



Agenda Item A.1
DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM
Meeting Date: November 18, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Jaime A. Valdez, Interim Neighborhood Services Director

CONTACT: JoAnne Plummer, Parks and Recreation Manager

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Proposal from the Goleta Valley Community Center Organization to Repurpose the Existing Tennis Courts for Pickleball

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider a proposal by the Goleta Valley Community Center Organization to repurpose the existing tennis courts for pickleball use and provide a recommendation to City Council related to the recreation use compatibility based on community need and existing adopted City Parks and Recreation related plans.

BACKGROUND:

The Goleta Community Center is a city-owned facility, managed by the Goleta Valley Community Center (GVCC), a non-profit organization. In 1994 the GVCC built the multi-purpose courts, designed for use by tennis and basketball players. In the beginning, the courts were used for tennis instruction and pick-up play but saw more activity by pick-up basketball. In the last 15 years, it has been reported that most of the activity on the courts is an occasional pick-up basketball game and a private rental for softball pitching practice due to the courts having lights and perimeter fencing.

In 2019, GVCC staff worked with residents to create a temporary pickleball court on the existing basketball court. This system was operated similar to the temporary court system first established at Evergreen Park. The lines were temporary tape, and users had to check out the portable net system. The temporary court was met with high demand and was quite active until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic shut down all activity.

As the State of California released guidelines to allow tennis and pickleball activity to resume during the pandemic, the need for pickleball space increased significantly. In the Spring of 2020, the existing tennis courts were identified by GVCC staff and pickleball enthusiasts as a possible location to convert existing tennis courts to temporary pickleball courts. Members of the pickleball community joined forces to raise

the necessary funds to maintain the existing modified court and provisionally convert the existing tennis courts to four temporary pickleball courts.

The pilot pickleball court conversion has been well-received by the pickleball community. The temporary court conversion also included updated light fixtures, additional access gates to the north of the courts, a revised entrance walkway from the parking lot to the courts and a membership program facilitated through GVCC, with a reported membership in excess of 300. The membership program allows users to reserve a court from 8:00 am until 8:30 pm and has proven popular and well-liked.

DISCUSSION:

The GVCC has prepared a proposal for the Commission's consideration to convert the temporary pickleball courts into four permanent pickleball courts and one multi use court to accommodate a portable pickleball court and basketball court (Attachment 1). An accompanying presentation on the proposal is also included with this staff report (Attachment 2). This renovation would allow the GVCC the opportunity to resurface the existing courts, install the permanent net system and paint permanent court lines. The pilot program has been running for more than a year and continues to be successful with significant demand for use. Fundraisers have been held in the form of clinics, tournaments and more. These events have attracted players from all over the central coast, with some coming from surrounding states.

The permanent adjustments to the courts would not only provide necessary improvements to the playing surface and fencing material but would also allow for more local and regional competitive opportunities. The existing court surface is over 25 years old, and areas are smooth, making it challenging for maintenance and users to play.

The noise from pickleball is an evolving issue experienced nationwide. There are few options available to agencies, with no straightforward answer. The GVCC has received some complaints from area residents and have been able to be responsive with adjustment to the hours of operation. It is important to note that there are very few options to consider when trying to mitigate the noise of the paddles, balls and the enthusiasm of the players. As indicated in their proposal, GVCC is continuing to explore options that are effective, reasonable for users and affordable. Beyond exploring noise reduction measures, the only other option would be for the City Council to fundamentally rethink where else pickleball courts could go on the Community Center site. This is a much larger decision, which would take a significant amount of time and lead to increased costs and dedication of City staff resources that must be balanced against other priorities of the City.

In an effort to ensure notification to neighboring tenants and residents, staff went above and beyond the City of Goleta's required noticing procedures and mailed notices on November 4, 2021 to over 500 residents/tenants within a 300-foot boundary from the parcel edges of the Goleta Community Center. This noticing was in addition to the press release, website news posting, GovDelivery email notification system, direct

emails to interested parties previously requesting notification, a story on this topic in the Monarch Press and posting to all City of Goleta social media platforms.

The purview of the Commission is to evaluate the use and proposed conversion of existing basketball/tennis courts at a city facility into pickleball courts with one basketball court. The Commission is being asked to determine whether this conversion meets the recreational needs of the community, namely how it aligns with the 2015 Recreation Needs Assessment and the 2021 Parks, Playgrounds and Facilities Master Plan.

