



STAFF REPORT

City Council

Meeting Date:

7/14/2026

Staff Report Number:

26-126-CC

Regular Business:

Consider and adopt a resolution to make back-in angled parking permanent at Nealon Park frontage and seek direction on vehicular access to Blake Street at Middle Avenue

Recommendation

Staff recommends that City Council adopt a resolution as recommended by the Complete Streets Commission to make back-in angled parking permanent at Nealon Park (Attachment A) and provide direction on one of three following vehicular access options for Blake Street at Middle Avenue:

- Option 1 – Restore vehicular access
- Option 2 – Retain the temporary vehicle access restriction and conduct a circulation study
- Option 3 – Restore vehicular access and conduct a circulation study

Policy Issues

The proposed actions are consistent with policies and programs included in the General Plan Circulation Element (e.g., CIRC-1.7, CIRC-1.8, CIRC-2.7), the Vision Zero Action Plan, and the Complete Streets Policy. These policies seek to maintain a safe, efficient, attractive, user-friendly circulation system that promotes a healthy, safe and active community and quality of life throughout Menlo Park.

Background

The Middle Avenue corridor is a key part of the City's transportation network, providing critical access to Nealon and Jack Lyle Parks, senior centers and preschools, Hillview Middle School, Oak Knoll Elementary School, and nearby residential neighborhoods. Efforts for traffic calming along the corridor and for pedestrian and bicycle improvements have been ongoing. On March 9, 2021, City Council directed staff to add Middle Avenue traffic calming project as a complete streets project. Following a comprehensive public outreach effort and City Council direction, buffered bicycle lanes were installed as a pilot Feb. 14, 2023 and subsequently approved.

The Middle Avenue Complete Streets project was completed in spring 2026. Improvements installed included permanent bicycle lanes, speed tables, speed humps, speed feedback signs, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB). As part of the broader Middle Avenue Complete Streets project, City Council also directed staff to pilot parking modifications along the frontage of Nealon Park and access restrictions to Blake Street from Middle Avenue (Attachment B).

Nealon Park parking

In February 2023, the City Council approved removal of parking on both sides of Middle Avenue to install buffered bicycle lanes (Attachment C). Concurrently, this project was initiated along Middle Avenue at Nealon Park to redesign the frontage parking configuration and adjacent bicycle facility. As part of this

effort, a parallel parking configuration with a buffered bicycle lane located between the sidewalk and parking was piloted for six months.

Following implementation of the parallel parking configuration, public outreach identified concerns regarding the reduction of on-street spaces and potential conflicts between vehicles unloading and pedestrians (particularly those with children and strollers) having to cross the adjacent bike lane to access the sidewalk. Public feedback also identified significant and recurring safety and operational concerns, including encroachment of parked vehicles into the bike lane, limited driver sight lines when exiting parallel spaces, and increased conflict points between vehicle doors, park users, and bicyclists, particularly during peak school travel periods. Bicyclists were also observed not riding in the new bicycle path between the parallel parking and the sidewalks but rather continuing straight on Middle Avenue. This behavior resulted in unpredictable bicyclist movements and a significant increase in potential conflict points between passing cyclists and park users entering and exiting their parked vehicles.

In response to these concerns, staff refined the pilot design by converting the Nealon Park frontage to back-in angled parking. This configuration was designed to improve forward visibility for drivers re-entering the travel lane and positioning vehicle doors away from the bike lane, thereby reducing dooring conflicts and improving predictability of movements for all users and increasing the number of parking spaces from 17 to 31. The bike lane was repositioned to be in line with the remainder of the buffered bike lane along Middle Avenue, providing a consistent and predictable path for cyclists. The revised parking configuration was approved for pilot implementation by City Council in May 2024 and subsequently installed in late 2024.

