages, many of our growing population of pickleball players are seniors who abandoned tennis because it became too physically demanding. The Blue Zones Project and the Blue Point needs assessment both point to the need for more and better senior facilities in Mendocino County.

Low Gap Park is a great location for pickleball courts

Low Gap Park has ample parking. There are no residential neighbors to be pestered by paddle noise and players happily shouting. Restrooms are located nearby. Existing trees provide some shelter from the wind, which is important to a sport played with wiffle balls.

We have measured the site and determined that it can easily accommodate six pickleball courts (see layout on page 4). The court surface needs refurbishing anyway; it badly needs to have its many cracks filled, and its courts repainted (see photos on page 5).

The two tennis courts at Low Gap Park are rarely used by tennis players. We know this because some pickleball players have begun to play there regularly, and they rarely encounter tennis players.

How much will it cost?

After consulting with the Shasta Lake Pickleball Club, which performed a similar conversion, we estimate the hard costs to be less than \$10,000 (see the List of Tools on page 9 and the List of Materials on page 10). Lights for night-time play would be welcomed, but if that added cost turns out to be prohibitive, we regard it as an add-on, not a requirement.

We plan to raise funds to help offset the costs of this project. We are currently working toward achieving 501(c)(7) tax-exempt status as an unincorporated nonprofit association. Our members have pledged more than \$3,800 for this project. The South Ukiah Rotary Club has pledged \$1,000. We have barely begun our outreach.

Some of our members have experience with court repairs or similar construction activities and are willing to donate their labor. We have researched the steps involved (see the Court Surfacing and Repair Hints on pages 11-13) and have links to how-to videos online. We would welcome assistance and supervision from county staff to make sure the results meet county standards.

Conclusion

The local pickleball community has grown rapidly in recent years. The lack of local pickleball courts is causing long wait times. Out of frustration, some players are splintering away from the drop-in play times, reducing the social value of the game for everyone involved.

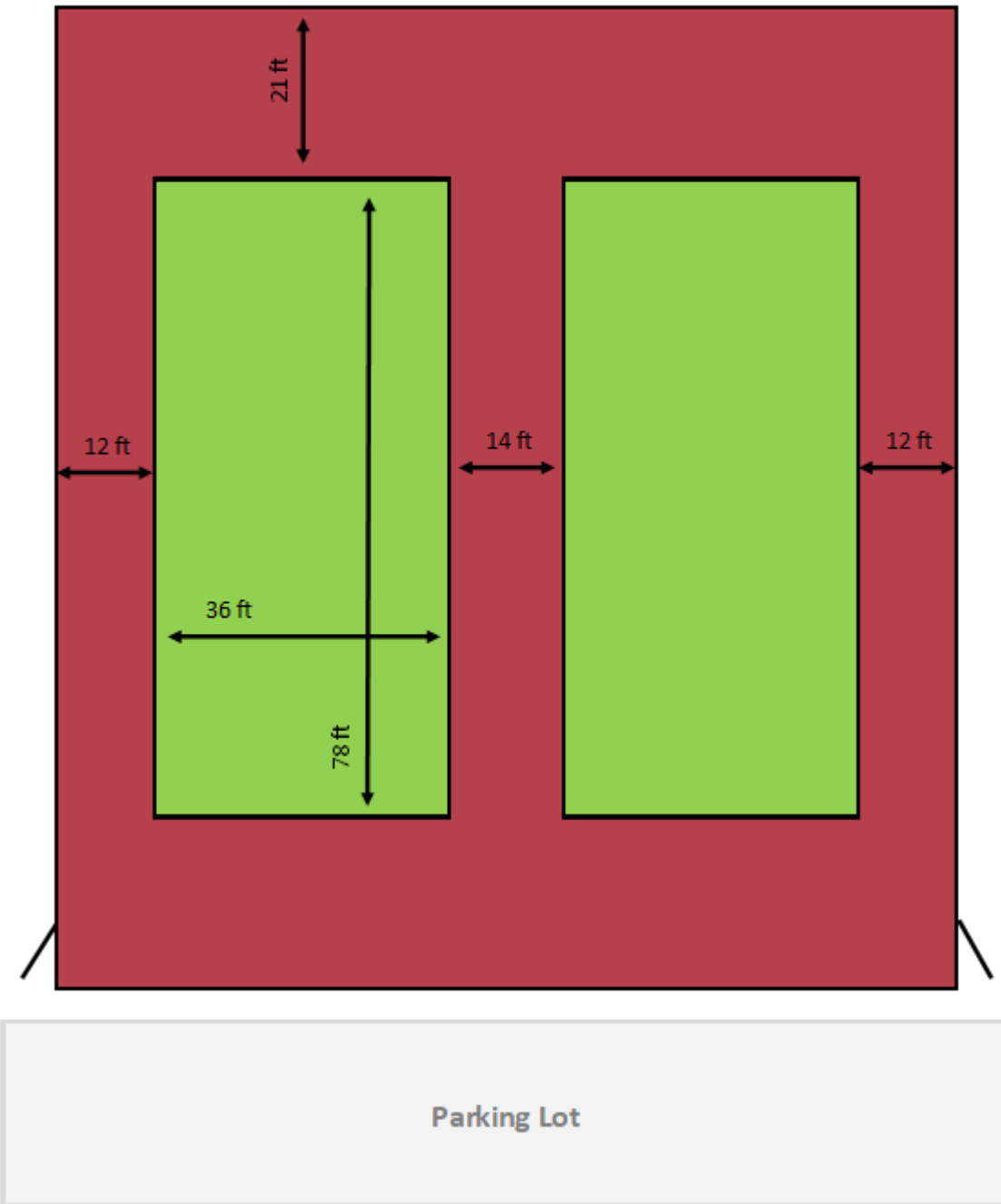
A solution is well within reach: Low Gap Park has two under-utilized tennis courts, which can be converted cheaply into six pickleball courts, serving 24 simultaneous players. Considering that the courts will need to be refurbished soon anyway, this is an opportunity for the county to get significant help with the expense, and to serve a growing need in the community at the same time.

