

Education

Level of Education

- According to estimates in the American Community Survey (2006-2010), 28.4 percent of the Belle Haven population over 25 hold a high school diploma or equivalent as the highest level of educational attainment, compared with 8.8 percent of the overall Menlo Park population over 25 and 21.5 percent of the California population over 25.
- About 13.3 percent of the Belle Haven population over 25 holds a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 69.5 percent in Menlo Park overall and 30 percent in California.

Language and Literacy

- According to estimates in the American Community Survey (2006-2010), almost 68 percent of Belle Haven residents over 5 speak a language other than English at home. Almost 60 percent of Belle Haven residents over 5 speak Spanish at home. In about 15.6 percent of Belle Haven households, there was no one over the age of 14 who spoke only English or who spoke English “very well.” Less than 1 percent of children (ages 5-17) in Belle Haven were recorded as speaking English “not well” or “not at all.” Almost 25 percent of working-age adults (ages 18-64) in Belle Haven were recorded as speaking English “not well” or “not at all.” Almost 34 percent of seniors (ages 65+) in Belle Haven were recorded as speaking English “not well” or “not at all.” Since 2000, the largest proportion of the Belle Haven population recorded as speaking English “not well” or “not at all” has shifted from working-age adults to seniors.⁶
- Based on a survey of Belle Haven conducted in 2005, 53 percent of respondents preferred to receive information about Onetta Harris Community Center and Kelly Park in English and 44 percent in Spanish. 78 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable speaking English with others.
- In a survey of 244 residents conducted in August 2012, 79% of respondents agreed that they felt comfortable reading and writing in English.

Reading Skills

- In the 2009-10 school year, 30 percent of students at Belle Haven Elementary School were meeting or exceeding state standards, slightly lower than the number of students at the Ravenswood City School District level (34%),⁷ and much lower than the number of students at the state level (52%).

⁶ Data on 2000 census taken from the 2010 Demographic Analysis of the Belle Haven Community for the Menlo Park Library.

⁷ The Ravenswood City School District includes schools in both Menlo Park and East Palo Alto. In Menlo Park, the schools in the Ravenswood district are Belle Haven Elementary, Willow Oaks Elementary, and East Palo Alto Stanford High School. In East Palo Alto, the schools in the Ravenswood district are Brentwood Academy, Cesar Chavez Academy, Costaño Elementary, Green Oaks Academy, James Flood School, Ronald McNair Academy, Ravenswood Child Development Center, San Francisco 49ers Academy,

Public Assistance

- According to the American Community Survey (2006-2010), about 6.7 percent of households in the Belle Haven neighborhood received cash public assistance in 2010, compared with 1.4 percent in Menlo Park overall and 3.4 percent in California.
- During the 2005-06 school year, 84.3 percent of students in the Ravenswood Elementary School District were receiving free lunch.

Hunger

- As of the 2010 census, about 7.3 percent of households in Belle Haven had received Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months, compared with 1.4 percent in Menlo Park overall and 5.4 percent in California.

Community Conversation Interviews

Question: Based on your experience and what you hear from family and friends, what do you think is the biggest issue currently facing the community?

Summary:

More communication/collaboration East and West, Improve education (Belle Haven in Menlo Park School District instead of Ravenswood), better ways of getting the word out, Community should be more self-sufficient, improve landscape here in Belle Haven (Better streets, sidewalks, more businesses and resources), more job opportunities.

- Belle Haven is a senior community, need to be addressed. Down to a lot of young families and children, figure out services. Facebook will be large compound, traffic. Vacant buildings need to be filled for jobs in the community. Need seminars to educate people on what they can do to make things better.
- Education is the top issue—the quality of education and the way it is organized. Under the current system, children in Belle Haven are disadvantaged when they leave. Employment is another issue. There is a lack of entry-level and medium-level jobs in the area for Belle Haven residents. There are no jobs at all in Belle Haven. Without more variety in the types of jobs available, residents have to work at minimum wage or they have to apply for jobs that require advanced degrees
- The school and the Belle Haven library—people are not comfortable with them, though some people think it is okay. We need more competent teachers in Belle Haven schools, teachers who will teach students how to compete with others in higher education.
- There are three programs: Boys and Girls Club, OHCC, Belle Haven afterschool but it takes all of us to raise the kids. Public needs to know the services available to them. Get info out there, some people still don't know.
- Safety, parents feeling that their kids are safe. Kids struggling with transition to M-A, lack of opportunities for kids' leads to bad decisions.
- Crime prevention and quality of life are the two big ones. I've lived in Belle Haven for about fifteen years. Crime from East Palo Alto has tainted the neighborhood. But Belle Haven has also improved. The recent shooting on Madera has people ready to address crime issues and the community's relationship with the police. On my way to the Homeowners' Association meeting at OHCC in early August, I think it was the first Wednesday of the month (8/1), I was driving up almost to Terminal, trying to get to the meeting, and a police officer stopped me and told me

very rudely that it was a crime scene and that I should get out of there. If the police show that lack of courtesy to everyone, it is going to generate bad feelings. The police and the Belle Haven community need to bond. It's a small community and people should be able to know the police officers who patrol here. Belle Haven has changed—the police should know that and act like they know it. Also, some Belle Haven youth could be trained as police officers, which might improve the relationship. Youth are not engaged in this community. Both the community and the city have to focus on youth more. The Belle Haven Community Foundation is trying to address this and many other issues related to the quality of life in Belle Haven. We need to be self-sufficient and responsible; it is not all on the city and the city should not see Belle Haven as a burden. Infrastructure also needs attention in Belle Haven, like parks, signs, streets, and the traffic bottleneck on Willow where the road narrows into one lane. There is only one way out of Belle Haven in an emergency. I'm not sure how to fix this, but Hamilton, Ivy, and Newbridge lead to Willow and that is the only way in or out. There should be safer routes made for children going to school, especially those going to the west side.

