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## CHAPTER 5 RECOMMENDATIONS



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### RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations chapter provides more specific direction for individual park and recreation facility projects, based on current conditions, needs, and opportunities.

The first part is focused on specific recommendations for existing parks and facilities. This is followed by recommendations that are applicable to all Menlo Park's facilities and parks. The final section on new parks and facilities addresses access and connectivity, as well as continuing the city's priority of bringing nature into the city, especially in its play areas and downtown opportunity sites.

**The Park & Recreation Facilities Master Plan Update serves as a guiding document for the city as it seeks to improve parks and recreation facilities in Menlo Park. It is primarily a planning and policy document and is not envisioned to approve specific facilities improvement projects or programs. Projects and programs that are advanced under this Plan would need to undergo their own design, environmental review and approval process prior to being implemented.**

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## Chapter 5 Recommendations

### BELLE HAVEN MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY CAMPUS AND PARK

The Onetta Harris Community Center, Menlo Park Senior Center, Belle Haven Youth Center, and Belle Haven Pool, along with Kelly Park form a comprehensive community recreation campus in the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park. The plan recommendation is to complete a detailed feasibility study with substantial community involvement to re-imagine the area as the **Belle Haven Multi-Generational Community Campus and Park (Campus)**. The existing buildings have been recently evaluated (Noll & Tam Architects, *Onetta Harris Community Center & Menlo Park Senior Center Existing Building Evaluation*, 2018). Except for the Senior Center, they are at the end of their productive life and need substantial upgrades or a rebuild. The Pool has undergone a separate assessment, and there is a master plan for redevelopment. The Pool Master Plan should be aligned with the vision and goals for the site and incorporated into a feasibility study.

**GOALS:** Re-imagine a multi-generational, community-centric campus with improved efficiencies that make recreational opportunities accessible and welcoming to all residents, current as well as the newly projected demographic.

There are several approaches to meeting the needs for this site, and which need to be assessed in the recommended feasibility study:

**1. Major Renovation:** Implement major renovations to the existing recreation center and pools, maintaining those buildings and the form of the site. This approach would likely have the lowest cost and shortest time frame, but may not provide the full benefits of a reenvisioned campus. New open space would likely not fit on the existing site, some of the new spaces



Welcoming Green Space



Multi-generational Fitness Center



Dynamic Teen Center

could not be easily accommodated, and there would not be an improvement in operational efficiencies. The buildings would need to be fully assessed for the ability to successfully renovate them.

**2. Selective Redevelopment:** This option maintains the Senior Center, which was built 25 years ago, and considers repurposing the rest of the site. This approach allows the City to meet a wide range of needs while saving some costs and allowing the Senior Center to continue operation and offer swing space during construction to keep some programs operational. The challenges with this approach are the site constraints and need for structured parking - potential under the Recreation Center. The feasibility study should evaluate if this option is more cost effective than Option 3, which repurposes the entire site.

**3. New Campus:** This option is to start over for the entire site, potentially including access to Kelly Park. This approach would allow the development of a single recreation building with all the needed uses, integrated pools and locker spaces, better access and visibility of the fields, and make for the best use of the site. This approach would provide the best operational functionality and efficiencies. The feasibility study needs to determine if this option may be more cost effective than the selective redevelopment approach.

The new vision for the site includes the following elements and may be achieved in different ways based on the approach the City finds most feasible.

- Creating a welcoming entry - an informal green space for community picnics, for young people, and adding more nature into the campus.
- Developing a multi-generational facility that will provide a mix of recreation and activity spaces that will engage all ages and abilities, including a

gymnasium, fitness center, multi-purpose dance and fitness rooms with wood floors and mirrored walls, locker rooms for the pool (if redeveloped as one facility) and gym, a multipurpose community room that will serve as rental spaces for parties and weddings, while serving the seniors in the daytime, and potentially a location for a new library branch.

- Enabling operational efficiencies by combining the recreation center and senior center. Currently, the two buildings are not optimizing use. The seniors need more space before 1 pm, and there is a need and opportunity to expand community use of the recreation facilities after 1. By putting both uses under one roof, there is an opportunity to create a more efficient community facility for all ages, and to optimize the spaces for multiple uses. Integrating seniors into the recreation center provides a better opportunity for them to use fitness equipment and wellness services including a new pool. If Option 3 is pursued, integrate the teen and youth facilities into the building.
- Providing a community-centric recreation swimming center that prioritizes recreation over swim teams. The current pool is not well utilized by the surrounding community, and there is a recent needs assessment report that recommends reconfiguring the complex. The Plan's new vision provides for integrated lockers and bathrooms to be used for the gym and pool, reduced staffing by allowing for a single control point/receptionist. Further, the Plan recommends moving from a lap pool to a more community-centric pool that provides warmer water that is conducive to swim lessons, senior and adult water aerobics, and family play. Ideally, the pool would have lap lanes. A shallow, zero entry area

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### BELLE HAVEN CAMPUS OPPORTUNITIES



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to accommodate all ages and abilities, play items such as a slide or water mushrooms (see adjacent image), and a deeper area that allows for fitness classes. Incorporate this concept with the existing Pool Master Plan.

- Repurposing the existing senior center (if Option 3 is not pursued). Based on a recent building assessment, the existing senior center does not need to be rebuilt and can be part of the solution for providing swing space during construction. Ultimately the building, approximately 11,000 sf, can be reconfigured to accommodate the proposed Youth Center with continued access to the play area and community garden, and flexible classrooms and meeting spaces for the community.
- Building a new Parking Structure. Due to site constraints, including a PG&E right-of-way, a new parking structure may have to be developed as part of the recreation center. Parking will have to be addressed under all Options.



