

Rationale for a Sechelt Pickleball Facility - 2023



Summary of Intent

This document outlines the Sunshine Coast Pickleball Association’s (SCPA) rationale for seeking a permanent indoor pickleball facility in the District of Sechelt on Lots 9 & 10, DL 1471.

Our Proposal

This proposal is an update to SCPA’s ‘Rationale for a Sechelt Pickleball Facility’ presented to DoS Committee as a Whole on Oct. 23, 2019. At that meeting Council unanimously supported our proposal and delegated it to staff for review. Here’s a link to the [Coast Reporter article](#) summarizing the presentation and Council’s response. Unfortunately, staff consideration of our proposal was delayed due to the uncertainty regarding a daycare proposed for a portion of Lot 10 plus the Covid-19 imposed interruption of 2020/2021. The siting of the proposed daycare is now established for the southwest portion of the lot. Our current proposal has the pickleball facility sited for the northern portion of Lots 9 & 10 between the [Suncoast Racquets Club](#) and the [Sunshine Coast Arena](#).

In the three+ years since to our 2019 presentation, the justification for a year-round indoor facility has strengthened considerably due to the substantially increased demand for pickleball courts on the Coast.

**Pickleball Facility
Between
Tennis & Arena
With Access off of
Arena Driveway**



An important prerequisite for this initiative is leasing District land on similar terms to that of the Suncoast Racquet Club. Our lease would likely straddle Lots 9 & 10 but not interfere with any of the other facilities on these lots. As drawn, access to the facility is from the Arena driveway, but if that access is not possible access to the facility could be from Lighthouse either above or below the Racquets Club lease. Depending on the siting of the proposed daycare a shared access and parking might be possible. We have met with directors of the Racquet Club and they support our proposal and location.

SCPA’s Guiding Principles for the Facility Initiative

1. We support the notion of a financially self-sufficient facility on an operating basis.
2. We endorse the principle of community play as well as member play at the facility.
3. We accept the responsibility for generating participation and revenue within the Sunshine Coast community and beyond.
4. We commit to work with the District of Sechelt to secure grants to help offset capital costs.

Size, Scope and Funding

SCPA is seeking an 8-court facility (roughly the same square footage of the Suncoast Racquet Club). Our current focus is on an [all metal building](#) like the Racquets Club or a [fabric on steel building](#) like the pickleball facility in Vernon. We recognize that capital funding will be sourced from private/member investors, grants and mortgage financing. Annual operating costs will be generated primarily through member dues.



Project information
 Building: Centurion 48
 Dimensions: 145' x 230' x 55'
 Location: Vernon, British Columbia, Canada
 Purpose: 12 Court Pickleball facility

1 Vernon - Fabric on Steel

Eight Court Pickleball Facility

Overall Building Dimension: 70'x 240'

Court Dimension: 20'x40'

Spacing Between Courts: 5'

Spacing Behind Courts: 10'

Side Spacing for End Courts: 10'

Court Access Corridor: 10'x215'

Washroom Dimension: 15'x25'

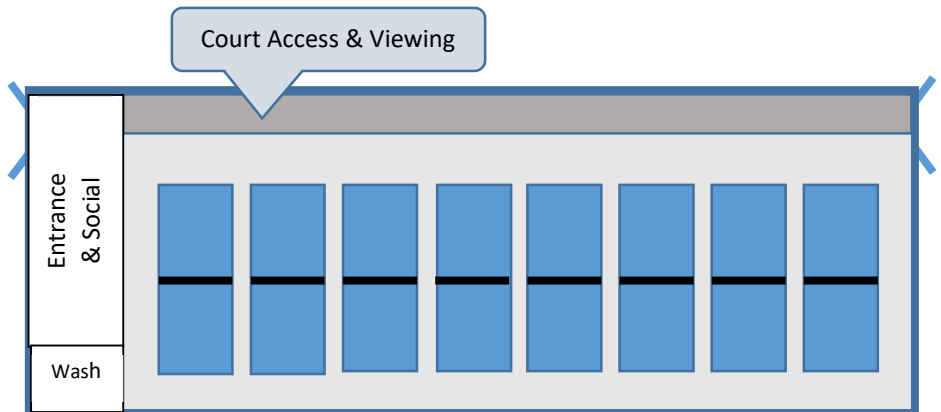
Entrance & Social: 55'x25'

