

## Brigitte Shearer

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**From:** Paul Sheng  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 15, 2022 11:57 AM  
**To:** P&R Comm; info@belmontprosplan.com  
**Cc:** City Council  
**Subject:** Comments on Parks element of PROS plan

Dear Parks & Recreation Commission:

I thought the format for discussing the various parks at the 1/12/22 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting worked out very well, and the meeting was very collaborative, creative, positive, supportive, and productive. I know that emailed comments about parks are being tallied in the PROS plan, so rather than sending a separate email about each park, I will submit all of my input in this one email by highlighting the park name in bold, and ask that Gates & Associates tally these comments separately for each park.

**Patricia Wharton Park** – I think the draft improvements are great, and I think That Comr. Foehr’s idea of putting in boulders for small kids to climb on is an excellent idea.

**Wakefield Park** – same as above, a walking path would be great. Again, excellent idea by Comr. Foehr for an observation deck for visitors to take in the view. In looking at Wakefield Park on Google Maps, it has a large barren area. Maybe that would be a place to consider a neighborhood pump track.

**Belameda Park** – all the draft improvements look great, and the proposal for a teen outdoor experience is a fantastic idea – our teen population is underserved and there’s not much for teens to do after school. Many end up aimlessly hanging out at Carlmont Shopping Center. A teen outdoor zone at Belameda is very close to Carlmont High and would be an absolutely perfect location for that amenity.

**Hidden Canyon Park** - I agree wholeheartedly with Comr. Michael’s comments at the prior meeting, and they’re worth quoting here:

“I also believe a big part of this connection with the community does happen through Hidden Canyon. I think we should have an open space outpost here, offering a natural transition from city to park to open space. We should run staff programs here. Let little kids sample nature here. Offer wildlife education. Invite everyone to learn, respect, and help out. There’s a ton we can do to enhance our open space while not turning the site into a manufactured, high-volume destination. In a smaller way, I think we should replicate this at all our major trailheads.”

I want to make a couple of points in response to public comments made by Deniz Bolbol, Pat Cuvielo, and Kristen Mercer, who were aggressively railing against any improvement to Hidden Canyon Park. They stated that Hidden Canyon is classified as a Neighborhood Park in the Master Plan, which is defined as “A medium-sized park ranging from 2 to 10 acres that provides basic recreational activities for a specific neighborhood within a one-mile radius.” That is correct.

But they went on to argue that because 10 or so Hidden Canyon tract homeowners essentially said “not in my backyard” to any improvement at the Hidden Canyon Focus Group meeting, no

improvement should happen there. They also seemed to argue that the Master Plan legally requires Hidden Canyon to only serve the interests of those homeowners. Not so.

First, as the Commission correctly pointed out, Neighborhood Parks are a *classification* in the Master Plan, not a restriction or mandate on how parks can and should be improved to serve the community.

Second, consider what is actually within a one-mile radius of Hidden Canyon Park: Go to <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Hidden+Canyon+Park/@37.5034277,-122.300551,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x808f9f62b039d777:0x84c7f24c0202cd4d!8m2!3d37.5034277!4d-122.2987105?hl=en> and right-click your mouse pointer on the red marker for Hidden Canyon Park. A dialog box will come up. Click on the last item "Measure distance." Zoom out a bit, and then left-click your mouse on Casa Bona Avenue at Semeria Park. A line will appear, drawing a 1-mile radius to that point from the center of Hidden Canyon Park. If you left-click and hold the mouse pointer on the circle at the end of that line (the one at Semeria Park), you can rotate the line to see what's within a one-mile radius of Hidden Canyon Park. That one-mile radius encompasses at least a third, if not more, of Belmont's residential areas. It includes, for example:

-all of the homes, condos, and apartments in the Carlmont neighborhood;

-most of the homes in the area behind/between Barrett Community Center and Notre Dame University;

-all of the homes and apartments off Ralston near Charles Armstrong School and off Alameda near Carlmont High School (even past the Belmont border, well into the Devonshire area of San Carlos);

-a large portion of the Cipriani neighborhood surrounding Semeria Park and Cipriani Elementary;

-nearly the entire Belmont Heights neighborhood, from Tahoe/Yosemite Drive, all the residential streets that branch off Hallmark, and well past the San Carlos/Belmont Border at Hallmark and Crestview;

So even if one strictly views Hidden Canyon Park's classification as a "Neighborhood Park" under the Master Plan, then the "neighborhood" it serves -within a one-mile radius – includes portions of nearly every residential neighborhood in the city - and 100% of the Carlmont neighborhood, including all the apartments. (i.e. the highest-density neighborhood in the city.) Thus, under the Master Plan, Hidden Canyon park is intended to provide basic recreational activities for the *thousands of people who live within that radius* – not just the handful of homeowners in the pink townhouses on Carlmont Drive.

Commissioner Michaels' vision for improvements to Hidden Canyon to serve as a natural transition to the open space is entirely consistent with the Master Plan, and the overwhelming majority of people in Belmont would like to see this vision come to fruition in the PROS Plan.

Thank you for considering my comments, and thank you for all of the time, effort, and dedication you put into serving on the Commission.

-Paul Sheng

## Brigitte Shearer

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, January 14, 2022 1:02 PM  
**To:** Brigitte Shearer; P&R Comm  
**Subject:** Staff undermines your transparency - Suggestions

Dear Park and Rec Commissioners:

I have participated and listened to many Park and Recreation meetings discussing the Open Space Master Plan updates including your recent Jan 12 commission meeting. I have also listened to several of Linda Gates powerpoint presentations and I do believe you all are attempting to do your best regarding transparency, encouraging suggestions and comments and I believe in your integrity in navigating this complex and at times, controversial process.

However, I believe all your efforts are being **undermined by your Staff reports**. Many of us don't have the time to comb through every presentation and fact check every Staff report and therefore rely on your Staff to give the public an accurate and comprehensive "executive summary", however, I am finding their reports increasingly **biased and not reflective of all the information and data available**.

For example, the January 12 Staff report on "Summary of Comments on Draft Park Improvements" summarizes email comments but ignores the important verbal comments from your Focus meetings. Community Feedback from the most important stakeholder, the Hidden Valley (HV) residents on Oct. 26, 2021, is omitted. Was there not enough time from Oct 26 to Jan 12 to consolidate all comments regarding HV and summarize in an objective report? How can they leave out the most important comments coming from the community stakeholders that will be forever forced to live with your recommendations and decisions?

HV callers on Oct 26 cited excessive traffic and parking already burdening their neighborhood. Several urged only small incremental additions taking care not to increase use. Many opposed any fencing, dogs, gardens or artificial structures. None supported dogs, bike use, yoga or gathering spaces as the staff report claims in their summary. (Please read the comments for yourself which have been provided below from your youtube recording).

Further, the email comments from HV on the PROS website don't even add up to the Staff stated summary. In reality, comments overwhelmingly oppose development. Over half of email respondents asked to prioritize the natural setting and wildlife, and even those who support amenities qualify that they must fit and complement the natural setting.

Staff summary statements appear to represent biased visitor comments that are totally out of synch with HV actual comments. This leads me to conclude that certain members of your Staff are biased and undermining your transparency and credibility. Your Staff reports should be carefully reviewed prior to publication because that is the one document that the community can easily review among the myriad of documents, presentations and reports that you publish and these summaries should be fact checked and not "cherry picked"; comments should clearly be delineated between local resident and visitor comments and both represented.

Several immediate suggestions to increase your transparency and credibility:

**Suggestion #1** - If you are truly committed to transparency and integrity, your February review of Hidden Valley and Ralston Ranch park recommendation commission meeting should republish the Staff summary report with the Hidden Valley quotes that lists the residential community comments first and separately list below the visitor comments to clearly distinguish the two groups.

