

# Pickleball Sport Court Ordinance

City Council

# Background

- City Council issued moratorium on Sport Courts over 500 sq.ft.
  - Due to perceived unique impact of residential pickleball courts and concerns voiced by residents
  - Moratorium is effective up to 6 months
- Staff was instructed to research and draft an ordinance regulating residential pickleball courts

# Planning Commission Meetings

- Staff introduced a draft ordinance to the Planning Commission at the 10/4/23 meeting, followed by additional discussion at the 10/18/23 meeting.
- Commissioners have not yet reached consensus on a single direction for this ordinance, and supported differing options, including:
  - Requiring a generous setback from property lines, with the option for a reduced setback if a sound study indicates that acoustic buffering measures have reduced the impact
  - Focusing more broadly on any type of yard noise that causes an issue, rather than focusing specifically on the impacts of pickleball
  - Requiring a building permit with an affidavit that commits the applicant to staying below the noise ordinance threshold
  - Requiring neighbor consent from all adjacent neighbors
- Commissioners were in favor of getting additional City Council discussion on potential directions, and then continuing the Planning Commission review process.

# Comparing Impacts

- Compared to other court sports, Pickleball produces sounds at a louder level (~**70 dB** at 100 ft distance), similar to:
  - Vacuum cleaner
  - Freeway traffic
  - Older/loud appliances
- Outdoor dB threshold: **55 dB**
- Tennis: ~**40 dB** at 100 ft
- ...and at a higher pitch (~**1.2k Hz**), similar to:
  - Reversing garbage truck
  - Dropping a tin can on hard surface
  - High-pitched flute

# Current Relevant Regulations

## Lighting

- Must conform to outdoor lighting standards in **§19.77**
  - 21,780 lumens/acre in Single-Family zones east of Wasatch Blvd.
  - 43,560 lumens/acre in other Single-Family zones
  - Must be full-cutoff
  - Fixtures no more than 12 ft in height
  - Automatically extinguish in sunlight and after 11 PM.

## Fencing

- If fencing is built on the property line, would need to conform to requirements. In the rear yard:
  - **6 ft** permitted
  - **8 ft** conditional use
  - **12 ft** conditional use w/ neighbors' approval
- If fencing is constructed off the property lines, it will be reviewed as an accessory structure and must meet:
  - **3 ft** setback
  - **14 ft** height limit (+1 ft setback for +1 ft height; 20 ft max.)

# Noise

- Primary concern voiced by residents and council
- **70 dB at 100 ft. distance**
  - 70 dB is not a dangerous level, but can be highly irritating
- **1200 Hz pitch**
  - Highly irritating pitch, often used for alarms
- Mitigation
  - Quiet paddles/balls (seem to only reduce noise level ~5 dB)
  - Structures/acoustic wraps (max. reduction of 32 dB)
  - Vegetation (highly variable; seasonal)
  - Indoor courts
  - Distance

## Recommendation

- Enforce existing Fencing ordinance
- Enforce existing Lighting ordinance
- Require distance of **150 ft.** from all property lines
- Allow for reduction of **75 ft.** with fixed mitigation method that brings dB level down to 65 dB or lower.

# Other Options

- Outdoor pickleball court ban in certain zones
- Neighbor approval within a defined radius
- Building permit process
- Signed affidavit
- Quiet equipment requirement
- A different setback distance

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