

August 16, 2016

Analysis of *Brooklyn Park 2025*



Community Visioning Input Period



Data Analysis and Report by Collective Progress
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A Note from Jay Stroebel, City Manager

Hello!

Every great community has an inspiring vision about the future it works to achieve. For Brooklyn Park, our vision is to be “a thriving community, inspiring pride, where opportunities exist for all.”

While working toward this vision and staying true to our key value of doing things with people, not to people, we gathered insights from nearly 1,000 residents and other stakeholders over the last several months for our community’s new plan. This plan, *Brooklyn Park 2025*, will be the blueprint defining clear goals and priorities that will guide our community’s efforts over the next decade.

In the report that follows, you will read about our realistic community challenges, but also hear the inspiring dreams and aspirations from community members from all backgrounds. I want to thank the community for their invaluable participation, as well as the great staff of Brooklyn Park for their work in making this community input effort a huge success.

Brooklyn Park 2025 will ultimately be adopted by the City Council in early 2017. As we work toward that milestone of adoption, we look forward to hearing the community’s continued input and working together to realize this exciting next chapter for Brooklyn Park.

Jay Stroebel

Brooklyn Park City Manager



Executive Summary

Brooklyn Park is the sixth largest city in Minnesota and has a diverse population that has been considered a “community of communities”. *Brooklyn Park 2025* is creating a new plan for the city. To better understand the desires of the community, the City conducted a visioning input period where community members shared both their experience of Brooklyn Park today and their aspirations for the future.

Brooklyn Park’s Community Engagement staff gathered the voices of 977 community members who live, work, learn and play in Brooklyn Park. They collected data at Community cafés, meetings with specific community groups, tables at community events, mini-interviews with youth, publicly posted whiteboards, and an online forum. Collective Progress, a local independent consultant, analyzed the input to identify the top issues and aspirations the community expressed.

Top Issues and Challenges

Some of the top concerns fall under safety and crime, including the perception of crime, how it affects the image of Brooklyn Park, and the reality or lived experiences of crime. Community members are concerned about the unique challenges that diversity can bring, including access to human services and government, lack of representation in city leadership, and overall racial, educational and economic disparities.

Affordable housing, rental housing, education, healthcare and city services are also shared concerns.

Community members expressed desire for the city government to improve communication, the city’s image, and to work towards creating a positive and unified identity for Brooklyn Park.

Top Aspirations for 2025

Community members are hopeful that the city will improve its image as a safe place to live and work.

People see the strength in the city’s diversity and want to promote it for others to admire and learn from, projecting hope in working towards achieving racial equity. There is a vision for the city to excel in quality education and schools and in providing career advancement for youth. Community members want the city to attract businesses that offer fair wages and local resident employment opportunities. They want to see convenience of public transportation become a reality with the light rail, in anticipation that public transportation will help the economy and connect people to new opportunities. There is a desire for the city to be a destination for entertainment and recreation that keeps residents engaged and attracts visitors. Overall, community members envision Brooklyn Park as a place where everyone has the opportunity to live their best life no matter what age, race, or income level.

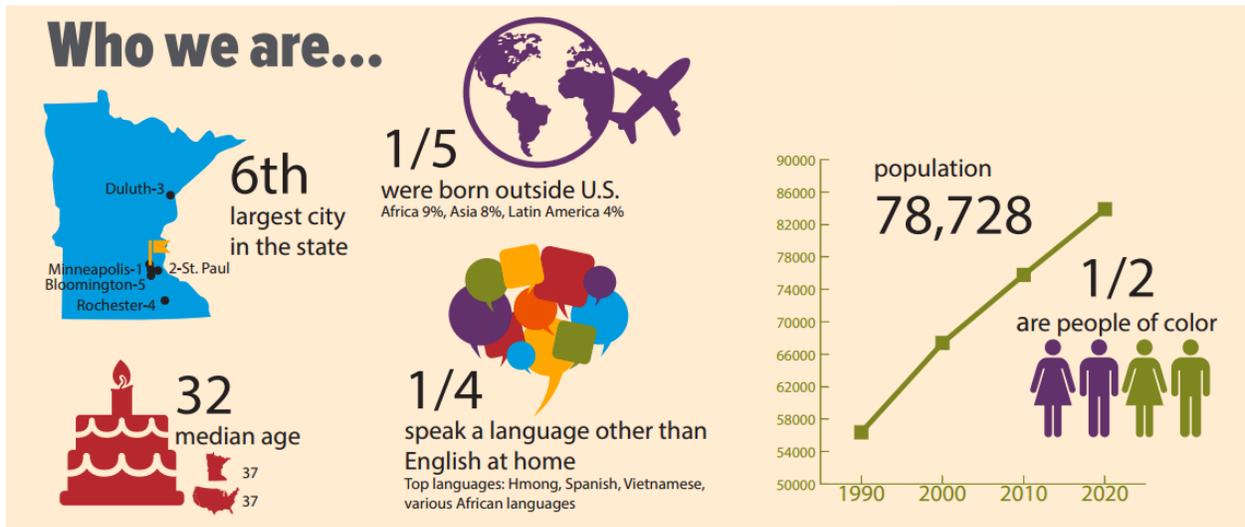
Ongoing Commitment and Next Steps

This community input will guide the *Brooklyn Park 2025* Steering Committee in making goals for the *Brooklyn Park 2025* plan. Community members will have an opportunity to give feedback on the draft plan this fall, and City Council will approve the plan before it goes into effect in 2017.