ALTERNATIVES:

Should the Commission choose not to make a recommendation to the City Council, staff will carry the proposal from GVCC forward to City Council, sharing any comments made by the Commission.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

All the costs associated with the proposal will be paid for by the GVCC operations budget, which includes funds raised by pickleball players.

Approved By:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jaime A. Valdez", is written over a horizontal line.

Jaime A. Valdez, Interim
Neighborhood Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Goleta Valley Community Center Organization Proposal to Repurpose the Existing Tennis Courts for Pickleball
2. Presentation on Repurposing Existing Tennis Courts for Pickleball at the Goleta Community Center Campus

ATTACHMENT 1

Goleta Valley Community Center Organization Proposal to Repurpose the Existing
Tennis Courts for Pickleball



**GOLETA VALLEY
COMMUNITY CENTER**

5679 Hollister Avenue, Goleta, CA 93117

Phone: (805) 967-1237

Email: info@thegvcc.org

501(c)3 Tax Exempt Corporation #95-3278302

Proposal

The Goleta Valley Community Center, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, currently the managers of the Goleta Community Center Campus located at 5679 Hollister Ave in the City of Goleta, propose to pay for permanent improvements to the existing outdoor athletic courts. The outdoor courts are currently being used as temporary Pickleball courts with one court, #5 being used for dual sports of Pickleball and Basketball. The proposed changes include, resurfacing the playing surface, painting the new surface, and striping the new surface for Pickleball on courts 1-5; court #5 will also be striped for basketball. The improvements include installation of eight permanently installed net post and four nets for Pickleball on courts 1-4. Court #5 will have a portable net due to its mixed use of Pickleball and Basketball. Additionally, the GVCC would like to replace damaged chain link fencing with new chain link fencing on the park or south side of the courts, the divider fence between court #4 and court #5 and the eastside fence. Our hope is to begin the permanent changes starting in December of 2021. The changes/upgrades to the courts if approved will make them permanent Pickleball Courts.

Court History:

The Goleta Valley Community Center (GVCC), a 501C3 Non-Profit organization, has been managing the Goleta Community Center property for over 40 years. We take pride in our work as the caretakers of this property, not just in maintaining the property but also for our vision towards the future. Over 25 years ago, in 1994 GVCC sought permission to build a multipurpose outdoor court to bring more recreational opportunities to the Community Center. Our request went to Santa Barbara County, the property owner and it was unanimously approved. The new courts were well received. A local Tennis Pro taught lessons and managed the courts for years, however as time went on there was more “pickup” basketball games than tennis use. Eventually, demand for tennis went away. The court sat underutilized for the last 15 years. The most significant use before Pickleball, was a request from a girls' softball pitching coach

wanting to rent the courts for the Fall Season. She came to the GVCC as we had the only lighted courts for nighttime use.

A private individual, Glen Avolio in 2019 asked the GVCC if we would be interested in making one of our courts a "Pickleball Court". We agreed, Glen volunteered to come stripe the court with tape as a temporary situation. He made our first temporary Pickleball court. The court was opened for free play hoping that it would attract more players, which it did.

Spring of 2020 JoAnne Plummer referred Mike Myers to GVCC. Mike is looking for lighted courts for nighttime play. There were no lighted Pickleball courts in the City of Goleta or Santa Barbara. Due to Mike's connection with hundreds of Pickleball players in both Goleta and Santa Barbara, more and more players began to show up. A single court could not handle the demand. Mike wanted to temporarily create (4) more courts out of the existing tennis court, and he assured us if we allowed him to do it, "they will come".

The GVCC bought two portable nets for the new courts and Mike and his wife bought two and donated them to the GVCC, that gave us five nets, one for each court. Court lines were temporarily painted. When we opened the courts for the first-time people did not just come, it was like we had opened the flood gates. Our courts were opened at 8am and we had twenty players lined up and eager to play for free, that was an affirmation that the interests in Pickleball was remarkably high. This marked the true beginning of our "Pilot Pickleball Program.

Mike and I started talking about an improvement plan. We devised two plans to raise the necessary funds. First, was to hold Pickleball fundraisers in the form of a Pickleball clinics, Round Robin Competitions, and tournaments. Secondly, was to create Goleta Valley Community Center Pickleball Memberships that could be purchased for one year allowing members only to be permitted to reserve a court.

