

6:00 PM

City Hall Conf Rm A203

A G E N D A

If you need these materials in an alternative format or need reasonable accommodations for a RPAC meeting, please provide the City with 72-hours' notice by calling 763-424-8000 or emailing Josie Shardlow at josie.shardlow@brooklynpark.org.

Para asistencia, 763-424-8000; Yog xav tau kev pab, 763-424-8000.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

2. OPEN FORUM-PUBLIC COMMENT AND RESPONSE

Provides an opportunity for the public to address the Commission on items which are not on the agenda. Public Comment will be limited to 15 minutes (if no one is in attendance for Public Comment, the regular meeting may begin), and it may not be used to make personal attacks, to air personality grievances, to make political endorsements or for political campaign purposes. Individuals should limit their comments to three minutes. Commissioners will not enter into a dialogue with citizens. Questions from the Commission will be for clarification only. Public Comment will not be used as a time for problem solving or reacting to the comments made, but rather for hearing the citizen for informational purposes only.

3. APPROVAL OF September 20, 2023 AGENDA

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM August 16, 2023 MEETING

5. ACTION ITEMS

N/A

6. GENERAL INFORMATION - PRESENTATIONS

1. TEEN CENTER

7. OLD BUSINESS

1. 4.4_8.28.23 RFCA 2023 Playground Replacement (O&M) - CC AUGUST 28TH
2. 8.1 Age-Friendly Update - CC AUGUST 28TH
3. C.2 Next Steps Fire, CAC, Senior Center - CC SEPTEMBER 5TH
CAC IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE – City Council Work Session 9/5

8. WRITTEN REPORTS

1. PROGRAM AND EVENTS UPDATE
2. PARK PROJECTS UPDATE
3. DIRECTORS REPORT

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. OPEN FORUM – QUESTION AND ANSWERS

10. VERBAL REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. CITY COUNCIL UPDATE
2. KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT RPAC MEETING
 - OCTOBER 18TH
 - NOVEMBER 15TH
3. KEY DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS

11. ADJOURNMENT

Wednesday, August 16, 2023
Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission
Minutes

- 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL - The Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission meeting was held at the Community Activity Center and was called to order by Chairperson Nolen at 6:30 P.M.**

Chair Nolen introduced and welcomed Aria Reickard, Youth Liaison to RPAC.

Commission Members present:

Mark Nolen, At-large (Chair)
Dwain Erickson, West (Vice Chair)
Latrina Caldwell, At-large
Miriam Osammor, East
Terry Parks, At, Large
Judy Purcell, Central
Kellina Quigley, At-large

Commission Members absent:

William Birdnecklace, West
Joe Gomez, At-large
Johnny Hoang, At-large
Deborah Lande, Central
Taylor Murray, East

Councilmember XP Lee

Brooklyn Park Staff present:

Brad Tullberg, Director of Recreation and Parks
Greg Hoag, Parks and Buildings Manager, Operations and Maintenance
Marcus Hill, Parks and Facilities Manager
Jeanine Machan, Administrative Assistant

- 2. OPEN FORUM-PUBLIC COMMENT AND RESPONSE**
N/A

- 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A Motion was made to Approve the August 16, 2023 agenda by Commissioner Parks and second by, Commissioner Osammor
Motion unanimously approved.

- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A Motion was made to Approve the June 21, 2023 minutes by Commissioner Purcell and second by, Commissioner Caldwell.
Motion unanimously approved.

