

**City of Belmont**  
**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN**



**November 10, 1992**

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**Approved by Belmont City Council**

**November 10, 1992**

**Callander Associates**  
landscape architecture  
park and recreation planning

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Open Space Fire Hazard Assessment
- Sample Tree Inventory and Summary Report

# **I. INTRODUCTION**

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Opportunities for recreation activities are a major factor in determining the quality of life in any given community. All segments of the population from young to old need outlets for creativity, socialization, exercise, and fun. Provision of recreation services is considered to be a basic municipal responsibility, as is the provision of roads, water, police, and fire services.

Life in Belmont is greatly enhanced by the City's parks, open space areas, hills, and trees. These are the elements that do much to create the community's identity. Preservation of these resources is critical to the preservation of the character of Belmont. Enhancement and positive development of the local parks and open spaces will enable the community to "get the most" out of available resources.

## **Purpose of the Master Plan**

This document is a long range plan that describes the development, operation, and maintenance of the City's park and open space system through the year 2007. The planning process involves five main components:

1. Inventory and analysis of existing parks and open spaces, potential new park areas, and other existing conditions.
2. Analysis of current demand and future trends.
3. Identification of goals and policies to guide the development of the system.
4. Development of action plan recommendations for the 15-year planning period.
5. Development of an implementation plan to describe costs, funding, operation, and maintenance of the system, including street trees and open space management.

## **Previous Planning Efforts**

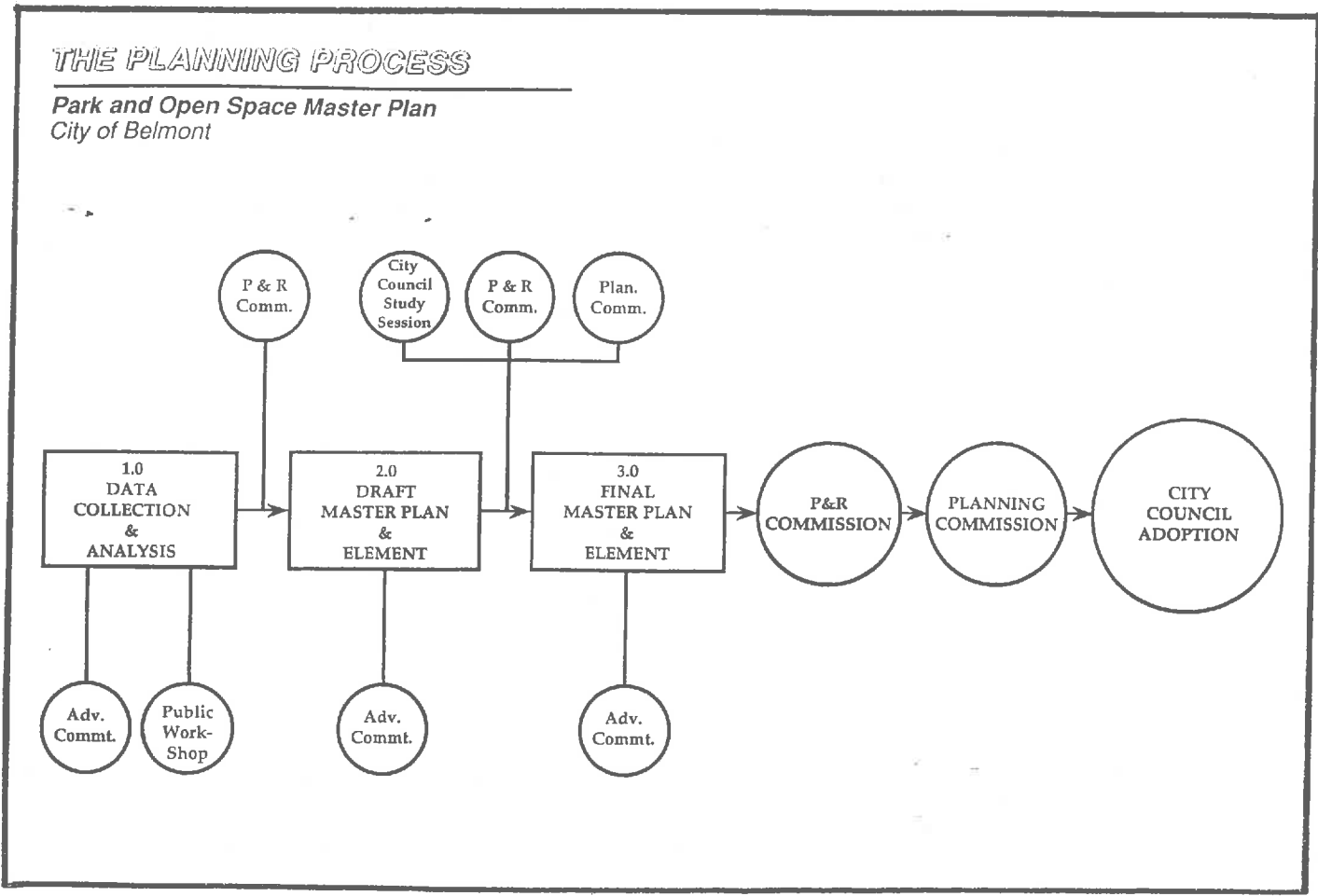
Belmont has a long history of planning for parks and recreation. The City's current policies on parks and open spaces are set forth in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of the General Plan, adopted in 1982. Many of the Element's action items have been accomplished, including development of the Belmont Sports Complex and Twin Pines Park. Previous versions of the Element were also prepared in 1977 and 1968.

## **The Current Planning Process**

The current planning process, illustrated on the diagram on the next page, involves both the preparation of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan, and the revision of the City's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of the General Plan. An advisory committee, including City staff and two members from each commission, has been formed to review each document

and provide input throughout the process. The following meetings were conducted to facilitate public and City involvement in the planning process (all dates 1992):

|                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Advisory Committee:              | March 4, 1992     |
|                                  | April 1           |
|                                  | April 21          |
|                                  | May 19            |
|                                  | June 16           |
|                                  | July 21           |
| Public Workshop:                 | April 9           |
| Parks and Recreation Commission: | May 6             |
|                                  | July 8            |
|                                  | September 2       |
| Planning Commission:             | September 15      |
|                                  | October 6         |
| City Council Study Session:      | July 14           |
| City Council:                    | November 10, 1992 |



## **Master Plan Monitoring Process**

This master plan is a flexible planning tool intended to be periodically reviewed and evaluated in light of changing conditions. The plan is not legally binding and may be modified by the City Council. The plan should be updated at least every five years. Since this is a fifteen-year plan, a new effort should begin in the twelfth or thirteenth year to address the next 15-year period from 2007 to 2022.

## **Future Park and Open Space Planning Process**

Upon adoption of this Master Plan, the City may begin to implement the individual projects described in Chapters VIII and IX. Further planning will be necessary. The process will be similar for each specific project, with the following general sequence:

1. Secure project funding.
2. Prepare master plan.
3. Prepare preliminary design.
4. Prepare construction documents.
5. Construct and maintain the project.

Depending on the magnitude of the project, the City may retain a professional design or planning consultant to assist the City staff. The entire sequence will be open to public review. Generally, the early master plan and preliminary phases will involve public participation workshops to help determine the general direction and specific details of each project. Approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission, the City Council, and possibly the Planning Commission will be required. Public review and comment will be an integral part of these meetings. The public will be notified of all meetings and workshops by the Parks and Recreation Department through a variety of methods. Such methods may include posting notices at the project site, notifying homeowners' associations, publication in the local press, or others.



## II. POPULATION ANALYSIS

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Planning for parks and recreation facilities relies upon an understanding of the people who live in the community and how the population is expected to change in the future. Population levels are the major determinant of the amount of acreage of parkland and number of individual facilities to be provided. Population characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and household composition are important factors in determining appropriate types of recreation facilities and programs.

### City-Wide Demographic Profile

Belmont is a fairly affluent middle class residential community located in a major metropolitan area characterized by a relatively high cost of living. The mean value of a single-family home in Belmont is \$418,021. Most residents (96.8%) are white or Asian. Most (75.3%) are family members, and an average of 2.34 persons reside in each household. Female persons account for 51.2% of the population.

### Population Level

The current population of the City of Belmont is 24,127, according to the 1990 Census. Belmont's population has remained stable over the past 20 years, and is not expected to significantly increase over the 15 year life of this master plan.

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**Table II-1**  
**POPULATION LEVEL - CITY OF BELMONT**

| <u>Year</u>      | <u>Population</u> | <u>Change During Preceding Decade</u> |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1970             | 23,667            | -                                     |
| 1980             | 24,505            | 1.9% increase                         |
| 1990             | 24,127            | 1.5% decrease                         |
| 2000 (projected) | 25,700            | 6.5% increase                         |
| 2010 (projected) | 25,700            | no change                             |

Sources: U.S. Census, 1970, 1980, 1990  
Projections 90 by ABAG, December 1989

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While the city-wide population has varied little over the past twenty years, the population level of several of the five planning areas changed between 1980 and 1990. In general, the neighborhoods east of the railroad tracks experienced population growth, while the remainder of the City either declined or stabilized.

**Table II-2**  
**CHANGES IN POPULATION LEVEL, 1980 to 1990**

| <u>City of Belmont</u>       | <u>East Belmont Sterling Downs Homeview</u> | <u>Central Country Club</u> | <u>Cipriani The Plateau Skymont</u> | <u>Carlmont Western Hills Hallmark</u> | <u>Chula Vista Sunnyslope</u> |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1980: 24,505<br>1990: 24,127 | 1980: 3,362<br>1990: 3,624                  | 1980: 6,688<br>1990: 6,529  | 1980: 5,923<br>1990: 5,601          | 1980: 5,890<br>1990: 5,925             | 1980: 2,640<br>1990: 2,448    |
| 1.5% decrease                | 15.2% increase                              | 2.3% decrease               | 5.4% decrease                       | 0.5% increase                          | 7.3% decrease                 |

Source: U.S. Census, 1980 and 1990

## Age Distribution

Age structure is important because different age groups demand different kinds of services. For instance, young children require safe play areas, youth are benefited by supervised programs, younger adults will likely demand opportunities for active recreation and an older population will call for opportunities for social interaction. Table II-3 shows the age distribution for the entire City, and as broken down into the five planning areas. East Belmont/Sterling Downs/Homeview has the greatest percentage of younger adults. Cipriani/Plateau/Skymont has the greatest percentage of middle adults. Chula Vista/Sunnyslope has the greatest percentage of seniors.

**Table II-3**  
**AGE DISTRIBUTION - 1990**

| <u>Age Group</u>               | <u>City of Belmont</u> | <u>East Belmont Sterling Downs Homeview</u> | <u>Central Country Club</u> | <u>Cipriani The Plateau Skymont</u> | <u>Carlmont Western Hills Hallmark</u> | <u>Chula Vista Sunnyslope</u> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Young children (under 5 years) | 6%                     | 7%  | 5%                          | 7%                                  | 5%                                     | 7%                            |
| Children (5-11 years)          | 7%                     | 7%  | 6%                          | 8%                                  | 6%                                     | 7%                            |
| Teens (12-18 years)            | 6%                     | 6%  | 6%                          | 7%                                  | 5%                                     | 6%                            |
| Younger Adults (19-34 years)   | 29%                    | 39%   | 28%                         | 21%                                 | 34%                                    | 22%                           |
| Middle Adults (35-64 years)    | 41%                    | 34%   | 42%                         | 47%                                 | 39%                                    | 42%                           |
| Seniors (Over 65 years)        | 11%                    | 7%  | 13%                         | 10%                                 | 11%                                    | 16%                           |

Source: U.S. Census, 1990.

Table II-4 indicates that although the overall population level has stabilized, the age distribution shifted somewhat between 1980 and 1990. Increased percentages of children under 5 years and people over 65 years indicates that the population is simultaneously aging, and experiencing a baby "boomlet".

**Table II-4**  
**CHANGES IN AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1980 to 1990**

|   | <u>1980 pop. (% of total)</u> | <u>1990 pop. (% of total)</u> | <u>Change 1980 - 1990</u> |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>City of Belmont</u>                            |                               |                               |                           |
| Under 5   | 1,080 (4.4%)                  | 1,430 (5.9%)                  | 32.4% increase            |
| Over 65   | 1,933 (7.9%)                  | 2,755 (11.4%)                 | 42.5% increase            |
| <u>East Belmont, Sterling Downs, and Homeview</u> |                               |                               |                           |
| Under 5   | 193 (5.7%)                    | 267 (7.4%)                    | 38.3% increase            |
| Over 65   | 172 (5.1%)                    | 250 (6.9%)                    | 45.3% increase            |
| <u>Central and Country Club</u>                   |                               |                               |                           |
| Under 5   | 269 (4%)                      | 337 (5.2%)                    | 25.2% increase            |
| Over 65   | 655 (9.8%)                    | 866 (13.3%)                   | 32.2% increase            |
| <u>Cipriani, The Plateau, and Skymont</u>         |                               |                               |                           |
| Under 5   | 344 (5.8%)                    | 379 (6.8%)                    | 10.1% increase            |
| Over 65   | 313 (5.3%)                    | 579 (10.3%)                   | 85.0% increase            |
| <u>Carlmont, Western Hills, and Hallmark</u>      |                               |                               |                           |
| Under 5   | 215 (3.7%)                    | 282 (4.8%)                    | 31.2% increase            |
| Over 65   | 508 (8.6%)                    | 679 (11.5%)                   | 33.7% increase            |
| <u>Chula Vista and Sunnyslope</u>                 |                               |                               |                           |
| Under 5   | 59 (2.2%)                     | 165 (6.7%)                    | 179.7% increase           |
| Over 65   | 285 (10.8%)                   | 381 (15.6%)                   | 33.7% increase            |

Source: U.S. Census 1990

## Ethnic Composition

Belmont is a predominantly white community, with Asians making up the next largest population. Persons of Hispanic origin account for 7.3% of the total City population. (Hispanic people are included within all five racial groups by the U.S. Census.) Table II-5 indicates that the ethnic composition remains relatively similar in each of the five planning areas. Notable exceptions are the higher-than-average representation of blacks and Hispanic-origin persons in East Belmont/Sterling Downs/Homeview, of whites in Chula Vista/Sunnyslope, and of Asians in Carlmont/Western Hills/Hallmark.