- The biggest issues facing the community are adequate services, effective schools, income levels, and immigration status. Under services, think especially of health and wellness, both emotional and physical, and recreation. Under immigration status, think of the effect on families and on the larger community, particularly of the fear of deportation. Gap in education/ health care, perception of being under achieving. Kids continue to do so enhance the community
- Belle Haven Elementary, or education more generally, is a major issue. If you look at the API scores of the Menlo Park City School District, they are much higher than average, but for Belle Haven they are very low. If Belle Haven was made a part of the MPCSD, the school might do much better. It is hard for people to be excited about sending their kids to Belle Haven Elementary. I live in the Hamilton enclave of Belle Haven and most of the school-age kids go to Beechwood, to private schools on the west side, or are in the Tinsley program. This hurts Belle Haven Elementary, if the children of the well-educated residents do not go there, but there is no incentive for parents to send their kids to Belle Haven Elementary. It becomes a catch-22 of sorts because how will Belle Haven Elementary improve if higher-performing students don't attend? Beechwood has been around for a long time and seems to generate a lot of positive community sentiment. Housing is another major issue. We are at somewhat of a crossroads. Gentrification is a definite possibility, especially with the arrival of Facebook. This is good for homeowners because with more homeowners there will be more taxes paid to support the schools. It is, however, bad for longtime renters who might also be neighborhood stakeholders because they will be displaced. As you've probably seen from your research into the statistics, Belle Haven is experiencing a demographic transition. Traffic is the third major issue I can think of. I think people are generally satisfied with the upward trend of the Bohannon industrial complex. At the same time, the Willow-Newbridge intersection is a really bad traffic area. Also, the Menlo Park Police substation is a major blight on the city. It looks awful and reflects badly on the Belle Haven area and on the city overall. Unfortunately, it also happens to be beside a really good restaurant, the Backyard.

ATTACHMENT B

- The overall landscape needs attention—public areas are undeveloped and look abandoned. It is not as well kept as the west side. There is more police activity on this side—the police presence is good because we feel more protected, but the necessity for it indicates that people are doing things that they shouldn't be. There could be more communication with Belle Haven residents. For example, public meetings. The September City Council meeting hasn't really been publicized much, unless you have access to the website. There could be more communication between the residents and the west side.
- Unemployment, young adult activities, communication between the east and west (city government), street maintenance, infrastructure, schools in Belle Haven versus West Menlo Park schools, Belle Haven School and Willow school versus MPCSD, are all big issues.
- Education system, not fair for non-native speakers and native speakers. Held back because of native speakers. Passing along kids. Makes it difficult when they go to high school.

Question: When you think about the future of the Belle Haven neighborhood, what do you see?

Summary:

Stop forgetting about Belle Haven, part of the City, Stop cutting services here-less for the have-nots, Want to be more like the West side, There is starting to be another ethnic shift. We feel divided and there is a strong bitterness because of this and we feel ignored.

- There are a lot of residents who are willing to speak up and do what is needed to make changes. We need to get people in both parts of Menlo Park to understand that Belle Haven is part of Menlo Park. It's necessary to break down the existing separatism. I am hopeful. I've worked here for 20 years and seen a lot of positive changes.
- Envision being more like the other side of town: have shops, walking, bike trails, and sit down areas. Make like a bit nicer.
- I see people knowing each other and each other's children, and the children knowing us. I see people not parked on lawns because something has been done about parking. I see more affordable housing, to offset the current overcrowding. I see self-sufficiency, services in Belle Haven, and jobs for youth and for everyone. I see no more long commutes to work. I see Belle Haven residents working for the city of Menlo Park. I see better, safer bike paths on Willow. I see an abundant community, with less or no crime. With sufficient housing, jobs, and food, there will be less crime.
- I see land that could be developed. Families need social services, for example there are no clinics for them to go to.

