



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Date: 9/21/2021
Time: 5:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom

Closed Session

A. Call To Order

Mayor Combs called the meeting to order at 5:11 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Combs, Mueller, Nash, Taylor, Wolosin
Absent: None
Staff: City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson, City Attorney Nira Doherty

C. Agenda Review

The City Council pulled item J3. for discussion.

D. Closed Session

D1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION (Government Code § 54956.9)

Sand Hill Townhouse Association vs. City of Menlo Park (Case No. 21-CLJ-02831)

Claimant: Sand Hill Townhouse Association

Agency Claimed Against: City of Menlo Park

D2. Closed session conference with labor negotiators pursuant to Government Code §54957.6 regarding labor negotiations with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 829 (AFSCME) and Confidential employees; Service Employees International Union Local 521 (SEIU); Menlo Park Police Sergeants Association (PSA); Menlo Park Police Officers' Association (POA) and Confidential employees; unrepresented management; City Attorney and; City Manager

Attendees: City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson, City Attorney Nira F. Doherty,

D3. Closed session conference pursuant to Government Code §54957(b)(1) regarding public employee performance evaluation of the City Attorney

E. Adjournment

Mayor Combs adjourned to the regular session at 5:32 p.m.

Regular Session

F. Call To Order

Mayor Combs called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

G. Roll Call

Present: Combs, Mueller, Nash, Taylor, Wolosin
Absent: None
Staff: City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson, City Attorney Nira Doherty, City Clerk Judi A. Herren

Report out of Closed Session

None.

H. Study Session

- H1. Presentation on California Senate Bill 1383 implementation to reduce short-lived climate pollutants and provide direction to prioritize City resources to meet implementation deadlines (Staff Report #21-181-CC) (Presentation)

Management Analyst Joanna Chen and RethinkWaste representatives TJ Carter and Joe LaMariana made the presentation (Attachment).

- Tom Kabat provided options on staffing for food waste and electrification.
- Tim Johnson spoke in support of Senate Bill 1383 (SB 1383).

The City Council received clarification on City resources needed for food waste and electrification.

The City Council directed staff to prioritize City resources as presented by staff to meet the implementation deadline (Attachment).

I. Advisory Body Vacancies and Appointments

- I1. Consider applicants and make appointments to fill vacancies on the Finance and Audit Committee and Library Commission (Staff Report #21-177-CC)

City Clerk Judi Herren introduced the item.

- Pavneet Singh spoke on their application for the Library Commission.

The City Council made appointments to fill vacancies on the Finance and Audit Committee and Library Commission:

Finance and Audit Committee

- Stuart Soffer – term expiring April 30, 2022

Library Commission

- Pavneet Singh – term expiring April 30, 2024

J. Consent Calendar

J1. Accept the City Council meeting minutes for August 31, 2021 (Attachment)

~~J2. Approve and appropriate \$10,000 for seed money to support the newly formed Menlo Park Sister Cities Association and ongoing sister cities program (Staff Report #21-179-CC)~~

Removed from agenda after publication; rescheduled for October 26, 2021 or November 9, 2021 City Council meeting.

J3. Adopt Resolution No. 6654 approving the funding agreement with Hibiscus Properties for the construction of raised median islands on Chilco Street and authorizing the city manager to execute the funding agreement (Staff Report #21-163-CC) – **continued from August 31, 2021**

Mayor Combs was recused from item J3., and exited the meeting.

The City Council discussed public outreach before selecting the construction method, and the use of remaining funds.

The City Council received clarification on construction options and costs.

The City Council requested a report on the alternative selected.

ACTION: Motion and second (Taylor/ Wolosin), to adopt Resolution No. 6654 approving the funding agreement with Hibiscus Properties for the construction of raised median islands on Chilco Street and authorizing the city manager to execute the funding agreement up to \$605,650 plus contingencies and direct staff to engage with the community to select the preferred alternative, passed 4-0 (Combs recused).

Mayor Combs returned to the meeting.

J4. Adopt Resolution No. 6668 authorizing the city manager to rescind the portions of Emergency Order No. 2 in Fall 2021 related to the Arrillaga Family Gymnasium, City Council Chambers, City Hall, and Arrillaga Family Gymnastics Center (Staff Report #21-183-CC)

ACTION: Motion and second (Nash/ Combs), to approve the consent calendar with the exception of item J3., passed unanimously.

The City Council reordered the agenda.

L1. Adopt Resolution No. 6663 to approve permanent installation of the Belle Haven neighborhood traffic management plan (Staff Report #21-173-CC) (Presentation) – **continued from September 14, 2021**

Web form public comment on item L1. (Attachment).

Mayor Combs was recused from item L1., and exited the meeting.

Senior Transportation Engineer Kevin Chen made the presentation (Attachment).

- Menlo Park Fire Protection representative Jon Johnston spoke in support of staff's recommendations for the Belle Haven neighborhood traffic management plan.
- Sonia Elks spoke in opposition of the concrete bulbouts on Newbridge Street.

The City Council received clarification on gateway treatments, width of street and bulbouts standards, impacts to vehicles turning when bulbouts in place, ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance, traffic signal timing considerations, and speed hump cutouts for fire truck wheels.

The City Council discussed other considerations and residential outreach related to flashing stop signs.

The City Council directed staff to not install permanent bulbouts and remove the temporary bulbouts on Newbridge Street, install one speed hump on Newbridge Street between Chilco Street and Sevier Avenue, install speed humps on Chilco Street between Terminal Avenue and Newbridge Street, explore raised crosswalks and flashing stop signs at Chilco Street and Ivy Drive and Chilco Street and Newbridge Street, and replace brick gateways with signage on the sidewalks

ACTION: Motion and second (Taylor/ Wolosin) to adopt Resolution No. 6663 to approve permanent installation of the Belle Haven neighborhood traffic management plan with the following modifications:

- 1) no permanent installation of bulbouts and removal of the temporary bulbouts on Newbridge Street; and
- 2) install one speed hump on Newbridge Street between Chilco Street and Sevier Avenue; and
- 3) install speed humps on Chilco Street between Terminal Avenue and Newbridge Street; and
- 4) replace brick gateways with signage behind the sidewalks; and

And directed staff to:

- 5) explore raised crosswalks and flashing stop signs at Chilco Street and Ivy Drive and Chilco Street and Newbridge Street; and
- 6) discuss with applicant other projects to run simultaneously, passed 4-0 (Combs recused).

The City Council took a recess at 8:00 p.m.

The City Council reconvened at 8:32 p.m.

The City Council reordered the agenda.

- L4. Adopt resolution amending the City Council approved salary schedule effective September 21, 2021 (Staff Report #21-187-CC)

Assistant City Manager Nick Pegueros introduced the item.

ACTION: Motion and second (Wolosin/ Combs), to adopt Resolution No. 6669 amending the City Council approved salary schedule effective September 21, 2021 adding four positions to the salary schedule (Finance Director, Enterprise Applications Administrator, Systems Administrator, and Engineering Services Manager) and; removing one position from the salary schedule (Engineering Services Manager/City Engineer), passed unanimously.

The City Council reordered the agenda.

- L5. Direction on drafting an ordinance and ballot measure for City Council consideration on preserving park land (Staff Report #21-185-CC) (Presentation)

Web form public comment on item L5. (Attachment).

City Councilmember Mueller made the presentation (Attachment).

- Adina Levin spoke in support of low-income housing and impacts to the housing element.
- Catherine Carlton spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.

- Jeff Fenton spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.
- Michal Bortnik spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands and requested clarification on how equity is being managed.
- David Yoshida spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.
- Jaqueline Wender spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.
- Michael Babiak spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.
- Maya Sewald spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.
- Brittani Baxter provided information on arena goals for low-income housing.
- Shanda Bahles spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.
- Eminent Domain spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.
- Robert Dickinson requested clarification on the impact of additional housing to the economic crisis.
- Kelsey Baner spoke in support of parks and fair housing.
- Wayne Michelsen spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.
- Ken Chan spoke in support of focusing on the housing element.
- Brian Kissel spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.
- Tim Johnston spoke in support of as ordinance preserving park lands.

The City Council received clarification on private versus public dedications and current park protections.

The City Council discussed preparation of ordinance and the requirements and necessities for a ballot measure.

ACTION: Motion to direct staff to analyze and return a zoning ordinance prohibiting the conversion of City parks to different municipal purposes, (Wolosin/ motion failed with no second.)

ACTION: Motion and second (Mueller/ Combs), to direct staff to draft ordinance that dedicates all parks in the City as dedicated as parks and protected from development unless for the exception of municipal use by a vote of the public, and the city attorney to return list of municipal uses for City Council consideration, and the city attorney will rectify gaps identified in State law for consideration at a later meeting, failed 2-3 (Taylor, Wolosin, and Nash dissenting).

K. Public Hearing

- K1. Ordinance No. 1078 repealing and replacing Menlo Park Municipal Code Section 16.86.025 (Staff Report #21-186-CC)

City Attorney Nira Doherty introduced the item.

ACTION: Motion and second (Combs/ Taylor), to waive the first reading of Ordinance No. 1078 repealing and replacing Menlo Park Municipal Code section 16.86.025, passed unanimously.

L. Regular Business

- L2. Authorize the city manager to reactivate the gymnastics program (Staff Report #21-182-CC) (Presentation)

Web form public comment on item L2. (Attachment).

Library and Community Services Director Sean Reinhart, Interim Assistant Community Services Director Theresa DellaSanta, and Recreation Coordinator Karen Mihalek made the presentation (Attachment).

- Michelle Sutton spoke in support of the private sector management of the City's gymnastics program.

The City Council received clarification on the proposed phase-in approach, cost of reactivation, resident verse non-resident enrollment, capacity for reopening, and liability due to exposure or transmission.

The City Council decided to take no action at this time.

ACTION: By acclamation, the City Council extended the meeting past 11 p.m., passed unanimously

- L3. Adopt the Transportation Management Association feasibility study final report (Staff Report #21-184-CC) (Presentation)

The City Council continued item L3. to a future meeting.

M. Informational Items

- M1. City Council agenda topics: October 2021 (Staff Report #21-178-CC)
- M2. 2021 priorities and work plan quarterly report as of July 31 (Staff Report #21-180-CC)

Web form public comment on item M2. (Attachment).

N. City Manager's Report

City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson reported on the upcoming Housing Element Update Community Meeting on September 23, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. and the Reimaging Public Safety Subcommittee meetings.

O. City Councilmember Reports

City Councilmember Wolosin reported out on the City Manager Recruitment Subcommittee and upcoming public meetings.

Mayor Combs requested a future agenda item to consider hiring an independent consultant to conduct a 360 performance review of the city attorney which would include soliciting feedback from City staff and conduct a review of the city's legal billings both currently and historically. City Councilmember Taylor supported City Council discussion of the matter at a future City Council meeting

P. Adjournment

Mayor Combs adjourned the meeting at 11:09 p.m.

Judi A. Herren, City Clerk

These minutes were approved at the City Council meeting of October 26, 2021.

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS, COVID-19, EMERGENCY ADVISORY NOTICE

On March 19, 2020, the Governor ordered a statewide stay-at-home order calling on all individuals living in the State of California to stay at home or at their place of residence to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Additionally, the Governor has temporarily suspended certain requirements of the Brown Act. For the duration of the shelter in place order, the following public meeting protocols will apply.

Teleconference meeting: All members of the City Council, city staff, applicants, and members of the public will be participating by teleconference. To promote social distancing while allowing essential governmental functions to continue, the Governor has temporarily waived portions of the open meetings act and rules pertaining to teleconference meetings. This meeting is conducted in compliance with the Governor Executive Order N-25-20 issued March 12, 2020, and supplemental Executive Order N-29-20 issued March 17, 2020.