Blake Street Pilot

In early 2022, neighborhood residents submitted a petition to the City regarding safety concerns at the intersection of Middle Avenue and Blake Street. Issues raised included drivers not yielding to pedestrians in the marked crosswalk and concerns that cut-through traffic entering Blake Street from Middle Avenue increased vehicle activity and turning movements at the intersection, resulting in increased potential conflicts. The petition also identified a lack of a safe route for bicyclists and pedestrians to access Nealon Park.

In September 2022, an RRFB was installed at the existing crosswalk on Middle Avenue at Blake Street as part of a citywide initiative to improve pedestrian access at selected locations throughout the City. This enhancement was partially funded by a grant from the San Mateo County Transportation Authority's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.

In October 2022, the City Council approved a temporary vehicular access restriction onto Blake Street at Middle Avenue to address the neighborhood concerns raised in the petition (Attachment D). The temporary vehicular access restriction was implemented through the installation of bollards in late December 2023 to address ongoing neighborhood concerns including high traffic volumes and safety issues related to motorist behavior and pedestrian visibility. Although City actions and project materials have referred to the Blake Street pilot project as a "street closure," the project did not close Blake Street or vacate the public right-of-way. Instead, the project temporarily restricts vehicular through access to Blake Street at Middle Avenue with the installation of temporary bollards while maintaining the vehicular access to Blake Street at College Avenue and retaining the street as an open public right-of-way for pedestrian, bicycle, emergency, utility, and local access.

Slow Streets Program

Before adoption of the Slow Streets Program, neighborhood traffic calming requests were evaluated through the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP). Under that framework, the Blake Street intersection access restriction could have been evaluated in response to neighborhood concerns regarding

cut-through traffic, pedestrian safety, and vehicle turning conflicts. However, the NTMP was paused in 2020 and was not accepting new requests when concerns regarding the Middle Avenue and Blake Street intersection were raised. As a result, the access restriction was piloted as part of the broader Middle Avenue Complete Streets Project rather than through the NTMP.

Since implementation of the Blake Street and Nealon Park pilot projects, the City Council adopted the Slow Streets Program in April 2026, which superseded the NTMP establishing a new framework for evaluating and implementing neighborhood traffic calming measures. The program utilizes a data-driven prioritization process and emphasizes safety, equitable access, emergency vehicle access, and community engagement when evaluating potential traffic calming projects. Future requests for traffic calming improvements on neighborhood streets, including concerns related to vehicle speeds, traffic volumes, or cut-through traffic, such as the initial concerns raised for Blake Street, would be evaluated through the Slow Streets Program framework.

Public engagement

Public engagement for the pilot projects was solicited through an online public survey that was conducted in May – June 2025. The survey was advertised through on-site park signage, email notifications, door hanger distribution, and local schools' and recreation programs' newsletters. The outreach strategy was designed to encourage participation from a diverse range of potentially impacted stakeholders, including nearby residents, park visitors, and members of the broader Menlo Park community, however the survey was not designed to be statistically significant. The survey received 169 responses. Most respondents reported visiting Nealon Park regularly, with many identifying as nearby residents, park users, or parents participating in activities at the site. Respondents reached the area primarily by car, bicycle, or on foot, reflecting a mix of travel modes consistent with park and neighborhood activity. The feedback provided insights into the safety, comfort, and accessibility of the pilots. Survey results can be found in Attachment B of Nov. 12, 2025, CSC Staff report (Attachment E).

Complete Streets Commission

On Nov. 12, 2025, the CSC reviewed the two pilots (Attachment E) and discussed pilot performance, community feedback from the survey, and multimodal safety considerations. The CSC recommended that the Blake Street temporary vehicular access restriction to be made permanent and requested that staff return with different parking configurations along the Nealon park frontage.

On March 11, the CSC evaluated additional design concepts for the Nealon Park parking (Attachment F) and recommended concluding the parking pilot and retaining the existing back-in angled parking configuration.

Analysis

The Nealon Park frontage parking and Blake Street pilots were initiated to address community-identified concerns related to safe routes for bicyclists and pedestrians crossing Middle Avenue to access Nealon Park and along its frontage.