ATTACHMENT B

- Success, kids coming up. (key) strong stakeholders continue to propel neighborhood
- I hope for gentrification. I want to see more new homeowners buy up and improve some of the homes that look awful. With more new homeowners, more kids will come into Belle Haven Elementary and test scores will improve. I would also like to see Belle Haven Elementary brought into the Menlo Park City School District. It's hard to say what will push the other because no one is making the first move. Either improvement to the school will bring in new homeowners, or more new homeowners will cause improvements in the school.
- Don't see anything dramatically different, doesn't see gentrification. His hope: school would become beacon, longer learning day, summer instruction, everything in a bigger scale, Boys and Girls club turns into teen club house and everything else held at Belle Haven School.
- I've lived here since 1955. There is a need for housing, especially new low-income housing. There is some concern among residents about gentrification. The community was originally designed as a place for minorities. Now longtime residents can't afford to stay and those who do stay feel that their needs are not being met. Originally there were a lot of Europeans and Asians here, then it shifted to an African-American majority, then a Latino majority with equal proportions of Pacific Islanders and African-Americans, and now more Europeans are moving back in. There have been improvements over the years, thanks to both the city and residents. The "curb appeal" of the community has improved.
- Up in the air, because it's changing demographics
- I see a better school for a new generation. I worked in the library commission and we tried to send a letter to the city. We need a bigger library in Belle Haven, but there is no space. I would like to see a new library and a new police substation. The current police station has no parking. Menlo Park can look better; we pay the taxes to make it look better. Even if there can't be a new Belle Haven library, we could have new and more books, and more computers, especially if they added a second floor. New things attract more patrons.
- It's tough to know because of budget cuts and not knowing what kind of impact they will have. The city hits hardest the programs that are needed most. I really don't know what the future looks like. We were left out of the decision regarding Facebook. No one said it would affect the Belle Haven community. Belle Haven didn't gain much. A small community foundation fund was established, \$500,000 over five years, to be shared between Belle Haven and East Palo Alto. Groups can apply for grants, but at \$100,000 per year, there isn't too much that can be done. I hope that the future of Belle Haven will be the future of Menlo Park. I want to see one city, not divided into east and west. There is a big infrastructure gap between east and west. Tree

maintenance is much better on the west side. The blatant difference between east and west generates bad feelings.

- Trying to get closer to what is offered in other communities and what is offered on the other side of Menlo Park. Example: summer time programs for learning retention. Public become more serious about the kid's education.

Question: What concerns do you have for the future of the Belle Haven neighborhood, what do see?

Summary:

Cuts keep happening in a community that needs the services the most. Need equal access to education. More jobs for youth and adults who live here in Belle Haven.

- If there are going to be budget cuts, what will be cut? How will it affect the quality of life in Belle Haven? We need to make sure programs continue, even if there are cuts. Child care, after school care, and the senior center should definitely not get cut. We need to collaborate with the city to find alternatives. Does the city have a development department that focuses on finding funds for Belle Haven? That might go a long way toward solving some issues.
- We need equal access to education in Belle Haven. Right now, there are a lot of young people transitioning into adulthood who cannot have stability in their lives because of educational inequity. Public schools struggle to reach everyone. The high school graduation rate in Belle Haven is below 50% that alone should be a cause for concern. Educational inequity perpetuates existing issues like crime, problems of emotional health, and drug use and addiction, and undermines the ability to form strong families. College readiness is another concern—most kids in Belle Haven are not prepared for college. For the ones who never graduate high school, what are they going to do? Some will find ways to succeed, but others won't. There is a tendency right now to look at symptoms of problems rather than their causes, when looking at the causes is what will solve the problems. Right now, the issues we're confronting are the symptoms of a lack of services.
- Better services. Have it so you can come together and talk. More bike friendly.
- There are underdeveloped areas that are not kept, like the railroad track on Chilco. It gives the community a devalued look. Government cuts and budget cuts are a concern. If there is a change in police presence, that would mean bad things for this community. The police substation was supposed to be developed but it wasn't. Security is always a concern.
- Real Estate prices and safety.

ATTACHMENT B

- Being the same, creating opportunities for kids they need to feel valued in the community and an opportunity for work.
- Things have gotten worse over time in education. The successful ones leave and don't come back. Those that stay have little hope of a future, which perpetuates crime. The difference in housing prices between East and West Menlo Park creates a stress on residents here. We live all right here, but sometimes it may not look like it in comparison to over there. When Belle Haven kids go to high schools on the west side, they are not encouraged to enter college prep courses. People over here are often unaware of features such as academic tracking and do not realize that this influences the classes their kids are assigned to in high school. Here we have a school district that is 30% immigrants and on top of that, 40% English language learners. Consequently, most of these kids are placed in regular, basic, or below basic classes in west side schools. The dropout rate is very high here, about 60 to 70%.
- This community has limited resources. There could be ways to maximize that, but more also needs to be put in. There could be job training at OHCC. There could be more activities at OHCC. What about the OHCC computer lab? That could be put in use for more hours of the day.

Question: What concerns do you have for the future of the community?

Summary:

More for teens and young adults, more community involvement. Fear of gentrification and residents becoming pushed out due to higher prices.

- Community involvement, getting that across to the younger ones, also community services.
- Gentrification, challenge with new people coming in, hard for older people.
- Things have gotten worse over time in education. The successful ones leave and don't come back. Those that stay have little hope of a future, which perpetuates crime. The difference in housing prices between East and West Menlo Park creates a stress on residents here. We live all right here, but sometimes it may not look like it in comparison to over there. When Belle Haven kids go to high schools on the west side, they are not encouraged to enter college prep courses. People over here are often unaware of features such as academic tracking and do not realize that this influences the classes their kids are assigned to in high school. Here we have a school district that is 30% immigrants and on top of that, 40% English language learners. Consequently, most of these kids are placed in regular, basic, or below basic classes in west side schools. The dropout rate is very high here, about 60 to 70%.

