



Photos provided

An aerial simulation of the Murray Pickleball Complex in Murray-Calloway County Central Park.

## Update on Pickleball Complex

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Tim Thurmond, president of the Murray Pickleball Association, has some updates to share on the Pickleball Complex at the Murray-Calloway County Park.



Martha Andrus

The location of the complex will be at the corner of Arcadia and North Eighth Street which is at the curve and across the street from Need Line. Thurmond said the entrance to the complex will be from the park, not from the street. You will enter from the road once you turn into the park and the complex will be on the right. Parking spaces will be located behind the complex.

"The city plans to build approximately 55 parking spaces for this location," said Thurmond. "The city is donating a very valuable parcel of land, approximately three acres, and they are building the parking lot. When you have baseball games going on at the park during the summer, the large parking lot is full. Now there will be 55 more spaces just across the road. Baseball only takes place two or three months out of the year so pickleball can utilize that space for additional parking."

Thurmond said the Murray Pickleball Association has raised \$700,000. "Our goal is to build nine courts and right now we have enough to pay for seven courts. We are still raising funds, not only from companies and businesses, but from individuals. Visit [murraypickleball.org](http://murraypickleball.org) and donations may be made there. We have also set up a Go Me Fund for the Murray Pickleball Association. We will be offering pavers for \$100, \$250 or \$500. We want to be able to build the nine courts, so we are still accepting and needing donations."

Thurmond said there are still opportunities available for naming

rights in the complex such as for lights and other areas including the complex itself.

Thurmond said there are signs now located on the fence at the area where the complex will be located.

"The engineers and architects have spent about five weeks working on the changes to the plan for this complex," said Thurmond. "They are now working on the bidding process for subcontractors and we plan to break ground on Oct. 1."

Thurmond said first there is going to be the demolition of the field that is currently located in this area, in addition to some batting cages and a pitching cage that

have not been used for some time but need to be removed before construction can begin.

"We will have the rights to begin the demolition at the field after July 1," he said. "We want to keep this at a minimum cost as much as possible. We can sure use some volunteers during the demolition and even during the construction phases."

Thurmond said the Purchase Area Development District in Mayfield has applied for a grant to help build a Welcome Center at the complex. "If this grant is approved, it has to be matched by us, but this would serve as a walk-through to the commons area of the complex. This will be independent of the rest of the complex. We will begin construction with or without the

Welcome Center construction."

"We envision the welcome center consisting of two restrooms and a small concession area," he said. "There would also be room to set up tables during registration, not only for pickleball activities, but also other park activities. The commons area would consist of bleachers and the championship court would be behind that with some seating available on each side of the court. Then on either side of the championship court would be four courts. The courts would be built to face north and south because you don't want people playing with the sun in their eyes. We think the layout is awesome and this will be something this community will be very proud of."

Thurmond said the goal is to have the complex completed by the end of the year. "Depending on the temperatures, the surface of the courts may not be able to be finished until it is 60 degrees. They use a special complex on the court surface that is easier to play on and helps the ball to bounce better. The building process, I am told, should take about 90 days."

Thurmond said even though they are still in the fundraising mode, they are continuing with plans to build the complex.

"We will work in phases as we progress through construction and that also depends on our funding and how much we are spending," he said. "We envision having pickleball machines and 500 pickleballs so we can offer clinics. We also hope to purchase a few paddles that will be kept at the park office and would be available for players to check out and return when finished playing. But all of this, of course, takes funding and that is why we are continuing to fundraise, especially hoping to secure the needed amount to build our goal of nine courts."

The Murray Pickleball Association is currently playing at Chestnut Park on Tuesday mornings beginning at 8 a.m. and Thurmond



From left, Bobby Deitz, engineer with BFW; Josh Vernon, architect with Urban Fabric; Tim Thurmond; Johnny Bohannon, Park Board chairman; Steve Wilhelm, MCC Park maintenance director; and Mike Sykes (holding his daughter), MCC Park director, standing in the outfield of the present ballfield where the new pickleball complex will be located in Central Park.



The pickleball sign hanging on the fence at Central Park pictured with, from left, Josh Vernon, Tim Thurmond, Bobby Deitz, Steve Wilhelm, Mike Sykes and Johnny Bohannon.

said anyone is invited to come and watch or play.

They also continue to play indoors at First Baptist Church and First United Methodist Church gyms.

Thurmond said a court costs

about \$80,000 to complete which includes the surface, net, posts, fencing and windbreakers. He said lights would depend on the financing.

"But we are building a professional tournament-level facility,"

he said. "Again, it will be something this entire community will be proud of and benefit from."

Thurmond said any questions about the complex or donations may be made by calling him at 270-752-5268. ■