



A Purpose-Built Racquet Sports Facility

Nanaimo Racquet Centre Consortium

A proposal for the construction of a purpose-built field house in support of racquet sports.

- PRESENTED BY THE AD HOC STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF RACQUET SPORTS IN NANAIMO (NANAIMO RACQUET CENTRE CONSORTIUM)

The Vision

Currently Nanaimo and district is facing a shortage of indoor capacity for racquet sports. This proposal sets out the Vision of the Ad Hoc committee representing the needs of Badminton, Pickleball and Tennis in our Community.

It is the hope of the committee that a facility could be undertaken by the City as part of it's planning for the development of space in the Beban Park area.

The Vision (cont.)

There are numerous benefits to situating the field house at Beban Park, including.

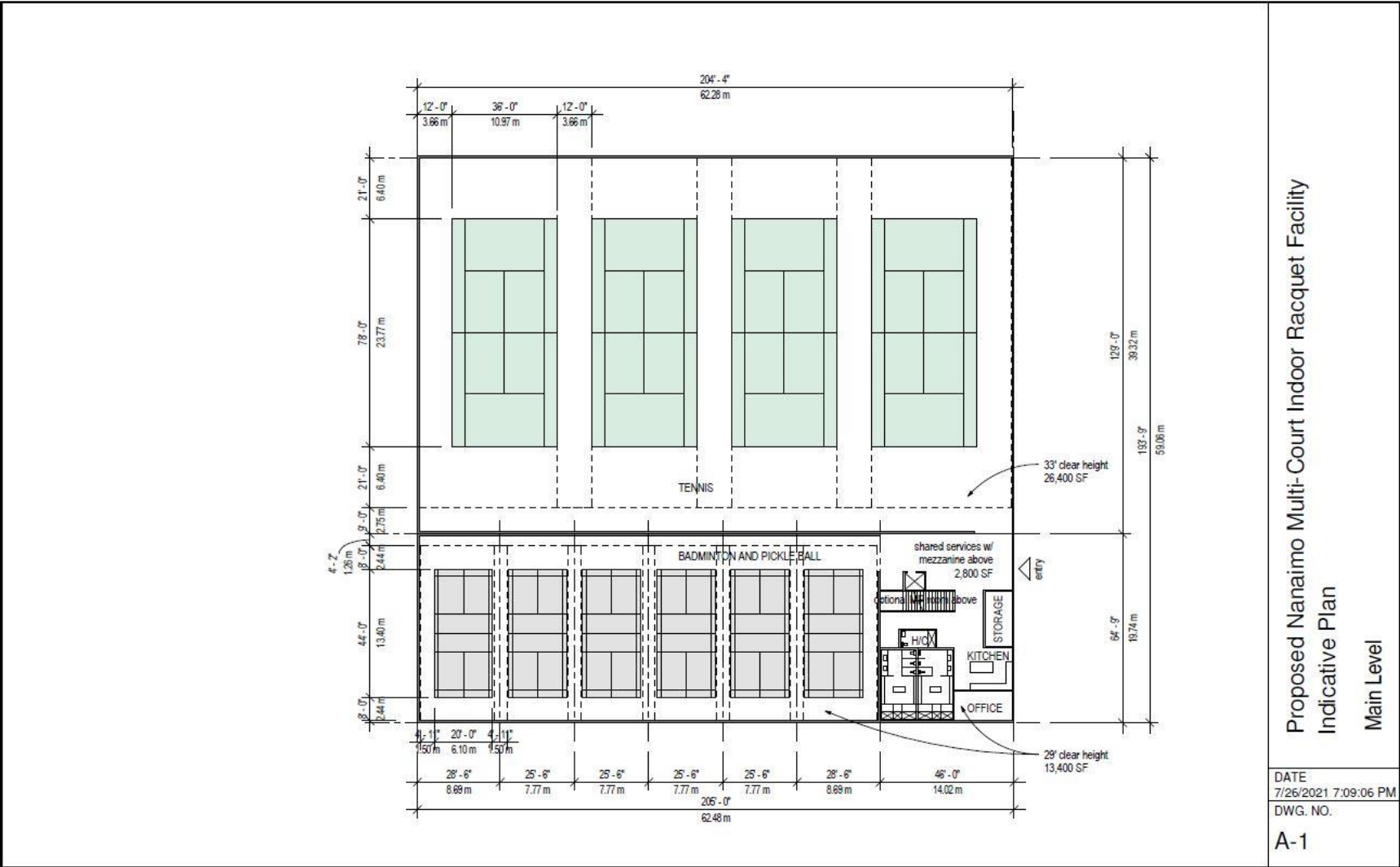
- Great central city location to serve all neighborhoods
- Excellent access and egress for the site to handle increased traffic flow
- Generous existing parking facilities
- Utilities and services near by that could be tied into
- Ideal underutilized grounds where a facility could be placed – the 40,000 sq ft plot is perfect.
- The facility type is consistent with the stated objectives in the Beban Park community plan.