ATTACHMENT B

- This community has limited resources. There could be ways to maximize that, but more also needs to be put in. There could be job training at OHCC. There could be more activities at OHCC. What about the OHCC computer lab? That could be put in use for more hours of the day
- I am very concerned about the young people. I would like to see OHCC have more resources. Young people are in danger of being killed or jailed and this danger arises from gang violence and drugs. There is probably even a lot more going on than we are aware of. There needs to be a program targeting 18-25 year olds to address the issues that they face. There should also be a teen center or more programs for teens at OHCC. I don't think people want to see Belle Haven go back to the way it used to be. The parents of the teens I currently work with say that Belle Haven used to be much worse in terms of crime. The city has done some good by building and maintaining parks, but it is not enough to keep kids off the streets. Educational programs at OHCC would be the best preventative measure. The right people aren't at OHCC to influence the community. There needs to be someone who can relate to the community, and to whom the community can relate, someone who talks like them and looks like them. Also, the results that the city wants are not always the results that the community wants or needs.
- Have all the kids graduate high school and get some sort of post high school education, not necessarily college.
- Community involvement, getting that across to the younger ones, also community services.
- Education is an issue, setup to fail everything related to that. Relationship with other side of Menlo Park. New people have more money, people get less. Gentrification. Can't afford houses, example: pool not subsidized anymore and people can't afford it.

Question: What would you like Menlo Park City Council members to know about the Belle Haven community?

Summary:

More connection to both the West/East Sides. Council members need to reach out more to the Belle Haven residents. It appears that council members do not really know all that goes on here in this community. Have more council meetings here in the community.

- This community is a group on the move. The community has changed over time. It is a group that is able to make good decisions for itself.

ATTACHMENT B

- The City Council members should know all that there is to know. They shouldn't need me or anyone else to tell them. If you are going to run for City Council, you should know the community, know the issues, and know the people.
- Community like every other community. What we don't hold in degrees hold in integrity, street smarts. We can balance a budget as well as anyone. We are used to having to survive on very little. You (City of Menlo Park) are not doing us any favors: Come as a peer. We are on the same plane.
- There are a lot of hardworking people in this community. Political non-involvement does not mean they do not care. Often people here are barred from involvement by feeling uncomfortable, or they do not have time, or they are not aware of how to be involved in a political process. There needs to be more outreach by City Council. More meetings need to be held here and translation is a must. It's not as simple as to say City Council meetings are open to everyone—there needs to be more active attempts to engage Belle Haven residents. Of course, I've also seen progress with the City Council since I've been here. City Council should also keep in mind Belle Haven's history and respect that history, whether it is a history of anger or frustration or whatnot
- Tending to forget this side, look at it as all being one.
- Don't be afraid of it, been politically afraid of change. Buy-In value
- We would like to be more connected to the west side. In terms of physical connections, there could be easier access. They redid the footbridge, which was good. We also do not want to lose our subsidies. We want to be like the west side, but we need to be helped along to do it. I would like to see everyone in Belle Haven enjoying the same standard of living as on the west side. I would say the Council does a pretty good job. They are compassionate about Belle Haven and understand how Belle Haven came to be. I know that there are some historic issues, but overall I would say they are doing a good job.
- I would like the City Council members to understand what it means to have to work two or three jobs just to live. Along with that, I would like them to understand how hard it can be to attend something like a parent conference or a City Council meeting, things that might seem easy or just minor inconveniences to people on the west side. Unfortunately, these are usually meetings where important decisions are made. Morning PTA meetings are also inconvenient—most people over here are heading to work at that time. A City Council meeting that runs four or five hours in the evening is not going to appeal to someone who just worked a 14-hour day. The needs of the working poor in Belle Haven are not taken into account. Even Belle Haven professionals keep long hours, usually because they are trying to advance themselves in their careers. There is a wide misconception that low attendance by Belle Haven residents means lack

ATTACHMENT B

of caring. I would like City Council to know who we are, what we have to do to survive. Also I would like City Council to know what this lifestyle means in terms of kids getting academic support—they don't because their parents don't have time to provide it. At any meeting, food and childcare are a must. It needs to be understood that there is an additional cost to support programs in Belle Haven. There are few college-educated residents here. This means that some issues perceived as important by West Menlo Park are not seen the same way here because people have no perspective on the issues. A lot of people here also don't have computers, or they have computers with no access to internet. Lack of access to technology impacts a child's academic performance. If there is limited computer lab time at school, and the library has limited computer use policies, kids have a hard time completing electronic assignments. There are a lot of logistical issues that people here have to confront. People also walk to get places here, but if resources are moved out of the neighborhood, they will no longer be accessible.

- I would like to see a nice look for the city. Belle Haven has looked the same for years. The street lines are faded or not present and safety is a concern. On Hamilton, the speed limit is too high. There should be more signs and crosswalks. The trees in the neighborhood are not cut. The city should pay more attention to Belle Haven. Residents need to see the results of the taxes they pay.
- The residents are hardworking and are not always as engaged in community meetings and activities because of work and child care. I think the residents are mostly homeowners. Many have lost their homes and moved out, but for the ones who stayed, they want to do more and want to be acknowledged as part of the wider Menlo Park community.
- The Belle Haven School is an issue. Why isn't Belle Haven part of the Menlo Park School District?
- Education is a big part of their lives; many kids are the first generation in their household to go to college.

