

MINUTES FOR STUDY SESSION

PARK COMMISSION

April 1, 2026

Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Weiner, Bachman, Adams, Gardiner, Landt

Staff Present: Acting Director Dials, Parks Division Manager Caldwell, Executive Assistant Mero

Absent: None

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Announced that audience members must be seated in the allotted seating per the Fire Marshal’s limits for the room. The meeting is being shown on the monitor in the lobby. Audience members who have submitted a speaker request form will be called in to speak at the podium. No verbal excitations of support or lack of support. Use sign language gesticulation to show support.
- II. **ROLL CALL** – Landt via Zoom, Weiner, Bachman, Adams, Gardiner
- III. **HUNTER PARK TENNIS COURTS PROJECT** – Acting Director Dials

SITUATION & BACKGROUND – In 2024, the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) secured a matching grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to rehabilitate the Hunter Park Tennis Courts. As the project approaches the bidding phase, staff are requesting feedback on proposed design amendments to better align with current regional multi-sport demand and participation trends.

The currently approved grant scope includes the rehabilitation of eight tennis courts, including one multi-use court designated for bike polo and futsal. Because any deviation from this scope requires a public process and formal submission to OPRD, staff seek direction on the following alternatives.

At the March 11, 2026, regular meeting, Park Commissioners (PC) directed staff to present options for the April study session.

ASSESSMENT – The following three options for discussion are:

- **Option 1: No change to grant submittal**
 - Court #5 to remain available as a multi-use court for bike polo and futsal with a removable tennis net.
 - No addition of pickleball courts.
- **Option 2: Court #5 multi use tennis court dual lined for pickleball (addition of four pickleball courts)**
 - Eight tennis courts (one multi-use court #5).

- Court #5 remains available for tennis with a removable tennis net and as a multi-use court for bike polo, futsal. Also lined for pickleball.
 - Pickleball nets are temporarily set up and removed by users after play.
 - Add option for versatility by adding removable tennis nets to all back courts #5-8 for future event needs.
 - Court usage evaluated in one year.
- **Option 3: Adding pickleball lines for up to 4 tennis courts #5, 6, 7, 8 (addition of up to 16 courts)**
 - 8 tennis courts (2-4 shared courts)
 - Pickleball nets would be temporarily set up and removed by users after play.
 - Continue the use of bike polo & futsal on court #5.
 - Add option for versatility by all back courts #5 - #8 having removable tennis nets to plan for future events/needs.

Option	Description	Key Features
Option 1	No Change	Maintain original grant submittal: 8 tennis courts . Court #5 remains multi-use (bike polo/futsal).
Option 2	Limited Expansion of Pickleball	8 Tennis Courts (1 shared) . Court #5 dual-lined for 4 pickleball courts. Includes removable nets for courts #5-8.
Option 3	Significant Expansion of Pickleball	8 Tennis Courts (2-4 shared) . Courts #5-8 dual-lined for up to 16 pickleball courts. All back courts utilize removable nets.

Proposed Management & Shared Use Plan: If dual striping is implemented, staff recommend the following operational guidelines:

- **Reservations:** Non-net programs (futsal and bike polo) must be reserved through the APRD office; signage will indicate reserved times.
- **Priority Play:** Outside of reservations, play is first-come, first-served.
- **Seasonal Exceptions:** During High School Tennis Season from March to early June (3 PM to 6 PM) and during permitted tournaments, all eight courts will be reserved exclusively for tennis.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION - Staff would advise the PC to consider Option 2 (one dual-striped court). This approach allows APRD staff to monitor usage, and report back in one year. This maximizes public resources by allowing up to 16 participants to utilize the same footprint that typically serves only two – four tennis players.

Staff would monitor usage by:

- Customer phone calls and emails
- Bi-weekly onsite tracking of use
- Reservation reports

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

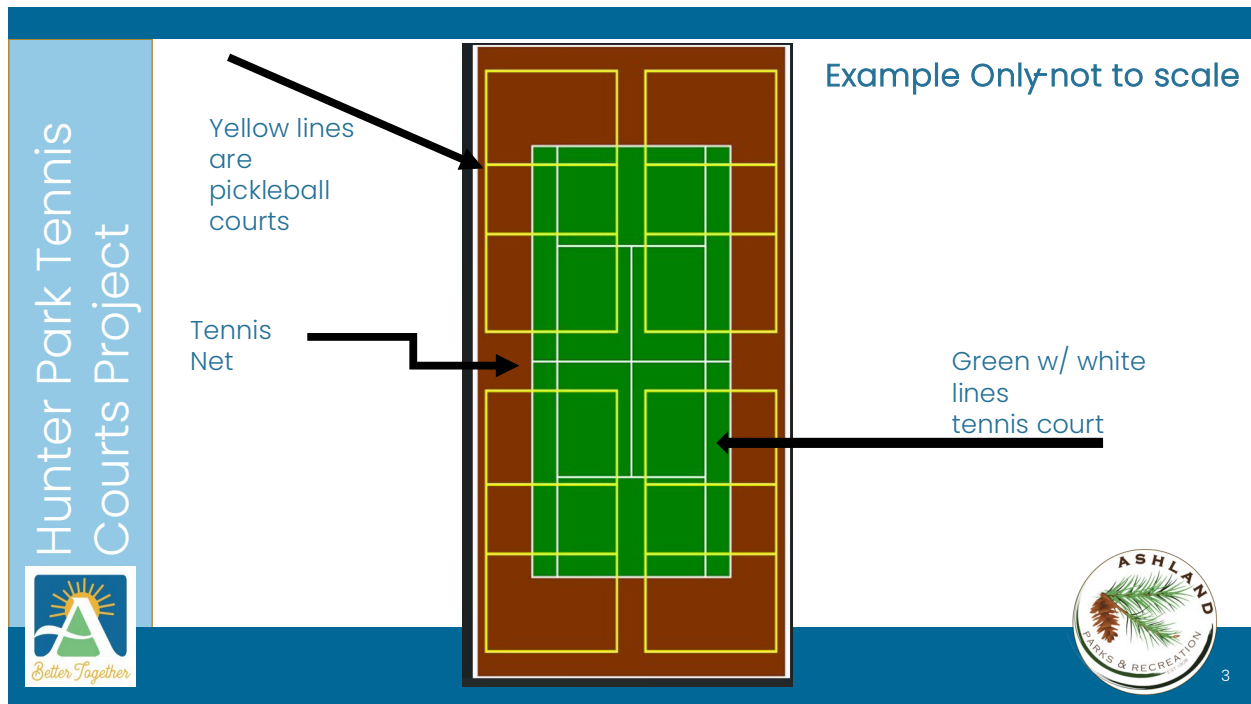
- Would the PC like to consider one of these three options?
- What other information is needed prior to a decision on April 8?