- How to participate in the meeting
 - Submit a written comment online up to 1-hour before the meeting start time:
menlopark.org/publiccommentSeptember21*
 - Access the meeting real-time online at:
Zoom.us/join – Meeting ID 998 8073 4930
 - Access the meeting real-time via telephone at:
(669) 900-6833
Meeting ID 998 8073 4930
Press *9 to raise hand to speak

*Written public comments are accepted up to 1-hour before the meeting start time. Written messages are provided to the City Council at the appropriate time in their meeting.

- Watch meeting:
 - Cable television subscriber in Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, Atherton, and Palo Alto:
Channel 26
 - Online:
menlopark.org/streaming

Note: City Council closed sessions are not broadcast online or on television and public participation is limited to the beginning of closed session.

Subject to Change: Given the current public health emergency and the rapidly evolving federal, state, county and local orders, the format of this meeting may be altered or the meeting may be canceled. You may check on the status of the meeting by visiting the City's website www.menlopark.org. The instructions for logging on to the webinar and/or the access code is subject to change. If you have difficulty accessing the webinar, please check the latest online edition of the posted agenda for updated information (menlopark.org/agenda).

According to City Council policy, all meetings of the City Council are to end by midnight unless there is a super majority vote taken by 11:00 p.m. to extend the meeting and identify the items to be considered after 11:00 p.m.

SB 1383

Reducing Short-Lived Climate Pollutants in California

An Overview of SB 1383's
Organic Waste Reduction
Requirements



H1-PRESENTATION



A Public Agency

SB 1383 Implementation

CLIMATE CHANGE NEGATIVELY IMPACTS CALIFORNIA

Landfilled Organic Waste Emits
Methane Gas—
A Super Pollutant
More Powerful than CO2

Methane Gas Contributes to
Climate Change in California



CALIFORNIA
is already experiencing
the impacts of
CLIMATE CHANGE

IN 2015 THE DROUGHT COST THE
AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY IN THE
CENTRAL VALLEY AN ESTIMATED
\$2.7 BILLION & 20,000 JOBS

SB 1383 Requirements

2020

50 PERCENT REDUCTION IN LANDFILLED ORGANIC WASTE
(11.5 Million Tons Allowed Organic Waste Disposal)

2022

REGULATIONS TAKE EFFECT

2025

75 PERCENT REDUCTION IN LANDFILLED ORGANIC WASTE
(5.7 Million Tons Allowed Organic Waste Disposal)

2025

20 PERCENT INCREASE IN RECOVERY OF CURRENTLY DISPOSED EDIBLE FOOD

Jurisdiction Responsibilities

Provide Organics Collection Services to All Residents and Businesses



Conduct Education and Outreach to Community



Secure Access to Recycling and Edible Food Recovery Capacity



Establish Edible Food Recovery Program



Procure Recyclable and Recovered Organic Products



Monitor Compliance and Conduct Enforcement



Responsibilities

Jurisdictions Ultimately Responsible for Compliance

- Jurisdiction may delegate to public or private entity(ies)
- Exception that the authority to impose civil penalties can only be delegated to public agency

Delegation

- RethinkWaste
- SMC Office of Sustainability
- Recology/South Bay Recycling
- Other contractors, jurisdictions

Compliance Strategy

- RethinkWaste leads compliance for majority of requirements
- City leads compliance for ordinance adoption, C&D and WELO, enforcement and procurement
- SMC Office of Sustainability lead on food recovery program capacity

Collection and Processing Approach

Standard Compliance Approach

- 3-container system provided to ALL customers
- Limited waivers (space, de-minimis)

RethinkWaste Service Area Compliance Needs



Ordinances & Policies

Mandatory organics, food recovery, enforcement, and C&D ordinances are needed for entire service area. WELO policies required.



Enforcement

Enforcement program to be implemented by City



Product Procurement

Extensive compost, mulch, renewable fuel procurement requirements need to be met; recycled-content paper procurement



Collection & Processing

Programs established through franchise but need large expansion for MFD/commercial organics compliance.



Food Recovery

Food recovery programs will be led by SMC Office of Sustainability.



Other

Memorandum of Understanding with RethinkWaste, outreach & education, recordkeeping, and reporting.

Model SB 1383 Enforcement Ordinance



RethinkWaste

- Develop model ordinance for jurisdictions to customize and adopt
- Provide technical assistance

City

- Adopt/amend ordinances and policies
 - Mandatory ordinance with enforcement provisions
 - CALGreen-compliant C&D ordinance
 - WELO policy
 - Organics product procurement policy

SB 1383 Enforcement



RethinkWaste

- Conduct education and outreach
- Identify and educate non-compliant entities
- Report non-compliant entities to jurisdictions

City

- Adopt enforcement ordinance
- Issue Notice Of Violations and assess penalties for non-compliant entities (Jan. 1, 2024)
- Hire more staff, if need for enforcement

Procurement



RethinkWaste

- Research options with SMC Office of Sustainability
- Coordinate compost and mulch distribution with member agencies, if materials are part of the compliance approach

City

- Coordinate with SMC Office of Sustainability
- Support implementation of selected procurement program, which may involve use, sale, or donation of compost/mulch and/or support use of electricity or renewable natural gas
- Purchase recycled-content paper to meet SB 1383 specs
- Maintain records for above programs

Recology Services



RethinkWaste

- Work with Recology to provide SB 1383 compliant collection services
- Negotiate changes to collection and processing agreements
- Negotiate cost structure for new services
- Provide waivers to eligible generators

City

- Review Amendment 2 of Franchise Agreement (Fall 2021)

Food Recovery Program



RethinkWaste

- Support the SMC Office of Sustainability with food recovery program outreach and education

City

- Review MOU agreement with SMC Office of Sustainability

Other



RethinkWaste

- Hire additional staff and/or contractors
- Maintain recordkeeping and reporting
- Educate generators and other regulated entities
- Issue waivers
- Support member agencies and SMC Office of Sustainability as needed

City

- Review SB 1383 Implementation MOU with RethinkWaste
- Hire additional staff as necessary



COUNCIL DIRECTION

- To prioritize City resources to meet implementation deadline

Requirement	Direction sought
Enforcement ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amend Municipal Code ordinance
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amend purchasing ordinance• Update City's environmental purchasing policy
Recology services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt amendments to the Recology franchise agreement
Food recovery program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve the County's MOU
Record keeping, education, and outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve SBWMA's MOU

Thank you

Tj Carter
Recycling and Compliance Program Manager
RethinkWaste
tcarter@rethinkwaste.org

COUNCIL DIRECTION H1-DIRECTION ATTACHMENT

- To prioritize City resources to meet implementation deadline

Requirement	Direction sought
Enforcement ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend Municipal Code ordinance
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend purchasing ordinance • Update City's environmental purchasing policy
Recology services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt amendments to the Recology franchise agreement
Food recovery program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the County's MOU
Record keeping, education, and outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve SBWMA's MOU

Agenda item L1

Jacqui Cebrian, resident

I am a member of the Complete Streets Commission, but speaking only for myself. I'm a little surprised to see the staff report recommend going forward with the bulbouts on Newbridge while acknowledging that it forces bicycles into the lane of traffic AT EVERY INTERSECTION along Newbridge where bulbouts are present. This road is a primary thoroughfare for the community and as such has lots of traffic, including buses, garbage trucks and fire trucks. I think it is a very unsafe idea to force bikes to navigate themselves into and out of the flow of traffic in order to solve a problem that isn't really a problem. Newbridge isn't that wide of a street that we need ped protections to shorten it. The bulbouts cause a problem for bikes right now and we should not make the choice to continue increasing their risks on the possibility that someday wider sidewalks will be built. Newbridge also doesn't need speed humps. Those will drastically inconvenience residents while not reducing cut through traffic in any meaningful way. The staff reports will show that speed isn't a big factor on Newbridge. Chilco is the street that could use some speed mitigation elements. Thank you for listening.



BELLE HAVEN NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING PLAN – PERMANENT INSTALLATION

City Council Meeting: September 14, 2021

ARRIVEDA FERRY
CITY OF MENLO PARK

AGENDA

- Plan milestones
- Implementation process
 - Data collection
 - Survey results
- Recommendations
- Next steps



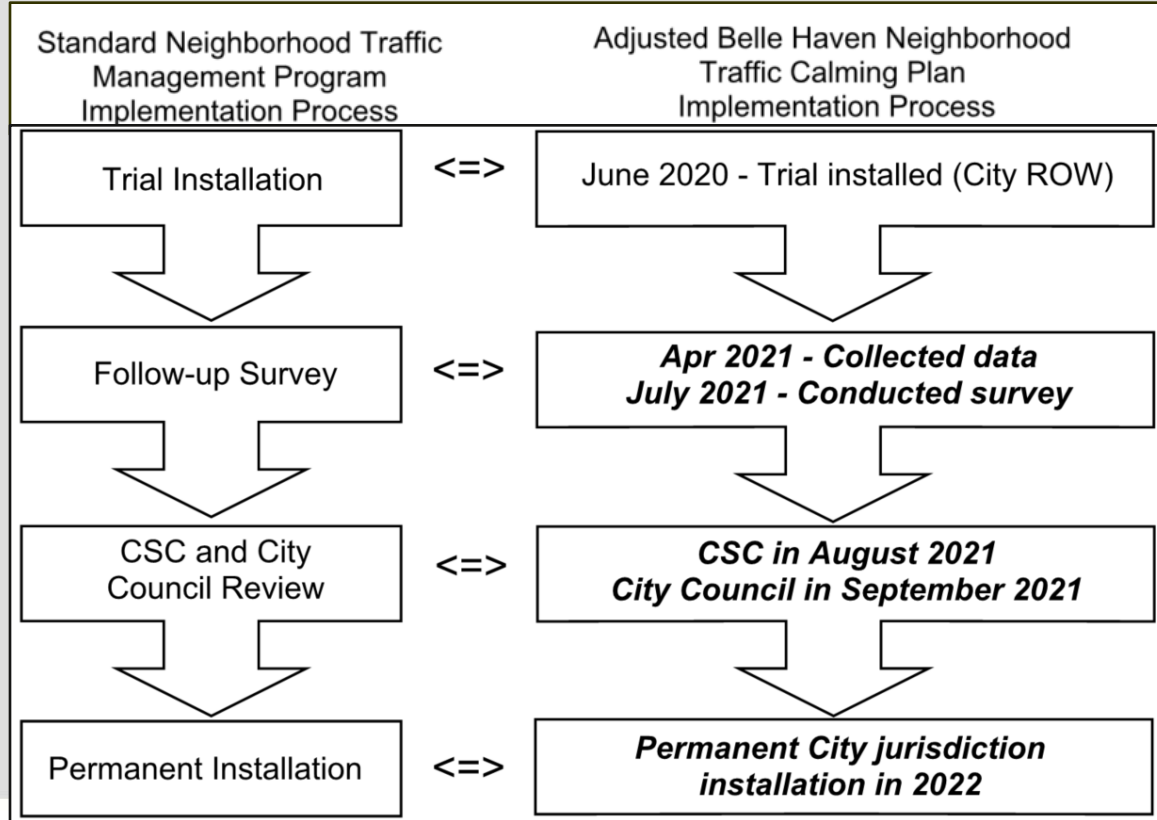
PLAN MILESTONES

- Aug. 2019
 - City Council approved Plan
- June 2020
 - Trial measures installed
- Mar. 2021
 - Permanent installation implementation process revised
- Aug. 2021
 - Complete Streets Commissions (CSC) recommended permanent installation