Question: Can you think of any strengths or assets in the Belle Haven community that would help with getting people involved in a possible visioning process?

Summary:

Many "siloes" in the community looking out for their own interest and don't want to help or collaborate, but tend to be the loudest voices. Need to come together as a whole before we can really succeed.

- There are some self-contained groups, or "silos," that do really good things for themselves but do not necessarily collaborate with other such groups. They tend to be protective of their

resources, too. Unfortunately, these groups tend to be the most vocal voices in Belle Haven, so the council only hears them. Individuals who do not belong to these groups have no venue to express their opinions. There might be a lot of people who agree, but don't know it, and there is no way of getting their voices to unite. People also feel that their opinion is not valued and that problems will therefore not get solved. Sometimes West Menlo Park does not understand this. We could have something like a town hall, where individuals, not groups, get up and speak. It's a culturally diverse community, which is strength. I'm part of a new organization, the Belle Haven Community Foundation, which is trying to include all ethnicities. Some groups or individuals are not comfortable expressing themselves or attending City Council meetings. It might be best if cultural representatives were chosen, so that all opinions get heard but are expressed by people who are comfortable with communication. There is a lot of talent in this community and people are interested and want to see improvement. Of course it will take a while to get everyone to agree. High school kids are not welcomed in this community as they should be. They are not supported and not given a positive environment. There is too much focus on college talk with these kids and not enough focus on careers. Therefore, these kids don't see the relevance of what they are learning in high school. Career technical education does exist in California, but it hasn't gotten to our middle schools yet, where it needs to be. We should mentor kids more, help them figure out where to go, what to do, and how to get there.

- There is a chance, manageable problems.
- Well, different people will want different things. A lot of the things they want might be “nuts and bolts.” For example, street and sidewalk improvements. It's good for people to feel like they have an outlet to tell the Council specifically what they want to have done. In the past, I think people have felt that the Council took a broad perspective without necessarily addressing specific needs or concerns.
- Belle Haven is a community in transition. There are old-timers and new. There has been some blending in the last five years, but there is still a ways to go. The community has a lot of untapped strength that the city could use but doesn't. People here have a lot of personal skills, skills in the arts, electronics, and the computer industry. There are skilled workers here but they can't get skilled jobs. The city government's job is to take care of the have-nots. There should be a job bank here. We will not come to the table if we do not feel invited. In the past it felt like we were being given leftovers or crumbs.
- It is a resilient community and very strong emotionally. There is a very strong sense of family here and it is possible to find common ground. There is a deep sense of caring for the young people—this is a major misconception about Belle Haven. It is not that parents care any less for their children here; it is that it is more difficult to be a parent here. There is also a willingness to

grow and adapt. Take the shift from an African-American majority to a Hispanic/Latino majority. That transition required tolerance and adaptability from all sides. People are also very forgiving here and willing to move on.

- People would like a sense of being able to communicate and share their ideas. There are few opportunities for Belle Haven residents to do this. There are few meetings at OHCC to get residents' input and some of these have been canceled. We would like to be able to express our concerns as well as positive changes in the community on a regular, ongoing basis.
- Talks- lead by local elders, let them use facilities for free, add components for young crowd
- Things are getting better. We are now more connected to the west side. Change might not happen as fast as we would like, but it is trending upward.
- Parents want their kids to be successful. Council members could provide opportunities for kids. For example, an internship involving job skill training would be really good and more purposeful than just giving them a high school education. There are some residents who look for free handouts and will try to take advantage of the system. Most families are happy to give back, in my experience. Provide a co-op, an opportunity for families to buy in, something that makes a bigger impact on the families, and something that is less one-sided. For example, we offered a free SAT class in exchange for getting some families to put in volunteer hours. It is a win-win situation. Residents should know that the city can be empathetic and provide support and workshops geared toward what the residents are going through.
Strengths: good job of getting message to parents. Example: Neighborhood Advice Group at Boys and Girls Club, family night, they offer workshops on homework help etc.
- Community Workshops with all stakeholders. People that work here are still part of community, even if they don't live here.

Question: Do you have any concerns about getting people involved in a possible visioning process?

Summary:

Get youth involved and share how important this project really is. Really follow through with this process and do not drop the ball. Be upfront and clear about what the City is really doing. Take time to really promote the meetings and what the plan is.

- I might potentially be concerned about the nature of the vision produced. Would it serve families and children well? Would it address the core issues? Would it represent real commitment to change, or just window dressing? Would there be sufficient community input? Who in the community is being consulted and how is this decided?

ATTACHMENT B

- The older ones will let them know, help younger ones know the importance of this.
- Talks can go somewhere you don't want it to go, but need to take risk and just prepare.
- No.
- Have to reach EVERY family in the community, big melting pot.
- Community needs conversations to be diverse but also separate. People feel more free to talk in own language

Question: Are there methods for involving people that have worked especially well in Belle Haven? / Not so well?

Summary:

Go door to door (Canvassing); Make sure reading material is clear, concise and translated. Maybe have a special event or use special events to promote meetings, etc. Phone calls or emails. Send out a letter to the community before the meeting to explain the process more. Too much jargon during meetings turns off residents. Have more than one meeting at different times due to residents' busy schedules and time constraints.