Ukiah Pickleball Club is well organized, and we are determined to do everything we can to help county staff do the work and help pay for it.

For further information, please contact our president, David Riemenschneider, at driemen@pacific.net. Thank you for considering this proposal.

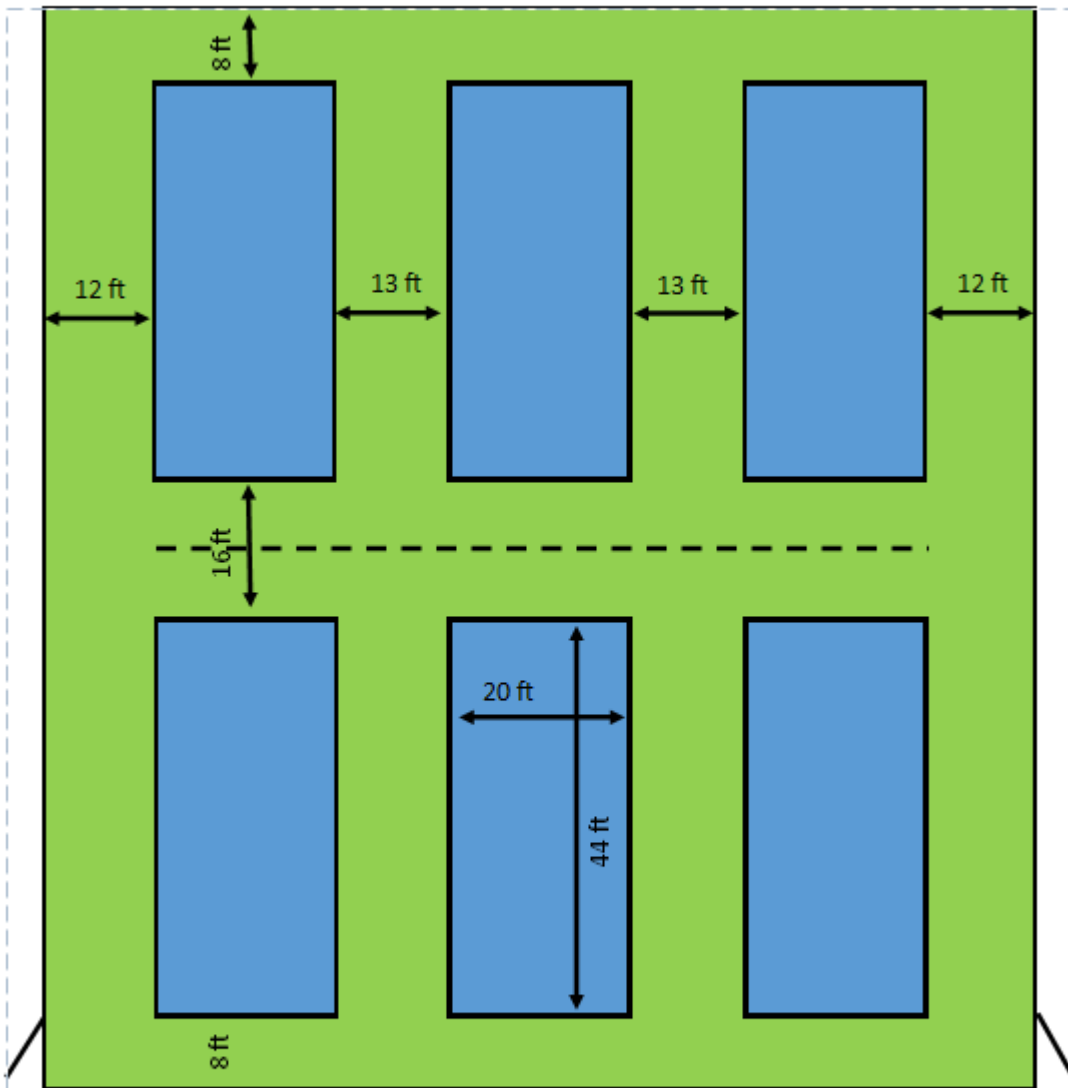
Existing Tennis Courts at Low Gap Park

These courts accommodate 4 to 8 players



Proposed Pickleball Courts at Low Gap Park

These courts would accommodate 24 players



Parking Lot

Low Gap Courts Are Overdue for Attention



Ukiah Pickleball Club members have already shown a willingness to help maintain the Low Gap courts.

BEFORE 

AFTER




Courts at Oak Manor Park Are Too Crowded



Even with a temporary court set up, all courts are full.



Lots of players have to wait on the sidelines.



Paddles of waiting players, in two racks (regular and advanced play).

Courts at City of Shasta Lake (Before and After)



Tools Needed, with Costs

| TOOLS NEEDED | QTY | PRICE | COST |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----------|-----------------|
| V-Shaped Coating Application Squeegee | 1 | \$79.95 | \$79.95 |