REVISED IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS





DRAFT PLAN



Right-of-Way
Approval Authority

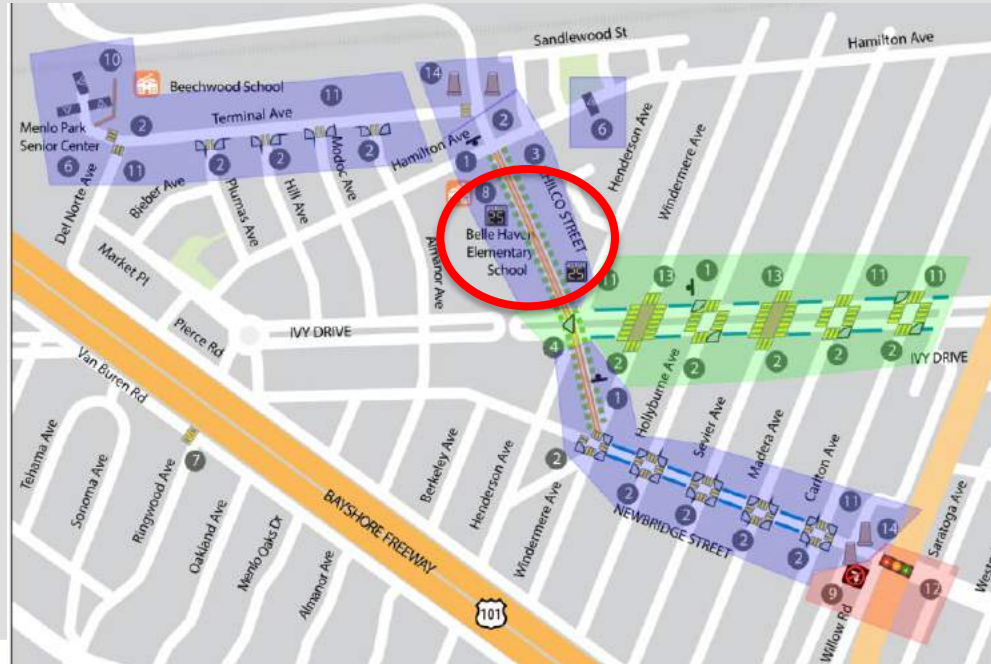
City

San Francisco Public
Utilities Commission

Caltrans

SURVEY RESULTS – SPEED LIMIT SIGNS

- Speed reduction effectiveness (83)
 - increase: 4%, decrease: 24%, no change: 72%



SURVEY RESULTS – BULBOUTS (CITY ROW)

- Permanent installation (82)
 - Support: 52%, oppose: 32%, neutral: 16%
- Designs should focus on (89):
 - Pedestrian access/safety: 57%, vehicular access/maneuverability: 22%, neutral: 21%
- Bulbout design style: traditional vs. detached



Traditional

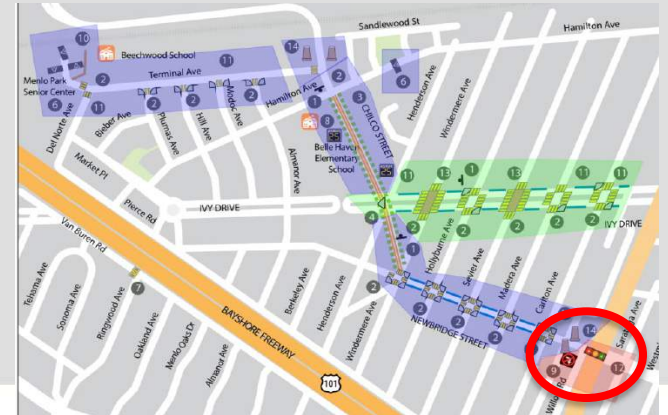


Detached



SURVEY RESULTS – WILLOW RD. / NEWBRIDGE ST. (CALTRANS)

- Reverse Newbridge St. signal phase sequence
- Convert Newbridge St. left turn to a protected phase
- Prohibit Newbridge St. right turn when Willow Rd. eastbound left is activated (84): weekdays from 4 to 6 p.m.
 - Modification awareness: 33% yes, 67% no
 - Concern: longer congestion on Newbridge St. during the morning peak hours



SURVEY RESULTS – IVY DRIVE (SFPUC)

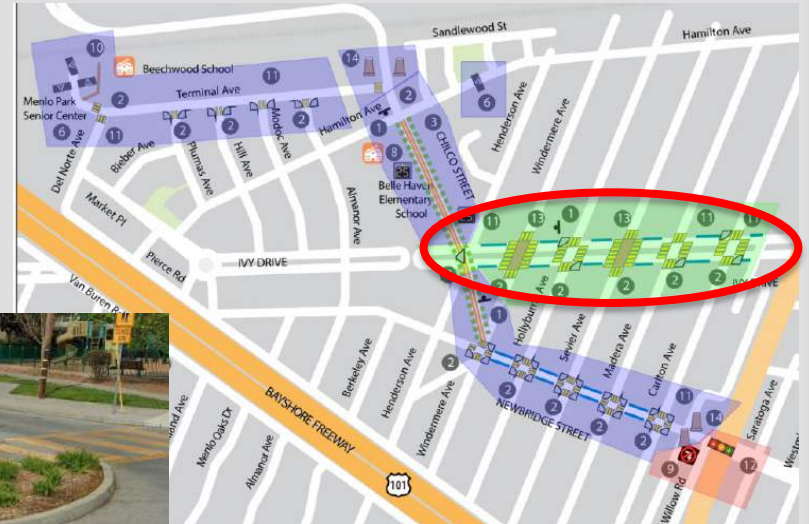
- Bulbouts, crosswalks/nose medians (84)
 - Support: 49%, Oppose: 26%, Neutral: 25%



Existing



Proposed:
Crosswalk/
nose median



NEWBRIDGE ST. BULBOUTS

- Slow down right turning vehicles
- Shorten crossing distance
- Less confident bicyclists may experience discomfort sharing space with vehicles at intersections





PLAN COMPARISON



Draft Plan



Recommended Plan



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Permanent installation
 - Chilco St.: speed feedback signs
 - Newbridge St. and Hamilton Ave: gateways
 - Terminal Ave. and Newbridge St. cross streets: bulbouts
 - Willow Rd. / Newbridge St.: signal improvements
 - c. No right turn blank out sign: weekdays 4 – 6 p.m.
 - **Newbridge St.: bulbouts**
 - **Ivy Dr.: substitute bulbouts/raised intersections with median noses**



RECOMMENDED PLAN



Right-of-Way
Approval Authority

City

San Francisco Public
Utilities Commission

Caltrans

Legend

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Updated School Signage | 4 Sharrow | 7 Raised Crosswalk | 10 New Sidewalk | 13 Gateway Treatment |
| 2 Marked Crosswalk | 5 Edge Line Stripe | 8 Speed Feedback Sign | 11 Bulbout** | |
| 3 Yellow Centerline | 6 Speed Hump | 9 Blank Out Sign*
Weekdays from 4 to 6 p.m. | 12 Left Turn Arrow | |

*No right turn blank out sign will activate concurrent with Northbound left turn **Will require removal of localized on-street parking spaces (~2-4 spaces per location)



NEXT STEPS

- Incorporate City Council direction
- Commence steps for final design and implementation



THANK YOU

Agenda item L2 Michael Taylor, resident

Good evening, Mayor Combs and City Council, my name is Michael Taylor. I live at 180 Seminary Drive; I've lived in Menlo Park for almost 30 years. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and thank you for your service to our community.

First, I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself. I am a USA Gymnastics National Instructor and have been since 1984. USA Gymnastics is the national governing body for the sport of gymnastics. I've been all over the country teaching safety and technique classes, conducting seminars and clinics for coaches, teachers, and parents, and running camps and events for athletes. I've served as expert witness in over 100 legal cases and lawsuits. Gymnastics is the foundational basis for all movement and sport activities. It is crucial for children to have access to a professional, quality, developmental gymnastics program. If you need more information on my credentials and qualifications, please check out my website at gym.net. The point is, I know gymnastics.

More importantly, I know Menlo Park. My two youngest children went through the Menlo Park school system, and they participated in many of the recreation programs offered in Menlo Park, including dance, AYSO, martial arts, Little League, swimming, and gymnastics. I worked for the city for 17 years, including many years running the gymnastics program. When I arrived in 1991, there were about 200 students in the program and in a few short years, my staff and I grew the activity to over 1,700 participants. In 2005, I was the Interim Director of the Community Services Department. I left the city in 2007 and went to work for the City of Saratoga, a community of about 33,000 people, very similar to Menlo Park, where I ran the Recreation and Facilities Department and the Risk and Emergency Management programs for 12 years. I retired a little over two years ago after 30 years in City government; I understand municipal government.

I am here to encourage the Council to NOT reinstate the city-operated Gymnastics Program as outlined in the staff report. As a taxpayer I consider the additional cost to the city to be exorbitant and totally unnecessary. It is crucial that a city the size of Menlo Park provide a high-quality gymnastics program for the youth, but there are many ways to accomplish this and conducting a city-run program is only one. In 2006, after Burgess swimming pool had been closed for renovation, as Interim Community Services Director, I recommended that City Council contract the Aquatics program to an outside provider for an immediate cost savings to the City of \$1.3. We avoided the need for recruiting and hiring lifeguards, pool managers, desk staff, and provide trainings, and transferred that responsibility to an independent contractor who, to my knowledge, has done an outstanding job of providing a safe, comprehensive aquatics program to the city. That contract arrangement remains to this day and continues to be a successful community program. It is an excellent example/model of what I recommend. If the Council approves a similar arrangement for the gymnastics program, an independent contractor can provide a quality service without burdening the city with an additional 5 ¾ FTE's. I encourage you to talk to the finance department about the true costs of employees, especially other post employment benefits (OPEB) packages and the ongoing financial burden those place on the city. There is no need to add additional employees when the City can contract out the program, receive better services with better staffing, and without additional costs. The truth of the matter is the city is not positioned to offer a quality program. The bureaucracy and difficulties of recruiting, hiring, training, and certifying qualified gymnastics instructors, scheduling, and paying them appropriately is simply not possible in a city-run program. It is possible with direct leadership that could be provided by an outside provider.

There are many examples of the advantages of "out-sourcing" services. The City of Saratoga Recreation Department provided over 220 classes, camps, and activities by using 61 independent contractors for everything from dance to soccer to swimming and childcare, providing quality services to the residents that met the standards established by the City. Each contractor provided the City with a two-million-dollar certificate of primary insurance, reducing liability for the City. The entire Saratoga Recreation Department operated with just two staff (Program Coordinators).

This is a golden opportunity to do the right thing. SEIU may have concerns, but the gymnastics positions are currently vacant, and any previous staff members would have the opportunity to apply for new positions with an independent provider. The city could prepare an agreement that is financially beneficial and would ensure the program meets the standards it deems appropriate for a comprehensive, quality gymnastics program.

Please do not recommend reinstating the city-run gymnastics program. I suggest the Council prepare an RFP to find a professional independent contractor that can provide the service, save the City substantial amounts of money, reduce liabilities, and provide a truly quality program that includes recruitment of qualified individuals, hiring sufficient staff, offer extensive training, and create a safe, quality, comprehensive program. I ask that the Council re-open the gymnastics program but NOT reinstating the city-operated activity.

That concludes my comments, but I am available to answer any questions you may have, and please feel free to contact me anytime.

Sincerely Yours,

Michael Taylor
180 Seminary Drive
650-888-9020 | coacht@gym.net

p.s

I highly recommend that all members of Council read "Reinventing Government" by David Osborne, former City Manager in Redwood City.