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED - Parks Capital Improvement Project and workplan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS - This project is approved for grant funding through OPRD. \$720,000 (60%) grant, \$480,000(40%) from Parks CIP, for \$1,200,000 total project cost. These proposed amendments would have little impact on the approved budget.

ATTACHMENTS - Dual striped tennis and pickleball court example

PREPARED BY - Rachel Dials, Acting Director
(Rachel took responsibility for the 'staff' recommendation.)





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Added Costs

- Pickleball Lines: four pickleball courts to one of the existing tennis courts:
 - **\$800-\$1000 per court additional**

Public Comments

- Over 80 comments related to pickleball and tennis in Hunter and Lithia Parks have been received via the "Contact the Commissioner" Form on the City Website.
- 11 comments were sent via written public testimony which were shared with the Commissioners and will be included in this meeting's minutes.





Public Comments

- Keep Pickleball in Lithia Park: **32%**
- Convert some courts in Hunter Park for Pickleball: **31%**
- Keep Hunter Tennis Courts for Tennis only: **28%**
- Ideas for Reducing Pickleball Noise: **8%**
- Tennis Only in Lithia/Remove Pickleball: **.5%**



OSAA Regulations for HS Tennis Tournaments

- **Oregon Schools Activities Association (OSAA) play**, there is no rule prohibiting dual-lined courts, as long as the tennis lines remain the dominant and clearly identifiable markings.
- **Visibility Requirements:** The primary tennis lines must be of a single color that clearly contrasts with the court surface. Blended lines (typically for pickleball or youth tennis) should ideally be in a different color or a lighter/darker shade of the court color to minimize "line confusion."
- **State Championship Standards:** For the highest levels of competition (State Championships), OSAA typically utilizes premier facilities like the OSU Tennis Complex. While these facilities often have dedicated tennis courts, the use of dual-lined courts at the district or local level does not disqualify a match from being "official" under OSAA/USTA guidelines.





Proposed Management & Shared Use Plan

If dual striping is implemented, staff recommend the following operational guidelines:

- **Reservations:** Non-net programs (futsal and bike polo) must be reserved through the APRD office; signage will indicate reserved times.
- **Priority Play:** Outside of reservations, play is first-come, first-served.
- **Seasonal Exceptions:** During High School Tennis Season from March to early June (3 PM to 6 PM) and during permitted tournaments, all eight courts will be reserved exclusively for tennis.



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff would advise the Commission to consider Option 2 (one dual-striped court).

This approach would allow APRD staff to monitor usage, and report back in one year. This maximizes public resources by allowing up to 16 participants to utilize the same footprint that typically serves only two – four tennis players.



Commissioner Weiner's statement: Disappointed his proposal was not seen by the community because it wasn't included in the packet. He shared it with the other Commissioners. Noted all Ashland user groups and stakeholder's goals should be evaluated when making a decision regarding programming in public parks with the intent of reaching a compromise(s).

Feedback received from the pickleball user group:

- They want more pickleball courts
- They want the courts grouped together for the social aspect of the game
 - They want to be able to hold tournaments which would require more courts and don't mind playing on dual lined courts
 - They spoke to the fact that pickleball is good for the mind and the body and that it brings diverse groups together

Feedback received from the tennis user group:

- No further erosion of tennis access in Ashland
- Courts are needed to support the Ashland High tennis teams
- Dual lined courts are distracting and a detraction from tennis
- Want distance from the noise and distraction of pickleball play

Feedback received from other park users:

- Want access to the peaceful environment of Lithia Park and it's features without the noise nuisance of pickleball. Features such as the Japanese Garden, the upper duck pond, Madrone Picnic Area, and creekside walking
- Want more parking access to these features. Pickleball users take up much of the parking.

Homeowners

- Want quiet enjoyment of their homes – a right of people in the United States.

Weiner's proposal:

- Three dual lined courts at Hunter Park expanding pickleball from 8 to 12 courts in a location amenable to noise mitigation
- Six dual lined tennis courts at Hunter Park
- Convert pickleball courts in Lithia to tennis only restoring peace and nature to Lithia park and the homeowners near the park.

Chair Bachman: Explained that he asked Commissioner Weiner to share his proposal to see how it fits into the bigger picture. Believes the proposal fits better into the strategic planning meeting. Not on the table for discussion. There isn't time to process it before a decision has to be made to get the project out to bid and built before the deadline for use of the grant money.

Public Testimony

Cori Frank, Ashland: Need more pickleball courts. Read thank you letters from students. Children are playing pickleball, too.

Allen Kenner, Ashland: Spoke to keeping Hunter Courts as is. Recounted 200 lawsuits arising from dual striping. Most tennis players don't want to play on dual striped courts.

Sharon Bates, Ashland: Would like four permanent pickleball courts at Hunter and seven permanent tennis courts. Joyful sounds should not be made illegal in any public park. Parks are for fun.

Diane Paulson, Ashland: Has the number of pickleball players and tennis players playing in the summer been measured? Quiet in the home is something many don't have. Quiet shouldn't be the goal. Pickleball noise is joyful and invigorating.

Mark Reeve, Ashland: Plays tennis and pickleball. Recommends option 2 for Hunter Park courts. Encouraged Commissioners to think about adding more pickleball courts in the long term to respond to the huge interest in the growing sport.

Karl Carstensen, didn't state: Teaches pickleball at Ashland high school to 25 – 30 kids twice a week. The sound of pickleball is people being healthy. Make Ashland a blue zone. Encouraged coexisting.

Robin Donaldson, Ashland: Passionate about all the noises she hears living on Granite street. Recommended not negating the sounds of joy and engagement. The community is for everyone.

Dr. Kathleen Bates, didn't state: Former tennis player and coach. Never been happier than playing pickleball in beautiful, blessed Lithia Park. Rarely sees tennis players playing at Hunter. Many people waiting to play pickleball in Lithia.

Philippe Sprague, Ashland: Would like to know how many people complain about the pickleball noise. If the courts were in Lithia when the complainer moved to Granite, they should have known it was noisy. Cursed and was asked to stop by Chair Bachman.