*Integrate Play elements in Pool*



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### BELLE HAVEN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

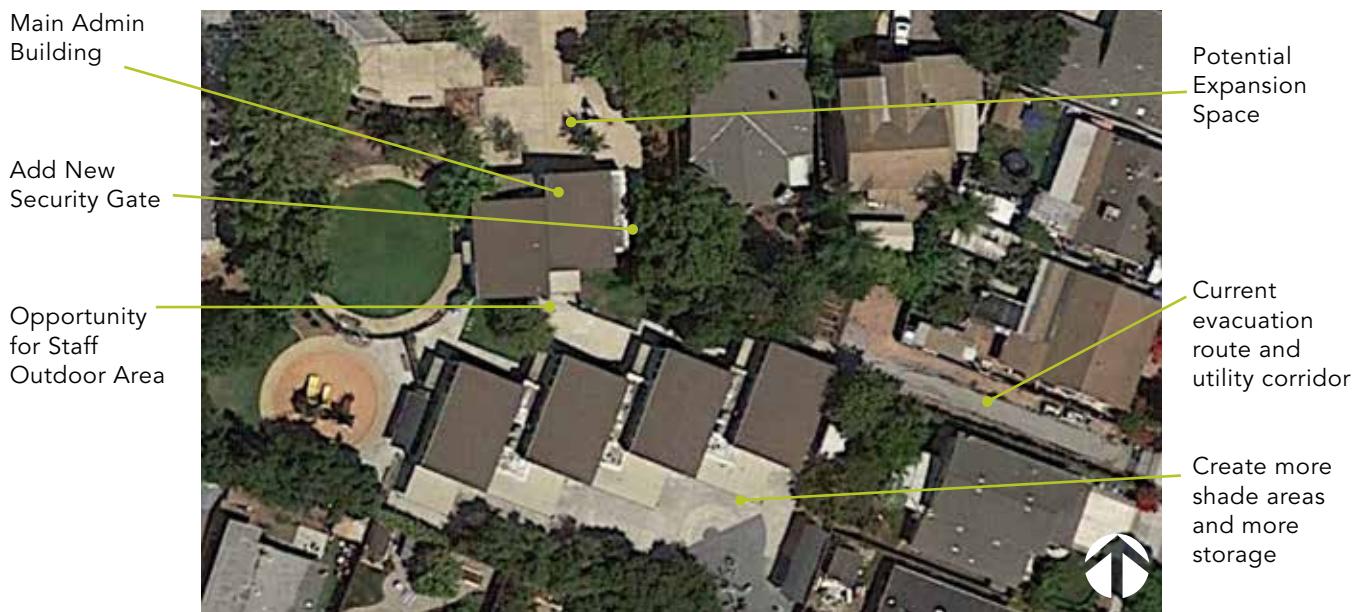
The Belle Haven Child Development Center is located across from the Belle Haven Library and Belle Haven Elementary School. The facility serves 96 children 3-5 years old. The facility is well used and maintained, but cramped in almost all respects. There may be some opportunities to expand the facility such as moving out towards the street. While the facility was updated recently, there should be an assessment of ways to expand the facility to address the following needs as well as variety of smaller concerns:

- Add more storage capacity for all classrooms (for children's personal items, sleeping cots, and other needs)
- Develop a separate area for a staff break room and add another office

- Dedicate and if possible expand the current multipurpose room just for children and parent's meetings (currently is used for storage for a variety of items, and has a office cubicle)
- Evaluate and address additional enhancements throughout the facility to better support the number of students and their needs.

Separately, there are several issues and opportunities with the outdoor areas:

- Add a locked and alarmed gate adjacent to the main administration building for a better evacuation route (currently kids needs to walk around the block). Reinstitute policy to lock and alarm exterior gates to secure the facility during the evenings and weekends.
- Consider utilizing space between buildings for an outdoor staff space.



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### JOSEPH B. KELLY PARK

Kelley Park community park is a major amenity for the city as a whole, located within the Belle Haven community. It has the only city-owned lighted synthetic turf soccer field and is heavily used. Belle Haven residents wish to see more activities and events that would draw the Menlo Park community to the park and strengthen the connection across Highway 101, to serve Menlo Park as a whole.

**GOALS:** Enhance access and visibility of the park, promoting it as a destination for wellness - active sports and fitness, as well as community-wide events.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Provide additional wayfinding signage to direct users to Kelly Park, as well as directional and orientation signage at park entry, where orientation is poor. Add more welcoming features to invite park use.
- Provide additional signage regarding park rules, parking hours, dogs, and synthetic turf. Enforce dog rules and appropriate use of synthetic turf.

- Schedule more community events and special activities to make the park a recognized destination.
- Provide additional storage for sports use.
- Improve direct connections to Kelly Park from the Senior Center. (If and when the Campus is reconfigured, Kelly Park should be better integrated with the buildings on the site.)
- Improve the existing access across Hwy 101 and install noise reduction measures (such as a sound wall or plantings) to reduce freeway noise from



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Hwy. 101. When a multi-use trail is installed along the Dumbarton Corridor, ensure that safe and direct access is provided across the tracks to the park.

- Provide a dumpster enclosure, and screen transformers with vegetation or attractive fencing.

- Renovate landscaping to emphasize native and drought tolerant planting, and consider opportunities for green infrastructure such as bioretention areas.

- When replacing the synthetic turf and infill material, install a trench drain at the sports field to improve drainage and field life.



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## BURGESS CAMPUS

**BURGESS CAMPUS GOALS:** Continue to evaluate the patterns of use for this highly frequented park and its facilities to ensure optimum efficiencies with use, function, sustainability, and to maximize capacity.

## ARRILLAGA FAMILY GYMNASIUM AND RECREATION CENTER

The Arrillaga Family Gymnasium (Gym) and Arrillaga Family Recreation Center (Recreation Center) in Burgess Park are well used, well maintained, and important community assets. They are both in good condition with recent upgrades and consistent maintenance. There are no major changes or upgrades needed for these buildings except for some concerns with acoustics and heating, air condition and ventilation systems (HVAC) that should be addressed in the near future. There are some potential opportunities for the city to explore in the future.

The community has expressed a desire and need for a new fitness center in central Menlo Park (the need for Belle Haven is addressed at Onetta Harris new

campus). There are limited options provided by the private market, and the city is in an excellent position to provide these services and to complement other fitness and wellness programs offered in these facilities. The city does have a small space allotted in the Gymnastics center for fitness bikes and equipment, but no well-designed facility meeting today's standards for fitness and wellness.

There is a potential to create a new addition to these facilities that would connect the buildings with a single point of entry, reducing staffing costs, creating a better lobby space for community gathering and social cohesion, and adding a substantial fitness, weights, and wellness center. A successful community fitness center should be approximately 3000 sf based on other communities experience. This kind of space works well in concert with the dance spaces, gymnasium, and classroom space. The addition of concessions or a small cafe could also be successful.

One of the most significant opportunities would be reducing costs of operations by having a single point of entry where fees can be collected instead of the current two. Offices and administration space could also be made more efficient. Further, this would allow the city to effectively change the fee structure, program



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Potential future addition connecting the two buildings and adding a fitness center

Arrillaga Family Recreation Center



delivery model and allow for drop-in or membership type cards. A new Onetta Harris complex should utilize the same approach.

