

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who are the stakeholders for this project and how is it funded?

City staff have been working on this project with community members since 2017. After much community feedback, the City Council approved the conceptual design study in 2017, along with \$35M of other projects, as a part of Phase 1 of the T1 Bond measure. In December of 2020, after over 45 community meetings, the City Council approved \$7M towards the rebuilding of a new Clubhouse at Willard Park.

2. What programs currently use the Willard Clubhouse?

Pre-Covid, the City of Berkeley offered an afterschool program for Grades TK thru Grade 5 during the school year, and summer camp programming during the summer. During the summer, Willard Park was the site that generally provided extended morning AM care and PM extended care, offering families an affordable option for full day childcare during the summers.

During the school year, the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) was able to offer bus service from the nearest elementary schools such as Emerson, Sylvia Mendez, John Muir and Malcolm X elementary schools. BUSD programs are often at capacity and the City offers another affordable option to families seeking afterschool care.

These programs were greatly reduced and altered during the pandemic to meet requirements of the local Health Order by implementing such options as reduced group size and stable cohorts. Affordable childcare options are in great need.

3. When will afterschool care and summer camp programs return to the Clubhouse?

The City's fall session of after-school program begins Monday, August 16, 2021. Currently, 45 children are enrolled with a capped waiting list of 50. Summer camp programming is also anticipated to return next summer.

4. Can the City of Berkeley expand its afterschool care and summer camp programs at Willard?

Additional square footage for the clubhouse will mean an expansion of existing programs and the addition of many other programs. The current programs are limited in size due to the size and condition of the clubhouse. As-is, enrollment for after-school and summer programs are limited to approximately 45 children, with an extensive waitlist. Program is primarily outdoors as the size of the clubhouse cannot accommodate the occupancy. The clubhouse is mainly used to store supplies and belongings, prepare snacks, provide a restroom, and an area for staff to manage the program. Any increase in enrollment must also include an increase in staffing to maintain minimum supervision standards, requiring a building with a

higher occupancy limit. Additional square footage for the clubhouse size will mean new Age 0-5 programs and adult classes.

5. I can't afford childcare, what other childcare options does the City of Berkeley offer?

The City offers up to 100% scholarships, based on HUD income guidelines, for many programs. If you are interested in applying for a scholarship in order to participate in our Programs, please read the [Scholarship Application](#) (click here for [Scholarship Application](#)) in its entirety and send the completed form and supplemental information to recreation@cityofberkeley.info. Spaces are filled on a first come, first served basis, with priority registration given to scholarship recipients. Please call (510) 981-5150 or visit the following website for additional information: <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/RecreationRegistration/>

6. Willard Middle School already has an afterschool program, why do you need an afterschool program at Willard Clubhouse?

Willard Middle School provided afterschool options for their own middle schoolers in Grades 6 thru 8. Willard Clubhouse provides aftercare for a different age group – elementary age students from Grades TK thru 5.

7. Can Willard Middle School be used by the City of Berkeley to run programs and community meetings?

No. Willard Middle School is owned and operated by the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD). BUSD has no room for such City programs. Additionally, the City of Berkeley and BUSD memorandum of understanding does not include the Willard School site.

8. Why do we need a larger building?

The current building, amenities, condition, and configuration limits the type of use and programming that can be offered at the site. A larger facility will support a multitude of programming options and more extensive facility hours to activate the entire park and foster positive community engagements.

The Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront is exploring the use of the building for toddler programs in the morning, afterschool programming in the afternoon, and possible community events and facility rentals in the evenings and weekends.

Additionally, childcare programs are cancelled during inclement weather (such as rain and poor air quality) because the indoor facility cannot accommodate the occupancy of the programs. A larger facility would support a more stable and reliable childcare service for our participating families.

9. Why do we need a new building?

The current building in its condition is difficult to maintain and needs various upgrades and facility improvements to be able to meet current building codes and the City's sustainability and resiliency goals. Additionally, the needs of the community are continually changing, and a new, more flexible building will be able to sustain the City's ability to offer programs that meet current needs.

