

My name is Jaime Blanton, and I live near the proposed development at 1615 Choto Road.

I understand the property is already zoned CN Neighborhood Commercial. The Commission is not being asked to rezone the property, but instead to determine whether the proposed project is compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

While neighborhood-scale restaurants can be appropriate within CN zoning, this proposal appears to include outdoor activity areas such as pickleball courts, outdoor screens, amplified sound, and gathering spaces.

Many nearby homes appear to be located approximately 70–100 feet from portions of the site. The parcel also sits at approximately 884 feet elevation, while many surrounding homes sit significantly lower. Elevation differences can influence how both sound and lighting travel toward nearby homes.

Pickleball produces a repetitive paddle-to-ball impact sound that can travel noticeable distances. When combined with crowd noise, amplified audio, and routine commercial activity such as dumpster service or deliveries, the cumulative sound environment may be significant for nearby residents.

There is also a question regarding the scale of the development relative to the intent of CN zoning. The ordinance limits commercial buildings in this district to approximately 5,000 square feet of indoor floor area. According to planning materials, the proposal includes roughly 3,100 square feet of interior space but more than 6,700 square feet of outdoor commercial activity space. This means the majority of the project's activity may occur outdoors, which raises an important planning question about whether the overall scale and intensity of the project remains consistent with the neighborhood-scale intent of CN zoning.

Outdoor activity areas may also require evening lighting or illuminated screens, which may create light spill toward nearby homes.

The CN zoning district is intended to provide neighborhood-scale commercial services while minimizing impacts on nearby residences.

Given the proximity of surrounding homes and the intensity of the proposed outdoor activity, sound, and lighting, we respectfully ask the Commission to carefully evaluate whether this project is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Purpose of This Document

This master notes document compiles all research, analysis, arguments, and preparation material discussed regarding the proposed commercial development review of the property located at 1615 Choto Road in Knox County.

The purpose is to provide neighbors with a comprehensive study document that explains:

- Planning considerations
- Elevation relationships
- Residential proximity concerns
- Pickleball noise research
- Legal disputes related to pickleball courts
- Arguments related to development compatibility discussions
- Suggested public comment language

Overview of Proposed Development

The proposed development at 1615 Choto Road has been described as potentially including:

- A two-story restaurant
- Outdoor patio areas
- Outdoor amplified music
- Outdoor movie screen area
- Pickleball court
- Evening operating hours potentially until 11 PM

Nearby Neighborhoods

The parcel sits adjacent to established residential neighborhoods including:

- Choto Fields
- Choto Mills
- Montgomery Cove

Some homes appear to be located approximately 70–100 feet from portions of the proposed site.

Elevation Analysis

Development Parcel

1615 Choto Road – approximately 884 ft

Choto Fields

12609 Coral Reef Circle – 884 ft

2613 Choto Fields – 884 ft

Typical homes – approximately 870–850 ft

Lowest homes – approximately 840 ft

Choto Mills

12501 Choto Mills Lane – 867 ft

Typical homes – approximately 850 ft

12534 Choto Mills Lane – 842 ft

Relative elevation differences compared with the development parcel:

Highest Choto Mills home – ~17 ft lower

Typical homes – ~34 ft lower

Lowest homes – ~42 ft lower

If a two-story structure (~20–25 ft) were constructed, activity areas could effectively sit approximately 35–65 ft higher relative to some nearby homes.

Montgomery Cove information forthcoming.

Residential Proximity Analysis

Commercial recreation and restaurant uses located within approximately 100 feet of residential homes are typically considered very close proximity in land-use planning.

Potential impacts may include:

- Outdoor activity noise
- Amplified music
- Lighting visibility
- Increased evening activity

Pickleball Acoustic Characteristics

Pickleball produces impulse noise created when a paddle strikes a plastic ball.

Typical sound levels reported in studies:

At court surface – 70–90 dB

At approximately 100 ft – 60–70 dB

At approximately 300 ft – 50–60 dB

Impulse noise occurs repeatedly during play and may be perceived differently than continuous background noise.

Legal Issues Related to Pickleball Courts

Across the United States, pickleball courts near residential neighborhoods have generated increasing legal disputes involving:

- Private nuisance claims
- Noise ordinance violations
- Interference with quiet enjoyment of property
- Municipal liability

Example Pickleball Noise Litigation

Dougherty & Romito v. City of Boise (Idaho)

Residents alleged pickleball noise interfered with enjoyment of their home.