**Suggestion #2** - It is now more difficult to find your Belmont Pros Plan on the City website having to navigate four clicks to find it (i.e. Depts, Park and Rec, Parks and Recreation Projects, and Pros Master Plan). Why don't you feature Belmont's most important 15 year "Green and Sustainable" Master Plan on the **home page** where the entire left hand side is totally blank with wasted space (<https://www.belmont.gov>). **Post your February meeting details for Hidden Valley and Ralston Ranch with the corrected Staff summary a week before your February meeting for residents to easily find and review.**

In addition, add the link (<https://belmontprosplan.com/resources>) on the home page which allows residents to easily find all the presentations, advisory meetings and community comments with ease. (Please update your resources page with Linda Gates *latest Nov 3 presentation*) and keep the link up to date.

Respectfully,  
Jennifer Lien

## Public Comments October 26 2021 – Hidden Canyon Focus Group PROS plan

Public comments begin @ 10 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U48PQtG0rE>

1. Patricia: Lived on the street 20 years, came for nature and its already high use and recent increase is exponential. Traffic already an impact on dead end street, already too many cars. Its' already highly used so don't try to add more to it.

2. Christine, Carlmont Drive original owner: This is *already* heavily used. Was aware of planned park but asking remember this is a quiet neighborhood and home – sanctuary away from hustle and bustle. Wants to see area cleaned up but NOT amenities that would encourage lingering in the park with groups and activities. Allow the space to remain quiet - not draw more use and attention. Loves open spaces and nature. Opposes restrooms and outdoor classrooms. Limited access, difficult emergency access.

3. Barbara, Carlmont Dr resident: It's already heavily used; speeding cars all day long and crazy at weekends with cars parked the full length of street. Maintenance and safety are already a problem that need to be addressed before you consider putting anything else there. Adding anything else would increase these burdens.

4. Deniz: I hope city listens to neighbors; these plans include things that will create conflict with wildlife. Bathrooms increase it as destination, draw people from a wider area. Gardening and dog park conflicts with wildlife (fencing, disruption, not natural). Needs to be as naturalistic and low use as possible, not a destination for others from the wider bay area.

5. Speaking from other side of town and should respect neighbors but also listen to whole city. Thinks something can respect the natural environment and not negatively impact residents but serve the whole city. Supports small pump track to complement trail use.

6. Jessie, Carlmont Dr. resident: Agrees with other residents; This is long dead-end road and single access is the bottleneck and in-out doubles the impact. Measure is not the size of the park – it's access. Make any changes incrementally because if you draw too much traffic you can't go back.

7. Homeowners on Carlmont: Enjoy natural beauty, favors open natural nature low key like picnic table or children's feature – nothing fenced or dogs that would change the open nature. Don't fill entire space – only add incrementally to gauge increased impacts.

See Continued...

**Continued,  
Public Comments October 26 2021 – Hidden Canyon Focus Group PROS plan**

8. Shirley, Carlmont Dr. resident: Have you actually measured the traffic? Yes parks are open to all but this is already over capacity. It's not just the *park* size, its overall capacity so you need to consider the balance across different areas – wants to see study done of projected added impacts before.

9. Kielly, Carlmont Drive resident: Agrees with Shirley and Jessie – first evaluate existing evening and weekend traffic and how much can be added. Existing parking inadequate. Keep natural setting, i.e. picnic and children's feature but not fencing or dogs. Already *not* maintained; restroom smells and dogs off leash not enforced; fears more use and lack of enforcement.

10. Pat, Belmont resident: This park is specifically identified in the General Plan to serve a *neighborhood*, even though it is open to all. The notion that an open space is undeveloped simply because there are no human-built structures is wrong. Wildlife uses it heavily and they were not polled in the survey. No fencing, paving or play structures - would conflict with the wildlife that uses and moves through the area. Consider picnic tables but ensure food-trash is secured from wildlife. Opposes restrooms or permanent structures.

11. Think of all Belmont as a park; think about reducing local traffic by making streets more pedestrian/bike friendly to help all parks.

12. Echo Pat– this designated undeveloped because it was intended to be natural space compatible with the natural setting it is in. Humans need to resist the urge to build on every space we have. Dogs and gardening are inconsistent with natural setting. Regardless of safe streets if you're attracting visitors from a wider area they will drive. Should be natural, consistent with undeveloped open space.

13. Space is flat and barren in summer and muddy in winter, needs facelift. Supports restroom, kids play area but with rocks and natural materials, more oak trees maybe some picnic tables. Concerned about classroom use.

14. Cindy, Carlmont resident: First bring current amenities up to standard; disrepair, trail signs, invasive species. Start slowly on current problems before adding.

Closing: Brigitte assured there would be no barbecues or fire pits.

Consultant assured attendees that they would listen and consider resident input. We're trying to provide amenities for the next 15 years. Further comments please email [info@belmontprosplan.com](mailto:info@belmontprosplan.com).

**Brigitte Shearer**

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**From:** Bob Stahl  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 13, 2022 3:48 PM  
**To:** Brigitte Shearer; Kelley Lotosky; P&R Comm  
**Subject:** Pros Plan for Ralston Ranch park area

I am Bob Stahl, an advisory member of the Belmont Prosplan.

I want to let you know I've been receiving multiple emails from residents of the Ralston Ranch area who are against placing a dog park in the planned park area. They cite the limited street parking, narrow road, and increased traffic in the area from people coming from outside the area. They also believe installing a play structure is not in keeping with the naturalness of the area.

Please take this into consideration in your planning.

Thank you.

## Brigitte Shearer

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**From:** Carol Rossi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 11, 2022 6:47 PM  
**To:** P&R Comm  
**Subject:** Ralston Ranch Park development

Dear Park and Rec,

I would like to make sure that the neighborhood thoughts regarding the development of the Ralston Ranch Park are clearly expressed to PROS and the Park and Rec Commission. Based on comments made on the zoom meet, we want to make sure that the park stays as natural as possible to allow for the wildlife to roam through easily to access either side of the canyon around the neighborhood. We also expressed support of making sure this space allows for the local neighborhood, which is defined as a 1 mile radius, to have equitable access to the park. We are in support of having the city develop a sitting area and walking paths through the park, with the additional suggestion of a meditation walking circle. Overall, we aren't opposed to a simple, small play structure, however we highlighted 1. our neighborhood is windy (one of, if not the windiest neighborhoods in Belmont- not conducive to being outside for extended periods of time) and foggy, 2. the play structure should not be placed up against the fence line of the neighbors properties but on the side of Ralston, 3. neighbors being concerned about trash accumulating and being blown around (as it is not maintained at the vista point), 4. bringing extra traffic into the neighborhood with the bend in the street (blind spot when sun is low in the sky at sunrise/sunset) and the 1-way turn around at the Christian exit, that a lot of outsiders use as an exit. Please consider that this property will require a significant amount of grading and that with erosion/water damage over time it will erode the natural drainage for the trees that are currently in the park. **If the city puts in a seating area or a playground away from the residents fence line and closer to ralston avenue, it may need to consider building a retaining wall.** A small playground or sitting area may possibly attract teenagers who might drink and smoke and cause a fire. In addition, the city will need to assess the PG&E line that runs along Ralston and goes to the station (at Christian) on Ralston Ranch Road. The line crosses somewhere from Ralston to Ralston Ranch Road. We do strongly oppose a dog park for many of the reasons stated above. Passive development (walking trails, meditation circle, sitting areas) for the Ralston Ranch Park is supported by this community. We appreciate the PROS committee reaching out to the local residents and hope that our opinions in developing the Ralston Ranch Park will be respected as it moves forward in developing our undeveloped parks in Belmont.

Thank you, Carol Rossi  
76 Ralston Ranch Road



## Brigitte Shearer

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 11, 2022 4:42 PM  
**To:** PROS Committee; P&R Comm  
**Subject:** Hidden Valley Neighborhood Park Defined in General Plan  
**Attachments:** GPsection4ParksOpenSpace2015.pdf

Dear Commissioners and PROS advisory representatives,

Confusion about the designation of *Neighborhood Park* vs. *Community Park*, *Mini Park*, and *Open Space* has created community conflict.

The 2035 General Plan Parks Element, section 4.2 (attached) differentiates between the classes of parks by size and appropriate use, and clearly Hidden Valley is intended as a "Neighborhood Park".

