

TENNIS TASK FORCE REPORT Spring 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Task Force Members

Eileen Argentina, Services Manager, Portland Parks & Recreation
Andre Ashley, Sports Program Supervisor, Portland Parks & Recreation
Danice Brown, Executive Director, Portland After-School Tennis
Bob Downing, Central Services Manager, Portland Parks & Recreation
Scott Eads, President, Portland Parks Tennis Association
Brett Horner, Planning Manager, Portland Parks & Recreation
Bill Leong, Executive Director, USTA/Pacific Northwest
Todd Lofgren, Business Development Coordinator, Portland Parks & Recreation
Jack Olson, Advocacy Consultant, USTA/Pacific Northwest
Wayne Pickard, Tennis Manager, Multnomah Athletic Club
Mike Stone, Tennis Coordinator, Portland Parks & Recreation

Task Force Facilitation

Kathy Fong Stephens, Barney & Worth Inc.

Task Force Coordination

Ali Ryan, Portland Parks & Recreation

Portland Parks & Recreation

1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 1302 Portland, Oregon 97204 (503) 823-PLAY www.PortlandParks.org



CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Background

Tennis Task Force Charge

Vision and Guiding Principles

Key Strategy Areas

Priority Goals

Next Steps

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) has been actively involved in public tennis for nearly a century. As a lifelong sport which appeals to individuals independent of age, ethnicity, gender, or economic status, tennis continues to be a popular option for recreation and fitness in the Pacific Northwest. Indeed, surveys show that tennis is enjoying a strong resurgence of interest in recent years as the fastest growing traditional sport in the Pacific Northwest. However, in recent years, PP&R's public tennis programs and facilities have faced a number of challenges, including the inability to adequately maintain existing facilities, and lack of capital funding for the new construction and improvements required to meet the growing demand and to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

While enhancements to outdoor facilities and programs are needed, the most striking deficiencies exist with respect to public indoor facilities. Portland's per-capita number of indoor courts is well below that of neighboring cities, a statistic that reflects the fact that a new public indoor court has not been constructed in the past 25 years. This data takes on greater significance when it is recognized that tennis in the Pacific Northwest is an indoor sport for at least six months of the typical year.

Public indoor tennis currently does not require General Fund support to meet its direct costs, though some indirect costs are supported. The only other sport to operate independently of General Fund dollars is golf, which requires no General Fund support. Concerns have been raised that indoor tennis' independence has come at the expense of raising fees for indoor court time, thereby impacting equitable access to public indoor tennis across income levels. It is concluded that a "critical mass" of indoor courts in a single location is needed to achieve sustainable, equitable access to indoor tennis in the city of Portland.

Previous reports, in particular the 2008 Sport Courts Technical Paper, have examined PP&R's system and developed a series of recommendations for indoor and outdoor facilities and programming. These recommendations included redeveloping PTC to provide a minimum of 10 indoor tennis courts and to designate specific parks as Community Tennis Centers. However, no method for implementing those recommendations was defined. To regain momentum, a task force of PP&R staff and Tennis Community representatives formed and met in April and May of 2009, in order to build a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities for public tennis in Portland. The Tennis Task Force was charged with creating a shared vision for PP&R's tennis system, and with creating a strategic, actionable framework for a continued joint effort to achieve that vision.

The resulting Tennis Vision calls for affordable, public, well-designed and well maintained facilities that are useable throughout the year by Portlanders of all ages and skill levels. Additionally, the Tennis Vision defines the need for development of a citywide tennis "hub," as well as Community Tennis Centers that provide localized access.

To support achievement of this vision, the report outlines key recommended actions in the areas of facilities and capital, facilities and maintenance, programs and operations, and

resources and partnerships. The report also defines a series of priority goals within each recommendation area, and assigns PP&R staff or Tennis Community members to lead efforts to achieve those goals.

The work of the Tennis Task Force is just beginning. Quarterly meetings are planned to assess progress, adjust plans, and continue forward movement toward achievement of the Tennis Vision.

BACKGROUND

The first references to tennis courts in Portland parks indicate that the oldest courts in the system were built in Kenilworth Park in 1915. Peninsula and Washington Parks' tennis courts followed soon after in 1917. By 1928 there were 55 courts. Meeting notes from the Parks Board of that time suggest that these improvements were very popular, and free tennis lessons were even offered at Portland parks each summer.