Double Doors Each End

Support Posts:

First one from ends of the building @ 32.5'

Subsequent posts @ 25' up to Washrooms and Entrance so that posts come down between each court



Justification for a Year-Round Community Facility

Exponential Growth of Pickleball

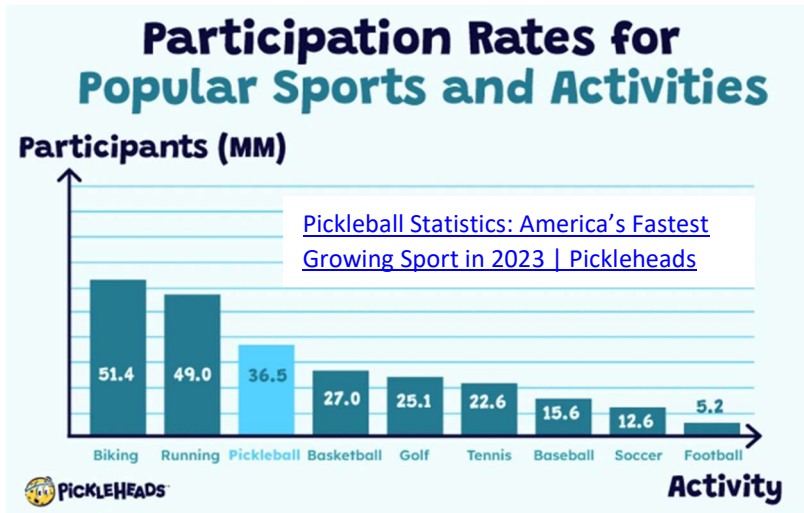
“A sport on fire” [Global News Feb 11, 2023](#).

Pickleball is [the fastest growing sport in America](#) with nearly 36.5 million players. Why is this new game (founded 1965) with a [funny name such a success](#)? It’s FUN. It is easy to play. The learning curve is short. There is less physical impact on the body than tennis, squash, or racquet ball. The game can be played recreationally and competitively.

Played competitively it provides a good workout for all ages. Cities and towns across BC, Canada and the US have recognized the exponential increase in demand for pickleball facilities in their communities by building indoor and outdoor courts.

Entrepreneurs have responded with for-profit facilities – a new one called [Volli](#) has just opened in Bellingham. A professional pickleball league ([PPA](#)) is now drawing crowds and substantial prize money. There are many examples of pickleball courts being created in both large and small communities throughout North America.

Here are three examples from smaller BC communities created with funding help from the local and regional governments:



- a) The [Vernon Pickleball Association](#) (VPA) in 2017 successfully negotiated a land lease and \$300,000 grant from the North Okanagan Regional District to build 12 dedicated pickleball courts on Marshal Field. In Spring 2018 the VPA raised over \$111,000 from its members and obtained a loan for \$145,000. With additional support from sponsors and in-kind donations the 12 outdoor courts were completed in August 2018. The club then embarked on a fundraising “[Raise the Roof](#)” campaign in May 2020 to enclose the 12 courts. The campaign quickly raised \$1.2 million and on April 30, 2021 the doors were opened in the OWA Complex for pickleball play.



- b) [Pickleball's popularity nets 4 new courts in Oliver, BC](#)



Development of the 4 new courts was led by a committee composed of town staff and local tennis and pickleball players that began meeting in 2018. After surveying the community to quantify the need for new courts, the group completed a business case, solicited donations and applied through the town for a federal grant. That grant, worth \$42,567 from the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative program, will be combined with local donations and \$60,000 from the town to fund the \$140,000 project.

- c) Christina Lake, BC the “[Official Pickleball Capital of Canada](#)”!