| 36" Coating Application Squeegee | 1 | \$124.95 | \$124.95 |
| 24" Coating Application Squeegee | 1 | \$104.95 | \$104.95 |
| Floor Scaper | 1 | \$31.97 | \$31.97 |
| Wheelbarrow | 1 | Donated | \$0.00 |
| Regular Shovel | 1 | Donated | \$0.00 |
| Square Point Shovel | 1 | Donated | \$0.00 |
| Garden Hose (100') | 3 | \$36.49 | \$109.47 |
| Faucet Splitter | 1 | \$9.99 | \$9.99 |
| Hose Nozel/Sprayer | 2 | \$9.99 | \$19.98 |
| 3" Paint Roller Handle | 2 | \$8.42 | \$16.84 |
| 3" Paint Roller Cover | 4 | \$3.80 | \$15.20 |
| 5' Roller Handle & Squeegee Handle | 2 | \$7.50 | \$15.00 |
| 5 Gallon Bucket | 5 | \$3.60 | \$18.00 |
| 1 Gallon Pail | 2 | \$8.34 | \$16.68 |
| Chalk Line | 1 | Donated | \$0.00 |
| Mixing Paddle (5 gal) | 1 | \$25.00 | \$25.00 |
| Mixing Paddle (55 gal) | 1 | \$35.00 | \$35.00 |
| Yellow Carpenter Crayons | 2 | \$3.00 | \$6.00 |
| Line Taping Machine | 1 | \$320.38 | \$320.38 |
| Whisk Broom | 1 | Donated | \$0.00 |
| Drill Motor (Mixing) | 1 | Donated | \$0.00 |
| Gas Powered Pressure Washer | 1 | Donated | \$0.00 |
| Gas Powered Blower | 1 | Donated | \$0.00 |
| Orbital Floor Sander (rented) | 1 | Donated | \$0.00 |
| TOOL COST | | | \$949.36 |