Carlyle Stout, Ashland: One of the best things about Ashland is the sense of community, exemplified by Lithia park. The park has changed over the years. Sees pickleball as a salvation for most of the community. Keep it in Lithia and keep tennis striped for tennis only at Hunter.

Koeby Johnson, Ashland: Lithia park is not a one-use place dedicated to quiet peace and solitude. It has always been noisy. It was home to an auto park, there are loud commencement celebrations, and children having a blast on the playground. Pickleball fits into this scenario. Not recognizing that shows a lack of understanding of this community.

Russel Feingold, Ashland: Lives on Granite Street within earshot of the pickleball courts and cannot hear it from inside his home. Would be expensive to alter the courts in Lithia Park and funds are tight. The people have shown up and spoken, and they want pickleball to remain in Lithia Park.

Jared Rojo Meyer, didn't state: Ashland high school boys' tennis team coach. Pickleball is fine as long as it isn't eliminating tennis courts and reducing the opportunity for youth to learn tennis. Tennis has been around since the 1100s. The two sports should be separated. Choose Option 1.

Gail Patton, Ashland: Noted all the loss of tennis courts in Ashland. Already compromised by giving the Lithia courts to pickleball. Tennis and pickleball cannot share space. Each sport should have their own courts. Please choose option #1.

John Spitzley, Ashland: Spoke to the PROS Plan data on participation in different sports. Did a search of a data base called Playtime Scheduler to look at pickleball participants. Conservatively there are 15,000 – 20,000 yearly pickleball participants in Ashland.

Jack Gibbs, Ashland: Helped start a petition to keep pickleball courts in Lithia. Over 150 signatures in a couple days. Spoke to how pickleball enhances life, brings people together, etc. A social wonder. Pickleball is an economic driver for the City. Embrace it, enhance it.

Joel Heller, Ashland: Spends his winters in a town of 4,000 with 40 pickleball courts which are used. Courts in Fichtner–Mainwaring Park in Medford are dual striped, and they play tournaments there. Supports adding a few pickleball courts at Hunter Park.

Bruce Laidlaw, Ashland: Tennis player. No one has claimed to like playing on dual striped courts. Need to act quickly to keep the grant funding for Hunter. Noted the PC previously stated pickleball should be discussed in conjunction with the PROS Plan. No pickleball courts at Hunter, please.

Stan Mavis, Ashland: Lives close to Ashland, not bothered by pickleball noise. Pickleball is growing exponentially compared to tennis. To represent the constituents, protect and grow pickleball.

Martin Stadtmueller, Ashland: Co-coach of the Ashland high school girls team. Don't conflate what is allowed by OSAA with what actually works. Dual striped courts do not work for tennis. Doesn't understand why solving the pickleball issue has to fall on the shoulders of the tennis community.

Noah, Brun, didn't state: Did a soundscape at Lithia Park on March 29, 2026 at 4:30 PM. noise from cars, children, and picknickers accounted for most of the louder sounds. Louder than the noise produced by six pickleball courts in use. Nothing over 52 decibels from pickleball play which is less than the sound of a car

Lutie Lyman, Ashland: Tennis player for 40 years. Need to find another place to put pickleball courts. Maybe Bellview school if it closes. Maybe Lincoln school. There's already a large cement slab at Lincoln and parking at both. Large gyms at both schools. Three empty courts at SOU.

Written Public Testimony

- Dear Park Commission members,
I am an avid tennis player and am in favor of Option 1.
Thank you,
Alex Zaffaroni

- Allen Kenner 3/28/2026
Ashland, OR 97520

Dear Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission,

I am writing to respectfully urge the Commission to keep the Hunter Park courts dedicated to tennis and to reject all proposals to add pickleball striping. I also ask that future planning for both sports prioritize separate facilities so that each community can thrive without being placed in direct conflict.

While restriping may appear to be a reasonable compromise, our own experience locally and from communities across the country shows that it creates conflict and resentment. Restriping for pickleball represents the point at which court space becomes contested. It permanently changes how a court is used, and increases the number of players occupying the same space. The introduction of loud, extremely distracting pickleball noise and confusing lines, even on only one or two courts, will significantly interfere with people's ability to play and enjoy tennis on all the courts. It will drive tennis players away, just as it did at Lithia Park and at countless courts around the country. This is why so many communities are now moving away from shared striping and toward separate facilities.

Tennis players are not the only ones who would be adversely affected if pickleball were allowed at Hunter Park. Pickleball noise is loud and carries far and would keep neighbors, and users of the Daniel Meyer Pool and Hunter Park from being able to enjoy peaceful, relaxing quiet while in their backyards, swimming, laying by the pool, or simply reading a book while lying on the grass.

As an avid tennis player and part of the tennis community, I rely on the courts for much of my social interaction, making new friends, and for keeping me fit and healthy. But our community has already lost over

two-thirds of its tennis courts. Not that long ago we had 25 courts, now we have only 8. That loss includes the recent conversion to pickleball of two tennis courts at Lithia Park, despite Ashland having a large tennis community whose numbers are rapidly growing.

Restriping any of the remaining tennis courts at Hunter Park would further diminish tennis in Ashland. It would be quite unfair.

It would adversely affect youth, the high school tennis teams, families, and longtime residents who rely on access to tennis courts. Additionally, Big Al's Tournament, an important event that brings revenue to our city by attracting out-of-town players and guests, would likely struggle. Its appeal would be significantly diminished if any of the few remaining courts were restriped for pickleball.

If the Parks and Recreation Commission has any doubt that restriping will create problems instead of solutions, there is a substantial and growing body of evidence from communities across the United States that shows restriping tennis courts for pickleball consistently leads to conflict. These conflicts are not isolated; they follow a clear and repeated pattern that has been documented in dozens of cities.

For example, in Palo Alto, California, beginning in 2018, temporary striping of tennis courts led to ongoing disputes that continue today, with repeated public meetings and organized opposition. In Portland, Oregon, in 2020, courts were restriped and the backlash was so strong that pickleball use was later restricted and lines were removed. In Des Moines, Iowa, in 2023, a citywide restriping of tennis courts resulted in widespread complaints about lost access, overcrowding, and noise. In Seattle, Washington, also in 2023, a proposal to stripe tennis courts was reversed after public opposition.