Many Pickleball players hearing about our plans to improve the courts made personal donations toward the improvements. Mike realized that the improvements were going to be quite expensive, and it was going to take a long time to build up an account for the improvements, so he opened a "GoFundMe" account for "improvements" of the GVCC Pickleball courts, within a week there was several thousand dollars and it kept growing day by day.

Improvement Plan: (Note-5, 6 and 7 are what this proposal is asking permission to complete)

1. Fix the lighting on courts. **(Completed)** Three of the eight lights were not functional. Contractor had stated there were wiring issues. (Qty 6) 300 Watt and (Qty 2) 450-Watt LED lights were purchased and installed using community raised funds. These replaced (Qty 8 1500-Watt) metal halide bulbs previously installed at the courts. This significantly reduces energy consumption to light the courts, reduces electricity cost and alleviates strain on the current California electrical grid. These light changes also significantly reduced maintenance cost. This was done at no cost to The City of Goleta or GVCC.

2. Replace tattered windscreens. **(Completed three sides. South side under investigation)**
The windscreens had not been replaced or maintained for years. They were ripped or non-existent on most sections of the fencing. We were able to procure used windscreens from UCSB when they were replacing their tennis courts at minimal cost. It was enough to cover three sides of the court. The south side was left open so Pickleball players could view the lawn and trees as they played. We are looking into the possibility of a thick windscreen for noise abatement on the south side fence.
3. Paint the poles and fences **(Completed, but light poles need painted)**
4. Install three new gates so each court could be accessed without crossing another court. **(Complete)**
5. ***Court resurfacing and painting; the old surface is worn out and slippery. (Not complete proposed)***
6. ***Install permanent nets to remove potential tripping hazard of net legs. (Not complete proposed)***
7. ***Replace damage fencing around the court (Not complete proposed)***

The above improvements that have been completed were funded by money raised from individual Pickleball players that directly donated thru Go Fund Me, local Goleta business owner donations, Pickleball clinics, and proceeds from round robin/tournaments. Currently, there has been a private investment of \$15,019.88. What is still on our list of improvement is the resurfacing, painting, striping and installation of permanent net post and new nets.

Justification for the changes:

The playing surface of the temporary Pickleball Courts is old and worn, with peeling and chipped paint and a playing surface that no longer has traction but that has become slippery especially with dust and dirt on the court. A general rule is that courts need resurfacing every 4 to 8 years. The courts are 25 years old and have not been resurfaced.

While the courts were originally built for tennis, they have not been used for tennis for over 15 years. Since being temporarily modified for Pickleball in early August of 2020 the courts have been active seven (7) days a week with heavy use in the morning and early evenings. The GVCC established Pickleball Memberships for \$60 a year. We have sold over three hundred Pickleball memberships to local players. This generates \$18,000 per year income for GVCC that was not previously there. Additionally, non-members can play for 2 hours by paying a \$2 dollar fee. This generates approximately \$60 per week for an additional \$3,120 of annual income for the GVCC.

The courts were opened for play during the COVID 19 Pandemic. State and City of Goleta COVID 19 guidelines for safe play were established and posted on the courts and GVCC Web site. Players commented at the time how happy they were being outside and getting good physical exercise. Several commented that it was a mental health boost from being couped up at home.

These courts are contributing to health and wellbeing of those coming to play and they are a boost to the local economy *especially when* there are Pickleball clinics, or tournaments as those activities attract local players as well as players from out of county and in some cases out of state. Those people come and stay in our local hotels, and local RV Parks or campgrounds, they patronize our local restaurants and food markets as well as buying gas in our local service stations. The GVCC benefits financially from the tournaments, thru entry fees and court reservations, the funds received have allow the GVCC to make significant improvements without asking the City of Goleta for additional funds.

Five years ago, the City of Goleta shared with the GVCC management that they wanted to see more recreational opportunities on the Goleta Community Center Campus as well as more recreational value added to the property. They also want to see an improvement in the GVCC's ability to generate more income to reduce the city's need to subsidize GVCC's operations. The GVCC has delivered on both those city directives. The proposed changes when completed will allow the GVCC to host "sanctioned" tournaments bringing in top notched players from out of the area. Tournaments are weekend events. This means people will be coming to Goleta for an extended time, staying in local hotels, eating at local restaurants, and staying to see our local scenic spots. This will be a boost to the local economy and to the GVCC as the "host Site."