The popularity of most sports ebbs and flows over time, but tennis's enduring popularity in Portland is evidenced by the history of public and private investment in facilities and programs. Below is a summary of the current inventory of public and private tennis courts:

Type of Organization	Indoor Courts	Outdoor
Courts		
Private Clubs	42	23
Private Schools	10	18
Public Schools	4	30
Portland Parks & Recreation	7	105
Total	63	176

In the Pacific Northwest, serving the demand for year round public tennis requires adequate public indoor facilities due to the climate. Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) has made initial investments in limited indoor capacity, including the opening of the Portland Tennis Center (PTC) in 1973 and St. Johns Racquet Center in 1980, but has not committed significant resources to these facilities in recent years, and has not built a new indoor tennis court in more than 25 years. The extensive outdoor court inventory is showing significant signs of wear and tear, and the distribution and placement of outdoor courts presents challenges for prioritizing the limited maintenance resources available.

More critically, the Portland population has grown substantially over the past 25 years while public indoor tennis capacity has remained unchanged. The failure of public indoor construction to keep pace with the population growth has led to a severe shortage of public indoor tennis courts in Portland. Portland has only one public indoor court per 79,900 residents. By comparison, Vancouver, Washington has one indoor court per 17,600 residents and Beaverton one per 5,400 residents.

Funding overview

Tennis (both indoor and outdoor programs) is but one of many competing uses for PP&R's assets and organizational focus. During the budget process for fiscal year 2005-06 (which resulted in \$7.8 million, or 10.2 percent, worth of service reductions for parks), PP&R's budget provided one-time funding for the tennis program, but assumed in future years the program would operate without General Fund assistance. The 2006-07 budget (which reflected \$2.3 million, or 3.1 percent, worth of service reductions for parks) assumed this financial independence would occur by soliciting a concessionaire to operate the Portland Tennis Center and the St. Johns Racquet Center. When a 2006 Request for Proposals failed

-

¹ USTA Pacific Northwest statistic

to draw any respondents, the bureau revisited its assumptions about the ability of its indoor tennis facilities as currently configured to achieve financial self-sufficiency.

Tennis program revenues currently meet direct costs, but the program still receives General Fund support to meet indirect costs. In recent years, pressure on PTC/St. Johns to operate without General Fund assistance has led to an escalation of court fees. Concerns exist with some members of the public that equitable access to indoor courts has become a casualty of the squeeze produced by excess demand coupled with the pressure for tennis to become fully self-funding. The Tennis Task Force believes that, notwithstanding tennis' proven ability to generate substantial revenues, pricing for public indoor tennis should remain affordable to the general public.

Recent Steps

PP&R produced a Sport Courts Technical Paper in 2008 which described the existing system and the state of the sport in the region, and identified key actions regarding both the indoor and outdoor tennis facilities for which the bureau is responsible. Among other things, the Technical Paper recommended that PTC be redeveloped to provide a minimum of 10 indoor courts, that specific parks be designated as Community Tennis Centers² and that the use of a private provider to manage public tennis facilities be explored. The Technical Paper was developed in order to encapsulate existing information, however it did not provide a venue for determining how to implement the recommendations and action items.

By the end of 2007-08, no clear direction had been established. The tennis community turned out in large numbers to voice its dissatisfaction during the budget hearing for fiscal year 2008-09, and Portland City Council responded by allocating resources to address the condition of the outdoor courts at PTC. This step was needed because the outdoor courts at PTC had fallen into extreme disrepair and it was thought that the improvements would contribute modestly to PTC's ability to operate without General Fund support. However, the repairs to the outdoor courts were, by themselves, wholly incapable of putting the program on the sustainable footing that both the bureau and the tennis community desire.

In July 2008, tennis advocates met with PP&R Director Zari Santner to determine how they could work together to address the needs of the tennis community. They committed to an effort to create a shared vision for public tennis in Portland through a collaborative planning process.

In April and May of 2009, the Tennis Task Force formed and met to create this shared vision. The work required that both the bureau and the tennis community build a mutual understanding of their respective operating environments, to commit to solving problems together, and to being open to objectively evaluating a range of approaches to solving the problems that have been identified.

² Community Tennis Centers are defined in the June 2008 Sport Courts Technical Paper as parks that have enhanced levels of tennis programs, events and court maintenance. Additional amenities such as covered benches, water fountains and lights are also included.

As referenced in the Priority Goals statement below, the 2009 Task Force concurs with some key conclusions underlying the recommendations contained in the 2008 Sport Courts Technical Paper: The current number and distribution of public indoor courts is ill-suited for producing a fully self-sustaining tennis program that meets the growing public demand while remaining affordable. What is needed is a critical mass of indoor courts—preferably at least 10 courts—at a single location. It is a principal objective of the Task Force to identify sources of capital funding in order to design, plan and construct such a tennis "hub" either at the current PTC site or a new site.

This report documents the work of the Tennis Task Force, and lays the groundwork for the bureau and the tennis community to continue to work together to tackle the significant challenges that lie ahead in funding and operating enhanced facilities and programs so that tennis can fulfill its important role as an avenue for recreation, wellness, fitness, community, and personal development for all Portland residents.