Nealon Park parking

Collision data

In fall 2023, two collisions took place within the Nealon Park parking lot behind the park and did not occur on the roadway frontage. No collisions were reported along the segment of Middle Avenue adjacent to Nealon Park.

Public feedback

Feedback on the back-in angled parking configuration was mixed, with responses generally divided between parking supply gain and design concerns. Supportive comments highlighted improved visibility when exiting parking spaces, and increased parking supply. Concerns focused on the difficulty in backing into parking spaces, and potential conflicts with the bike lane, and impacts to cyclists along a key school route. However, a year has passed since the survey and observations by City staff, including the Police Department, indicate that instances of motorists incorrectly using the back-in angled parking spaces have decreased significantly over time.

Complete Streets Commission

On Nov. 12, 2025, the CSC reviewed the pilots (Attachment E) and discussed pilot performance, community feedback from the survey, and multimodal safety considerations. The CSC requested staff to return with additional design concepts for the Nealon Park parking.

On March 11, the CSC evaluated additional design concepts for the Nealon Park parking (Attachment B) and recommended concluding the parking pilot and retaining the existing back-in angled parking configuration.

Next steps

Staff recommends that City Council adopt a resolution to make the existing back-in angled parking configuration permanent. The design provides improved visibility when exiting compared to parallel and front-in angled parking configurations. Since installation, no injury collisions or safety incidents have been recorded along the park frontage. This configuration presents the lowest relative exposure to multimodal conflicts among the alternatives evaluated. In addition, observed driver compliance with the configuration has improved over time.

Blake Street pilot

To evaluate the effects of the Blake Street pilot, staff collected traffic speed, volume, and collision data within the surrounding Allied Arts neighborhood. These data were used to compare conditions before and after implementation of the closure and to assess whether the outcomes aligned with the pilot's goals and the City's adopted VZAP and Complete Streets Policy, which prioritize safety, accessibility, and comfort for all roadway users. The analysis focuses on understanding how the pilot influenced neighborhood circulation, travel speeds, and safety while maintaining appropriate access for residents, park visitors, and service vehicles. The following sections summarize collision history, speed and volume trends, and public feedback collected during the evaluation period.

Collision data

Between 2020 and 2024, three collisions were recorded in the vicinity of Blake Street and Middle Avenue. In May 2023, one collision occurred at Blake Street and College Avenue involving a driver striking a parked vehicle. The remaining two collisions occurred within the Nealon Park parking lot.

Volume data

The study area encompasses the segment of the Allied Arts neighborhood that is bounded by El Camino Real to the east, Middle Avenue to the north, Creek Drive to the south, and Arbor Road to the west. This area includes the local residential streets most directly affected by the temporary vehicular access restriction on Blake Street. Traffic volumes within the study area increased overall between 2023 and 2025, with the most notable increases observed along Middle Avenue and Cambridge Avenue (Table 1). Middle Avenue, which functions as a neighborhood collector roadway, experienced an increase of approximately 13% (762 vehicles per day) between 2023 and the initial 2025 analysis period, while Cambridge Avenue increased by approximately 26% (199 vehicles per day). Several adjacent local residential streets, including

University Drive, College Avenue, and Partridge Avenue, also experienced increases in traffic volumes. In contrast, Blake Street experienced a 83% decrease (138 fewer vehicles per day) in traffic volumes as a result of the temporary vehicular access restriction.

Following the implementation of the Middle Avenue traffic calming improvements, additional changes in traffic patterns were observed during the October 2025 through March 2026 analysis period. Volumes along Middle Avenue decreased by approximately 4% (260 vehicles per day), compared to the 2025 analysis period (before Middle Avenue Complete Streets project), while several nearby residential streets experienced increases. It is important to note that the streets within the study area continue to operate at residential traffic volumes that are below 1,000-1,500 vehicles per day with the observed increase. Other nearby neighborhood streets, such as Oak Avenue and Olive Street for example, carried an average of approximately 2,500 vehicles per day and Lemon Street carried 900 per day in 2025.

