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FEATURED

# Pickleball complex plans move forward

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A pickleball game from earlier this year. The new 24-court center will occupy a 10.8-acre property on Camino de la Canoa near Canoa Preserve Park; the fundraising goal is set at about \$1.375 million.

Courtesy of GVR

By the end of September, the final design for Green Valley Recreation's new Pickleball Center will be unveiled, said Donna Coon, chair of the GVR planning and evaluation committee.

Although there are a lot of moving parts and kinks being worked out, the project is moving along smoothly. The only question is how to pay for it.

“We have not run into any show-stoppers,” Coon said, adding that, to date, nothing is driving up the estimated cost of the center.

Once the plan is finalized, GVR will send it to Pima County for final approval. The new 24-court center will occupy a 10.8-acre property on Camino de la Canoa near Canoa Preserve Park; the fundraising goal is set at about \$1.375 million.

Coon said the community stands behind the new center, but a GVR member survey released in February shows divided support. Of the 5,388 GVR members who weighed in on constructing the new center, about 47 percent were somewhat or strongly opposed, or were undecided about it; 52 percent showed strong or mild support for building the 24-court facility.

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The survey was taken in January, which could have skewed the results. Just month later, GVR backed off on putting the complex on property on Esperanza Boulevard near three neighborhoods after a public outcry.

Kristen DiBone, architect at WSM Architects Inc., said Thursday that the center is running on schedule.

Last week, the geotechnical report – which assesses site conditions –was returned to GVR, she said, and nothing but good news was reported.

During this part of the design phase, the firm has been meeting with the pickleball design team almost every other week, she said. The committee recently approved the design for a permanent ramada.

The paving and grading design will take about five more weeks, she added, explaining the soils report has caused delays. There were no details on the delay.

WSM will submit its development plan to the county around mid-September, a few weeks later than originally proposed, DiBone said.

During the county review, WSM will draft the building plan in order to streamline the entire proposal. At this rate, the local design firm will get a cost estimate in early September and then present the projected price to GVR's planning and evaluation committee for review.

She clarified that WSM's cost consultant will only provide an estimate, not a bid.

As per GVR's design committee request, WSM will garner lump sum cost estimates for the new center, DiBone said. Then, that amount will be phased out over the timeframe for construction.

One potential hiccup is if GVR's committees are delayed during the budget phasing and funding segment of the process, DiBone said.

But WSM allotted extra time for the decision process, she said, adding "this is typical for every project."

What remains to be figured out is how the complex will be financed.

The GVR Pickleball Club in July said it had raised \$55,000 so far, and expected that to pick up once ground is broken on the complex. The GVR Foundation's efforts to launch a fundraising campaign were thwarted when it was denied a \$9,500 grant by the GVR Board in May.

### **East Center expansion**

The East Center pickleball expansion project will go before the Fiscal Affairs Committee on Sept. 18.

The project was delayed after the committee had unanswered questions for the planning and evaluation committee, as the project morphed from a lighting installation into an additional court construction proposal.

Once it gets the green light, the proposal will be sent to the county for approval, which could take about six weeks.

But DiBone, of WSM Architects Inc., said she plans to set up an in-person meeting with the county to speed up the process. The expansion project will take about two months to complete.

DiBone said optimistically speaking, the expansion project will kick off in October and be

completed by the end of the year.

Pickleball seasons starts to warm up around mid-October; between January and April is considered peak season.

“We really want it done before high season when everyone comes back,” Coon said, chair of GVR’s planning and evaluation committee.

On Feb. 27, the GVR board of directors unanimously approved to fund up to \$90,000 to install lighting for East Center’s pickleball courts #1-3.

Less than a month later, the board contracted with WSM to convert court #1 into two north/south facing courts.

GVR identified that courts #1 and #2 had long-standing safety concerns, according to GVR documents. Moreover, courts #2 and #3 were laid out too close to one another, “thereby exposing players to potential collisions” and “typical on-court dividing/protection fencing is absent due to the narrow court dimensions.”

Custom Courts & Tile, a Phoenix firm that built East Center’s courts #4-7, is contracted for the project. The company is currently repairing two tennis courts located at Las Campanas.

The firm will reconstruct court #1 and overlay courts #2-3 with post-tension concrete, new required sidewalks and court entry gateways. Lighting will be installed at the new playing fields and existing lights will be refitted with LED lamps.

An additional \$65,400 was requested for the expansion project, which has yet to be approved.

The East Center revamp is designed to remedy the problems and offer members additional lighted courts. And, according to GVR, offer “additional pickleball play opportunities during GVR’s peak season in early 2019 while the 24-court Pickleball Center is under development.”

On Thursday, Kathy Palese, a planning and evaluation committee member, said she’s concerned about losing three pickleball courts when seasonal residents return to Green Valley.

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