Concept

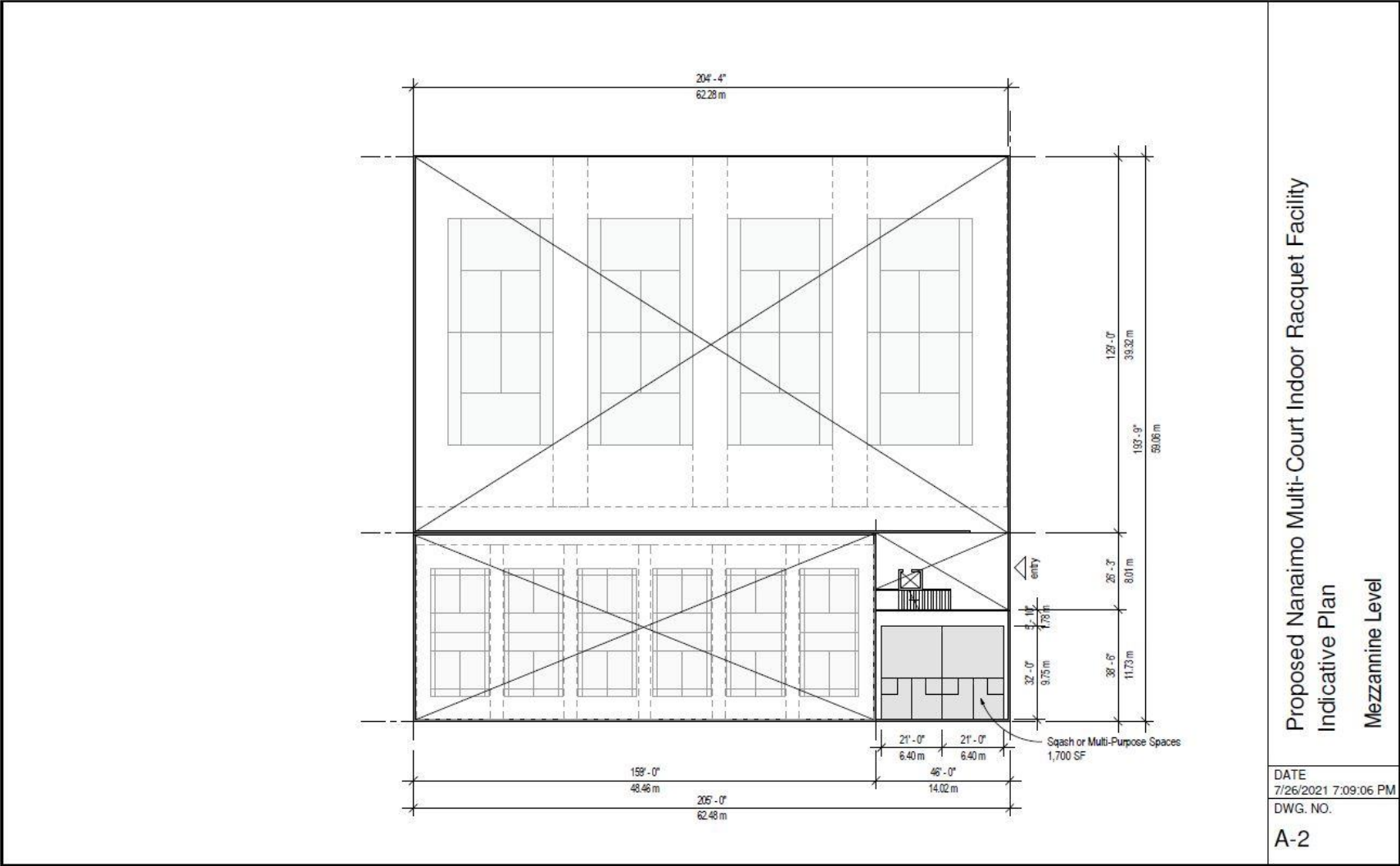
The committee has prepared a to-scale floor plan of a field house that could house the sports of Badminton, Pickleball, and Tennis as well as a possible host site for Volleyball. The concept suggests a facility with two separate playing areas sharing a common core. The rationale for two separate areas is driven by the separate needs of the surface type, lighting and other considerations to maximize the quality and enjoyment of each sport.