Table 1: Volumes					
Street name	2023 Average Daily Traffic (Jan-Dec)	2025 Average Daily Traffic (Jan-Aug)	2025 Average Daily Traffic Volume Change	2025-26 Average Daily Traffic (Oct-March)	Post Middle Avenue Complete Streets Volume Change
Middle Avenue	5742	6504	762	6244	-260
Cambridge Avenue	762	961	199	1435	474
University Drive	711	801	90	1338	537
College Avenue	249	329	80	541	212
Partridge Avenue	145	205	60	475	270
Arbor Road	345	381	36	558	177
Princeton Road	28	26	-2	75	49
Yale Road	61	50	-11	172	122
Harvard Avenue	169	156	-13	333	177
Cornell Road	76	59	-17	167	108
Creek Drive	125	73	-52	220	147
Blake Street	166	28	-138	68	40

Notes:

1) The time periods used represent traffic in 2023 before the implementation, in 2025 after the implementation of the pilot projects, and in late 2025 and early 2026 after the implementation of the traffic calming elements along Middle Avenue. The post pilot volume change is the difference between the 2023 and 2025 January-August time periods. The post traffic calming volume change is the difference between the post pilot (2025 January – August) data and 2025-26 (October-March) data. Data was not used from September 2025 due to the construction activity on Middle Avenue.

Source: Streetlight Data

Speed data

Speed data are shown in Table 2 for Middle Avenue and surrounding streets within the Allied Arts neighborhood. Speed data indicates that the traffic calming measures were generally associated with reductions in 85th percentile vehicle speeds throughout the study area. Middle Avenue experienced the largest reduction, decreasing from 31 mph during the earlier 2025 period to 27 mph following

implementation of the traffic calming improvements. Additional speed reductions were observed on University Drive, Princeton Road, Creek Drive, and several other local streets, while some streets remained unchanged. Partridge Avenue experienced an increase in the 85th percentile speed of 1 mph.

The reduction in speeds along Middle Avenue and nearby streets is consistent with the objectives of the Middle Avenue traffic calming project and indicates that the corridor improvements have been effective at moderating vehicle speeds.

Table 2: Speeds					
Street name	2023 85% Speed (Jan-Dec)	2025 85% Speed (Jan-Aug)	Post Pilot installation speed change	2025-26 85% Speed (Oct-March)	Post Middle Avenue Traffic calming speed change
Middle Avenue	32	31	-1	27	-4
Cambridge Avenue	21	20	-1	19	-1
University Drive	22	22	0	20	-2
College Avenue	22	20	-2	20	0
Partridge Avenue	22	21	-1	22	1
Arbor Road	23	23	0	22	-1
Princeton Road	19	19	0	16	-3
Yale Road	18	18	0	18	0
Harvard Avenue	25	23	-2	22	-1
Cornell Road	16	16	0	16	0
Creek Drive	23	21	-2	20	-1
Blake Street	19	19	0	N/A	N/A

Notes:

- 1) Source: StreetLight Data

Public feedback

Feedback from the survey for the Blake Street temporary vehicular access restriction was mixed, with strong overall support. Supportive comments frequently cited improved safety, reduced cut-through traffic, and a calmer neighborhood environment. Opposing comments noted concern that the Blake Street temporary vehicular access restriction primarily benefits residents on Blake Street and College Avenue while shifting traffic circulation impacts to surrounding neighborhood streets.

Complete Streets Commission

On Nov. 12, 2025, the CSC reviewed the pilots (Attachment F) and discussed pilot performance, community feedback from the survey, and multimodal safety considerations. The CSC recommended that the Blake Street temporary vehicular access restriction to be made permanent. Since the CSC meeting, staff have identified the process for making the temporary restriction permanent, which would require a circulation study and amending the City's General Plan Circulation Element.