- 5. ACTION ITEMS**
N/A

- 6. GENERAL INFORMATION - PRESENTATIONS**

- 1. 2024 BUDGET**

Director Tullberg presented (see attached PowerPoint) an overview of the proposed 2024 Recreation and Parks Department budgets and staff priorities including:

- Recreation & Parks Department General Fund
- Ice Arena Special Revenue Fund Budget
- Brookland Golf Park Special Revenue Fund Budget
- Edinburgh USA Golf Course & Clubhouse Enterprise Fund Budget
- Brooklyn Park Sports Dome Enterprise Fund Budget
- For reference, the operating philosophies of each type of fund are:
 - **General Fund** – This represents funding via current year revenue collections of the General Fund, which supports operations and capital outlay expenditures. Revenue sources include annual property tax levies, state aid payments, and various programs, permit and license fees.
 - **Special Revenue Fund (SRF)** – Special Revenue Funds consist of funds generated from fees collected from users of the Brookland Golf Park and CAC Ice Arena. These funds are utilized to pay for general operations and maintenance, but not capital improvement projects.
 - **Recreation Enterprise Fund (RE)** – Recreation Enterprise Fund consists of funds generated from fees collected from users of the Edinburgh USA Golf Course and Clubhouse and Brooklyn Park Sports Dome. These funds are utilized for operational expenditures, capital improvements and debt retirement for the facility.

Budget Timeline going forward:

- September 25 – Council Adopts Preliminary Budget and Tax Levy
- November 6 - Department Presentations to Council
- November 6 – Presentation of CIP/CEP to City Council
- November 13 – City Council Reviews 2024 Amended Budget
- December 4 – Truth and Taxation Public Hearing
- December 11 – Adopt final Budget, CIP/CEP and Tax Levy

2024 Budget Priorities (as of 8/16/23)

- **Priority 1 – Increase Historic Eidem Farm Specialist to Full-Time**
 - \$17,606 + benefits
- **Priority 2 – Add .75 FTE youth and Adults Sports Specialist**
 - \$80,240 (salary and benefits)
- **Priority 3 – Add Full-Time Events Specialist**
 - \$111,219 (salary and benefits)
- **Priority 4 – Increase Events Budget**
 - \$15,000 – Fireworks
 - \$50,000 – Additional Events contractual services
 - \$15,000 – Additional events seasonal staffing

CIP/CEP Overview

- **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)** is a 5-yr Infrastructure Plan for rehabilitation, replacement, enhancement and new projects (\$25,000+)
- **Capital Equipment Plan (CEP)** is a 5-yr Operational Equipment Plan for replacement and new items (\$10,000+)
 - CIP/CEP are flexible plans based upon long-range planning, financial projections and annual review
 - Only first year of projects are approved within each 5-year CIP/CEP
 - Projects are approved and then included in the annual budget

CIP Project Types Overview

- **Rehabilitation** – restore to original condition (i.e. parking lot overlay)
- **Replacement** – replace old with new (HVAC, playground)
- **Enhancement** – expand/ improve an existing facility
- **New Facility** – construction of a new facility
- **Provisional** – Projects where funding is not identified

CIP Fund Overview

- **Heritage Infrastructure Fund (HI)** - This fund was created in 1999 by City Council action to

fund general capital replacement expenditures on a pay as you go basis over fifty-year period. This first five years of the fifty-year plan are comprised of projects included in the current Capital Improvement Program.

- **Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Fund (OSLAD)** – This fund represents funding primarily via park dedication fees, cell tower lease revenue, sale of park land and waivers from developers funding may also be from grant-in-aid, bonds and donations. This fund is utilized to acquire and develop, replace and rehabilitate parks and facilities.
- **Park Referendum Bond (PB)** – The 2018 Park Bond Referendum that was approved includes up to \$26M in park projects. The city will bond for various projects over the course of 5-7 years. Projects include natural resource management, trails, wayfinding, lighting, park reinvestments, community/senior center investments, fields and courts, teen center and Historic Eidem Farm.
- **Grant-In-Aid (GA)** – This funding is received from the Federal, State or County government. Grants are often made on a matching basis, which means the city shares a portion of the costs of the project.
- **Heritage Infrastructure Fund (HI)** - This fund was created in 1999 by City Council action to fund general capital replacement expenditures on a pay as you go basis over fifty-year period. This first five years of the fifty-year plan are comprised of projects included in the current Capital Improvement Program.
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2024 Proposed CIP Projects