**Table II-5**  
**ETHNIC COMPOSITION - 1990**

| <b>Ethnic Group</b>      | <b>City of Belmont</b> | <b>East Belmont Sterling Downs Homeview</b> | <b>Central Country Club</b> | <b>Cipriani The Plateau Skymont</b> | <b>Carlmont Western Hills Hallmark</b> | <b>Chula Vista Sunnyslope</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| White                    | 86.8%                  | 83.9%                                       | 87.8%                       | 88.6%                               | 84.7%                                  | 89.5%                         |
| Asian & Pacific Islander | 10.0%                  | 9.6%  | 9.0%                        | 9.8%                                | 12.3%                                  | 7.8%                          |
| Black                    | 1.6%                   | 3.8%  | 1.2%                        | 0.8%                                | 1.5%                                   | 1.3%                          |
| Native American          | 0.4%                   | 0.5%  | 0.3%                        | 0.3%                                | 0.4%                                   | 0.6%                          |
| Other (Hispanic origin)  | 1.2% (7.3%)            | 2.0% (11.6%)                                | 1.5% (7.3%)                 | 0.4% (5.3%)                         | 1.1% (6.7%)                            | 0.7% (6.6%)                   |

Source: 1990 Census

## Housing Values

The mean value of an owner-occupied housing unit (single family home or condominium unit) is \$418,021. Of the five Belmont planning areas, housing values are roughly equal to the city-wide average in three areas, while they are significantly lower in the East Belmont/Sterling Downs/Homeview Area, and significantly higher in Carlmont/Western Hills/Hallmark.

**Table II-6**  
**MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS**

| <b>City of Belmont</b> | <b>East Belmont Sterling Downs Homeview</b> | <b>Central Country Club</b> | <b>Cipriani The Plateau Skymont</b> | <b>Carlmont Western Hills Hallmark</b> | <b>Chula Vista Sunnyslope</b> |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| \$418,021.             | \$309,015.                                  | \$406,643.                  | \$415,935.                          | \$503,732.                             | \$419,915.                    |

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

## Household Composition

Table II-7 indicates some variation in household types between planning areas. The East Belmont/Sterling Downs/Homeview area includes higher-than-average representation of single parents, single heads-of-household, non-family households, and one-person households. The Cipriani/Plateau/Skymont area includes a significantly higher percentage of married-with-children and married-without-children households, and a very low percentage of one-person and non-family households. The Chula Vista/Sunnyslope area also has a higher-than-average percentage of married households. Carlmont/Western Hills/Hallmark has a lower representation of married households and the greatest percentage of one-person households.

**Table II-7**  
**HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION - 1980**

| <b>House-<br/>hold<br/>Type</b>                         | <b>City of<br/>Belmont</b> | <b>East Belmont<br/>Sterling Downs<br/>Homeview</b> | <b>Central<br/>Country Club</b> | <b>Cipriani<br/>The Plateau<br/>Skymont</b> | <b>Carlmont<br/>Western Hills<br/>Hallmark</b> | <b>Chula Vista<br/>Sunnyslope</b> |
|---|----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Married<br>(with children)                              | 20.8%                      | 18.5%   | 19.7%                           | 29.9%                                       | 15.6%  | 23.2%                             |
| Married<br>(without children)                           | 32.0%                      | 20.0%   | 35.2%                           | 41.7%                                       | 26.7%  | 37.1%                             |
| Male<br>Household<br>(Single parent<br>with children)   | 1.2%                       | 2.2%  | 1.1%                            | 1.0%  | 0.8%   | 1.0%                              |
| Male<br>Household<br>(Single)                           | 1.8%                       | 2.7%  | 1.9%                            | 1.4%  | 1.8%   | 1.0%                              |
| Female<br>Household<br>(Single parent<br>with children) | 3.4%                       | 4.7%  | 3.1%                            | 2.9%  | 3.2%   | 4.1%                              |
| Female<br>Household<br>(Single)                         | 3.6%                       | 3.9%  | 4.4%                            | 3.0%  | 2.9%   | 4.1%                              |
| Non-<br>family<br>Household<br>(Unrelated<br>singles)   | 10.2%                      | 14.3%   | 8.4%                            | 6.3%  | 13.3%  | 7.2%                              |
| One-<br>person<br>Household                             | 27.0%                      | 33.5%   | 26.2%                           | 13.7%                                       | 35.6%  | 22.2%                             |

Source: 1990 Census

### **III. STANDARDS AND DEFINITIONS**

---

Much effort has been expended in research and at the academic level in the development of planning standards for provision of park and recreation facilities. Standards have been developed that address acreage of parkland per a given population (usually expressed as acres/1000 populations), appropriate number of individual facilities such as tennis courts or football fields; park location; area served by different types of parks; and numerous other factors. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards (see appendix) have been recognized by many agencies as guidelines intended to be modified based on local conditions. The national standards are meant to be used as a flexible planning tool. It is recognized that what is appropriate for some cities will not work in others.

The park classification system developed by the NRPA is a useful device for categorizing and analyzing existing parks, and planning for the future. The NRPA defines six distinct types of park and recreation facilities, defines preferred sizes, and defines a theoretical area served by each. Detailed definitions and standards developed specifically for Belmont are included in this chapter.

#### **Previous Standards for Park Acreage**

The 1982 Belmont Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element refers to a "commonly used" standard of 8.5 acres of parkland for each 1000 residents (5 acres Community Parks and 3.5 acres Neighborhood Parks). The City currently provides approximately 4 acres of developed parks (excluding open space areas) for every 1000 residents.

The intent of the acreage standards for "local" parks, according to the NRPA guidelines, is to establish target amounts of Community, Neighborhood and Mini Parks. Open space is considered a "regional" or "unique" type of park space for which no set standard acreage amount is established. This does not mean that open space is unimportant, rather that there is no formula for provision of open space acreage. Because the open space areas are so important to the character of Belmont, and also from a recreation standpoint, it will be important to preserve as great an amount of open space as possible, rather than attempt to provide a prescribed acreage per 1000 residents.

#### **Recommended Standard for Local Parks**

With regard to Community, Neighborhood, and Mini Parks, it is unrealistic to expect that Belmont will achieve the 8.5 acre/1000 population standard. Belmont is a mature community, and most of its remaining undeveloped land is located in the steeply sloping areas on the western end of the City. These areas are generally more suited for open space and trails than for development of traditional local parks. Concerted community effort to raise funds to purchase expensive, already developed land would be required to approach the 8.5 acre standard.

Given the limitations of available land and resources to fund acquisition and development, it is recommended the City establish a standard of 5 acres of local parks per 1000 population (2 acres Community Parks and 3 acres Neighborhood and Mini Parks). If implemented this standard would result in no net gain of Community Park acreage (demand is currently met), and an additional 1 acre per 1000 residents of Neighborhood and Mini parks.

The proposed standard acknowledges the lack of available parcels suitable for Community Park development, but also reflects opportunities for development of smaller Neighborhood and Mini Parks in the western portions of the City. It implies a greater emphasis on upgrading of existing facilities over addition of new facilities. It also points out the importance of maintaining public availability and improvement of the school grounds that constitute nearly one-half of the current supply.

## **COMMUNITY PARK STANDARDS**

---

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>DEFINITION</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large park that includes passive and active recreation facilities that serve the entire city or a substantial portion of the city.</li> <li>• A community park should include the facilities that are also typically found at neighborhood and mini parks.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>SERVICE AREA</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to four mile radius.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>SIZE</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 acres or larger.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>ACREAGE STANDARD</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 acres/1,000 population.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>SITE CHARACTERISTICS</b> |  |
| <b>Configuration</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contiguous useable (non-linear) shape, with level terrain to accommodate active recreation.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Access/Location</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate on an arterial or collector street.</li> <li>• Provide at least two major street frontages.</li> <li>• Provide connection to pedestrian and bicycle routes.</li> <li>• Locate to minimize conflicts with residential areas.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Character</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has desirable visual and natural attributes for passive recreation, such as waterway frontage or significant vegetation.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>BASIC REQUIREMENTS</b>   |  |
| <b>Outdoor sports</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation facilities for organized league practice and play for softball, baseball, and/or soccer.</li> <li>• Bleachers, restrooms, and concession stands at league sports facilities.</li> <li>• Tennis courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, handball courts, and practice wall.</li> <li>• Lighting for outdoor sports facilities.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Passive Recreation</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jogging path, minimum two miles long.</li> <li>• Open turf area for casual games, minimum two acres.</li> </ul>   |

## COMMUNITY PARK STANDARDS (continued)

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- Special Facility**
- Community parks should include at least one special facility such as a pool, community center, gymnasium, or amphitheater.
- Play Areas**
- Tot lot for ages 2-5, minimum one.
  - Play lot for ages 6-12, minimum one.
  - Should include climbing structures, other apparatus, and sand play
  - All play experiences must be accessible to the disabled (federal requirement).
- Family Picnic Areas**
- Shaded and wind-protected area.
  - Tables for 6-8 people each.
  - Barbeque facilities.
  - Locate adjacent to open turf or play areas.
- Group Picnic Area**
- Shaded and wind-protected area.
  - Picnic tables, serving tables, and barbecue facilities for 200 persons minimum.
  - Restroom facilities nearby.
  - Play area nearby.
  - Locate adjacent to open turf area and away from nearby residential areas.
- Parking**
- Off-street, minimum 100 spaces.
- Restrooms**
- Permanent restroom buildings, minimum one per each 10 acres.
- Lighting**
- Provide lighting at athletic fields and courts, parking lots, and pathways.
  - Design to prevent glare and spill-over into adjacent residential areas.
- Telephone**
- Provide public phones accessible at all times.
  - Locate throughout park at reasonable intervals for safety.
- Bicycle Parking**
- Lockable parking at suitable locations throughout park.
- Pathway System**
- Provide multi-use paved paths, minimum ten-feet wide, for service and emergency access and police surveillance.

### OPTIONAL ELEMENTS

- Exercise course, 12 or 24 stations.
- Specialized sports facilities such as bocce ball courts or putting green.
- Food concessions building.
- Community garden area.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARK STANDARDS

---

- DEFINITION**
- Medium sized park that provides basic recreational activities for a specific neighborhood.
  - Typical neighborhood park facilities may be included as a portion of a larger community park.
- SERVICE AREA**
- 1/2-mile radius to serve a single neighborhood, or populations up to 5000.
- SIZE**
- Two to ten acres.



## NEIGHBORHOOD PARK STANDARDS (continued)

---

- ACREAGE STANDARD**
- 3 acres/1000 population .

### SITE CHARACTERISTICS

- Configuration**
- Contiguous, useable (non-linear) shape, with level terrain to accommodate casual (non-organized) sports activities.
- Access/Location**
- Locate on a collector or arterial street.
  - Provide two major street frontages if possible.
  - Provide connection to pedestrian and bicycle routes.
  - Locate centrally within neighborhood.
  - Locate adjacent to schools where possible. May be combined with schoolgrounds as a "school-park".
- Character**
- May contain natural features for passive recreation, such as water body or significant vegetation.
  - Should contain large trees for shade and windbreak.

### BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- Passive Recreation**
- Open turf area for non-organized sports, minimum one acre, two acres or more desirable.
  - Pathway system for walking/jogging.
- Play Areas**
- Tot lot for ages 2-5.
  - Play lot for ages 6-12.
  - Should include climbing structures, other apparatus and sand play.
  - All play areas must be accessible to the disabled (federal law).
- Family Picnic Areas**
- Shaded and wind-protected area.
  - Minimum three tables for 6-8 people each.
- Drinking Fountain**
- Minimum one, accessible to the disabled.
- Bicycle Parking**
- Lockable parking, minimum one location.
- Lighting**
- Pathway lighting only.
- Telephone**
- Provide public phone.
- OPTIONAL ELEMENTS**
- Tennis courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, handball courts, or practice wall.
  - Barbeque facilities at family picnic tables.
  - Off-street parking for 10 to 30 cars.
  - Restroom building.
  - Exercise course or cluster.
  - Practice baseball diamond, not lighted.

## SCHOOL PARK STANDARDS

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- DEFINITION**
- City park facilities that are developed in cooperation with the School District and are located in part or entirely on School District lands.
  - Joint city/school parks should be designed to allow access to children's play areas during the hours of 9am to 3pm, Monday through Friday, in addition to non-school hours.
  - The basic intent is to provide neighborhood park-type facilities.
- BASIC REQUIREMENTS**
- Generally contains open turf areas, baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, and children's play areas.
  - Other features should conform to the neighborhood park standards.

## MINI PARK STANDARDS

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- DEFINITION**
- Small parks located within residential areas that provide play areas for small children or passive sitting areas.
  - Mini park facilities may be provided within a neighborhood or community park.
- SERVICE AREA**
- 1/4-mile radius.
- SIZE**
- 1/4 to 2 acres.
- ACREAGE STANDARD**
- Mini Park acreage shall be included in the standard for Neighborhood Parks.
- SITE CHARACTERISTICS**
- Level areas accessible to the disabled.
  - Located within neighborhoods and in close proximity to high density residential or housing for the elderly.
- BASIC REQUIREMENTS**
- Benches in shaded area.
  - Tot lot for children under age 2-5.
  - Trash receptacle, minimum one.
- OPTIONAL ELEMENTS**
- Drinking fountain.
  - Small turf area.
  - Picnic table(s) to accommodate 6-8 people.
  - Play area for children age 6-12.

