



MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 030-2010

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager *R. Williams for*

DATE: January 29, 2010

SUBJECT: Report titled "Debunking the Myths About Miami Beach Tennis Courts"

On January 28, 2010, Mr. Rick Williams emailed a report titled "Debunking the Myths About Miami Beach Tennis Courts" to City Clerk, Robert Parcher, requesting the report be placed in the February 3rd Agenda.

The report is being transmitted to the City Commission via LTC.

If you wish to discuss or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

REP/lb
Enc.

Debunking the Myths About Miami Beach Tennis Courts

Prepared by:
Miami Beach Tennis Players Association

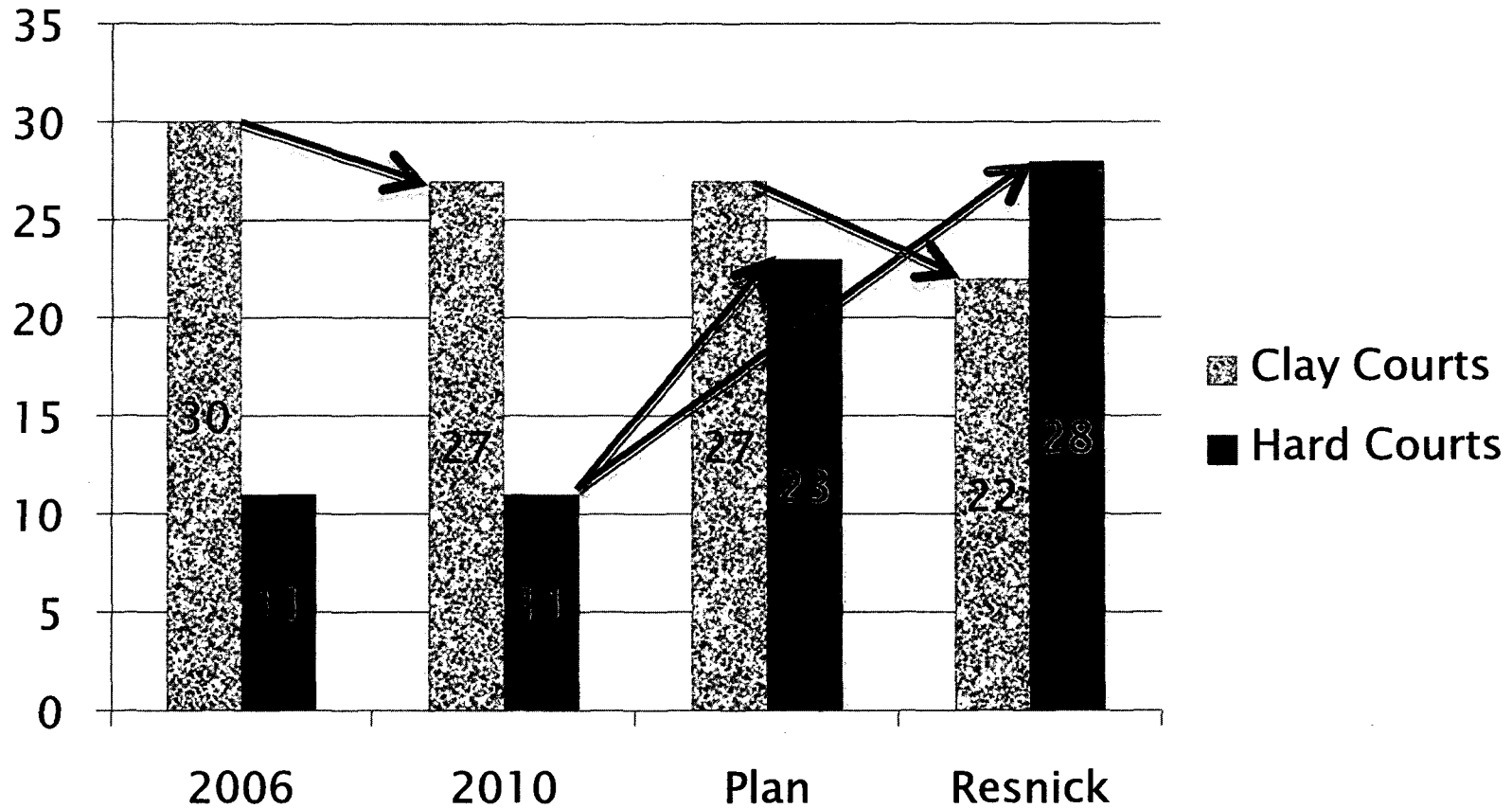
Background

- ▶ After lengthy study and numerous public hearings in 2009, the City of Miami Beach decided to preserve 17 clay courts at Flamingo Park in the new CIP plan
- ▶ The issue of converting five clay courts to asphalt was raised at the January Commission Meeting and the commission now wants to revisit this issue
- ▶ This document debunks many of the myths being raised proving the 17 clay courts must be preserved

Myth #1: “The City Is Unjust in its Treatment of “Hard Court Players”

- Mr. Resnick’s concern about the lack of hard courts is remedied in the current plan
- The City has approved 12 new hard courts within a mile of Flamingo Park, a 120% increase after previously eliminating 3 clay courts, a 10% reduction
- The Resnick plan calls for an additional 19% cut in the number of clay courts resulting in a significant imbalance and an injustice to tennis players who enjoy clay courts