City management staff is committed to a philosophy of community engagement and to achieving the long-term goals of this plan *Brooklyn Park 2025* provides a great foundation for ongoing communication with community groups and for building stronger relationships that make residents more connected to the city and to each other. This community plan is also an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and work collectively with other civic organizations and community members.

Introduction

Brooklyn Park's population has grown and changed significantly in the past two decades. In 2016, over half of residents are people of color, more than 20% were born outside of the U.S., and one in four speaks a language other than English at home. Our young and diverse population is vibrant and unique, but also risks becoming a community of people living *near* one another while being disconnected from each other.



The Foundation for *Brooklyn Park 2025*

Foreseeing the challenges that population change would bring, a group of residents, staff and Council members formed the Core Planning Team in 2009 as part of the city's Community Engagement Initiative (CEI). This team created a mission/vision statement and core values for Brooklyn Park through a consensus-based process. The mission and values formed a foundation for increased community engagement to bring people together and make sure all voices of the community are heard.

The philosophy of doing things "with" rather than "to" the community is now embedded into all departments' philosophies and is changing how they do their work. This philosophy guided the Community Engagement division staff in gathering community input for the city's new plan, *Brooklyn Park 2025*. This more comprehensive and updated community plan will realign the city's efforts with community priorities, positioning staff and community partners to better work toward achieving it.

Our Vision: Brooklyn Park, a thriving community inspiring pride where opportunities exist for all!

Our Core Values

- Everyone has equal intrinsic value
- Diversity enriches community
- Trust is the foundation for building a healthy community
- The community thrives when each individual takes responsibility to contribute
- When a community supports all its members, it thrives

Analyzing the *Brooklyn Park 2025* Input

In April 2016, the City of Brooklyn Park hired Collective Progress, social research and evaluation consultants, to analyze community input data from 977 people, community whiteboards, and the online forum. Carrie Vogelsang and Anna Rodell completed a thorough analysis of the data and presented initial conclusions to the public at the Community Engagement Gathering in July 2016. They wrote the more detailed and nuanced analysis for this report, which will be used to formulate the *Brooklyn Park 2025* draft plan.

Brooklyn Park 2025 Steering Committee

The *Brooklyn Park 2025* Steering Committee is made up of residents, council members, and city staff. The committee will take this report and turn the ideas and aspirations into goals and priorities, forming the *Brooklyn Park 2025* draft community plan. Community members will have the opportunity to give feedback on the draft plan online and in-person this fall. The final plan will be presented to the City Council to be approved and adopted before implementation in early 2017.



Community Visioning Process for Brooklyn Park 2025

The community visioning process of *Brooklyn Park 2025* was an opportunity for city leaders to better understand community members' aspirations for realizing the city's vision: to be a thriving community, inspiring pride where opportunities exist for all. The results from the analysis will guide long-term city planning and development.

Key Visioning Questions for *Brooklyn Park 2025*

In late 2015, Arcadia Evaluation consultants helped develop four key questions for the process using Technology of Participation (ToP) methods. They include:

1. What **key words** would you use to describe the community of Brooklyn Park today?
2. What do you **love most** about Brooklyn Park?
3. What are the **most important issues or challenges** that affect our quality of life in Brooklyn Park?
4. As we look forward to 2025, **what do you want to see** in Brooklyn Park? What would the **headlines** be in the Sun Post or Star Tribune?

Who participated in the visioning process?

Over 977 people participated in person; we also had 212 ideas written on public whiteboards and 23 entries in our online forum. (See Appendix 2 for more detail.) While some segments of the community were more difficult to reach than others, staff made significant effort to engage representatives of various racial/ethnic groups, age groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds. City Council Members, commissioners, and City staff gave their input as well. Residents from all over the city, businesses and community organizations also participated.

How did they participate?

Thirty-one percent of the input came from events where City staff convened community members at 1.5 hour events. A postcard invitation was sent to every household to attend the event in their Council district. Thirty-five staff participated as facilitators and note-takers at these events.

Sixty-nine percent of the input came from City staff meeting community members out where they already gather, including civic organization meetings, farmer's markets, and regular community events (see Appendix for a full list). Whiteboards were placed around the city in high traffic public buildings and private businesses. Additionally, residents could share their input through an online forum called "Brooklyn Park Open Forum".



6 community cafés Invite mailed to every household in the city plus specific events for partnering organizations, community leaders, commissioners and City Council

9 white boards at locations around the city

6 tables at community events like Tater Daze and Senior Forum

94 mini-interviews with youth at Zanewood

1 online forum

17 community groups meetings (civic organizations, parents groups, etc.)