Some community meeting space could move to a new Library, freeing up additional space for recreation.

### BURGESS POOL

Burgess Pool is connected to the Gymnastics Center and operated by a third party contractor. The facility includes an instructional pool, a 25-yard lap pool, and wading pool. The facility is well utilized and scheduled year around. There are several upgrades identified in the Pool audit that should be addressed in the coming years.

The instructional pool is covered in the winter for ongoing swim lessons. The ventilation and temperature in the dome is not as comfortable as desired according to stakeholders and observation. The dome is at the end of its useful life and the city is evaluating installing a permanent dome with more up-to-date ventilation that could improve the air quality and comfort of the user.

Many cities are moving away from wading pools due to health concerns and aesthetics. There is the potential to meet an identified need and desire by changing the wading pool to a splash pad, play area or beach entry.

Other amenities to consider include additional shade structures, cabanas, and a permanent storage area to replace the temporary ones currently on the pool deck. The overall amenities such as lifeguard chairs, bleachers, diving blocks, lobby space, locker rooms, and the like should be continually maintained and upgraded as needed.



### ARRILLAGA FAMILY GYMNASTICS CENTER

The Arrillaga Family Gymnastics Center is a relatively new, state-of-the-art facility focused on gymnastics. The facility is well suited to this use and does not require new physical improvements. However, the facility is not being fully utilized and has spaces that are being used as a conference/meeting space rather than their intended uses. This underutilization is due in large part to challenges in recruiting and retaining staff to operate and manage the programs needed. This is a city-wide and regional issue that is impacting many facets of city operations.

The city should evaluate the operations of this facility, integrating the recommendations from the 2014 Operational and Administrative Review by MRG, and explore how to best optimize the use of the facility and serve the community. The MRG report suggests the city contract and rent the facility for "elite" training and focus on broader recreational gymnastics. With this in mind, offering events, birthday parties, and corporate team building, in concert with the adjacent pool could have some benefits and provide a new stream of revenues.

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Potential to transition wading pool to a splash pad or beach entry pool.

Year-round structure to cover the instructional pool to increase usability and comfort.

Consider the addition of shade structure, cabanas, and additional permanent storage space.

### MENLO CHILDREN'S CENTER

Menlo Children's Center provides licensed child care for approximately 72 children ages 2-5, as well as for licensed after-school care for approximately 75 school age children, K-5. The facility is located in Burgess Park and includes two buildings: child care center and an adjacent building for the after-school program.

The Child Care Center building has a downstairs space that is shared by public works. Previously, the building housed the police and jail creating some odd spaces, which impacts usability and function of the space for the child care center. The outdoor areas and parking are also insufficient. The City should investigate the ability to renovate the existing building to remove dividing walls, create separate kitchen areas for each age group, increase storage space, and create a reception space for the Center. The outdoor areas should also be improved and could expand into underutilized space around the center.

The after-school building needs a general upgrade inside, including the need for a reception desk. The outdoor area needs to be improved and enlarged if possible to allow for great area for kids to play in a supervised area.



A classroom with a separate area that cannot be used effectively due to the wall and licensing requirements.

Limited parking for the 75 plus families at pick up and drop off.

After-school Center and play area that needs to be enlarged.



Child Care Center with play areas. Potential to expand into park to create more space for older children.

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### BURGESS PARK

Burgess Park, one of Menlo Park's two community parks, contains multiple amenities that support active and passive uses, and appeal to individuals, small social and family groups, and organized sports users. Improvements would gain efficiencies, expand usable field time for sports groups, and provide a wider range of experiences for users.

**GOALS:** Continue to evaluate the patterns of use for this highly frequented park, to ensure optimum efficiencies with field use, improve sustainability, and maximize capacity

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Increase usability and field availability by installing field lighting. Ensure that lighting has cut-offs that prevent spillage to adjacent residential neighborhoods, and that minimize dark sky impacts. Consider artificial turf to increase all season and all weather play, and reduce routine maintenance.
- Reconfigure the baseball diamond to make the field more flexible and efficient for multiple sport overlays.
- When fields are renovated, consider the potential for underground water storage.
- Consider expansion of snack shack to allow for a wider range of offerings. Provide additional shade and movable seating to create a flexible and inviting eating area.
- Renovate the existing playground with an emphasis on nature play experiences, and access for children of all abilities. This may also provide opportunities to include green infrastructure.
- Provide additional reservable picnic areas, and/or gathering spaces to accommodate varying group sizes.
- Update park landscaping with more native plant palettes. Replace small, unused lawn areas with native, drought tolerant plants, demonstration gardens, and artistic combinations of colors and textures. Adjacent to streets, parking and other hardscape areas, install bioretention areas per the city's Green Infrastructure Plan, to cleanse stormwater and replenish groundwater.
- Update park lighting fixtures to more energy



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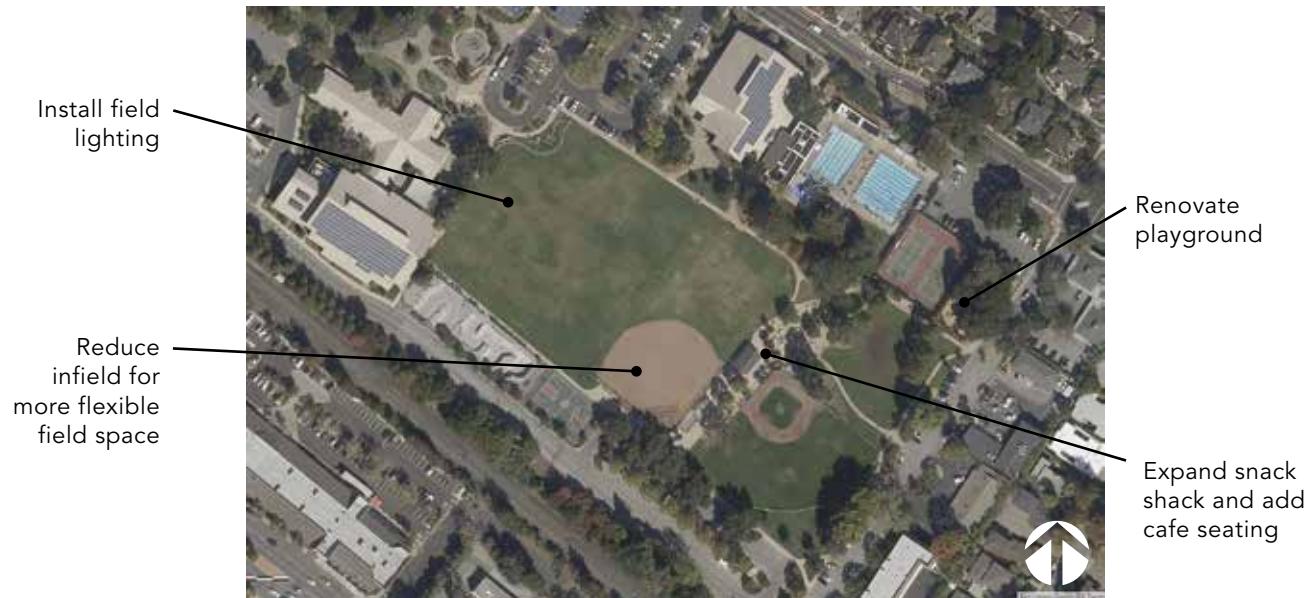
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efficient options, such as updating tennis court lights to LED. Evaluate parking lot lighting levels, to ensure that safety standards are met.