### 4.2 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The City provides its residents with several types of parks and recreation facilities. Parks and recreational facilities are classified as follows:

- **Mini Park.** A small park ranging from a quarter-acre to 2 acres that is located within a residential area and is intended to provide play areas for small children or passive sitting areas for residents within a quarter-mile-radius.
- **Neighborhood Park.** A medium-sized park ranging from **2 to 10 acres** that provides basic recreational activities **for a specific neighborhood within a one-mile radius**.
- **Community Park.** A large park ranging from 20 to 50 acres that includes passive and active recreation facilities that serve the entire city or a substantial portion of the city.

Gates Associates affirmed this principle in Community Meeting #3 (below); neighborhood parks are to serve an area of 1/8 to 1/4 mile ONLY – not the wider community or region.

### Hidden Valley is very clearly a "Neighborhood Park".

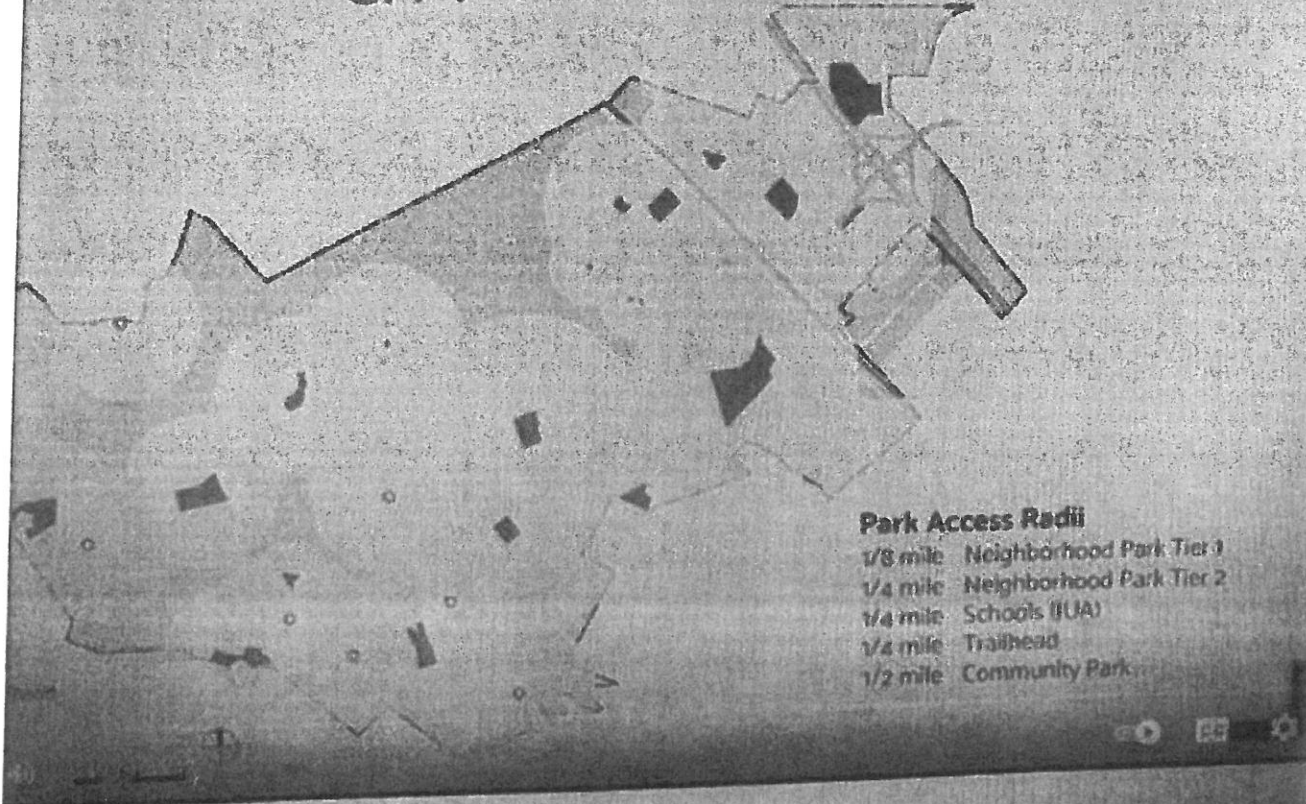
1. **It is only 5 acres** – far too small to accommodate community-wide amenities without impacting park space.
2. It's located at the end of a long dead-end residential street, with limited infrastructure and **constrained emergency access in a high wildfire risk canyon**.
3. **Traffic and Parking already overburden** the entire length of Carlmont Drive (not just the single family homes), and providing parking for greater use would entail paving a large portion of the park.

Social equity is NOT the issue in this case. These General Plan standards are based on resident security, visitor safety, traffic circulation, emergency services, and City infrastructure considerations. Some of the public confuse this park with the adjacent 200 acres of Hidden Canyon. Already this neighborhood is dangerously overtaxed, serving as the *gateway access to that open space*, which the City promotes regionally. Unwittingly the City has, without consideration for capacity or resident and visitor safety, drawn thousands of visitors from a far wider region than intended by the General Plan.

**The Park Master Plan MUST conform to General Plan standards, and your legal obligation is to ensure that conformance.**

Please make it clear to staff and consultants as well as the general public, that intensification of use in this tiny park is not their *choice*; both the General Plan and prudent consideration of public safety and City planning dictate Hidden Valley is NOT a community park, but a neighborhood park.