## SPECIAL FACILITY STANDARDS

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- DEFINITION**
- A facility such as a community center, athletic complex, aquatic center, or other cultural or athletic facility that services a specific need for a portion of the city's population.
- SERVICE AREA**
- The entire city.
- SIZE**
- Varies.
- LOCATION**
- May be included within a community park or may be at a separate location.

## **SPECIAL FACILITY STANDARDS (continued)**

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- FACILITY TYPES**  
(may be combined)
- Community center, with auditorium, meeting rooms, classroom space, offices, indoor recreation space, crafts room, exercise space, etc.
  - Indoor gymnasium.
  - Aquatics complex.
  - Combined "swim/gym".
  - Childcare facility.
  - Community theater, indoor.
  - Outdoor theater.
  - Sports complex for adults, youth, or both.
  - Senior center.
  - Teen center.
  - Community art center.

## **SPORTS AND SPECIAL USE FACILITY STANDARDS**

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- Softball Fields (adult)**
- 1 field per 10,000 population.
  - Provide adequate number of lighted fields for adult league play.
- Baseball Fields (youth)**
- 1 field per 2,000 population.
- Soccer Fields**
- 1 field per 5,000 population.
  - Sizes of fields may vary; fields should accommodate various age groups of participating players.
- Football Fields**
- 1 field for the City.
- Tennis Courts**
- 1 court per 2,000 population.
- Basketball Courts (outdoor)**
- 1 court per 2,000 population.
- Indoor Theater**
- 1 community theater for the City.
  - 350 to 1000 seat capacity.
- Community Center**
- 1 center for the City.
  - Provide meeting rooms, office space, kitchen, performing arts space, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, classroom space.
- Teen Center**
- 1 center for the City.
- Senior Center**
- 1 center for the City.
  - May be combined with Community Center.
- Swimming Pool**
- 1 pool per 25,000 population.
  - Pool size and configuration should accommodate organized youth and adult team swimming; recreational lap swimming; classes; and accessibility for the physically disabled, frail, elderly, and young children.

**SPORTS AND SPECIAL USE FACILITY STANDARDS (continued)**

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**Gymnasium**

- 1 gym per 25,000 population.
- Provide for public use during evenings and weekends.

**Weight Room**

- 1 weight room per 25,000 population.
- Provide for public use during evenings and weekends.

## IV. ANALYSIS OF SUPPLY

### Regional Setting

Belmont's residents are fortunate to live in an existing metropolitan area with a great diversity of available cultural and natural recreation opportunities. Local, county, state, and national parks of all types are located within convenient reach. Belmont residents frequently make use of adjacent cities' parks and the many other available resources in addition to those parks located within the city limits.

### Existing Park Acreage

The City of Belmont contains approximately 95.5 acres of formalized recreation area available at developed City parks and schoolgrounds. With a current population of 24,127, the City provides approximately 4 acres for each 1000 residents. As indicated in table IV-1, the City of Belmont currently provides a comparable amount of parkland to that of most Peninsula cities, but a lower amount than that recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). It is also important to note that 43% of the total acreage is composed of schoolgrounds. Belmont also contains a significant amount of open space acreage in addition to the 95.5 acres of developed parkland. Open space provides valuable opportunities for passive recreation and is discussed in a separate chapter of this report.

**Table IV-1**  
**COMPARATIVE PARK ACREAGE & STANDARDS - Peninsula Cities**

| City                | Existing Population | Existing Acres/1000 population |                              |       | Total Standard (Acres/1000 People) |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|
|                     |                     | Developed Park                 | Schools                      | Total |                                    |
| NRPA Standard       | --                  | --                             | --                           | --    | 6 to 10.5 (1)                      |
| Belmont             | 24,127              | 2.3                            | 1.7                          | 4     | 5 (2)                              |
| South San Francisco | 54,000              | 1.0                            | 2.0                          | 3.0   | none established                   |
| San Mateo           | 86,000              | 1.4                            | 1.9                          | 3.3   | 10.0 (2)                           |
| Millbrae            | 21,000              | 1.0                            | 0.7                          | 1.7   | none established                   |
| Foster City         | 30,000              | 4.3                            | not included                 | 4.3   | none established                   |
| Menlo Park          | 28,000              | 2.5                            | 2.0                          | 4.5   | none established                   |
| San Carlos          | 25,000              | 2.0                            | 1.5                          | 3.5   | 4.0 (2)                            |
| San Bruno           | 36,000              | 5.5                            | 3.0                          | 8.5   | none established                   |
| Daly City           | 83,000              | 1.0                            | not included                 | 1.0   | none established                   |
| Redwood City        | 65,200              | 1.5                            | not included                 | 1.5   | none established                   |
| Mountain View       | 65,000              | 2.8                            | included with developed park | 2.8   | none established                   |

Notes: (1)Total standard cited refers to traditional developed parks only (Community, Neighborhood, and Mini Parks).

(2)Total standard cited refers to traditional developed parks and schoolground acreage combined.



## Deficiencies of Park Acreage Based on Current Population

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan recommends a standard of 5 acres of developed parks per 1000 population (2 acres community parks and 3 acres neighborhood parks). Table IV-2 illustrates the current deficiencies based on the 5 acre standard. The 29.5 acre deficiency in neighborhood parks is significant because 10 of the City's 12 neighborhoods fall short of the recommended standard (Table IV-4). Community park facility demands have been fulfilled with the recent development of the Belmont Sports Complex supplementing Twin Pines Park, Carlmont High School and Ralston Intermediate School.

**Table IV-2**  
**CURRENT ACREAGE DEFICIENCIES - Population 24,127**

|                             | <b>Standard<br/>(Acres/1000)</b> | <b>Acres Required</b> | <b>Existing Acres</b> | <b>Deficiency (Surplus)</b> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Neighborhood and Mini Parks | 3                                | 72                    | 42.5                  | 29.5                        |
| Community Parks             | 2                                | 48                    | 53.0                  | (5)                         |
| <b>Total Park Acreage</b>   | <b>5</b>                         | <b>120</b>            | <b>95.5</b>           | <b>24.5</b>                 |

## Deficiencies of Park Acreage Based on Year 2007 Population

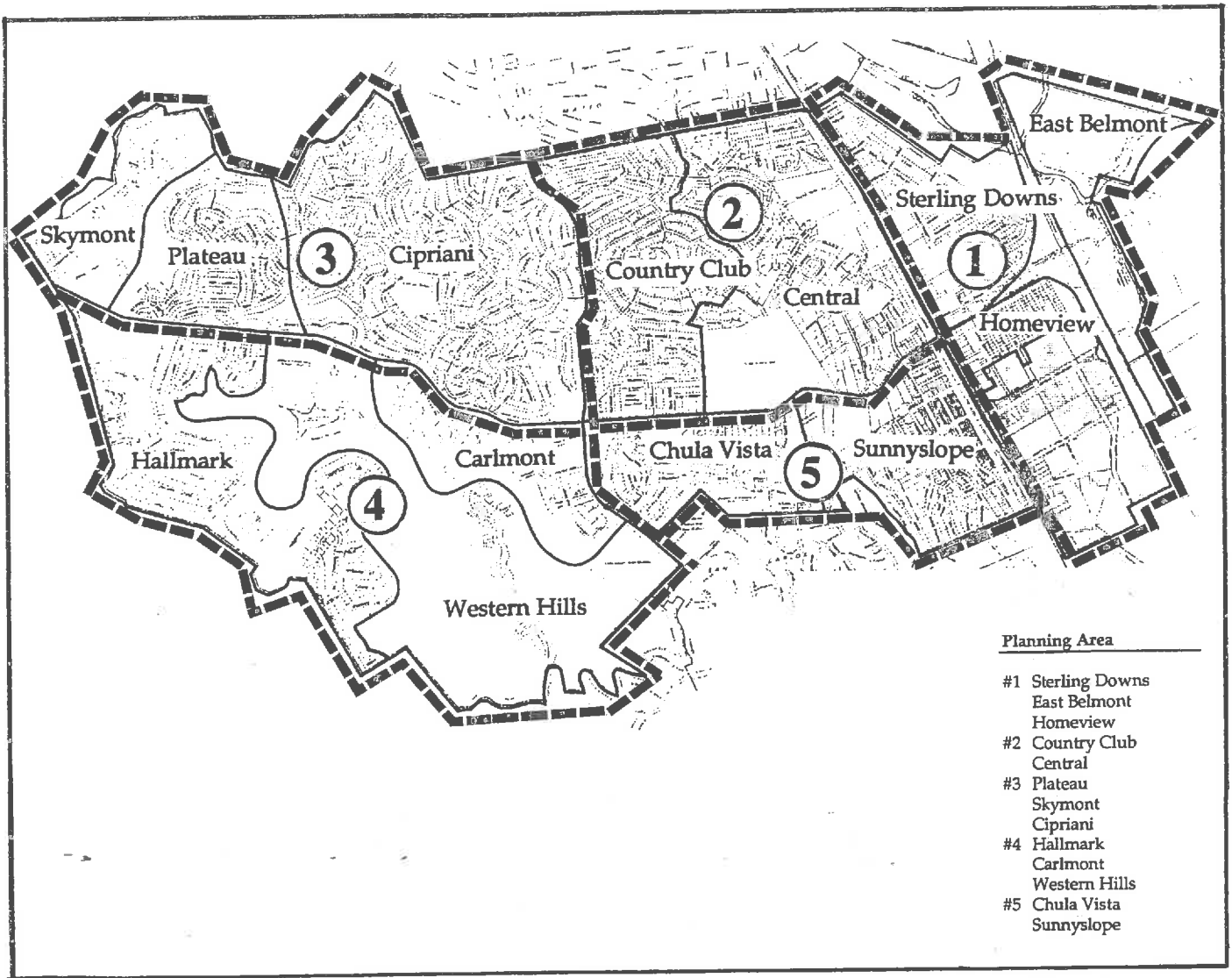
Belmont's population is expected to stabilize at the 25,700 level by the year 2000. The additional population would create a demand for approximately 8 new acres of parks based on the 5 acre/1000 standard.

**Table IV-3**  
**YEAR 2007 ACREAGE DEFICIENCIES - Population 25,700**

|                             | <b>Standard<br/>(Acres/1000)</b> | <b>Acres Required</b> | <b>Existing Acres</b> | <b>Deficiency (Surplus)</b> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Neighborhood and Mini Parks | 3                                | 72                    | 42.5                  | 34.5                        |
| Community Parks             | 2                                | 51                    | 53.0                  | (2)                         |
| <b>Total Park Acreage</b>   | <b>5</b>                         | <b>128</b>            | <b>95.5</b>           | <b>32.5</b>                 |

## Planning Areas

The diagram on the next page illustrates the neighborhood planning areas that form the basis for park planning at the neighborhood level. These areas are outlined in the 1982 General Plan Document. Each of the five planning areas is made up of two or three individual neighborhoods. Each neighborhood is a contiguous area free of significant barriers to pedestrian movement that contains a population of 4500 or less. In an ideal world, each neighborhood would have a satisfactory amount of local park acreage located within walking distance of all residents.



Planning Areas

### Neighborhood Park Deficiencies

Table IV-4 summarizes the availability of neighborhood and mini parks in each neighborhood. Only two neighborhoods, Hallmark and Chula Vista, currently meet the 3 acre/1000 population standard. Significant deficiencies occur in the Central, Country Club, and Cipriani neighborhoods. Residential development in these areas has provided few park resources, and has left little undeveloped land available to correct the deficiency. The more-recently developed neighborhoods of Skymont, The Plateau, Western Hills, and Carlmont are also underserved. However, opportunities exist to develop new parks in the undeveloped portions of these neighborhoods.



**Table IV-4**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD PARK ACREAGE REQUIREMENTS - Existing Population**

| <b>Neighborhood</b> | <b>1990 Population</b> | <b>Existing Acreage</b> | <b>Total Requirement<br/>3 Acres/1000 Population</b> | <b>Additional Acreage Needed</b> |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Sterling Downs      | 3,211                  | 7.8                     | 9.6  | 1.8                              |
| East Belmont        | 127                    | 0                       | 0.3  | 0.3                              |
| Homeview            | 939                    | 1                       | 2.8  | 1.8                              |
| Country Club        | 3,102                  | 3.4                     | 9.3  | 5.9                              |
| Central             | 3,423                  | 3.7                     | 10.3   | 6.6                              |
| Plateau & Skymont   | 1,215                  | 0                       | 3.6  | 3.6                              |
| Cipriani            | 4,198                  | 6                       | 12.6   | 6.6                              |
| Hallmark            | 1,932                  | 13                      | 5.8  | (7.2 surplus)                    |
| Carlmont            | 3,030                  | 3                       | 9.1  | 6.1                              |
| Western Hills       | 435                    | 0.1                     | 1.3  | 1.2                              |
| Chula Vista         | 1,105                  | 4.5                     | 3.3  | (1.2 surplus)                    |
| Sunnyslope          | 1,410                  | 0                       | 4.2  | 4.2                              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        | <b>24,127</b>          | <b>42.5</b>             | <b>72.2</b>  | <b>29.7</b>                      |

Source: 1990 Census

## Inventory of Existing Facilities

A description of all existing public park and recreation facilities located in the City of Belmont is presented in the appendix.