Agenda item L2 Nancy Wagner, resident

My name is Nancy Wagner. I am concerned about the City Council rushing to rubber stamp the City Staff's proposal to reopen the gymnastics program without first conducting a review of how a City run gymnastics program will be funded, why it's subsidized by taxpayers and if a private vendor could better meet the needs the community with improved programming, including more class offerings for gymnasts of all levels and abilities.

My interested in gymnastics goes back to the days when I was a competitor, coach and even a teacher for the City of Menlo Park gymnastics program in the 1980s. I later participated in the adult class taught by Michael Taylor. I am married to a former City of Menlo Park gymnastics employee, our son was in preschool gymnastics programs and team programs at Burgess.

As someone who uses the sports facilities at the City of Menlo Park, and is an avid swimmer, I've come to appreciate how turning over the pool to a private contractor was one of the best decisions the Council made.

The Council rejected City Staff's recommendation to have the City resume operations and instead choose to go with the more successful and fiscally advantageous option for the City residents when voting to contract the program to a private vendor with a stellar track record.

At the time that decision was finalized, the pool had been closed for about 2 years, and City pool employees had already been reassigned to other departments or found other employment. Here is the opportunity for our City Council to do the same for Gymnastics.

Due to the closure of the Gymnastics program for almost 2 years now, the City Council is again presented with a unique opportunity that could improve operations.

I ask that the Council pause any decision on approving City staff report that includes the hiring of 6 City funded positions until options are considered, taking into account the fiscal savings to the taxpayers and the ability of a private vendor to reopen a more vibrant and fully operational program.

I would hope that the Council consider that the City managed gymnastics program, in 2018 and prior to Covid, eliminated birthday parties and cut programming by 25 percent.

Nothing in the City staff report addresses how this City operated and managed sports program would address the issue of staffing the program adequately enough to provide a high quality program will full class offerings.

With the exception of gymnastics, all other sports programs offered through the city recreation department are already contracted out, quite successfully.

It's one thing for the City to subsidize and run the City operated childcare program, for example, which is providing an essential service to the community.

Sports activities like Gymnastics should be treated like the Aquatics program - and all other sports programs - and be operated for the City of Menlo Park by private vendors.

The City Council would be premature in approving the City staff's proposal at this juncture, and until the fiscal realities and program options are examined.

Agenda item L2

Louise Furukawa, resident

My child, now a college student had the opportunity to train and compete at the highest level of boy's/men's gymnastics having started at this facility. When the boy's program closed, we were forced to commute 1.5 hours daily to an appropriate gym at his level. It is very difficult to find qualified coaches for boys in gymnastics and the majority of his former coaches are now at Goldstar. Menlo Park has the opportunity to insert highly qualified coaches with a proven performance record into it's coveted facility.

Agenda item L2
Sandy Lee, resident

Please reactivate the city run gymnastics program. My daughters have actively participated for many years (one was on the team for 7 years up to Level 7). The coaches, teachers, and staff make this program very special. They run a program that is healthy, fun, safe, and developmentally appropriate. Whereas a private gym rather focuses on money and competition. Please bring back our beloved city run gymnastics program!

Agenda item L2 Pamela Evans

To the Menlo Park City Council,

My name is Pamela Evans, and I have owned Gold Star Gymnastics since 2001. In these turbulent times, I am writing to offer a proposal. If the City of Menlo Park is considering contracting a third party to manage the gymnastics program, I would be interested in discussing this possibility. Menlo Park Gymnastics has been a mainstay in our area for decades, and we would like to assist in whatever way possible to make sure that the program continues.

Staffing:

We are uniquely suited to such an arrangement. Over the years Gold Star and Menlo Park Gymnastics have shared many staff members. Currently we have several employees who began their career at Menlo Park Gymnastics and have now moved to Gold Star. If we were to be awarded this contract, we would encourage Menlo Park Gymnastics coaches who were employed in March, 2020, to interview. We are always looking for experienced staff, and offer highly competitive rates of pay plus full benefits for any employees scheduled for 25 hours per week (including health and dental insurance, vacation and holiday pay, and a retirement fund). We have had a wonderful record of hiring high quality coaches who formerly worked for Menlo Park Gymnastics because our philosophies are so similar.

Like Menlo Park, Gold Star strives to structure a curriculum for all students, from those who simply feel that their lives will be enriched by learning cartwheels to those who want to test their skills on a competitive stage. Yet even with our competitive program we cherish family and childhood. Our schedules maximize practice times that are non-school nights while keeping family dinners intact as much as possible. In all of our classes, we offer high quality instruction in an inclusive, supportive, and safe environment.

We are committed to providing the same caring and attentive training for our coaches. Our extensive staff development assures that all of our teachers feel confident when leading their own classes, which translates directly to the children feeling successful while participating in these classes. We employed more than 30 full time and 90 part time staff.

Over 50 part time employees are high school students, who live within a 10 mile radius of the gym. We would continue with this practice in Menlo Park. We pride ourselves on training young coaches to become kind and effective teachers while also becoming good employees. These young coaches learn how to be responsible for the health and well-being of their students, to teach progressions to beginners, to interact respectfully with their co-workers, along with a multitude of other benefits. They are placed in charge of a class of children and tasked with not only keeping them safe but helping them to learn and advance all while having fun. We would not just provide exercise for the youngest Menlo Park residents, but also a first job for the City's teenage population.

Class Offerings:

Our company serves approximately 2500 students attending per week in non-competitive classes for all skill levels including Parent & Tot, PreSchool & School-Age Gymnastics Classes, and Ninja. Our competitive program consists of Boys and Girls Competitive Gymnastics Teams, and All-Star Competitive Cheer Teams. Throughout the year we also offer School-Holiday Camps, Birthday Parties, and Kids Night Out Parties.

We also offer many options for children with special needs. We encourage children impacted by physical, mental, and cognitive challenges to join our regular classes. If the child needs an aide, we can assign a coach-in-training to help with the class, thereby offering an extra hand or to present modified exercises. We also allow personal aides on the gymnastics floor to assist the child in staying focused, interacting positively with their classmates, and finding success in our curriculum. For those students who need even more attention, we offer private lessons. Over the last 10 years we have employed three staff members who completed graduate degrees in Occupational Therapy and work specifically with youth populations. All three of these coaches are also expert gymnastics instructors and have provided our staff with guidance, through clinics and daily mentoring of teaching methods for specific children in their classes. One of these coaches is currently employed part time with Gold Star, one has expressed an interest in returning if we are awarded this contract with Menlo Park gymnastics and is currently running a company offering therapy through gymnastics to children with exceptionalities and/or disabilities, and the third lives locally and continues to give expert advice to Gold Star.

Agenda item L2 Pamela Evans, continued

Scholarship Opportunities:

We have extensive scholarship opportunities in place at Gold Star. Every one of our employees is given an employee discount which they can extend to members of their own family, or a family of their choosing. This discount provides classes at an enormous reduction. Also, those high school coaches who are members of our competitive teams receive a discounted rate. And of course, we do award special rates for families in need.

In addition to all of these reduced tuition rates, we are committed to researching other non-profit opportunities to supplement tuition for underserved communities in the City. In past years, Gold Star taught satellite programs in preschools. We would be happy to discuss offering classes at the Belle Haven Center if this arrangement would bring gymnastics into underserved communities.

COVID Safety Protocols:

In June, 2020, we re-opened summer camps and teams, and added classes in July 2020. Over the last year we have constructed the safest possible environment for our students. Below are just some of the procedures that were implemented.

- We set separate entrances and exits to avoid overcrowding in the lobby.
- We added handwashing stations outside the front doors in addition to the bathrooms, to ensure that every student can wash their hands before and after class.
- We gave every student a string backpack to carry their shoes and water bottles from event to event. Our cubbies and drinking fountains are no longer being used (except for filling water bottles).
- We installed bleachers outside of our large picture windows to give spectators the ability to social distance while watching classes. We began allowing parents in the building in June, 2021, as long as they are fully masked.
- We rearranged the gymnastics equipment and mapped each event to accommodate adequate space for every student.
- We altered the class schedules so that equipment can be cleaned every hour; and hung buckets with spray bottles filled with child-safe disinfectant and washcloths to provide immediate access for cleaning at each event.
- We increased ventilation by powering the retractor fans on the roof, replacing the air conditioning filters with HEPA filters, and opening the five sets of doors throughout the building.

If such an opportunity arises to bring in a third party to take over the gymnastics program, I sincerely hope that you will consider us.

Sincerely,

Pamela Evans, PhD



GYMNASTICS PROGRAM REACTIVATION

Theresa DellaSanta, Interim Assistant Community Services Director
Karen Mihalek, Recreation Coordinator

ANN MERGA FAHEY
GYMNASIUM



RECOMMENDATIONS



- Direct staff to reactivate the gymnastics program starting in November 2021
- Authorize 5.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees to support gymnastics program operations, consistent with program staffing levels in fiscal year 2018-19
- Amend the fiscal year 2021-22 operating budget to include \$767,000 total budgeted expenditures and \$450,000 total projected revenues for gymnastics program operations.



BACKGROUND

- COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession
- City-owned facilities closed to indoor public access March 12, 2020
- Due to infeasibility of safely delivering gymnastics services during the pandemic, City Council suspended the gymnastics program in the FY 2020-21 budget and eliminated gymnastics staff positions
- COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 allowed the city to plan for reopening facilities
- On June 22, 2021, City Council directed staff to prepare a proposal to reactivate the gymnastics program using city personnel
- Since March 2021, staff has received unsolicited inquiries from over one hundred gymnastics program families inquiring about reactivation plans and expressing their interest in returning to Menlo Park's gymnastics program



PHASED-IN REOPENING

Concerns about the delta variant and uncertainty about the long-term impacts of the pandemic indicate a conservative, phased approach for reactivating the gymnastics program:

- Phase 1: November 2021
 - Weekday operations focused on children/toddlers and special needs
- Phase 2: January 2022
 - Expand to weekday evening operations including competitive/adults
- Phase 3: March 2022
 - Expand to seven-day operations including weekend programs and facility rentals.

All dates are tentative and subject to change

YOUTH AND SPECIAL NEEDS

- A resource for children of all ages and abilities
- Experiment and experience the joy of movement
- Build strength and coordination which also supports math and language skills
- Progression to competitive classes if that is their goal
- Opportunities to compete and train at a higher level
- Taught by our experienced and compassionate staff who have familiarity in teaching children of all ages and abilities.





PERSONNEL CAPACITY

- To safely reactivate the gymnastics program, staff recommends that City Council authorize 5.75 FTE regular benefitted positions and expenditures for temporary and seasonal staff, consistent with FY 2018-19 staffing levels

Position	FTE	Duties
Recreation Coordinator	1.00	Coordinate and oversee gymnastics center
Program Assistant	1.00	Administrative support
Program Assistant	1.00	Program support and teach classes
Gymnastics Instructor	1.00	Teach classes
Gymnastics Instructor	1.00	Teach classes
Gymnastics Instructor	0.75	Teach classes
Total	5.75	

OPERATING REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

- Staff analyzed operating budget actuals from previous fiscal years as reference points to develop proposed program expenditures and revenues for fiscal year 2021-22
- Factor in partial year operations, phase-in timeline
- Revenue projections that reflect the uncertainty of the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic may have on program attendance.