Challenges

GVCC acknowledges that Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the nation and that with its popularity come important challenges for our local communities. The most significant challenge is the Pickleball sound from the ball contacting the Pickleball paddle. The GVCC is aware of the sound complaints and has responded in writing to our local neighbors that have called or written to complain. We have restricted play times to 8am to 8:30pm as a response to concerns. We are currently consulting with several different Pickleball facilities researching their attempts at the sound reduction. We have also outreached to various companies that produce products that help reduce noise. We have reviewed assorted products that are placed on the court fencing to help reduce the sound. We are looking at research on various Pickleball paddles and balls that claim to be quieter. The import things we have learned is that while the products claim to reduce the sound none "*eliminate*" it. We are currently conducting a sound measurement study and will use the data from this to choose an appropriate sound mitigation path going forward.

The Goleta Community Center for years has had active recreational activities on the back field even before the field was renovated, the tennis/ basketball courts were active for many years, and the field has been the primary outdoor play area for the Boys and Girls Club. The GVCC in 2019 began to revitalize the area with our temporary Pickleball court about the same time the City of Goleta renovated the athletic field, all done with the hopes and anticipation of attracting more people and more recreational activity at the Goleta Community Center. The City of Goleta especially "Old Town" has grown up since becoming a city and now we have new neighbors, the Hampton Inn right next door, the Willow Creek Condo

Development and now the Winslowe Condo Development with both commercial and residential units. All of us as neighbors deal with the joyful sounds coming from children at play, and the various sports activities as well as the noise generated by highway traffic and planes flying into and out of the Santa Barbara Airport, we live in a vibrant and busy community. The GVCC Pickleball Courts help keep our community vibrant and healthy, the GVCC in proposing these permanent improvements has sought bids from (3) recognized Pickleball Contractors. We have selected one of the contractors and designated approximately \$30,000. For this project once we have City approval to pursue the work.

Respectfully,

Charlie Johnson, Acting General Manager

ATTACHMENT 2

Presentation on Repurposing Existing Tennis Courts for Pickleball at the Goleta
Community Center Campus

Goleta Valley Community Center

- Proposal to “Convert” temporary Pickleball courts to permanent courts
- November 2021





First Trial Court — Basketball / Pickleball

- Single court initially trialed by Glen Avolio in 2019
- Court was in high demand
- Additional courts were needed



Four More Courts added to meet demand

- The initial court had so much demand that additional courts were needed
- GVCC purchased 2 nets
- An additional 2 nets were donated
- Temporary lines were painted on the existing unused tennis court
- Much of the play was in evenings when folks got off of work

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- Lines painted, Fences painted and 5 temporary nets
 - This was the beginning of the GVCC “Pilot Pickleball program”



Evening Demand – Poor Lighting

- Young and old professionals joined after work for exercise, fun and comradery
- 2 lights were out
- 2 lights had missing covers
- Lights were older metal halides that are expensive to maintain and operate
- Lighting was dim on many sections of the court





New 300 Watt LED Replaced 1500 Watt Metal Halide Bulbs

- Metal halide bulbs are expensive to maintain
- They are expensive to operate and increase the strain on the CA electrical grid
- LED reduce the wattage for the same amount of lumen output
- LED are more efficient and cheaper to operate
- Lights and installation was paid for by private donations from the pickleball community

New LED lights
“First major
improvement”



Additional Improvements



Goleta USAPA Pickleball Ambassador Mike Myers

- Once the new temporary Pickleball nets were in place, the fencing painted, and the old lights removed, and new LED lights installed the courts were ready for play.
- Mike worked with several other active players and the GVCC staff to put together a “Pilot Pickleball Program” which included:
 - Rules and Regulations
 - Court reservation system, fee for use
 - Clinics, Round Robin Tournaments
 - Instructors and Court Monitors
 - “Open” Play times





Usage

- Courts have been used for clinics, tournaments and round robins
- This has been bringing people from Cambria, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, Ventura, Thousand Oaks, Los Angeles, Palm Desert, San Diego to Goleta
- All of the people who come to our community end up supporting local business... gas, food and lodging.
- Above is Santa Barbara Men's Team vs Cambria Men's Team



Usage

The Women's Team has also been doing the same tournaments and bringing in more people...Paso Robles Womens Team

Open Play

- Open Play is when folks just show up and play
- Tuesday night is the biggest night
- A full paddle rack (as pictured) means that 20 people are playing and 12 people are waiting to play
- There has been as many as 35 people waiting on a Tuesday night
- That is a total of 55 people out there using the community center
- Also shown is the area of improvement. People waiting to play should not stand in dirt with their white tennis shoes on