# CITY-WIDE PARK PROXIMITY



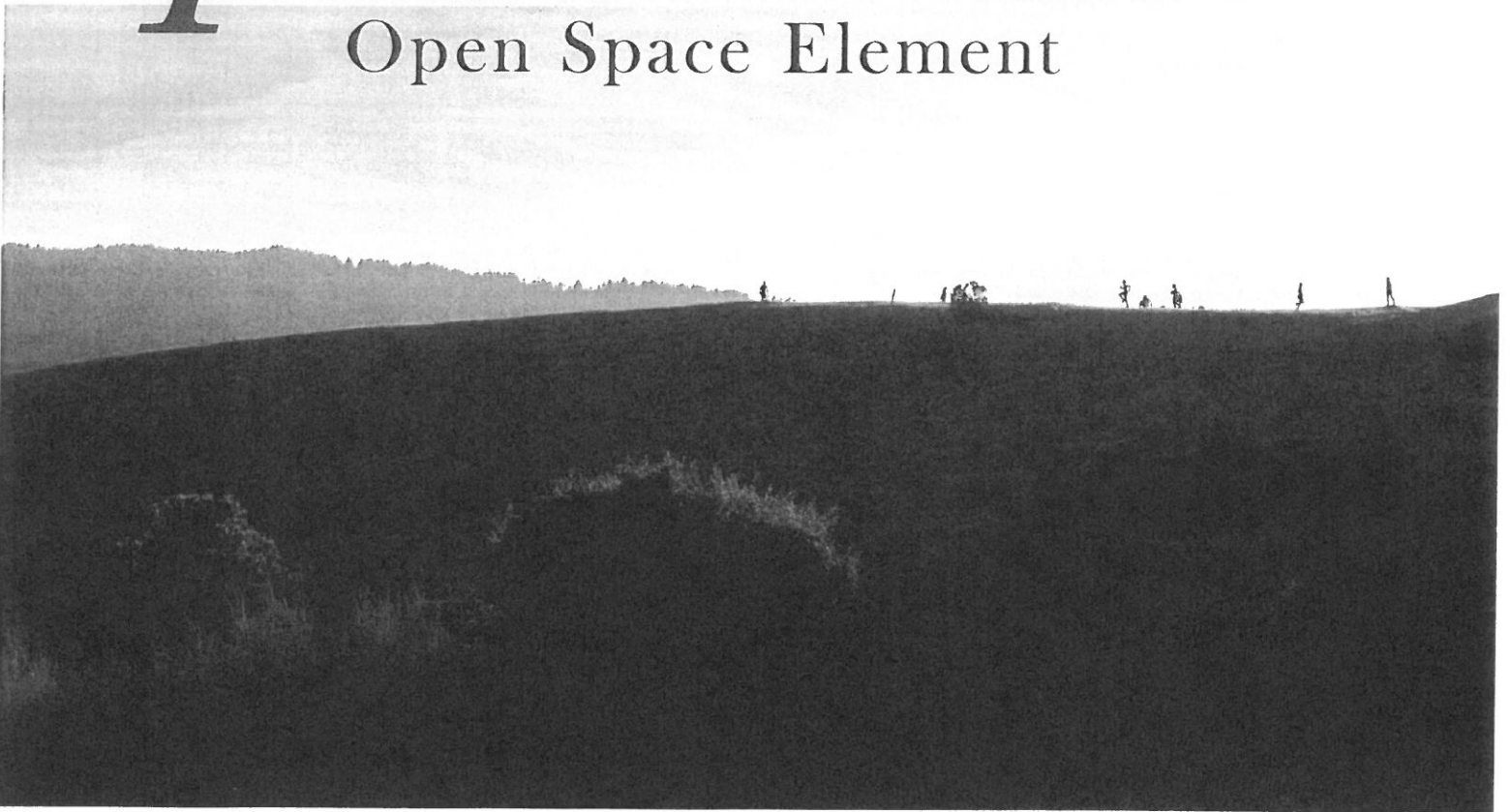
Committee Meeting #3



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# 4

## Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element





*Twin Pines Park is the largest park and recreational facility serving Belmont residents.*

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This element presents the goals, policies, and actions for parks, recreation, and natural open space in Belmont. The City of Belmont's parks and recreation system is integral to its sense of community and quality of life. The city has excellent open space resources and great weather many months of the year, encouraging people to be outdoors. Maintenance, improvements, and programming of parks, recreation, and open space resources are provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation. Maintaining existing facilities, acquiring and developing additional facilities to meet future needs, and providing programming for parks and recreation areas as the city's population grows are important components of this element.

### RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW

California State law (Government Code sections 65302(e) and 65560-65567) requires California cities to adopt an Open Space Element as part of their General Plan. **Open space land is defined in the California Government Code as any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to open space use, and that is designated on a local, regional or State open space plan, including open space for the preservation of natural resources and open space for outdoor recreation.** Along with the

Housing Element, the Open Space Element has the most detailed statutory intent and, next to Land Use, is the broadest in scope.

The California Subdivision Map Act enables a city to require dedication of land or fees in lieu of land dedication for neighborhood and community parks as a condition of development approval. Known as the "Quimby Act" (Government Code section 66477), it also establishes the criteria for determining the land dedication requirement and in-lieu fee based on park standards. The City of Belmont's 2014 parkland dedication requirements and in-lieu fees are discussed in this element.

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element bears a strong relationship to the Conservation Element, which is required to provide direction regarding the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources. The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element addresses open space for outdoor recreation, while the Conservation and Safety elements discuss open space for preservation of natural resources and open space for public health and safety, respectively.

Because open space and park facilities are essential components of a balanced land use pattern, the Land Use Element also has a strong relationship to this element. The

intent of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element, however, is not to establish land use policies for open space areas, but rather to outline recreational strategies in harmony with land use policies. In addition, the classification of open space and parks relates to the amount and location of the population, which is another relationship to the Land Use and Housing elements. The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element is also related to the Circulation Element in that designated bicycle routes, trails, and pedestrian routes provide critical access to and through open space and parklands.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNITY VISION

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element is most closely tied to the “natural beauty” and “thriving culture” values in the Belmont Community Vision:

##### *Natural Beauty*

- We choose to make our home among these beautiful hills, trees, parks, views, and open spaces.
- Our natural surroundings inspire us to play, create, and contemplate.
- Our actions today preserve and enhance Belmont’s beauty to make it even lovelier for future generations.
- Our wooded residential areas are diverse, peaceful and well maintained.

##### *Thriving Culture*

- Our playgrounds and athletic fields are of high quality and in high gear.

## 4.2 PARKS AND RECREATION

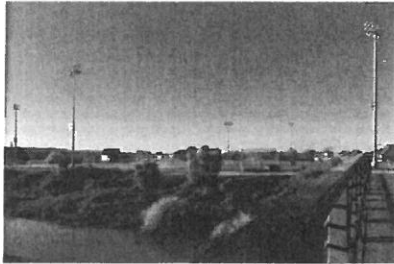
### PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The City provides its residents with several types of parks and recreation facilities. Parks are defined as land owned, leased, or provided to the City and used for public recreational purposes. In addition, there is joint use planning and operation of school district athletic facilities for public recreation. Parks and recreational facilities are classified as follows:

- **Mini Park.** A small park ranging from a quarter-acre to 2 acres that is located within a residential area and is intended to provide play areas for small children or passive sitting areas for residents within a quarter-mile-radius.
- **Neighborhood Park.** A medium-sized park ranging from 2 to 10 acres that provides basic recreational activities for a specific neighborhood within a one-mile radius.
- **Community Park.** A large park ranging from 20 to 50 acres that includes passive and active recreation facilities that serve the entire city or a substantial portion of the city.



*Belmont's parks help create a sense of community.*



*The Belmont Sports Complex (top) and the Barrett Community Center (bottom) are used for many recreational programs.*

- **School Park.** Athletic fields and facilities that operate under joint use agreements between the City and the School District and are used by the community during non-school hours.
- **Special Facility.** A facility such as a community center, athletic complex, aquatic center or other cultural or athletic facility that services a specific recreational need for all or a portion of the city's population.

#### EXISTING FACILITIES AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

Currently, the City manages the maintenance of and improvement to 14 developed parks, two undeveloped parks, 11 athletic fields, nearly 320 acres of open space, and over 160,000 square feet of public buildings. Figure 4-1 shows the existing parks and recreation facilities in Belmont, as well as planned improvements and open space lots that have been donated to the City in recent years but have not been improved as parks. Table 4-1 below provides a list of existing parks and recreational facilities and open space areas in the city and the approximate acreages for each. In general, mini parks have a service area of about one-quarter-mile radius, neighborhood parks have a service area of about one-mile radius, and community parks serve the entire city. The City has a joint use agreement with the Belmont/Redwood Shores Elementary School District for the athletic fields at Fox,

Ralston, Nesbit, and Central Schools. The City maintains the fields and schedules all non-school hours. The joint use agreement is up for consideration of renewal in 2019. Table 4-1 also lists undeveloped open space areas that are available to the public for recreational uses, which is discussed in more detail below in Section 4.3.

The Parks and Recreation Department offers recreation programs for Belmont residents of all ages, which are highly valued by the Belmont community. The City operates recreation programs, a preschool, and camps for children and youth; exercise, sports, and enrichment programs such as yoga and softball for adults; and diverse programs, including language groups, knitting, and Tai Chi, for seniors. The Twin Pines Senior and Community Center, the Barrett Community Center, and the Belmont Sports Complex are used for many of the recreational programs. Priorities for recreation programs in the coming years include identifying the recreational aspirations of the Belmont community and evaluating which recreational programs to continue and which to change to better meet the community's needs and interests.

#### PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS TO PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

In addition, several improvements to parks and recreation facilities are planned or

underway as of 2017. Davey Glen Park was recently developed from an undeveloped lot to a neighborhood park, and the Belmont Sports Complex is in the design process for artificial turf installation. Barrett Community Center is being considered for a complete redesign of the site and a new community center. As detailed in the Belmont Village Specific Plan, improvements are planned for the Belmont Village Priority Development Area (PDA) that will ensure access to parks and other community gathering spaces as the area intensifies, including opportunities for new plazas and improved connections to Twin Pines Park and Belmont Creek.

#### ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Ideally, every residence should be within a quarter-mile (5 minute walking distance) of a park. Figure 4-2 shows the areas within a quarter-mile and half-mile “as the crow flies” from mini, neighborhood, and community parks. It also shows the areas within 5 and 10 minute walking distances, or walksheds, for mini, neighborhood, and community parks and school fields. The map also shows the City’s parks service area standards for the one-quarter mile service area radius and one-mile service area radius for context.