In the attached drawing the footprint that is represented is just under an acre at 40,289 Sq Ft.

Design Concept: Main Level



Design Concept: Mezzanine



Community Benefits

Prior to the pandemic, we could identify at least 1000 known participants actively engaged in our combined sports with demand for more capacity being driven by a current shortage of venues and the accelerated growth of each sport. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport, for all ages, in North America, and there is little doubt that increased capacity for indoor play would be utilized to the fullest. As a community, Nanaimo and area would benefit greatly from such a new facility as would the visibility and prestige of the City.

We will address these benefits under three categories:

- ❖ Health
- ❖ Social & Cultural, and
- ❖ Economic

Health Benefits

A fundamental tenant of cost analysis for health care in any population is that it is infinitely less expensive and demanding upon our health system to maintain an active population. The savings in preventive medicine are vast compared to applying treatment to existing health problems. Keeping our population active is one of the major goals of maintaining a healthy population.

Keeping our community active and healthy is a major objective of the Vancouver Island Health Authority. In so doing the cost of delivery of health services is reduced.

Social & Cultural Benefits

Humans are a gregarious species, and it is a fact we do better when we are socially engaged. The facility could provide a gathering place for citizens of the city for both recreation and business.

Many of the sporting activity participants would utilize the facility after play for small gatherings and refreshments.

Being able to host larger events across more than one indoor site would encourage visiting play and events that included large numbers of out-of-town participants. Players from out of town would add to the cultural diversity of the city during those events.

Economic Benefits

From an economic perspective we can identify numerous benefits. The construction of a new complex will:

- ❖ Create new permanent full & part time jobs
- ❖ Create temporary construction jobs
- ❖ Increase property values in the area
- ❖ Boost tourism through out-of-town participants being attracted to our events, and
- ❖ Opportunities for vendors and suppliers
- ❖ Opportunity for small business (i.e. Pro Shop)
- ❖ Increase people traffic for existing business on site or in the neighbourhood

Specific Issues We Face

Each of the three major racquet sports represented in this submission has specific issues they are faced with and somewhat unique solutions that need to be addressed.

- Badminton Issues – Presented by Chris Pearce
- Pickleball Issues – Presented by Dave Eaton
- Tennis Issues – Presented by Mark Chase

The future for the sport of Badminton and its Issues (1)

- Badminton is the second most popular participation sport in the world. Played by an estimated 300 million people
- Badminton is a lifetime sport, ideally suited to ages 5-90+, with appeal for both recreational and competitive athletes
- It is number two in the list of the sports associated with living longer, due to the physical and mental challenges of the sport as well as the social nature of participation
- Badminton will be an Olympic para-sport in Tokyo and para-badminton participation is growing in Canada



The future for the sport of **Badminton** and its Issues (Cont. 2)

- One of the few sports that can only be played indoors (due to the effect of even minor air currents on the shuttle and the difficulty of seeing the shuttle in sunshine)
- Presently the City only provides courts at Oliver Woods – demand far outstrips supply
- Not enough court time for singles play, training, competitions, and developmental programs for youth/beginner adults or training time for adults interested in competitive play

The future for the sport of **Badminton** and its Issues (Cont. 3)

- Proper badminton courts require specialized facilities
- Court time in school gyms is difficult or impossible to obtain on a regular basis as the school community needs come first – cancellations are common for rental groups
- Most elementary school gyms do not have high enough ceilings or floor space for badminton and the secondary schools are seldom available to the public before 9 PM
- We lost access to the Franklyn Street gym a number of years ago and that was a huge loss to the community (4-5 sessions lost per week)

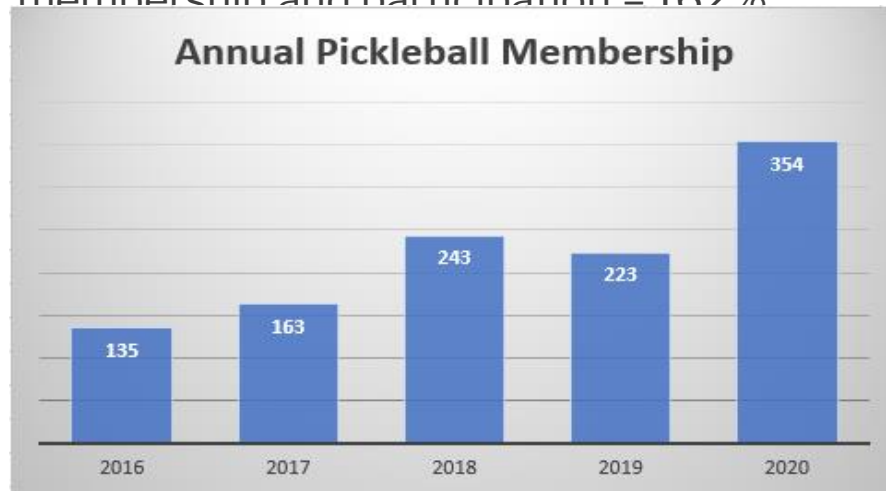
Summary for the sport of Badminton

The most ideal solution to the existing concerns and needs of badminton, would be realized with the construction of a field house as identified in the opening of our presentation. This solution does the following:

