

BONNERWORTH PARK—WHAT IS AT STAKE

The following serves to rebut erroneous claims made about Bonnerworth Park, the planning process, and the impacts of the current plan expressed by City of Peterborough representatives and those quoted in the media since (and including) the April 2, 2024 General Committee meeting.

Also included is additional information relating to the plan's impacts on groups not previously included in the consultation process and discussion over the park's future.

CLAIM: The City consulted extensively with sport and recreational groups

- The City's consultation process focused on the sports community (but not all, see below), but left out the communities of informal recreational users of parks.
- Moreover, we have seen no evidence the City ever actively sought out representatives in the Bonnerworth community as it did with organized sports groups before the March 2024 consultation. For example,
- Residents at Marycrest at Inglewood have indicated they were not notified of the project, have expressed anger and sadness at the loss of the baseball fields and green space, and cited their use of the park to watch baseball games; engaging youth is an important social activity important to seniors' mental health
- Bonnerworth is used by a diverse range of users for unstructured play—children and young families, seniors, those playing informal “pick-up” sports such as Frisbee, soccer, touch football, kite flying, X-country skiing, running dogs.
- Even within the sport community, major users have been overlooked, most especially womens' and youth baseball communities
- The local tennis community that is not organized but uses Bonnerworth heavily (including local residents)
- Every resident in the area was virtually unaware of the proposal; for example, Saint Peter High School and residents of Marycrest
- The extensive outreach effort (mailings, posted notices) should have been made before last October so that the community could inform the city of the issues associated with the proposal before Council made a decision

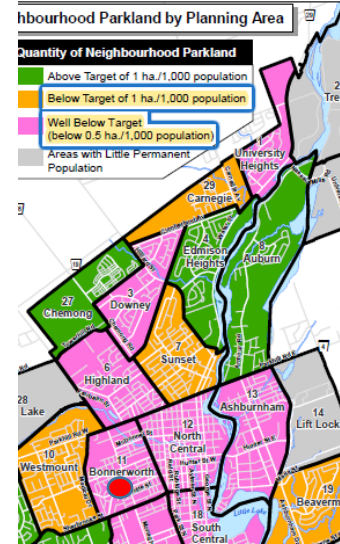
CLAIM: Almost 75% of those filling the public survey support the Bonnerworth Park redevelopment and a 600-signature petition from the pickleball community supports the project

- The survey did not include any questions that discern the level of support for the project
- The survey was clearly directed to a specific outcome (park benches, trees,, etc.) and did not allow for alternative views on what should happen in the park
- Did the City put in safeguards to prevent people from filling out the survey more than once?
- A pickleball complex in any location would garner the cited levels of support from the pickleball community
- This is not a popularity contest. Numbers alone do not absolve the city from undertaking thorough and responsible planning to ensure all park users are served, that the plan is

compatible with and does not negatively affect the surrounding community, and that it is planned in a manner that does not put millions of taxpayer dollars at potential risk by examining questions of feasibility at the back end of the process.

CLAIM: Jackson and Hamilton parks provide space for the informal recreation functions the Bonnerworth plan displaces

- Jackson Park is a forested nature park. It provides none of the space Bonnerworth does to support informal play and recreation activities such as pick-up baseball, soccer, touch football, kite flying, etc.
- Hamilton Park is used for Frisbee golf, basketball, playground, and a splash pad; the remaining area is wet much of the year
- The City’s *Parks and Open Space Planning Guidelines and Standards* classifies the Bonnerworth Planning Area as “well below target” for neighbourhood parkland (see red circle on map). The adjacent Westmount Planning Area to the west (left on map) is “below target”
- As a result, Bonnerworth Park serves critically-important neighbourhood park functions
- Both the Bonnerworth and Knights of Columbus park plans reduce open space for unstructured play to a minimum



CLAIM: The Community is NIMBY and against any change to the park

- The tennis courts are a valuable asset. The *Tennis and Pickleball Strategy* (pg. 6) cite them as the second-most used tennis facility in the city; why remove them?
- Skateboarders have been part of Bonnerworth Park for the past 20+ years and has been transformed into a beloved facility that is more inclusive and that meets the needs of a growing sport
- The non-profit Skateboard Club has engaged the City over the past 4 years to improve and expand the park to be safer and more accessible and support plans for summer camps, lessons, and after-school programming for at-risk-youth
- A bike pump track might fit; perhaps well landscaped as part of a park setting. Preoper consultation with the baseball community would determine its feasibility and location in relation to the baseball fields
- Both activities require no parking lots and promote fitness and community for youth
- We support the city’s policy to equitably distribute facilities across community parks; relocating the tennis courts and baseball diamonds goes entirely against this policy
- The community does not support pickleball being located in ANY residential community. The evidence from controversies and legal action in countless cities across North America provides compelling evidence to avoid doing so. It is perplexing that the city is willfully turning a blind eye to the known noise impacts of pickleball on nearby residents and the specific risks associated with locating them in Bonnerworth Park
- Pickleball noise will also likely disturb other park users, including those the park development plan purports to serve