Input from about **125 city staff**

Community Engagement Gathering: Reflections on Community Input



Intern Kim Zayzay shares her reflections with the group.

On July 28th, 2016, a special community engagement gathering allowed community members to reflect on the conclusions from the community input period.

Approximately 60 people attended the gathering including community members, steering committee members, staff, and others that participated in the community input period. The group participated in a few interactive activities, reflecting on the findings and discussing the topics they most identified with.

How does this Community Input Process Differ from 2009?

This community engagement process builds on foundation made by the 2009 Community Engagement Initiative (CEI). For *Brooklyn Park 2025*, more people contributed their voices (977) compared to 2009 (414). This year's process has been more intentional about engaging with the community, council and staff alike so that everyone feels *ownership* of the plan. The hope is that more widespread engagement will help align all of our community's resources toward the same goals and create shared ownership throughout the entire community, especially among the staff who work on these goals. The City also plans to increase accountability to the community around measurable goal progress.

Our Research Method: Qualitative Data Analysis

In most research studies that involve data collection, there are advantages and disadvantages to choosing a quantitative approach (analyzing numbers) or a qualitative approach (analyzing words). For the visioning and input process used for *Brooklyn Park 2025*, we chose a qualitative design to collect and analyze the data. Staff considered a few ways to get the qualitative input.

Option 1: Survey-Based Research

The first option was a survey with open-ended questions, which we could have sent to every home through direct mail and electronically to our mailing lists. This format would have cost approximately \$40,000 with no staff-to-participant interaction. The City's experience sending out surveys and coupons led us to believe this would be ineffective for a few reasons: 1) we would receive an anemic response rate, 2) respondents would likely share common traits such as age, education level, and English-speaking ability; and 3) respondents would largely be community members already engaged with City government who would participate in any engagement we invited them to do.

Option 2: Focus on Transformational Interview-Based Research

The second option was in-person interaction and conversation through group interviews and workshops. There are a few unique benefits to this approach.

1. It provides a more in-depth way of collecting input than a written survey would allow. Interviews and conversation are two-way communication and allow for clarification and contexting, which can benefit the quality of the analysis.
2. It provides an intangible benefit of relationship-building among community members and with City staff and officials. These kinds of relationships are integral to our health as a community and embody our core values that “trust is the foundation for building a healthy community” and “community thrives when each individual takes responsibility to contribute.” We see these efforts and their effects on the participants as *transformational*, rather than transactional.
3. This process provides more “bang for the buck”, spending \$26,050.44 to date and projecting to connect with more than 1.5% of the population. This is a higher engagement rate than peer cities (see Appendix 1 for details).
4. It also focuses on reaching a variety of community members who might not otherwise be reached including youth, immigrants, and non-native English speakers.

The positive outcomes of trust-building and relationship-building, coupled with the lower cost per response, made it evident that a conversation and relationship-focused process would not only provide the best community input, but would also be more meaningful and impactful for the community. For this reason, we chose to focus on in-person, conversation-based engagement while also incorporating impersonal tools like the online forum and community whiteboards.

Measuring Popularity of Ideas

Words can be interpreted in many different ways, making qualitative data analysis subjective. To minimize the subjective nature of qualitative analysis, Collective Progress analyzed the data with more than one person to have consensus on the ways in which words were being interpreted. Collective Progress used the software program NVivo for their interpretation and analysis. Since words and the use of language are complex, answers are often interpreted in more than one way. Multiple interpretations restrict the ability to produce counts or frequencies that are very specifically tied to just one idea. The top ideas were analyzed and then grouped under thematic categories for this report.

Analysis of the Input

Listening to Brooklyn Park's Community

This section contains a summary of the input gathered during the Brooklyn Park 2025 process. We define "community members" broadly in Brooklyn Park, encouraging people who live, work, play and learn here to self-define if they feel they are part of the community and contribute to it in some way.



Community Voices

Community members' answers to the first two key questions were analyzed and then turned into word clouds to show both the common themes and variety in the answers. These word clouds, shown on the following page, show what words community members used most often in their answers. The words that are bigger were used more often; the smaller words were used less frequently.

What key words would you use to describe the community of Brooklyn Park today?



What do you love most about Brooklyn Park?



What are the most important issues or challenges that affect our quality of life in Brooklyn Park?

People gave their perspectives on the most important issues and challenges that affect their quality of life in Brooklyn Park. The top themes from their answers are listed below. Subjects at the top of the list were more common; those at the bottom were less common.