Membership- Day Pass

- GVCC has a membership of \$60 per year allowing access to the courts
- Membership is approximately 300 people
- This has generated approximately \$18,000 per year in income for the center
- Drop in guests pay \$2 for 2 hours
- This has generated approximately \$60 per week or \$3120 in additional income



Looking to the future

- GVCC's "Pilot Program" took off like wildfire, the courts were full almost all day long. The temporary
- Courts were opened in the middle of the COVID19 Pandemic, a **Stay at Home Order** from the state had just been lifted and people were allowed to be outdoors with restrictions.
- Mike and Charlie began talking about plans to improve the courts, a priority list was developed:
 - Change lights to LED. (completed)
 - The existing windscreens were tattered and torn or completely missing, we needed replacements. (completed)
 - Players wanted separate entry gates on each court. (completed)
 - The outdoor court surface was worn out, paint was chipped and faded, concrete had cracks and chips and needed to be resurfaced. **(Proposed)**
 - The court fencing was damaged, had numerous attempted repairs but was in very poor condition. **(Proposed)**
 - The temporary pickle ball nets were light weight and not sturdy enough for long term use, players were asking for the GVCC to replace them with permanent net post and new nets. **(Proposed)**

PICKLEBALL IS THE FASTEST GROWING SPORT NATION-WIDE

- The interest and enthusiasm is so high many counties, cities and communities are converting their tennis courts into pickleball courts and or are creating new courts to keep up with the demand.
- There are issues and concerns about the “pickleball sound”, research is on-going on how best to solve the problem. New technologies are being look at for sound barriers around the courts, new designs and materials for the pickleball paddles, and the construction of the Pickle balls, the research is a work in progress.