- Consider the addition of outdoor fitness equipment to expand park uses.
- Identify ways to create more distinctive elements in the park, such as additional art or playful structures for informal play, and the like.
- Perform necessary maintenance on the duck pond, including re-lining the pond. Consider updating the filtration system for the duck pond to improve water quality. Update signage to educate the public about negative impacts of feeding the ducks.



Ongoing maintenance needed for duck pond



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### WILLOW OAKS PARK

Willow Oaks Park is a central feature of the Willows neighborhood, providing residents with a range of amenities for all ages. Its iconic sculpture, readily visible from Willow Road, identifies the park. Incorporation of art elements would build on this theme. Renovation of the off-leash dog area and addition of a restroom are pending projects.

**GOALS:** Celebrate the identity of this park with a variety of enhancements to make better use of underutilized spaces and enhance community gathering spaces.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Complete planned improvements to the fenced off-leash dog area, and construct the planned restroom. Renovate playground to update play equipment, and to provide more play features in underused spaces within the play area. Incorporate artful play elements to complement the park's signature sculpture.



Sculpture enhances park's identity

- Construct a curb ramp and removable bollards to create a maintenance vehicle staging area adjacent to the on-site parking/circulation. Consider providing trash enclosures.
- Consider addition of a group gathering space or community garden.
- Reconfigure the tennis courts to improve park usability. When the current lease which includes the basketball courts expires, consider shifting two tennis courts south to the current location of the basketball court to create a more inviting park entry, and more usable park space to the north of the courts.

- Improve signage at pedestrian entry from Gilbert Avenue. Adjust park signage to improve visibility from eastern approach on Willow Road, where the view of the sign is blocked by utilities.

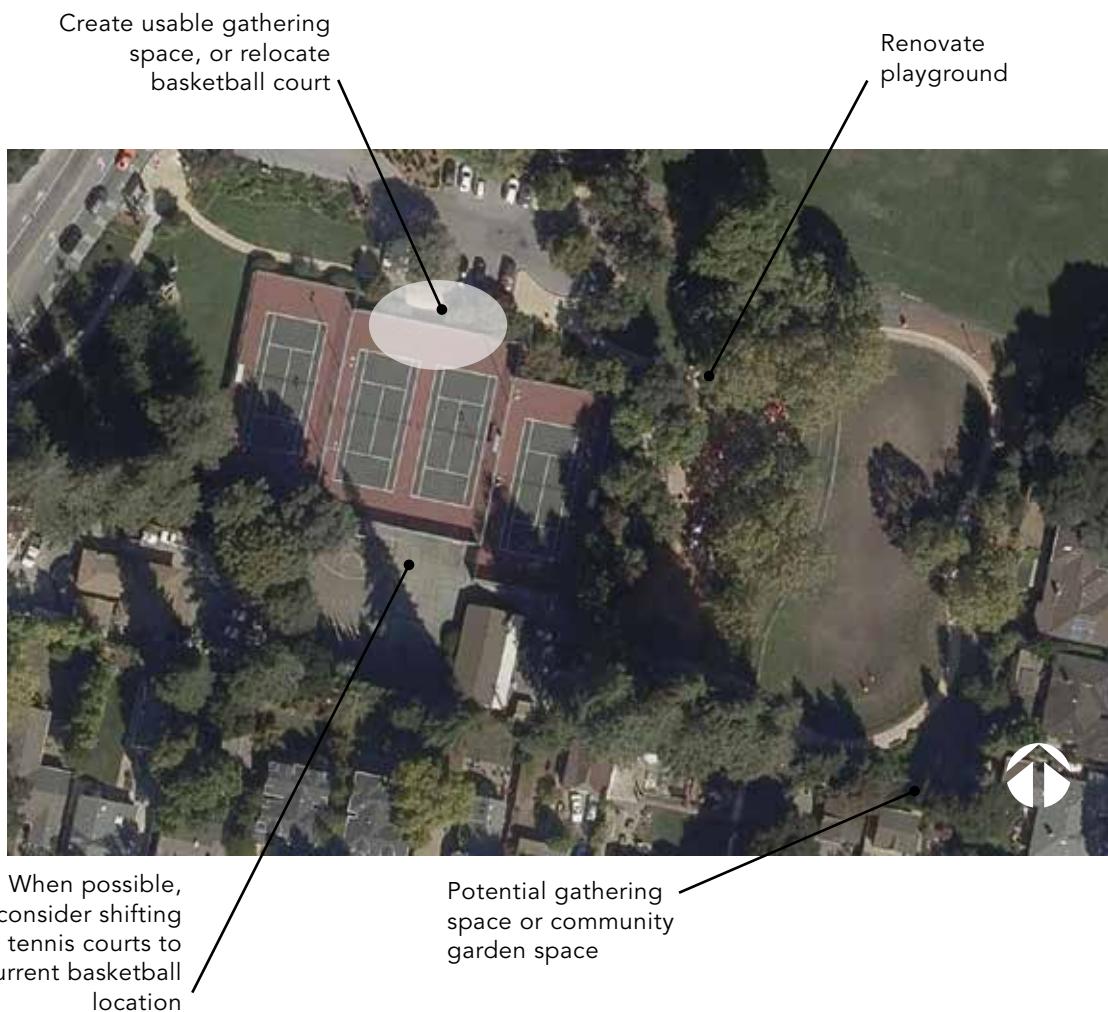


Basketball court is underutilized

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- Upgrade tennis court light fixtures to LED, and improve overall park lighting.
- Develop a system for improving neighborhood access to tennis courts.
- Improve drainage throughout the site and in particular to prevent lawn drainage onto tennis courts, and flooding in driveway of the adjacent school, including green infrastructure such as retention ponds and bioretention areas per the city's Green Infrastructure for Stormwater Plan's Regional Project opportunities.
- Evaluate the potential for a water well at this park.