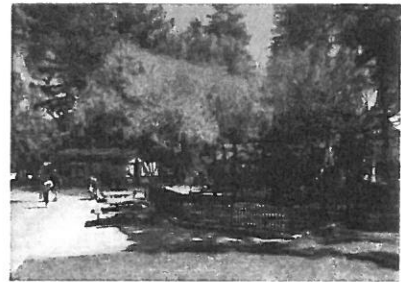
With the hilly topography in Belmont, many of the parks require a long and circuitous walk in residential neighborhoods. Thus,

areas that are actually within a five-minute walking distance for many parks and fields are often smaller than the service areas. Due to the uneven distribution of smaller parks in the city, many residents do not have access to parks and open spaces within walking distance. Residential neighborhoods with poor access to developed parkland are primarily north of Ralston Avenue and west of El Camino Real, in the Central, Country Club, Plateau, and Skymont neighborhoods.

In general, parks and recreation facilities in Belmont can be accessed by vehicles as well as on foot. Mini and neighborhood parks are often connected to sidewalks and have street parking options. Off-street parking spaces are available for all community parks and recreational facilities. The three main trailheads for the Water Dog Lake open space have parking available, although many of the lesser entrances generally do not have parking options on site at the entrance, and visitors are encouraged to park elsewhere and access the trails on foot.

#### CURRENT STANDARDS AND DEFICIENCIES

This General Plan continues the goal established in the previous General Plan and 1992 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to provide for 5.0 acres of parks for every 1,000 residents, with 2.0 acres of community parks and 3.0 acres of



*Twin Pines Park offers outdoor amenities for residents and access to Belmont Creek.*

**TABLE 4-1: Parks and Recreation Facilities and Open Space Inventory**

Park or Recreational Facility	Acreage <sup>1</sup>
<b>Neighborhood and Mini Parks</b>	
Alexander Park	1.4
Cipriani Park and Dog Park	10.0
College View Park	0.1
Davey Glen Park	1.1
Hallmark Park	5.2
Hastings Tot Lot	0.3
O'Donnell Park	0.9
Patricia Wharton Park	0.1
Semeria Park	0.2
Wakefield Park	1.1
<i>Subtotal Neighborhood and Mini Parks</i>	<i>20.4</i>
<b>Community Parks</b>	
Barrett Community Center and Park	5.0
Belameda Park	2.9
Belmont Sports Complex	12.6
McDougal Field	3.0
Twin Pines Park <sup>2</sup>	19.9
<i>Subtotal Community Parks</i>	<i>43.4</i>
<b>Undeveloped Park Areas</b>	
Ralston Ranch Park	1.3
Hidden Canyon Park	23.7
<i>Subtotal Undeveloped Parks</i>	<i>25.0</i>
<b>School Parks (under Joint Use Agreements)</b>	
Central School	3.4
Fox School	6.1
Nesbit School	6.5
Ralston Middle School	7.4
<i>Subtotal School Parks</i>	<i>23.4</i>
<b>Total Parks and Recreation Facilities</b>	<b>112.2</b>

**TABLE 4-1: Parks and Recreation Facilities and Open Space Inventory**

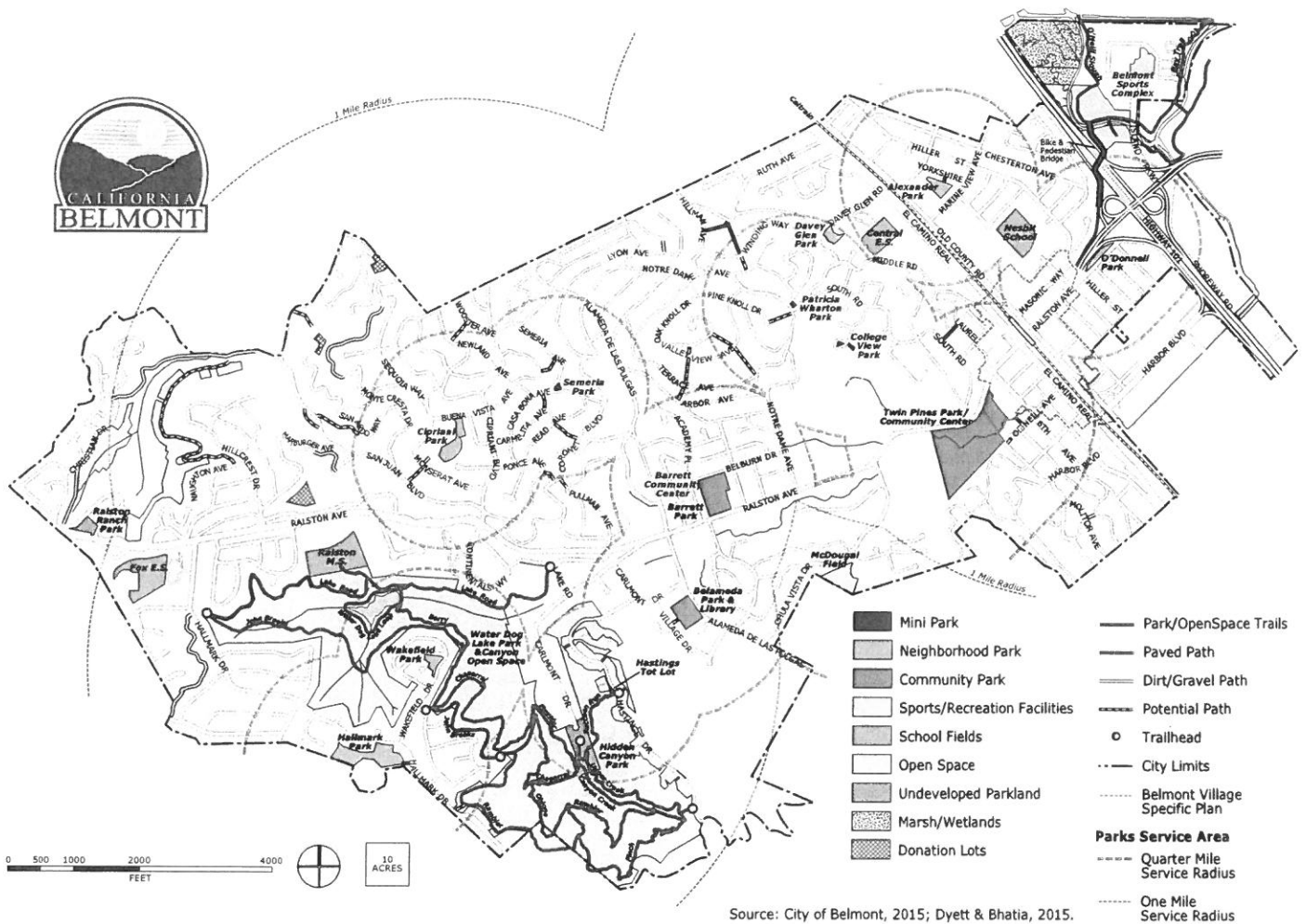
Park or Recreational Facility	Acreage <sup>1</sup>
<b>Open Space and Trail Areas</b>	
San Juan Canyon	33.0
Water Dog Lake	260.6
<i>Subtotal Open Space and Trail Areas</i>	<i>293.6</i>
<b>Total Parks and Recreation Facilities and Open Spaces</b>	<b>405.8</b>

Notes:  
 1. Acreage is rounded to the nearest tenth acre. Numbers may not sum precisely due to rounding.  
 2. Includes other community facilities as well: the Manor House, the Cottage, Twin Pines Senior & Community Center, and the Lodge.

Source: City of Belmont, 2017.



FIGURE 4-1: PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS





*Most new public open spaces in the Belmont Priority Development Area (PDA) will be plazas and mini parks, incorporated into the urban environment.*

neighborhood and mini parks. Based on the city's 2013 population of 26,400 and the existing park facilities totaling 112.2 acres, Belmont provides an overall ratio of 4.3 acres of park area per 1,000 residents. This figure is below the General Plan and Master Plan standard of 5.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Additionally, this figure includes two undeveloped park areas, as well as about 23 acres of school park area that are under a joint use agreement with the City, which is up for renewal in 2019. If the joint use agreement is not renewed, the Belmont community could potentially face an even greater shortage of parks and recreational facilities.

