

MEMORANDUM



TO: VICTOR CARDENAS, CITY MANAGER
FROM: CHARLES BOULARD, COMMUNITY DEV. DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: PICKLEBALL NOISE COMPLAINTS
DATE: AUGUST 5, 2025

Background:

During the August 25, 2025, City Council meeting (2) residents expressed concerns over noise impacts resulting from the conversion of a private sports court in the Bristol Corners development from tennis to pickleball.

The first of the residents, Mr. O'Reilly, resides at 30514 Pennington Lane. Per GIS records Mr. O'Reilly's home is located approximately 800 feet from the nearest converted pickleball court. The second speaker, Ms. Schmitz, resides at 30388 Pennington Lane. The rear deck of her home appears to be approximately 147 feet from the nearest pickleball court.

Currently there are 4 known locations within the City where pickleball courts are located near residential structures. In addition to Bristol Corners, there are the recently constructed courts at Wildlife Woods Park (approx. 375 feet to nearest residence) and Meadow Brook Commons (235 feet to nearest residence and 166 feet to the nearest corner of the main building). There are also recently constructed courts at Fox Run located approximately 273 feet from the nearest residential building.

To date, the Novi Code Compliance team has received communication of exactly one concern regarding noise from pickleball courts and no formal written complaints. One of our team spoke with the Bristol Corners HOA president Don Abrams on a separate matter last week and he commented that the Association was researching sound barrier measures for the court.

Current Ordinance provisions:

Site Plan:

Currently the Zoning Ordinance does not differentiate or regulate specific recreational uses within a recreation area. In the case of conversion of an existing private sports court to another sporting use, Planning review and revision of the project Site Plan would not be required.

Zoning Ordinance Sound Limits:

Current language in the Zoning Ordinance addresses Noise Disturbances as follows. These provisions have typically been applied to address impacts from industrial processes, late

night/early morning dumpster service, noise producing special events and amplified sound. The Weighted Sound Level Decibel measurement is unlikely to accurately register pickleball impacts due to the extremely short duration of the created sound.

5.14 Noise Disturbances

- i. No activity, operation or use of land, open body of water, buildings or equipment shall make, continue or cause to be made or continue, any noise disturbance or allow to be emitted, sound from any source or combination of sources other than a motor vehicle registered for use on public highways, which when measured in accordance with the procedure described in this Section exceeds the sound level limits in Table 5.14.10.A.ii Weighted Sound Level Limit Decibels. The measurements made are to be evaluated under Table 5.14.10.A.ii based upon the zoning of the property receiving the emitted sound.
- ii. Where background sound levels exceed the sound level limits in Table 5.14.10.A.ii , below, a violation shall be deemed to exist if the complained for activity exceeds the background sound levels by six (6) decibels.

Daytime db sound limit is 60 Db.

5.14.10.A.II Weighted Sound Level Limit Decibels			
Receiving Zoning Districts			
R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, RT, RA, RM-1, RM-2, MH		NCC, B-1, B-2, B-3, EXPO, EXO, OS-1, OSC, TC, TC-1, RC, FS, C, I-1, I-2, P-1, PSLR	
Night Time Hours Decibels	Day Time Hours Decibels	Night Time Hours Decibels	Day Time Hours Decibels
55	60	70	75

Nuisance provisions:

The provisions of Chapter 22 of the City Code address noise disturbances as follows:

Sec. 22-96. - Noise disturbances prohibited

Noise shall mean any sound that disturbs humans or animals, or that causes or tends to cause an adverse psychological or physiological effect on humans or other animals.

Noise disturbance shall mean any sound that:
Disturbs a reasonable person of normal sensitivities; or
exceeds the sound level limits set forth in section 5.14(10) of the City
of Novi Zoning Ordinance; or
Is plainly audible as defined in this section.
Plainly audible shall mean any sound or noise that can be
detected by a person using his or her unaided hearing faculties at
a distance of one hundred (100) feet or more from the real
property line of the source of the sound or noise.

Potential Options:

1. Zoning Ordinance Land Use provisions: Some communities have adopted required minimum separations between residential units and sports courts/pickleball courts. This would impact future developments and could limit recreational opportunities in future mixed or single use developments with residential uses.
2. Zoning Ordinance Sound Limitations: Due to the short duration of the impact from pickleball paddles and balls, different criteria and sound measuring equipment would likely be required to regulate under an amendment to this section.
3. Nuisance provisions: Thus far Code Compliance staff have not witnessed sound impacts from pickleball courts deemed to "*Disturb a reasonable person of normal sensitivities*" however this is clearly subjective, and additional guidance would be appreciated if enforcement were requested under these provisions.

Please let me know if I can provide additional information.