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### NEALON PARK

Nealon Park is a centrally located neighborhood park. The new Nealon Park Nature Play Area; All Abilities Playground is replacing the old playground near the Middle Avenue frontage. The park has a fenced, recently renovated softball field that serves, during limited hours, as one of the city's two off-leash dog areas. Dog owners appreciate the size of the current off-leash area, but the limited hours make it inaccessible for many working dog owners. Field users are frustrated by dog owners failure to pick up after their dogs resulting in a messy, potentially unhealthful, and sometimes unusable space. Changes to Middle Avenue to improve circulation are being studied, and may impact parking along the park's frontage.

**GOALS:** Explore further improvements to this recently updated park, consistent with the all-abilities Nature Play Area, whether through planting, or continuing the theme throughout the park. Ensure that it is a harmonious mixed-use space that addresses all user groups.

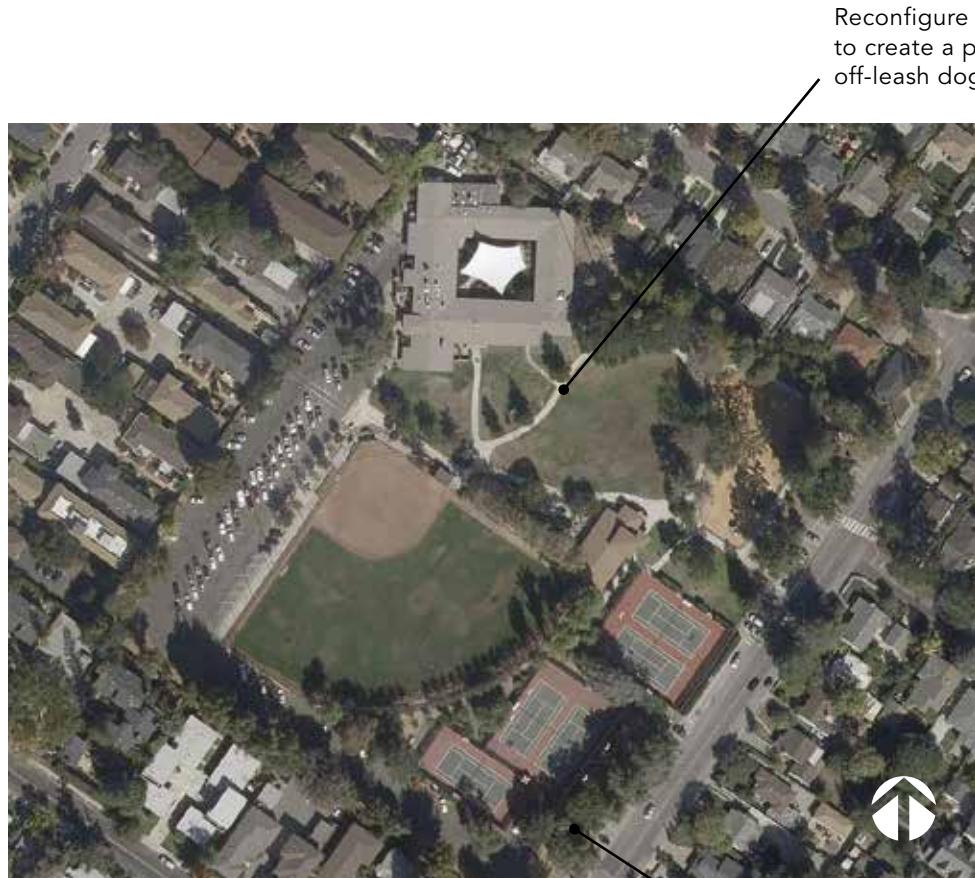
#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Relocate the dog use area from the sports fields to address health and safety concerns. Reconfigure the park's pathways to create space for a fenced, off-leash dog area, with separate areas for large and small dogs. The area should be a minimum of one half acre, and should include benches, shade, water for dogs and people, trash receptacles and dog waste bag dispensers. Consider addition of dog agility elements, such as stairs and tubes.
- Create a demonstration garden with native plants to reinforce the nature theme of the new playground, including bioretention areas to treat adjacent hardscape.
- Activate the underused southern corner of the park by adding art, small gathering spaces, game tables, or similar amenities.
- Complete pathway upgrades from asphalt to concrete.



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Reconfigure pathways  
to create a permanent  
off-leash dog area



Activate the  
underused  
corner of the  
park



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### SHARON PARK

Sharon Park is known for its scenic lake and gazebo, making it a frequent location for wedding ceremonies. Its scenic natural qualities make it ideal for relaxation, walking, and dog walking. The west end of the park is undeveloped open space and trees. It is visually and physically separated from the rest of the park by a maintenance access road and sloped terrain, providing an opportunity for an off-leash dog area that would enhance current dog walking use.

