

Frequently Asked Questions

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

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

2. What programs currently use the Willard Clubhouse?

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

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

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

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

The City's fall session of after-school program returned on Monday, August 16, 2021. Currently, 45 children are enrolled with a capped waiting list of 50. Summer camp programming returned in Summer 2022.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

No. Willard Middle School is owned and operated by the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD). BUSD has no room for such City programs.

8. Why do we need a larger building?

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

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

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

9. Why do we need a new building?

The current building in its condition is difficult to maintain and needs various upgrades and facility improvements to be able to meet current building codes and the City's sustainability and resiliency goals. The new building will be equipped with an updated energy efficient ventilation system that will provide improved indoor air quality. Additionally, the needs of the community are continually changing, and a new, more flexible building will be able to sustain the City's ability to offer programs that meet current needs.

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

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

<https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/adopted-plans/berkeley-resilience-strategy>

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

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

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

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

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

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

Though there are several facilities in the area that can be reserved and used by the community, including at the Claremont Library, BUSD facilities, and other local

private facilities such as local churches or through the University, this quadrant of Southeast Berkeley has the fewest options. Community members have expressed the want and need for a space that would be able to offer more opportunities for both programming and rentals.

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

The site that housed the former Willard Pool is owned by the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD). The pool was closed many years ago, but the City continued to lease the abutting building for administrative use and to provide a shower program. However, the City of Berkeley's lease of the site expired at the end of 2020 and was not renewed by BUSD. The City no longer has a lease or a memorandum of understanding to use the site, therefore the new Clubhouse cannot be constructed there. Additionally, without a long-term lease, Measure T1 funds may not be utilized to fund any improvements. Please contact BUSD directly regarding inquiries of their plans for that site.

15. Is the Willard Pool going to come back?

The site of the former Willard Pool is owned by the Berkeley Unified School District. The City of Berkeley has no jurisdiction, memorandum of understanding, or lease to use or develop that site. Please contact BUSD directly regarding inquiries of their plans for that site.

16. There is a neighboring field that's empty most of the time, can the building be constructed there or the field opened as a park for public use?

The field is owned by BUSD, and part of Willard Middle School property. The field is used by the middle school during the day and for school events. The City of Berkeley has no jurisdiction, memorandum of understanding, or lease to use or develop that site.

17. Is the City planning on bulldozing Willard Park? Is this a corporate building?

No. The planned improvement is a community center building to replace the existing, aging clubhouse building. The building will be owned and operated by the City of Berkeley.

18. Will this building take over the entire south end of the park and impose a huge edifice onto the site and result in the loss of many trees and open space?

Though the proposed building is larger than the existing clubhouse, the size is intended to balance the need for program space, preserve open space and certain trees, and be a scale appropriate to the space. The City's Forestry Division and City Arborist are developing a tree plan for the entire site to evaluate all site trees, replace any trees lost and provide a variety of additional trees for future generations to enjoy. Additionally, the project team is seeking a variance to reduce

the minimum required 20' rear setback to 16', thus reducing the impact on existing open space.

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

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

20. How long will construction last?

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

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

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

22. Will the new building have a restroom?

Yes, the community building will have its own restrooms for program and facility rental use, and will be separate from the new 200 SF stand-alone public restrooms which will be located near the tennis courts.

23. Are the community meetings being recorded?

Community meetings both live or held via zoom are typically not recorded. Meetings which include a legislative body, such as City Council meetings, are usually recorded.

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

The clubhouse is currently only used for the City of Berkeley's recreational programming. During the summers, the City of Berkeley uses the site for various summer camp programs from 7:30am-6pm. During the school year, BUSD provides school bus service from a few BUSD elementary schools to the Willard Afterschool program for grades TK thru 5, and the City of Berkeley afterschool program generally runs from 2pm-6pm.

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

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

The size of the clubhouse, and amenities (such as the interior restroom) cannot provide sufficient occupancy or security for unstaffed public use. The single community room is mainly used to store supplies and items necessary to run and

manage recreational programming. In addition, the building lacks amenities such as tables, chairs, AV equipment, sufficient lighting, ventilation, etc.

