

# Manotick Court Expansion Project: Community Consultations February-April 2022

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## Executive Summary

From February to May 2022, a committee appointed by the Manotick Tennis Club conducted community consultations on a concept plan that introduces 6 new pickleball courts on a grassy area of Centennial Park not currently used by any organized sporting group. The committee conducted 1:1 consultations with key stakeholders, followed by a community webinar. The community was invited to fill out a survey indicating their thoughts on the concept plan.

Survey results indicated a slight majority of respondents (53%) supported or largely supported the concept plan. However, when asked about their concerns, 38% of respondents indicated that noise from pickleball play was a serious concern.

When stakeholders and survey respondents were asked to give more information on how they would improve the concept plan, by far the most mentioned comments were

- Move the courts to a different location in Centennial Park (21% of respondents)
- Move the courts to a different park within Manotick (21% of respondents)

## Background on Manotick Tennis Club

[The Manotick Tennis Club \(MTC\)](#) is a community club that has operated for more than 50 years, offering affordable programs for members and the community. The club has been in its current location in Centennial Park for more than 30 years. The club offers spring and fall after-school programs, summer camps, adult lessons and clinics, and club membership at affordable rates. The club also partners with local schools and associations to enable and promote participation in tennis and pickleball and hosts competitive tournaments.

The Manotick Tennis Club is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that collectively have decades of experience in building capacity for community recreation within the City of Ottawa. The Manotick Tennis Club operates as an incorporated not-for-profit member association under the auspices of the City of Ottawa.

Until recently, the facility offered six courts for tennis. In 2018 the club introduced pickleball as a pilot project and converted one tennis court (the furthest west) into four temporary pickleball courts. It was an overwhelming success.

## Background on court expansion project

The club is seeking to increase pickleball and tennis playing capacity to better serve members and the community at large. In 2019, the club engaged Fotenn planning and design consultants to develop a court expansion concept plan to support a grant application to the City of Ottawa Community Partnership Major Capital program. Fotenn consulted with the club, the City of Ottawa maintenance staff at the Mike O'Neil Arena, and the Manotick Culture, Parks and Recreation Association (MCPRA), who are spearheading the Centennial Park Enhancement Project. In November 2021, the club received approval in principle from the City of Ottawa on a 50-50 cost sharing partnership that will see the City contributing 50 percent of the project costs up to a maximum of \$150,000.

### Court expansion rationale

There are several factors contributing to building permanent pickleball courts in Manotick:

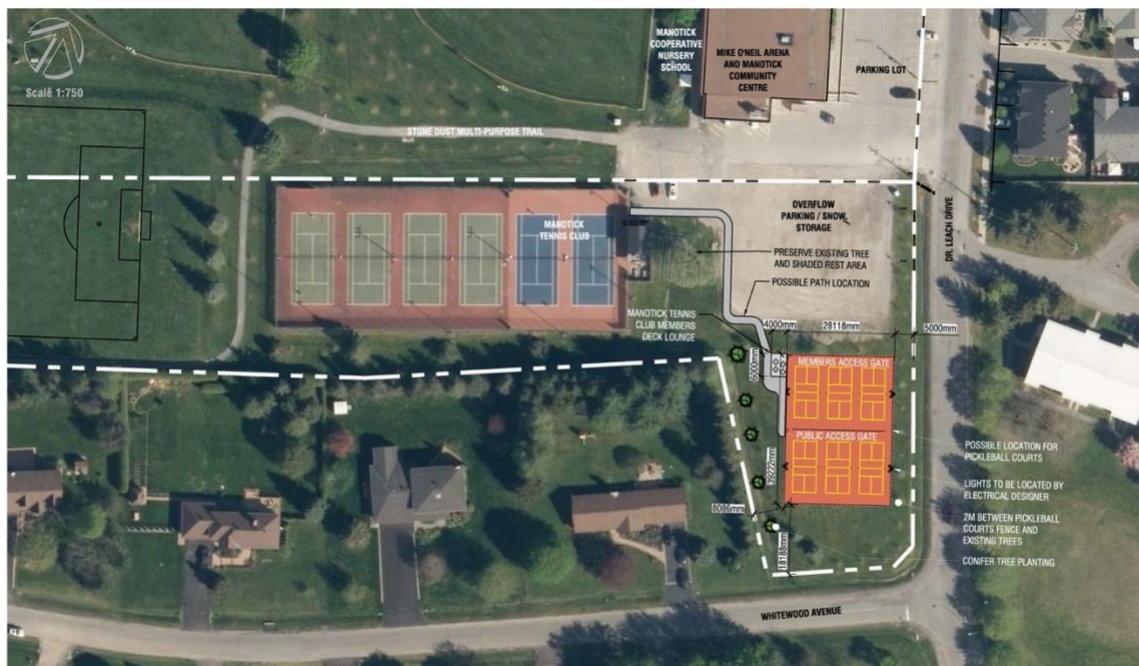
- 1) **Manotick Tennis Club is seeing dramatic increases in demand for its tennis and pickleball programs.**
  - Participation in summer tennis programs doubled between 2018 and 2021.
  - Club membership has dramatically increased. In 2021 the club achieved an all-time high of 651 members. In 2022, club membership was increased slightly to 700 members and that number was reached by the middle of April, prior to club opening. At time of writing, the membership waitlist was above 100 people/households.
  - Two high school tennis teams now use courts for practice.
- 2) **South Ottawa is particularly underserved for tennis and pickleball.** The City of Ottawa's [Provision Levels for Parkland and Recreational Facilities](#) notes that current