TENNIS TASK FORCE CHARGE

The Tennis Task Force is organized as an advisory group to Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R), with work beginning in Spring 2009 and ending upon completion of a Task Force Report and Recommendations.

The charge to the Tennis Task Force is to collaborate to develop a shared vision for PP&R's tennis system. To support the achievement of the vision, the Task Force will outline recommended actions that address priority facility, programmatic and funding options for a tennis program that is available to the public and sustainable over the long term.

The resulting task force report and recommendations will be submitted to City Commissioner Nick Fish, PP&R administration and the larger tennis community to help guide the future of PP&R's tennis system.

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Tennis Vision

Portlanders are able to play tennis throughout the year at affordable, public, well-designed, and well-maintained facilities.

Portlanders of all ages throughout the community have affordable opportunities to be introduced to the sport and to develop their skills through programs, instruction, and organized competition.

Tennis is available as an avenue to personal and physical development for youth throughout Portland, as well as a recreational, health and fitness outlet for adults and seniors.

A Center for Tennis serves as the "hub" of public tennis in Portland with other tennis facilities providing localized access in neighborhoods throughout the city. This Center has a critical mass of indoor courts, outdoor courts, and building facilities that enable the Center to offer a full range of services, to host tournaments and to realize economies of scale that permit it to fund its own operations. Complementary Community Tennis Centers also exist in selected locations with enhanced facilities and programming. Local access courts in Portland parks continue to play an integral role in the overall tennis system, providing valuable casual play opportunities and a base neighborhood level of service.

Guiding Principles

The effort to achieve the Tennis Vision will follow the Guiding Principles outlined in the Parks 2020 Vision statement. Certain of these Guiding Principles are particularly relevant to achieving the Tennis Vision in a manner that will best serve the interests of all Portlanders:

- ➤ It will be desirable to develop tennis facilities and programs that operate as a Connected System under the overall direction of a tennis coordinator whose mission will be to ensure that the tennis facilities and programs are optimized to serve all residents
- ➤ The tennis facilities and programs should be **Inclusive and Accessible** so that all Portland residents are equitably served.
- > The tennis facilities and programs should be developed and planned in a manner that strives for **Excellence** such that Portlanders of all ages and means are able to enjoy a high quality experience with the sport.
- ➤ Tennis has been **Validated** as an important element within Portland Parks & Recreation's overall portfolio of sports offerings.
- > The integrated tennis program will be on a **Sustainable** financial footing.
- ➤ The Tennis Vision will be achieved through **Civic Involvement** of interested parties who will play an important role in planning, developing and implementing the vision.

1. Facilities/Capital

- a. Make the case for investment in new or expanded indoor tennis facilities
- b. Create Community Tennis Centers at key outdoor court locations
- c. Build an economically viable indoor tennis facility

2. Facilities/Maintenance

- a. Initiate revised maintenance program
- b. Renovate or decommission courts as recommended in the Sport Courts Technical Paper, and in compliance with adopted design standards

3. Program/Operations

- a. Develop clear messages for community about public tennis system programs, offerings, expectations, commitments, accomplishments, performance, and cost recovery requirements
- b. Establish a city-wide coordinated tennis program at outdoor courts
- c. Develop public tennis system's ability to generate revenue and recover costs

4. Resources/Partnerships

- a. Investigate alternative business model
- b. Define suitable parameters for public/private partnerships to protect the public interest
- c. Explore other partnership models to enhance public tennis system

Area 1: FACILITIES / CAPITAL

GOAL	Timeline*	Leads and Partners	Priority Actions/Milestones	Comments
1.A. Build the strongest possible CASE STATEMENT to position the Portland Tennis Center for an allocation of the expected 2010 bond measure (as outlined in the Task Force Vision Statement)	Short Term	Scott and Jack, with USTA/ PPTA/PAST		Make a case for indoor center, tailored to possible funding sources
1.B. Create a PLAN for more effective utilization of the outdoor tennis system	Intermediate Term	Bob/Andre/ Mike	o Establish COMMUNITY TENNIS CENTERS with enhanced facilities and program by Summer 2010 in selected neighborhood locations (Mike/Andre, with Todd) o Expand SUMMER TENNIS CLINICS in outdoor parks (Bob/Andre/Mike) o Develop a COORDINATED PROGRAM of tennis instruction at outdoor courts; develop standards for recreational program (Bob/Andre/Mike) o Investigate "QUICKSTART"	Efforts to develop Community Tennis Centers, as defined in the 2008 Sport Courts Technical Paper, would not adversely affect development of a Major Tennis Complex as noted in item 1.D.