“As a tourist destination Christina Lake offers many attractions to keep you coming back. Not the least of which is the addition of 6 pickleball courts at this, our nation’s official Pickleball Capital.”

The Christina Lake Pickleball Club with the support of the Parks and Recreation department completed 6 dedicated outdoor courts in June 2019.

These are just three examples of smaller BC communities that have responded to the exponential growth and benefits of pickleball. It’s time for Sechelt and the Sunshine Coast to catch up!

Health Benefits

The physical and mental health benefits of regular exercise are well established for all age groups. The demographics of the Sunshine Coast skews older. According to [Harvard Health](#) *“In many ways, pickleball is the ideal activity for older adults,” says Timothy Rivotto, a physical therapist and tennis coach with Harvard-affiliated Spaulding Rehabilitation Network. “It can accommodate people with different fitness levels and still offer a good aerobic workout. Pickleball also requires using key brain skills and is an exciting way to interact with others.”* However, the health benefits of pickleball extend equally to younger players – e.g. muscle strength development, balance and timing, weight control. *“Regardless of your age, pickleball is a wonderful game that can help improve your overall health. Regular exercise helps keep your mind and body fit which improves the functions of different organs to maintain a healthy lifestyle.”* [10 health Benefits of Playing Pickleball](#). All around North America there are “generational gap” tournaments – players competing with a partner that is at least one generation apart. One of our highest ranked, younger players has competed in these tournaments elsewhere and is keen to bring the concept to Sechelt.

Pickleball was a featured exhibitor at the [2023 Wellness Show](#) at the Vancouver Convention Centre and 3 of our members served as volunteers at the show demonstrating the sport on a full-size court.

Pickleball Play has Exceeded Capacity on the Sunshine Coast

Pickleball came to Sunshine Coast in 2010 with programs and organization by SCPA on 2 indoor courts at the Sechelt Seniors Activity Centre. Until 2014, the center was adequate to facilitate pickleballers from Gibsons to Pender Harbour. No longer. SCPA membership increased 74% this past year to a record 305 by 2022 year-end. It is not unreasonable to assume a 10% membership increase in each of the next 3 years, and this does not account for an estimated 100 additional players on the Coast who are not members of SCPA. Our growing membership has the scale to generate the revenue necessary to make the pickleball facility financially self-sustainable.



During the summer months pickleball play is available at the Sechelt and Gibsons arenas (9 courts at each arena) but each year dry floor users are subject to uncertain and often reduced availability since priority is

given to ice user groups. Outdoor summer play is also possible at the two dedicated courts in Hackett Park as well as two jointly lined pickleball courts at each of Dougall Park and Parkland in Gibsons. However, these courts are very crowded during the popular times.

It's during the fall, winter and spring months that the Coast is severely lacking indoor play opportunities. It is highly unfortunate, and somewhat unusual for a community our size, that we lack a public gymnasium for indoor sports and recreational activities. During these non-summer months pickleball does schedule some evening school time. However, we compete with other users and understandably priority times are given to school groups. Additionally, the school courts are too short for pickleball play and actually pose a safety hazard with solid walls far too close with very tight baselines. Further, school play is constantly interrupted by school events (again understandably) and holiday closures. Senior Centre play is available on 2 courts as is play at an unheated private facility.

Expertise of Sunshine Coast Pickleball Association <https://www.sunshinecoastpickleball.com/>

SCPA is a non-profit society united by a passion for pickleball and a desire to enjoy a competitive or social game in a collegial, sportsmanlike environment. Fun, fitness & friendship are the pillars of our culture. Performance is measured by the satisfaction of our members.

Our Mission is to facilitate the growth of pickleball on the Sunshine Coast by organizing recreational and competitive play, developing skills, and fostering a positive experience for members wherever the game is played. Our vision is to ensure an excellent playing environment for the long-term by leading the development of a permanent indoor facility.