## V. ANALYSIS OF DEMAND

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### Public Workshop Summary

A public workshop was held at City Hall on April 9, 1992 with City staff and members of the Parks and Recreation Commission present. The meeting was attended by approximately 85 residents who discussed their concerns and preferences for new or improved facilities. A listing of all comments received is included in the appendix. The following summarizes the main points of the discussion.

1. *Provision of a well-rounded variety of recreational facilities was stressed.* People wanted parks that provide opportunities for all segments of the population. Facilities for young children, the elderly, and those not interested in active physical recreation were viewed as lacking. A city emphasis on organized athletics was perceived.
2. *A "central park" for Belmont was desired.* Although Twin Pines Park is well-loved, many felt that it does not provide enough variety. A centrally-located community park with facilities for all age groups, abilities, and interests was desired. Many suggested the Barrett - Carlmont Center - Belameda area is the "heart" of the city and would be a good location.
3. *Improved neighborhood parks were vocally supported.* Parents complained of a lack of appropriate play apparatus for toddlers, citing conflicts between younger and older children. Some felt that the standard metal play structures lacked creativity. The current condition of several parks was considered substandard, and the critical importance of neighborhood parks located within walking distance was confirmed.
4. *Passive recreation opportunities were valued.* Areas for walking, relaxing, and appreciating nature were considered as important as active recreation facilities. Alternative opportunities such as community gardens were discussed. Sierra Club representatives offered their trail-building resources. Bicycle paths and trail connections to San Carlos, San Mateo, the Bay Ridge Trail, and the Around the Bay Trail were supported.
5. *The need for additional baseball and soccer fields was cited.* Representatives of the youth soccer and baseball leagues stated they have experienced a 3% to 5% per-year increase in participation rates over the past ten years. Belmont leagues receive significant pressure from the Redwood Shores area. Therefore, cooperation with Redwood City Parks was proposed. It was also suggested that additional fields may be made possible by reconfiguring existing parks and schoolgrounds to alleviate the need to construct new parks.
6. *The existing open space areas are highly valued.* Residents described the decline in supply of hilly open space areas due to development, and called for preservation and wise use of the remaining areas.

7. *A community swimming pool was desired.* Because the Carlmont High School Pool is not always available, residents desired a facility available to all residents and operated by the City.
8. *Development of facilities for teens was supported.* Workshop participants described the lack of constructive activities aimed at the teenage population. Better separation of teens and younger children through appropriate park design was desired. A teen center was suggested, and involvement of teens in the planning, design, and construction was seen as desirable.
9. *Water Dog Lake Park improvements were desired.* The lake was seen as an underutilized resource that could be improved through clean-up, adding a fishing pier, and pay telephone for safety.
10. *A high degree of importance was placed on the maintenance and improvement of existing parks.* While most agreed that additional parks are needed, a high priority was placed on maximizing the value of existing resources.
11. *A dog exercise area was requested.* A petition signed by 236 residents was presented that supported a dedicated area for pets to run off-leash. The area would be designed the turf and be posted with appropriate regulations.
12. *Funding alternatives were discussed.* Volunteer labor, community involvement, and fundraising were suggested as methods for reducing costs. The likelihood of passage of a bond measure or tax assessment received mixed reviews. The existence of a City of Belmont "Open Space Fund" was pointed out.

In addition to the public workshop discussion, participants were given the opportunity to write individual comments on large wall charts organized into several topic areas. The written comments both supported the discussion and offered a chance for less vocal participants to record their input.

When asked to indicate their *favorite recreation activities*, participants comments were weighted toward passive recreation. Walking, biking, swimming, camping, picnicing, dancing, nature study and playground use were indicated.

On the listing of *favorite parks*, 12 of the 16 entries were parks outside of the City of Belmont. Of the Belmont parks listed, Twin Pines received three mentions and Barrett Park one. Many people apparently preferred non-Belmont parks such as Washington and Pershing in Burlingame, Beresford Park in San Mateo, and Johnson and Mitchell Parks in Palo Alto because they are located reasonably close by and offer a variety of opportunities.

*Suggested new park facilities* included community gardens, a municipal swimming pool, a teen center, and a dog run. *Suggested improvements to existing parks* included trails in the open space areas, improved playgrounds, and development of Belameda and Water Dog Lake Park.

Comments received on the *current problems* chart included a perceived emphasis on organized sports over less physical forms of recreation, and lack of activities designed to foster civic pride, a need for better playgrounds, services needed for disabled residents, and a general feeling of crowding and urban pressure.

*Top priorities* included a teen facility or recreation programming for teens, pool, a "central park", open space trails, Belameda Park improvements, and Cipriani Park improvements.

When asked to comment on *potential funding sources*, entries included the City's "open space fund", redevelopment funds for O'Donnell and Alexander Parks, development of a campground for revenue generation, bonding, user fees, incorporation into the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and volunteer contributions.

## Written Questionnaire

A one-page questionnaire was distributed at the April 9th workshop. To date, four completed questionnaires have been received. The results are meant to be used as a source of additional public input. If additional questionnaires are received, results will be tabulated and summarized.

## CPNS Informal Survey

A group of interested parents associated with the Carlmont Parents Nursery School developed a written questionnaire independently of this study. Twenty-eight responses were collected and delivered to the consultant at the public workshop on April 9, 1992. Although the survey is not a representative sampling of Belmont citizens, it does provide some interesting information regarding attitudes and preferences. It is important to note that the results reflect a bias toward families with small children.

1. *Favorite Parks.* When asked to name their favorite park and why, most responded with parks located outside of Belmont. Only two Belmont parks were cited, Twin Pines with eleven mentions, and Barrett with one response. Twenty-nine other parks were cited. Beresford Park in San Mateo received the most responses with sixteen. San Mateo's Central Park (ten responses) and Laurie Meadows Park (nine responses), Burton park in San Carlos (nine responses), and Coyote Point County Park (eight responses) were also popular. People were mainly attracted to large parks having a diversity of facilities, and felt Belmont lacked a true "destination" park.
2. *Desirable Park Facilities.* The questionnaire asked for comments on "any special interest items, i.e., a swimming pool, hike and bike trails or connections between parks, teen center, recreational needs, the desirability of gateway parks or plantings to improve the City's identify, etc." Twenty-five types of facilities were mentioned. A community swimming pool received the most responses (eighteen). Next were a teen facility (sixteen), bicycle paths (eleven), hiking trails (seven), and a wading pool for

children (six). The responses reflect the prompting inherent in the question's mention of these specific facilities.

3. *Top Priority Parks to be Improved.* When asked which three parks should be improved first, Twin Pines and Barrett each received fourteen responses, Belameda received eight, and the Belmont Sports Complex received three. Eight other parks or school sites received one or two mentions. In the case of Twin Pines and the Sports Complex, responders desired the addition of specific use facilities, such as play areas, picnic tables, etc., to further improve what was perceived to be a nice existing park. For Barrett and Belameda, the feeling was that each park needed an overall upgrading.

### **Non-Resident Demand**

Although the Belmont park system receives little general use by non-City residents, the City's youth sports programs are impacted by those Redwood City residents living in the Redwood Shores area. Because this area is included in the Belmont School District, its youth are involved in sports leagues that play at the Belmont parks and schools. In 1991, 246 of the 1,532 participants in the six Belmont-based youth sports organizations were residents of Redwood Shores. This represents a significant participation rate (16%) by non-residents.

No sports facilities currently exist within Redwood Shores to serve Redwood City residents. The City of Belmont would like to see the City of Redwood City develop some fields in this area to help satisfy current and future demand, either at a new park or a new school site.

## VI. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

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The following objectives and policies are provided as a statement of the City's goal to maintain a city-wide system of public parks and recreation facilities that adequately serves the residents of Belmont. The objectives are broad goals or statements of purpose that provide overall guidance. Policies are specific action items which will help to implement the objectives.

### **Objective 1: Park System Development**

*Develop a high-quality public park system with adequate space and facilities to provide an appropriate mix of recreation activities for the City's residents .*

#### **Policies**

- 1.1 Increase availability of neighborhood facilities in underserved areas.
- 1.2 Develop mini park facilities in underserved areas that have no opportunities for development of larger neighborhood parks.
- 1.3 Develop new neighborhood parks in new residential neighborhoods, located within convenient walking distance.
- 1.4 Emphasize joint-use and improvement of school facilities such as gymnasiums, swimming pools, turf fields, and tennis courts.
- 1.5 Develop formal joint use agreement with Belmont School District.
- 1.6 Ensure no net loss of existing school open space and recreation areas through acquisition where necessary.
- 1.7 Develop agreement with Redwood City for use of future athletic fields in Redwood Shores.
- 1.8 Locate, orient, and design new parks in such a way as to facilitate security, policing and maintenance.
- 1.9 Emphasize the use of drought-tolerant and drought-resistant landscaping in the development of City parks.
- 1.10 Build on the current "avenue of the arts" concept along Ralston Avenue to promote the development of public art assets.
- 1.11 Require high-quality, planning, design, and construction services for all park development projects.

- 1.12 Conduct public hearings as an integral part of the design process for all development projects.
- 1.13 Provide for non-traditional forms of recreation as new needs arise.
- 1.14 Develop a network of bicycle and pedestrian trails to link individual components of the park system and the neighborhoods. Provide trail links to the surrounding communities, the Bay Ridge Trail, and the Around-the-Bay Trail.
- 1.15 Design of all new park projects shall conform to the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. Existing facilities should be brought into conformance as they receive improvements.

**Objective 2: Open Space**

*Preserve and enhance the existing open space resources of the City.*

**Policies**

- 2.1 Adopt a municipal ordinance to govern the rules for use of City open space areas.
- 2.2 Increase the useability of existing open space areas by developing trail systems.
- 2.3 Develop trailhead areas with off-street parking and signage to serve the existing open space areas.
- 2.4 Develop neighborhood pedestrian access trailheads (without parking) where feasible.
- 2.5 Preserve large contiguous units of open space.
- 2.6 Discourage narrow, left-over strips of open space surrounded by development, except as required for trail systems.
- 2.7 Assist the Fire Protection District to identify wildland fire hazard areas and develop fire access roads.
- 2.8 Protect wildlife habitat by maintaining wildlife corridors and preserving habitat and corridors in new residential neighborhoods.
- 2.9 Utilize conservation and open space easements to preserve existing open space.
- 2.10 Prohibit the use of motorized vehicles within open space areas.

## **VII. ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Action Plan Strategy**

Belmont enjoys significant opportunities to both improve existing parks and to develop entirely new facilities. The master plan recommends the following strategy to facilitate the balanced development of new and improved facilities over the next 15 years:

1. Improve and redesign existing parks to better serve current and future needs.
2. Improve existing schoolgrounds to better serve as neighborhood parks and to provide improved athletic fields.
3. Develop new parks where feasible to increase City-wide total park acreage and to serve those neighborhoods deficient in facilities.
4. Manage and develop the City's open space areas to protect the resource, improve fire protection capabilities, and provide for passive recreation. (See Chapter VIII).
5. Develop bicycle lanes and paths to link residential areas with the park system.

### **Parks, Special Facilities, and Schoolgrounds**

The following text describes the action plan recommendations for parks, special facilities, and school grounds. The discussion is organized by neighborhood. Additional information describing the existing conditions of the parks is presented in the existing facilities inventory included in the appendix. The numbered recommendations do not reflect a priority ranking.

#### **EAST BELMONT**

This neighborhood, located between Highway 101 and Redwood Shores, contains a small residential population. The recently-constructed Belmont Sports Complex and Conference Center located here provide first-rate facilities used by the entire community as well as nearby Redwood Shores residents. The Complex includes play areas suitable for neighborhood use.

##### **Belmont Sports Complex and Conference Center**

1. No additional capital improvements recommended.
2. Develop use policies to guide scheduling and management of the recreation programs, concessions, and fees for use of the facilities.
3. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

#### **HOMEVIEW**

Currently served by one neighborhood park that provides only one-third of the acreage needed, the Homeview neighborhood contains no opportunities for development of additional parks due to the lack of undeveloped land. Efforts to provide for the residents of this area should be concentrated on improving the existing park and those in the nearby Sterling Downs neighborhood.



### **O'Donnell Park**

1. The City has made a commitment to redesign the park in fiscal year 1992-193 and construct it in fiscal year 1993-94.
2. Provide complete remodel of park.
3. Provide new play areas, picnic facilities, paths, drinking fountain, shade structure, planting, turf, irrigation, and restrooms.
4. Increase noise buffer along Ralston with planting and berming.
5. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **STERLING DOWNS**

This neighborhood is served by one neighborhood park and one elementary school that together provide approximately 7.8 acres, just short of the recommended 9.6 acres. No opportunities to develop new parks exist in this built-out neighborhood. Instead, improvement of the existing park, and cooperation with the school district to make the elementary schoolgrounds more accessible and usable by neighborhood residents are recommended. Especially needed are facilities to serve the large percentage of families with young children.

### **Alexander Park**

1. Complete remodel of play areas, including play equipment, surfacing, and seating.
2. Resurface tennis courts, provide new fencing.
3. Additional perimeter screen planting.
4. Remove existing restroom due to difficulty of maintenance. Provide portable restrooms as needed for group events.
5. Turf renovation.
6. Install public telephone.
7. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **Nesbit Elementary School**

1. Maintain joint use agreement with school district.
2. Complete turf renovation of sports fields including grading, drainage, irrigation, and turf.
3. Develop play areas and informal picnic and sitting areas to increase useability by neighborhood residents.
4. Install public telephone.
5. Provide drinking fountain.
6. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **SUNNYSLOPE**

This neighborhood is served by Twin Pines Park which is considered to be a community park rather than a neighborhood-scale park. In recognition of the need for neighborhood facilities, the City has developed two play areas at Twin Pines in recent years. The park also includes

picnic and sitting areas, and in general it successfully serves the neighborhood in addition to the entire community. No other available areas exist for development of additional parks.

