



SAVE BONNERWORTH PARK GROUP

Letter to the Editor
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[Bonnerworth Park or Pickleball Park?](#)

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Bonnerworth Park or Pickleball Park?

On Thursday, March 21, I got my first look at the city's proposed \$2 million enhancement of Bonnerworth Park.

The plan eliminates the tennis courts (to be relocated to Knights of Columbus Park) and baseball diamonds and replaces them with an expanded skateboard park, a cycling track, 16 pickleball courts, roughly 80 parking spaces and noise abatement landscaping.

I have issues with this proposal.

The process that led to this plan is flawed and left community stakeholder input until too late.

The plan we saw on March 21 is based on a project proposal approved by council on Oct. 23. The pickleball, cycling and skateboarding communities were consulted starting in late 2022. The neighbours were informed eight days before the public consultation period is scheduled to close on March 29.

This does not represent a genuine and sincere effort to get meaningful input from the broader community.

One-third of the real estate in the proposal is dedicated to pickleball or noise abatement landscaping for it. This is a tournament-capable facility, not a few courts to support the local community. Pickleball noise is intrusive and does not belong in residential neighbourhoods. A 2023 tennis and pickleball strategy document notes that noise abatement landscaping at Bonnerworth may not sufficiently manage noise in the surrounding neighbourhood.

The parking plan will cover one-fifth of the park area. Most cyclists and skateboarders will find their way to the park regardless of parking. It is the pickleball community that needs parking most.

Removing pickleball and most of the parking from the plan will free up nearly half of the real estate for broader community use.

The focus on pickleball is catering to the wrong community. Although billed as an all-ages sport, pickleball is played primarily by adults. We need to invest in recreation projects that engage our youth and help them develop skills, confidence and a sense of purpose.

I fully support the track and skatepark expansion elements in the Bonnerworth proposal. Pickleball, however, needs to find a home well outside of residential neighbourhoods.

Paul Sobanski, Peterborough