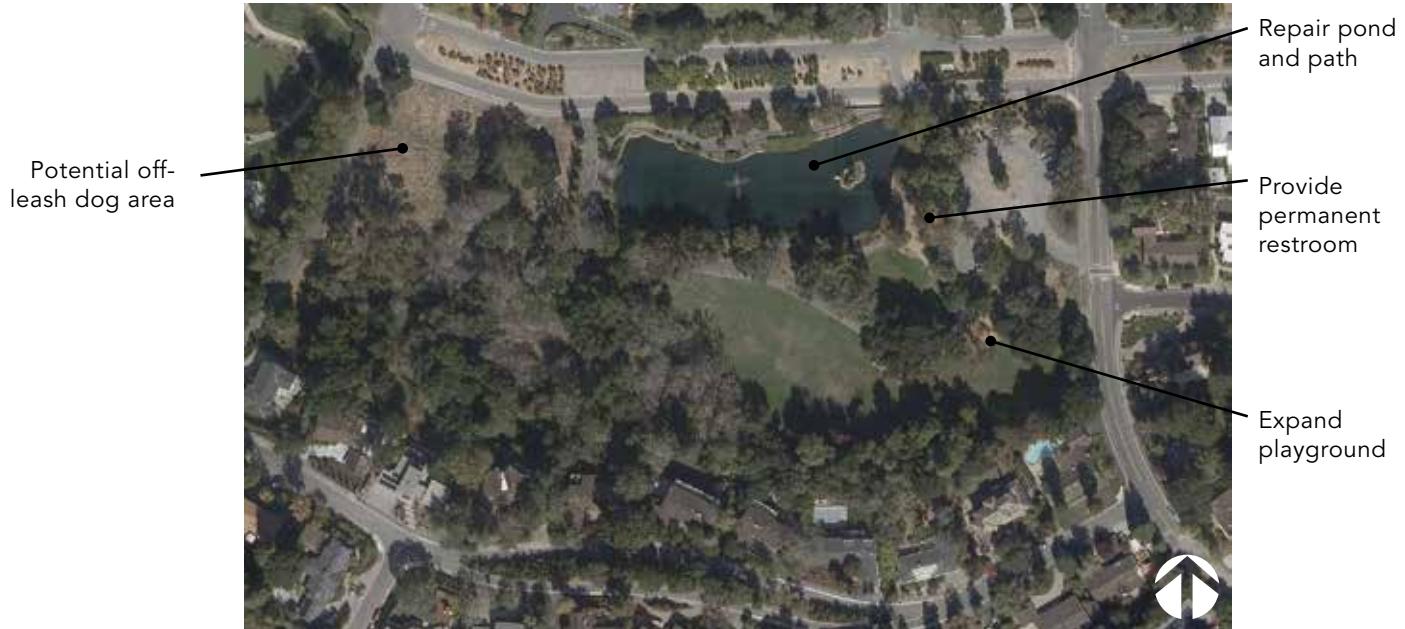
**GOALS:** Maintain the scenic qualities of this unique setting, and improve amenities throughout the park to support enjoyment of this space.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Provide a permanent restroom to accommodate event attendees and other park users. Provision of a restroom is consistent with similar park projects in the city.

- Repair and renovate the deteriorating pond lining to preserve this unique element. Design new pump house and relocate lake filtration equipment.
- Replace the walking path around the lake, which is cracked and in poor condition. Upgrade park infrastructure, including pathways, landscaping, irrigation and lighting.
- Consider improving informal pathways, where there is the potential demonstration gardens, and/or interpretive signage.
- Update and expand the small playground. Provide bike racks.

- Consider providing a fenced, off-leash dog area at the undeveloped western end of the park.



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## STANFORD HILLS PARK

This underutilized park has potential to become a city-wide destination, as it can accommodate two of the special features desired by the community - an agility dog park and a pump track. The lawn areas are not suitable for organized sports, and potential improvements are limited in the area of the utility easement which runs across much of the property. An agility dog park and/or a pump track could be compatible uses.

**GOALS:** Stanford Hills has potential to become a community destination with a broader use of this park. Currently underutilized, it is the ideal space to house a number of recreational opportunities that the community has expressed interest in.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Determine ability to enhance natural spaces and consider a demonstration habitat area.
- Consider creating a fenced, off-leash agility dog area for large and small dogs.
- Design and integrate engaging nature play elements or a multi-generational fitness area.
- Identify areas to provide seating for relaxation.
- Replace asphalt paths with concrete.



## OTHER PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

### FREMONT PARK

Fremont Park is the heart of downtown Menlo Park. Less than a half acre, this park is home to major community events and gatherings, from the Summer Concert Series to the city's Christmas Tree Lighting. Aside from hosting community cultural events, Fremont Park is a downtown destination for lunchtime relaxation.

**GOALS:** Maintain this park as a venue for community building events, as well as casual relaxation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Maintain flexible use space for both community events and for passive downtown enjoyment.
- Consider adding a permanent restroom.
- Consider adding a permanent stage or amphitheater.



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### HAMILTON PARK

Hamilton Park is envisioned as a neighborhood park, focused on family and multi-generational use. Located near the Belle Haven Elementary School, a large apartment complex, and several churches, it can serve as a multi-generational gathering space for Belle Haven residents. Parking along Sandlewood Street could accommodate food trucks for neighborhood parties.

**GOALS:** Add amenities to this neighborhood park improve comfort and usability, and to serve a wider range of neighborhood users.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Add a tot-lot play area (for ages 2-5).
- Plant more trees to increase shade, and to create a natural canopy and visual interest. Enhance the plantings at the bio-retention areas per the Green Infrastructure Plan and add educational signage to explain their functions.
- Add barbecues at the picnic areas, and a shade structure to accommodate group gatherings.



- Provide shaded seating and game tables for users of all ages.
- Maintain the open lawn as flexible space for informal play and relaxation.

### JACK W. LYLE PARK

This is an active neighborhood park with multi-use sports field well used for soccer practice and games. Its playground has a distinct character, and the park has memorable elements such as its stone columns. A permanent restroom opened in 2019.

**GOALS:** Support existing use by adding amenities which will invite additional users to this already bustling park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Create a group picnic area near the multi-use field, for team gatherings or family picnics. The addition of the permanent restroom supports the use of the park for lengthier gatherings that could be accommodated by a group area with tables, benches and barbecues.



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- Provide additional parent seating around the playground. Contain sand play area to prevent sand migration into Fibar surfacing.
- Consider addition of a small fenced off leash dog area, or picnic area at the open lawn area to broaden use.

### KARL E. CLARK PARK

Named after an icon of the Belle Haven neighborhood, this park can be an expression of community values. Amenities for youth and seniors, features that educate about the history of Belle Haven and its community, and sustainable park elements would strengthen community identity.

**GOALS:** Celebrate the history and character of the Belle Haven neighborhood by including amenities that support community interaction and education.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Create educational features relating the story of Karl E. Clark, and to neighborhood history and

local culture. These could include storyboards, wall tiles, paving insets, or other features that can convey words and images. Repair of deteriorating good neighbor fencing provides an opportunity for creating a "canvas." Engage the community to participate in the design, content development, and creation of these features.

- Consider removal of the walking path at the northwestern edge of the park to provide more contiguous usable and flexible lawn space for play and gathering.
- Renovate the playground with interactive and engaging play features. Provide bike racks.
- Improve visibility to back corners of the park.
- Consider adding community garden plots to supplement the nearby Belle Haven Community Gardens, or a picnic and barbecue area for community gatherings.



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### SEMINARY OAKS PARK

This wooded park invites strolling, relaxing or picnicking. Its pastoral character is attractive and unique, and should be maintained and enhanced.