#### **Twin Pines Park**

1. Add restroom near group picnic area.
2. Add picnic shelter to group picnic area.
3. Develop interpretive signage or program for site history and natural history.
4. Remove invasive, non-native tree species from woodland.
5. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

#### **Senior and Community Center**

1. Add shade structure at patio.
2. Add shade cover at stage.
3. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

#### **Lodge, Cottage, and Manor House**

1. Construct deck at top level of Cottage for outdoor dining.
2. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **CHULA VISTA**

McDougal park, a former schoolground now owned by the City, provides the needed acreage for this neighborhood. The schoolgrounds should be improved and modified to provide a more park-like atmosphere.

#### **-McDougal Park**

1. Complete turf renovation of sports fields including grading, drainage, irrigation, and new turf.
2. Develop neighborhood gathering place including play areas, picnic and sitting areas.
3. Add restroom, drinking fountain, and concession stand.
4. Install public telephone.
5. Add perimeter field fencing, bleachers, and scorebooths.
6. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **CENTRAL**

This neighborhood is currently underserved, with only one elementary school and two small mini-parks that provide 3.7 of the needed 10.3 acres of local parks. Opportunities to provide additional parks are limited, however. One large undeveloped, privately-owned parcel exists on Davey Glen Road, a portion of which could be acquired and developed for recreational use. The College of Notre Dame and the Notre Dame High School include significant recreation facilities, but are privately-owned and availability to the public is limited. The lack of development opportunities underscores the importance of the schoolgrounds to provide needed recreation facilities for the neighborhood.

### **Central Elementary School**

1. Maintain joint use agreement with school district.
2. Complete turf renovation of sports fields including grading, drainage, irrigation, and new turf.
3. Enhance entrance area with identification and other signage.
4. Install public telephone.
5. Develop play areas and informal picnic and sitting areas to increase usability by neighborhood residents.
6. Provide drinking fountain.
7. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **Patricia Wharton Mini Park**

1. Improve planting and irrigation to reinforce the pleasant garden setting.
2. Encourage neighborhood involvement in maintaining garden plantings.
3. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **College View Mini Park**

1. Planting and irrigation improvements, including screen planting at adjacent residential properties.
2. Provide new play equipment and pathways.
3. Enlarge entrance opening by selective shrub removal.
4. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **Davey Glen Property**

1. Work with the developer to achieve parkland dedication instead of Quimby Act fees.
2. Develop neighborhood park as part of future development proposal.
3. Consider the relocation of the existing residence to the upper (western) end of the property, to be developed as a small museum, interpretive center or other civic facility. Encourage neighborhood and community involvement in the design, development, and operation.
4. Develop passive interpretive trail or exhibits to take advantage of natural character and archaeological features.

### **College of Notre Dame**

1. Continue to cooperate with the College to maintain and further develop opportunities for public use.
2. Should the property become available in the future, the City should evaluate the feasibility of acquiring it.

## **COUNTRY CLUB**

This neighborhood generates a demand for 9.3 acres of local parks, but contains only the 3.4 acres of former schoolground at the Barrett Community Center. Because no opportunities exist to develop additional acreage, an effort should be made to redesign Barrett to better serve the neighborhood. Barrett provides community-wide special facilities including the "1870 Studios", daycare, and auditorium building. The proximity of Barrett to the central hub of Alameda de las Pulgas and Ralston reinforces the importance of developing these facilities to serve both as a community center and as a neighborhood park.

### **Barrett Community Center**

1. Complete turf renovation of sports fields including grading, drainage, irrigation, and new turf.
2. Develop neighborhood gathering place including play areas, picnic and sitting areas.
3. Reconfigure and improve hardcourt area. Reduce expanse of school blacktop paving and redesign basketball courts.
4. Architectural improvements to auditorium should include ADA compliance, creating a better defined sense of entrances, and remodeling exterior to develop a community-oriented appearance to replace the school building look. Develop box office for auditorium.
5. Evaluate feasibility of converting a portion of the existing building complex to a teen drop-in center.
6. Evaluate for ADA compliance.
7. Remodel existing restrooms.
8. Provide drinking fountains.
9. Improve existing parking lot.
10. Develop outdoor plaza area adjacent to auditorium.
11. Develop clear identification for entries to day care, artist studios, and auditorium areas.

## **CIPRIANI**

This neighborhood is well served by Cipriani Park, due to its central location and significant acreage. Limited opportunities exist to develop additional small mini-parks. Such parks would require acquisition of subdivided residential lots in the San Juan Canyon area. Development of park amenities would be constrained by steep topography.

### **Cipriani Park**

1. Complete turf renovation of sports fields including grading, drainage, irrigation, and turf.
2. Install new backstops.
3. Improve entry, provide better identification of the park from the street.
4. Redesign and regrade the slope between the upper turf fields and the lower picnic/park area to provide smoother transition.

5. Provide new play areas.
6. Provide restroom and drinking fountain.
7. Possible site for dog-run for community use.
8. Install public telephone.
9. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **Potential Mini-Park**

1. Acquire and develop residential lots, totaling 1/2 to 1 acre in size.
2. Develop creative play area, incorporating slopes into the design.
3. Develop passive sitting and gathering area.
4. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

## **CARLMONT**

The 3,030 residents create a demand for approximately nine acres of local parks, yet have access only to the three-acre Belameda Park. Carlmont High School provides additional resources. One additional neighborhood park is recommended. Two new neighborhood parks recommended for the adjacent Western Hills neighborhood would provide additional resources for Carlmont residents. Improvement of Belameda Park should be a high priority.

### **Belameda Park**

1. Provide complete remodel of park.
2. Central location and adjacent library suggest development of an "urban" park atmosphere. Plazas, a fountain, sitting and gathering areas, an amphitheater, and other creative features and focal points would be appropriate.
3. Reconfigure existing parking area to provide a greater number of spaces without taking away from usable park space.
4. Include play area and shade structure.
5. Allow reasonable space for library expansion. The park planning process should be a cooperative effort between the City and the County library system.
6. Construct public restroom.
7. Provide drinking fountain.
8. Buffer noise from street.
9. Install public telephone.
10. ADA compliance.

### **Potential Neighborhood Park - Carlmont/Continental**

1. Evaluate feasibility of acquiring vacant site located between Continentals and Davis Court adjacent to Ralston.
2. Location would provide park resources close to the Cipriani neighborhood as well as providing for Carlmont needs.

3. Size of parcel (approximately 5 acres) would allow development of additional soccer or baseball fields to serve community. Night lighting of fields would be feasible if impact on nearby apartments could be controlled.
4. Include play area, sitting, and picnic areas.
5. Include off-street parking to minimize impact on apartments. Entrance would be from Continentals.
6. Trail connection to Lake Road and Water Dog Lake is feasible.
7. Re-zoning would be required.

### **Peninsula Jewish Community Center**

1. The City should evaluate the feasibility of acquisition should this property become available.
2. The City should evaluate the feasibility of entering into a joint-use agreement with the J.C.C. to allow some sort of public use.

## **WESTERN HILLS**

This is a large area that consists mostly of undeveloped land. It includes two schools and one mini-park, and has a population of approximately 435. Two new neighborhood parks are proposed here to serve the adjacent Carlmont neighborhood in addition to future residents of new developments in the Western Hills. Open space action plan recommendations areas are discussed in a separate chapter.

### **Hastings Tot Lot**

1. This mini-park warrants a complete remodel. The existing equipment is outdated.
2. Provide new play equipment, sitting areas, shade structures, pathways, and tree planting.
3. Evaluate for ADA compliance.
4. Develop as trailhead for adjacent open space trails.

### **Ralston Intermediate School**

1. Maintain joint-use agreement with school district.
2. Complete turf renovation of sports fields including grading, drainage, irrigation, and new turf.

### **Carlmont High School**

1. Maintain joint-use agreement for community use of swimming pool, gymnasium, and weight room.

### **Potential Neighborhood Park - Carlmont Canyon**

1. Develop in conjunction with future housing development.
2. Provide three acres, including play area, passive sitting areas, picnic, and trailhead.
3. Include limited off-street parking.
4. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **Potential Neighborhood Park - Valerga Drive**

1. Develop in conjunction with future housing development.
2. Provide same type of development as described above for potential neighborhood park - Carlmont Canyon.

## **HALLMARK**

Hallmark's three parks and one elementary school provide 13 acres of recreation space, over twice the 5.8 acres needed to satisfy the 3 acre per 1,000 population standard. In addition, this neighborhood enjoys access to the adjacent open space areas, as well as direct pedestrian access to the San Mateo County trail system on the adjacent San Francisco Water District lands.

### **Hallmark Park**

1. Increase recreation potential of the site by converting the existing landscape areas into play, picnic, sitting, and lawn areas.
2. Expand overview area with additional seating and paving.
3. Evaluate for ADA compliance. Accessibility into the park will require redesign and regrading of the entrance and path.

### **Wakefield Park**

1. Provide screening of adjacent residences.
2. Develop play area and additional sitting and lawn areas by redesigning and regrading the site.
3. Provide irrigation system.
4. Develop park entry with signage and paving.
5. Install public telephone.
6. Obtain certified arborist's report for maintenance of oak trees.
7. Eradicate noxious plant species and improve planting of hillside between park and street.
8. Evaluate for ADA compliance. Accessibility into the park will require redesign and regrading of the entrance and path.

### **Fox Tot Lot**

1. Redesign and replace existing play equipment.
2. Stabilize existing eroded hillside.

3. Provide additional planting for wind screening.
4. Add public telephone.
5. Redesign concrete tricycle course to address existing safety concerns.
6. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **Fox Elementary School**

1. Complete turf renovation of sports fields including grading, drainage, irrigation, and turf.
2. Maintain joint-use relationship with school district.

## **THE PLATEAU**

This neighborhood is located in the San Juan Hills area, and currently includes no developed parks. The remaining available land is characterized by very steep slopes ranging from 15% to 75%. Development of a traditional neighborhood park a minimum of 2 or 3 acres in size is not considered economically feasible. As is the case in the Cipriani neighborhood, opportunities here are limited to the purchase of residential lots for development of a mini-park.

### **Potential Mini-Park**

1. Acquire and develop residential lots, approximately 1 acre in size.
2. Develop creative play area, incorporating slopes into the design.
3. Develop passive sitting and gathering area.
4. ADA compliance.

## **SKYMONT**

Also located in the San Juan Hills, Skymont's situation is similar to the Plateau neighborhood, with no existing parks and mostly steeply sloping land remaining undeveloped. The Laurel Creek Canyon divides the Plateau and Skymont, and provides natural open space for both neighborhoods. There is an undeveloped unsubdivided parcel located at the end of Bishop Road, however, that could be developed as a unique neighborhood park. A pedestrian/bicycle trail connection could link this park with the Plateau neighborhood. The current developer proposal for the Carriage Estates subdivision includes a one-acre mini park located near Ralston Avenue.

### **Potential Neighborhood Park - Bishop Court**

1. Provide typical neighborhood park components, including lawn for informal play, picnic, sitting, and play areas.
2. Active athletic fields are not recommended in order to minimize generation of traffic through the neighborhood.
3. Provide trailhead terminus of proposed Belmont open space trail system, and link to potential Sugarloaf trail system in San Mateo.
4. Provide limited off-street parking.



5. Evaluate for ADA compliance.

### **Potential Mini Park - Carriage Estates**

1. Provide play area, sitting, picnic, and turf areas.
2. Provide trailhead for Laurel Creek Canyon trail system in lieu of trailhead at Vista Point.

### **Vista Point**

1. Maintain in current condition.
2. Provide trailhead connection to proposed open space trail system.

## **Bicycle Paths and Lanes**

Bicycle routes provide recreation opportunities, and alternative method of transportation, and can link residential areas with parks and other destination. Belmont currently has on-street bicycle lanes (Caltrans Class 2 bicycle routes) on portions of Ralston Avenue, and short segments of off-street bicycle paths (Caltrans Class 1 bicycle routes) at the western end of Ralston and in the Island Park area east of 101. The "Ralston Trail" at the west end of Ralston connects Belmont to the existing Crystal Springs Trail and the San Mateo County trail system, including the proposed San Francisco Bay Area Ridge Trail. Improved bicycle routes through Belmont are needed to connect the community to the regional trail systems. The following action items are recommended.

### **Ralston Avenue Bicycle Lanes**

1. Construct one-way bicycle lanes on the entire length of Ralston Avenue in accordance with Caltrans Class 2 standards to improve and complete the existing sections.

### **Alameda de las Pulgas Bicycle Lanes**

1. Construct one-way bicycle lanes on Alameda de las Pulgas (south of Ralston Avenue only) in accordance with Caltrans Class 2 standards. Note: The narrow roadway width north of Ralston precludes the establishment of standard bicycle lanes.

### **Island Park Bicycle Paths**

1. Complete bicycle path to provide connection from Foster City paths to bicycle lanes on Island Drive.
2. Provide connection to Redwood Shores.

## Ralston - 101 Interchange

1. Provide bicycle lanes or separated bicycle paths to cross Highway 101 in conjunction with the interchange improvement project.

## Sports Facilities

The available number of active recreation facilities is adequate to meet current demand. Because the City's population is not expected to increase substantially, demand for additional facilities would occur only if participation rates increase in the future. Should this occur, efforts should be made to create additional fields at existing sites by reconfiguring field layout.