Top 25 Issues/Challenges

- Crime
- Safety
- Youth perception and experience of crime and violence
- Lack of enforcement of city code
- Diverse and transparent communication with residents
- Inadequate public relations and negative public image
- Diversity creates new challenges
- Inclusion of diverse populations
- Lack of community spaces and events to create opportunities for diverse communities to come together
- Rental housing maintenance and integration across the city
- Affordable housing options for all, including seniors and homeless
- Racial disparities in the community (access to services, income, achievement gap, opportunities, representation)
- Lack of adequate transportation options within the city
- Achievement gap and graduation rate; quality of schools
- Lack of out-of-school activities and job opportunities for youth; lack of community places for youth activities
- Lack of jobs that offer a livable wage; disparities of income
- A community that is diverse but divided
- Lack of access to quality and specialized health care
- Negative perception of Brooklyn Park by outsiders due to crime and violence
- Lack of access to government provided/human services for diverse groups of people
- Lack of diverse representation at the decision-maker/leadership level
- Lack of policy and enforcement of policies in terms of housing (especially with rental properties)
- Lack of community identity; nothing that says "I am Brooklyn Park"
- Poor water quality
- More can be done by the city government to combat perception of crime (e.g. with media) and combating crime

As we look forward to 2025, what do you want to see in Brooklyn Park? What would the headlines be in the Sun Post or Star Tribune?

“Best place to live, work and raise a family.”

Summary of the Community’s Aspirations

Community members hoped that Brooklyn Park will be able to improve its image as a safe place to live and work. People see the strength in the diversity of the city and want to promote it for others to admire and learn from since there is hope in working towards racial equity by 2025. There is a vision for Brooklyn Park to excel in quality of education and schools and in providing career advancement for youth. They want to attract businesses that provide fair wages for local residents. People recognize the challenges associated with affordable housing and integrating this across the city to bridge divides without lowering property values. Community members see that convenient transportation will become a reality with the light rail that will help the economy and connect people to new opportunities. There is a desire for the city to be a destination for entertainment and recreation that keeps residents engaged and attracts visitors. Overall community members envision Brooklyn Park as a place where everyone has the opportunity to live their best life no matter what age, race, or income level.



What the Community Wants to See by 2025 (by theme)

We asked community members about their hopes for the future of Brooklyn Park. Each section below highlights the **main themes**, **direct quotes**, and **possible newspaper headlines** about the city in 2025.

Education

- Graduation rates will increase
- More high school students will go on to college
- The quality of schools and educational facilities will improve

"Best schools in Minnesota."

"Great schools help to keep a city growing."

"More equitable school resources."

Headline: *Most number/percentage of high school students entering college or graduating*

Disparities and Equity

- Income and racial disparities will be reduced or eliminated
- Economic and geographic divides will cease to exist
- An inclusive environment will be strengthened with increased multi-cultural activities and services and opportunities for all people

"The city with opportunities for all."

"No racial disparity."

"Open communities, open minds and opportunities."

"Brooklyn Park has the most people of color owned businesses and the lowest amount of people living in poverty."

Headline: *Brooklyn Park is a Model City for Racial Equity*

Economy

- Employment opportunities will increase for a diverse local workforce and for youth
- There will be increased financial stability for families to remain long-term
- More retail stores and restaurants will open so residents spend money here on entertainment and revenue from visitors increases

"If you build a place where people want to visit, you'll build a place where people want to live. If you build a place where people want to live, you'll build a place where people have to work. If you build a place where people want to work, you'll build a place where business has to be. If you build a place where business wants to be, you're back to building a place where people want to visit."

"Large corporations take the lead in pay equity." "Brooklyn Park median income matches the Metro."

Headline: *Brooklyn Park the city with economic opportunities for all*

Community Relations

- Diversity in city government/leadership, including police, will increase in order to better represent communities
- Diversity will be embraced and celebrated where people better understand and mix with different cultures
- Brooklyn Park will be more unified and friendly; known as a strong community where people feel more connected to each other

"Best multicultural city."

"One community; one goal."

"More neighborhood involvement. Neighbors get to know each other."

"United community."

Headline: *City Council Reflects Changing Faces of the City*

Safety and Crime

- Crime and violence will be reduced, especially for youth, which will improve public perception
- People will feel safer where they live and work, and streets will have better lighting
- Better relations will be built between police and neighborhoods, especially focusing on youth

"Brooklyn Park will be a safe community. No longer will people across the Twin Cities have a stigma of high crime and an unsafe community when they hear the words 'Brooklyn Park'."

"Brooklyn Park crime rates continue to decline."

Headline: *Brooklyn Park voted safest community in Minnesota*

Housing

- The quality, type and maintenance of housing will be improved, especially rental properties and options for aging adults (50+)
- There will be more affordable housing without decreasing property values
- Low-income housing will be integrated into new residential developments

"Reduce homelessness with more housing options and opportunities."

"Affordable apartments and houses."

"Housing ranges affordable to all."

Headline: *Brooklyn Park integrates low income housing into new residential developments*

Transportation

- Public transit will improve, especially the light rail that connects people to jobs, opportunities, and new locations.
- Use of cars will decrease because walking, biking, and use of buses and light rail will increase.
- Quality of roads, sidewalks, and trails will improve.

“Transit options reduce the need to use personal automobiles.”