While Belmont currently falls short of achieving its developed parkland standard, the city has many acres of open space and miles of trails. Based on the 2013 population of 26,400 residents and the existing open space areas totaling 293.6 acres, Belmont provides 11.1 acres of open space for every 1,000 residents. When the parks and open space areas are combined, Belmont provides a total ratio of 15.4 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 residents. Belmont provides a total of 9.6 miles of trails, resulting in a ratio of 0.4 miles of trails per 1,000 residents.

Through 2035, Belmont's population is projected to grow to about 30,500. If the City's parkland standard remains the same (5.0 acres per 1,000 residents), the City would need to add about 40.3 acres of parks and

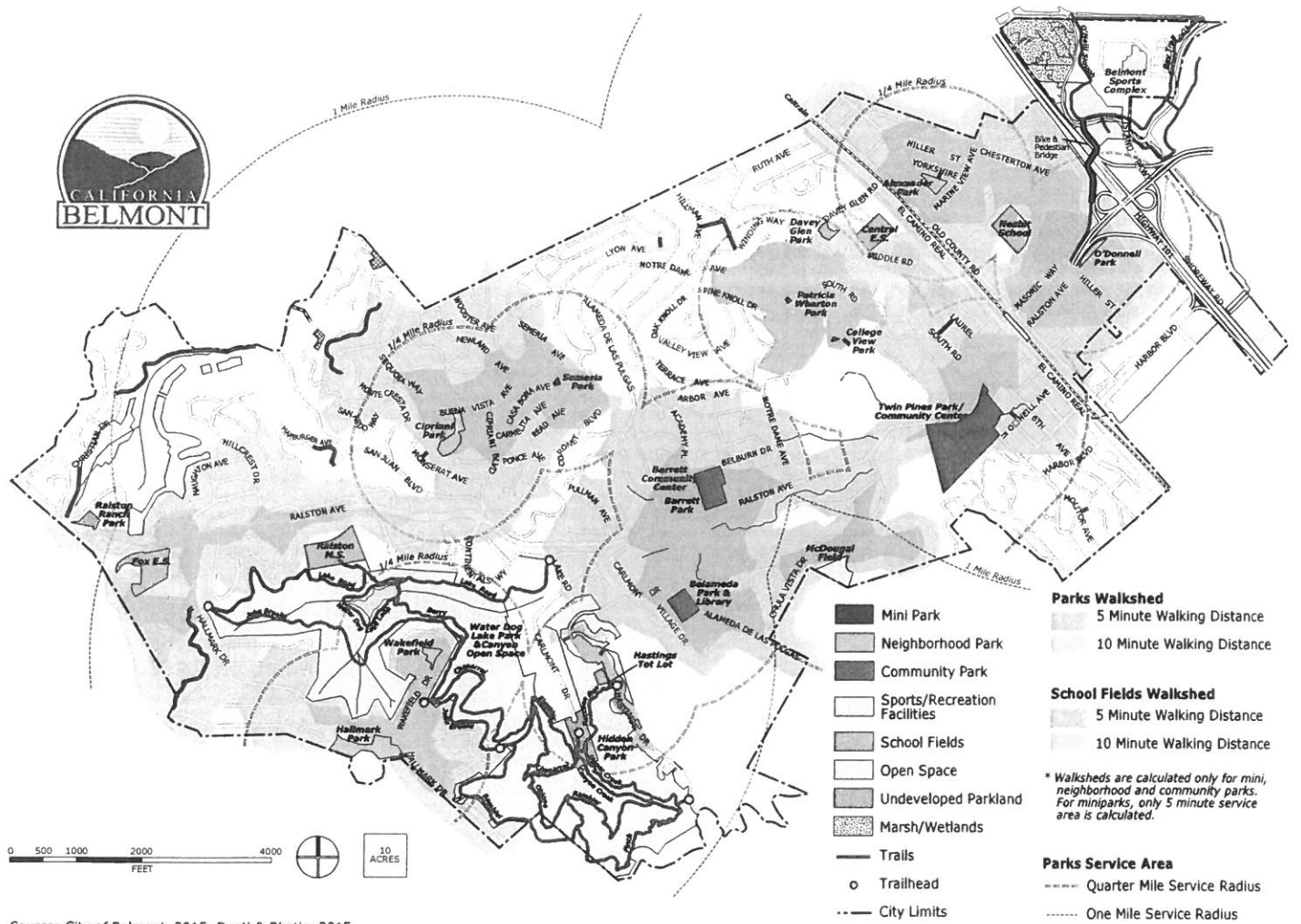
recreational facilities by 2035 to overcome the existing deficiency as well as serve new population growth. To retain the current ratio of 4.3 acres per 1,000 residents, the City would still need to add 19 acres of parkland.

#### *Achieving the Standard*

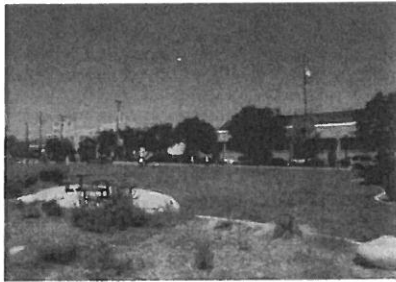
The State's 1975 Quimby Act allows cities to require dedication or in lieu fees for community and neighborhood parkland contributions for new development in a city. The Act allows for a required dedication of up to three acres per 1,000 residents, or up to five acres per 1,000 residents to match the existing ratio if it is higher than three acres per 1,000 residents. In Belmont, based on the 2014 Quimby Land Dedication Requirement and In-Lieu Fee Study, the area of existing neighborhood and community parks was determined to be 3.87 acres per 1,000 residents, so the City's parkland dedication standard was set to 3.87 acres per 1,000 residents. However, the parkland facilities and open space inventory was recently updated by the City, and the area of existing neighborhood and community parks was determined to be 4.3 acres per 1,000 residents.

The Mitigation Fee Act (Government Code section 66000) allows cities to establish, increase, or impose a fee as a condition of approval of a development project if certain requirements are met. Cities must identify the purpose and use of the fee, and they also must demonstrate a reasonable relationship or

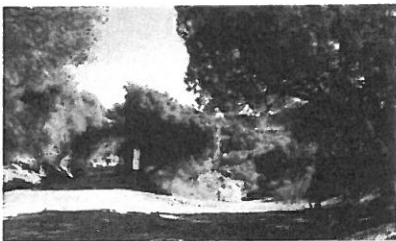
FIGURE 4-2: PARK ACCESSIBILITY



Source: City of Belmont, 2015; Dyett & Bhatia, 2015.



*The General Plan aims to create an extensive system of parks, plazas, and other open spaces that serves the entire Belmont community, enhances community identity, and is conveniently located for community use.*



*The General Plan aims to preserve and protect the natural open space in Belmont.*

“nexus” between new development that occurs within the city and the need for additional facilities as a result of new development. In October 2014, the City of Belmont published a Park Impact Fee Nexus Study to meet the Mitigation Fee Act requirements.

In October 2014, Belmont also adopted a Park Impact Fee for residential and nonresidential development, ensuring that all new growth in Belmont (not just developments to which the Quimby Act applies) contribute to the City’s park and recreation resources commensurate with their impact.

*Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan*

The City plans for the development, operation, improvement, and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. It contains an inventory and analysis of existing parks and open spaces and potential new park areas, as well as analysis of current demand and future trends for parks and recreational facilities. The Plan identifies detailed policies and standards for parks and recreational facilities, and it contains an implementation plan with actions, costs, and funding sources. These policies and standards are incorporated by reference into the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element and constitute additional policies and standards for parks and recreational facilities as required by the Quimby Act. Last updated in 1992, an update

to the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan is an implementation priority for the General Plan.

