



Pickleball: A Growing Sport for Our Changing Demography

One of the more interesting parts of being a CVRD Director is hearing presentations from individuals and organizations on almost every subject imaginable, from arts groups to airports. A recent report from the South Cowichan Pickleball Club is an example.

Pickleball (one of the game's inventors had a dog named "Pickle") is a rapidly growing racquet sport, which can be played indoors or out. Played with paddles and a wiffle ball, it is easier on the body than tennis, but still a good workout, and very popular with seniors. However there are not enough courts in South Cowichan to meet the demand.

The proposal from the Club was to put pickleball courts in one of the fields behind Kerry Park Recreation Centre, where there is ample space. There were several appealing aspects to the proposal, including available parking, washroom facilities and access to public transit. The annual operating costs would be minimal. It would be similar to the very popular skateboard park, with low maintenance and self-regulated play. The Club would fundraise to pay part of the costs. All in all, an attractive proposal. The Recreation Centre Commission asked for a staff report on costs and details, due in November.

The Club's report also outlined projected demographic changes predicted by BC Statistics for the CVRD over the next ten years. The overall population is projected to increase 7.5% to 98,000 people by 2030. The big surprise was that every bit of that growth will be in the age 65+ group, which is expected to grow 34%. Meanwhile, the population age 19-64 is expected to shrink by 1.3%, and age 0-18 is expected to fall by 3.9% by 2030. The implications of this demographic trend are significant, particularly the rising health care costs of an aging population, combined with fewer working age people and children.



There are many implications and challenges, but it is safe say that "senior friendly" sports like pickleball will continue to be in high demand in South Cowichan.

BLAISE SALMON

[South Cowichan Life Magazine](#)