



City of Buellton

Willemsen Green Survey Summary

Background

In 2021, the City of Buellton conducted a community survey to help guide future uses for a portion of the City-owned Willemsen Property. The current and planned uses reflect the community's priorities identified through prior visioning and outreach efforts. Existing and planned improvements include a library, an outdoor children's museum, an event facility, and sports fields. However, specific long-range uses for the Willemsen Green area were not defined in the approved site plan.

To help inform future planning for this space, the City recently conducted a community survey focused on the 0.68-acre green space within the 24-acre City-owned property at 202 Dairyland Road. The survey invited residents to share open-ended feedback on what they would like to see--and not like to see--developed on the site.

The survey was available on the City's website and promoted through the City's monthly bulletin and social media channels. The survey period ran from January 12 to February 4, 2026, and received a total of 302 responses. The following report summarizes the community's response.

Demographics

Most survey respondents are Buellton residents (91%), with 31% who live in the neighborhood of the Willemsen Property. Only 10% of respondents live outside of Buellton. In terms of household, most respondents represent a family without children or have left the home (40%), followed by a family with an older child or children ages 8-18 (33%), and a family with a young child or children ages 8 and under (27%).

Summary

The survey results indicate that community members prioritize recreation and nature for future use of the Willemsen Green Property, with 46% ranking recreation and 31% ranking nature as their top choice. Culture and arts followed closely in second and third priority. Civic and education uses ranked lower overall, with "other" uses consistently ranked last. The rankings show a clear preference for active and passive outdoor uses that preserve open space while offering opportunities for recreation, arts, and community connection.

The open-ended questions were intended to gather further insights into what ideas respondents have given the categories provided. Residents expressed support for sports facilities, open green space, performance areas, public art, gardens, and learning spaces. Respondents emphasized keeping the site open, minimally developed, and fully accessible to the public, while protecting neighborhood quality of



life. There was consistent opposition to private schools, private business, housing and large-scale events, as well as concerns about traffic and noise. Overall, the community envisions Willemssen Green as a publicly accessible, low-impact space for the benefit of local residents and families.



Questions

Please rank the following potential community-serving uses for the Willemssen Property in order of preference:

When asked to rank the following potential community-serving uses for the Willemssen Property in order of preference, most identified **recreation** as their top priority, with **nature** close behind. **Culture and arts** ranked highest as second and third priorities. **Civic** and **education** uses were tied for fourth and fifth, while the "**other**" category ranked last.

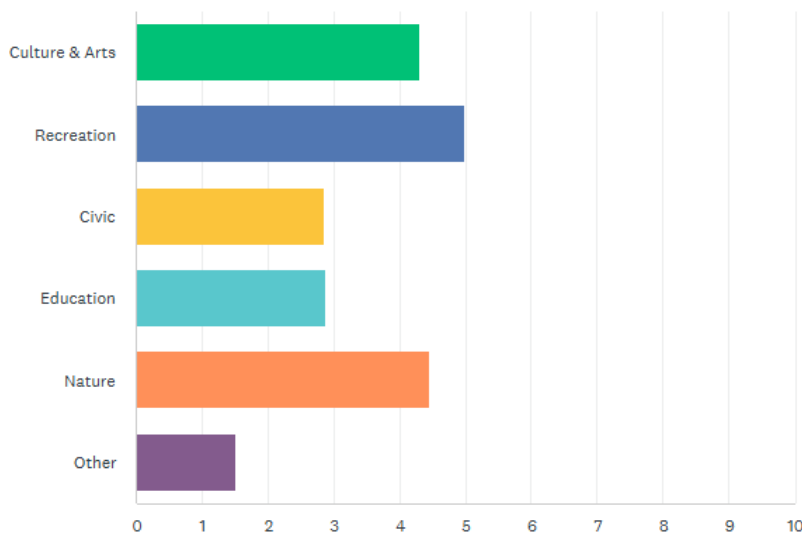
1. Rank #1: **Recreation**
2. Rank #2: **Nature**
3. Rank #3: **Culture & Arts**
4. Rank #4: **Civic**
5. Rank #5: **Education**
6. Rank #6: **Other**

Q1

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Please rank the following potential community-serving uses for the Willemssen Property in order of preference (top = highest preference)

Answered: 301 Skipped: 1





For any categories you believe would be an appropriate use for the site, please describe the specific types of facilities, spaces, or activities you would be interested in seeing there:

Open-ended opportunities were presented for respondents to input their ideas for each of the given categories. The average total response rate among all five categories was 117 responses per category. The responses describe specific types of facilities community members would like to see in each of the given areas. The following is a list of their ideas **in order of most to least frequently cited for each category.**

Recreation

- Sports fields and courts
 - Pickleball
 - Soccer, baseball, football
 - Tennis or volleyball
- Pool or water recreation
 - Community pool
 - Splash pad
- Open green space
 - Preserving lawn space
 - Picnicking, sitting, or relaxing
- Walking, biking, trail system
 - River walk to Solvang
 - Walking/jogging path
 - Dog walking
- Youth and teen recreation space
 - Skate Park
 - After-school hang-out area
- Group exercise
 - Yoga, tai chi, Pilates
 - Outdoor fitness space
 - Exercise classes
- Indoor recreation facilities
 - Gymnasium
 - Indoor volleyball
 - Climbing walls
- Playground and family zone
 - Playground
 - Special-needs park
 - Multi-generational play zones
 - Climbing structures