With the exception of the Belmont Sports Complex, however, the current condition of the turf, court surfaces, and supporting amenities is substandard. A complete renovation of most facilities is recommended. It is also important to note that the majority of these facilities occur on School District property. Formalized agreements for joint City-School District use should be developed to ensure public availability of these important resources. Also, should any school site be subject to future sale, the City should make every effort to obtain the site through the provisions of the Naylor Act.

**Table VII-1  
SPORTS FACILITIES INVENTORY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

| Facility            | Total # Existing      | (@ School Sites)      | (@ City Parks) | National Standard | Total Recomm. | Add'l Recomm. | Summary   |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---|
| 1. Baseball         | 30                    | 22                    | 8              | 5<br>(1/5000)     | 30            | 0             | Improve condition of existing fields.                                     |
| 2. Soccer           | 6                     | 5                     | 1              | 3<br>(1/10,000)   | 6             | 0             | Improve condition of existing fields.                                     |
| 3. Football         | 1                     | 1                     | 0              | 1<br>(1/20,000)   | 1             | 0             | Used by schools only. New football fields not required for City programs. |
| 4. Tennis Court     | 11                    | 6                     | 5              | 13<br>(1/2,000)   | 13            | 2             | Improve condition of existing courts.                                     |
| 5. Basketball Court | 28 (full)<br>7 (half) | 27 (full)<br>7 (half) | 1 (full)       | 5<br>(1/5,000)    | 30            | 0             | Improve condition of existing schoolground courts.                        |
| 6. Swimming Pool    | 1                     | 1                     | 0              | 1<br>(1/20,000)   | 1             | 0             | One additional pool is available to members of the Jewish Comm. Center.   |

Note: Projections are based on target population of 25,700.

## **ADA Requirements**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is a civil-rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. It requires, among other things, that facilities, services, and programs provided by cities be accessible to the disabled. Cities must conduct a self-evaluation and develop a transition plan to bring existing facilities and services into compliance. All new construction and all alteration of existing facilities must also comply. With respect to parks and open space, the City of Belmont should begin the compliance process as soon as possible. Existing facilities should be inventoried and evaluated, and appropriate corrective measures designed and implemented.

## **Interpretive Facilities**

Belmont's cultural and natural history provide an exciting background for informal education. Interpretive signage, displays, and programs would be welcome additions throughout the park system. The City's commitment to the arts also provides unique subject matter for the public.

## VIII. BELMONT'S OPEN SPACE

### Existing Conditions

Belmont is fortunate to have retained a significant amount of hilly undeveloped land in the western portion of the City. These areas contribute greatly to the character of Belmont and possess many inherent values: scenic beauty, visual relief from the urbanized area, preservation of natural ecosystems, watershed management, and providing space for passive recreation and outdoor education. The adjacent S.F. watershed lands provide additional resources.

The undeveloped areas consist of steeply sloping hillsides and canyons that are surrounded by residential development on the ridges above. Small portions have been disturbed by grading and drainage improvements associated with the adjacent development. Vegetation is predominantly native and includes grassland, oak woodland, riparian woodland, chaparral, and scrub. The higher elevations offer vistas from nearby Sugarloaf Mountain to the San Francisco skyline and East Bay, while the canyons offer a more intimate natural experience and a feeling of separation from the surrounding urban area. Belmont's open spaces are further described in the City's San Juan Hills Area Plan (March 1988) and the Western Hills Area Plan (June 1990). The remainder is in private ownership and is subject to residential development.

Preservation of Belmont's open space is not guaranteed, however. While much is either in public ownership (City land) or quasi-public ownership (College of Notre Dame lands leased to the City), the remainder is privately held and is subject to residential development. Engineering technology makes development feasible in extremely steep areas. Fortunately, the two Area plans, which have been adopted as amendments to the City's General Plan, have designated these areas as "Hillside Residential and Open Space". Policies adopted for these areas limit development and encourage the preservation of open space, vegetation, and natural resources.

**Table VIII-1**  
**OPEN SPACE INVENTORY**

| <u>Open Space Area</u>           | <u>Type</u>  | <u>Ownership</u>      | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Remarks</u>  |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|---|
| San Juan Hills                   | Private      | 250 Separate Owners   | 6.5 acres      | San Juan Hills Area Plan encourages preservation of open space.                             |
| John S. Brooks                   | Public       | City                  | 51 acres       | Dedicated to City in 1978.  |
| Water Dog Lake Park              | Quasi-Public | College of Notre Dame | 50 acres       | Land is leased by the City.   |
| Carlmont Canyon                  | Private      | Private               | 90 acres       | Development is limited to 33 units in one location.   |
| Western Hills - West of Hastings | Public       | City                  | 120 acres      | Open space management and trails development must be coordinated with Carlmont Canyon area. |
| Western Hills - East of Hastings | Private      | Private               | 86 acres       | Development limited to 38 units in one location.  |

The value of the open space lands will be maximized if they are treated as a single unit. Coordinated planning and management policies are necessary for effective vegetation management, fire prevention, and recreational trail establishment.

An integrated approach will be more easily accomplished on the lands south of Ralston, where 96% of the privately-owned undeveloped land is held by two owners. This land includes a 90-acre holding in the Carlmont Canyon, and the 86-acre slope east of Hastings Drive. Under the Western Hills Area Plan, development is limited to 33 units in Carlmont Canyon and 38 units east of Hastings Drive. The Area Plan requires the new housing units to be clustered together on the Carlmont Canyon valley floor, and east of Hastings to be clustered on the lower portion of the site near Valerga Drive. This approach will leave the steep hillsides undeveloped.

North of Ralston, undeveloped land in the San Juan Hills consists of over 250 separate private ownerships on over 500 vacant lots. The San Juan Hills Area Plan seeks to control future development by encouraging cluster development, density transfer, reconsolidation of lots, lot merger, limiting the number of houses in vacant subdivided areas, restricting development in geologic hazard areas, and other methods. The Plan also encourages protection of natural resources and views, and the establishment of a continuous public greenbelt.

## **Action Plan Recommendations**

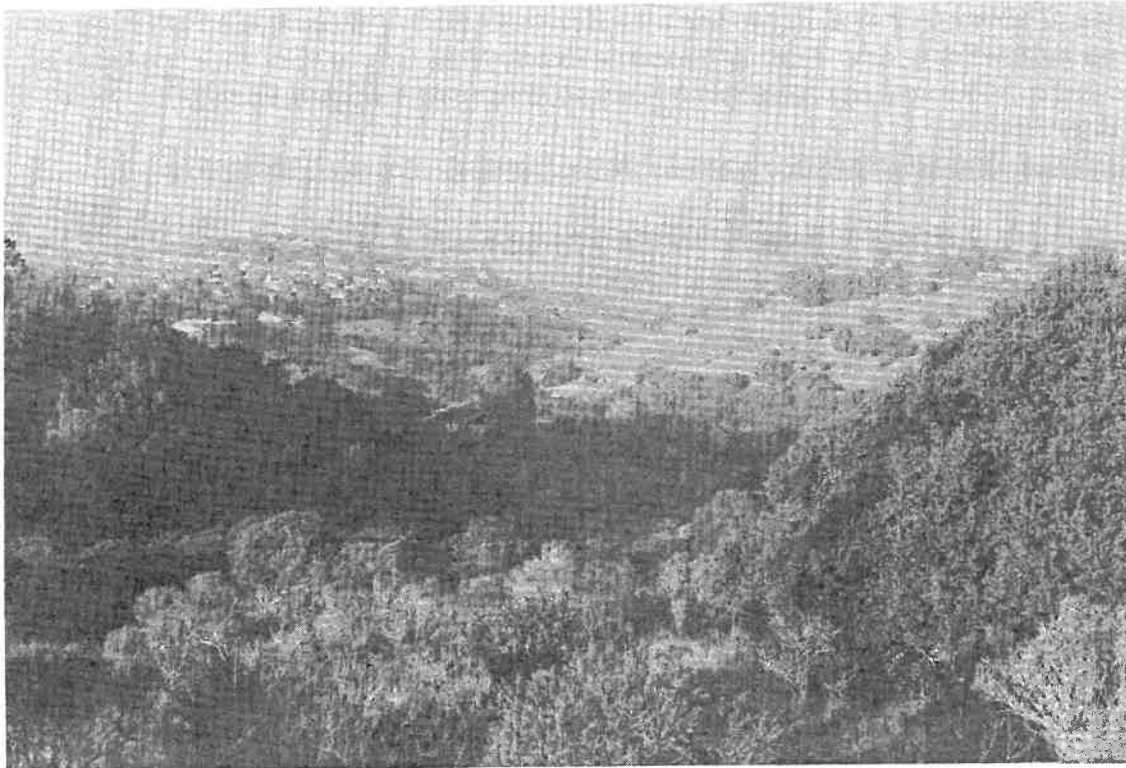
Preservation of the remaining open space is an important City goal. It is possible to create a greenbelt that would stretch from San Mateo to San Carlos, interrupted only by the developed area between Ralston Avenue and Lake Road. The City should pursue land acquisition, dedication of conservation and public access easements, and employ development controls to encourage preservation of as much area as possible.

The preserved open space should be retained in a natural state for passive recreation, education, and aesthetic purposes. Vegetation management will be required to create and maintain native ecosystems and for fire control. Development should be limited to those types of facilities that support the intended passive uses, including trails, trailheads, signage, picnic areas, and small neighborhood parks.

### **San Juan Hills Open Space (Private)**

1. Create a continuous greenbelt extending from Ralston Avenue north to Sugarloaf Mountain and then southeast to the Marburger area. Include portions of the Area Plan statistical subareas of Laurel Creek Canyon, Bartlett, Lower Lock, Upper Lock, Marburger, and Marburger Unsubdivided.
2. Evaluate feasibility of acquiring the Laurel Creek Canyon area for public open space.
3. Acquire open space easements in favor of the City on those greenbelt areas retained in private ownership.
4. Develop a multi-use trail and a single-use trail extending through Laurel Creek Canyon from the Vista Point on Ralston to the City limit at Sugarloaf Mountain.

5. Develop trailhead access points at the Vista Point and at the proposed neighborhood park at Bishop Road.
6. Implement vegetation management program for fire control and natural resource enhancement.



*Laurel Creek in San Juan Hills open space*

#### **John S. Brooks Open Space (Public)**

1. Develop trailhead with limited off-street parking for up to 15 vehicles on the Lake Road cul-de-sac at Hallmark Drive.
2. Develop multi-use and single-use trails to connect with Water Dog Lake and the remaining open space areas to the south.
3. Develop small picnic area on the level area just below the Hallmark/Lake Road entrance. Prohibit barbecues.
4. Implement vegetation management program for fire control and natural resource enhancement.

### **Water Dog Lake Park (Quasi-Public)**

1. Maintain lease agreement with College of Notre Dame. The current 50-year lease initiated in 1965 carries an option to extend for an additional 50 years.
2. Develop single-use trail systems.
3. Improve trail around lake to address safety concerns.
4. Develop nature study area to take advantage of natural marsh at west end of lake. Develop boardwalk access across portions of marsh. Implement marsh vegetation management and enhancement program, possibly in conjunction with the schools.
5. Improve entrance at Lyall Way and Lake Road. Develop trailhead without off-street parking with signage, fencing, gate, and drinking water supply.
6. Develop single-use trail connection from Lake Road to proposed Carlmont neighborhood park near Continentals Way.
7. Implement vegetation management program for fire control and natural resource enhancement.
8. Develop maintenance program for periodic lake dredging to maintain flood control capacity.

### **Carlmont Canyon (Private)**

1. Develop multi-use and single-use trails to connect to Water Dog Lake and the City-owned Western Hills open space areas.
2. Develop trailhead with off-street parking in conjunction with potential Carlmont Canyon Neighborhood Park.
3. Implement vegetation management program for fire control and natural resource enhancement.
4. Acquire open space easements in favor of the City on the portions to remain undeveloped.

### **Western Hills - West of Hastings (Public)**

1. Develop multi-use and single-use trails to connect to Carlmont Canyon.
2. Develop a trailhead with off-street parking at the southern end of Hastings Drive.
3. Implement vegetation management program for fire control and natural resource enhancement.

### **Western Hills - East of Hastings (Private)**

1. Acquire an open space easement in favor of the City for the portion of this property to remain undeveloped.
2. Develop multi-use and single-use trails.
3. Develop a trailhead with off-street parking in conjunction with the proposed neighborhood park at Valerga Drive.
4. Implement vegetation management program for fire control and natural resource enhancement.

## Design Guidelines

### Multi-use Trails

Multi-use trails are proposed throughout the open space areas to create a network extending from San Mateo to San Carlos. These trails would be open to hikers, mountain bicyclists, and equestrians. They would be gravel-surfaced and 10 to 12 feet in width to accommodate emergency, service, and fire-fighting vehicles. No other motor vehicles would be permitted. They are generally proposed for the higher elevations where they would help create a fire break and allow fire truck access adjacent to the surrounding subdivisions. Drainage improvements would include surface swales and drain dips or drains bars, and subsurface culverts where necessary. Trail gradients of 10% or less are desirable with 15% considered a maximum. Accessible trails must slope at 8.33% or less. To the greatest extent possible compatible with terrain, multi-use trails should be made accessible.

### Single-Use Trails

These trails would be narrow earthen paths open to hikers only, from two to four feet in width. They are proposed for the lower elevations including valley floors and also to connect to the multi-use trail system. The single-use trail system would also extend the length of Belmont's open space areas from San Mateo to San Carlos, and would provide a more secluded, natural hiking experience than would the multi-use trails.

### Trailhead with Parking

Four trailhead areas with limited off-street parking are proposed for either end of each of the two major open spaces north and south of Ralston Avenue. These trailheads would provide 12 to 24 paved parking spaces each to reduce impact on the residential areas. Direct access to the open space would be controlled with fencing and gates. A source of drinking water, benches, and appropriate signage would be provided. Small picnic areas would also be appropriate.