- We do not support the transformation of a park that serves a diverse range of sport and recreational needs for a diverse community which has many lower-income and marginalized residents into one that serves only 3 sports
- The 16 pickleball courts dominate the park plan—their associated parking and buffers eliminates almost all green, open informal play space the community now enjoys and which the City states is in short supply
- The plan also turns the park into a winter dead zone—it accommodates no winter activity whatsoever

CLAIM: Pickleball noise will not be an issue at Bonnerworth

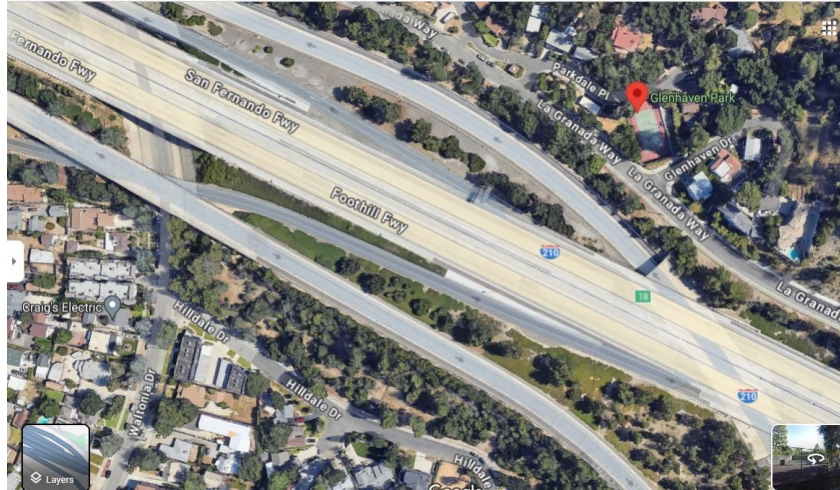
- The October 10, 2023 staff report (pg 8) states that noise complaints have been received at Bonnerworth; it also states the noise disturbance at Knights of Columbus as one reason for relocating the courts
- The report (pg. 8) further states noise complaints could increase with the opening of Hunt Terraces. The apartment tower is now open.
- The report further states that the noise from 16 pickleball courts may be a problem for Hunt Terrace residents, and that sound barriers may not mitigate noise there
- It is a mystery why the City would remove a noise problem from one park, only to transfer it to another park and amplify the problem by a factor of four. Has the City not learned anything?

CLAIM: There is only one house within the 150-metre buffer recommended in the October 10, 2023 staff report

- Our calculations using the Concept Plan layout suggest upwards of 130 residential units (houses and apartments) are within the 150-m City-recommended buffer zone from the edge of the proposed pickleball complex:
 - 8 houses on Monaghan (McDonnell/Monaghan house is 30 m away)
 - 6 houses on Walnut Street
 - 5 houses on Murray Street
 - 4 houses on Bonaccord St.
 - 5 houses on Middleton Dr.
 - West-facing apartments of the 34 apartments at Malcolm Court
 - West-facing apartments of the 85 units at Hunt Terraces
 - East-facing apartments of the 60-unit complex at Marycrest (50 metres away)
 - Potentially south-facing apartments of Hedonics apartment building

CLAIM: Road Noise masks pickleball noise

- All the scientific literature and noise studies from other jurisdictions confirm that traffic noise does nothing to eliminate the impacts of pickleball noise
- One study (*Pickleball Noise Impact Assessment and Abatement Planning*, 2023, by Spendiarian & Willis Acoustics and Noise Control) noted that noise from a 15-lane Los Angeles freeway (Interstate 210 Foothill Freeway in suburban Los Angeles) did nothing to mask the noise from a two-court pickleball facility (see Google Satellite image next page—red pin sites the pickleball court). The freeway at this location carried about 173,000 vehicles daily in 2017, more than 10 times the volume carried by 2-lane Monaghan Road



- The science further confirms that the higher frequencies, hard sound, repetitiveness, and long duration of pickleball noise can create mental health issues for nearby residents
- The study cited above also confirms that vegetation is an ineffective noise suppressor and that noise walls “are limited in the amount of noise reduction” they provide
- The nature of pickleball noise also eliminates vegetation as seeming to reduce noise if it is visually screened
- The use of berms further devotes otherwise usable park space to pickleball-related use
- This is not an “emerging” issue; the science of pickleball noise propagation and its associated impacts on nearby residents are well-known and documented
- So are the planning guidelines—DO NOT LOCATE COURTS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS; an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure
- NOT ONE of the 6 design objectives in the current detailed design contract speaks to achieving compatibility with the surrounding community

CLAIM: No complaints have ever been received about pickleball noise and parking during tournaments at Bonnerworth