Nature

- Preserve open space
 - Leave as-is
- Gardens and native space
 - Botanical garden extension
 - Native plant garden
- Walking/trail path
 - Walking and hiking trail
 - River access paths
 - Loop walkways
- Nature education
 - Signage and plaques
 - Discovery trails with QR codes
- Wildlife habitat
 - Bird and butterfly habitat
 - Pollinator gardens
 - Dark sky protection
- Quiet reflection zone
 - Meditation garden
 - Zen labyrinth
 - Reading and sitting areas
- Community and educational garden
 - Community garden plot
 - Teaching garden
 - Schoolyard habitat projects
- Nature center
 - Indoor/outdoor exhibits
 - Chumash and local ecology exhibits

Culture and Arts

- Performance and entertainment
 - Outdoor amphitheater
 - Live music, art shows, plays, dance
 - Movie nights, poetry
- Art displays and public installations
 - Rotating exhibits, gallery, murals
 - Sculpture garden and interactive art
 - Outdoor paths and installations
- Workshops, classes, studios
 - Arts & crafts
 - Woodworking
- Youth and family



- Kids' extracurricular activities
 - Youth camp
- Community events
 - Art fair
 - Farmer's market
 - Festivals
- History/cultural heritage
 - Historical museum
 - Walking path with plaques
 - Chumash cultural heritage

Civic

- Community meeting and gathering space
 - Public meeting rooms
 - Rental spaces for non-profits, businesses, and residents
 - Town hall-style venues
 - General gathering space
- Outdoor civic plaza
 - Gazebo or pavilion
 - Shaded seating and hardscaped plaza
- Community events and public programming
 - City/community events
 - Fairs, markets, cook-offs
 - Festivals, speakers, lectures
- Civic education and engagement
 - Voter registration
 - Candidate forums and debates
 - Civic literacy workshops
- Flexible, multi-use event facilities
 - Event halls
 - Barn reuse
 - Multi-purpose venue
- Historical, recognition and cultural heritage
 - Historical museum and archives
 - Honoring veterans and local heroes
 - Remembrance ceremonies
- Passive civic space and informal setting
 - Benches and pathways
 - Quiet gathering areas
 - Passive park space



Education

- Community classes or workshops
 - Adult education classes
 - Workshops (art, dance, gardening, cooking, etc.)
- Youth learning center
 - Children's museum
 - Hands-on exhibits
 - Field trip or camp space
- Nature/environmental space
 - Botanical/native gardens
 - Nature center
- Opposition to private schools
 - Explicit responses against private schools
- Literacy programming
 - Book clubs
 - Reading programs
- Tutoring and study support
 - Tutoring rooms
 - Homework area
- History and cultural education
 - Buellton history center
 - Historical society
- Preschool and early education
 - Affordable pre-school
 - Early-learning center
- Temporary learning use
 - Field trips
 - Seasonal camps

What other ideas or priorities would you like to share for the future of the Willemsen Green?

A total of 120 responses were received providing additional ideas for the future of the Willemsen Green Property. The following priorities were captured:

- **Keep it open, green and minimally developed:** Community members appreciate the open green space leaving comments such as "leave It alone," "no structures/no buildings," and "low-Impact, temporary uses only"
- **Public access with opposition to private/exclusive use:** Community members wanted to ensure the space remains accessible to the public and is not privatized for profit or reserved for exclusive use



- **Protect neighborhood quality of life:** Community members ask that traffic, noise, and safety be considered when making plans for the space so that residents are not crowded out or disturbed in their peaceful neighborhood
- **Community benefit:** Community members would like to ensure the space remains oriented toward local residents and not for tourists and out-of-town visitors
- **Family, youth, and teens:** Community members suggest the space be used for teen hang-outs, youth sports, play and fitness
- **Small-scale events and cultural programming:** Community members suggested an outdoor theater, amphitheater and art shows
- **Sports and recreation facilities:** Community members mentioned sport facilities such as tennis courts, pickleball, a skate park, and sports field
- **Parks, picnic and passive amenities:** Community members also suggested areas for gatherings such as picnic tables, BBQ pits, benches, reading areas, and open lawn space

Are there types of uses, facilities or activities you do **not** want to see on the Willemssen Green?

A total of 156 responses were received providing ideas for what respondents do not want to see for the future of the Willemssen Green Property. The following priorities were captured:

- **Private schools:** Community members strongly oppose additional private schooling in this space
- **Private business:** Community members are particularly not in favor of any private business or exclusive use for Willemssen Green
- **Housing:** Community members do not want to see any housing here, particularly low-income, apartment, or hotels
- **High-impact events:** Community members do not want any events that will attract crowds of people or add noise
- **Traffic, parking, and neighborhood disruption:** Community members do not want to see increased traffic or overflow parking and encounter any safety issues
- **Permanent buildings, hardscape or overdevelopment:** Community members do not wish to see concrete structures or buildings
- **Commercial/tourism:** Community members would like to avoid making this area a destination place for tourists and out-of-town visitors
- **Organized sports or high-intensity recreation:** Community members mentioned opposition to certain sports that are known to cause noise and traffic such as pickleball, skate parks, soccer, basketball, and splash pads