- It would provide the required additional indoor space we are lacking
- It would provide space and conditions that meet the unique needs of our sport
- It would provide a reliable space for indoor play where player development programs could be undertaken
- It would provide access to the sport for a growing community
- Because of the physical similarities, the courts would be perfectly compatible with pickleball play

The future for the sport of Pickleball and its Issues (1)

- COVID-19 Community restrictions have made it impossible to maintain play at a level we were experiencing. We expect to rebuild participation substantially once play is no longer restricted.
- Prior to COVID we experienced a growing membership and participation – 162%



The future for the sport of Pickleball and its Issues (Cont.2)

- We currently face an unreliable indoor booking opportunity which excludes many players
- There is a clear lack of indoor space
- Pickleball is a sport for all ages, but particularly good for the senior population.
- Pickleball is becoming a popular competitive sport and is starting to appeal to a younger generation
- We have an opportunity to build a Player Development Program for youth in our community as well as players of all ages. We presently work in conjunction with the Oliver Woods Recreation Center to host “Introduction to Pickleball” orientation sessions. These sessions are open to interested people of all ages.

Summary for the sport of Pickleball

The most ideal solution to the existing concerns and needs of pickleball, would be realized with the construction of a field house as identified in the opening of our presentation. This solution does the following:

- It would provide the required additional indoor space to support the rapid growth of the sport
- It would alleviate the irregular scheduling problems.
- With the additional indoor space, it would attract larger and more frequent events to the city
- The additional space would better support player and sport development programs
- Because of the similar court layouts, the facility would share space perfectly with badminton.

The future for the sport of **Tennis** and its Issues

- Unlike the other racquet sports, tennis has only 4 indoor courts in an exclusive private club
 - The long term future of this facility is doubtful
 - Owners have expressed a wish to retire
 - Tennis bubble is > 25 years old, considered end of life.
- A lack of covered space severely restricts growth of the sport and delivery of programs to develop our junior and other members.
- Our community is under-serviced in terms of a publicly sourced all-weather facility. Upgrading the level of this service would support a broader access for public play as well as tennis club membership play and programs.



Why Tennis matters

- Tennis is **inclusive**:
 - 44% of players are female; 56% are male
 - Age is **no** barrier – there are many frequent players in their 70s
 - Tennis is well-suited for persons with disabilities
 - Tennis is in the top 3 of most played sports for **new Canadians**
- Tennis promotes **public health**:
 - A study by the city of Copenhagen showed that tennis **extends life** by more than any other sport – avg 9.7 years
 - The combination of short bursts of high intensity exercise, and the social interactions fostered by tennis participation appear to be key factors improving sense of well-being and long-term health
- Tennis is **growing**:
 - 36% increase in frequent players 2017-2019
- Tennis contributes to the municipal **economy**:
 - After expenses, facilities can generate \$20-40 thousand in revenue.
 - Facilities generate part and full time jobs for facility managers, coaches and program instructors
- Tennis is **affordable** for all:
 - You just need a racquet and a ball.
 - Unfortunately, **all-weather** tennis is currently NOT affordable for all

Summary for the sport of Tennis

The most ideal solution to the existing concerns and needs of tennis, would be realized with the construction of a field house as identified in the opening of our presentation. This solution does the following:

- It would provide access to indoor tennis for those unable to afford the exclusive indoor club.
- It would provide new jobs and a new revenue stream for the city
- It would provide the space needed to develop new players and conduct player development programs
- It would provide an inexpensive opportunity for all members of the community to enjoy the sport.
- It would improve the health of residents of Nanaimo

Conclusions

Nanaimo is a growing and vibrant city whose racquet sports facilities have been outgrown by a rapidly increasing population and vigorous growth in the various racquet sports.

Construction of new sporting venues is a critical path forward in supporting a healthy active and engaged population.

By providing its citizenry with adequate activity centers the City increases its global attractiveness and makes the community a more desirable place to raise our families.

Our three sport's communities look forward towards being part of the positive growth for our city and its citizens.