plans for building tennis and pickleball courts to 2031 are not sufficient to meet target provisioning levels. As the fastest-growing region in the City, South Ottawa is particularly underserved for tennis and pickleball courts.

- 3) **Manotick demographics are well-suited to pickleball.** Manotick has a larger 55+ population than the City at large. [The Sports and Fitness Industry association](#) reports that 75% of core participants of pickleball are 55 and older (core participants are defined as those that play 8 or more times per year.)
- 4) **The current pickleball courts are only temporary.** The existing location is not intended to be a permanent site for pickleball.

### Court expansion concept plan

The concept plan sited six dedicated pickleball courts on existing grassy recreational land at the corner of Whitewood Avenue and Dr. Leach Drive. This plan would allow the club to convert the current pickleball courts back to a tennis court. The concept plan shares the new pickleball courts between the club and the community. The concept plan suggests fencing and lights to the required City of Ottawa standards. The concept plan was sited to minimize interference with other park uses, such as snow storage from the arena in winter. The concept plan was also sited in a way that does not remove any trees from the park, requires minimal site investment (i.e. changes to drainage) and does not affect existing parking.



## Community Consultation Process

Community consultations are part of any Major Capital Grant process. The club convened a committee to lead consultations with the community:

1. Lori Gadzala, Board Member, Manotick Tennis Club
2. Diana Dowthwaite, Board Member, Manotick Tennis Club and President, Ottawa Pickleball Association
3. Tom Plant, Board Member, MCPRA

The committee conducted consultations in two phases.

### Phase 1: 1:1 Consultations with park users, community groups and neighbours

The committee reached out to the following community groups, neighbours and users of Centennial Park and Mike O'Neil Arena. Individual consultations were conducted either in person, over zoom, or over email.

<b>Neighbours</b>	<b>Users of Centennial Park / Mike O'Neil Arena</b>	<b>Community Groups / Groups using Manotick Tennis Club</b>
Various adjacent neighbours on Whitewood Avenue	Ottawa South United Soccer	Manotick Village and Community Association (MVCA)
Hyfield Place Board of Directors	Manotick Softball Association	Manotick Culture, Parks and Recreation Association (MCPRA)
Village Walk Community Association	Manotick Cooperative Nursery School	Manotick BIA
	Rideau Osgoode Minor Hockey	St. Mark High School Tennis Team
		St. Francis Xavier HS Tennis Team

Existing users of Centennial Park were largely supportive of the concept plan, assuming their use was not impacted. Some concerns were voiced about whether the park had sufficient parking spaces for peak usage times.

Community groups were generally supportive of the concept plan, with some adding caveats that their support assumed that community noise and parking concerns would be adequately addressed. The MTC has received letters of support from the MVCA, the MCPRA, St. Mark High School Tennis team and St. Francis Xavier HS Tennis team.