Similarly, in Boise, Idaho, between 2018 and 2025, converted courts became the subject of a prolonged dispute that ultimately resulted in a lawsuit and a return to tennis-only use. In Fairfax County, Virginia, from 2021 through 2025, conflicts escalated to repeated repainting of pickleball lines after courts were reverted, which officials described as ongoing vandalism. In San Francisco, California, between 2023 and 2024, adding pickleball lines to shared courts led to heated public meetings and reported vandalism. In the Palm Springs region in 2021, disputes arose over taped lines, and court markings, resulted in physical confrontations between users.

Additional examples reinforce the same pattern. In Camas, Washington, since 2023, shared courts led to ongoing tension, conflicts, and overcrowding, prompting the Parks Chief to propose separate courts for tennis and for pickleball. In Fresno, California, conflicts over multi-use courts escalated to city council involvement. In Hamden, Connecticut, in 2024 and 2025, proposed striping created funding disputes and community division. In Boca Raton, Florida, in 2025, the conversion of tennis courts led to a lawsuit from residents.

Taken together, these examples are part of a broader national trend. News reports indicate that there have been more than 200 lawsuits nationwide in the past decade related to pickleball conflicts, many tied to

restriping, conversions, noise, and court placement. These disputes have increased sharply since 2020 as the sport has grown. We saw the beginnings of such conflicts here in Ashland when both pickleball and tennis players tried to share the courts at Lithia Park, leading to the Commission's wise decision to separate the two communities.

A key driver of these conflicts is noise, which is a central and often underestimated factor. Pickleball produces very loud, sharp, and repetitive sounds that carry much farther than typical tennis play. This has led to widespread complaints across the country from residents near pickleball courts. It also directly affects tennis players at dual-use courts. Tennis relies heavily on auditory cues. Players use the sound of the ball coming off the opponent's racket to judge pace, spin, and timing. When multiple pickleball games are taking place on the same surface, the volume and frequency of the noise can make it difficult or even impossible for tennis players to read these cues, which significantly degrades both performance and enjoyment of the game.

In addition to noise, there are important physical and visual impacts from striping. The addition of multiple pickleball lines introduces a different surface texture in those areas, which can subtly affect ball bounce and trajectory. For tennis players who depend on consistency, even small variations matter. In addition, many players see restriping as a defacing of the court. They also experience visual confusion from numerous overlapping lines. It becomes harder to track boundaries during fast play. A useful analogy is to imagine watching a movie with pickleball lines taped across the screen; while it may still be possible to follow the action, the experience would be so degraded it would cause great frustration and most people would choose not to participate.

It is understandable that the pickleball community wants more courts. However, while it might initially seem reasonable to share Hunter Park courts, this approach does not hold up under closer examination.

A common argument for restriping is that there aren't funds to build new pickleball courts, and since the tennis courts are already paved this would make sense economically. However, this argument overlooks the significant and well-documented problems of joint use, including noise impacts and loss of tennis access, which have proven difficult or impossible to resolve in many communities. If pickleball is as popular as claimed, it should be possible to secure funding for appropriately located, dedicated facilities.

Another argument is that the Hunter Park courts are often vacant and therefore should not be dedicated just for tennis. However, if that reasoning were applied broadly, many single-use recreational spaces in Ashland such as baseball fields, that are unused for much of the time, would be subject to constant repurposing despite serving important community needs at specific times. It would be like arguing that a library reading area should be used for loud group dance classes simply because it is vacant much of the time.

A third argument is that the courts at Lithia Park are often icy in the winter. However, similar conditions occur at Hunter Park, along with additional issues such as the frequent presence of dense fog which keeps the courts wet for long periods, so this does not provide a meaningful justification for relocation. Finally, a commonly proposed compromise is to simply restripe only a few courts. This seems like an

obvious solution, but in practice it creates most of the same issues as full restriping. Tennis players will not want to play on restriped courts, representing an unfair loss of tennis courts. Additionally, pickleball noise will adversely affect people playing tennis on the remaining courts, turning what should be enjoyable recreation into an unpleasant experience. As a result, user conflicts would persist, meaning this approach is not actually a compromise at all.

Given all of these factors, the path forward is clear. The Commission has already recognized these challenges through its moratorium on restriping at Hunter Park due to noise concerns and existing tennis demand. This reflects the reality that these conflicts are significant and persistent. Hunter Park presents an opportunity to avoid repeating the well-documented mistakes of other communities. By following the existing moratorium and preserving the tennis courts as they are, and supporting the development of dedicated pickleball facilities elsewhere, the Commission can reduce conflict, avoid costly lawsuits, protect existing community assets, and support both sports in a balanced and sustainable way.

This is not a question of choosing one community over another; it is a question of planning wisely so that both communities can succeed without being placed in opposition.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community.
Sincerely,

Allen Kenner

References Appendix

1. AP (2025) – Tennis participation grows to more than 25M players in the US even as pickleball's popularity surges
<https://share.google/muM6kcRUSbG7Gvsz>
2. Axios (2025) – “Pickleball boom brings lawsuits”
Reporting on more than 200 lawsuits nationwide related to pickleball conflicts involving municipalities and homeowners associations
<https://share.google/SfUB743ZEgUgivy0F>
3. The Washington Post (2025) – Coverage of pickleball noise disputes and litigation
<https://share.google/IThwz5IYZnctzdYPt>
4. Fox News (2025) – Wealthy California town bans pickleball
<https://share.google/7EKMIYGPP3FnSOH0V>



Park Commission

340 South Pioneer Street
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5. Axios San Francisco (2024) – Court removals due to noise complaints
<https://share.google/qDuDezUhgKELbzQBJ>
6. The Denver Post (2024) – Colorado residents sue their town over pickleball noise
<https://share.google/849i03zdaKMSH9Goh>
7. City of Boise (2025) – Official announcement of lawsuit settlement and reversion of converted pickleball courts back to tennis use
<https://share.google/w7qHksd5b8zd0l6cN>
8. Axios Portland (2023) – Pickleball lines removed after backlash
<https://share.google/0oiWaR9gscDj49dQt>
9. West Seattle Blog (2024) – Seattle proposal to stripe tennis courts for pickleball being reversed following public opposition
<https://share.google/gUB7uArhGxOPRhT9Q>
10. FOX 5 DC (2025) – repeated repainting of pickleball lines in Fairfax County after courts were reverted to tennis only
<https://share.google/LI7hFl2pA2f6OgNex>
11. San Francisco Chronicle (2023–2024) – Coverage of conflicts, vandalism, and public disputes following addition of pickleball lines to tennis courts
<https://share.google/iAwq2YIRjy5JZFGZo>
12. Sports Destination Management (2021) – Reporting on conflicts in the Palm Springs region involving taped lines and user disputes
<https://share.google/x4u96KnUU4w1Yzdap>
13. The Post-Record (2025) – Due to ongoing conflict in Camas, Washington over shared tennis and pickleball courts, Parks Chief proposes separate courts for each group
<https://share.google/NmSHVdu0dRRxKvDAB>
14. Athletic Business (2024–2025) – Reporting on funding disputes in Hamden, Connecticut related to proposed pickleball striping
<https://share.google/idVvUsoo2NaxcGAvj>
15. AMG World (2025) – Coverage of Boca Raton homeowners association lawsuit over conversion of tennis courts to pickleball
<https://share.google/2PYrJB6TLown9SOnK>
16. Acoustical Society of America – Research on pickleball noise and community impacts
<https://share.google/Bequ30PkCekeNSMpH>

