



NIAGARA INDOOR  
**PICKLEBALL**  
ASSOCIATION

## WHYTE ARENA INDOOR PICKLEBALL PROPOSAL

## Summary

To repurpose the old Whyte arena as a dedicated indoor pickleball facility to serve the people of the Niagara Region and provide a venue for revenue-producing pickleball camps and sanctioned tournaments which would draw players and spectators from near and far.

## Opportunity

There is an opportunity for the City of Thorold to be a leader by having one of the first dedicated indoor pickleball facilities in Ontario.

Pickleball players would come from all over the Region of Niagara to play in this new repurposed facility. Local businesses in Thorold would benefit from activity the facility would bring.

## Stakeholders

- Seniors
- Retirees
- Local Niagara Region players of all levels
- Local young adults with after school programs
- Out-of-region players who come to play in tournaments and camps
- Local restaurants and pubs
- Local hotels
- Local businesses

### Seniors and Retirees

Seniors and retirees need a dedicated indoor pickleball facility so they can play the game in a safe, friendly environment away from wind, rain, and the harmful rays of the sun. The

indoor facility would also have a players' lounge for seniors to meet and socialize.

## **Niagara Area Local Players**

Local players, through a pickleball club, would have scheduled times for different levels of play. Ladders and tournaments would also be organized through the club.

## **Facility Programs**

First and foremost, the indoor facility would be for the residents of Niagara to enjoy,

- Instructional clinics for Niagara residents.
- After school programs for students of all ages.
- Hosting inter-club league competition bringing in players from nearby towns and cities.

In addition, sanctioned tournaments would bring in players from the United States and across Canada.

Pickleball Camps are a big thing in the U.S. Players come from afar to take part in these 3 day or week-long instructional camps.

## **Revenue Stream**

- Membership fees. Players would be willing to pay more to play in a good indoor facility.
- Members would pay additional fees to enter planned programs such as ladders, tournaments, clinics and instructional programs.
- Three day and week-long pickleball camps as well as sanctioned tournaments would generate income not only

for the facility, but also for hotels, restaurants, and local shops.

- Ticket sales from spectators during tournaments.
- Potential of television revenue for the rights to televise and film the events.
- Coffee shop and vendor revenue.
- Advertising and sponsorship revenue for signs and promotional sales.

## **Current Status of Indoor Pickleball**

While pickleball can be played outside over the summer, problems do arise.

Rain, wind, insects, the sun, and the heat present challenges for the outdoor player. Noise issues and complaints have resulted in fines and the shutting down of six outdoor courts in Virgil. Indoor pickleball is more desirable for most players.

Finding indoor pickleball facilities has been difficult. Currently, all indoor facilities are shared. This means that there are multiple lines and floor markings as well as different surfaces to play on. One local facility has a glossy wooden floor with windows on three sides making it difficult to play due to the glare. Another venue is an older arena which is either too hot or too cold and has a cement floor which is very hard on the legs and knees.

Sharing with other sports also means we are restricted as to when we can play.

Currently, area pickleball players make do with church halls, basketball courts and ball hockey arenas when we can find them.

None of these places are up to standards for sanctioned tournaments.

There is also a safety aspect with these facilities. Stepping on a ball from another court could cause a fall because there is no barrier between the courts. Other risks include slipping and falling because the glossy floor gets wet; running into walls, chairs and / or spectators seated too close. This can be hazardous for all players but even more so for older and less agile players.

Pickleball can be cancelled because one of the many other activities has been prioritized. Those other facilities are too few and too crowded as it is and there are not enough of them to allow for additional players.

## **Advantages of a Dedicated Indoor Facility**

Guaranteed play. Not affected by sun, wind, snow, heat, cold, or rainy weather.

A permanent facility to meet, socialize and have fun.

Courts that are climate controlled, long lasting, and free from cracks and debris.

Courts that have one set of lines, good lighting, barriers between courts and good sightlines.

## Employment Opportunities

A dedicated pickleball facility would require staff to run the facility and coffee shop.

Clinic and camp instructors would be needed. Fees charged would more than cover the cost of these professionals.

The facility would positively impact the surrounding businesses: hotels, restaurants, wineries, and attractions.

Pickleball is year-round which creates year-round business opportunities.

## Fastest Growing Sport

Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in North America<sup>1</sup>.

Pickleball Canada recently announced a major milestone of 40,000 members. This is up 43% from the January membership of 23,000<sup>2</sup>.

This quote from the NY Times (Sept 3, 2022) explains some of the sport's appeal: *"Besides being easier to learn than tennis, pickleball is also slower paced and there's less ground to cover; you could almost fit four pickleball courts onto one tennis court, and most picklers play doubles. Some research suggests that it may be safer than tennis for people with heart issues, too."*

While the game of pickleball is extremely popular with older people and retirees it is now attracting younger people and the demand for more courts is unprecedented.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MCD1nqTlxA&t=6s> (CNBC video)

<sup>2</sup> <https://pickleballcanada.org/pickleball-canada-celebrates-40000-members/>

Pickleball is growing throughout the Golden Horseshoe. Many outdoor courts have recently been constructed including Hamilton (12 courts), Stoney Creek (12), Welland (6 dedicated), Fenwick (6) & Virgil (6 – under a 2-year suspension for noise violation).