10. Will a new building be a Care and Shelter site for the City of Berkeley? Will people be sheltered here?

"Care and Shelter" sites in Berkeley is a safety designation that indicates that the facility must meet certain structural and seismic safety standards to withstand an emergency event, such as a significant earthquake, and still be immediately operable to use the facility for any use that would benefit the community during the aftermath of the emergency event. The type of use would be dependent on the emergency. For example, the facility could be used to distribute food, water, or supplies should an earthquake disrupt public utilities such as gas, electricity or water service. Because of the proposed size of the building, it is not likely to be use for sheltering, but emergency use of the building will be based on the type of emergency. More information about a resilient Berkeley can be found here:

<https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Resilience/>

11. Can we use Willard Middle School for community events and rentals?

The public may certainly request facility rentals at Willard Middle School or other BUSD Facilities. Facility rentals must be coordinated directly with BUSD as the City has no lease or memorandum of understanding to use or manage programs from the Willard Middle School facility. The City of Berkeley and the BUSD are two separate and distinct entities. More information regarding BUSD Facility Rentals can be found here: <https://www.berkeleyschools.net/departments/facilities/>

12. Can we use Claremont Library for community events and rentals?

Claremont Library does offer a flex space in the rear of the Children's area that, Pre-Covid, was reservable on Tuesday evenings from 5:30pm-7:30pm. It is not a dedicated room for events and has limited use. More information about reservable space in our Public Libraries may be found here:

<https://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/library/meeting-rooms>

13. Why do we need a larger building? There are plenty of other spaces that the community can use for events and rentals.

Though there are several facilities in the area that can be reserved and used by the community, including at the Claremont Library, BUSD facilities, and other local private facilities such as local churches or through the University, this quadrant of Southeast Berkeley has the fewest options. Community members have expressed

the want and need for a space that would be able to offer more opportunities for both programming and rentals.

14. Can the new Clubhouse be constructed at the Willard Pool site?

The site that housed the former Willard Pool is owned by the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD). The pool was closed many years ago, but the City of Berkeley's lease of the site expired at the end of 2020. Until that time, the City of Berkeley leased the building for our Recreation program Administration Office and ran a shower program, but the lease agreement was not renewed by BUSD. The City no longer has a lease or a memorandum of understanding to use the site, therefore the new Clubhouse cannot be constructed. Without a long-term lease, Measure T1 funds may not be utilized to fund any improvements. Please contact BUSD regarding their plans for that site.

15. Is the Willard Pool going to come back?

The site of the former Willard Pool is owned by the Berkeley Unified School District. The City of Berkeley has no jurisdiction, memorandum of understanding, or lease to use or develop that site.

16. What will happen to the Potter's Wall?

Unknown at this time. Any modifications or removal of it would be coordinated with the City's Civic Arts Program.

17. How long will construction last?

Construction of a new building is anticipated to take approximately 18 months.

18. Will the public restrooms be separated from the new Clubhouse?

Yes, the public restrooms will be separate from the new Clubhouse. The conceptual design proposes two gender neutral public restrooms that are detached from the new Clubhouse.

19. Will the new building have a restroom?

Yes, the community building will have its own restrooms for program and facility rental use, which will be separate from the public restroom planned for another area of the park.

20. Are the zoom community meetings being recorded?

Community meetings held via zoom are not recorded. Meetings are only recorded when they include a legislative body.

21. I rarely see the clubhouse open, what is the clubhouse building used for?

Pre-Covid, the clubhouse was currently only used for the City of Berkeley's recreational programming. During the summers, the City of Berkeley used the site

for various summer camp programs from 7:30am-6pm. During the school year, BUSD was able to provide school bus service from a few BUSD elementary schools to the Willard Afterschool program for grades TK thru 5. The afterschool program generally ran from 2pm-6pm, depending on the season, and was an affordable option for afterschool care, especially when the local BUSD school programs were overloaded. Interest in the afterschool program has steadily increased, and prior to Covid provided services to approximately 40 children, with an extensive waitlist. Programs are primarily outdoors as the size of the clubhouse cannot accommodate the occupancy and is mainly used to store supplies and belongings, prepare snacks, provide a restroom, and an area for staff to manage the program.

22. Why isn't the clubhouse open more often, on the weekends, or in the evenings, and available to the public to use?

The size of the clubhouse, and amenities (such as the interior restroom) cannot provide sufficient occupancy or security for unstaffed public use. The single room is mainly used to store supplies and items necessary to run and manage recreational programming. In addition, the building lacks amenities that would be beneficial for public use, e.g. kitchenette, tables, chairs, AV equipment, sufficient lighting, air circulation, etc.