- Dear Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission,

I wanted to provide my testimony in support of keeping the Pickleball courts in Lithia park. I run/walk through Lithia Park 6-7 times a week and don't view pickleball as a noise concern.

I have used the Lithia pickleball courts and met 100's of players of all ages and many, many tourists that are visiting who come to use the courts. It has become a terrific community building activity for many residents. I also have seen many people who are walking by the courts stop to take pictures of the courts and ask questions because they are so amazed by the number of people using the courts and want to learn pickleball.

The Lithia park location is really unique for pickleball and very central for a lot of users who bike/walk to the courts. It also is a unique draw for visitors staying in Ashland downtown that takes no money or resources to promote.

It would be very unfortunate if Hunter park is the only option as it provides a less centralized location and the dual lined tennis/pickleball courts with portable nets are a poorer playing experience.

Overall, I feel that Lithia Pickleball courts provide a central location for many locals(including players from Talent who don't have courts) and visitors. The courts are widely used, require almost no annual cost especially compared to any APRC park or facility, and meet the APRC mission to "provide and promote recreational opportunities".

sincerely
Brian Lovett
Ashland OR

- To All involved in the decisions about Hunter Park Tennis Courts:

I started playing tennis about once a week 40 years ago. I discovered pickleball 12 years ago and have played it at least twice a week since then. I play tennis also about twice a week.

Even though I love pickleball, the noise of the game does bother my nervous system. I love getting back to tennis where there is more calm in both the quietness and more time between hits that makes it less jarring and jumpy for me personally. In short I regularly enjoy both games.

During the high school tennis season, it's almost impossible to find a court to play on. The tennis courts all over the valley become occupied by high schools. For example, Saint Mary's high school takes over all the courts at Fichner-Mainwaring Park in Medford, and Cascade Christian HS has taken over the courts at Holmes Park in Medford and Phoenix High school has taken over the courts at Bear Creek Park in Medford. As well as Hunter Park being taken over by the boys and girls teams from Ashland high school. In short, we don't need fewer tennis courts, we need more. And we also need more Pickleball courts, especially ones that are in sun exposure during the winter.

I don't think any existing tennis facilities should have to give up courts to Pickleball as there is enough demand for the tennis courts throughout the year.

Also, I come to play tennis to calm my nervous system, and the noise from the Pickleball games is very disruptive.

Managing multiple lines on the tennis court is not symmetric as to affecting the tennis players equally as much as the Pickleball players. It affects the tennis players much more because they have to take in all the distracting lines because they're using an entire court that will be lined over by four Pickleball courts so they are literally looking at all four Pickleball courts lines. When I play pickle ball, the tennis lines are not very disruptive because it's taking up very little of my actual Pickleball court.

Tennis and Pickleball should be kept separately and courts should not be taken away from tennis players to be used for Pickleball.

Tennis courts are important too because Tennis is a much more challenging sport than pickleball in terms of the expanded court allowing a greater separation of players unique abilities to control the ball and those that aspire to refine their skills will see that coming from Pickleball and going to Tennis provides a unique growth Opportunity much like going from being restricted to a set of colored pencils to that of painting with paints you can mix in an infinite number of colors. Pickleball is a compressed form of tennis and compresses the range of shots in a smaller area thus eliminating much of the shots that can be developed into winners. We want to provide for both tennis players and pickleball players, but the experiences are unique and should be allowed to be the separate experiences that they are. I would love for there to be more pickleball courts, but not by taking away the existing courts from tennis. Hunter Park is really the only place in Ashland to play tennis, and tennis is quieter than pickleball and when playing tennis, noise from pickleball is grating on the nervous system.

I have lived in both Medford and Ashland over the years. I can tell you when living in Medford, I would not go to Ashland if there was a fair chance that the tennis courts would all be in use when I arrived - a huge waste of time. And I often would come to Ashland for the rest of the day after playing at Hunter Park, patronizing businesses for lunch, dinner and other things.

Thank you for your consideration to not allow pickleball on the Hunter Park Tennis courts.
Please build new pickleball courts in Ashland in a sunny area.

Sincerely,
Dan Rossetta

- I think it is important to provide outdoor activities like pickleball and tennis in multiple locations across the city. When I first moved to Ashland, 20 years ago, it was the goal, of the Park Commission, to have a park within 1/4 mile of every residence so that people would have outdoor space to access, enjoy and be healthy and active in.

When I spoke at the last Parks Commission meeting about the importance of adding some pickleball courts to the Hunter Park project, it was to both meet the need for more courts for the pickleball players but more importantly to provide another location to serve part of the community that did not have close easy access to courts. I think it is important to have courts on both sides of town.

The Lithia Park courts provide access for the North Ashland residents (and currently all the rest of us) but they also provide courts for the people visiting Ashland as tourists and they draw people from the rest of the valley because of the beautiful location.

As a former small business owner in Ashland, I can speak to the need to create a draw to the downtown corridor, to keep our town vibrant with small businesses. It is very difficult to keep a small business alive in this town and we are just starting to see a re-emergence of vibrant tourism since the smoky summers of 2015-2019, and COVID, which pretty much wiped out the tourism our town relies on to keep small businesses viable and provide us all with the amenities that make our town so amazing.

For years I worked with the Chamber and other business owners to create multiple avenues to attract tourists, from festivals to outdoor athletic activities like hiking, mountain biking, ice skating, etc. Pickleball is one of those activities that draws people to visit and stay longer.

I personally travel with my pickleball paddle and look for open play games wherever I travel. I have played with many people at Lithia Park who have been in town visiting and have come to play.

One last thought I had for bringing tennis courts back to the north side of town, because tennis players need the diversity of access and courts too. The ice skating rink proposal looks like a great permanent venue for entertainment year round. Could tennis courts be added under the rink and used in the spring, summer and fall when ice skating is not in season?