[Want to see in the local newspaper] “The Brooklyn Park 2025 plan made possible the addition of intra-city bus routes, sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, and light rail. This expanded infrastructure has made it possible for our residents and neighbors to use public transportation to get to work and attend a variety of cultural events at the new community center/water park, restaurants, theaters, music, comedy, and sporting venues in our beautiful city.”

Headline: *Light rail opens, connecting people to jobs and opportunities*

Parks and Recreation

- More quality parks and a recreation/event center will help make Brooklyn Park a destination for residents to enjoy and for non-residents to visit
- More green spaces and areas with trees will be maintained
- Park infrastructure will improve and activities such as playgrounds, sports, pools/splash pads will be more available

“We need a community pool, rec center and playground where families can go. It doesn’t help our community by going to other cities for that as we then shop and eat at the local stores and restaurants since we are already out and about. We want to hang out and spend our money in Brooklyn Park.”

“Brooklyn Park Rec and Parks receives Gold Medal Award from National Recreation and Parks Association.”

“More parks and trails.”

“A mini Minnehaha Falls.”

Headline: *This city has it all - bike routes, parks, and health club to improve fitness*

Restaurants/Farmers Markets

- More quality sit-down restaurants will open that are welcoming for families
- Farmers markets and community gardens will have an impact on increasing healthy food options for residents and restaurants
- Restaurants reflect the diverse cultures represented in the city that contributes to making the city a cultural destination

“Need more restaurants – sit-down, family-oriented.”

“A community garden.”

“Up and coming restaurant industries.”

“More farmers markets (healthy food).”

Headline: *Brooklyn Park has the best restaurants*

Entertainment – Arts, Music, Culture

- More music and arts festivals and affordable events/activities will entertain residents and attract visitors
- Arts and cultural events and activities will be better networked with the education system in order to connect youth and families to activities
- New entertainment center focusing on the arts and music help celebrate the diverse cultures of the city and promote the city as a cultural destination

“Brooklyn Park has an outdoor amphitheater.”

“If we have activities and restaurants in the city we wouldn’t have to go elsewhere for entertainment all of the time. On a typical weekend my family goes to the zoo, museum, indoor/outdoor park, or splash pad. More local attractions would be nice and more restaurants to visit after these events are needed. With all the growing businesses we need to show everyone coming into Brooklyn Park how great we can be.”

Headline: *Bringing the arts to our community!*

City Development

- Investing in the Southside to provide an opportunity for revitalization and closing the gap between the division of North and South of 85th Avenue
- Continued investment in 610 redevelopment and future development along other main roads
- Newer infrastructure
- Innovation in design, city development planning and technology advancements
- Opportunities to invest in and showcase the river as a destination

“Reinvest in south (older part) of the community.”

“Development boom continues along Highway 610, 169, and West Broadway Avenue thanks to the light rail and roadway investments.”

“Park, trails, and event site that center around the river. Showcase the river.”

Headline: *The new and improved Brooklyn Park!*

City Government Services and Access

- Providing more multicultural services to serve entire community
- Increased and improved services for aging population
- More services for the homeless population including youth
- General increase in services

“There will be a boom in green space, arts revival, public transportation, multicultural services.”

The Community Wants Brooklyn Park to be Known for:

- Being the best place to live in the Twin Cities Metro area, Minnesota, the Nation
- Becoming a city that is “cutting edge” and “trendy”. This would make the city more desirable for residents to live and non-residents to visit
- Providing opportunities for employment and affordable living
- Having high graduation rates and high quality schools
- Having a city government that is representative of the city’s diverse community demographics
- Promoting diversity as a strength of its community
- Being a city that is welcoming to all

Extra Themes

Although comments on taxes and the environment were not as common in the answers provided by community members, including what was said in these two areas is important for the understanding of the diversity of topics that came out of the community conversations.

Taxes

- Reduction of property tax burden on residents
- Investment of taxes into infrastructure (e.g. schools)
- Businesses that receive tax breaks need to invest back into improvement of the community

“Not so high of property taxes – don’t raise them again!”

“Keeping property taxes low with high paying services.”

Headline: *Lowest property taxes in Minnesota due to thriving businesses that pay their fair share.*

Environment

- Increase use of solar energy
- Opportunities for residents and businesses to join programs that provide use of solar/wind energy
- Introducing alternative energy can lead to a new industry with job and employment opportunities

“More alternative energy – solar, wind – available and utilized by all.”

Headline: *Brooklyn Park is a Solar Energy city! Energy leader, water quality leader, protecting the environment.*

Listening to Brooklyn Park's Youth

Youth Participants

Youth input was key to better understanding the youth perspective and vision for the future of Brooklyn Park, and the current challenges and issues that youth face today. Approximately 125 youth participated in sessions specifically for youth. They were from:

- Zanewood Recreation Center
- Brooklyns Youth Council
- YLEN, an after-school youth program at Northview Junior High



Brooklyn Park Youth Top 5 Issues/Challenges

- Prevalence of crime, violence and bullying in community
- Quality of education. Concern about balancing life and education and doing well at school.
- Lack of welcoming and inclusive community. Prevalence of racism and discrimination.
- Living in a polluted and unclean environment.
- Lack of public transportation options for youth. Lack of sidewalks in the city to be able to walk safely to destinations.