FISCAL YEAR 2021-22, EXPENDITURES PROJECTIONS

- Salaries/benefits for benefitted staff are approximately \$511,000 and are annualized; actuals are projected at 60% due to partial year operations
- Salaries/benefits includes \$99,000 for non-benefitted temporary personnel, not annualized

Table 2. Gymnastics program expenditures

	Fiscal year 2017-18 actual	Fiscal year 2018-19 actual	Fiscal year 2019-20 actual	Fiscal year 2020-21 actual	Fiscal year 2021-22 proposed
Salaries/Benefits	\$771,645	\$848,645	\$904,824	\$85,384	\$610,000*
Operating expenses	\$149,979	\$214,669	\$158,838	\$0	\$107,000
Contract services	\$63,904	\$54,642	\$41,565	\$0	\$26,000
Other (utilities, etc)	\$47,947	\$48,890	\$32,477	\$0	\$24,000
Total	\$1,033,475	\$1,166,666	\$1,137,703	\$85,384	\$767,000



FISCAL YEAR 2021-22, REVENUES PROJECTIONS

- Revenue projections are very conservative
- Partial year operations, phased in reactivation, uncertainty about the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on program participation
- Cost recovery in FY 2021-22 projected at 80%
- Program historically achieves more than 100% cost recovery when at full capacity

Table 3. Gymnastics program revenues

	Fiscal year 2017-18 actual	Fiscal year 2018-19 actual	Fiscal year 2019-20 actual	Fiscal year 2020-21 actual	Fiscal year 2021- 22 proposed
Revenues (fees, etc.)	\$1,741,451	\$1,257,112	\$960,719	\$0	\$450,000
Total	\$1,741,451	\$1,257,112	\$960,719	\$0	\$450,000*



RECOMMENDATIONS



- Direct staff to reactivate the gymnastics program starting in November 2021
- Authorize 5.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees to support gymnastics program operations, consistent with program staffing levels in fiscal year 2018-19
- Amend the fiscal year 2021-22 operating budget to include \$767,000 total budgeted expenditures and \$450,000 total projected revenues for gymnastics program operations.

Agenda item L5 Brian Kissel, resident

Council Members, Friends, and Neighbors,

As you can see by the Change.org petition, there are already nearly 1,500 signatures already in support of Councilman Mueller's Park Preservation Measure: <https://chnng.it/zfdpMPMmsG>

Menlo Park residents understand and support the need for more housing, but there are much better options than taking our precious limited parkland and open spaces, which Councilman Mueller has already recommended.

Per the City Master Plan Update of Oct 15, 2019, there are only 54.2 acres of parkland in Menlo Park relative to a total of ~6,400 acres total, so only 0.8% of our total acreage. Further the master plan discusses "the need for new, expanded or renovated parks, open spaces and facilities; improving and maintaining the existing assets; and acquiring or obtaining access to additional properties for future park and recreation uses."

Menlo Park is a very dense community with 1,883 residents per square mile compared to San Mateo County that has 998 residents per square mile (nearly twice the density). The percent of children under 14 (22%), is higher than the County (15%) or the State (20%). Menlo Park already has a higher percentage of high density multi-family housing (35%) than the county (33%) or the state (31%). With the state mandate for more housing, the density in Menlo Park will only increase. With this increased density, the need for parkland and open space becomes even more important for our community, especially for those living in high density housing with limited yard and open space.

Also from the Menlo Park General Plan:

Nine Guiding Principles formed the basis of the latest update to the City of Menlo Park General Plan. The Guiding Principles describe the kind of place that community members want Menlo Park to be. The goals, policies and programs of the Open Space/Conservation, Noise and Safety Elements, adopted in May 2013, were carefully analyzed to ensure consistency with the Guiding Principles.

One of those principles addresses "Accessible Open Space and Recreation," stating that "Menlo Park provides safe and convenient access to an ample amount of local and regional parks and a range of public open space types." Further to "provide open space lands for a variety of recreation opportunities, make improvements, construct facilities and maintain programs that incorporate sustainable practices that promote healthy living and quality of life."

If anything, we should be finding ways to expand and improve the limited amount of parkland and open space that we have, not taking this precious resource for additional development of any kind. There are much better ways to meet our additional housing needs. Let's explore those options and agree to preserve and protect all our existing parkland. Councilman Mueller has started that discussion, let's support him with the Parkland Preservation Measure and ongoing efforts to identify development opportunities that better serve existing and new members of our community.

Respectfully, Brian Kissel

Agenda item L5
Denise Dowsett, resident

I find it ironic there is discussion on short-term climate pollutants while another agenda item attempts to remove some precious green space that once gone, will never come back. This park ironically serves a very diverse group of residents. There needs to be a more thoughtful, cleverer way to provide high-density housing without losing precious green space important to everybody's mental and psychological well-being. This should not happen because of the agenda of a few. Any decision should reflect the wishes of all residents.

Agenda item L5 Bob Dickinson, resident

Contrary to what some are saying, we can preserve our precious green spaces in Menlo Park and build affordable housing too. Building that housing on parkland would be going in exactly the wrong direction as more multi-family housing will actually create a growing demand for parks. We should be emulating our neighbor, Palo Alto, and looking for additional parkland, not cannibalizing what we already have.

And, make no mistake, even a seemingly small encroachment on our existing parks will set us on a slippery slope, creating a precedent that will allow further encroachment in the future in the name of political expediency.

The idea that we need to consider building housing on parkland is underpinned by a misleading narrative asserting that the additional housing needs to be built on land the City owns. In reality, the responsibility of the City is to zone the land needed for it, not to build it. And, the proponents of this view seem to believe that land the city owns is free. Actually, its economic value is its replacement cost and its intangible value to the residents of Menlo Park is priceless.

There are far better places to build new housing than in our parks. For example, in Sharon Heights the shopping center can be rezoned for mixed use and the capacity of the extensive existing multi-family housing can be increased. There are similar opportunities located throughout the city. In addition, we will likely have an oversupply of office space due to the recent shift to more remote and hybrid work and it may be attractive to convert some of that surplus to housing.

Housing should not be looked at in isolation, but rather in conjunction with planning for transit, schools, parks and recreation, and employment opportunities. A key goal of the State of California is higher density housing in proximity to transit, services and jobs in order to reduce long distance commutes by car with their attendant congestion and emissions.

This is a watershed moment in the history of Menlo Park. Let's make sure we don't go down the wrong path by building housing in our parks! Please approve the motion by Mayor Combs and Council Member Mueller.

Agenda item L5
George John, resident

My wife and I have lived on the peninsula for over 30 years, and we chose Sharon Heights for our retirement home because of the park and open space nearby.

We are counting on you, our city representatives, to represent us and defend our public lands.

It is a strange artifact of our political system that public lands are continuously open to attack by developers, but once the developers win, the space is forever lost to the public.

This asymmetry demands vigilance and thorough consideration before ceding a parcel of land to development and forever removing it from public enjoyment.

As neighbors of the open space next to Sharon Park I can say that every day I see one or more of

- people walking along the paths
- people running along the paths
- people waking their dogs along the paths
- kids playing around the trees
- kids and teachers of a nearby school on a hike /adventure along a path
- people taking photos of themselves against the rustic background
- people taking photos of the hawks that often alight on the trees

There are very few spaces like this on the east side of 280. Surely we can keep them a few more years.

Agenda item L5
Sanaz Hariri, MD, resident

I grew up in Sharon Heights. My parents still live in that home, and I built a home in Sharon Heights where I am raising twin 8 year old boys. The Duck Pond is the heart of Sharon Heights. I played there as a child, and my boys go there after school with their friends. I run in the park and sometimes read there. The pandemic has shown us how important open spaces are for our mental and physical health. Preserving the Duck Pond for us and our future is essential. I am fully committed to this endeavor as a mother, a citizen, and a doctor.

Agenda item L5 Jason Hartlove, resident

You can't tell a kid that it's time to exercise; that's a turn-off...you have to say, "Let's go to the park and have some fun! Then you get them to do some running, play on the swings, practice on the balance beam, and basically get a full workout disguised as play. - Gov. Schwarzenegger

The importance of play to childhood development cannot be overstated, as well as the importance of open spaces to general mental well being among the population. City parks serve, day in and day out, as the primary green spaces for the majority of Americans, and with at least 8.6% of Menlo Park housing units being multi-unit apartments, a large portion of our fellow citizens depend on our parks to provide areas for play and relaxation. The Duck Pond, located in Sharon Heights, is no exception and on the weekends, one cannot find parking in the lot due to the popularity of this beautiful space. There are many alternative spaces available for development to meet the long term goals for additional housing unit creation, including rezoning and repurposing existing residential and commercial sites such as the Sharon Heights Shopping Center, the vastly under-utilized commercial office complexes along Sand Hill Road and many others which should be explored before we consider taking away from our citizenry the shared open park spaces we have dedicated to our common use and which we have held dear for so many decades.

Agenda item L5
Kirill Pertsev, resident

Menlo Park is a tree city with just a few parks, please leave them alone. We have a literal desert right in the downtown (our disgusting parking lots). People who live in "affordable housing" usually have one car per household and sometimes don't have it at all. How one is supposed to commute to work every morning from Sharon Pond? They need Caltrain, buses, access to 101. We have only one store, Safeway, and it takes 15-20 minutes to walk from the Pond to it. A despicable "Limousine liberalism" in its purest form.

Agenda item L5

Shanda Bahles, resident

I strongly support adding to Menlo Park's housing stock. I also strongly support protecting our existing parkland both for future generations AND for the higher density population new housing will bring. Multifamily housing is necessary to achieve the required new housing mandate. Those families won't have yards. Their children won't have open space to run around in. Except for our parks! Keep our parks. For everyone to enjoy now and for future generations. Upzone existing higher density housing, redevelop Sharon Heights Shopping Center, build on parking lots. There are other options. Thank you.

Agenda item L5
Tonia Lutch, resident

Please support this measure. It is critical that we keep our green spaces in our city. We have children and a dog and our local park is essential for us and so many families. Honestly, it helps with our mental health as well; my family needs those spaces to go and enjoy and reset. Thank you.

Agenda item L5
Vicky Tierney, resident

It is imperative that the city of Menlo Park preserve the limited parkland that we already have. While I support the desire to build housing development, this does not mean that we take what little parkland we have in order to meet this need. Such an action is a lose-lose situation. I wholeheartedly support Mr Mueller's measure. Please let's preserve our parkland. Thank you.

Agenda item L5 Susan Wyle

Please preserve our parks and protect them from housing development! Menlo Park does not have a lot of open green space, and for seniors these parks are very important as they are close to home when we cannot go long distances. During the pandemic, these parks have been and will continue to be very important to the mental health and well being of all. Housing developments on the small park lands that exist will bring traffic, crowding, construction disruption. Sharon Park in particular is home to all kinds of migrating birds and other creatures and would be badly impacted by any loss of acreage or disruption of the natural environment. There are better places to put new housing where park land would not be minimized.

Agenda item L5

John Ryan, resident

As others have commented, our parks and open spaces are a common and greatly needed resource, particularly for children and for those spending much of the day at home. Public open spaces, once given up to development, are gone forever. The residents of the City understand this and cherish their parks. They should have a say in whether public parks are sacrificed to development when other options have not been exhausted. Trust the citizens to do the right thing, and please support this proposal.

Agenda item L5

Wayne Michelsen, resident

As population and housing density grows on the SF peninsula, we need **more** open park space, **not less**. Residents, both existing and new, need open space for recreation, relaxation, and reflection. This has been evident as our parks have been discovered and visited in record numbers during the covid shut-down. If some park land appears to be underutilized, it is because that space lacks access or amenities, not lack of demand. Instead of reducing the size of any of our Parks, we should be expanding or enhancing the park atmosphere and services they provide.

There has been, and will continue to be, a never ending call to consume open space and develop on every available inch. Once gone, it is gone forever. We are already in a severe open space deficit, and cannot afford to lose any more. We must preserve what little remains.