- Phone calls work well to invite the entire community.
- Well, you are dealing with a lot of disparate communities. Electronic communication or social media works well in my area, but not all parts of the neighborhood are computer literate or have access to the internet. You get the same five people always showing up to community meetings. I don't know how to change that. Maybe if people felt that their opinions made a difference they would be more willing to participate. You might try a "letters to the editor" type of approach with your newsletter to get feedback. People can submit their concerns. You might get some responses that way. If it's practical, you could also try canvassing street to street, since it is a small community.
- Many people speak a language other than English. Translation is a must. Having meetings in the Belle Haven area would be a big help, especially on a regular basis, with a calendar to let us know that they are upcoming
- Well-food/outings bring us together. Gear something around field (soccer). Market workshops more like fun events.
- Door to door, has to be insightful info., scare tactics ("If you don't use it you will lose it")

referring to cuts.

- A well-handled event is a good idea. Make it enjoyable, provide food, do visuals with a projector rather than writing on a whiteboard. Work with residents to organize a meeting. Last time we were able to get lots of restaurant donations. The city doesn't necessarily need to spend a lot of money. Work with the Belle Haven Community Foundation. These meetings should be a collaborative process. It does not have to be a burden on the city. Even if things don't work out the first time, it is important to keep trying.
- Having meetings here is a start. Translation is a must. A two-way conversation is good. There should also be an understanding that people might not know how to enter a political process. The organizers of the process should build trust with the community. Community residents should see that some of the leaders in the process are people who really care, people who are familiar, for example Alejandro. Also think about mixing business and pleasure. Potlucks, a meet-and-greet, live music, all of those are possibilities. Advertise meetings as fun community events, something people will still want to attend after a long day at work. Something for kids always helps. Make it inviting.
- Word-of-mouth is a big one. If you create an issue, people will rally around it. For example, people came out to talk about cuts in redevelopment funding before, and about Facebook home buyers. Present it as an issue that they have a stake in. Do this for mail-out flyers especially. People will toss mail if they don't understand it or if it doesn't seem important. Make sure to translate anything you send out. Also, some people don't read their mail. Identify big groups and approach them for help in establishing communication. Better yet, recruit neighborhood people to do this for you. Go to churches, businesses, and schools to do this. On-site surveys will also work well. Go where people are comfortable. Know that Belle Haven residents attend churches in Redwood City and Mountain View. Bridget will have some of this information. You might also try longtime realtors. Stress the importance of participation. Use PowerPoint or videos and get people engaged as you're explaining the process. Start people talking among themselves before the September council meeting happens. That way people will have a better idea of what they think about the process and community issues, and they might be able to choose representatives to attend the meeting and speak. Seniors are also a good resource. They engage their families. You might try going to one of Avidah's lunch events and having her talk to everyone at once. Host a social event for the community. The Belle Haven Community Foundation has a social website called Next Door that might be helpful. It is a social website for neighborhoods and Cherise often posts things on it. Also, bring your flyers to other community events and use that as an opportunity to engage people.
- Just trying to get them here. Draw people from programs/ classes already here.

ATTACHMENT B

- Many people speak a language other than English. Translation is a must. Having meetings in the Belle Haven area would be a big help, especially on a regular basis, with a calendar to let us know that they are upcoming
- Put one person in charge. Have a city person go to Belle Haven school meetings. Send out more flyers; establish better communication between the city and the community. There **needs to be** more outreach on the part of the city. Send out emails. Schools are a good connection—they can pass along news to parents.
- Involve children that bring out the parents. Turnouts vary a lot. It's hard to predict what will work. I suggest starting way in advance and just trying over and over. Flood the community with flyers, stuff the mailboxes.
- I'm not sure about at the city level. I think the Boys and Girls Club budget is way bigger than the OHCC budget because we have federal funding. I think it's important to stand behind our mission and core values. We make a visible impact on children. The city needs to show that it is willing to go the extra mile, in whatever form, and to establish confidence and trust with the community. It is a very tight-knit community and families will rally together. They all love Menlo Park and take a lot of pride in the neighborhood. Kids especially have a lot of pride in the neighborhood, which tells me that there is hope among them for a future. Let people know that the city cares.
- Come to the Boys and Girls club and hold events. Requires direct communication with the public.
- Give too much info, get lost in jargon. Be upfront about objectives.

Question: What do you think are the biggest barriers to getting neighborhood people to participate in community discussions and decisions?

Summary:

Have a clear vision. Belle Haven needs more education on how the political system works. More communication or notification of when council meetings are taking place. More meetings here, because transportation is an issue.

- Language, definitely, is a barrier. There is a lack of cultural understanding in all directions. There is a lack of awareness about how political systems work. There is a lack of belief that it will make a difference to get involved. There is a lack of time in residents' schedules.
- Coming from "the city" and "big" council people don't like coming over here. Front and center approach with people they see daily.

