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CONSENT CALENDAR
 November 12, 2024

To: Members of the Berkeley City Council
 From: Councilmember Mark Humbert (Author)
 Subject: Budget Referral: Create a City park at Parkside Drive terminus median

RECOMMENDATION: Refer \$150,000 to the November 2024 AAO#1 budget process for consultants, conceptual design, and public engagement for converting the median informally known as “Round Park” (and possibly other nearby medians) to an official City park. Longer-term improvements could include but are not limited to ADA access, fencing, improved landscaping, and signage and would be funded separately.

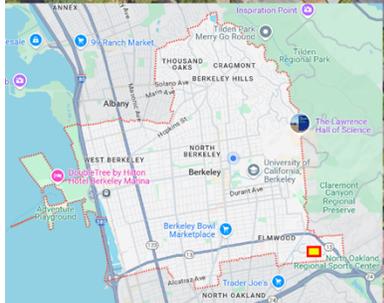
FISCAL IMPACT: The Parks Department has provided a cost estimate of \$150,000 that would cover consulting fees, conceptual design development, and public engagement for potentially converting the median at the terminus of Parkside Drive into a City park.

BACKGROUND: Contrary to popular understanding, the southeast (SE) quadrant of Berkeley has the least amount of parkland and recreational facilities in the city. A [2015 study and report](#) (also attached) conducted by the Parks and Waterfront Commission and authored by Commissioners Caitlin Lempres Brostrom, Dru Howard, and Susan McKay found that that Berkeley’s SE quadrant has the least amount of parkland by acreage and the fewest recreational facilities—this despite the fact that the SE quadrant is also the highest population quadrant of Berkeley.

Table 1 roughly illustrates major city parks/recreation facilities in Berkeley’s quadrants:

<p>Northwest Ohlone Park Cedar Rose Park King Pool Berkeley Marina/Cesar Chavez Park Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex James Kenney Community Center</p>	<p>Northeast Live Oak Park and Community Center Berkeley Rose Garden and Tennis Courts Cordonices Park John Hinkel Park Indian Rock Park</p>
<p>Southwest Strawberry Creek Park San Pablo Park and Community Center Grove Park Aquatic Park Brickyard Cove/Adventure Playground/Cal Sailing</p>	<p>Southeast Willard Park, Tennis Courts and Community Center Tim Moellering Field and Basketball Courts Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center Park</p>

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS: The eastern terminus of Parkside Drive in the Claremont/Uplands neighborhood features a large, round median area surrounded by a loop in the roadway. The existing median is teardrop shaped with a roughly 128-foot maximum radius and an approximate area of 0.4 acres (18,000 square feet).



The median features patchy grass, shrubs, and trees, including palm, pine, coast live oak, and white bottlebrush. The area also includes utility poles, a garbage can, and a number of large stones. There is currently informal use of the median, mostly by nearby residents for dog walking and small gatherings. The City does not sanction such use of the median and use of City medians for recreation is, in many cases, prohibited.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION: Berkeley's SE quadrant currently has the least amount of parkland in both absolute and per capita terms and is the most rapidly growing quadrant of the city. Creating additional parks in this area of the city therefore serves both to provide adequate parkland for a growing population and help meet geographic equity goals. Because this is land already owned by the City, all acquisition costs would be avoided. Additionally, the roughly anticipated program at this potential park would be relatively simple, likely requiring only very modest investment from the City. Additionally, neighbors have expressed a strong interest in private fundraising for this effort, potentially further reducing the anticipated fiscal burden of this new park.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS: Since this proposal covers only the planning, design, and public engagement phases, no substantial environmental impacts are anticipated. Eventual implementation of a park design would have greater potential for material environmental impacts, but these are expected to be minimal since the median already experiences informal, unsanctioned recreational use and physical changes to the site would be the minimum necessary to meet applicable standards, perhaps with the addition of play equipment, crossing and safety enhancements, or other minor infrastructure.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION: The Council would need to approve the expenditure of these funds as part of a future budget adoption/action. Upon completion of consultant work, conceptual design, and public outreach, additional Council actions and City funding would be necessary to create final designs and begin physical improvements.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION: Cost estimates for planned improvements will not be available until completion of consulting and conceptual plans.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments

1. Parks and Waterfront Commission: Subcommittee on Planning, Berkeley Parks Planning for an Equitable Future, Commissioners Caitlin Lempres Brostrom, Dru Howard, and Susan McKay, Presented 2016
<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Equitable%20Future%20-%20P%26W%20Comm%20-%20Brostrom%20-%20McKay%20-%202016-07-19.pdf>