What Brooklyn Park Youth Want to See by 2025

Less Crime and Violence

The large majority of youth saw the future for Brooklyn Park to be less violent and have less crime. Sadly, a few youth commented that there would be no reduction in crime or violence in the future, and they saw violence being as prevalent an issue, in the future, as they perceive and experience it today.

"No crime in Brooklyn Park."

"I want to see less death."

[I want to see] "Peace."

More Ways to Keep Youth Engaged

Most of the youth who were interviewed for Brooklyn Park 2025 are part of the Zanewood community and involved in their youth programming. Many of them mentioned Zanewood and wanting to see it around and improved in the future. They see the future of youth in Brooklyn Park being involved in Zanewood activities the same way in which they are today. Youth specifically asked for more options for out-of-school activities and opportunities.

"Zanewood still open."

"Kids still going to Zanewood."

"More stuff than fighting; I want to do activities."

"Better access to youth programming resources."

A Cleaner Environment

Youth want to see a reduction of litter and a cleaner environment for the future of the city and the neighborhoods they live in. Some youth even said that they wish for Brooklyn Park to be cleaner even if they won't be living in the city.

"I won't be in Brooklyn Park, nor in the State of Minnesota, but I would like to see cleaner community."

"I would most like to see the environment clean."

Seeing Themselves

Several youth commented that they see themselves making it into the local newspaper headlines due to their future success. A majority of these future self-aspirations were highlighting their success in sports.

Listening to Brooklyn Park's Staff

Brooklyn Park Staff also gave their vision for Brooklyn Park's strategic planning process for 2025. 125 staff members from all departments contributed their voices.



Brooklyn Park Staff's Top 5 Issues/Challenges

- Challenges in updating the city to make it more vibrant and desirable to attract residents and businesses as well as cater to current residents.
- The City and its community are lacking a clear and defining identity
- Lack of communication with community members and staff that result in a lack of transparency. Concerns about tax base and overtaxing residents (need to increase business tax base to draw in more revenue)
- Negative focus on crime and its effect on the perception of the community
- Clear dividing economic and racial disparities within the community that can be seen in the physical divide between North and South of 85th

What Brooklyn Park Staff Want to See by 2025

The focus of what Brooklyn Park Staff want for the future of the city mostly featured development opportunities to make Brooklyn Park grow and become a place that people want to live, work, and visit. Staff believe that creating a unique identify for Brooklyn Park is crucial, and that it will create development opportunities for something that says "I am Brooklyn Park." They believe this will make residents proud and happy to be from Brooklyn Park.

Public Transportation and Light Rail

The development of the light rail to extend to Brooklyn Park was seen as a good opportunity to connect to other cities as well as make Brooklyn Park easily accessible to its residents and non-residents. It was also discussed that public transportation could be improved in general to make it easier to get to and from destinations.

“Light rail station areas are points of pride in Brooklyn Park.”

“North-South-East-West connections.”

Businesses, Economy, and Job Opportunities

In connect with the development of the light rail, many staff saw increased public transportation leading to job and business opportunities. Some staff also said that there is opportunity for music, sports, and entertainment events as well as shopping and restaurant destinations that could interest non-residents and residents and positively affect the local economy.

“Brooklyn Park – the leader in employment opportunities.”

“More shopping options; a little downtown/shopping hub.”

Parks, Outdoor Activities, Recreation Centers, and City Aquatic Opportunity

Vibrant communities need updated parks and green spaces that become community destinations and gathering areas. The opportunity for a city pool/splash pad would be a good addition to bring community and families together and provide a desired community resource.

“Are the systemic strategies answering to the call to be diverse and progressive.”

Reduction of Crime and Disparities

Overall, City staff would like to see a community where everyone feels safe and crime rates are at an all-time low. There is an opportunity and a need for Brooklyn Park’s perception of being a high crime area to change for the future.

“Live up to mission statement – ‘opportunities exist for all.’”

“Safe community for all.”

“Brooklyn Park solves poverty.”

“Youth crime decreases – youth voice is heard.”

Staff Desire for Brooklyn Park to be Known for:

- Best place to live in the Twin Cities Metro area, Minnesota, the Nation.
- Job opportunities
- Opportunities for businesses to thrive and be supported
- A city that feels unified and highlights its diversity

One Unifying Common Theme: Diversity of Brooklyn Park

The community input revealed that many people see the racial and ethnic diversity of the population as both a challenge and strength for Brooklyn Park. The words “diversity” and “diverse” rose to the top for both words that come to mind when people think of Brooklyn Park and what they love about Brooklyn Park. In fact, our diversity is one of the characteristics that makes us unique among our peer cities.