Estimated Materials, with Costs

| MATERIALS NEEDED | QTY NEEDED | SIZE | QTY | PRICE | COST |
|--|------------|--------|-----|----------|-------------------|
| Acrylic Patch Binder (cracks & bird baths) | 10 gal | 5 gal | 2 | \$200.00 | \$400.00 |
| Neutral Concentrate w/sand (2 coats) | 110 gal | 55 gal | 2 | \$581.99 | \$1,163.98 |
| Pigment (Light Green OB, field) | 4 gal | 1 gal | 4 | \$64.99 | \$259.96 |
| Pigment (Blue, PB courts) | 4 gal | 1 gal | 4 | \$59.99 | \$239.96 |
| Sand (40-60 mesh for Patch Binder) | 200 | 100 | 2 | \$13.00 | \$26.00 |
| Cement (added to Patch Binder) | 2 bags | 94 lbs | 2 | \$10.00 | \$20.00 |
| White Line Paint, Textured | | | 1 | \$34.99 | \$34.99 |
| Stripe Rite (Crisp, sharp lines) | | | 1 | \$22.99 | \$22.99 |
| Sport Wax (acrylic top coat - 2 coats) | 120 gal | 30 gal | 4 | \$525.99 | \$2,103.96 |
| 2" Masking Tape. 180' Roll | 3000' | 180' | 17 | \$9.00 | \$153.00 |
| Masking Paper, 1000' Roll | 2000' | 1000 | 2 | \$22.98 | \$45.96 |
| Pickleball Post (set of 2) | 6 | 1 set | 6 | \$379.99 | \$2,279.94 |
| Pickleball Net | | | 6 | \$159.99 | \$959.94 |
| Post Sleeve (set of 2) | 6 | 1 set | 6 | \$28.99 | \$173.94 |
| Blue Chalkline Chalk | | | 1 | \$2.99 | \$2.99 |
| Pickleball paddle rack | | | 1 | \$109.99 | \$109.99 |
| Signage: Court & game rules on Aluminum | | | 2 | \$89.95 | \$179.90 |
| Misc. tarps, rags, gloves, safety goggles | | | | | \$100.00 |
| | | | | | |
| MATERIALS COST | | | | | \$8,277.50 |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL TOOLS | | | | | \$949.36 |
| TOTAL MATERIALS | | | | | \$8,277.50 |
| TOTAL LABOR | | | | | FREE |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | | | \$9,226.86 |

We Are Prepared to Help: Court Surfacing and Repair Hints

This tennis court surfacing and repair industry is very unique. Tennis court surfacing and repair can be accomplished with a relatively low investment, in comparison to other trades. The right tools and equipment can help a good contractor achieve a quality tennis court surfacing job, in a safe and timely manner. The following list contains both necessary items and optional items that make the tennis court surfacing and repair process easier, quicker or cleaner.

1. Truck :Preferably, a flatbed truck with side racks and a hydraulic lift gate for loading and unloading surfacing material drums. A trailer that is low to the ground can also be utilized for transporting drums to the jobsite. Court surfacing materials can be mixed on the trailer, without removing heavy drums.

2. Drum Cart :Heavy duty 2-wheel cart for moving drums of court surfacing material. A good drum cart has a sliding hook and secures the top of the drum, to keep drum secure on cart.

