

Pickleball Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

September 9, 2021

1. What is Pickleball?

Answer: Pickleball is a paddle sport that combines elements of tennis, ping-pong (or Table Tennis), and badminton. It is played on a court that is roughly half the size of a tennis court. Players use "paddles" to strike the ball. The pickleball itself is similar to a wiffle ball.



Like tennis, pickleball can be played as singles or doubles. Doubles is the far more popular way to play. Games are typically played to 11.

Although you may have only recently heard about pickleball, it is not a "new" game. In fact, pickleball was invented in 1965 on Bainbridge Island by Joel Pritchard.

[Video: What is Pickleball?](#)

[Video: Pro Level Pickleball – NOT your grandmother's Pickleball](#)

For more information, please see the [USA Pickleball site](#).

Some background and history on the Celebration Pickleball Club can be found [here](#)

2. How popular is Pickleball? Who plays?

Answer: Pickleball grew in 2020 to **4.2 million players in the US, an incredible growth rate of 21.3% from 2019** per the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2021 Topline Participation Report, released in Feb. 2021.

- Of the 4.2 million players, 2.8 million were "Casual" players who play 1-7 times a year
- 1.4 million were "Core" players who play 8 or more times a year
- The Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) for all players from 2017 to 2020 was 10.5%, for a total growth rate of 34% over three years
- 61% of participants are men and 39% are women
- The average age for all players is 38.1 years old
- The average age for Core players is 47.5 and Casual players 33.6 years old
- 60% of Core players are 55 or older
- 79% of Casual players are 54 or younger

3. Do any CROA Board members play Pickleball?

Answer: The Pickleball Task Force is not aware that any CROA Board member has ever played Pickleball.

4. Why is there a Pickleball Task Force?

Answer: An unofficial Pickleball Task Force was started in March of 2021 in response to the CROA Board approving a motion to obtain bids for Pickleball. As part of this motion and follow-on discussion, it was requested that Management (CCMC) engage with the Pickleball group – Management then referred to this group as the "Pickleball Task Force". Subsequently, in June 2021, to comply with the charter, an official Pickleball Task Force was created by CROA. CROA advertised in the Celebration Friday Flash to solicit candidates. There were 8 applicants and CROA then selected and voted on candidates to fill the 5 slots on the Pickleball Task Force. A similar process was done for the Charter Review Task Force.

5. Why is \$1 million dollars being spent on Pickleball?

Answer: Currently, the Request for Proposal (RFP) has not yet been issued for Pickleball and no bids have been received. We do expect the bids to be in the neighborhood of \$1M or more, but a significant portion of the expense will be required for site preparation, regardless of the amenity.

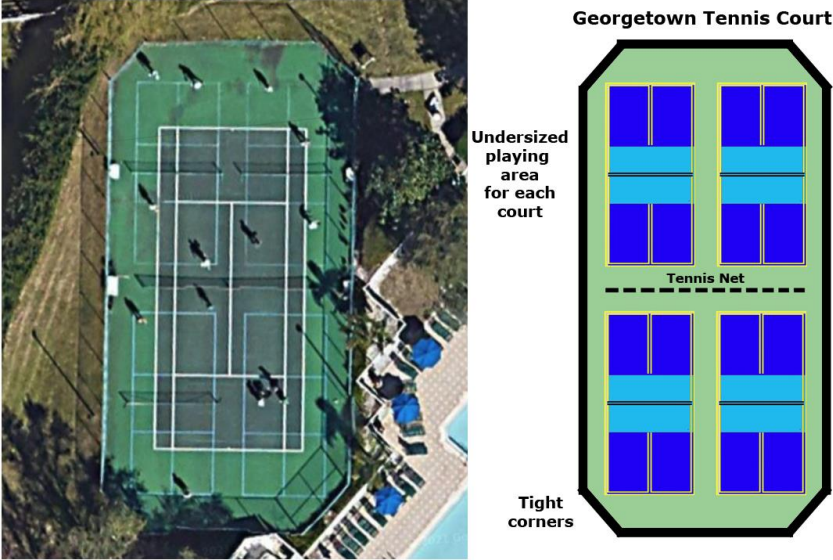
6. Has Celebration looked at the cost of Pickleball previously?