A Diversity Index represents the percent chance of two randomly chosen people coming from a different race or culture. It’s a different measure than a minority population because it’s a measure of true diversity, not just non-white people. A high Diversity Index means a large variety of races and cultures all living in the same area, not just a majority-minority population.

Here’s what the Diversity Index looks like in 2016 and how it’s projected to change in the next five years.

Geography	2016 Diversity Index	2021 Diversity Index	Change
Brooklyn Park, MN	70.7	72.5	+1.8
Hennepin County, MN	53.4	56.5	+3.1
Minnesota	37.5	41.4	+3.9
United States	63.5	66	+2.5

Source: Esri Demographics

Overall, the community’s comments suggest that Brooklyn Park’s diversity contributes to the geographic and economic divides of the city and the disconnect that people experience with each other, but there is hope that this diversity can also be leveraged as an asset. Participants hope Brooklyn Park can be a model for other cities in how it embraces diversity and addresses racial inequities in all areas impacting the city and its residents. Recognizing that racial inequities are integrated into other challenges the city is facing, participants believe there is an opportunity for the city to be more intentional in its actions focused on reducing disparities between populations. There is also hope that city leadership will become more reflective of the diverse communities of Brooklyn Park.

Shared Ownership and Collective Action: The Importance of Partnerships

The city management staff is already focused on what action can come from this community visioning period of *Brooklyn Park 2025*. They see the opportunity for long-term community engagement and relationship building beyond the official scope of this input gathering phase. There is interest in setting up goal teams so people can have focused efforts on each goal that is developed by the Steering Committee. The effectiveness of these goal teams and preparation for implementation of the community plan, that is adopted by the City Council, is hinged on representation and commitment from multi-sector community partners for ongoing work and holding the city, community and other stakeholders accountable to the *Brooklyn Park 2025* plan and vision.

There is also an opportunity to integrate the community input from this process into other city-wide plans. The Parks System Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and future plans can first look at the overarching input about the challenges and aspirations of the city to help them prioritize projects and to also look deeper into specific ideas to determine what additional input is needed in order to better align the interests of the community with city planning. The city can also expand its community partnership network to include more local organizations that are working directly with the community, as well as specifically addressing the reduction of disparities and advancing equity. This includes looking at the educational systems, non-profit and community-based organizations, different cultural groups, and the business community. There is an opportunity for goals and priorities to be shared by multiple organizations since *Brooklyn Park 2025* is about the entire community feeling ownership of this plan and sharing in the vision for the city.

City Commitment to the Community

The city management staff is committed to long-term engagement with the community that focuses on achieving long-term planning goals resulting from this community input of *Brooklyn Park 2025*. They will still be addressing short-term and urgent needs of the population as they arise, but recognize that this phase of *Brooklyn Park 2025* provides a great foundation for ongoing communication with community groups and building stronger relationships that make residents more connected to the city and to each other.

Next steps in *Brooklyn Park 2025*

- Steering Committee and city staff will turn this input into the draft plan (goals and priorities)
- Community reviews the draft plan
- City Council approves the final plan (City Council)
- Implement the plan

Appendix 1: Limitations and Comparison Studies

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative data gathering for this community visioning input period was not focused on generating statistics through closed-ended questions, but instead allowed for the discovery of common topics or themes among community members during the analysis as a result of open-ended questioning in multiple community forums. Because of this process, the nature of the responses and interpretation is subjective, rather than objective. This involves recognizing potential biases of people collecting the data and conducting the analysis, which can be considered a limitation. Qualitative data takes more time to collect and analyze and it is not unusual for the data collected to represent a smaller size of the population compared to the overall general population. Generalizability of results to the overall general population is not possible with qualitative analysis; in other words, what these data show in the analysis cannot be attributed to include all perspectives held by Brooklyn Park's community members since not all community members participated.

The City staff made efforts to invite and involve many types of groups and individuals to participate in this process who reflect the diversity of the city. Most of the people who participated were self-selected, which creates the limitation of not hearing the voices of those who did not choose to participate. Demographic data was not collected from participants in order to keep the process simple and to respect people's privacy; people often choose to not participate in research because their personal information (such as race, location, age, etc.) is being collected. Because of this, there are limitations to the data analysis through connecting demographics to data that was collected. The largest two groups of participants that had the possibility to be analyzed as stand-alone participant groups were youth and City of Brooklyn Park staff. Other groups were too small to be analyzed separately.

How did we do?

Throughout the process thus far, we have engaged 977 people and received 212 other comments, meaning we engaged between 1.2-1.5% of our population. (We don't know exactly how many people gave the whiteboard comments, so it could be up to 212 individuals.) We have spent \$26,050.44 on materials, postage, and consulting fees. Before starting this engagement process, we heavily researched other organizations including [Eagan MN](#), [Tacoma WA](#), and [Chesterfield County VA](#) to make sure we were using best practices for our engagement. Our process has so far engaged a higher portion of our population than our peers, which we take as a good sign. We can, however, always improve upon our community engagement efforts, and we will continually look to our community members and our peers for ways to better engage more people in these visioning processes.