CHALLENGES

Goleta Courts need improvement to be in-line with other municipalities

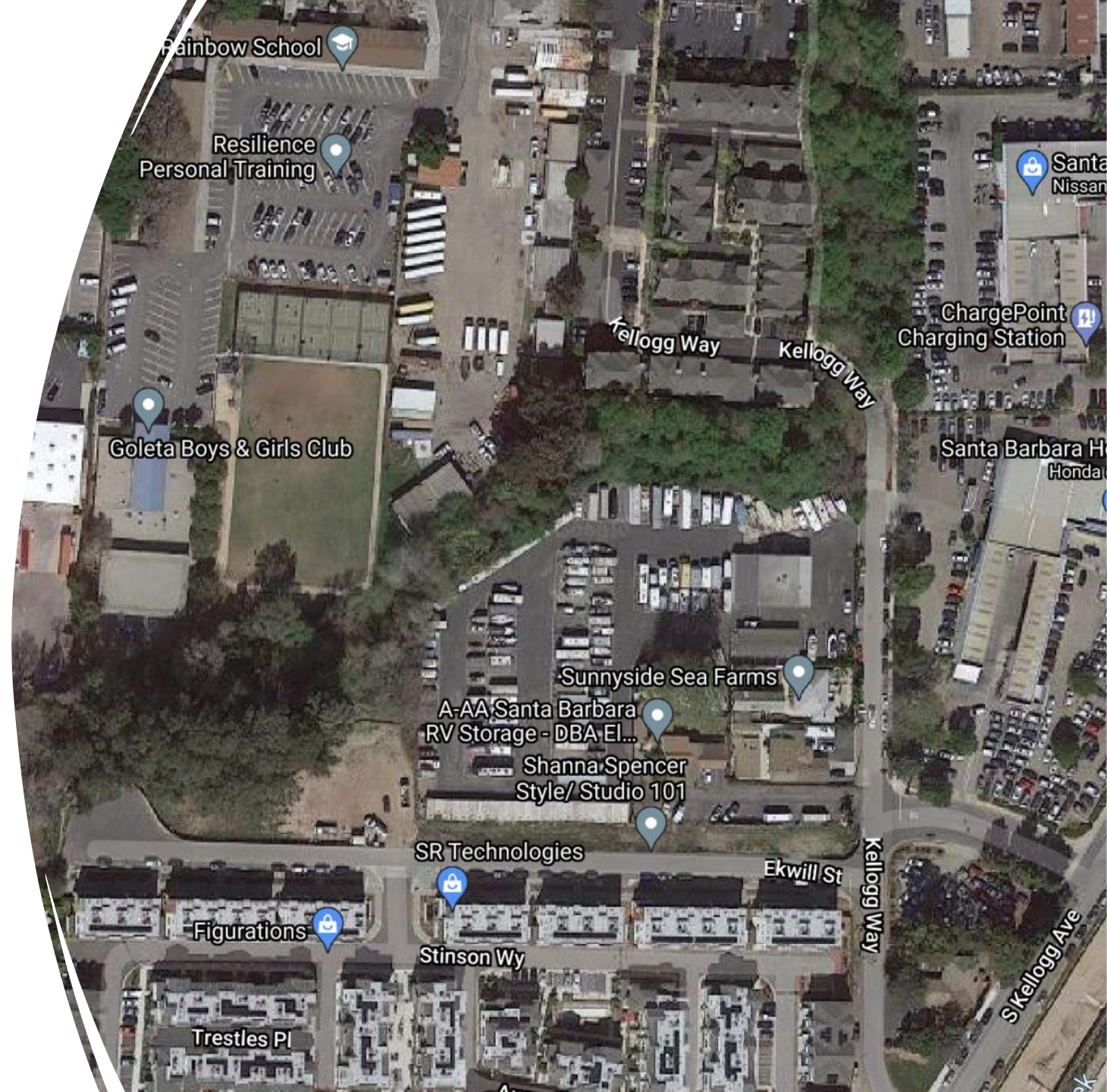


Through the joint efforts between the Santa Maria Pickleball Club, Recreation and Parks Department and People for Leisure and Youth, Inc., six brand-new pickleball courts are nearing completion at Hagerman Sports Complex off Skyway Drive.



Sound Issues

- The Community Center will continue to support the community
- The Community Center has been in existence since 1984
- There are large gatherings of children
- Many sporting events
- Pickleball is not the sole source of noise



Sound Issues

- Pickleball sound levels within 100 feet of courts will usually be around 70 dBa with no sound reduction efforts applied. This is as loud as freeway traffic sound.
- At 200 feet, (using the 6 dB drop for doubling the distance) the level will be about 64 dBa. That's louder than normal conversation.
- At 400 feet it will be about 58 dBa. That's quieter than normal conversation levels. By limiting use of paddles and ball brands based on sound testing, you can achieve below 50 dBa, and usually below local background level at that distance.
- Even at 100 feet, with consideration for equipment and sound barriers, the level could be about 52 dBa, and may be an acceptable sound level in many neighborhoods. This means that barriers and distance are the most effective tools. It also means that sound levels can be predicted in advance of having complaints, so consider your location and work with your pickleball community to make the sport a welcome addition to your neighborhood.
- Research cited from Bob Unetich, Facebook Pickleball Sound Mitigation Group Admin
A Registered Professional Engineer in Pennsylvania
- This indicates that the noise level for the surrounding neighbors should be within allotted levels and not above regulations of The City of Goleta
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/145879006219534>
- Additional acoustic measurements are required to confirm this
- Action will be taken to perform the study
- Noise abatement steps will be taken when data is known.

Goleta Community Center & Our Neighborhood

Our closest neighbors are right here on the Community Center Campus, they include:*

The United Boy's and Girl's Club of Goleta*

Rainbow School – a longstanding child care facility*

CommUnify – a long standing child care facility*

Michelle Apartments to the west of our facility

Hampton Inn, GUSD bus yard and Willow Creek Condo Assoc.

Winslowe Condo Assoc. both commercial and residential



Winslowe Condos

CommUnify



Neighbors



Bus Yard & Hampton Inn
Willow Creek condos



Rainbow School
Michelle Apts.



Justification and Benefits for permanent improvements

- The court surface is worn out its lost traction, court paint is peeling and faded and has become slippery especially with dirt or dust on it.
- The courts were built for Tennis / Basketball but have had very limited use for tennis for many years, Basketball has mostly been pickup games.
- Since our conversion to temporary Pickleball Courts, we've seen constant use of the courts 7 days a week.
- The courts are generating income for the GVCC and are supporting our local economy thru, hotels (TOT) , local restaurants, tourist spots.
- These courts are contributing to the health and wellbeing of our community thru physical exercise, they've been a mental health boost especially during the COVID 19 Pandemic.

Community Letters of Support

- Hampton Inn
- McDonalds Restaurants
- United Boy's and Girls Club of Goleta
- CommUnify
- Rainbow School
- The Habit Restaurant
- Willow Creek Condo Assoc.
- Goleta Coffee