Neighbours were supportive of the idea of expanding pickleball in Manotick, however most were not supportive of the location outlined in the concept plan. The overwhelming concern was noise from pickleball play interfering with the enjoyment of their homes, yards, balconies, and front porches. Secondary concerns were losing green space as well as neighbourhood disruption and safety concerns due to parking.

## Phase 2: Consultations with the community at large

The committee and its community partners promoted a consultations webinar through social media, email and in the Manotick Messenger. The committee conducted a one-hour webinar March 23 for the community, explaining the motivations for court expansion and giving an overview of the concept plan. More than 40 community members attended the webinar. The webinar was also recorded and posted on the MTC website and the recording received 71 views. During the webinar, participants were invited to fill out a survey, and the survey remained live and available through the MTC website for two weeks following the webinar.

The survey received 72 responses with broad representation from the club, neighbours and the community (see below). Respondents could choose more than one descriptor.

▼ MTC member tennis player	27.78%	20
▼ MTC member pickleball player	29.17%	21
▼ Non-member tennis player	13.89%	10
▼ Non-member pickleball player	9.72%	7
▼ Neighbour, Dr. Leach or Whitewood	29.17%	21
▼ Community member	50.00%	36
▼ Community business owner	2.78%	2
<b>Total Respondents: 72</b>		

## Community consultations: What we heard

### Determining when pickleball players would prefer to play

For survey respondents (no. = 27) who indicated they played pickleball, the survey asked when they most preferred to play. Every day of the week (Monday-Sunday) was broken down into morning, afternoon and evening and respondents were asked to choose all times that applied. The table below indicates the top 10 most popular times.

Day and time	Number of respondents
Saturday mornings	21
Friday mornings	18
Monday mornings	17
Sunday mornings	17
Wednesday mornings	17
Tuesday mornings	15
Thursday mornings	14
Tuesday evenings	13
Thursday evenings	13
Wednesday evenings	11

### Evaluating support for concept plan for permanent pickleball courts in Centennial Park

In the survey, when respondents were asked how they would characterize their support for the current concept plan for permanent pickleball courts and returning court 6 to tennis, a slight majority (53%) expressed support for the plan.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Looks great, let's get going!	30.30% 20
▼ I support the concept plan with a few tweaks	22.73% 15
▼ I support the idea of permanent pickleball courts in Centennial park but not this concept plan	15.15% 10
▼ I do not support any plan that expands pickleball in Centennial park	31.82% 21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>

### Hearing concerns regarding concept plan

In phase one of consultations, many groups, organizations that use the park, and neighbours that were individually consulted were asked about their feedback on the concept plan. For those people that filled out the survey in phase two of consultations, forty respondents left

comments regarding the concept plan. The table below captures the concerns we heard in consultation phases one and two, from the most frequently heard concerns to the least.

Methodology: Concerns about the concept plan fell into several recurring themes. Each comment was tagged depending on the theme the comment touched on (many comments in the survey had more than one concern, and the groups consulted in phase one often had more than one concern.) The table below details each theme, the number of times the theme was mentioned by either an individual or a group (either in phase one or phase two of consultations), and some representative comments on that theme. In the case of the survey, several respondents repeated the same theme in more than one part of the survey, however the theme was only counted once per individual.

It is possible that people who were consulted in phase one also completed the survey in phase two and mentioned the same concerns, in which case their concerns were counted as two mentions.

<b>Theme/Concern</b>	<b># of mentions</b>	<b>Representative comments</b>
Noise	25	<p>The noise of pickleball from spring to fall is a serious concern. I live across the street from the proposed project. This will severely affect my quality of life.</p> <p>I understand the benefit of pickleball but find it very noisy due to the hard plastic ball and paddle.</p> <p>It concerns me that there may be constant, repetitive noise throughout the day in the summer. This will greatly affect my enjoyment of my garden.</p> <p>Concerned about late play. Have heard people playing to 10-11pm in the past.</p>
Losing green space	9	<p>As a resident of Whitewood we regularly access that greenspace. I do not like the concept of eliminating green space and infringing on the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Would like green space to be preserved.</p>
Traffic	5	<p>Don't see the community benefit of adding more traffic in the neighbourhood so non club members can come to Manotick.</p>
Parking	5	<p>The new addition only adds to existing parking issues at the overall park.</p> <p>Parking shortage in village impacting Arena parking.</p>