Let's find solutions for adding active outdoor activities across this town to attract and accommodate more people and multiple sports rather than reducing an already existing very successful venue like the Lithia Park pickleball courts.

Thank you for your consideration,

Denise Daehler

- Dear Ashland Parks Department,

I recently moved to Ashland and I love it here. One of the main draws for me was the pickleball in Lithia Park, the most beautiful public pickleball courts I've ever seen. I moved here and bought my house in part so I could walk to the park and to the pickleball courts. The setting enhances the health benefits and strong sense of community that pickleball brings with it, and it has facilitated my feeling welcome in Ashland.

While I do understand the noise concerns, the park is large and there are many places one can go and avoid the sound of pickleball (it is a sound that brings joy to me, but I understand if you don't play it could be different!)

Pickleball is a special sport that is very easy to pick up, has an inclusive and open play culture (very rare), many health benefits (physical and social) and builds community, helping to offset isolation and loneliness. It can be played at all ages and at any level, and I rarely see any other sport where a 16 year old can be on the court with a 70 year old and everyone is enjoying themselves. I think that's something we should be encouraging in a public park.

Please consider keeping this popular sport in this central and accessible location. It contributes to Ashland being such a desirable place to live.

Sincerely,

Diane Santas

- I am writing re: the Hunter Park Tennis Courts Project.

My comment is pickleball has 8 public courts and tennis has 8 courts. So adding pickleball lines to multiple tennis courts at Hunter Park, will significantly reduce tennis players' ability to play. In addition, pickleball lines distort the tennis court by negatively affecting court targets and the player's depth perception.

Because the high school tennis team and the annual Big Al's Tournament use all 8 courts for practices and matches,

I am in favor of Option 1 "Maintain original grant submittal: 8 tennis courts. Court #5 remains multi-use (bike polo/futsal)."

This would not add pickleball lines to any of the courts.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

To Your Wellth!!

Glen Alex

- Dear Ashland Parks & Rec commission,

Ashland used to have well over 30 tennis courts. We are now down to 7.5

Here are a few things I'd ask you to consider before you ruin our last remaining courts by striping them with pickleball lines.

Pickleball lines change how the ball bounces. In tennis there's a risk/reward factor in hitting for the lines. Balls that hit tennis lines tend to skid, potentially forcing an error and rewarding the player taking a risk. With Pickleball lines throughout the court, balls are now skidding in the middle of the court. The playing surface becomes maddeningly inconsistent.

Pickleball lines are slippery and dangerous. I had one player last year at an away match who slipped on a pickleball line and hurt her knee. This is not uncommon and pickleball lines would render the courts unusable for tournament play.

Tennis is a visual sport. Visually, the sea of Pickleball lines completely messes with the visual sense of where one is on the court and where one is trying to hit the ball. It also renders making accurate line calls incredibly difficult. We have players on our high school team hitting balls over 120MPH. Judging the trajectory of a tennis ball is difficult enough. Pickleball lines make this darn near impossible.

Tennis is an auditory sport In tennis, so much information is conveyed by the sound of the ball being struck. A good player can learn if the ball was hit flat, or with spin, clearly or slightly off center, with pace or without. There's a reason pro matches ask for quiet during points. Pickleball is incredibly noisy. When Pickleballers are around, that sound information is completely lost.

Pickleball lines will significantly limit how the Hunter Park courts can be used. At Ashland High School, our hope is that the once the courts are rebuilt, Ashland could host the high school district championships and invitational HS tournaments. Due to the factors I mentioned above, hosting districts is simply not an option if the Hunter Courts are double lined for pickleball. Likewise it limits the use of the courts for future local and USTA tournaments.

You're inviting unnecessary conflict. In the Ashland trail system, Ashland Parks & Rec has wisely chosen to limit conflict and enhance user enjoyment by separating user groups that can't peacefully co-exist, namely hikers/runners and downhill mountain bikers. By wisely providing DH mountain bikers and hikers/runners with their own dedicated trails, Parks & Rec has greatly reduced conflicts while increasing user enjoyment. Bravo! Now let's do the same for tennis players and Pickleballers. Rather than put the Hatfields and McCoy's together and naively expect everyone to get along, I urge you to do the sensible thing and keep tennis and Pickleballers where they belong—at separate facilities!

Finally, I don't understand the idea of paying big \$\$ to fix the courts if you're just going to ruin them by adding pickleball lines. Personally (and I'm not alone in this view), given the choice between the current cracked courts and new courts with pickleballers, the noise, confusing lines and the conflict that will come with them, I'll take the cracks!

TLDR: Pickleball lines destroy the tennis experience even when Pickleball players are not present.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Martin Stadtmueller
AHS Girls Tennis Coach, 2024 & 2025, Assistant Coach 2026

- Regarding the Hunter Park tennis court project:

I would like to add the perspective of a long-time Ashland tennis player. In the 1990s, there were 23 tennis courts in town available at no charge for public use (Hunter Park, SOU, Lithia Park, Helman School). All but the 8 courts at Hunter Park have been converted to other uses.

Several points addressing your discussion April 1:

(1) The staff report recommendation of Option 2 (one dual-striped court) tries to minimize the loss of tennis courts for tennis players. Since court 5 is already multi-use for tennis, bike polo and futsal, it would expand multi-use only for court 5. I think that is a reasonable compromise from the standpoint of tennis players.

(2) The staff report mentions "Seasonal Exceptions" when all 8 courts would be reserved exclusively for tennis: for high school team practice March to early June in the afternoons and during permitted tournaments. The staff report did not mention that there are youth tennis lessons at Hunter Park during the summer. These youth lessons usually fill two courts on weekdays for at least six weeks. That only leaves six courts for other tennis players to use during those times.

(3) Squeezing tennis players to only four exclusive courts, as Option 3 could do, would not be a good choice by the Parks Commission. I know commissioners have many priorities to balance, but please continue to respect the large number of tennis players in Ashland. Having both tennis players and pickleball players wait for a turn on four courts seems like it would be very awkward.

(4) I would support funding to build more dedicated pickleball courts in Ashland, or to stripe pickleball lines on school property paved areas for pickleball play weekends and summertimes, or to stripe pickleball lines on basketball courts in our parks and schools (if basketball players would not mind that).