BERKELEY PARKS PLANNING FOR AN EQUITABLE FUTURE



presented
July 2016

Parks and Waterfront Commission: Subcommittee on Planning

UPDATE

This report, Berkeley Parks - Planning for an Equitable Future, was produced during the first half of 2015 and completed in July 2015 by the Parks and Waterfront Subcommittee for Planning. Since then it has been formatted and graphically improved to make it more accessible to a wider audience of Berkeley citizens. This report is a snapshot in time that takes a look at the park's facilities and the issues that affect them up through July 2015. It has not been updated with more current information. Since the time that this report was written, the Berkeley Pier was found to be structurally unsound and closed for use by the public and the James Kenney Community Center Seismic Repair Project was funded and moved forward. The Subcommittee authors hope that the report's information which is intended as an overview, is helpful in moving forward with a discussion of the issues presented.



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THE CITY OF BERKELEY PARKS AND WATERFRONT COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING
is a working group made up of Commissioners Caitlin Lempres Brostrom, Dru Howard, and Susan McKay.



PART 1: DATA COLLECTION

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

In November 2014, the citizens of Berkeley passed a ballot initiative (Measure F), to increase the parcel tax that supports maintenance of the City's parks and recreation facilities, by an overwhelming majority. The happy result is that increased funds will become available in July 2015 and will begin to be applied to major maintenance projects that will address deferred maintenance that has accrued since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978.

This year, the Director of the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department, Scott Ferris, asked the Parks and Waterfront Commission to weigh in about priorities and schedules for facilities repair. During the PWC's discussions it became apparent that more information was needed for the Commission to feel comfortable about making recommendations.

Two issues arose that the Commission felt deserved further investigation:

1. Application of funds throughout the City and distribution of amenities.
2. Concern about the ability of the parks to meet increased needs brought about by current and projected growth in the City.

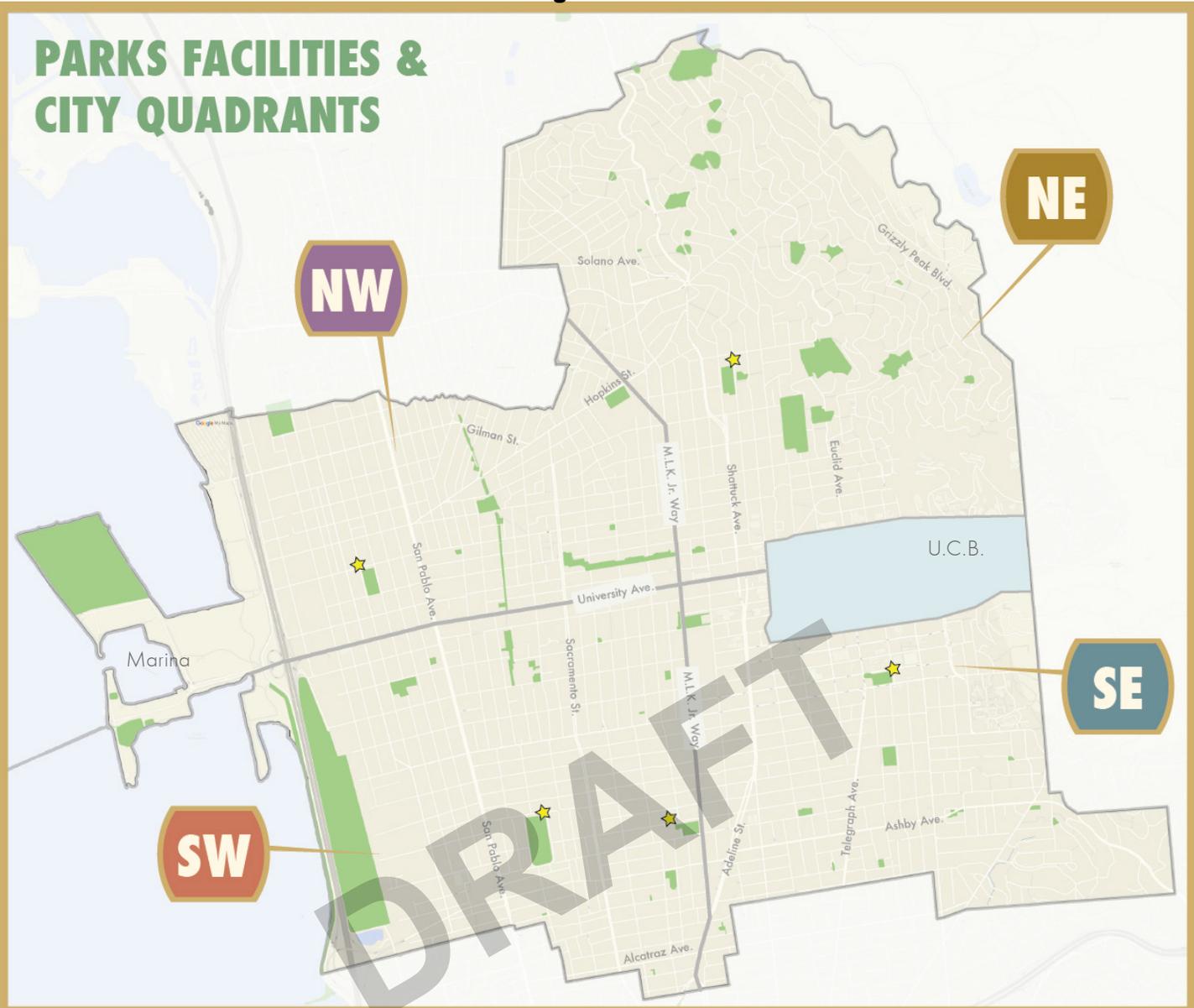
The Subcommittee took up the assignment to look into these issues.