- Not true. Noise complaints during tournaments have been filed by Bonnerworth neighbours
- Waiting for complaints to come in is a terrible way to manage any City investment, let alone use as a basis for spending millions of dollars on an activity known to generate controversy and precipitate lawsuits, some of which have closed facilities
- Pickleball noise impacts could affect evening and weekend events, such as weddings, at the McDonnell Community Centre. The outdoor verandah is heavily used at these events, and rentals of the facility provide revenue for the city
- Parking for a 261-competitor tournament (source: Peterborough Pickleball Association website) was largely accommodated by using the rest of the park for parking; the community could not use the park
- The new plan must accommodate twice that level of parking demand for provincial tournaments with 500 competitors
- All this traffic will filter into an inner city residential area. A location that close to hotels, restaurants, and major routes entering the city would be much more suitable for a competition-level facility

CLAIM: Tennis at Knights of Columbus Park is a suitable replacement for Bonnerworth

- By centralizing large-scale recreational facilities in one location and removing the tennis courts at Bonnerworth, the City is completely undermining the intent of the “Equitable distribution throughout community parks” Sport Court Guideline contained in the October 10, 2023 staff report.
- The city has chosen the most expensive and inequitable way possible to address conflicts of shared use between pickleball and tennis. Why eliminate tennis altogether from Bonnerworth; it creates a tennis desert in our community.
- The court relocation requires users who formerly walked or cycled to Bonnerworth (of which there are many) to travel 3½ kilometres to Knights of Columbus—likely by car—thus undermining the Transportation Master Plan and Climate Action Plan
- The up-to one-hour time between busses does not serve as a realistic travel option for those without access to a car
- The closure of the Bonnerworth courts will likely eliminate the Saint Peter High School tennis program altogether
- The closure may have potential impacts on other High School tennis programs (Kenner, Adam Scott, Holy Cross)
- There is a potential impact on Saint Peter’s ability to host Kawartha High School tennis tournaments (including all high schools in the regions of Peterborough, Cobourg, Kawartha Lakes, etc.) and to host Central Ontario Secondary School Athletics (COSSA) tennis tournaments

CLAIM: The Bonnerworth tennis courts are in poor condition

- The courts were refurbished three years ago
- There are small issues, but the courts are eminently playable. So why eliminate them?

CLAIM: The baseball diamonds are not well used

- COVID restrictions when the study was undertaken limited the use of diamonds for organized baseball.
- The PBA and Saint Peter High School are heavy users of the diamonds—women and young children in particular will be penalized
- These diamonds are well-suited for these users; they do not need to be regulation size
- With this plan, the city, in just three years, will have eliminated 5 ball diamonds—2 at Morrow Park, 2 at Bonnerworth, and 1 at Knights of Columbus Park
- These diamonds and outfield areas also serve as essential areas for unstructured play

Impacts on Spring and Fall programs at Saint Peter High School

- The park is used daily by 8 semester 1 PE classes (including special education classes) using tennis courts or diamonds for softball
- There is also daily usage by one of the boys soccer/girls rugby teams as extra practice field when the school hosts games
- Daily usage by one of coed ultimate frisbee/girls soccer/boys rugby/girls field lacrosse/boys field lacrosse/girls softball/coed tennis teams as extra practice field when we are hosting games

- Depending on the season, the number of students and school athletes using the park ranges from 150 – 200 students DAILY. [4 PE classes of 30 students, plus one team of 25-30 athletes, plus the tennis team)

Impacts on Peterborough Tigers Baseball

- The redevelopment plan jeopardizes the newly-created Diamond Ready baseball development program, which aids the development and growth of youth baseball in Peterborough. This program started with ages 8-13 and has expanded into a program for starters aged 5-7
- For ages 7-11, Bonnerworth has been a huge part of the Tigers scheduling success and is used daily in the summer for practices or games
- Baseball participation has never dropped in numbers and continues to grow. This year’s (2024) registration is at an all-time high and has spurred the creation of a second Tigers Rep team per age group/division (8-12). That’s over 120 kids
- These numbers do not account for house league numbers, which have increased as more youth decide they want to play
- Taking away two more diamonds will significantly disadvantage the youth baseball players and cause a setback for what the organization has been trying to accomplish

CLAIM: Pickleball is saving our youth

- As can be seen from the above, pickleball is just one of many sports that encourage youth to socialize and get exercise; youth baseball leagues, skateboarding, and tennis—all activities currently on offer in the park—also promote youth fitness and socialization
- Many other activities also engage seniors
- Pickleball’s popularity does not justify its intrusion into a community and the locking-out of so many other sports users, many of which are youth (baseball) and young athletes (Saint Peter High School)

CLAIM: The pickleball courts must be built this year: Further study will both delay the project and increase cost risk

- The way the city has planned this project has already significantly increased project risk by leaving many unanswered questions
- The budget was determined on the basis of no design and no understanding (and the costs of) noise mitigation, parking, roadway changes, and stormwater management in a difficult geotechnical environment (as reflected in the unsuccessful drainage measures at Hunt Terraces)
- All these studies are being undertaken at the END of the process when they should have front-ended a feasibility stage to determine if Bonnerworth was a feasible, cost-effective, and suitable location

CLAIM: The pickleball courts at Bonnerworth have been in use for years

- The courts have been in place just three seasons, following the refurbishment of the tennis courts