Sincerely,
Peter Finkle
Ashland

- Good evening,

My name is Thor Morris, I'm a resident if Ashland. I'm emailing to express my support for Option 2 regarding the Hunter Park Tennis Court construction as outlined below. While pickleball is very popular, Hunter Park has the only remaining public tennis courts, and while I think shariglng on of the courts is reasonable I think more than that would be too limiting for tennis in Ashland. These courts are also important doe the high school tennis team.

Option 2 is "Limited Expansion of Pickleball — 8 Tennis Courts (1 shared). Court #5 dual-lined for 4 pickleball courts.

Includes removable nets for courts #5–8."

This would have pickleball lines on one court (court #5, where bike polo is played)

Thank you,

Thor

- As a mom of two Ashland high school tennis players, I urge the Parks Commission to vote for option 1, keeping Hunter courts as tennis only. I hope that you accept this testimony even though I am providing it after tonight's meeting. I arrived at the meeting at 5:56 pm but all seating was full. Parks staff told me and others to go to the projection area outside because of fire code regulations. When I went back inside to try to figure out how to get in line to speak, I was reminded of needing to stay outside. I did not know the process of how to get to the podium. The same was true for about a dozen Ashland high school students and the girls' tennis coach: all came to speak on the side of maintaining the current 8 courts as tennis-only but remained out of view from the commission in the lobby area. The testimony tonight was lopsided in favor of the pickleball community, who may have been better organized and knew the process of how to speak.

I also attended the meeting about the Hunter tennis courts held at the Ashland Senior Center about six months ago. At that meeting, Ashland Parks and Recreation Director Rocky Houston told the audience that the tennis courts would be maintained as tennis only, not double striped as pickle ball courts, and that all the design plans and funding were in place. In fact, design plans were posted on the walls of the senior center. The audience at that meeting was tennis-heavy and cheered when this announcement was made, relieved that the meeting wouldn't devolve into a pickle ball vs tennis argument. At that meeting, most of the discussion had to do with timing of the repairs, as not to disrupt the high school tennis season, not about the type of rebuild.

Why are we revisiting this question six months later, when the plans were already in place? I question the legitimacy of the entire Parks and Recreation process if plans are made, publically announced, and then because of unknown delays in getting bids / breaking ground, the design and public comment process starts anew..

Don't compromise the quality of the tennis court rebuild; please find a solution for additional pickle ball courts elsewhere. If you convert even one tennis court to pickle ball, the quality of the tennis experience deteriorates. Tennis requires concentration. There is an expectation of silence and lack of interference from balls interrupting match play. Tennis players won't want to play near pickle ball players, so you will end up with unused tennis courts, and then over time, do to "lack of use," will end up converting the entire row of courts 5-8 to pickleball. The Ashland tennis community already gave up Lithia park tennis courts to pickle ball, with an agreement that Hunter courts would remain tennis courts. And now we are in danger of sliding down the slippery slope of losing the Hunter courts as well. Why does the Park and Recreation commission keep changing what it promises the tennis community? It seems very disingenuous.

Respectfully,
Tina Rutar

- Please leave tennis courts for tennis at Hunter Park. Use removable tape to mark picklball if necessary for tournaments. Or, relocate pickleball facility to somewhere compatable. Hunter Park is for tennis!
Thnakyou,

William Kirkbride

Questions/Discussion

- We are information gathering tonight, not arguing. Would like to focus on discarding options starting with option 3. It is a controversial issue with no clear consensus, making a major change like this seems premature and ill advised.

- Option 3 goes too far but should keep it as an option. Public testimony referenced all three options. Gives a good cross-section for decision making.
- Clarification: the Commission can only look at land that belongs to the City. Need to study the pickleball noise issues thoroughly before taking action. Stated the discussion of more pickleball belongs in a discussion of the strategic plan and the next budget cycle. The Hunter Courts project needs to move forward by next week.
- If the direction they move forward doesn't address any of the challenges/problems then they need to honor the previous agreement of pickleball only at Lithia and tennis only at Hunter.
- Job tonight is to frame up options for what they are going to vote on next week. Agrees these are the three options to consider. Feedback received clarifies this is not the time for Weiner's proposal. It is clear that many people want pickleball to remain in Lithia Park.
- Should encourage the school district to add pickleball courts on their property in the long term.
- Generally would like to see more cooperation between school district, SOU, and the City to create more space for recreation, fields, courts, etc.

IV. **PARK WALK MEDALLION** – Commissioner Gardiner

Commissioner Gardiner is presenting to represent Tom Foster. In addition to helping establish the Lithia Park walks in 1989, Tom helped found the Pacific Northwest Museum of Natural History. That museum was part of the draw for the forensics laboratory being established in Ashland. People from the museum were some of the first nature guides in Lithia Park.

Tom guided for years and continues to train volunteer guides. Gardiner is one of the guides. Only one walk per week now down from three days a week pre COVID, but it is still very popular.

Tom would like to commemorate the dozens of volunteer guides from over the years with a medallion placed at the entrance to Lithia Park. Tom would also like there to be a time capsule buried beneath the medallion. He has begun working on a design for the medallion.

Process includes taking the proposal to the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC). They would then maintain it. The medallion would need to be set in concrete for stability.

SITUATION & BACKGROUND – In 1989 Tom Foster lead a group of local citizens to develop an informative Park Walk program. Volunteers got together and trained themselves on the history of Lithia Park and early Ashland settlers and incorporated these tales, along

with the identification of local flora and geological highlights, to create what came to be known as the Lithia Park Nature Walks.

These volunteers had been associated with the Pacific Northwest Museum of Natural History (now ScienceWorks). Over the years interest in these free guided tours has introduced more than 20,000 visitors to Lithia Park, the crown jewel of our park system.

This program operated uninterrupted for over 30 years until it was sidelined by the onset of the Covid pandemic in the early 2020's. After a few years off, the program was brought back to life and continues to sponsor weekly park walks on Saturdays at 10:00 from May through September.

These walks are coordinated by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Departments Volunteer and Events Coordinator, Sulaiman Shelton and lead by a group of four to six hearty volunteer guides.

At Tom's request, we would like the Park Commission to consider the idea of placing a sidewalk medallion near the main entrance to Lithia Park to recognize the volunteer efforts of all the many individuals that have led park walks in Lithia Park since 1989. The medallion would be similar in size and fashion to medallions that have been placed at many locations around town identifying important local historical events (MAP Project) and the current Public Art Advisory Committee's efforts to create the Literary Walk around town.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS - Would the PC like to consider this request?