26. What is the history of the park?

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

<https://berkeleyca.gov/community-recreation/parks-recreation/parks/willard-park>

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

Willard Park was founded in the late 1950's, and the clubhouse was constructed in the 1970's. Since then, the clubhouse has not been significantly improved, but other projects at Willard Park include:

1991 – Hillegass Avenue public restroom

1992 – Derby Hillegass entry improvements

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

2004 – Tennis court lighting improvements

2014 – Tennis court renovations

2017 – Tot lot and pathway renovations

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

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

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

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

<https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/ballot-measures/measure-t1>

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

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

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

29. Is this an appropriate use of Measure T1 bond monies?

The Measure T1 Bond funds are to be used exactly for this type of project to replace/improve/renovate existing aging City infrastructure. This is an investment into this area of Berkeley.

30. What impact does the City anticipate with this project?

There are short-term and temporary impacts during construction, and long-term impacts that can be looked at both positive and negative. The goal is to make overall improvements to the Park, and the City of Berkeley's amenities and recreational programming. Alternatively, there is a negative impact in allowing existing infrastructure to age and to maintain outdated facilities. The City hopes to adapt to current needs, anticipate future needs and changing demographics and conditions, and provide modern, flexible, recreational facilities that benefit the entire community and serve everyone.

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

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

and foster positive community engagements. The new Clubhouse is currently expected to be 3,285 SF.

The size and configuration of the proposed one-story replacement building hopes to balance the needs for programming, maintain as much open space as possible, and enhance the park and neighborhood environment. As a comparison, the Willard Park Clubhouse building is not anticipated to offer the same level of programming as MLK Jr. Youth Services Center/YAP (South Central Berkeley, with a footprint of approx. 11,300 SF), Frances Albrier Community Center (SW Berkeley, with a footprint of approx. 13,000 SF), James Kenney Community Center (NW Berkeley, with a footprint of approx. 14,250 SF), or Live Oak Community Center (North Berkeley, with a footprint of approx. 15,300 SF). Willard Park Clubhouse is the City's only recreational facility in this area of Southeast Berkeley.

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

Due to a sharp increase in construction costs, 15% in the past year and another anticipated 10% this year, the cost estimate for the preferred plan for the new Willard Clubhouse has escalated. In response to the unanticipated increase, the project has been reduced in size and scope. The current iteration of the Clubhouse is 3,285 SF.

32. What about a 2-story structure with a smaller footprint?

The project team studied a 2-story option; however, community input favored the 1-story options. A 2-story option would match the scale of the neighboring buildings, providing a view of the Campanile and overlooking the park, but the 1-story option was clearly favored. A public building needs to provide full accessibility and egress, and a 2-story building would require an elevator and stairs which drive up the cost. Also, the community rooms on the upper level would not have direct outdoor access. The current design aligns with the goal of providing a Clubhouse with the strongest connection to the outdoor space.

33. What about investment into the City's other recreation centers?

The City has 4 other recreation centers:

James Kenney Community Center in northwest Berkeley was renovated in 2017. The building received seismic improvements and code compliance upgrades to qualify the building to be a Care & Shelter site for the City of Berkeley. Other improvements included accessibility improvements, restroom renovation, new

finishes, new siding, new windows, among other upgrades. The work was funded by Measure F (Parks Tax), the City's General Fund, and a FEMA grant.

Live Oak Community Center in northeast Berkeley recently completed renovations in 2021. The building received seismic improvements and code compliance upgrades to qualify the building to be a Care & Shelter site for the City of Berkeley. Other improvements included accessibility improvements, restroom renovations, building expansion, a new ADA restroom, upgraded electrical and HVAC systems, and new finishes, among other upgrades. The work was funded by Measure F (Parks Tax), the City's General Fund, and Measure T1 (Infrastructure Bond) Phase 1.

MLK Jr. Youth Services Center/Young Adult Program (YAP) in south Berkeley is scheduled for renovations in the next few years. The building is to receive seismic improvements and code compliance upgrades to qualify the building to be a Care & Shelter site for the City of Berkeley. Improvements are anticipated to include accessibility improvements, restroom renovation, new finishes, and upgraded electrical and HVAC systems, among other upgrades. The work is funded by Measure T1 Phase 2 and is in the initial planning/development stages.