GOALS & SCOPE

The Subcommittee's work focused on the issues of equity and growth. We researched and prepared an overview of past, present, and projected conditions to provide a comparative base for recommendations. For our review, we divided the City into quadrants (NEQ, SEQ, NWQ, SWQ). We have reviewed general demographics, distribution of park facilities and recreation programs, maintenance funding (past and planned), as well as the implications of the projected population growth. We also reviewed the City's Community Centers' role in supporting surrounding neighborhoods. Another area of review was the BUSD schoolyards which are under the shared Measure Y Use Agreement.

We looked at facilities that are located within the City limits only and did not include camps located outside of the City. The information in this report is intended as an overview and is based on sources that are easily accessible. Further and more in-depth investigation will increase the accuracy of the material.

PARKS FACILITIES & CITY QUADRANTS



-  BOUNDARY
-  CITY PARK
-  Community & Rec Centers

NW Quadrant	NE Quadrant	SE Quadrant	SW Quadrant
Boundary: City Limits, MLK Way, University Ave.	Boundary: City Limits, UCB, University Ave., MLK Way.	Boundary: City Limits, UCB, University Ave., MLK Way.	Boundary: City Limits, MLK Way, University Ave.



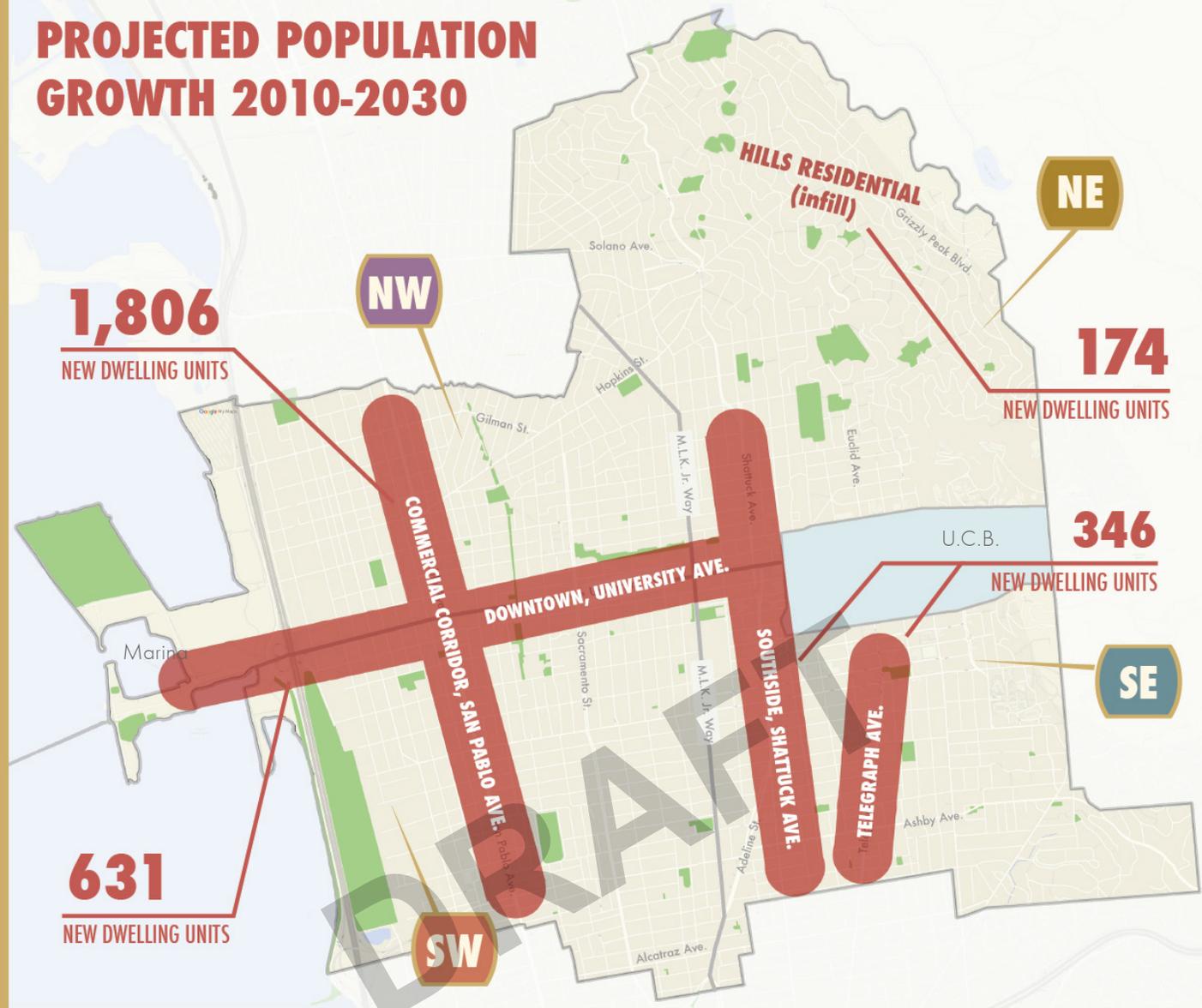
CITY QUADRANTS