SCPA has extensive experience in leadership, organization, and expertise within the pickleball community on the coast and throughout the province. In addition, SCPA exudes values that are consistent with the community goals of happy and healthy living. We are members of [Pickleball BC](#) and [Pickleball Canada](#).

Additionally, we have been active participants in community events like Canada Day and each year contribute to the Food Bank at our annual Festive Dinner. We are pleased to have the support of Sechelt merchants – e.g., Trail Bay Source for Sports and the Sunshine Coast Credit Union. In our drive to establish a permanent facility we hope to expand our base of sponsors.

Broad Target Group of Users

The target market for the facility will be:

1. Senior Residents of the Sunshine Coast. This segment, representing the majority of SCPA members, will be our fastest growing market as more senior citizens are retiring to the Coast and Sechelt area than ever before. When provided with health-promoting programs, they are keen to participate due to the new focus on physical activity.
2. Local Families and Youth. Pickleball can be something new and fun for families who seek a few hours of fun. SCPA would promote family days and a youth program to attract younger demographics to the center. As volunteers we coordinated a pickleball program at Kinnikinnick Elementary School. Notwithstanding the preponderance of senior play, pickleball is being discovered by the younger generation. The [US 2021 demographic breakdown](#) reflects the trend to a younger demographic: 6-17 – 21.2%, 18-34 – 28.8%, 35-54 – 20.4%, 55-64 – 12%, over 65 17.65%.
3. Visitors and Tourists. Because SCPA membership would not be mandatory to play at the facility, visitors and tourists will be welcome at our facility. Through Pickleball BC, Pickleball Canada, public relations, and word-of-mouth, the facility will become known throughout the province as a destination venue. The potential economic spin-off to other businesses should not be underestimated.

Revenue and Expense Estimates

Costs are based on 8 courts in a permanent facility with a coated asphalt surface, painted pickleball lines, movable nets (for flexible use), and an entrance room with washrooms.

Capital Costs

We prefer a building like that of the Suncoast Racquet Club although a fabric on steel structure like the one in Vernon would also meet our needs. Each has advantages and disadvantages. We are currently gathering cost estimates for each type of structure. The following tables are very rough estimates.



Capital Costs Steel Building

Basic structure: walls, roof, insulation, doors, lights, heat pump, freight, taxes	800,000
Erection & installation	200,000
Site Preparation	100,000
Foundation	125,000
Floor	150,000
Nets and Benches	25,000
Entrance & Washrooms	125,000
Contingency	200,000
Total Cost	1,725,000

Capital Funding Estimates

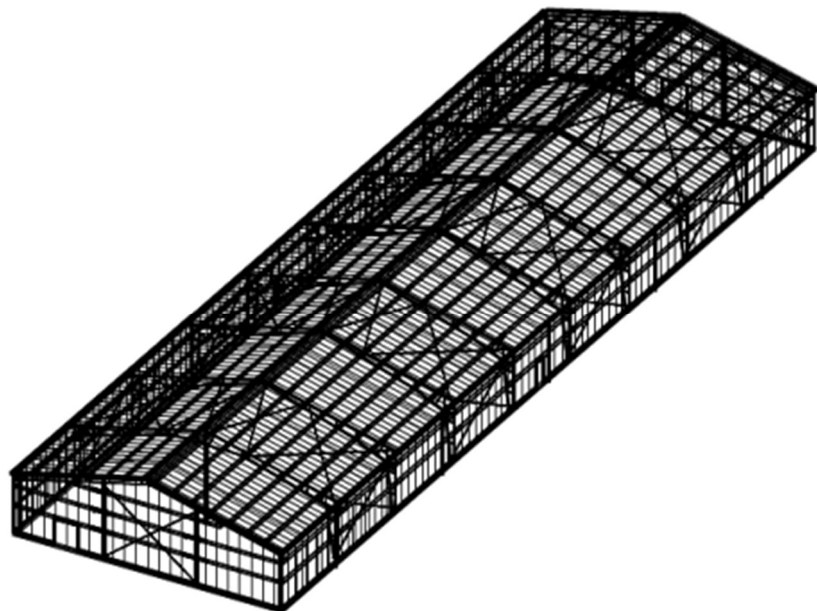
Club Debentures	450,000
Donations	300,000
Grants and Sponsors	275,000
Mortgage	600,000
In-Kind	100,000
Total	1,725,000