Options for consideration and City Council feedback

The temporary vehicular access restriction was originally implemented in response to safety concerns and pedestrian crossing conditions at Blake Street and Middle Avenue to Nealon Park. The RRFB was installed and has improved pedestrian crossing visibility and safety and vehicle speeds have decreased since the implementation of the Middle Avenue traffic calming improvements. These improvements collectively address the primary safety concerns that were originally raised by the petition.

Staff are therefore recommending options for City Council's consideration:

- Option 1, Restore vehicular access – This option restores local street connectivity and reduces the circulation impacts associated with the diversion of Blake Street traffic onto nearby neighborhood streets. A vehicular access restriction
- Option 2, Retain the vehicle access restriction – This option maintains the pilot as staff pursue making the access restriction permanent by following the necessary process per California Vehicle Code §21101(g), which authorizes local agencies to prohibit “entry to, or exit from, or both, from any street by means of islands, curbs, traffic barriers, or other roadway design features to implement the circulation element of a general plan”. As the City's General Plan Circulation Element does not include vehicular access restrictions, retaining the restriction at Blake Street would require amending the document. A circulation study would also be required to evaluate potential traffic circulation impacts associated with a permanent modification to the neighborhood street network. Additional environmental review would be required as the requisite circulation study would be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Depending on the results of the circulation and environmental analysis, the proposed Blake Street access restriction itself would be potentially categorically exempt under CEQA Section 15301(c) for existing facilities. Additional funding would be required for the circulation study and environmental review.
Option 3, Restore vehicular access and conduct a circulation study – This option restores local street connectivity as staff pursue assessing a permanent restriction by conducting a circulation study. Additional funding would be required for the study.

Next steps

Upon City Council's action on Nealon Park, staff would make the back-in angled parking permanent and coordinate with the City's on-call contractor. Based on City Council's feedback, staff would return at a future date following the selected option for Blake Street and request City Council action.

Impact on City Resources

There are sufficient funds in the next fiscal year operational budget to permanently stripe the back-in angled parking along the Nealon Park frontage.

Environmental Review

Modifications to make back-in angled parking permanent at Nealon Park is categorically exempt pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(c) for existing facilities.

Public Notice

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Changeable message boards and A-frame displays with the City Council

meeting details were deployed around Nealon Park and Blake Street. The pilots' webpage (Attachment G) was updated, and emails with the meeting information were distributed to the pilots' stakeholders.

Attachments

A. Resolution

B. Historic and existing project layouts

C. Hyperlink – Feb. 14, 2023, Staff Report #23-032-CC:

www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/2/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2023-meetings/agendas/20230214-city-council-regular-agenda-packet.pdf#page=172

D. Hyperlink – Oct. 18, 2022, Staff Report #22-198-CC:

www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/3/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2022-meetings/agendas/20221018-city-council-agenda-packet.pdf#page=161

E. Hyperlink – Nov. 12, 2025, Staff Report #25-006-CSC:

www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/complete-streets-commission/2025-meetings/agendas/20251112-csc-agenda_original.pdf#page=7

F. Hyperlink – March 11, Staff Report #26-004-CSC:

<https://www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/complete-streets-commission/2026-meetings/agendas/20260311-csc-agenda.pdf#page=33>

G. Hyperlink – Project webpage

www.menlopark.gov/Government/Departments/Public-Works/Capital-improvement-projects/Middle-Avenue-Complete-Streets

Report prepared by:

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RESOLUTION NO. XXXX**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MENLO PARK TO
MAKE PERMANENT THE EXISTING BACK-IN ANGLED PARKING AT
NEALON PARK FRONTAGE**

WHEREAS, California Vehicle Code Section 22507 authorizes local jurisdictions to install parking restrictions on local streets; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Menlo Park is responsible for the operation and regulation of traffic on public streets under its jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the Menlo Park Municipal Code Section 11.24.009 provides that the City Council shall, by ordinance or resolution, establish parking, stopping, and standing restrictions; and