The Subcommittee chose to divide the City into quadrants with University Avenue as the N/S division and Martin Luther King Jr. Way as the E/W division. This divides the City into fairly equal land and population areas. Although U.C. Berkeley is in the Southeast Quadrant, it is viewed as a distinct, "self-contained" entity in relation to housing, open space, and recreation for this report. The Marina is considered separately as it has separate funding and little housing.

DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS & FACILITIES

Parks are distributed throughout the City. The five largest, are located in the NE, NW and SW Quadrants. These quadrants also have one each of the City's three community/recreation centers. The SE Quadrant has the fewest facilities both by number and acreage. Most of the City's parks and facilities (sports courts, fields, children's play areas, picnic areas) are in the NE, NW and SW Quadrants, within these quadrants, facilities are fairly evenly distributed, the SE quadrant has significantly

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH 2010-2030



1,806

NEW DWELLING UNITS

174

NEW DWELLING UNITS

346

NEW DWELLING UNITS

631

NEW DWELLING UNITS

-  BOUNDARY
-  CITY PARK
-  POP GROWTH

NW Growth	NE Growth	SE Growth	SW Growth
9%	1%	11%	5%
2010: 17,500 2022: 19,000	2010: 24,500 2022: 24,850	2010: 28,000 2022: 32,000	2010: 28,000 2022: 29,400



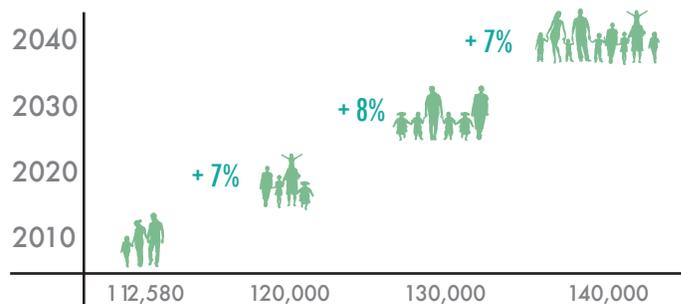
fewer facilities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