If opposition to the park preservation proposal is because of housing demand, lets be clear. We all suffer from the associated impacts. But, consuming park space is an unwise option to address it. Additional housing is much better incentivized in other ways. Proposals to rezone commercial areas for multi-use residential-over-commercial and/or higher-density condo/apartment sites seem promising. New and visiting residents will appreciate **preserved or expanded** parks, rather than reduced.

Agenda item L5

David Greoig, resident

I strongly back this effort for an ordinance and ballot measure to preserve our park land. I hope this is given full consideration and allows the citizens of Menlo Park to decide issues about our parks. Our parks are a big part of what makes Menlo Park Menlo Park. Let's keep them the way they are and look harder for other alternatives.

Agenda item L5
Patricia Kepler, resident

To the Menlo Park City Council:

As a 60-year resident of Menlo Park, I strongly support the measure introduced by Councilman Ray Mueller to preserve our parks.

Menlo Park is a lovely city, but it does not have an abundance of open space or parkland. One need only look at the new housing constructed along El Camino and elsewhere to know that our future holds more density. It is vital that we take measures to preserve the parks and open spaces that we already have.

There is a great human need for places that are natural and peaceful, where one can get away from the busy world, if only for a short time. There is also a need for places where families can gather to picnic, to let children play and run freely. This is the primary purpose of parks in a community.

Please see that our parks are permanently preserved, not just for those of us here today but for those who will be residents here in the years to come. Too often when things are lost, they can never be regained.

Patricia Kepler

Agenda item L5

Robert Vernstrom, resident

Public park land is very limited in Menlo Park. Available open space will become even more critical as the Council adds additional multi-family housing across the city. Residents of this new housing will need more, not less public park space. Using land zoned for commercial development is a more rational approach than to give away already limited park space that cannot easily be replaced. You can add a story to a commercial building, but not to a public park. Please allow a ballot measure to let the people of Menlo Park advise on this issue. Acting against the popular is surely not your intent.

Agenda item L5 Jennifer Johnson, resident

Dear City Council Members,

I am a former Parks & Recreation Commissioner and greatly value our parks and open spaces. I worked diligently for years with the Commission to ensure that our parks are safe, accessible, and inclusive. I would never want to lose any of our park land or open spaces as they are incredibly vital to our health as a community. However, I Do Not support this ordinance or ballot measure for a number of reasons.

First, we have a representative democracy from the Federal down to the City level. We elect people who we believe will serve well and support our values. They study the issues, receive input from multiple sources, and then make decisions. This measure would allow our elected representatives to avoid the responsibility for making these, sometimes very difficult and contentious, decisions. These kinds of ballot measures can also be heavily influenced by those who are able to spend lots of money. These decisions should not be made on the basis of who can outspend the other. And, while I don't want Menlo Park to re-zone parks or open spaces if there other options, there may arise circumstances in which, during an emergency or for a certain time period, that City Council may need to make a quick, difficult decision. In those circumstances, waiting for an election may not be possible.

Second, who will pay for the proposed ballot measure and - if it is successful - subsequent local referendums? It is estimated that it will cost the City \$35,000-40,000 and an unknown, but likely large, amount of staff time. Will all these costs be borne by the tax payers of Menlo Park? Will those with the means to pay for these measures, and the associated polling, advertising and phone banking, gain even more control over their fellow citizen's lives? There is already tremendous inequity in our city.

Finally, I am concerned about the timing and motivations behind this measure. I was a Parks and Recreation Commissioner for 5 years and at no time was it suggested that there was a need for something like this. However, immediately after it was suggested that low-income housing be built in undeveloped park land in Sharon Park, obstacles to rezoning this land became an immediate priority. Apparently, a small number of city residents have had an opportunity to discuss this measure during a community meeting with their council member. Surely voters from the rest of Menlo Park deserve the same opportunity with their council members. Putting something on the ballot deserves at least as much community outreach as putting a bathroom in a local park.

We have elected representatives who are tasked with these decisions. Our remedy if we do not agree is to elect someone else the next time. We also have a legal and moral obligation to ensure that all people in Menlo Park are represented, valued, and heard, no matter where they live.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer Johnson

Agenda item L5 Gordon Wong, resident

Council Members, Friends, and Neighbors,

I have already written in change.org and want to write in more detail here. Please note that there are nearly 1200 signatures on change.org so this is a passionate matter for many people. see <https://chnng.it/zfdpMPMmsG>

While I recognize the need for more housing in Menlo park, destroying limited parks, a nonrenewable resource, to achieve this is an unacceptable solution to me. Councilman Mueller has alternative suggestions for you to consider.

Per the City Master Plan Update of Oct 15, 2019, there are only 54.2 acres of parkland in Menlo Park relative to a total of ~6,400 acres total, so only 0.8% of our total acreage. Further the master plan discusses "the need for new, expanded or renovated parks, open spaces and facilities; improving and maintaining the existing assets; and acquiring or obtaining access to additional properties for future park and recreation uses."

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Also, from the Menlo Park General Plan:

I quote from Brian Kissel's letter to you

"Nine Guiding Principles formed the basis of the latest update to the City of Menlo Park General Plan. The Guiding Principles describe the kind of place that community members want Menlo Park to be. The goals, policies and programs of the Open Space/Conservation, Noise and Safety Elements, adopted in May 2013, were carefully analyzed to ensure consistency with the Guiding Principles.

One of those principles' addresses "Accessible Open Space and Recreation," stating that "Menlo Park provides safe and convenient access to an ample amount of local and regional parks and a range of public open space types." Further to "provide open space lands for a variety of recreation opportunities, make improvements, construct facilities and maintain programs that incorporate sustainable practices that promote healthy living and quality of life."

Removal of these parks will destroy the value of Menlo Park as a city compared with other cities. The city's beauty is the reason why people want to be here.

Agenda item L5

Jennifer Pien, resident

There is already limited park space and destroying that for housing is not the way. Mueller has alt suggestions and they make more sense

While I recognize the need for more housing in Menlo park, destroying limited parks, a nonrenewable resource, to achieve this is an unacceptable solution to me. Councilman Mueller has alternative suggestions for you to consider.

I quote from Kisslers letter

"Per the City Master Plan Update of Oct 15, 2019, there are only 54.2 acres of parkland in Menlo Park relative to a total of ~6,400 acres total, so only 0.8% of our total acreage. Further the master plan discusses "the need for new, expanded or renovated parks, open spaces and facilities; improving and maintaining the existing assets; and acquiring or obtaining access to additional properties for future park and recreation uses."

Menlo Park is a very dense community with 1,883 residents per square mile compared to San Mateo County that has 998 residents per square mile (nearly twice the density). The percent of children under 14 (22%), is higher than the County (15%) or the State (20%). Menlo Park already has a higher percentage of high density multi-family housing (35%) than the county (33%) or the state (31%). With the state mandate for more housing, the density in Menlo Park will only increase. With this increased density, the need for parkland and open space becomes even more important for our community, especially for those living in high density housing with limited yard and open space."

Agenda item L5

Todd Maibach, resident

Every night when I take my evening walk, I walk past Sharon Park and the open space park on Valparaiso Hill. They are beautiful spaces where people can go to enjoy the natural world and see hawks, egrets, herons and other wild life. I strongly support the measure to preserve our local parks. If we allow them to be subdivided for building new apartments, there is no going back. Thirty years from now, the next generation could be living in ever more crowded conditions, in small apartments and condominiums, with no backyards and also no parks. Please preserve the existing parks. New housing can be built elsewhere, close to the 101 freeway and close to the offices of Facebook.

Agenda item L5 Shirley Wang, resident

Council Members, Friends, and Neighbors,

I have already written in change.org and want to write in more detail here. Please note that there are nearly 1200 signatures on change.org so this is a passionate matter for many people. see <https://chnng.it/zfdpMPMmsG>

While I recognize the need for more housing in Menlo park, destroying limited parks, a nonrenewable resource, to achieve this is an unacceptable solution to me. Councilman Mueller has alternative suggestions for you to consider.

Per the City Master Plan Update of Oct 15, 2019, there are only 54.2 acres of parkland in Menlo Park relative to a total of ~6,400 acres total, so only 0.8% of our total acreage. Further the master plan discusses "the need for new, expanded or renovated parks, open spaces and facilities; improving and maintaining the existing assets; and acquiring or obtaining access to additional properties for future park and recreation uses."

Menlo Park is a very dense community with 1,883 residents per square mile compared to San Mateo County that has 998 residents per square mile (nearly twice the density). The percent of children under 14 (22%), is higher than the County (15%) or the State (20%). Menlo Park already has a higher percentage of high-density multi-family housing (35%) than the county (33%) or the state (31%). With the state mandate for more housing, the density in Menlo Park will only increase. With this increased density, the need for parkland and open space becomes even more important for our community, especially for those living in high density housing with limited yard and open space.

Also, from the Menlo Park General Plan:

I quote from Brian Kissel's letter to you

"Nine Guiding Principles formed the basis of the latest update to the City of Menlo Park General Plan. The Guiding Principles describe the kind of place that community members want Menlo Park to be. The goals, policies and programs of the Open Space/Conservation, Noise and Safety Elements, adopted in May 2013, were carefully analyzed to ensure consistency with the Guiding Principles.

One of those principles' addresses "Accessible Open Space and Recreation," stating that "Menlo Park provides safe and convenient access to an ample amount of local and regional parks and a range of public open space types." Further to "provide open space lands for a variety of recreation opportunities, make improvements, construct facilities and maintain programs that incorporate sustainable practices that promote healthy living and quality of life."

Removal of these parks will destroy the value of Menlo Park as a city compared with other cities. The city's beauty is the reason why people want to be here.

Agenda item L5 Josie Wong, resident

My name is Josie and I am 12. There are not really good parks to play in the local area that is safe distance for me to walk to and I grew up enjoying the ducks and fish and my memories are there. I don't like other cities bc sharon park is so beautiful but I do know that palo alto has more parks per resident than we do in menlo park so the cannot take away the parks to build more houses. Dad says Councilman Mueller has other solutionso and we must do that instead

Agenda item L5

Eleanor Wong, resident

My name is Ellie and I am in 6th grade I walk my dog Maggie in the park most days. My sister and I are writing a joint letter. There are not really good parks to play in the local area that is a safe distance for me to walk to and I grew up enjoying the ducks and fish and my memories are there. I don't like other cities because Sharon Park is so beautiful but I do know that Palo Alto has more parks per resident than we do in Menlo Park so they cannot take away the parks to build more houses. Dad says Councilman Mueller has other solutions and we must do that instead.

Agenda item L5 Marnie Foody, resident

Council Members, Friends, and Neighbors,

Menlo Park residents understand and support the need for more housing, but there are much better options than taking our precious limited parkland and open spaces, which Councilman Mueller has already recommended. I support Ray Mueller's proposal.

Our parks are precious and help us build community. If these are developed, we will never be able to get these precious resources back. Housing development should take in places near public transportation lines, near downtown resources, and where infrastructure is already present suggest as water, sewer, electrical.

If anything, we should be finding ways to expand and improve the limited amount of parkland and open space that we have, not taking this precious resource for additional development of any kind. There are much better ways to meet our additional housing needs. Let's explore those options and agree to preserve and protect all our existing parkland. Councilman Mueller has started that discussion, let's support him with the Parkland Preservation Measure and ongoing efforts to identify development opportunities that better serve existing and new members of our community.

Agenda item L5
Diana Hewitt, resident

I support Councilman Ray Mueller's Park Preservation Measure. Please preserve our open space! I walk through and enjoy this space 3-4 times per week with my dog (on-leash), and find it very good for the soul. I would hate to lose it.