**4.3 NATURAL OPEN SPACES FOR RECREATION**

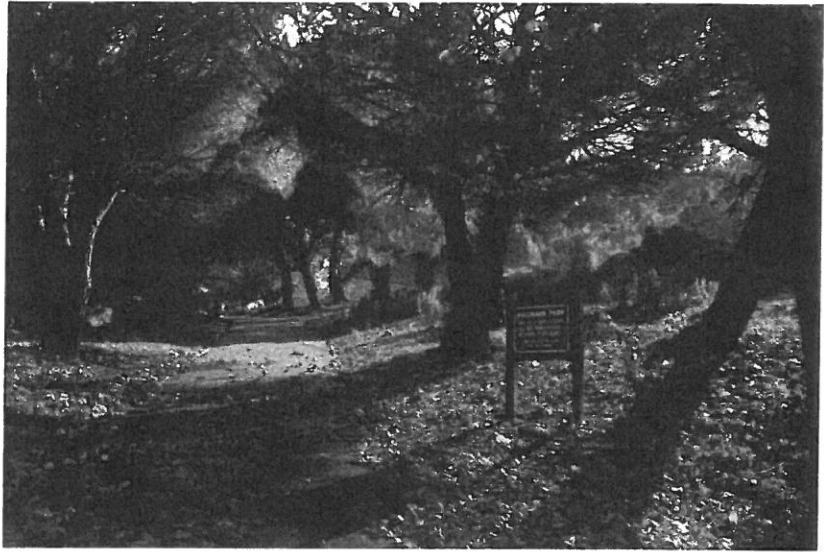
**OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK**

The California Government Code (Section 65560(b)) recognizes six types of open spaces, including open space for 1) natural resources, 2) managed production of resources, 3) outdoor recreation, 4) public health and safety, 5) military support, and 6) tribal resources. Three of these are present in Belmont: open space for outdoor recreation, which is addressed in this element; and open space for natural resources and for public health and safety, which are addressed in the Conservation and Safety elements. Natural open spaces in Belmont are shown on Figure 4-1.

**NATURAL OPEN SPACES FOR RECREATION IN BELMONT**

Trails and natural open spaces offer community benefits as places for exercise, recreation, and solitude, and also play a key role in physically connecting the community and creating a network of open spaces. The City of Belmont has a total of 317 acres of natural open space, plus an additional 24

acres of private common open space and three acres of marshland. San Juan Canyon and Water Dog Lake provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the community, including hiking and biking trails and access to other open space networks in the region, such as the Sugarloaf Open Space. Providing sufficient resources to manage and improve the city's open spaces and trails has been a priority identified by Belmont community members throughout the General Plan Update process.



*Hallmark Park, located on the western edge of Belmont, features a playground, tennis courts and trails connecting to other open spaces in Belmont.*

# 4

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

### PARKS AND RECREATION

**GOAL 4.1** Provide an expanded, high quality, and diversified park system that serves the entire Belmont community, enhances community identity, and is conveniently located for community use.

#### Policy 4.1-1

Use the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to define the vision, goals, and strategies for maintaining and improving Belmont's park system and to guide implementation efforts.

**Action 4.1-1a:** Update the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan at least once every 10-15 years to ensure that it accurately reflects the community's priorities and available resources. The update should include:

- Assessment of the parks and recreation needs of existing and future residents.
- In addition to a citywide evaluation of the parkland standards, evaluation of parkland standards on a neighborhood level to determine which neighborhoods are currently underserved.
- Appropriate uses of parks and recreational facilities based on a needs assessment.
- Opportunities and priorities for expanding and enhancing the park system and

recreational facilities, especially in underserved areas that would benefit from additional mini or neighborhood parks.

- Determine the use or designation for the open space behind Carlmont High School. Detailed recommendations for specific parks, facilities, and neighborhoods, including identification of potential opportunities for scientific, artistic, and historic exploration and discovery within Belmont's parks and recreational facilities.
- Financing strategies and funding priorities for parks and recreation facilities.

#### Policy 4.1-2

Strive to achieve and maintain a citywide standard of at least 5.0 acres of mini, neighborhood, and community parks per 1,000 residents, targeting a breakdown of 3.0 acres/1,000 residents for community parks and 2.0 acres/1,000 residents for neighborhood parks.

**Action 4.1-2a:** Establish priorities for use of park impact fees and in-lieu fees to achieve and maintain the citywide parkland standard, based on needs and priorities identified in the updated Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

**Action 4.1-2b:** Support acquisition or development of parks in Belmont, especially in neighborhoods that are currently underserved, to meet the City's parkland standard.

**Action 4.1-2c:** Pursue opportunities to convert underutilized parcels into mini parks or community spaces as is feasible, prioritizing those in areas that are currently underserved.

**Action 4.1-2d:** Develop a pilot program for "parklets" or "pop-up parks" to create small but functional public open spaces in street parking spaces or other underutilized places in the public right of way. *Refer to the Belmont Village Specific Plan for potential appropriate locations in the Village area.*

**Action 4.1-2e:** Encourage the installation of recreation areas and privately-owned public spaces in new developments and redevelopments including areas for off-leash dog running, events, and exercise.

**Action 4.1-2f:** Consider park uses for Hidden Canyon Park and Ralston Ranch Park based on community need.

**Action 4.1-2g:** If it becomes available, acquire the vacant lot adjacent to the Belmont Sports Complex for additional athletic fields for the community.

**Policy 4.1-3** Ensure that all development projects comply with the City’s parkland dedication requirements, in accordance with the Quimby Act, to provide adequate land for parks, open space, landscaping, and trails in appropriate locations through the dedication of land or otherwise providing for mini parks, planned trails, and other recreational space.

**Action 4.1-3a:** Meet with development applicants early in the entitlement process to ensure understanding of and compliance with the City’s parkland dedication requirements.

**Action 4.1-3b:** If parkland is to be dedicated (rather than an in-lieu fee paid), work with the applicant during the site planning process to ensure that parks/recreation facilities are appropriately sited and designed to best serve the new development and the Belmont community at large.

**Policy 4.1-4** Create different zoning classifications for parks and open space in the *Zoning Ordinance*. Park zones should include recreational uses along with associated structures, and infrastructure and open space should include more passive uses. The new designations should be consistent with the General Plan land use designations “Open Space” and “Public/Community Facilities.” See also descriptions and policies in the *Land Use Element*.

**Action 4.1-4a:** Update the Zoning Ordinance to include the appropriate zoning classifications for the parks and open spaces in Belmont.

**GOAL 4.2** Ensure that a wide variety of public community and recreation facilities are available to the entire Belmont community for recreational, social, and cultural activities.

**Policy 4.2-1** Review and update the types, amounts, and locations of community and recreation facilities as part of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

**Action 4.2-1a:** As part of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, conduct a facilities needs assessment to determine the Belmont community’s current needs and priorities for recreational facility space. The needs assessment should consider the unique needs of various groups within Belmont, including but not limited to children, teens, seniors, and pet-owners.

**Action 4.2-1b:** As part of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, include a policy to consider the range of effects of artificial turf in the environment, including reducing water use and increasing groundwater runoff, when evaluating projects to use artificial turf on new or existing athletic fields in Belmont.

#### **Policy 4.2-2**

Building on the needs assessment, improve the quality and quantity of public community facilities in Belmont.

**Action 4.2-2a:** Create a community-based vision for the new Barrett Community Center, and pursue implementation of the redesigned community center facilities. Consider changing the name to the Belmont Community Center.

**Action 4.2-2b:** Extend efforts to improve the quality of the athletic fields in Belmont.

#### **Policy 4.2-3**

Continue joint use agreements with other agencies, institutions, and private organizations for public use of recreational facilities not owned by the City, especially in neighborhoods deficient in recreational facilities, if the joint use agreements can help meet the city's recreational needs and if the terms are favorable to the City.

**Action 4.2-3a:** Consider renewing the joint use agreement with the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District for public use of recreational facilities, and review the terms of the agreement to ensure they are favorable to the City. Prepare a contingency plan to implement if the joint use agreement is not renewed.

**Action 4.2-3b:** Consider pursuing joint use agreements with other public agencies, such as Sequoia Union High School District, for pub-

lic use of recreational facilities, and review the terms of potential agreements to ensure they are favorable to the City.