### Trailhead without Parking

Pedestrian and bicycle access would also be provided at appropriate locations to facilitate access for residents of adjacent neighborhoods. These trailheads would include signage, benches, and access control fences and gates.

### Signage

Signage is very important to the efficient functioning and management of open space areas. The following signage types are required:

1. **Identification.** Signs at trailheads to identify the open space areas and orient the user. Signs to identify individual trails.
2. **Informational/Regulatory.** Rules, restriction, and hours of use.



3. **Interpretive.** Educational exhibits to explain natural history and warn of potential dangers such as poison oak and wood ticks.
4. **Directional.** Signs at trailheads and along trails to indicate directions and distances.

## **Fire Hazard Assessment**

A discussion of the fire hazard potential of Belmont's open space is contained in the "City of Belmont Open Space Fire Hazard Assessment and Recommendations", a study prepared as part of this master plan and on file in the Parks and Recreation Department office. The report describes the existing conditions of the open space areas, including fuel types, vegetation, potential irrigation patterns, and access. The study also provides guidelines for acceptability of parcels for acquisition or preservation as open space. Recommendations for management of the open space include improving access for fire-fighting vehicles, fuel reduction, vegetation management, replacement of flammable street trees with less-flammable species, and eradication of exotic plant species.



## IX. IMPLEMENTATION

### Priority Development Plan

Each proposed individual development project is listed below in Table IX-1. A three-tiered ranking system indicates the priority of each project relative to all others. The suggested time frame would see the A-priority projects developed in 1992-1997, the B-priority projects in 1997-2002, and the C-priority projects in 2002-2007. This suggested sequencing is not binding, and may be modified over time due to availability of funding resources, public interest, and other changing conditions.

The suggested priorities were developed through the public participation process, and with the assistance of the Advisory Committee, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and reflect the author's professional judgement. In general, the priorities reflect the strategy outlined in Chapter VII. A high priority is assigned to improvement of existing facilities, provision of neighborhood-oriented facilities in underserved areas, and preservation and development of open space areas. Development of new parks was generally viewed as a lower priority. It should be noted, however, that acquisition of land for the new parks must be pursued in a timely fashion if they are to be developed at a later time.

### Acquisition, Development, and Improvements

Cost estimates have been prepared for acquisition and development of new parks and recreation facilities, and improvements to existing facilities. Estimated development includes costs for design, engineering, testing and construction. Acquisition costs for new parks are unknown and subject to significant variation inherent in the real estate market. All figures are in 1992 dollars.

**Table IX-1**  
**ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT COSTS**

| <u>Community Facilities - Existing to be Improved</u>        | <u>Suggested Priority</u> | <u>Acquisition</u> | <u>Development</u> | <u>Subtotal</u>    |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Barrett Community Center - Building Improvements             | A                         | 0                  | \$1,000,000        |                    |
| Twin Pines Park Improvements                                 | A                         | 0                  | 385,000            |                    |
| Dog Run at Cipriani Park                                     | A                         | 0                  | 10,000             |                    |
| Ralston Intermediate School                                  | C                         | 0                  | 900,000            |                    |
| Acquire Jewish Community Center (if feasible)                | A                         | unknown            | unknown            |                    |
|  |                           |                    |                    | <u>\$2,295,000</u> |
| <br><u>Neighborhood Facilities - Existing to be Improved</u> |                           |                    |                    |                    |
| Alexander Park   | B                         | 0                  | 325,000            |                    |
| Barrett Community Center - Park Improvements                 | A                         | 0                  | 675,000            |                    |
| Belameda Park  | A                         | 0                  | 750,000            |                    |
| Central School   | B                         | 0                  | 500,000            |                    |
| Cipriani Park  | B                         | 0                  | 1,200,000          |                    |

Table IX-1 (continued)

| <u>Neighborhood Facilities - Existing to be Improved</u> | <u>Suggested Priority</u> | <u>Acquisition</u> | <u>Development</u> | <u>Subtotal</u> |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| College View Mini Park                                   | C                         | 0                  | 150,000            |                 |
| Fox Tot Lot  | B                         | 0                  | 175,000            |                 |
| Fox School   | C                         | 0                  | 750,000            |                 |
| Hallmark Park  | C                         | 0                  | 500,000            |                 |
| Hastings Tot Lot   | B                         | 0                  | 150,000            |                 |
| McDougal Park  | B                         | 0                  | 900,000            |                 |
| Nesbit School  | C                         | 0                  | 900,000            |                 |
| O'Donnell Park   | A                         | 0                  | 250,000            |                 |
| Patricia Wharton Mini Park                               | C                         | 0                  | 50,000             |                 |
| Wakefield Park   | B                         | 0                  | 250,000            |                 |
|  |                           |                    |                    | \$7,525,000     |
| <br><u>Neighborhood Facilities - Potential New</u>       |                           |                    |                    |                 |
| Carlmont Canyon Neighborhood Park (3 acres)              | B                         | unknown            | 600,000            |                 |
| Carlmont/Continental Neighborhood Park (5 acres)         | C                         | unknown            | 1,000,000          |                 |
| Cipriani Mini Park (1 acre)                              | B                         | unknown            | 300,000            |                 |
| Davey Glen Neighborhood Park (2 acres)                   | B                         | unknown            | 400,000            |                 |
| Plateau Mini Park (1 acre)                               | B                         | unknown            | 300,000            |                 |
| Skymont (Bishop Road) Neighborhood Park (5 acres)        | C                         | unknown            | 1,000,000          |                 |
| Skymont (Carriage Estates) Neighborhood Park (1 acre)    | C                         | unknown            | 200,000            |                 |
| Valerga Drive Neighborhood Park (3 acres)                | C                         | unknown            | 600,000            |                 |
|  |                           |                    |                    | \$4,400,000     |
| <br><u>Bicycle Paths and Lanes</u>                       |                           |                    |                    |                 |
|  | <u>Priority</u>           | <u>Acquisition</u> | <u>Development</u> | <u>Subtotal</u> |
| Ralston bicycle lanes (3.8 mi)                           | A                         | 0                  | 10,000             |                 |
| Alameda de las Pulgas bicycle lanes (0.7 mi)             | B                         | 0                  | 2,000              |                 |
| Island Park bicycle path (700 l.f.)                      | B                         | 0                  | 20,000             |                 |
| Ralston - 101 Interchange bicycle path improvements      | B                         | 0                  | 10,000             |                 |
|  |                           |                    |                    | \$42,000        |
| <br><u>Open Space Facilities</u>                         |                           |                    |                    |                 |
| <u>San Juan Hills</u>                                    |                           |                    |                    |                 |
| Single Use Trails (1.3 mi)                               | A                         | 0                  | 65,000             |                 |
| Multi Use Trails (1.1 mi)                                | A                         | 0                  | 220,000            |                 |
| Trailhead without Parking                                | B                         | 0                  | 50,000             |                 |
| Easement or Fee Title                                    | A                         | unknown            | 0                  |                 |
| Signage  | A                         | 0                  | 25,000             |                 |
| <u>John S. Brooks Memorial</u>                           |                           |                    |                    |                 |
| Single Use Trails (0.3 mi.)                              | A                         | 0                  | 15,000             |                 |
| Multi Use Trails (1.3 mi)                                | A                         | 0                  | 260,000            |                 |
| Trailhead with Parking                                   | B                         | 0                  | 200,000            |                 |
| Picnic Area  | B                         | 0                  | 50,000             |                 |
| Signage  | A                         | 0                  | 25,000             |                 |

Table IX-1 (continued)

| <u>Open Space Facilities</u>                                | <u>Suggested Priority</u> | <u>Acquisition</u> | <u>Development</u> | <u>Subtotal</u>     |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Water Dog Lake</b>                                       |                           |                    |                    |                     |
| Single Use Trails (1.3 mi)                                  | A                         | 0                  | 65,000             |                     |
| Multi Use Trails (0.4 mi)                                   | A                         | 0                  | 80,000             |                     |
| Nature Study Area   | B                         | 0                  | 100,000            |                     |
| Trailhead without Parking                                   | B                         | 0                  | 50,000             |                     |
| Signage   | A                         | 0                  | 25,000             |                     |
| <b>Western Hills (West of Hastings) and Carlmont Canyon</b> |                           |                    |                    |                     |
| Single Use Trails (2.4 mi)                                  | A                         | 0                  | 120,000            |                     |
| Multi Use Trails (4.5 mi)                                   | A                         | 0                  | 900,000            |                     |
| Bridge  | A                         | 0                  | 50,000             |                     |
| Trailhead with Parking                                      | B                         | 0                  | 250,000            |                     |
| Trailheads without Parking (3 each)                         | B                         | 0                  | 150,000            |                     |
| Easement or Fee Title                                       | A                         | unknown            | 0                  |                     |
| Signage   | A                         | 0                  | 25,000             |                     |
| <b>Western Hills (East of Hastings)</b>                     |                           |                    |                    |                     |
| Single Use Trails (0.7 mi.)                                 | A                         | 0                  | 35,000             |                     |
| Multi Use Trails (2.2 mi.)                                  | A                         | 0                  | 440,000            |                     |
| Trailhead without Parking (2 each)                          | B                         | 0                  | 100,000            |                     |
| Easement or Fee Title                                       | A                         | unknown            | 0                  |                     |
| Signage   | A                         | 0                  | 25,000             |                     |
|   |                           |                    |                    | \$3,325,000         |
|   |                           |                    | <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>\$17,587,000</b> |

Table IX-2  
SUMMARY OF COSTS FOR EACH PRIORITY

|              |           |                      |
|--------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Priority A   | 1992-1997 | \$5,455,000.         |
| Priority B   | 1997-2002 | \$6,082,000.         |
| Priority C   | 2002-2007 | \$6,050,000.         |
| <b>Total</b> |           | <b>\$17,587,000.</b> |

Note: All costs are in 1992 dollars

## Funding Sources

Implementation of the program outlined in this 15-year master plan will require funding through a number of different sources and methods. Because the City's general fund allocation is needed mainly for operation and maintenance, new sources must be utilized.

**Quimby Act:** The City's park dedication ordinance under the Quimby Act requires 3 acres of land dedication per 1000 residents (or fee in-lieu) of new subdivision projects. Because relatively few new subdivisions are expected in Belmont, this source is limited. However, due to a provision of the Act, up to 5 acres per 1000 residents may be required if a like amount of existing parkland is already provided by the City. Belmont should revise its Quimby Act ordinance to reflect the higher amount of existing park acreage.

**Development Impact Fees:** It is recommended that the City adopt an impact fee ordinance that requires new development to mitigate impact on the City's park system. Such a fee could be imposed on new business, commercial, single-family, and multi-family residential development.

**Redevelopment Agency:** Parks located within the redevelopment area would be eligible for redevelopment funding or either a pay-as-you-go basis or through bonding.

**Bonding:** For large, more expensive projects, bonding may be the only feasible method of obtaining the necessary capital amounts. Municipal bonds, general obligation bonds, and limited obligation bonds may be used for capital improvements, but they require two-thirds voter approval. Local voter initiatives also may be used to bond for acquisition and improvement of open space lands.

**Federal and State Grants:** Categorical or "block" grants from the State or Federal Government continue as the "financing technique of choice", if these funds are available. The problem with grants is that their availability is unpredictable. The trend at both the Federal and State level is not in the direction of more grants. A State Park and Recreation bond issue (Proposition 149) was defeated by California voters in November, 1990. An exception to this trend is in the area of transportation improvements. Several sources would be available for bicycle paths and trails, including the following:

### **California Bikeways Act (State of California Department of Transportation)**

A maximum of \$90,000 per project per year will be allocated from the \$360,000 in funds available per year from the Bike Lane Account.

### **Rail Transportation Bond Act Initiative Statute (Proposition 116)**

A maximum of \$4 million per year for five years beginning in 1991 is allocated by the California Transportation Commission through a competitive process. Funds will be provided for bicycle improvement projects that improve safety and convenience for bicycle commuters. Matching funds by local agencies are required.

### **Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3**

A percentage of the State sales tax is provided as competitive block grants for implementation and development only (not acquisition) of local pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Examples of facilities acceptable for funding include bicycle lanes, bridges and Class I paths.

### **Federal Bikeway Funds (23 U.S.C. Section 217)**

A maximum of \$4.5 million per year is available for 100 percent funding of independent bicycle facilities. While no matching funds are required, Federal Bikeway Funds are redirected from Federal Highway Funds and application must be made for authority to redirect funds for bikeways from State highway work.

### **Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program (National Park Service)**

While no funds are available as part of the program, technical assistance is provided for trail development, free of charge by the Park Service. Assistance includes strategies for fund raising, procedures for public involvement, and guidelines for design implementation.

### **State Coastal Conservancy**

The Coastal Conservancy provides grant funding to local agencies for coastal and bayshore access improvements, trails, and habitat acquisition and enhancement.

### **1991 Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)**

\$151 billion will be distributed nationwide during fiscal years 1992 through 1997. Although most of this funding is earmarked for the Interstate Highway System, mass-transit, and other vehicular improvements, a portion will be set aside for transportation enhancement projects which could include bicycle trails, pedestrian trails, landscaping, acquisition of scenic easements, and other non-vehicular projects.

**Gifts and Endowments:** Contributions from private individuals or businesses are an attractive source of financing. They are normally accompanied by some gesture of recognition to the donor. Although fundraising through donations is unpredictable, it would help supplement other more-reliable sources. The City's "Open Space Fund" should be publicized and promoted as one fundraising source.