Agenda item L5

Nikhil Viswanathan, resident

Building housing in Sharon Park is not a good use of our limited green space left in Menlo Park. There are huge parking lots which should be redeveloped instead.

Agenda item L5
Tracie Nelson, resident

Please do not allow any housing to be built in Sharon Park or any of our city parks. We have very little park space and need to protect this land ESPECIALLY as our housing areas become more dense and residents need outdoor spaces to visit. So many people in our community use this space to unwind, gather with family and friends, and to recreate. If we've learned anything from the last year and a half of the pandemic, we have learned how valuable these open spaces are to our well-being.

Agenda item L5

Linda Lee, resident

PLEASE PRESERVE OUR PARKS IN MENLO PARK!!!

We need them for our mental health and well being for adults just as much as for our children. We all need park spaces to enjoy being outdoors and to breath fresh air now more than ever as COVID pandemic continue to persist and is most infectious inside enclosed spaces. Everyone needs park spaces for so many reasons.

WE MUST PRESERVE OUR PARKS.

Agenda item L5
Sadler Nelson, resident

Today I visited a neighboring peninsula city for my daughter's soccer game and was impressed with how much park land it had compared to Menlo Park. That is not to say I am not impressed with the parks of Menlo Park - it is just to say, we can't afford to lose any. I would take this same daughter around when she was younger to explore each park of Menlo Park on a Saturday morning (our own "Tour de Menlo") and it was great family time. We need to preserve these precious jewels of our community. Please preserve what we have. Please preserve Sharon Park - all of it, including the ramble of nature that exists. Please take action for us as residents today but also our children in the future.

Agenda item L5
Doug Lee, resident

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WE MUST PASS A MENLO PARK LAW TO PRESERVE OUR PARKS. OUR LIVES DEPEND ON IT.

Agenda item L5
Naomi Lee, resident

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WE MUST PASS A MENLO PARK LAW TO PRESERVE OUR PARKS. OUR LIVES DEPEND ON IT.

Agenda item L5
Jackson Lee, resident

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WE MUST PASS A MENLO PARK LAW TO PRESERVE OUR PARKS. OUR LIVES DEPEND ON IT.

Agenda item L5
Edie Goldberg, resident

The last 1.5 years have been hard on many. Many residents were confined to their homes or apartments for long periods of time. Our parks, across the city, have never been so well used. As a psychologist, I can attest to the importance of parks and open spaces to provide a mental health boost to not only our city residents, but from others in both San Mateo and Santa Clara County. As we look to expand the density of housing in Menlo Park, we would be short sighted to consider using park land as a potential opportunity for a new housing location. We need more parks, not fewer.

The name of our town is Menlo PARK... we should be doing everything in our power to preserve and enhance our existing park land. I support Councilman Mueller's Park Preservation Ordinance and I think all the citizens in Menlo Park should have a say in this matter.

Agenda item L5
Linda Mikula, resident

I am writing today to voice support for Councilman Ray Mueller's Park Preservation Measure. Our very fine, family-friendly city's Master Plan discusses the importance of protecting and investing in our parkland and open spaces. Currently, our parkland represents less than 1 percent of Menlo Park's 6,400 acres.

Please let's work together to keep the parks in Menlo Park!

Sincerely,
Linda Mikula
Homeowner and 23-year Menlo Park Resident

Agenda item L5
Lizzie Bradley, resident

I am a Menlo Park resident and believe that its in our best collective interest to preserve our parks. I do understand and agree that we continue to need to provide additional housing for more people in ALL Menlo Park districts. This will undoubtedly be achieved through more housing density and less personal outdoor space (i.e yards). For this reason, it will become be even more important to ensure that park lands are protected and available - so that there is enough park space for the growth in our population.

Creating a preservation status for parks in Menlo Park is a great way to ensure that parks do not get reduced inadvertently by the City Counsel. I do not believe that council members should be able to decide to build on or reduce land designated as park space without a vote of the people of Menlo Park. This is such an important topic that it needs to be determined by a vote.

Agenda item L5 Kimberly Birn, resident

Council Members,

Our parks are one of our city's greatest assets. They provide a place for peace, exercise, community, and connection with nature. As our population and housing grows, we will require all that our parks offer us even more and simply cannot afford to lose a foot of park space to development. Everyday, I walk my dog around Sharon Park, my 90 year old mother comes to walk and sit at the park, my children have grown up enjoying it's playground, pond, trails, grassy fields and idyllic views of the hills, trees and fog rolling in. It is not only an escape for Menlo Park residents, including those who live in the numerous Sharon Heights apartment complexes and other MP complexes, but for the many visitors from other communities and towns who come daily to enjoy it. Our other parks are equally precious, from Burgess to Nealon to Jack Lyle to Kelly to Flood, they offer a respite that all of us crave and need, as close to our homes as possible to meet the needs of the young and the old, and to build local community as well.

There are other developed places to build the additional housing we need, if we consider building up existing apartment complexes and office/business structures to including housing above them (ie. the apartments on Sharon Park Drive near Sand Hill Road, the Sharon Heights Shopping Center, downtown parking lots and above businesses, ECR). Please consider supporting Councilman Mueller's Park Preservation Measure so that the great good can be served, with preserved park space for our growing population and wise use of expanded building in developed but underutilized locations with ready access to public transportation.

Thank you for preserving our parks and our communities so that Menlo Park continues to be a place we all treasure.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Birn

Agenda item L5
MaryAnn Saunders

I would like Ray Mueller's resolution about not using city parks for housing approved.

Agenda item L5 Joan DeVenne

I love coming to Sharon Park for a daily walk to enjoy the beauty of the surrounding hills, the peace of the park, and the feeling of being lost in nature. There are very few places in Menlo Park, Palo Alto or Redwood City where you can do this. I live in an apartment complex and enjoy the escape to this park. So as someone who has lived ninety years and seen so many changes, I just want to ask you to please protect our wonderful parks! We have so few of them and we need them now and for future generations.

Agenda item L5
Jerry Birn, resident

Dear Council Members,

With parklands representing less than 1% of our Menlo Park acreage (per the City Master Plan, Oct 2019), we cannot afford to give up land at our parks for development. Our city has higher multi-family density housing than the county or the state, and continued plans and needs for building more housing will increase this. For that reason, park space will be even more important for our expanding population. Please help us to preserve our parks which benefits all our residents by supporting Councilman Ray Mueller's measure to protect our parks. He has proposed viable locations for further housing development which will meet our growing housing needs while still preserving our irreplaceable parks.

Sincerely,
Jerry Birn

Agenda item L5

Mark Reinstra, resident

Throughout our history, we have seen the erosion of public spaces and community gathering places. This is an opportunity to make sure that Menlo Park retains the things that make it special. Kids playing and exploring is a critical need for their development and we need to be guardians of future generations. If we don't protect the parklands, our children and our children's children will have no place to socialize. Please think of the best for our community over the next decades. Let's increase density where we already have it and allow our open spaces to continue to be an oasis of calm and play.

Agenda item L5
Susan Reinstra, resident

Sharon Heights is surrounded by busy streets, and Sharon Park, including the eucalyptus grove, is the only park or open space available to the many children in Sharon Heights without crossing a busy street. It is critical to preserve open space for children in our neighborhood.

Agenda item L5
Brennan Birn, resident

Having grown up in Menlo Park, I have been lucky enough to enjoy our parks, from the playgrounds to the sports fields, and I have loved riding bikes, walking trails, and enjoying picnics, views and grassy fields there. Our parks are one of the best things about Menlo Park. Yes, they put the "park" in our town's name. As a college student, someday I hope to return to here afterwards. So yes, I am interested in affordable housing. However, I would never want it at the expense of our parks. Please, let's preserve our parks, support Councilman Ray Mueller's measure, and come up with other locations to build affordable housing, including at existing developed sites that can be rebuilt and expanded to meet these needs.

Thank you,
Brennan Birn

Agenda item L5
Alex Liston, resident

Access to parkland and open space is an essential aspect of living in Menlo Park. It should be the Council's goal to improve, protect, and expand our residents' experiences with nature rather than to destroy them.

Agenda item L5
Thomas Smith, resident

I'm writing because I'm incredibly concerned that Sharon Park and Burgess Park have been mentioned as possible building sites for affordable housing.

My family lives in Sharon Heights and uses both Sharon Park and Burgess Park on a weekly basis and absolutely loves these two parks. Sharon Park is the only park with a flat open space within walking distance of our home and so to lose that open area to housing would be devastating for our family. Additionally, we regularly use Burgess Park for many other outdoor activities and so losing that park to housing would also be a great loss to our family.

Please preserve all parkland in our city. Our family and our neighbors need open space and play/exercise areas that are open to all members of the community. We should be finding ways to expand the very limited amount of parkland in Menlo Park and, in particular, Sharon Heights, not taking away parkland. Re-zoning the Sharon Heights Shopping Center to allow low-income and affordable housing, retail and services is a much better option for all and one that I would support.

Agenda item L5
Jeffrey Fenton, resident

To the City Council: I strongly support Councilmember Mueller's proposed ordinance to preserve City park land. Parks are critical to mental and physical health. As Menlo Park's population increases, the need for parks and recreation increases as well. Parks also help mitigate the "heat island" effect from climate change. There are other more workable solutions to address housing needs at suitable sites throughout the City while preserving our parks as an endowment for current and future generations. I urge you to adopt this proposed ordinance. Thank you, Jeffrey Fenton, Menlo Park resident.

Agenda item L5
Anonymous, resident

It has been brought to my attention that Sharon Park and Burgess Park have been suggested as locations to build affordable housing. I believe in and strongly support affordable housing (in the true sense of the words).

However I also know that parks and green spaces are extremely important, for the health of our environment, and our physical and mental health. We all benefit from these areas of space to live, play and breathe in. Please preserve the open spaces and parks in our area for us now and for future generations.

There are many unused or underused buildings, stores and parking lots in our area. Please develop plans to use some of those for housing instead.

Agenda item L5

Laura Garcia-Manrique, resident

Menlo Park must provide for additional housing and must protect existing parkland. These are not conflicting goals. In fact protecting existing parkland is even more critical when population becomes denser. Once our parks are gone, they are gone forever. I am in support of Ray's proposal to rezone existing areas to allow for more units to be built and to protect existing parkland from further development.

Agenda item L5

Jacqueline Wender, resident

Dear Councilmembers:

I strongly support Councilmember Ray Mueller's proposed ordinance to preserve park land in Menlo Park.

I understand the City's requirements in the Housing Element, including the requirements around diversifying housing locations as well as affordability. But the City should not meet this requirement by removing, in all likelihood permanently, the precious parks and open spaces that are such a critical piece of everyone's quality of life. Indeed, with increasing city density I would argue that the City has an obligation to increase the availability of land for passive and active recreation.

In Mr. Mueller's email accompanying the Council agenda, he refers to the possible upzoning of the Sharon Heights Shopping Center to a mixed-use development of housing – including affordable, low-income housing – retail, and services. I would strongly support that rezoning and that new development.

Please do not succumb to the false notion that NIMBYism is at play in the pleas to preserve our parks, including Sharon Park. It is not. Rather, we urge you to heed the voices of the residents and find ways to meet the housing demand AND preserve the parks and open spaces that are so vital to all members of our community.

As Joni Mitchell so aptly put it: "Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone. They paved paradise, and put up a parking lot."