Appendix 2: Community Engagement Summary (page 1)

Brooklyn Park 2025 Community Engagement Summary

Thanks Brooklyn Park community members!

In order to get input on the Brooklyn Park 2025 community plan, City staff engaged nearly 1,000 community stakeholders in a variety of ways between April and June 2016.

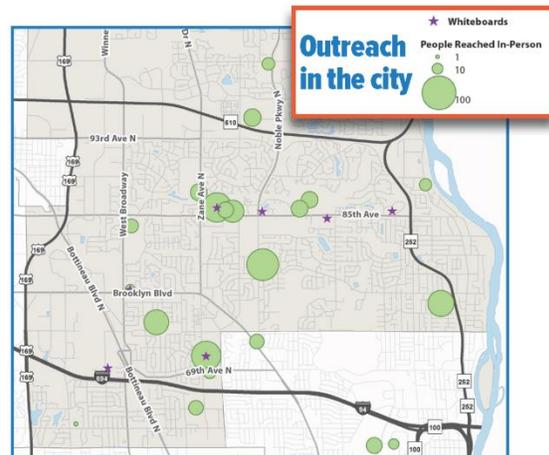
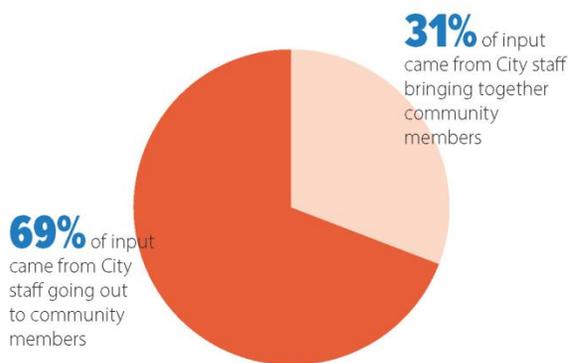
Who did we engage?

While some segments of the community were more difficult to reach than others, significant effort was made to engage representatives of various racial/ethnic groups and socioeconomic backgrounds. We also made sure to hear from many youth and seniors. City Council Members, commissioners, and City staff gave their input as well. We heard from residents from all over the city as well as businesses and community organizations.

How did we engage them?

Thirty-one percent of the input was gathered at events where City staff convened community members at 1.5 hour events. A postcard invitation was sent to every household. Thirty-five staff participated as facilitators and note-takers at these events.

Sixty-nine percent of the input came from City staff meeting community members out where they already gather. We also placed whiteboards around the city in highly trafficked public buildings and private businesses. Finally, residents could also share their input via an online forum.



Participants' experience

After the City-convened events, we surveyed participants about their experience. This is what they reported:



99%
met someone new



85%
were very likely to tell someone else about Brooklyn Park 2025



83%
called their overall experience very good or excellent

Appendix 3: Community Engagement Summary (page 2)

Community cafe event	Date	Number of people	Mini interviews	Date	Number of people
Community Engagement Gathering	03/24/16	29	Zanewood youth interviews	May 2016	94
West District community cafe	04/07/16	45			
Central District community cafe	05/04/16	54			
East District community cafe	06/07/16	74			
Joint Council/commission meeting	06/13/16	44			
Mayor's community partners event	06/30/16	15			

Community meeting visit	Date	Number of people
Business Forward Advisory Board	04/12/16	10
Brooklyn Park Moms Club	04/13/16	7
Property Managers Coalition	04/20/16	12
North Hennepin Community College Community Organization Class	04/25/16	21
Brooklyns Area Ministerial Association	05/11/16	17
Multicultural Advisory Committee	05/19/16	11
Brooklyns Youth Council	05/23/16	12
Izaak Walton League	05/24/16	16
YLEN Youth, Northview Junior High	05/25/16	19
Rotary Club and Junior Rotary Club	06/01/16	31
Brooklyn Park Women of Today	06/14/16	5
Lions Club board	06/20/16	16
SummerCrest condos	06/22/16	31
Seniors at Loaves and Fishes	06/29/16	23
Osseo Area Schools Hmong Parents meeting		27
Osseo Area School Parents, Birch Grove meeting	06/28/16	56
Osseo Area Schools Parents, Park Brook meeting	06/28/16	23

Tabling at events	Date	Number of people
Senior Forum	04/13/16	20
Police Open House	04/24/16	28
Tater Daze	06/18/16	34
Rec on the Go, Autumn Ridge Apartments	06/23/16	23
Farmers Market	06/30/16	30

Open comments	Date	Number of people
Online open forum	April to June 2016	23
Staff input	April to June 2016	125
Whiteboards comments, City Hall, Anytime Fitness, Community Activity Center, Pilgrim Cleaner, Festival Foods, Cub Foods north, Cub Foods south, Edinburgh USA Golf Course, BP Liquor	April to June 2016	212 comments

852 community members + 125 staff = 977



A community member reports on his table's conversation during a community cafe event.