**Assessment District:** Several state acts authorize the establishment of local assessment districts without voter approval. The Landscape and Lighting Act of 1972 is commonly used. Because improvements must be paid for annually on a pay-as-you-go basis, assessment revenue may be more well suited to maintenance than capital improvements.

**Volunteerism:** Certain park improvements and maintenance activities can be accomplished with the help of volunteer labor. Neighborhood associations or a non-profit parks and recreation foundation could be helpful in organizing these efforts. The California Conservation Corps and prison inmate work furlough programs are also available.

Table IX-2  
FUNDING SOURCES

|  | POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE |        |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         |       |
|--|--------------------------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
|  | General Fund             | Grants | Open Space Fund/Donations | Assessment District | Redevelopment Agency | Quimby Act Dedication/In-Lieu | Development Impact Fees | Bonds |
| <b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>                                  |                          |        |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Barrett Community Center Building Improvements               |                          | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               | O                       | X     |
| Twin Pines Park Improvements                                 | X                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               | O                       |       |
| Ralston Intermediate School                                  | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| Dog Run at Cipriani Park                                     | X                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               | O                       |       |
| <b>NEIGHBORHOOD FACILITIES<br/>(EXISTING TO BE IMPROVED)</b> |                          |        |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Alexander Park   | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   | X                    |                               |                         | X     |
| Barrett Community Center - Park Improvements                 | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| Belameda Park  | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| Central School   | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   | X                    |                               |                         | X     |
| Cipriani Park  | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| College View Mini Park                                       | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| Fox Tot Lot  | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| Hallmark Park  | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| Hastings Tot Lot   | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| McDougal Park  | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| Nesbit School  | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| Patricia Wharton Mini Park                                   | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |
| O'Donnell Park   | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   | X                    |                               |                         | X     |
| Wakefield Park   | O                        | O      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         | X     |

X - Primary Source  
O - Supplemental Source



Table IX-2  
**FUNDING SOURCES (continued)**

|  | POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE |        |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         |       |
|--|--------------------------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
|  | General Fund             | Grants | Open Space Fund/Donations | Assessment District | Redevelopment Agency | Quimby Act Dedication/In-Lieu | Development Impact Fees | Bonds |
| <b>NEIGHBORHOOD FACILITIES<br/>(POTENTIAL NEW)</b> |                          |        |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Carlmont Canyon Neighborhood Park                  |                          | O      |                           | O                   |                      | X                             | X                       | O     |
| Carlmont/Continental Neighborhood Park             |                          | O      |                           | O                   |                      | X                             | X                       | O     |
| Cipriani Mini Park                                 |                          | O      |                           | O                   |                      | X                             | X                       | O     |
| Davey Glen Neighborhood Park                       |                          | O      |                           | O                   |                      | X                             | X                       | O     |
| Plateau Mini Park                                  |                          | O      |                           | O                   |                      | X                             | X                       | O     |
| Skymont (Bishop Court) Neighborhood Park           |                          | O      |                           | O                   |                      | X                             | X                       | O     |
| Skymont (Carriage Estates) Neighborhood Park       |                          | O      |                           | O                   |                      | X                             | X                       | O     |
| Valerga Drive Neighborhood Park                    |                          | O      |                           | O                   |                      | X                             | X                       | O     |
| <b>OPEN SPACE FACILITIES</b>                       |                          |        |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Single Use Trails                                  | O                        | X      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Multi Use Trails                                   | O                        | X      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Trailheads   | O                        | X      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Picnic Area  | O                        | X      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Nature Study Area                                  | O                        | X      | O                         | O                   |                      |                               |                         |       |
| <b>BICYCLE PATHS AND LANES</b>                     |                          |        |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Ralston bicycle lanes                              |                          | X      |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Alameda de las Pulgas bicycle lanes                |                          | X      |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         |       |
| Island Park bicycle paths                          |                          |        |                           |                     |                      | X                             | X                       |       |
| Ralston - 101 Interchange                          |                          |        |                           |                     |                      |                               |                         | X     |

X - Primary Source  
O - Supplemental Source

## X. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

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### Existing Park Maintenance Levels and Budget

Belmont is actively maintaining 71 of the 95 total developed park acres. The remaining 24 acres consist of School-District maintained asphalt playgrounds and the natural hillside in Twin Pines Park. Belmont's current operation and maintenance funding level is above that of two nearby peninsula cities, but below that of five. Belmont's current budget of \$8,435 per acre lags behind the eight-city average of \$11,898 by \$3,554 (Table X-1).

Current maintenance levels in Belmont are fairly typical of many California cities that have limited funding resources. The Sports Complex receives a high level of care consistent with its intensity of use and the need for safety associated with organized athletics. The City parks are maintained in an average condition. Turf is mowed once per week, restrooms receive adequate attention, and safety concerns are attended to promptly. However, current funding levels do not allow any additional effort that would elevate the parks' condition and enhance their value to the community. School fields maintained by the City receive little more than normal turf maintenance.

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Table X-1  
**COMPARATIVE PARK MAINTENANCE BUDGETS- Peninsula Cities**

| <u>City</u>  | <u>Annual Budget</u> | <u>Maintained Acres</u> | <u>\$/Acre</u> | <u>Acres Per Full-time Personnel</u> | <u>Funding Source</u> |
|--------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Belmont      | \$599,000.           | 71                      | \$8,435.       | 6.8                                  | General Fund          |
| Burlingame   | \$940,000.           | 65                      | \$14,460.      | 2.5                                  | General Fund          |
| Menlo Park   | \$423,485.           | 65                      | \$6,515.       | 9.3                                  | General Fund          |
| Foster City  | \$1,411,000.         | 121                     | \$11,660.      | 5                                    | General Fund          |
| San Carlos   | \$643,000.           | 85                      | \$7,565.       | 7.7                                  | General Fund          |
| San Mateo    | \$2,377,500.         | 125                     | \$19,020.      | 4.6                                  | General Fund          |
| Redwood City | \$1,700,000.         | 129                     | \$13,175.      | 5.2                                  | General Fund          |
| Mt. View     | \$2,885,000.         | 201                     | \$14,355.      | 6.9                                  | General Fund          |
| (Average)    | -                    | -                       | \$11,898.      | 6.0                                  | -                     |

Note: All figures are in 1992 dollars

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### Improved Park Maintenance Levels

Due to the limited availability of land for construction of new parks, Belmont's existing parks are a high priority. Making strategic capital improvements and improving the conditions of existing parks are necessary for achievement of this Master Plan's goals. Improved maintenance will require an additional commitment of economic resources. Table X-2 shows the impact of increasing the budget to a desired funding level of \$12,000/acre to maintain the existing 71 acres. The \$253,000 increase equates to an increase of \$24.54 per year per household.

**Table X-2**  
**INCREASED ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS AT DESIRED LEVEL FOR CURRENT ACREAGE**

| <u>Current Acres</u> | <u>Desired Funding Level</u> | <u>Desired Annual Budget</u> | <u>Current Annual Budget</u> | <u>Desired Increase</u> | <u>Per-Household Annual Increase Year 1992</u> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 71                   | \$12,000/acre                | \$852,000.                   | \$599,000.                   | \$253,000.              | \$24.54  |

Notes: All figures are in 1992 dollars  
 Assume 10,320 total households based on the 1990 U.S. Census

### Additional Park Acreage

Expanding the park system by 20 acres over the next 15 years would also require additional maintenance funding. Table X-3 shows the impact of maintaining an additional 20 acres at the desired level to be \$240,000, or \$21.86 per household by the year 2007.

**Table X-3**  
**INCREASED ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS AT DESIRED LEVEL FOR ADDITIONAL ACREAGE**

| <u>Proposed Additional Acres</u> | <u>Desired Funding Level</u> | <u>Additional Annual Cost</u> | <u>Per Household Annual Cost - Year 2007</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 20 acres                         | \$12,000/acre                | \$240,000.                    | \$21.86                                      |

Notes: All figures are in 1992 dollars  
 Assume 10,980 total households in year 2007

The total impact by the year 2007 increasing both acreage and funding would be \$493,000 per year, or \$44.90 per household, as shown in Table X-4.

**Table X-4**  
**INCREASED ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS AT DESIRED LEVELS FOR TOTAL EXPANDED ACREAGE**

| <u>Current Acres</u> | <u>Proposed Additional</u> | <u>Total Expanded Acreage</u> | <u>Desired Funding Level</u> | <u>Desired Annual Budget</u> | <u>Desired Annual Increase</u> | <u>Per-Household Annual Increase Year 2007</u> |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 71 acres             | 20 acres                   | 91 acres                      | \$12,000/acre                | \$1,092,000.                 | \$493,000.                     | \$44.90  |

Notes: - All figures are in 1992 dollars  
 Assume 10,980 total households in year 2007

## **Park Maintenance Funding**

Belmont's park operation and maintenance are currently funded exclusively by the City's general fund, as is typical in most Bay Area cities. It is unlikely the City will increase the Parks and Recreation Department general fund allocation because doing so would take money away from other departments. Instead, new sources must be found.

Many newer, growing communities, such as some of the Central Valley and Southern California cities, have established assessment districts that effectively guarantee a source of funding for parks maintenance. These efforts have been successful in large part because the district is set up prior to the new population's purchase of new housing stock and establishment of residency.

Assessment districts are more difficult to establish in mature communities, due to the current negative sentiment toward any increases in taxes, fees, or other governmental charges. However, it is not unreasonable to expect that this sentiment could change at some point during the 15-year life of this Master Plan. If conditions deteriorate due to a lack of adequate resources, people may be more willing to contribute to something they perceive will improve their quality of life, and we may begin to see more assessment districts established in mature communities such as Belmont.

Even though no voter approval is required, recent experience indicates that citizen support is necessary for successful establishment of an assessment district. The tables included in this chapter show that both an expanded and improved park system can be maintained at a reasonable per-household annual cost. A well thought out educational campaign and statistically valid public opinion surveys are tools the City should use to determine the public's willingness to support an annual increase. Once this groundwork has been completed, the City Council could move to establish one City-wide district under the Landscape and Lighting Act of 1972.

## **Street Tree Maintenance and Funding Levels**

As a portion of the current master plan effort, a study of the City's street tree population was conducted. The goals of the study were to establish baseline inventory data, draw conclusions regarding existing maintenance practices, and recommend improvements. The study's conclusions were based on a representation sample inventory of approximately 5% of the community's trees in both residential and commercial areas. A complete copy of the City of Belmont Community Forest Summary Report is on file at the Parks and Recreation Department office.

The study found significantly lower-than-desirable maintenance funding levels in Belmont. The results of the Belmont street tree inventory were compared with street tree data from several surrounding cities. The averages from four cities in proximity to Belmont indicate that the tree site density average per street mile in those cities are almost identical to the number of trees per street tree mile in the City of Belmont (Table X-5), and therefore these cities are of value in providing comparisons.

**Table X-5**  
**TREE RESOURCE BUDGET COMPARISON**

|                                | Burlingame | Palo Alto | Sunnyvale   | Milpitas  | Average   | Belmont  |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Tree sites                     | 11,000     | 38,320    | 36,943      | 9,391     | 23,913    | 8,515    |
| Street miles                   | 74         | 199       | 330         | 123       | 181       | 65       |
| Tree sites per street mile     | 149        | 193       | 112         | 76        | 132       | 131      |
| Population                     | 26,750     | 55,900    | 119,000     | 51,576    | 63,306    | 24,000   |
| Tree sites per capita          | .41        | .68       | .31         | .18       | .40       | .35      |
| Tree maintenance budget (1992) | \$400,000  | \$919,000 | \$1,000,000 | \$135,000 | \$639,000 | \$25,000 |
| \$ per capita                  | \$15       | \$16      | \$9         | \$3       | \$11      | \$1.04   |
| \$ per tree site               | \$36       | \$24      | \$30        | \$14      | \$26      | \$3      |

Note: All figures are in 1992 dollars

Table X-5 indicates that the per-site funding for community forest maintenance expended by the City of Belmont is significantly below the average of the other four cities. The findings suggest that the City wishes to increase its tree population but lacks funding to sustain the existing forest. Should this trend continue a further decline in the number of mature trees can be expected. The condition rating of the City's trees and the percentage of vacant planting sites suggest that the current level of maintenance is not adequate to sustain the health and service life of existing trees.

A lack of funding is further suggested by the comparison indicating that the current per tree site funding level is well below average. Surrounding communities are spending an average of \$26.00 per site per year for tree maintenance, compared to \$3.00 in Belmont. To effectively maintain the tree resource, funding levels should be increased to provide sufficient maintenance to assure the sustainability and health of the tree population.

The City has space available ("tree sites") for 8,515 trees, 6,218 of which are currently occupied by trees. To maintain the existing 6,218 trees at a cost of \$26.00 per tree, a budget of \$161,668 would be required. This represents an increase of \$136,668 beyond the current budget of \$25,000. Implementation of a strategy to fully populate all available sites would greatly increase the benefits provided by the tree resource. A 10-year program could be initiated to plant all available tree sites. Such a program would involve the planting of 230 trees per year in addition to replacing removals. Reaching the maximum potential of 8,515 trees, the maintenance budget would increase to \$221,390 at \$26.00 per tree per year.

Urban foresters in the State of California typically recommend that street trees be maintained on a minimum 5-year cycle to reduce attrition within the tree population and possible negative effects on public health, safety and welfare resulting from inadequate tree maintenance. Each street tree within the City should receive appropriate maintenance an average of once during that time period. Currently, 1,244 trees would require maintenance each year of a 5-year cycle to

meet the recommended minimum maintenance requirement. If all available sites were planted, 1,703 trees would require maintenance each year. A complete inventory of the trees should be performed to help establish a routine maintenance program.