Frances Albrier Community Center in southwest Berkeley underwent a community process in 2019-2020 to solicit community feedback to develop conceptual designs for the renovation or replacement of the building. The preferred concept which aligned with the majority of community input, included complete demolition and replacement of the building, including the addition of a community swimming pool. The improvements would be a significant investment into the community and the conceptual plans are being used to seek possible funding opportunities. Details for the project can be found through the following website:
<https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/frances-albrier-community-center-replacement-project>

The Willard Clubhouse is the only recreation building in southeast Berkeley. This project represents an equitable investment into this area of Berkeley. The planned reconstruction is funded by Measure T1 Phase 2, and is scheduled to be completed in the next few years.

34. Can the City include an enclosed dog run in this park?

The multi-purpose/multi-use open lawn area is well used by the community and the project has prioritized minimizing impacts to the open lawn space based on community feedback. Willard Park does not have the space to have an enclosed dog run without giving up another use.

35. Can the City add a basketball court in this park?

A basketball hoop is being considered near the tennis ball wall south of the tennis courts. Funding for a basketball hoop and repaving the area will come from the Parks maintenance budget.

36. How much buffer is there between the new building and the next-door neighbor's houses?

The building will comply with the current setback requirements in the Berkeley Municipal Code Section 23.202.080 for the R-2 Restricted Two-Family Residential District. Willard Park is a corner lot with Derby Street as the Front Yard and Hillegass Avenue is the Street Side. The current setback requirements are:

- 20-foot setback from Derby Street
- 7.5-foot setback from Hillegass Avenue
- 4-foot interior side yard setback
- *20-foot rear yard (south property line) setback

*The design team is preparing an application to the City of Berkeley Planning Department for a variance to reduce the minimum 20-foot setback to 16-feet, in order to preserve more open space for public use in front of the proposed building.

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

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

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

38. Has the City undertaken any environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regarding the Willard Clubhouse Project?

The City is in process of environmental reviews and assessments for the Willard Clubhouse Project pursuant to what is needed for CEQA. Preliminarily, it appears that the project will be eligible for a categorical exemption, but a final determination is forthcoming. We anticipate we can finalize upon review and comments from our

zoning permit application with the Planning Department. Their review time is currently 4-6 months.

39. How is the City addressing the loss of existing trees?

The City's Forestry Division and City Arborist have developed a tree plan that addresses the entire park, including at the proposed building site. The Forestry Division evaluates the condition, varieties, and location, of all the trees in the park. They identify trees that should be protected and saved, trees that provide continued value to the park, and propose trees that would be valuable additions to the park.

The tree plan intends to offset and replace any trees lost and provide a variety of additional trees for future generations to enjoy. The tree plan also takes into consideration the expected growth/decline/removal of existing trees, looks at offsetting the carbon footprint of the planned removals with the addition of new trees, projects growth and shadows, maintaining park views and open space for joy and safety, and to enhance the character of the park.

40. What happened to the redwood tree that fell at the corner of Hillegass Street and Derby Street?

The redwood is being salvaged. The City intends to re-use the wood in other ways around the park and in the construction of the new Clubhouse and Restroom.

41. How long will the Willard Clubhouse construction take? What can you tell people who are worried about long-term, major disruption to the site?

Construction is anticipated to take approximately 18 months. As with any construction project, there will be some disruptive operations. The City anticipates the following impacts:

1. The area of the construction site will be fenced off, but the majority of the park is anticipated to remain open. The tennis courts, ball wall, playground, and a majority of the field will remain open and accessible.
2. The public restroom will be closed, but a public porta potty may be installed during the duration of the project.
3. Parking and traffic along Hillegass Avenue will be impacted the most when the building is being demolished to allow for movement of construction vehicles to work and remove debris, but access to all residents, driveways, and for emergency vehicles will be preserved.
4. No disruptions to utility services such as water, gas, electricity, or telephone is anticipated.
5. Construction noise and work will be limited to regular working hours, anticipated to be 7:30am-5pm, Monday thru Friday. Sustained noise impacts will be greatest during demolition, typically completed in one or two weeks at the beginning of the project. Intermittent noise of construction vehicle movement,

generator noise, sawing, hammering, and nail guns, tends to peak when the exterior structure is being erected. Noise will typically lesson when the construction moves to completing interior improvements and finishes.

6. Some parking spaces will be signed for contractor use for the duration of construction.