23. What is the history of the park?

Willard Park was founded in the late 1950's, and the clubhouse was constructed in the 1970's. The park has been the site of community activism, community events, tennis tournaments, afterschool programs, special events, and general recreational opportunities. Additional history of the park and its development can be found on the City's Park Index and website here:

[https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Parks_Rec_Waterfront/Trees_Parks/Willard_Park\(2\).aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Parks_Rec_Waterfront/Trees_Parks/Willard_Park(2).aspx)

24. What other improvement projects have been done at this park?

Willard Park was founded in the late 1950's, and the clubhouse was constructed in the 1970's. Since then, projects at Willard Park include:

1991 – Hillegass Avenue public restroom

1992 – Derby Hillegass entry improvements

1994 – Playground relocated from east side of clubhouse to west side of tennis courts.

2004 – Tennis court lighting improvements

2014 – Tennis court renovations

2017 – Tot lot and pathway renovations

25. This project seems rushed, how long has this project been in process?

Because this area of Berkeley does not contain as much park space, open space, or community space, there has always been interest in finding funding to improve and maintain the park.

Interest and traction for more modern improvements to the park started in 2008 when the City received funding from Measure WW, an East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD) bond. The WW funding was used for park improvements, and due to the time needed to allocate and secure the funding from EBRPD, and large number of projects funded at that time, the renovation to the tennis courts was completed in 2014 and renovations to the tot lot was completed in 2017. The WW funding however was not sufficient for improvements to park buildings, such as the Clubhouse.

In 2016, with the passage of Measure T1 (the City of Berkeley's \$100 Million bond to improve existing city infrastructure and facilities), the City had a new funding source to allocate around the city for infrastructure improvements. More information on the Measure T1 process can be found here:

<https://www.cityofberkeley.info/MeasureT1/>

In 2017, through a series of workshops, meetings, and commissions, the City endeavored to allocate the first \$35 Million in projects looking at a multitude of objectives, including equity, resiliency, sustainability, cost effectiveness, project readiness, community support, etc. And in June 2017, the City Council approved a list of projects all over the city, including funding to start planning and conceptual design of improvements to the Willard Clubhouse.

Interest in making positive improvements to Willard Park increased when the University of California released plans to close and develop the nearby site of People's Park, further reducing open space in this area of Berkeley.

The planning and conceptual design of Willard Clubhouse funded by Measure T1 phase 1, began in 2018. City staff and consultants managed a series of stakeholder meetings, workshops, and online feedback that concluded in 2020. In 2021, based on work completed to date, City Council allocated funding from Measure T1 phase 2 to complete the design and construction for the Willard Clubhouse replacement. The City staff and consultants are currently undertaking the process to develop the designs, continue gathering community feedback, and construct the Willard Clubhouse replacement.

- 26. The current clubhouse is 565 sf, with an additional 486 sf of a covered patio, and the current iteration of the building replacement is 4340 sf. Why the large increase?**

The current building is approximately 1050 sqft (including the covered patio), and its amenities, condition, and configuration limits the type of use and programming that can be offered at the site. A larger facility will support a multitude of programming options and more extensive facility hours to activate the entire park and foster positive community engagements.

The size and configuration of a replacement building is still being discussed and developed. The proposed one-story building size and massing hopes to balance the needs for programming, maintain as much open space as possible, and enhance the park and neighborhood environment.

The Willard Park Clubhouse building is not anticipated to offer the same level of programming as MLK Jr. Youth Center/YAP (South Central Berkeley, footprint approx. 11,300 SF), Frances Albrier Community Center (SW Berkeley, footprint approx. 13,000 SF), James Kenney Community Center (NW Berkeley, footprint approx. 14,250 SF), or Live Oak Community Center (North Berkeley, footprint approx. 15,300 SF). Willard Park Clubhouse is the City's only recreational facility in this area of Southeast Berkeley.

The current building in its current condition is difficult to maintain and needs various upgrades and facility improvements to be able to meet current building codes and the City's sustainability and resiliency goals. Additionally, the needs of the community are continually changing, and a new, more flexible building will be able to sustain the City's ability to offer programs that meet current needs.

27. How are you notifying the public of the public meetings and opportunities to provide feedback?

At a minimum, public notices are posted at the site, emailed to interested parties who have opted-in/requested to be included in project notifications, mailed to occupants and property owners surrounding the site via USPS, posted to the City's Event Calendar, posted to the Berkeleyside Event Calendar, included in Measure T1 notifications, posted to the City's Website and Capital Improvements Projects website, posted to the City's other Recreational Facilities, advertisements posted to the Recreation Division email list, handed out around the site and door to door, and forwarded to members of the City Council and the Parks and Waterfront Commission.

Please call (510) 981-6700 or send an email with your contact information to T1@cityofberkeley.info with the subject heading "Add to Willard Park email list" to opt-in to our email list for direct notifications regarding the Willard Park Clubhouse project.