Looking to the future, Pickleball Canada is exploring the possibility of having the sport officially included as an event in the next Canada Games competition.

# Support letters from Local Clubs

Niagara On The Lake Pickleball Club 300 members

Pelham Pickleball club 94 members

Welland Pickleball Club 114 members

These three clubs combined have over 500 active payers with membership growing each year.

There are even more players from surrounding towns and cities within the Niagara region that would be in support.

Niagara Falls

Grimsby

Fort Erie

St. Catharines

Lincoln

Port Colborne

West Lincoln

Wainfleet



September 27, 2022

James Fraser  
President, Niagara Indoor Pickleball Association  
3 Lampman drive  
Fenwick Ontario  
L0S 1C0

Dear James

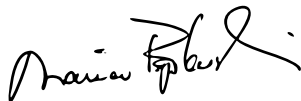
On behalf of the Pelham Pickleball Club it is our pleasure to write this letter in support of the Niagara Indoor Pickleball Association's "to build a dedicated, centrally located, indoor pickleball facility to service the people of the Niagara Region year-round".

The Pelham Pickleball Club is a group of 94 avid pickleball players who play on an outdoor court at Centennial Park. We would like nothing better than to be able to play year round avoiding extreme temperatures and other weather related issues. An indoor facility would also allow us to hold regional, provincial and national tournaments.

If you require any more information about Pelham Pickleball Club you may contact any of the following:

Ron Hall	<a href="mailto:rhall22@hotmail.com">rhall22@hotmail.com</a>
Marg Richardson	<a href="mailto:richardson.marg@gmail.com">richardson.marg@gmail.com</a>
Gary	<a href="mailto:dxrgary@gmail.com">dxrgary@gmail.com</a>
Maria Peplowski	<a href="mailto:mariapeplowski@gmail.com">mariapeplowski@gmail.com</a>

Sincerely



Maria Peplowski  
Treasurer

October 1st, 2022

James Fraser, President  
Niagara Indoor Pickleball Association  
3 Lampman Drive  
Fenwick, Ontario  
L0S 1C0

Dear James,

The Welland Pickleball Club would like to acknowledge its support for the Niagara Indoor Pickleball Association's goal of building a dedicated, indoor pickleball facility centrally located within the Niagara Region.

Currently the WPC plays strictly at Maple Park and at the Empire Sportsplex in Welland. Both current venues are outdoors - we would love to have a properly built/laid out, dedicated pickleball facility that we can use year round to avoid rain, snow and wind while playing with like-minded people within a reasonable distance. Having the option to play regional, provincial and/or national tournaments would be a definite bonus not only for pickleball players near and far but for the entire Region as well.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Welland Pickleball Club I remain,

Yours truly,

*Liz*

Liz MacDonald  
President, Welland Pickleball Club  
Along with:

*Ruth*

Ruth Feagan  
WPC Director/Secretary

*Liz*

Liz Simon  
WPC Director/Treasurer

*Gail*

Gail Lee  
WPC Director

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

James Fraser  
President, Niagara Indoor Pickleball Association  
3 Lampman Drive  
Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0

Dear James

On behalf of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club Inc. Board of Directors, I would like to give my wholehearted support for the Niagara Indoor Pickleball Association's endeavor to build a dedicated indoor pickleball facility.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake were charged with a noise violation and are now prohibited from using the outdoor pickleball courts located at the Centennial Sports Park in Virgil. As a result, we have had to move all our pickleball activities indoors. To have access year-round to a dedicated indoor pickleball facility would be ideal, as one of the many benefits of playing indoors is the elimination of noise concerns.

We are currently a club of 300 members and growing daily. Between September and November of this year, we have added approximately 50 new members. We have been using the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre which has limited availability and the Old Virgil School which is a facility on its last legs. Our increased membership means we are outgrowing these current indoor options. Additionally, we are adding more members who work during the day and would like to see evening and weekend options. This is a challenge as there is lots of competition for these prime gym hours from other sports.

One of the Club's long-term goals is to introduce youth pickleball programming, and this is currently not an option due to the lack of facilities.

As a non-profit organization, we are dedicated to the growth of pickleball in the Niagara Region, while keeping it affordable for everyone. For more information regarding the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club, please visit [notlpickleball.ca](http://notlpickleball.ca) or contact [president@notlpickleball.ca](mailto:president@notlpickleball.ca).

Kindest regards,

*Tracy Booth*

Tracy Booth  
President  
Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club Inc.