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED - N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS - We anticipate that this will be a private donation project that would be sponsored by the Ashland Parks Foundation.

ATTACHMENTS - N/A

PREPARED BY - Mike Gardiner, Vice Chair, Ashland Parks Commission

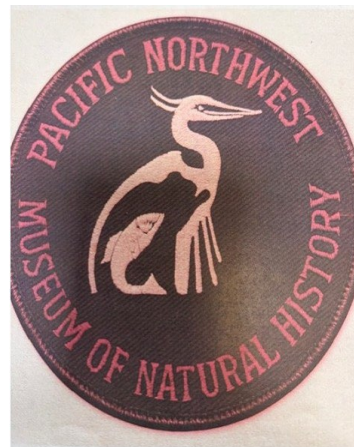


Park Walk Medallion Request (Information Only)

- Consider placing a sidewalk medallion near the main entrance to Lithia Park.
- This would recognize the volunteer efforts of all the many individuals that have led park walks in Lithia Park since 1989.

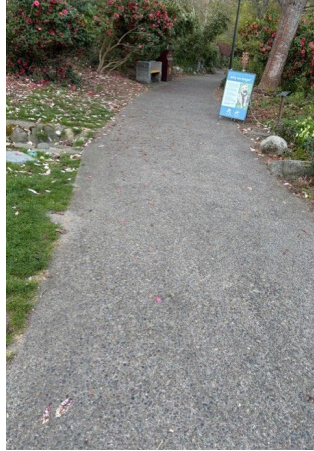


Park Walk Medallion Request





Park Walk Medallion Request



Questions/Discussion

- The proposal seems out of sync with the other historic marker medallions placed around Ashland. Might be confusing. Should be a different aesthetic, more like the recognition plaques. A plaque might be better for a time capsule too.
- Some of the literary markers are for contemporary writers, not just historical.
- Somewhat concerned about the number of words suggested – might be too small. Thinks the sidewalk in front of Lithia is in fact concrete rather than asphalt.
- General support for the concept.
- Request for the proposal to come back to the PC for formal approval. Gardiner is working with Tom (through the Ashland Parks Foundation) so that Tom can offer the proposed medallion as a gift to the City.
- There should be a mockup for the PAAC and PC to look at.
- Next step would be to bring a concept to the PAAC.

V. LOOKAHEAD REVIEW – Acting Director Dials

Date

Agenda Item

Presenter

4/8	Park Commission Regular Business Meeting Council Chamber 6:00 PM	
	Hunter Park Tennis Court Project (Action)	Dials
5/6	Park Commission Study Session – No meeting due to Joint Meeting with City Council on May 5	CANCELED
5/13	Park Commission Regular Business Meeting Council Chamber 6:00 PM	
	Winburn Way & Japanese Garden ADA (Information)	Caldwell/Fleury
	Ashland Fish Rehabilitation Project (Information/Tentative)	Scott Howell/Dials
	Public Art Proclamation (Information/Tentative)	PAAC
6/3	Park Commission Study Session Council Chamber 6:00 PM	
6/10	Park Commission Regular Business Meeting Council Chamber 6:00 PM	
APRC Advisory and Management Advisory Committees		
4/16/2026	Recreation Division Advisory Committee, the Grove 3:30 PM - CANCELED	
4/13/2026	Ashland Senior Advisory Committee, Senior Center 3:30 PM - CANCELED	
TBD	Trails Advisory Committee, the Grove	
TBD	Ashland Japanese Garden MAC Lithia Cabin 2:00 PM	
TBD	Bee City USA MAC	
TBD	Current Parks, Conservation, and Maintenance MAC	
Council Business/Budget Meetings/Commissions		
4/6/26	Food and Beverage Tax Discussion – City Council Study Session	Dials
5/5/26	Joint PC/City Council Meeting 6:00 PM Council Chamber	Council Hosts
5/19/26	Miscellaneous Fees – City Council Business Meeting	Dials

Department Work Plan

- Complete projects identified in the adopted Capital Improvement Plan for FY 26-27
 - Preventative Maintenance Projects
 - Lithia – Butler Perozzi Fountain Restoration
 - ADA Improvements
 - Hunter Park – Tennis Court Rehabilitation
 - Irrigation Controllers
 - Siskiyou Mountain – Trail Re-route

- Lithia – Master Plan work plan projects
 - East Main – Phase I development projects
2. Improve recreation and senior programming access by replacing staff eliminated during COVID-19 and developing a cost recovery policy.
 3. Complete the Parks, Recreation, Open space, & Senior services strategic plan (PROS)
 4. Establish Equipment Replacement and Repair program to be consistent with Citywide fleet standards.
 5. Update employee onboarding, training, and safety program
 6. Complete work plan items identified for FY 26-27 to implement the Lithia Park Master Plan
 - Fuels reduction between Glenview Rd & Ashland Creek
 - Hazard tree removal
 - Development and promotion of citizen science and/or other environmental education
 - Winburn Way traffic speed and road design
 - Trail map update
 - Replacement of interpretive signs for flora
 7. Develop funding strategy for future capital projects, specifically:
 - Pool replacement project
 - East Main future development phase(s)

2026

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
Budget Concepts (odd years) Adopt CIP (odd years)	VIP Annual Report ✓ Budget Direction (odd years) Calle Guanajuato Lease Agreement ✓	Recommend Budget (odd years) Recreation Division Annual Report ✓
Golf Course Annual Report ✓		
APRIL	MAY	JUNE

		Senior Services Cookout with APD
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
July 4th Parade	Senior Services Ice Cream Social	
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Return of the Salmon Family Field Day	Senior Services Annual Report Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink Opens Senior Services + Ashland Firefighters Union Thanksgiving Pie	Ashland Parks Foundation Annual Report First Frost Community Skate Event Senior Services Holiday Party

- Acting Director Dials and Parks Division Manager are meeting with Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair Cott regarding restarting TAC meetings.
- Butler-Perozzi fountain will be removed April 9 and taken to the artist studio in Phoenix. Tentatively set May 1 as the project start date with the dismantling tentatively beginning on May 4.
- Does tearing out the fountain and altering the terrace and stairs constitute a new construction of a publicly accessible facility that requires ADA access? It might be accessible by the path from the Japanese Garden, but we should look at that.
- Chair Bachman asked to schedule a strategic plan retreat April 18 for four hours 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM at the Lithia Cabin. All Commissioners confirmed they could make that date. Will need to publicly notice the meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Bachman adjourned the meeting at 7:34 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy A. Mero, Executive Assistant