Heritage Fund Projects

- Playground – (\$250,000) City Park carried forward from 2023 (\$130k)*
- Park Buildings, Shelters & Amenities (\$25,000)
- Parking Lots – Brookdale and Central (\$200,000)
- Courts – Possibly Pinebrook, other locations TBD(\$75,000)
- Trails – Possibly Jefferson Highway, other locations TBD (\$200,000)
- Irrigation System Master Planning for Athletic Complexes (\$50,000)*
- Northwoods Playground surface repairs (\$25,000)*
- Central Park hockey rink board replacement (\$150,000)*
- Eidem Farm Rehabilitation (\$25,000)
- Brookland Irrigation repairs (\$25,000)
- Community Activity Center Message Center & Hallway/ Grand Room Carpet (\$200,000)
- Emerald Ash Borer (\$200,000)
- Natural Resource Management (\$25,000)

Questions or comments

- Commissioner Parks stated that the expenditures for Fire will be increasing for the next couple of years as it is the number one priority. Director Tullberg stated It is key that the fire stations are on the Capital side so it won't see it here, however it will show with the additional staff and emergency component. There are 6 firefighters that are funded by a grant. Also, all the programs that are funded by ARP funds will need to be added to the budget or dropped.
- Commissioner Parks asked how much revenue is lost with the elimination of one of the rinks? Director Tullberg stated staff will provide all the information regarding the revenue vs expenditures at the September meeting regarding the CAC.
- Commissioner Erickson asked for confirmation that the Edinburgh USA Golf is the course and separate from the clubhouse. Director Tullberg confirmed.

- Commissioner Purcell asked if the wedding rentals at the CAC compete with Edinburgh? Director Tullberg stated that it is a different type of rental. At the CAC it is room rental only and at Edinburgh it is rental and food, so it is more extensive. Edinburgh competition would be Leopold's.
- Commissioner Parks stated that Leopold's is booked 3 years out.
- Manager Hoag stated that the Park Maintenance budget is not part of this presentation. He stated this budget increased by 7% over last year.
- Commissioner Erickson asked about chargebacks. Director Tullberg stated that chargebacks are moved from one department to another. It keeps departments in check, but a lot of money is spent sorting it out.

7. OLD BUSINESS

1. PARK AND RECREATION MONTH PROCLAMATION
2. 2024 EVENTS
3. BIG TICKETS ITEMS

Chair Nolen thanked everyone who attended the Joint Council Commissioners meeting. Director Tullberg called out the "Big Ticket" items that were discussed: the new fire stations, teen center, CAC, soft water treatment, 252, light rail, new water tower in NW section of the city and EAB. This was important to discuss since most of the council are new.

8. WRITTEN REPORTS

1. PROGRAM AND EVENTS UPDATE
2. PARK PROJECTS UPDATE
3. DIRECTORS REPORT

Manager Hill stated that design ideas will be shared with RPAC in the next couple of months on the Teen Center. Manager Hill stated that one more community engagement is scheduled to get feedback from the public, which is the Back-to-School BBQ.

Commissioner Parks asked how the word is getting out about the Back-to-School BBQ to get more of the public to attend? Manager Hill stated this is one of the largest events held and anticipates approximately 1000 – 1500 people.

Director Tullberg stated the community engagement for the Teen Center has been different than other Community engagements in that staff has engaged the youth to get their perspective.

Commissioner Parks stated the City Council Town Halls that are coming up would be another chance for feedback.

Manager Hill stated that the Hometown Ballfield is being used consistently.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. CANNABIS UPDATE

Director Tullberg provided a copy of the park ordinance that Maple Gove has approved regarding the use of Cannabis. Director Tullberg asked the Commission to review and provide feedback on what parameters RPAC would like to see as ordinances within the parks.

Discussion was held on the use of Cannabis in the parks and facilities associated with the parks.

A motion that Recreation and Parks staff recommends to City Council an ordinance to prohibit the use of cannabis in our parks, trails and facilities was made by Commissioner Purcell and second by Commissioner Parks.

Motion unanimously approved.