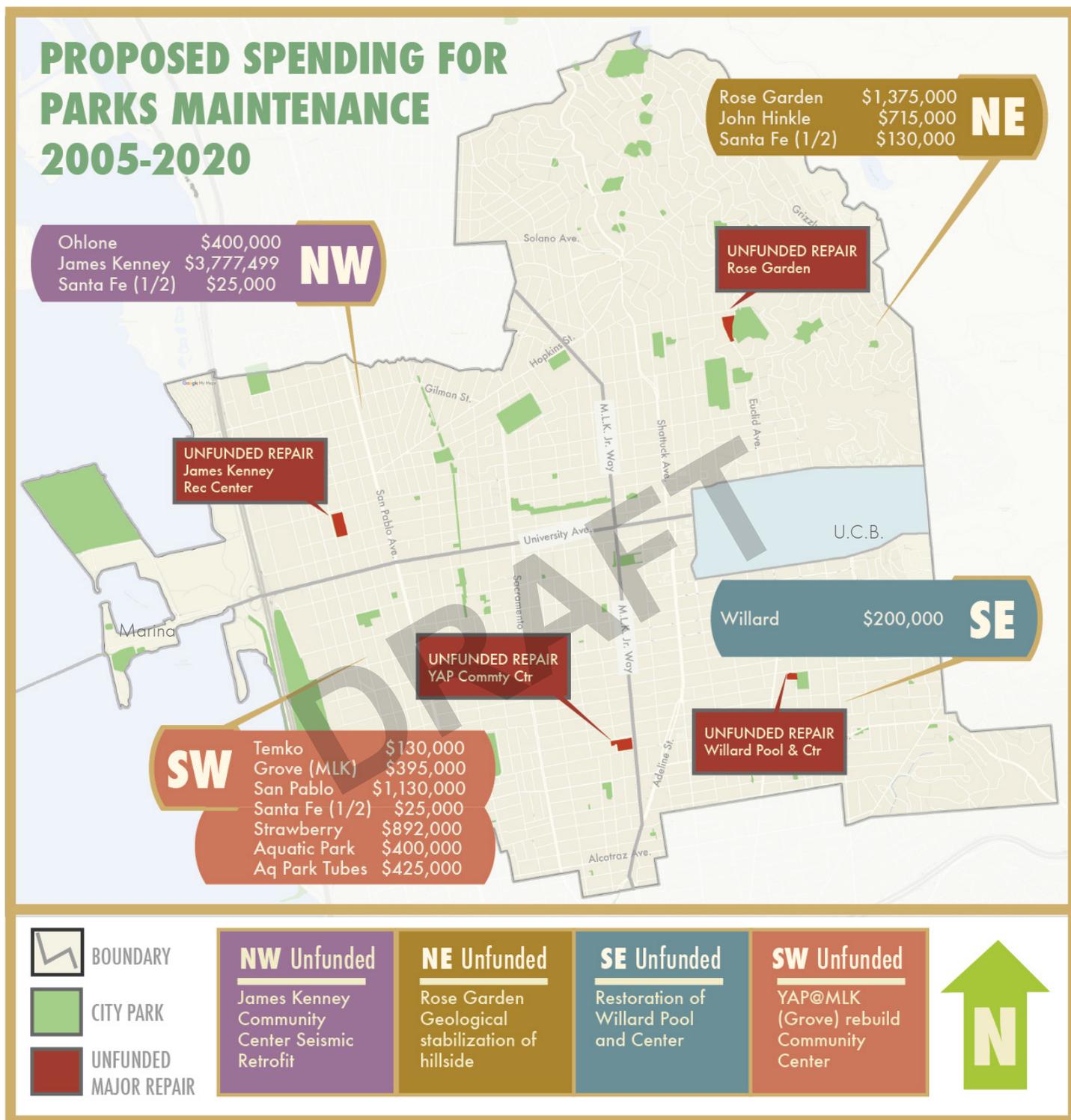
The Subcommittee has gathered demographic information for population and housing units. We have assembled a Fact Sheet that shows current and projected numbers city-wide and by quadrant. The current population is expected to increase 15% over the next 20 years - from 112,000 (2010) to 140,000 (2030).

New housing will increase especially along commercial

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH CITY WIDE



corridors in the SW NW and SE Quadrants of the City. Some near term examples of growth include BUSD's projection of 3% growth of its student population in the next two years and new housing at the foot of University Avenue where 480 units of new housing have been constructed and/or approved over the last three years with an additional 135 units currently under review.



PROPOSED SPENDING

As of July 2015 proposed spending through 2020, on major maintenance projects is distributed as follows: NE - \$2.22 M, NW - \$4.2 M, SW - \$3.4 M and SW \$2 M. Additionally the Marina projects including Cesar Chavez Park (funded by the Marina Fund) will receive \$2.4 M.