WHEREAS, the Menlo Park Municipal Code Section 11.24.045 provides that the City Council shall, by resolution, permit angle parking; and

WHEREAS, the City of Menlo Park implemented the Middle Avenue Complete Streets Project to improve multimodal safety, connectivity, and accessibility consistent with the City's General Plan Circulation Element, Vision Zero Action Plan, and Complete Streets Policy; and

WHEREAS, Feb. 14, 2023, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 6814 authorizing the reconfiguration of Nealon Park frontage parking to parallel parking spaces, for the installation of buffered bike lanes as a pilot Project; and,

WHEREAS, May 7, 2024, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 6899 authorizing the Continuation of the Nealon Park frontage parking as a pilot by reconfiguring from a parallel to back-in angle parking design with the placement of the buffered bike lane adjacent to the westbound vehicular travel lane in response to safety concerns to improve safety, visibility, and multimodal operations; and

WHEREAS, the City conducted public outreach and collected collision data to evaluate the pilot; and

WHEREAS, the evaluation found that the back-in angled parking configuration improved visibility, reduced conflicts with bicyclists, increased parking supply, and has operated without recorded injury collisions or safety incidents since installation; and

WHEREAS, March 11, 2026, the Complete Streets Commission recommended that the existing back-in angled parking configuration be maintained; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has considered the staff report, public feedback, and the Complete Streets Commission recommendations and finds that the back-in angle parking design improves multimodal safety; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the proposed actions are consistent with the City's Vision Zero Action Plan, Transportation Master Plan and Complete Streets Policy; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Menlo Park does hereby make permanent the existing back-in angled parking at the Nealon Park frontage.

I, Judi A. Herren, City Clerk of Menlo Park, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing City Council Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted at a meeting by said City Council on the fourteenth day of July, 2026, by the following votes:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Official Seal of said City on this ___ day of month, 2026.

Judi A. Herren, City Clerk

Past and existing project layouts



Figure 1 Blake Street Before Closure



Figure 2 Blake Street After Closure



Figure 3 Perpendicular Parking (before Oct 2023)



Figure 4 Parallel Parking (Oct 2023 – Dec 2024)

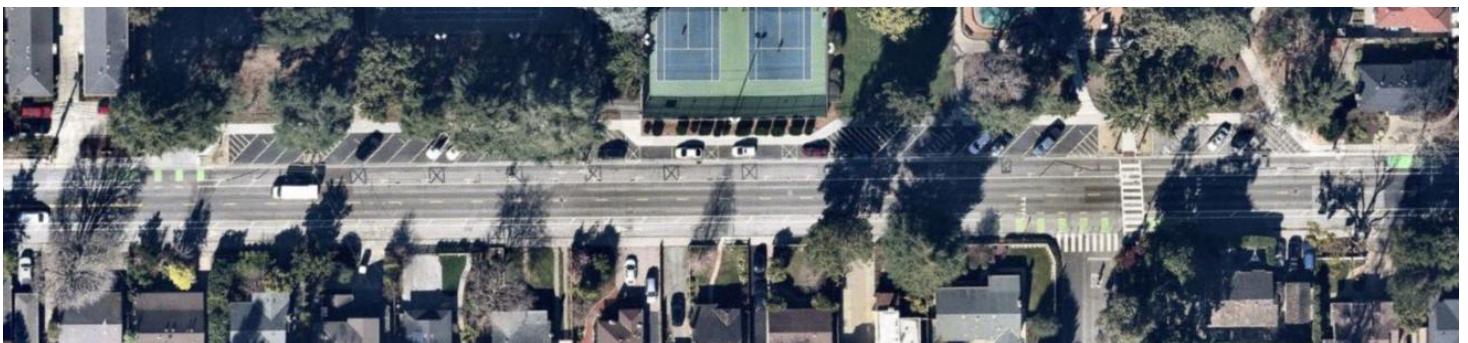


Figure 5 Back-In Angled Parking (Dec 2024 - Current)