3. Mixing Equipment :For Tennis Court Surfacing and Repair Materials

- a. Agitated tanks – SportMaster Color Mixing Machines
- b. Electric Drill: 1 ½ HP or larger, with long paddle mixer (approx. 30 inches) to reach bottom of drums.

4. Blower :At least 5 horsepower for removing debris, prior to surfacing.

5. Edging tool :Billy Goat Grazor, Little Wonder Pro Edger, or weed wacker to remove vegetation around court, and prevent from hanging into the court, prior to court repairs and surfacing.

6. Line Taping Machine :Dispenses masking tape for line painting, after surfacing coats.

- a. Striping accessories:
 - i. 2” to 3” paint roller & threaded handle (or paint brush)
 - ii. Good quality masking tape (approx. 8 rolls per tennis court)

7. Scrapers :Wide scrapers for scraping the court surface before and after each coat of surfacing material is applied, (SportMaster Super Scraper).

8. Broom :Stiff street brooms for cleaning.

9. Sport Application Squeegee :For tennis court surfacing material application.

10. Patching Straight Edges :Available from SportMaster in various lengths (always use straight edge wider that area in need of repair). Steel screed, for patching/leveling low spots (bird baths) on court surface.

11. Shovels :For picking up excess surfacing materials from court surfaces.

12. Two 100 foot Tape Measures :preferably steel, same make and model.

13. Chalk Line :For line/stripping layout.

14. Chalk or Soap Stones :Markings.

15. Clean Empty Pails (5-gallon) :

- a. For mixing court surfacing materials and patching mixes.
- b. For transporting patching, repair, and surfacing materials.
 - i. SportMaster “Sealer Wheeler” is also helpful for transporting court surfacing material onto court during application process.
- c. A smaller (approx. 2-gallon) pail is helpful for dipping into drums and splitting repair and surfacing materials, when mixing with drill and paddle mixer.

16. Masking Tape :

- a. For marking corners of playing areas on two-tone courts, to preserve existing lines and eliminate having to layout lines from scratch, after surfacing.

17. Roofing Paper (rolls) :Tape down at the end of a tennis court insert to collect extra surfacing materials, for ease of removal by shovel.

18. Tarp :For mixing area on jobsite and entry area to courts. Prevents drips and splatter of surfacing and repair materials from getting on the ground.

19. Empty Drums :

- a. Clean drums for mixing court repair and surfacing materials
- b. Extra drums for cleaning tools and collecting wastewater

20. Rags :For cleanup and to fill Net Post Sleeves prior to surfacing (prevents filling sleeves with coatings).

21. Other Tools & Equipment :

- a. Wrench and Socket: For opening/closing lids on drums.
- b. Water Hoses & Spray Nozzle: For dilution & cleaning.

- c. Garden-Type pump sprayer: For spraying Acrylic Adhesion Promoter (on new concrete courts) and good for misting hot court surfaces in front of application, to cool surface.
- d. Pressure Washer & cleaning supplies: Tri Sodium Phosphate (TSP) for cleaning detergent, and bleach to remove fungus, moss & mold, when needed. Visit www.sportmaster.net for maintenance and cleaning manual.
- e. Water Source: Make sure locate/secure on-site water or bring clean water for pressure washing, cleaning, and dilution of repair and surfacing products.
- f. Power Source: Make sure to locate/secure on-site electric or bring a generator to power the drill for mixing court surfacing and repair materials.
- g. Pail Openers: For efficient opening of pails.
- h. Trowel/Putty Knife: For application of acrylic trowel grade crack fillers and repair products.
- i. V or U-shaped Squeegee: To apply Acrylic Patch Binder mix into cracks and areas where surface repair is needed.
- j. Box Cutter: Use to open boxes, cut pour spouts on jugs, etc.
- k. Wire Brush: Helpful for cleaning surfacing materials that are dried on tools, and to remove stubborn vegetation in cracks, prior to repair.
- l. Work Gloves: Hand Protection
- m. Dust Mask: Use for air safety when pouring silica sand into surfacing materials.

22. Caution Tape :Secure the courts after application to prevent premature usage and tracking of sport surfacing materials.

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