The majority of the projects address serious deficiencies that, left unattended, will have costly consequences. These projects

were determined to be the most necessary and have the highest priority. They are a portion of the total need and the scope reflects the funds available. Unfortunately many major maintenance projects remain unscheduled and unfunded. Some of these projects are shown on the map "Proposed Spending For Parks Maintenance"

RECREATION PROGRAMS: CATEGORIES & DISTRIBUTION

Recreation programs are concentrated in the four large community/recreational centers – Frances Albrier at San Pablo Park, Live Oak, James Kenney and Grove. There are also a few programs run out of the Willard Park Clubhouse and the Harrison Park Field House. Program distribution throughout the City is based on the community/recreation centers being located in the NE, SW and NW quadrants.

The recreation programs offered by the City are extensive, varied and growing in popularity. A complete list of programs and activities is listed on the City's website. Programs seeing major growth (often having waiting lists) are in the early childhood – tots and pre-K (First Five) – and after-school programs. According to the Recreation Division, after-school programs have expanded, could expand further and may need additional facility space. A full analysis of how the parks can better serve the community's recreation needs should be conducted.

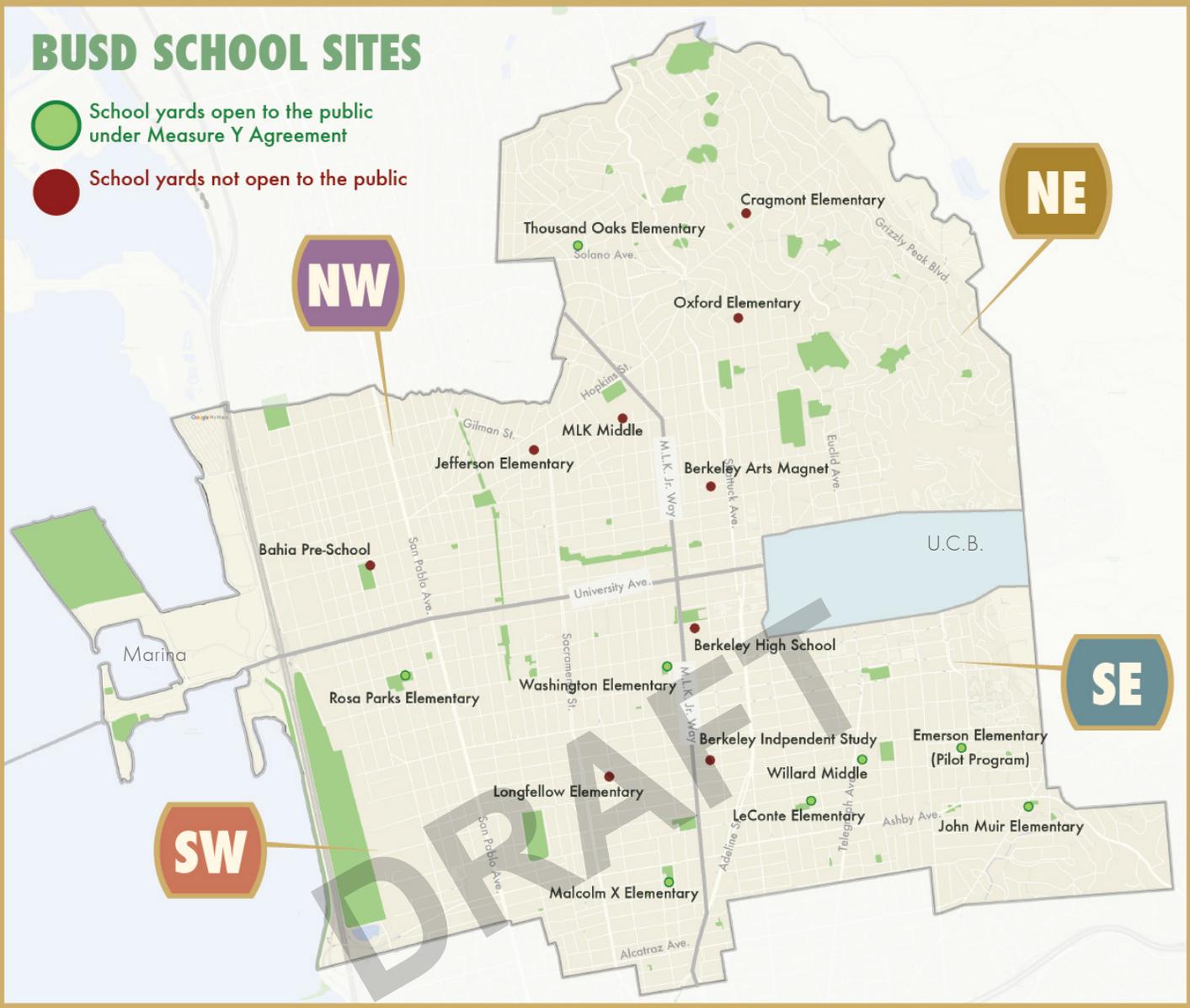
COMMUNITY/RECREATIONAL CENTERS' SUPPORT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Two of Berkeley's three large community/recreational centers are located in northwest (NW) and southwest (SW) Berkeley. These centers and parks have in the past provided essential opportunities for outdoor play, sports and recreational programs to the surrounding lower income neighborhoods. The buildings' gymnasias and sports courts, and activity and meeting rooms host neighborhood functions and meetings as well as city-wide programs. These programs traditionally have supported the neighborhoods by bringing immediate, close access to affordable activities. A further look at specific needs of neighborhoods for recreation program access should be conducted.