Answer: In February 2020, Town Hall issued an RFP for 9 Pickleball courts plus an option to add 3 more courts on Lot B (between CCDD building and Dog Park). The RFP also included other items, such as, lighting for the Dog Park and

Pickleball courts, restrooms, shade structure and fencing. The two bids received in response to this RFP were in the \$1 million dollar range but the RFP and resultant bids lacked the specificity necessary to understand the cost components. Unfortunately, due to the timeframe coinciding with the beginning of the COVID pandemic there was no follow-up with the contractors to understand the bids and no further action was taken.

7. How many people play Pickleball in Celebration currently?

Answer: The Celebration Pickleball club currently plays on a rented tennis court in Georgetown. On either side of the tennis net, 2 Pickleball nets are set up and taken down for each Pickleball session to provide 4 Pickleball courts with an undersized play area.



Sessions are scheduled every day of the week for 3 to 4 hours per session. With no advertising, promotion, or strict requirement to register, the club has about 265 members in the database (106 Celebration residents, 60 locals and about 100 snowbirds, visitors, unknown residency) plus many others who do not register. Pre-COVID busy days would see more than 35 in attendance for a session (16 playing, 19 waiting). Many new players are discouraged from participation due to the inability to have access to courts to learn or to play at a social level. In addition, lack of adequate lighting prevents working adults from having an evening option to play. Some background and history on the Celebration Pickleball Club can be found [here](#).

8. What is the social aspect of Pickleball? How is it different than Tennis?

Answer: Pickleball is not like Tennis where you typically schedule a court for an hour or two with 2 or 4 players. Because of the social nature of the sport, large groups of players show up for scheduled sessions (usually 3 to 4 hours) in order to play multiple games with multiple partners against multiple opponents. This does not preclude other smaller groups playing on their own, it's just not as common with Pickleball as it would be for tennis. Pickleball is most commonly played in a doubles format during scheduled open play sessions where players come and go over several hours. Many club members play 3 to 5 days per week for 2 to 3 hours each session. Many more players may congregate than there are available spots to play. While waiting to play these players congregate and socialize. Each doubles game (4 players on court) lasts 10-15 minutes, after a game ends the winners stay and split and 2 new players come in. This mixes players around with different partners and opponents. If there are 8 games going on, a new game starts every couple of minutes. The layout needs to support the constant flow of players going off and on the courts with minimal disruption to ongoing games. When coming off the court players need to reenter the queue in a central area and while not playing, players are socializing and watching other games. For these reasons the double stacked court arrangement is the standard in the industry, allowing for a central area to gather, view the courts and quick transitions between games.

9. How many courts are being requested by the Pickleball Task Force and why?

Answer: Given the current Pickleball participation in Celebration we believe 8 courts plus 1 handicapped accessible court would be a minimum near term requirement. The current participation (indicated above) is based on no advertising, on rented courts in an obscure location. When Pickleball becomes a legitimate Celebration amenity, we believe we will see significant growth due to awareness and removing some of the barriers for beginners to participate by having more available courts without having to compete with experienced players. We plan to provide free beginner clinics for the community, and with more courts we will be able to help these players grow in the sport while our intermediate+ players can still play with similar levels (avoiding intimidation for beginners and boring play for advanced). Having a space for all to socialize while providing separate courts for different levels of play has been one of our biggest struggles in Georgetown due to lack of space & courts. Further, given the worldwide growth of Pickleball, we have every reason to believe that demand will continue to grow across all age demographics and a facility capable of supporting 12-14 courts would be a reasonable expectation for Celebration.

The key question at this time is identifying a parcel capable of supporting a complex which *could* grow to 12-14 courts based on demonstrated demand. As previously discussed, due to the social nature of Pickleball it would not make sense to build 8 courts in one location and 4 courts in another location. While the cost estimates may put the construction of a 12-14 court facility out of reach in the near term, it is critical to identify a parcel that could accommodate a facility of this size in the near future.

10. Has any money been spent so far by Celebration in order to obtain drawings or anything else to prepare for a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Pickleball?