2. OPEN FORUM – QUESTION AND ANSWERS

Commissioner Osammor asked for an increase of events for older adults. Director Tullberg stated that the staff is currently working on an event for September 13 Living Wellness conference including a question-and-answer forum with city staff at the CAC. At the August 28th City Council meeting the proposed Age-friendly work will be presented by staff.

10. VERBAL REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. CITY COUNCIL UPDATE – Councilmember XP Lee
No report
2. CITY PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATES
NA

3. KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT RPAC MEETING
 - SEPTEMBER 20TH
 - OCTOBER 18TH
 - NOVEMBER 15TH

4. KEY DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS

11. ADJOURNMENT

A Motion was made by Commissioner Erickson to close the meeting, second by Commissioner Osammor.

Motion unanimously approved.

Adjourned by Chairperson Nolen at 8:15 P.M.

Submitted respectfully,
Jeanine Machan
Secretary

City of Brooklyn Park RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION			
Agenda Item	6.1	Meeting Date:	September 20, 2023
Agenda Section:	Presentation	Presented By:	Marcus Hill, Parks and Facilities Manager
Recreation & Parks Director Proposed Action	Teen Center Project Update		

Overview:

In 2018, the residents of Brooklyn Park passed a \$26M Park Bond Referendum that included \$2M for additional teen center space. Originally, a new location was considered, but without a facility partner the cost to acquire land and the cost of staffing and operating an additional location became prohibitive. Therefore, it was recommended that the existing Zanewood Recreation Center be improved and expanded to serve young people and families in Brooklyn Park.

Parks and Facilities Manager Hill will give an update on the Teen Center project including preliminary design work and cost estimating that has been completed by design partner Design By Melo.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:

Attachments:

City of Brooklyn Park RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION			
Agenda Item	7.0	Meeting Date:	September 20, 2023
Agenda Section:	Old Business	Presented By:	Brad Tullberg, Director of Recreation and Parks
Recreation & Parks Director Proposed Action	Past City Council Agenda Items and Community Engagement		

Overview:

- 7.1 4.4_8.28.23 RFCA 2023 Playground Replacement (O&M) - CC AUGUST 28TH
- 7.2 8.1 Age-Friendly Update - CC AUGUST 28TH
- 7.3 C.2 Next Steps Fire, CAC, Senior Center - CC SEPTEMBER 5TH

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:

NA

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:

NA

Attachments:

- 7.1 4.4_8.28.23 RFCA 2023 Playground Replacement (O&M)
- 7.2 8.1 Age-Friendly Update
- 7.2A 8.1A Serving Seniors in the Community
- 7.2B 8.1B Becoming AgeFriendly BP Recomm Rept 2019
- 7.3 C.2 Next Steps Fire, CAC, Senior Center

City of Brooklyn Park Request for Council Action

Agenda Item:	4.4	Meeting Date:	August 28, 2023
Agenda Section:	Consent	Originating Department:	Operations and Maintenance, Recreation and Parks
Resolution:	X	Prepared By:	Greg Hoag, Park and Building Maintenance Manager
Ordinance:	N/A		
Attachments:	1	Presented By:	Greg Hoag; Brad Tullberg, Recreation & Parks Director
Item:	Award Contract for Playground Replacement Program		

City Manager's Proposed Action:

MOTION _____, SECOND _____, TO WAIVE THE READING AND ADOPT RESOLUTION #2023-_____ TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR AND CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH MINNESOTA /WISCONSIN PLAYGROUND FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AT CITY PARK FOR A TOTAL COST OF \$130,000, AND TO DECLARE THE EXISTING PLAYGROUND AS SURPLUS PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO DISPOSE OF THE PLAYGROUND PER THE CITY PURCHASING POLICY.

Overview:

The playground replacement program is part of the 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The 2023 budget included \$130,000. This is an annual project to keep the playground structures compliant with current safety standards.

The playground scheduled for replacement in 2023 is at City Park. The current playground at City Park is 25 years old. Depending upon condition inspection and repair parts availability, playgrounds are typically replaced using a 20 – 25 year replacement cycle.