ATTACHMENT B

- People have to work in this community. Between jobs, kids, and extended family, they just don't have time to get involved. Language is another barrier. People whose first language isn't English might be intimidated by English-language meetings. Transportation and access is another issue. It is very difficult to get to this side of town during commute hours. Traffic on Willow and Marsh is bad.
- Education—both the level of education and the difference between the East and West. People over here are embarrassed sometimes to speak out in front of people from the west side because they might get put down. People on the west side speak with authority. Cultural differences are another barrier. For example, African-Americans are not comfortable being in a room where a lot of translation is going on because they find it distracting. Try using headsets that provide a Spanish translation, or hold separate meetings. Meeting attendance is also affected by who is going to the meeting. Belle Haven people will be edgy if a lot of people from West Menlo Park are present. There is a feeling that West Menlo Park doesn't care about Belle Haven. There is also a feeling that West Menlo Park will try to take away from what Belle Haven has. For example, OHCC has been here for years, but signage only went up recently, when more West Menlo Park people started coming here. Is that a coincidence? Some people don't think so. People will not trust why the visioning process is
- Getting the word out, bringing the community together. Need bilingual staff because communication is an issue.
- People feel like it doesn't matter whether they voice their opinion because they do not see results.
- If they feel that they stand to lose something, they will come out and give their opinions. They will be suspicious of too much of a positive attitude—it seems fake. It's important to help people understand what exactly "visioning" means, especially the intent and outcome. Of course, often it's hard to know the outcome in these cases, but people will be upset if the real outcome turns out to differ from what they all thought it would be, so it's important to keep track of what they think it might be.
- Language is a barrier. Time is also a barrier. Many people have multiple jobs and/or families to worry about. There is also a cultural difference—people trust elected officials and city employees to do what is best for the community and don't always understand that resident input and participation is needed. Location is another barrier.
- Language, the perception that you are not wanted, the racism in West Menlo Park, and the economic factors are all barriers to participation. I've lived here for forty-some years and I've experienced the racism firsthand. The city has done some things. In terms of community

ATTACHMENT B

engagement, they need to stop dictating what will be done to this community. Residents didn't have a say at the last budget session and it felt like things were thrown at us at the last minute. I got some parents together in an engagement movement. The community engagement report presented at that time didn't tally with what was actually done.

- People in this community work a lot, often multiple jobs, and just don't have time to get involved. There are a lot of single-parent homes and broken homes. Kids take care of themselves. I wish it was possible for families to prioritize their work schedules. I think part of what prevents them from doing this is that they fear losing their jobs. On the flip side, some of the parents work for materialistic possessions rather than spending time with their kids. We have people who claim they cannot afford the annual Boys and Girls Club fee (\$25), but who are simultaneously driving around in brand-new, expensive cars.
- Skepticism of value, not seeing the value in it. Being busy and feeling disconnected from the community.
- Most of them afraid due to language barrier. But we have translation now, can get them all together.
- Also might need not just one but two meetings due to different work schedules.

Child care. Lead games or something for kids, during the meeting. A vote would be a faster way to make decisions. Too many opinions and the meetings get too long. People on other side should not get choice on Belle Haven Decisions we (Belle Haven Residents) pay for stuff we don't use.

Question: How do people in this community get their information about what's going on in the community?

Summary:

Mailer/Newsletter, Flyers, Word of Mouth, Almanac.

- Beechwood School sends out information when possible—we use a school newsletter and
- Parent advisory meetings, and sometimes we ask parents to attend City Council meetings.
- Word-of-mouth is also a big one. Community activists and their groups, like Matt Henry and
- Alejandro, also keep people posted.
- The Almanac, maybe. I'm not really sure.

ATTACHMENT B

- Email is good, at least for the people I communicate with. People also call me. OHCC meetings are another way. Also use papers or flyers for people who don't have computers.
 - Mailings are what I look at, especially calendars and newsletters. I also communicate with my friends, like Alejandro, who sends me emails about things that are happening. I would say electronic communication is fairly common throughout the community.
 - Word-of-mouth, definitely. Also try mailings with translation.
 - Word-of-mouth, definitely. Like I said, that's why we need an influential person in the community to be in charge, because they would know how to get the word out. I know the Harris family and they seem to feel that OHCC values are no longer the same as they were in Onetta Harris's time.
 - Word of mouth, phone calls.
 - Word of mouth. Could get messages out on the community board.
 - Word of mouth. Palo Alto Daily and the Menlo Park Patch

Question: Do a lot of your neighbors communicate through email and/or other electronic methods, like Facebook?

Summary:

More youth currently use Facebook. Adults and older adults are starting to become interested, but may require training on how to use it.

- The use of electronic communication methods is growing. I would say it's over 50% among Beechwood parents. I can reach most parents by text message. The younger crowd.
- Parents are getting training for Facebook.
- It's coming around, some have emails now.
- There is not much electronic communication here. You could maybe do a study to see what percentage of residents have internet access. There was a missed opportunity during negotiations with Facebook—they could have worked to get Wi-Fi access for Belle Haven residents.
- Most have phone with access to email etc. but still a lot that don't have that.
- Haven't really used electronic methods.

Miscellaneous notes:

Summary:

Have separate meetings (Items about Belle Haven should only be inviting neighbors from Belle Haven). More use of fields for residents (Should not have to pay fees). Worried about gentrification and getting pushed out. Traffic concerns. Belle Haven should be as nice as the west side. Education opportunities need to be better for youth. More job training classes.