Answer: No money has been expended by Celebration Resident Owners Association (CROA) in any activity related to Pickleball or the Pickleball Task Force.

11. Why does the Pickleball Task Force recommend a parcel on Lot D? Where is Lot D?

Answer: Lot D is in the “civic corridor” between the CCDD building and the Athletic Field parking lot. The lot is approximately 750 feet wide and 150 feet deep. The Pickleball Task Force is recommending using a 300-foot wide by 150-foot deep parcel on Lot D.

The Pickleball Task Force’s recommendation is for the 300-foot wide by 150-foot deep parcel on Lot D closest to the existing parking for the following reasons:

- Parcel depth allows courts to be stacked two deep in a desirable configuration for Pickleball to promote the social aspects of the sport
- Close proximity to the existing restroom and water access in the concession building
- Ability to leverage the existing paved parking area
- Site access controlled behind the same fence as the Athletic Fields

12. Recreation Committee recommendation – will this work?

Answer: On August 25, 2021, the morning of the scheduled vote by the CROA board to determine the Lot selection, the Recreation Committee made a recommendation to use Lot B (between the Dog Park and the CCDD building). During the February 2020 Pickleball RFP the Pickleball Group was asked to provide possible layouts for the Lot B 100-foot deep by 300-foot wide parcel. At the time, the Pickleball Group had expressed concern regarding the limited depth as this would not allow courts to be double-stacked (two deep) as per industry standard. Town Hall Management was controlling the February 2020 RFP and we were advised we could not go deeper due to an existing dry retention pond. Important in this recommendation from the Recreation

Committee is that they are proposing reconfiguring the retention pond to gain more depth.

Please note: In response, the Pickleball Task Force has recommended to the CROA Board liaison that an Engineering study be performed to determine the maximum usable space that could be made available by reconfiguring the retention pond in a reasonably economic manner.

13. Have any engineering studies been completed on Lot B or D?

Answer: At this time, there have not been any formal engineering studies on either lot. During an informal walkthrough of Lot B (on August 29, 2021) with a member of the engineering team that designed the dog park it was determined that the dry retention pond located in the back of the property would pose a major obstacle to the project. Additionally, he indicated that the trees located on the property might pose an additional challenge in that the county would require they stay in place. The Pickleball Task Force has recommended to the CROA Board liaison that an Engineering study be performed to determine the maximum usable space that could be made available by reconfiguring the retention pond in a reasonably economic manner.

During a conversation with the same engineer, if Lot D is developed, he indicated that potentially 15% of Lot D may be required to be used as drainage.

14. Will parking be lost if a Pickleball Facility uses a 300-foot wide by 150-foot deep parcel on Lot D?

Answer: Currently Lot D is an undeveloped parcel and has been used for parking to accommodate large events. However, since the lot is undeveloped the parking utilization is not efficient with some reports indicating that only about 100 cars have been able to park on this lot. If a 300 x 150-foot parcel is used for Pickleball and the remaining 450 x 150 parcel could be developed for parking, a significant gain in available parking would be realized that would benefit the sports complex as well as occasional events held on fields. The number of spaces would be further increased if Lot B was also used for parking. Actual spaces would be determined by the designer based on the proposed engineering studies.

15. Where is the Pickleball Task Force in the process?

Answer: The Pickleball Task Force has had meetings with managers of Pickleball facilities in the area to understand what works and what does not. We have also met with a number of sport facility and general contractors to determine the best way to proceed. As part of our work, we have developed a preliminary set of requirements to facilitate our discussions and we expect the requirements to become part of any Request for Proposal (RFP). The CROA Board had approved a

motion in April 2021 to look at both Lot B (between the Dog Park and the CCDD building and Lot D (between the CCDD building Athletic Field parking lot) for the purpose of building Pickleball courts. Given the amount of work and expense to evaluate both Lot B and Lot D, the Pickleball Task Force has recommended the CROA Board authorize an RFP for Lot D only since Lot B lacks the depth necessary to accommodate the Pickleball Facility.

Please note: If the Engineering Study on Lot B as prompted by the Recreation Committee Recommendation indicates that sufficient depth can be obtained by economically reconfiguring the retention pond then Lot B may be reconsidered.