As Clay Courts Are Taken Away Hard Courts More Than Double



Tennis Court Data Detail

	2006		2010		Plan		Resnick	
	Clay	Hard	Clay	Hard	Clay	Hard	Clay	Hard
Flamingo	20	0	17	0	17	0	12	5
North Shores	10	2	10	2	10	2	10	2
Par 3	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
Nautilus	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Normandy	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4
Norm. Fairway	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2
Golf Club	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Palm Island	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3
Subtotal	30	11	27	11	27	23	22	28
Total	41		38		50		50	

Myth #2: “Clay Courts at Flamingo Equals “Shutting Off Young People”

- ▶ Young people enjoy playing on clay
- ▶ Youth clinics at North Shores and Flamingo Park are very popular
- ▶ Clay is safer and less likely to result in bodily injury than hard courts
- ▶ “If you develop players more on clay they will become better all court players, even better fast court players.” – Patrick McEnroe US Davis Cup Captain
- ▶ “I don’t want my eight year old son to play on hard courts” Tom Mar, Principal, Greensquare, June 2009

Myth #3: “There exist a lot of players who refuse to play on clay”

- ▶ There are very few people who hit exclusively on hard courts if given a choice
- ▶ There exist many players who can only play on clay due to the significantly higher risk of bodily injury on hard court (see Myth #5)

Myth #4: All Facilities Have a Mix of Court Types

- ▶ There are many all-clay facilities including:
 - The Racquet Center, Boca Raton (26 Clay)
 - Delray Swim and Tennis Club (24 Clay)
- ▶ Clay courts can only exist in a managed facility whereas hard courts can exist anywhere
- ▶ Who is going to pay to \$8-\$16 per hour to use hard courts at Flamingo with all those new free hard courts available nearby?
- ▶ We know from experience that hard courts within North Shores and Flamingo Park are principally used as overflow courts when clay courts are full. That is why Flamingo hard courts were removed.

Myth #4: “All Facilities Have a Mix of Court Types” (continued)

- ▶ All premier South Florida Tennis facilities include 18–26 courts with the same surface in order to enable hosting of official tournaments
- ▶ With only 12 clay courts, Flamingo would be relegated to third tier status, dishonoring its rich history as host of the Orange Bowl and forever ineligible to host official tournaments again

Myth #5: Risk of Injury on Clay is Comparable to Hard Courts

- ▶ Frequency of injury or pain was 6.6 times higher on hard courts than on clay courts (Dr. Benno King, Director of the Human Performance Laboratory at the University of Calgary - 2003)
- ▶ Fifteen top-ranked tennis players had more back and lower extremity injuries when playing on hard courts than when playing on clay. (von Salis-Soglio - 1979)
- ▶ Senior players reported fewer knee problems when they had played predominantly on clay courts, compared to senior players who played predominantly on hard surfaces. (Kulund et al - 1979)
- ▶ http://www.playtheclay.com/site_media/Tennis-Surface-Study-DrNigg-HPL11%20_2_.pdf

Myth #6: “MBTPA Only Represents Old People Who Like Clay Courts”

- ▶ Players of all ages like clay courts
- ▶ MBTPA has advocated for the increase in hard court inventory including:
 - Six new Par 3 Courts
 - Resurfacing of four previously unplayable Nautilus High School Courts
 - Renewal of two Miami Beach Golf Course Courts
- ▶ Seniors deserve consideration too. They have taken note of the City’s previous commitment to them, and they are a very reliable voting bloc who can determine election results

Myth #7: Par 3 Courts are in the “Middle of Nowhere,” Inadequate

- ▶ The six Par 3 Courts are adjacent to the high school with ready access to the Scott Rakow Youth Center on prestigious Pine Tree Drive
- ▶ It is a burden for high school players to travel to Flamingo when they can instead walk to the Par-3 tennis courts
- ▶ “The absence of lights at the par 3 course would not be a hindrance, in fact the location would allow us to start practice earlier”
– Toni Harmony, Beach High Tennis Coach

Myth #8: “Hard Courts Drain Faster”

- ▶ This is only partially true. When there is a brief rain hard courts become unplayable whereas clay courts can be used immediately without any need for draining.
- ▶ North Shores Tennis Center remains closed when clay is unplayable even if the hard courts are playable.

Summary

- ▶ There Will Be 12 New Hard Courts Within One Mile of Flamingo Park
- ▶ Studies prove what common sense indicates: clay courts are safer than hard courts.
- ▶ We have seen this movie before and we know how it ends – hard courts will be underutilized in Flamingo Park. That equals lost revenue and a waste of money to convert them to clay later on
- ▶ The Commission already committed to preservation of the clay courts at Flamingo park on 6/25/09, 9/9/09, and 12/9/09. It should not renege on its commitment based on myths
- ▶ MBTPA is asking that you stop reducing the number of clay courts in Miami Beach. We already have suffered a 10% reduction in 2007, and an additional 19% cut would be intolerable

Please Save Our Endangered Clay Courts

Thank you
Miami Beach Tennis Players Association