**GOALS:** Maintain and enhance the sylvan character of this peaceful park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Enhance the natural elements and create some unique amenities to add the park's distinctive character. Demonstration gardens and native plantings could add a layer of interest.
- Move picnic tables farther from street frontage. Provide additional benches and seating areas, with shade. Provide bike racks.



### TINKER PARK

Tinker Park is a small, but conveniently located park for passive enjoyment and young children's play. An emergency vehicle access occupies a large portion of the site.

**GOALS:** Provide additional usable elements for play value and interest at this small, conveniently located park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Adjust play equipment to be better accessible to 2-3 year olds.
- Adjust parent seating to avoid facing into the sun.
- Add striping or surface art to the paved emergency vehicle access to create additional play value.
- Consider addition of a small demonstration garden to replace frontage planting.



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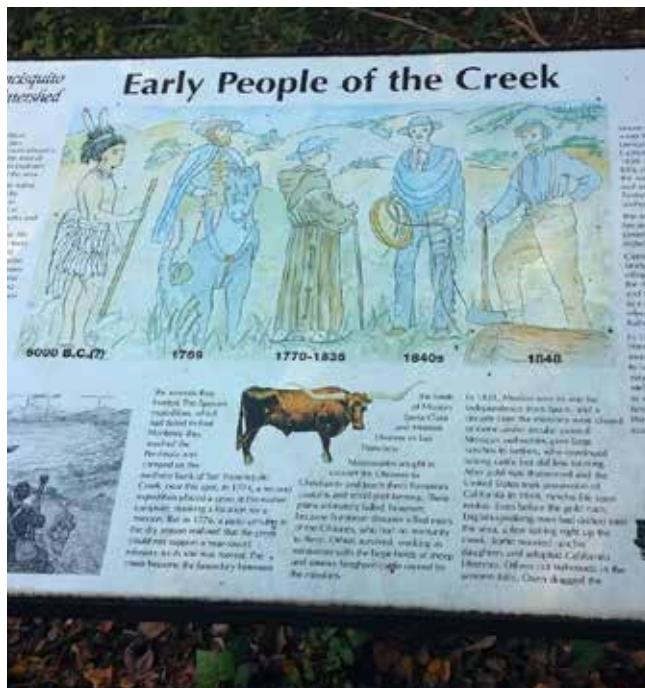
### ALMA STREET PARK

This small passive park provides interpretation of local historic events, the historic residents of the area, and the natural history of San Francisquito Creek. It also provides a pedestrian and bicycle connection across the creek to El Palo Alto Park and beyond.

**GOALS:** Increase awareness of this small gem, and add amenities that are consistent with this passive-use park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Provide park signage to improve visibility and awareness of the park and trail. Extend the trail connection northward along the east side of the Caltrain tracks.
- Continue to engage the community in restoration planting.



### BEDWELL BAYFRONT PARK

A Master Plan has recently been completed for this expansive bayfront open space.

**GOALS:** Implement the recommendations of the Bedwell Bayfront Park Master Plan.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Follow the recommendations of the adopted Bedwell Bayfront Park Master Plan.



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### SHARON HILLS PARK

This 12.5 acre wooded hillside open space area is popular with walkers, joggers, dog walkers, and people enjoying the views. Improve signage to ensure that it is known as a City Park and open space.

**GOALS:** Increase community awareness of this open space resource, and add amenities to support broader use.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Provide accessible amenities (pathways, benches, picnic tables) to viewpoints and at Altschul Avenue frontage if feasible.
- Potential to add reservable picnic sites and enhance amenities for better utilization.
- Consider adding a nature trail and establishing information about habitat, native plants, and environment.



### MARSH AND BAY PARK

Mostly a visual amenity, this small open space could be enhanced.

**GOALS:** Take advantage of this highly visible location to showcase art or artful planting.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Replace declining trees.
- In this highly visible location, a demonstration garden would be an attraction.
- Public art would be a visual amenity.



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### AT ALL PARKS

- As needed, update site furnishings, including trash and recycling receptacles, benches, drinking fountains, water bottle filling stations, and picnic tables. Use city standard models, to create maintenance efficiencies and reinforce city identity.
- Where appropriate, provide storyboards to educate users about historic, natural, and cultural aspects of the park.
- When updating play areas, use poured-in-place rubber surfacing rather than Fibar. The rubber surfacing requires less maintenance and is more manageable for wheelchairs and strollers.
- Provide dog waste bag dispensers and drinking water wherever dogs are allowed, whether on or off leash.

- Ensure that there are sufficient bike racks for projected use and that they are conveniently located. According to the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, best practice is to provide bicycle racks to accommodate 5% of projected maximum daily attendance. Bike racks should be located near the destination entry, visible from the street and within the destination, and out of the pedestrian path of travel.
- Assess all potential projects for green infrastructure opportunities per the city's Green Infrastructure Plan.
- Provide shade in parks as appropriate at play, picnic and seating areas. Consider use of trees to provide shade rather than manufactured covers.
- Where feasible, provide restrooms in all parks, similar to park projects within the city.



## NEW PARKS AND FACILITIES

### ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

The Transportation Master Plan identifies a number of improvements that would directly improve access to parks and recreation sites, including grade-separated crossings of several major barriers, as well as improvements to intersections and sidewalks that will also make access throughout the city easier and safer for cyclists and pedestrians. The El Camino Real - Downtown Specific Plan also calls for enhanced connectivity through and across the congested center of Menlo Park. Development agreements may offer additional opportunities to improve access to recreational sites, such as the Bayfront Expressway crossing being constructed with the expansion of the Facebook campus, providing access to Bedwell Bayfront Park. Existing and proposed connections are indicated on Figure 5-1.

The following connectivity enhancements will improve access to the city's parks and recreation facilities:

- Dumbarton Rail Corridor trail construction and rail crossing to provide access to the Onetta Harris Community Center Campus from the trail and the Chrysler/Jefferson area;
- Middle Avenue under-crossing of the Caltrain tracks, providing direct access to Burgess Park and the multiple recreation facilities in the Civic Campus;
- Improvements to the landing areas of the Hwy 101 overcrossing, bridging east and west Menlo Park for access to Kelly Park, Onetta Harris Community Center Campus, Karl E. Clark Park and the Boys and Girls Club, and Flood Park;

- Extension of the trail and linear park along Caltrain right-of-way;
- Provision of a bicycle and pedestrian trail along Ivy Drive over the SFPUC utility easement.