BUSD SCHOOL SITES

- School yards open to the public under Measure Y Agreement
- School yards not open to the public



 BOUNDARY

 CITY PARK

NW Schools	NE Schools	SE Schools	SW Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jefferson Elementary ● Bahia Pre-School ● M.L.K. Middle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cragmont Elementary ● Oxford Elementary ● Berkeley Arts Magnet ● Thousand Oaks Elementary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Berkeley High School ● Berkeley Indep. Study ● Willard Middle ● LeConte Elementary ● John Muir Elementary ● Emerson Elementary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Longfellow Elementary ● Washington Elementary ● Malcolm X Elementary ● Rosa Parks Elementary



BUSD SCHOOLYARDS

An initial glance at the general distribution of the parks throughout the City Quadrants shows that geographically, there is uneven distribution. This fact prompted a look at the location of BUSD schoolyards. Some school sites are open to the community now and in the future others could possibly supplement areas that have fewer parks and facilities.

MEASURE Y USE AGREEMENT

Measure Y is an active agreement established 25 years ago between the City of Berkeley and BUSD that allows use of six of the District's elementary and one middle schools' schoolyards by the community after school hours and activities and on weekends. The sites include Thousand Oaks, Rosa Parks, Washington, Le Conte, Malcolm X, John Muir and King MS. Per the agreement, the principals of each school can determine use and schedule for their school site. The Subcommittee surveyed the

BUSD Schoolyards principals to see how program is going. All of the responding principals (6 of 7) were supportive of the community's use of the outdoor facilities. A few problems involving litter and minor vandalism were noted.

BUSD SCHOOL SITES

There are BUSD school sites distributed throughout the City as well as the high school's downtown campus. All the schools have outdoor open space that is variously developed. In general, BUSD school sites tend to fill in where there are gaps in geographically even distribution of the parks throughout the City.

Currently there is a pilot program for community access to the schoolyard at Emerson School. This program should be monitored to determine it's potential as a positive model for other sites.

IMPROVEMENTS AND NEW PARKS

In addition to major maintenance projects in the parks, exciting ideas for major improvements to existing parks and new park development are always topics for discussion. Strategies should be developed for funding improvements.

CONCLUSION

The data in this report is intended to initiate and provide a basis for a conversation that pertains to equitably and evenly distributing public funds to maintain, renovate and improve Berkeley's parks facilities as the City enters a growth period that is projected to increase population by at least 15% over the next 20 years.

The hope is that Berkeley can plan for a sustainable park system that will be based on identified community standards, have a solid financial base and fulfill today's undeveloped potential to serve our growing population.

DATA SOURCES

- City of Berkeley Website - Community Profile Data
- City of Berkeley General Plan - Housing Element 2015
- City of Berkeley General Plan - Open Space and Recreation Element 2000(?)
- Department of Parks Recreation and Waterfront - www.cityofberkeley.info/recreation
- Winter and Spring Recreation
- Activity Guide 2015, Summer Recreation Activity Guide 2015
- Conversation with Denise Brown, Recreation and Youth Services Manager, Recreation Division, Parks Recreation and Waterfront Department
- Department of Parks Recreation and Waterfront 5-Year Major Maintenance/Capital Plan, 3/11/15