Frame Drawing from Metal Building Group (MBG)

Quote from MBG, April 5, 2023

Under Capital Cost Projection

Includes
 Building
 Insulation and doors
 Freight to Sechelt
 Installation



Operating Expenses

The following tables summarize our projected annual operating expenses and revenue. The line item for utilities is based on detailed energy consumption estimates from the supplier, with BC Hydro rates applied. Clearly, we will make every effort to reduce our mortgage debt servicing costs through other capital funding sources that do not require annual debt servicing (donations, grants, sponsors). At this point our budgetary estimate does not include staff costs since we anticipate using an automated door entry system that provides secure and convenient access to the facility.

Annual Operating Expenses

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Utilities – BC Hydro (lights, heat pumps), Internet	25,000	27,500	30,250
Debt Servicing (Mortgage \$600,00 @ 7.3%)	44,000	44,000	44,000
Debt Servicing (Club Debentures \$450,000 @ 3.0%)	13,500	13,500	12,450
Debenture Redemption	0	0	35,000
Insurance, Maintenance	10,000	11,000	12,100
Automated Door Entry Contract	2,500	2,500	2,500
Contingency	4,000	4,560	5,016
Total Annual Operating Expense	99,000	103,060	141,316

Annual Revenue Estimates

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Membership dues:	80,000	88,000	96,800
Drop-in Fees	10,000	11,000	12,100
Sponsors & Grants	7,000	7,700	8,470
Fundraising, tournaments, coaching, rentals:	5,000	6,000	7,200
Carry over annual surplus	0	3,000	12,640
Total Annual Revenue	102,000	115,700	137,210

As a prerequisite to the “go/no-go” construction decision, we must have the membership dues assurance from our membership. Not only does this mitigate operational financial risk, it also validates the pickleball community’s commitment to the facility.

Summary of Intent

A permanent indoor facility will be a vital component of a Sechelt sports and recreation complex.

Key benefits:

1. Meets the recreational and health needs of the Coast’s rapidly expanding senior community.
2. Facilitates expanding pickleball’s player demographics to families and youth.
3. Serves as an additional tourist destination opportunity for non-coastal pickleball enthusiasts.
4. Provides revenue-producing programs such as drop-ins, social events, coaching clinics and province-wide tournaments.
5. Offers flexible indoor space for special events and other compatible sports. The intent is to have the net posts set in receivers that are flush with the floor surface. This allows the posts to be removed to provide a fully open floor area. However, since the floor surface is expensive and somewhat vulnerable, any activity in the facility must meet the same standards as those imposed for pickleball play.

SCPA Directors

At this stage of the project, all directors have been involved in bringing this proposal to Council. Upon approval, a smaller Facilities committee will manage the process in consultation with other members who possess the necessary skillsets such as legal, construction and architecture.

Director Jacques Carrier with recent construction experience will serve as our Project Manager liaison.

President & Facilities Director:	Ted Bentley	president@sunshinecoastpickleball.com
VP & Player Development Director:	Brian Chipman	vicepresident@sunshinecoastpickleball.com
Past President & Events Director:	Ross Miller	ross@sunshinecoastpickleball.com
Treasurer:	Carolyne Oughton	treasurer@sunshinecoastpickleball.com
Secretary:	Diane Lamb	secretary@sunshinecoastpickleball.com
Communications Director:	Jo-Anne Bentley	communications@sunshinecoastpickleball.com
Operations Director:	Jacques Carrier	jacques@sunshinecoastpickleball.com
Director at Large	Carol Mollerup	carol@sunshinecoastpickleball.com
Director at Large	Kira Sufalko	sufalelise@gmail.com
Director at Large	Rick Semel	rick@sunshinecoastpickleball.com