		Do not want to encourage parking on Whitewood.
Community access	5	Need more details on member vs. public access to pickleball courts.  Concerned about the community use and the possible restriction on members
Lighting	4	Light issues need to be strongly considered.  Will lights shine in my bedroom windows at night?
Inappropriate site (other reasons not already mentioned)	3	What an eyesore in that location!  Concerns about negative neighbourhood impacts due to partially obstructed views.
Safe access from Whitewood to parking lot	2	Should maintain safe pedestrian and bike access to Centennial park without going on road. There is no paved shoulder between Dr. Leach Drive and Whitewood.
Litter	1	Minimize litter that blows into yards from unpaved parking lot

Improving the concept plan for proposed pickleball courts in Centennial Park

In both phases of consultations, we asked people what we could do to improve the concept plan. Again, we grouped the responses we received in phases one and two into themes, with the same methodology as above. Several ideas (for example design ideas or operational ideas that did not concern sound or lighting) were grouped together.

Themes	Number of mentions	Representative comments
Move courts to different location in Centennial Park	20	Living next door to the arena I can count on one hand how many times that vacant gravel lot is even close to full. The Zamboni still has tons of room for snow even if courts are on the gravel.  Would like to see the courts shifted toward the "overflow parking" as much as possible, taking into consideration the need for snow removal for the arena.  Consider converting existing tennis courts to pickleball where the sounds are not as close to Hyfield place and Village Walk.

		<p>Situate courts out of the public view within the park and keep noise away.</p> <p>Keep the green space, convert the existing gravel lot.</p> <p>Shift the courts to half on greenspace, half on gravel lot.</p> <p>Expand the courts to the north, between the arena and tennis courts.</p>
Move courts to different park entirely	17	<p>The courts are currently sited in the highest-density residential area in Manotick. Inappropriate site.</p> <p>Find a better site: aside from pickleball players, the rest of the community suffers from this location selection. Adds traffic issues, noise issues, reduces green space. Also, if the sport is this popular and the south Ottawa region is underserved (per the webinar), why build in a location that limits future expansion? Other sites could let you keep growing if needed.</p> <p>This park is very busy and has limited free space left - doesn't seem like the spot for a growing sport.</p> <p>Beryl Gaffney has parking, highway access, parking (and room for expansion), and is a far distance from residences.</p>
Design considerations - other	15	<p>Keep as much green space as possible</p> <p>Keep trees / Plant more trees</p> <p>Extend walkway from current overflow parking lot to Whitewood/Potter</p> <p>Clubhouse improvements</p> <p>Put under a dome</p>

		Add more bike racks
Design ideas - Pickleball court improvements	13	<p>Consider fencing between all courts; other fencing ideas (height etc)</p> <p>Court spacing – make sure adequate space between courts</p> <p>May be too limited regarding number of courts especially considering growth in the sport.</p> <p>Ideas concerning seating, wind abatement, colours of lines</p>
Design considerations – noise mitigation	9	<p>Pursue effective noise mitigation techniques/sound barriers</p> <p>Acoustifence</p>
Do not proceed	7	<p>Do not move forward as there were a lot of concerns raised during the call.</p> <p>Scrap the idea.</p>
Design considerations - lighting	6	<p>Consider not lighting the courts so that play stops by dark on summer nights so that people can have their windows open and go to sleep without the horrific noise of pickleball.</p> <p>Must have lighting.</p> <p>Have lights on timers so they turn off at night and stay off.</p>
Operational considerations – time of play	6	<p>Limit playing hours to minimize impact on nearby residents.</p> <p>Knowing that pickleball causes an obnoxious noise, consider limiting play times from 9am til 9pm so that local residents will not be wakened early or prevented from sleeping due to the noise.</p>
Operational ideas - other	5	<p>Integrate pickleball with MTC to strengthen member/community experience.</p>

		<p>Have a list of founding pickleball members help raise funds.</p> <p>Build courts quickly and efficiently.</p>
Research and development ideas	4	<p>See if community members can contribute via time and/or construction expertise/resources to complete project sooner</p> <p>Contact other cities who have undertaken similar changes.</p>