ACADEMIC STUDIES

- "Parks + Parks Funding in Los Angeles - An Equity Mapping Analysis", J. Wolch, J. Wilson, J. Fehrenbach
- "Got Green? Addressing Environmental Justice in Park Provision", C. Sister, J. Wolch, J. Wilson
- "Urban Green Space, Public Health, and Environmental Justice: The challenge of making cities 'just green enough'", J. Wolch, J. Byrne, J. Newell
- "The Active City? Disparities in Provision of Urban Public Recreation Resources", N. Dahmann, J. Wolch, Joassart-Maricelli, K. Reynolds, M. Jarrett



PART II: CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS

GOAL/SUMMARY

Based on the data and findings presented in Part I the Parks and Waterfront Commission held discussions regarding conclusions, recommendations, and actions to support the goals of equitable application of funds throughout the City and to insure that the parks continue to have the ability to meet increased needs brought about by population growth.

1 CONCLUSION, New residents should invest and contribute financially to Berkeley parks.

RECOMMENDATION

- Investigate additional funding mechanisms for parks based on new residents.
- Consider access to Transfer Tax, New Unit Surcharge, Building Permit Fee, etc.

ACTION

- As background, review history of parks funding and development in Berkeley.
- Research Strategies (Planning Dept. has asked SF to review other cities' in lieu type fee programs).
- Establish new residents definition, i.e. new housing units, etc. and alternatives for contributions.

2 CONCLUSION, Parks use will increase due to increase in population.

RECOMMENDATION

- Investigate strategies for expanding parks' capacity.

ACTIONS

- Determine which parks can absorb more intense development and increased use and/or review potential for expansion of programs and activities in existing parks.
- Investigate potential new or expanded park development on City-owned sites, including mini-parks, Cesar Chavez, Adeline Corridor, Santa Fe ROW, etc.

3 CONCLUSION There is an increase in the population of families with children, so expansion of facilities and programs for children may be needed.

RECOMMENDATION

- Establish a program to identify and meet the needs for facilities and recreation programs expansion.

ACTIONS

- Confirm demographic assumptions through data collection or other method.
- Outline and initiate an analysis (planning) process for identifying and meeting needs Collaborate with Recreation Division for program data (current and future)
- Initiate conversation with BUSD regarding sharing facilities.

4 CONCLUSION Parks use may change over time.

RECOMMENDATION

- Initiate an analysis process to study how parks and parks use may change.

ACTIONS

- Review how parks are used now; look at how they may be used in the future. Collaborate with the Recreation Division to assess recreation programs needs now and in the future.

5 CONCLUSION With the demographic shift in Berkeley neighborhoods, the City is no longer able to compete for state, fed money, and other grants for disadvantaged areas.

RECOMMENDATION

- Look for alternative funding sources.

ACTION

- Review funding options including a development foundation, access of City taxes (see above), bonds, etc.

6 CONCLUSION Berkeley's approach to public facilities (multiple, smaller) is neighborhood focused – libraries, pools, parks, elementary/middle schools.

RECOMMENDATION

- Support this condition and preference.

ACTIONS

- Review existing conditions and the role rec programs and facilities play in the support neighborhoods (especially in South Berkeley).
- Establish standards or guidelines for equitable distribution of facilities & programs supporting neighborhood access.

7 CONCLUSION There is often neighborhood support for supplemental funding of neighborhood focused projects (mini-grant program, Thousand Oaks urn project, Halcyon sculpture, etc.) by resident's direct contributions.

RECOMMENDATION

- Develop strategies to encourage and support supplemental funding for public projects.

ACTIONS

- Review history of programs in Berkeley, Develop guidelines to encourage and support neighborhood efforts.

8 CONCLUSION There are gaps in facilities and programs in some quadrants and neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDATION

- Propose equitable strategy for filling gaps.

ACTION

- Increase accuracy of current data
- Develop standards for access to facilities and programs
- Develop scenarios to implement equitable distribution of facilities and programs

9 CONCLUSION There is a potential for parks facilities to generate revenue.

RECOMMENDATION

- Investigate the potential for revenue generation.

ACTIONS

- Conduct study to identify potential revenue generators (including analysis of similar programs in other places)
- Develop goals and guidelines for revenue generation.
- Develop strategies to implement programs to generate revenue.

10 CONCLUSION There is an opportunity to increase access to open space and recreation through a collaboration between Parks and Recreation and the BUSD.

RECOMMENDATION

- Explore potential collaborations.

ACTION

- Initiate meetings of Parks and Waterfront Commission, BUSD Board, Children, Youth, and Recreation Commissions.