The dispute resulted in settlement and closure of several courts.

Lone Tree Pickleball Litigation (Colorado)

Residents filed nuisance claims alleging repeated pickleball noise disrupted daily activities.

Chick v. Bohnert (Kentucky Court of Appeals)

A lawsuit involving alleged nuisance from backyard pickleball play.

News Reports Pickleball Noise Disputes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W41BB3Aq8zg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBVhZQsv0hg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6PwsDFRCEA>

Planning Brief – Extended Analysis for Planning Staff Review

This section provides a structured planning brief that outlines key considerations for planning commissioners and planning staff when evaluating the proposed rezoning.

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses

The property at 1615 Choto Road is located adjacent to established residential neighborhoods including Choto Fields and Choto Mills. Rezoning the parcel to allow additional commercial activity may introduce uses that are not fully compatible with nearby residential properties.

Proximity of Residential Homes

Some homes appear to be located approximately 70–100 feet from portions of the proposed development site. Commercial recreation or restaurant activity located at this distance may generate noticeable impacts including noise, lighting visibility, and increased evening activity.

Elevation Relationships

The development parcel sits at approximately 884 feet elevation. Many surrounding homes sit between approximately 840 and 870 feet elevation. When building height is added, activity areas associated with a two-story structure could effectively sit 35–65 feet higher relative to nearby homes.

Noise Considerations

Pickleball courts and amplified outdoor music have the potential to create impulse noise that may travel beyond the immediate site. Several municipalities have experienced disputes and litigation related to pickleball court noise when located close to residential homes.

Existing Commercial Services

The surrounding area already contains numerous commercial businesses serving the community. The planning record should consider whether there is a demonstrated need for additional commercial zoning at this specific location.

Precedent Considerations

Expanded use in CN zones within a largely residential area may create pressure for additional rezonings nearby. Planning commissions often consider whether a rezoning may establish precedent for further land-use changes along a corridor.

Planning Commission Decision Framework

When evaluating rezoning requests, planning commissions commonly consider:

- Whether the proposed expanded use is compatible with surrounding land uses
- Whether the proposed expanded protects existing residential neighborhoods
- Whether potential impacts such as noise, lighting, and activity levels are appropriate for the location
- Whether there is a demonstrated planning need for the proposed expanded use

This framework can help determine whether maintaining the existing zoning designation is appropriate.

Planning Considerations in Development Compatibility Decisions

Planning commissions commonly evaluate rezonings or expanded use based on:

- Compatibility with surrounding land uses
- Protection of established neighborhoods
- Distance between activity areas and homes
- Building height and scale
- Noise and lighting impacts

Arguments Regarding Compatibility of the Proposed Project

1. No Demonstrated Need

The surrounding area already contains numerous commercial businesses.

2. Protection of Established Neighborhoods

Rezoning could introduce commercial activity extremely close to existing homes.

3. Precedent

Extended use for one parcel may encourage additional extended use nearby.

Key points neighbors may wish to emphasize:

- Existing businesses already serve the community
- Homes are located within approximately 70–100 ft
- Elevation differences may increase noise and lighting impacts
- Pickleball courts have caused legal disputes in other communities

Appendix A – Legal Case Sources

<https://boisedev.com/news/2025/06/30/willow-pickleball-suit/>

<https://boisedev.com/news/2025/09/02/pickleball-closure-lawsuit/>

<https://www.courthousenews.com/colorado-appeals-court-parses-a-pickle-of-a-noise-complaint/>

<https://www.casemine.com/judgement/us/6742ac70395a1d617fc8536c>

Appendix B – Pickleball Noise Research Sources

<https://businessden.com/2024/07/03/lone-tree-residents-sue-city-over-noise-from-pickleball-courts/>

<https://www.boisestatepublicradio.org/sports-recreation/2025/08/29/pickleball-boise-park-suit-lawsuit-noise>

Appendix C – Video New Reports regarding disputes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W41BB3Aq8zg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBVhZOsv0hg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6PwsDFRCEA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtjPK3ydOrc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0SxRncOShg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QWMjPva5V8>

Appendix D– Knox County Planning Resources

Knox County Planning Commission

<https://knoxplanning.org>

Knox County Zoning Ordinance

<https://knoxplanning.org/resources/zoning/ordinances/county/2023-08-28.pdf>

Knox County GIS Mapping System

<https://kgis.org/kgismaps/map.htm>