### NATURE IN THE CITY

The Menlo Park community values contact with the natural world. The community expressed the desire to increase interaction with nature – to bring nature into the city. The city is cut off from contact from much of San Francisquito Creek, which forms its southern border. The Downtown area is lively but densely developed, with limited green space. Opportunities to increase interaction with the natural world include:

- Work with the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority to identify and develop access points, overlooks, trail alignments and view corridors to increase visual and physical access to the creek.



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## Chapter 5 Recommendations

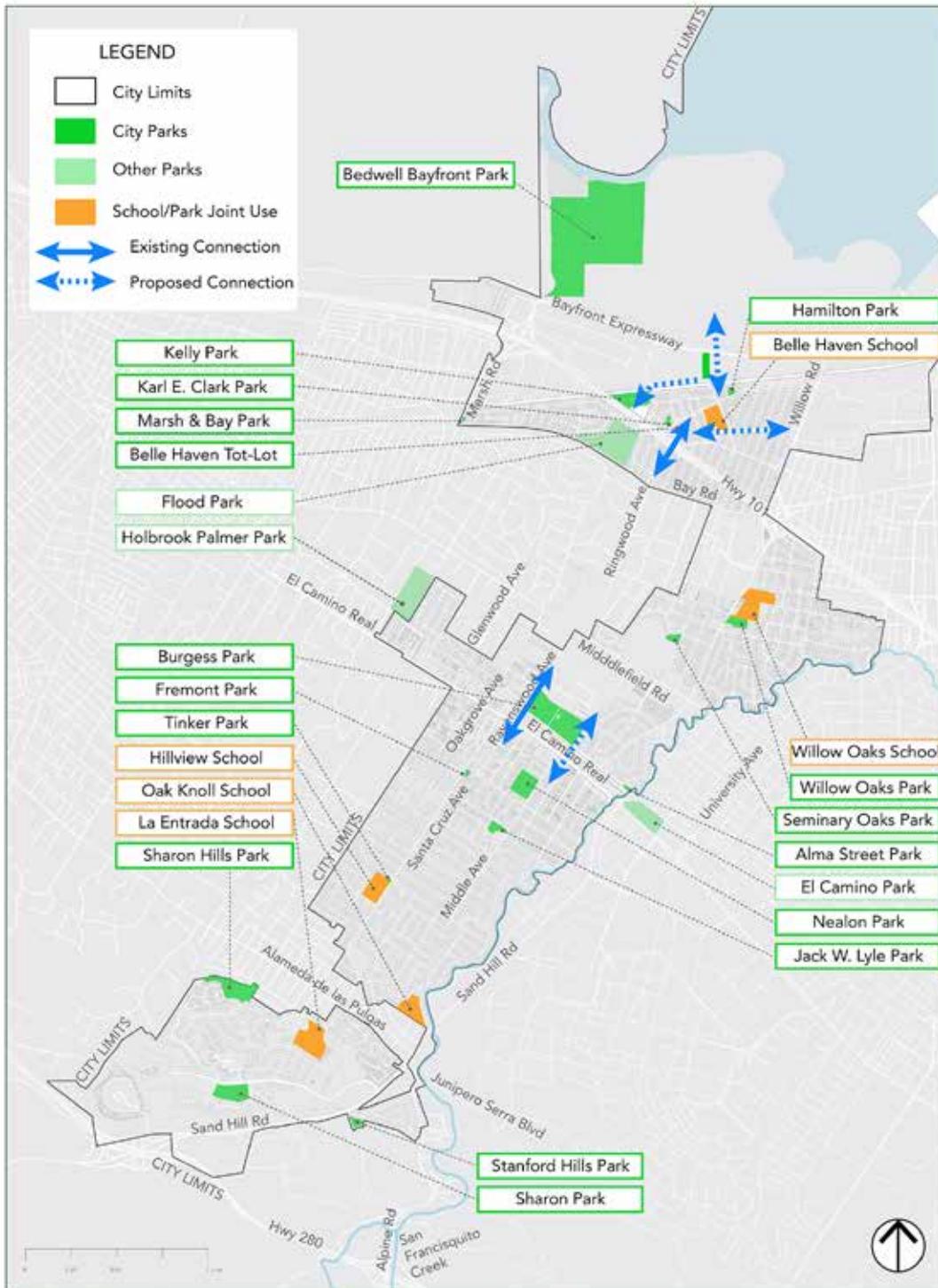


Figure 5-1: Connectivity

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## Chapter 5 Recommendations

- Emphasize trees and landscape areas in implementation of the open space recommendations of the El Camino Real - Downtown Specific Plan, including pocket parks, open space breaks, plazas, flexible space/public parking, paseo and open space breaks.

proposed to have publicly accessible open space and community amenities. Environmental and community review processes will be undertaken before any final plans are approved. Construction at Willow Village would not be anticipated before 2021-2022.

The city of Menlo Park should work with Facebook, other project developers, and the community to ensure that facilities are not duplicated and that they are designed to meet the needs of the community. At Willow Village, there should be a clear identification of the size and use of the community building and open space/fields so that facilities at the Onetta Harris Campus and Kelly Park can be dedicated to unmet needs. The community building should complement the outdoor uses as much as possible. For example, one approach may be to develop the Onetta Harris complex as an active, recreation, sports complex with fewer meeting and event spaces and establish the Willow Village community building as a more meeting, event, community gathering location indoors and out. Further, the City should discuss with Facebook how

## OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

In this Plan's Guidelines Chapter, Guideline 4.1: "Expand Parks and Recreation Opportunities" identifies future potential park and facility sites and partnerships, and discusses the importance of taking advantage of such opportunities. It identifies the Belle Haven neighborhood as the area where most change is projected to occur. Currently, Signature Development Group (Peninsula Innovation Partners), on behalf of Facebook, is working on plans for its proposed Willow Village development in Belle Haven. Willow Village, and other planned developments in the city, are



*Figure 5-2: Belle Haven Opportunity Map*

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## Chapter 5 Recommendations

the new facility will be operated, what the hours of operation will be and if there will be any fees. The City should explore the opportunity to jointly operate the facility to balance programs and uses throughout the Belle Haven neighborhood. Proposed and future multi-use paths, including one at the perimeter of the Willow Village project, will improve connections through the Belle Haven neighborhood.



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Exhibit 4  
Conceptual Publicly Accessible Open Space  
February 8, 2019

Figure 5-3: Initial Conceptual Plan for Willow Village Publicly Accessible Open Space (subject to future review and revision)

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