**Action 4.2-3c:** Consider partnering with Notre Dame de Namur University, private schools, or other organizations to deliver recreational facilities to the community including at the site of Barrett Community Center.

**Action 4.2-3d:** Periodically review and amend the City's joint use agreements for public use of recreational facilities not owned by the City, to ensure that the agreements include responsibilities and obligations for the City that can be reasonably met and fulfilled, such as those related to maintenance, custodial services, and equipment and storage.

### **GOAL 4.3 Improve the quantity and quality of recreational programming and services to provide varied recreational opportunities for the entire Belmont community.**

**Policy 4.3-1** Continue to provide recreational programs and services to serve the entire Belmont community.

**Action 4.3-1a:** Periodically conduct a programming needs assessment to determine the Belmont community's goals and needs for the types, amounts, and qualities of recreational programs and services. Ensure that the needs assessment considers the unique needs of vari-

ous groups within Belmont, including but not limited to children, teens, and seniors.

**Action 4.3-1b:** Use the findings and recommendations of the programming needs assessment to guide recreational programming in Belmont.

**Action 4.3-1c:** Pursue creation of creative recreation facilities, even those that are small in size, into infill areas of redevelopment focus, such as the BVSP.

**Policy 4.3-2** Support other agencies, private organizations, and institutions that serve the Belmont community with recreational, social, and cultural activities.

**Action 4.3-2a:** Allow, as feasible, other agencies, private organizations, and institutions to use or rent the City of Belmont's public facilities to host recreational, social, and cultural activities for the benefit of the Belmont community.

**Action 4.3-2b:** Encourage other agencies, private organizations, and institutions that provide similar recreational and cultural services to pool resources for the benefit of the Belmont community.



## OPEN SPACE

**GOAL 4.4** Continue to develop and support a balanced and integrated open space system reflecting a variety of considerations, including natural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety, to ensure synergies between various open space components and compatibility with land use planning.

**Policy 4.4-1** Continue to designate and protect open space lands for the preservation of scenic areas, natural drainage ways, and plant and wildlife habitats; for outdoor recreation; and for public health and safety. *See also policies in the Conservation and Safety elements.*

**Action 4.4-1a:** Develop a policy for acquisition of open space lands in Belmont including consideration of condition, connectivity, and usefulness of the lands. Develop a list of preferred properties for acquisition that will enhance the open space resources in Belmont.

**Policy 4.4-2** Maintain connectivity between large open spaces in Belmont and the region, including the Waterdog Lake area, San Juan Hills area, Sugarloaf Mountain, and the open space in the San Francisco Public Utility District's Crystal Springs watershed.

**Policy 4.4-3** Consistent with the San Juan Hills and Western Hills area plans, cluster development in the hillside areas of western Belmont in order to maintain contiguous habitat areas, minimize grading, and limit exposure to steep slopes and other sensitive areas. *See also policies in the Land Use Element.*

**Policy 4.4-4** Maintain and enhance trails in open spaces in Belmont. Continue to support opportunities for shared use of trails among multiple users, including pedestrians and mountain bicyclists. Promote knowledge, trail etiquette, and consideration of multiple users on trails through education programs and signage.

**Policy 4.4-5** Use the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to establish priorities for the protection, enhancement, and improvement of open space lands and trails for recreation purposes.

**Action 4.4-5a:** Ensure that the updated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan includes:

- **Identification and implementation** strategies for trail maintenance and design standards for trails through open space lands.
- Measures to improve the visual quality and safety of trails and bikeways.

- **Identification trails that are no longer necessary or are causing resource damage** such as erosion and implementation strategies to remove them.

**Policy 4.4-6** Develop programs to control invasive plant species that threaten the natural resources.

**Policy 4.4-7** Continue programs to reduce the fire danger in the open space. *See Policy 5.1-3 in the Conservation Element.*

**Policy 4.4-8** Develop interpretive programs to help engender appreciation for the open space resources in Belmont.

**GOAL 4.5** Preserve and protect open space resources using various methods available to the City.

**Policy 4.5-1** Consider open space dedication or acquisition of fee title land to ensure long-term preservation and protection only if public liability exposure can be acceptably limited to the extent feasible.

**Policy 4.5-2** Protect Belmont Creek from future encroachment through regulation, development review, conservation easements, or other appropriate actions.

**Action 4.5-2a:** Evaluate the necessity of a stream buffer overlay zone around Belmont Creek and tributaries to facilitate management and protection of the waterway. Such a zone would apply to areas where the creek

flows above ground through developed areas and would ensure that any new development adjacent to the creek is designed and built in such a way that the stream environment is not degraded.

**Action 4.5-2b:** Consider creek restoration projects that alter the creek corridor to enhance the function of the waterway, including restoration through Twin Pines Park.

**Policy 4.5-3** Continue to prohibit off-road motorized vehicle use in open space areas to prevent damage to the environment.

**Policy 4.5-4** Seek to preserve the existing open space areas in the San Juan Hills and Western Hills, consistent with the Area Plans, especially on steep hillsides and sensitive habitat areas.

**Action 4.5-4a:** As the San Juan Hills and Western Hills area plans are updated following the adoption of the General Plan, reevaluate land that is appropriate for development versus what should be conserved.

#### **GOAL 4.6 Improve and increase public access into open space areas where feasible and safe.**

**Policy 4.6-1** Maintain and improve access to parks and open space, especially in areas that lack land for additional parkland dedication and in areas where topography and lack of sidewalks inhibits easy pedestrian access to parks and recreation facilities.

**Action 4.6-1a:** Identify where formal or informal off-street paths and trails through neighborhoods are or can be established and maintained. Prioritize those paths and trails that improve pedestrian access and connectivity where it is currently limited, and where paths may link underserved neighborhoods to parks, recreation facilities, regional trails, and other community amenities.

**Action 4.6-1b:** Identify locations where trails and trail connections can be improved or established in open space recreation areas, such as potential new trail connections to the San Juan Canyon and Sugarloaf Mountain from the Vista Point.

**Action 4.6-1c:** Explore opportunities to obtain easements to expand Belmont's multi-use trail system.

**Action 4.6-1d:** Encourage members of the Belmont community, either as individuals or through an organization, to contribute to the care and maintenance of established neighborhood trails.

**Policy 4.6-2** Improve public access and connections to Belmont Creek. Promote use of this waterway corridor for passive recreation, education, and research.

**Action 4.6-2a:** When restoring or enhancing the riparian vegetation and habitat along the Belmont Creek corridor, improve public access to and along the waterway, especially near

Twin Pines Park and City Hall, where it is safe and feasible.

**Policy 4.6-3** In multimodal transportation planning efforts, such as corridor studies and active transportation plans, ensure that parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces are considered key destinations for linkages to the bicycle and pedestrian network.

#### **SUPPORT FOR PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE**

**GOAL 4.7 Pursue sufficient and dedicated funding for acquisition, operations, protection, maintenance, and management of parks, recreation facilities, and natural open spaces and to meet the recreational programming and service needs of the Belmont Community.**

**Policy 4.7-1** Ensure that residential and nonresidential development projects contribute to the City's park, recreation, and open space resources commensurate with their impacts, through the Quimby Act and establishment and collection of park impact fees.

**Action 4.7-1a:** Periodically review and amend the City's parkland dedication and in-lieu fee requirements for residential subdivisions, consistent with the Quimby Act.

**Action 4.7-1b:** Periodically review park development costs and building trends to assess any changes in costs, and update the Park Impact Fee Nexus Study as needed, to establish new fees consistent with the Mitigation Fee Act (California Government Code Section 66000 et seq.).

**Policy 4.7-2** Continue to work with local, regional, and State agencies, nonprofit and community organizations, foundations, and grant sources to provide funding for Belmont's open space, parks, and recreation and assistance with maintenance and programming.

**Policy 4.7-3** Support, where appropriate and feasible, partnerships with private businesses to conduct limited operations in park and recreation facilities (e.g. a concessions stand) to generate a revenue stream that may contribute to operations and maintenance costs.

**Policy 4.7-4** Encourage community involvement in the stewardship of Belmont's natural resources, including public and private work programs and special events to maintain open space lands.

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