	Г			
			program as a means to maximize court space and enhance after-school tennis programs (Bob/Andre/Mike) o Investigate COORDINATED USAGE program and policies to ensure	
			public	
			ACCESSIBILITY of both indoor and	
			outdoor courts for a	
			range of groups (Bob/Andre/Mike)	
1.C. DECOMMISSION COURTS, as recommended in the Sport Courts Technical Paper, or as indicated by	Intermediate Term	Zone Managers with PPTA support, Wayne Pickard	(DOD/MILIC/IVIRE)	Ensure report explains why decommissioning is necessary/how needs can be met
needs analysis				
1.D. Build (or expand current) MAJOR TENNIS COMPLEX (the Center for Tennis as described in Vision Statement): a minimum of 10 indoor courts; 2-8 outdoor courts; spectator viewing area, parking	Intermediate Term	Eileen/Brett, with all partners		Number of courts to be determined by analysis. Specifically refer to Sport Courts Technical Paper. Also revisit bubble estimate as "Plan B" if efforts to obtain adequate funding for major Tennis Complex do not succeed within a reasonable time (e.g., by 2011-12)
I.E. Monitor status of new St. Johns bid proposals. Develop plans for quickly deployable replacement indoor capacity in the event that St. Johns is sold without condition of preserving the tennis courts	Short to Intermediate Term	Eileen in consultation with PPTA		Revisit bubble estimate as possible interim solution to preserve current indoor capacity in the event that St. Johns public tennis facility is closed

Area 2: FACILITIES / MAINTENANCE				
2.A. Initiate revised MAINTENANCE PROGRAM	Short Term	Bob	- Will consult with users on this - "Green Goals"	
2.B. Initiate program to RENOVATE courts in poor condition	Short Term	Bob	 Subject to existing or newly available funds "Green," resilient surfaces, "Quickstart" But see 1.C. 	
2.C. Establish minimum DESIGN STANDARDS for new & existing courts	Short Term	Bob, with input from all.	- Elements to consider include site, surface, lighting court layout, new court design - Explore USTA standards	
	Area 3: PROGRAMS / OPERATIONS			
3.A. Develop CLEAR MESSAGES re: public tennis system program offerings, expectations, commitment, accomplishments and performance	Short Term	Eileen/Randy, with Scott and Jack	This will be further developed through the service delivery strategy, system plan, and business plan	
3.B. Establish a city-wide TENNIS COORDINATOR	Short Term	Andre/Mike/Bob	Scope/responsibilities to be clarified. Bob can address higher level system issues; Mike can address program quality and coordination	
3.C. Develop public tennis system's CAPACITY & TOOLS to improve revenue generation potential where appropriate	Intermediate Term	Andre/Mike/Bob		
3.D. Develop method to RESERVE, PROGRAM, TRACK USE of	Intermediate Term	Andre/Mike/ Bob, with community, planning, business		

all courts in	1	davalanmant		T
		development,		
system		Shawn and Glenn		
		Glenn		
	4	4 DECOLIDA	ODO IDADTNIEDOI	UDC
	Area	4: KESOUKO	CES / PARTNERSH	IIPS
4.A. Investigate	Short Term	Brett, with input		Service Delivery Strategy
BUSINESS		from PPTA,		
MODEL		USTA, PAST		
alternatives, user				
fee system, cost				
recovery potential				
4.B. Explore and	Short Term	Todd in	o Define suitable	Partners include active
expand	to	consultation with	parameters for	participation from PPTA,
PARTNERSHIPS	Intermediate	PPTA	public/private	USTA, and PAST, as well as
with			partnership in	potential private partners
organizations to			developing and/or	
enhance public			operating the	
tennis system			Portland Tennis	
			Center and/or	
			Community Tennis	
			Centers (as	
			described in Vision	
			Statement and	
			Preliminary Draft	
			Guidelines for	
			Public/Private	
			Partnership	
			prepared by Scott).	
			o Should Portland	
			Tennis Partners	
			LLP move forward	
			with public	
			comment process,	
			evaluate feasibility	
			and desirability of	
			PROPOSED ROSE	
			CITY tennis facility.	
			o Explore OTHER	
			FUNDING	
			resources, including	
			a major private	
			partner/benefactor/o	
			perator to leverage	
			the investment in a	
			new major indoor	
			tennis center	
	L	I	termis territer	1

^{*}Timeline Definitions
- Short Term (up to 1 year), Intermediate Term (approx. 1 – 5 years), Long Term (approx. 5 – 10 years)

NEXT STEPS

The Tennis Task Force has assigned responsibility for the action plan and will meet quarterly to review progress, adjust plans, and ensure forward movement on achieving the shared vision.

Work Plan to Process Report and Recommendations:

- 1. Task Force representatives brief Commissioner September 2009
- 2. Task Force representatives brief Parks Board September 2009
- 3. Task Force reconvenes quarterly to review progress
- 4. Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) coordinates interim updates from all goal leads via email and web page
- 5. Portland Parks Tennis Association envisioned as lead partner for coordinating interests of tennis community with PP&R.