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Jacqueline Wender

Agenda item L5

Nicole Ramirez

Keep your hands off of our parks!!! I am vehemently opposed to this measure. As a long time resident of Menlo Park (40+ years), I have seen this area change and local gems disappear in place of apartment buildings, only adding to the congestion in areas such as downtown Menlo Park. Sharon Park is a much needed green space in Sharon Heights as there are many apartments nearby that need an open space for families to relax and enjoy. Developing the land at that park (and other parks in the city for that matter) would be an absolute travesty. Please pass Ray Mueller's measure as the community stands behind him. He is the only one with a sound mind not in it for the money.

Agenda item L5
Anonymous

Please keep the parks for the use by children and elderly.

Agenda item L5
Dan Myers, resident

Parks are an invaluable asset that should exist in perpetuity.

They are not land banks to be drawn on when we decide they are necessary for de novo development.

Re-development is a logical solution.

Look no further than what people are doing to the private housing stock in Menlo Park.

Hundreds of homes have been renewed through rebuilding and/or adding to existing structures.

The city should do the same.

Agenda item L5

Lynette Viswanathan, resident

MP residents strongly support additional housing in the neighborhood but taking our very limited parkland and open space is not the best approach. The open space that Karen refers to should be developed as part of the park plans for future generations of not only the existing residents but addtl housing that is being proposed. Sharon Park is currently being used by residents across MP and their families. There are photo shoots, open air classes, pre school nature hikes, weddings and seniors walking all day. Leave the parks alone and find other sustainable areas close to transportation, groceries and shopping. The last thing we need is more cars, additional buses and increased density. It one of the rare open spots that allows you to breathe fresh air, enjoy nature and hear the birds at their best. Develop shopping areas like the Safeway parking lot that is closer to the freeway and easier to build around. Allow development of more vertical spaces around the apartment complexes. Our downtown is an eyesore, dealing with SB 9 and 10 is anybody's guess and now we are dealing with losing part of the only park we have. Please consider supporting Councilman Ray because it is the right thing to do for all our current and future residents.

Agenda item L5
John Carter, resident

We need to keep the Parks in Menlo Park.

For a city that has so much pride in its trees, why would we want to remove trees and parkland only to replace that precious resource with housing. I clearly support more low and middle income housing, but it is a false choice to choose between housing and parks.

We should look more carefully into better sites than parks & concentrate housing near transportation hubs (Caltrans).

Agenda item L5

Sridhar Viswanathan, resident

I believe Menlo Park residents understand and are supportive of having more housing, what they are appropriately objecting to is the conversion of our precious limited parkland and open spaces as the solution proposed by some for additional housing.

As we increase housing in MP and become denser as a community it becomes even more important to maintain the existing parks and limited open spaces we have for a growing community, and preferably find ways to further expand availability of parks and open spaces. Substantial housing can be added without the conversion of our parks and associated open spaces as outlined below.

My rationale for choice of spaces to add housing is underscored by easy access to transportation and proximity to stores/shopping. This maximizes convenience for work and personal activities and minimizes the likelihood the worsening the traffic situation. The conversion of as many parking spaces in downtown MP as possible with multistory buildings with parking on bottom 2 levels has the potential to contribute meaningfully to our objectives of increasing housing (and has been proposed by several MP residents). Other potential spaces that allow for additional substantial housing (using the concept above) could include the Sharon Heights shopping center.

Agenda item L5 James McCann, resident

While housing is important, parks are central to our neighborhoods and to our identity. Housing opportunities have been identified at better locations more central to transit and services and those opportunities will continue to present themselves in urban redevelopment. Our already limited parks should be preserved for the majority of voters and residents who use them and chose to purchase their homes near them.

Agenda item L5

Daniel Stallsmith, resident

Hi there. My family and I live a few blocks from Sharon Park and it is such a respite and harbor of tranquility amongst a very crowded Menlo Park. We were saddened to hear that the Park might be removed. We hope that there is some way to better utilize existing commercial areas like Sharon Park Plaza for additional building, rather than removing one of the few open/natural spaces in Menlo Park.

Agenda item L5

Diane Brandt, resident

Menlo Park City Council Members,

I urge the city council to adopt Council member Ray Mueller's proposed Park Preservation Ordinance and place a measure on the ballot that would require a vote of Menlo Park residents to re-zone park land.

I support alternate sites for housing, such as redevelopment of Sharon Heights Shopping Center to a mixed-use site that could include low-income and affordable housing.

Our green space is already in high demand and will become more so as additional housing units are added in the coming years. We need trees to clear our air from smoke and we need open space for our physical and mental well-being.

Please support the public health of current and future generations of Menlo Park residents.

Agenda item L5
Priya Bhusri, resident

Dear City Council members,

I have lived in Menlo Park for over 20 years--first in the Willows, then Sharon Heights and now as a home owner in Central West Menlo. What drew me here over 20 years ago was the open green space, great schools and wonderful community. Please preserve our parks. We all recognize the need to create public housing in our city but I think many of us agree that taking land from our precious open green space is not the answer. There are plenty of other areas that can be developed that will satisfy both our current Menlo Park residents and that will make better sense for our future fellow residents who will inhabit our great city.

Thank you for your service to our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Agenda item L5
Tim Johnston, resident

Commenting as President of the Menlo Park Historical Association, we applaud Mayor Combs and City Council-member Mueller for their efforts to preserve the parks of Menlo Park. We view the parks as an integral part of the fabric of the city's rich history and legacy.

But we encourage the council to equally commit time and energy (and a sense of urgency) to the creation of a Historic Preservation ordinance that protects and preserves what remains of this town's historic landmarks and buildings - a topic that has been presented for consideration, either formally or informally, many times over the years and has yet to gain any traction.

Thank you.

Parks Preservation Ordinance and Ballot Measure Proposal



Presented By:
Council Member Ray Mueller

Menlo Park City Council Meeting

September 21, 2021



September 10, 2012

9/12/12
City Attorney Opinion
California State Law

MEMORANDUM

TO: Housing Element Steering Committee
FROM: City Attorney
RE: Converting Parkland to Affordable Housing

California Government Code sections 38440 through 38462 set forth the procedure by which a city may dispose of land owned by the city in fee and dedicated by the city as parkland. [By designating land as parkland in a city's general plan and on various city maps and by operating the land as a park for an extended number of years, land would be considered "dedicated" by the city as parkland, and subject to the provisions of sections 38440-38462.] Except for an exchange of land for a minor portion of a park that effectively results in no loss of parkland, generally a city may only dispose of dedicated parkland by going through a public hearing process regarding the closure and abandonment of the park and by holding a special election to determine whether or not to sell or dispose of the parkland. Sections 38443 through 38450 outline the specific requirements and procedures for the notice, public hearing, and vote required by section 38441 to dispose of dedicated parkland.

There is a second procedure that would allow the City to use land dedicated as parkland for "other municipal purposes." (Cal. Govt. Code § 37111.1.) Unless the affordable housing was developed by the city, it does not appear that affordable housing is a "municipal purpose" as contemplated in this section. Under the terms of this section, in order to convert dedicated parkland to a different municipal purpose, the city must have acquired an equal or greater amount of land in the last three years that has been dedicated and developed as parkland, and the proposed use of the parkland to be converted must comply with the city's general plan.

- At the Housing Commission meeting August 4, 2021, comments from Chair Grove identified Sharon Park for consideration for development in our current Housing Element. In that meeting she called on City Council and Planning Commission to consider this proposal.
- Sharon Heights Homeowners Association Meeting, August 30th. At that meeting the prior City Attorney opinion was raised. Concern was expressed the City may pursue using one of the exceptions in the Government Code to move forward with developing within City parks.
- Residents shared their concern that Sharon Heights has many residents living various types of multi-family housing who use Sharon Park, and the need will only increase as density continues to increase. The park is 3 miles from Burgess Park.



- The concern that parks may be threatened by the same Govt. Code exceptions was expressed for every park in the City.
- At the meeting I asked residents to allow me to first take this issue to the City Council before the residents pursued a ballot measure on their own.
- In response to Chair Grove's call for consideration, and in light of resident feedback, on August 31st, I emailed the Mayor, requesting this issue be agendized. The intent before you tonight is to close the exceptions in the Government Code, and to always require a public vote, without exception, when proposing the conversion of parkland for a non Park and Recreation use in the City of Menlo Park.



Instruct the City Attorney to draft a Parks Preservation Ordinance for consideration:

- a. identifying all “dedicated parks” in Menlo Park
- b. requiring a majority vote of public should the City seek to use parkland for “other municipal purposes” not related to park and recreation uses, under Cal. Govt. Code § 37111.1.
- c. requiring a majority vote of the public should the city seek to convey a minor portion of parkland in exchange for parkland located contiguous to the current park, pursuant to Cal. Govt. Code § 38411



Instruct the City Attorney to draft an accompanying Parks Preservation Ballot Measure for consideration to be put on the next San Mateo County election ballot:

- a. the Park Preservation Ballot Measure would include all of the elements requiring a majority public vote included in the Park Preservation Ordinance.
- b. If adopted, the Park Preservation Ballot Measure would preclude this City Council, and future City Councils rescinding the ordinance at a later date. Rather a vote of the public would be required to rescind the park protections set forth in the measure.



- Since emailing the Mayor, over the last two weeks, concerned residents have gathered close to 1700 signatures from residents all over Menlo Park and in neighboring communities on a Change.org petition. Residents have also canvassed neighborhoods and worked the farmers market. The overwhelming response of the community has been that we must not develop in City parks. Additionally the nonprofit group Green Foothills sent a letter supporting that development not occur in our City parks.
- Still, just four days ago on September 17th, Chair Grove was published in an Almanac editorial again advocating that Sharon Park be considered for housing in the City's Housing Element.



- In a positive development for residents advocating against developing in City parks, today Chair Grove emailed this Council that she has now dropped the issue of pursuing housing in City parks. Emails received from Greenbelt Alliance that Ms. Grove was cc-ed on and also from the non-profit advocacy group Menlo Together have indicated that as development in parks is now a non-issue, the City should not spend time passing an ordinance nor pursuing a ballot measure. Chair. Grove states now, “Our parks our protected.”
- Respectfully, the residents who I have worked with on this issue, as well as I, believe our City parks are not adequately protected as any other party could still seek to exercise the Govt Code exceptions in the future, without a vote of the public.



We are requesting the City Council instruct the City Attorney to draft for consideration at a future meeting, a Parks Preservation Ordinance:

- a. identifying all “dedicated parks” in Menlo Park
- b. requiring a majority vote of public should the city seek to use parkland for “other municipal purposes” not related to park and recreation uses, under Cal. Govt. Code § 37111.1.
- c. requiring a majority vote of the public should the city seek to convey a minor portion of parkland in exchange for parkland located contiguous to the current park, pursuant to Cal. Govt. Code § 38411



Instruct the City Attorney to draft for consideration at a future meeting, an accompanying Parks Preservation Ballot Measure to be put on the next San Mateo County election ballot:

- a. the Parks Preservation Ballot Measure would include all of the elements requiring a majority public vote included in the Park Preservation Ordinance.
 - b. If adopted, the Parks Preservation Ballot Measure would preclude this City Council, and future City Councils rescinding the ordinance at a later date. Rather a vote of the public would be required to rescind the park protections set forth in the measure.
- Thank you for your consideration



Agenda item M2

Maria Amundson, resident

Dear Menlo Park City Council and Staff,

On behalf of the many neighbors and neighborhoods in support of a visionary and historic citywide, four-crossing rail Quiet Zone, I want to express our collective delight that the exploration of this is among the city priorities for Menlo Park this year.

We are also deeply grateful that the city's plan is to share a draft RFP with the Rail Subcommittee for public comment before it is made final. We truly appreciate your responsiveness and proactive approach to working together with local citizens on this to benefit the health and quality of life of everyone in Menlo Park for years to come.

With best regards,
Maria Amundson