- Meetings should be separate, meaning each community should have their own. This way certain issues would only pertain to that particular area. Would like to see advocate for kids in regards to Ravenswood district, kids are failing.
- You have a lot of different groups here—Spanish language groups, the Hamilton enclave, the Islander groups, the African-Americans. If we all understood each other's differences better, it would be easier to bridge those differences. Hamilton enclave is what we hope Belle Haven will become, but how we get others to buy into the same vision is the issue.
- Facebook traffic is an issue. We need to know that what we think and value will be considered in this visioning process. Belle Haven values are not appreciated by West Menlo Park and the city is not perceived as working in Belle Haven's best interests.
- Distribute information about the visioning process before the September meeting, to give people a chance to think it over. Give specifics. Make sure people know all the facts. Be upfront. If a loss of funding has been gradual, make a graph showing the trend so that people understand it to be a problem.
- Regarding the city services provided in Belle Haven, how did they decide what to provide? For example, we have the after school program and senior classes, but are the offerings always what the community needs? What processes are used to gather information to select programs and services?
- Regarding community participation—it would be higher if people knew more about the programs and services offered, and if these programs and services were more in line with community needs. I've been to some senior classes with my mom and the attendance is small.
- I suggest a calling system, or at least that is what we use in education. That way, people can get information instantaneously and do not need to know how to use the internet. Also, try doing what you're doing now, asking people directly, but on a larger scale. Lastly, try hosting community events to gather information.
- Kelly Park and the Belle Haven school field—why don't Belle Haven residents get priority? Belle Haven has a shortage of fields. Some Belle Haven groups tried to reserve it a year in advance

and it was already all booked up. Sometimes these facilities should be set aside for use by residents.

- This process has been done before. They've gathered information and it has just been put on the shelf. I hope that won't happen this time. In the past, I felt like the feedback we got from the Community Services Department was that we didn't really have a say. Will it be different this time?

I started working for the Community Services Department in 1998, in teen services at OHCC. It felt like a tense time, a time of transition. I grew up in West Menlo Park, so I didn't even know that Belle Haven was a part of Menlo Park and I had no idea of the conditions there. There were ethnic and racial tensions when I started. The African-American workers at OHCC were very tense with the other employees because the supervisor had just left. A lot of them were longtime residents who influenced the local parents and teens that I worked with. It was an uphill battle to make a difference, but as a new person of color I thought I might be able to have an influence. People's voices were not being heard and it was an issue that needed to be dealt with from the top. The voices of people of color were either blocked or not heard or validated. There was a sense that the community had given up and a lot of African-Americans had moved out. The teen center at OHCC at the time is now the after-school child care program. After funding was cut at the teen center, it was thought that there would be collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club. I worked at both Burgess and OHCC, so I saw both sides. I saw the resources in West Menlo Park versus the lack of resources in Belle Haven. If the city does not invest in Belle Haven, there is no reason for Belle Haven residents to care about the city. Family is the most important thing to a lot of Belle Haven residents. The city should show that it cares about Belle Haven. For instance, Belle Haven should not look so distinct from the rest of the city. Around the New bridge area, near the police substation, it looks very run-down. This would never be allowed in West Menlo Park, so why is it okay in Belle Haven? The distinctions between Belle Haven and the west side are not fair and not right. I am currently the full-time teen director at the Boys and Girls Club. I think that to give kids hope of success, you need to broaden their experiences. I get that funding is not as high for Belle Haven—a certain standard is expected in West Menlo Park because of the taxes paid here. Residents in Belle Haven do not capitalize on opportunities because they cannot relate to the person or people who are running the city. I think there needs to be a person of color who is influential with the community, who is put in charge of OHCC, because that would be the best way to get people involved.

- There is definitely a lack of communication between parents/families and 18-25 year olds. College needs to be talked about way before the end of high school. Otherwise, when these kids get to junior college and find that it is difficult, or that it will take them a longer time than usual to complete, they think they are not smart enough or do not have the necessary skills, and they turn to the streets as an easier alternative. It's a vicious cycle. The Boys and Girls Club only

ATTACHMENT B

serves kids up to 18 or 19 years old—after that they have nowhere to go, which is another reason that we need programs to capture this age bracket.

There is nothing for people to live for in this community, other than their families. There have been some very tense times here. I try to prepare kids to get out of a bad situation by teaching them that things may not change and if so, they need to be ready to make a change for themselves. If you look at the current economy, you can probably tell that things are not likely to improve anytime soon. Safety is also important. I was never worried or endangered in Belle Haven, but East Palo Alto is a different story. A lot of kids who are offered opportunities at universities around the country won't leave because they want to stay and help their parents. This is fine, but those that stay need to be educated to break the cycle, whatever cycle it is that they are trapped in. At the Boys and Girls Club, we have a system where kids have to attend a class three times a week, and if they do that, they are qualified to go on a field trip at the end of the week. It worked great. The city needs to find time to be resourceful. Not many employees in Belle Haven are also residents—this is something that could be changed. Kids who attend high school on the west side are subjected every day to the blatant differences between the west side and Belle Haven and that doesn't make them feel any better when they go home.

- Let public know the process and feedback so they know what's going on. Keep passed, something is being done.