The total cost for the playground equipment and installation is \$130,000. Minnesota/ Wisconsin Playgrounds is the local representative for Game Time equipment.

The existing playground will be disposed of following the City Purchasing Policy for permitted methods of disposal. It is anticipated that they will either be donated, auctioned, or scrapped and disposed of.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:

- Should the Council authorize the purchase of new playground equipment for City Park as recommended?

Operations and Maintenance and Recreation and Parks staff recommend approval of the project as presented.

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:

This project is included in the 2023-2027 CIP as item #2001 and the 2023 budget as New World project #200123; funding source is Heritage Infrastructure Fund \$130,000.

Attachments:

4.4A RESOLUTION

City of Brooklyn Park Request for Council Action			
Agenda Item:	8.1	Meeting Date:	August 28, 2023
Agenda Section:	Discussion Items	Originating Department:	Recreation & Parks
Resolution:	N/A	Prepared By:	Brad Tullberg, Recreation & Parks Director Kelly Becker, Recreation Program Supervisor
Ordinance:	N/A		
Attachments:	2	Presented By:	Kelly Becker
Item:	Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park Update		

City Manager's Proposed Action:

Update on Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park.

Overview:

In 2019, City Council accepted the *Becoming an Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park Recommendations Report* based on the findings of a year-long community engagement process that informed the strategic steps to become a more age-friendly community. They included both internal actions that focused on local government itself, as well as external actions concerning how the city can partner with other agencies and organizations throughout the community to advance this work.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, the older adult population were some of the most vulnerable individuals and withdrew from activity more than most. The older adult population was also generally slower to return to pre-pandemic levels of activity which impacted the Age-Friendly work in 2020 thru 2022. Agencies serving seniors paused or scaled back services from 2020 through 2022 due to safety concerns during the pandemic.

Since the pandemic has subsided, city staff have worked to complete several items to meet the Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park Goals:

- Developed a Community Resource list for ease of access to information on more than a dozen topics
- Purchased Access Trax portable, accessible pathways and ADA portable seating for community events through AARP Community Challenge Grant
- Actively working with NHCC to offer Life-Long-Learning classes for older adults on NHCC campus
- Continue work on AARP 3-year Action Plan
- Continue to build relationships with organizations serving older adults
- Modify department fee assistance program to include older adult programs
- Outreach to cultural communities through Hennepin County SHIP grant funding

Staff will provide an overview of the opportunities offered for older adults to engage with their community including specific outreach efforts to build connections in the multi-cultural senior population to determine best ways to expand programming.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider: N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues: N/A

Attachments:

- 8.1A SERVING SENIORS IN THE COMMUNITY
- 8.1B AGE FRIENDLY REPORT

Serving Seniors in the Community

AARP Age-Friendly Network of States & Communities

- Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park – put an age-friendly lens on the work in the city
- Community Resource List – now live on City website
- Networking within agencies that serve the aging population
- Age-Friendly Minnesota – including state, counties, cities in the network
- MN Housing Focus group for MN Housing Finance Agency (affordable housing for seniors)

Activity Groups (Weekly) at the Community Activity Center

(Yearly membership \$12/resident | \$18/non-resident)

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| ▪ Handcrafts | ▪ Poker |
| ▪ Quilters | ▪ 65 Rummy |
| ▪ Mah Johgg | ▪ 500 Card Club |
| ▪ Bingo | ▪ Book Club |
| ▪ Cribbage | ▪ Mexican Train Dominoes |
| ▪ Knitting | |

Adult Fitness (fee is dependent on number of classes per session, or insurance reimbursement is used with no cost to participant)

- Daytime classes offered 9 am & 10 am Monday & Wednesday mornings
- Medicare Supplemental Insurance reimbursement benefit can be used for daytime and Tuesday 5 pm classes
- New instructor in fall 2023 to teach 1 or 2 additional mornings each week
- Tuesday evening Hatha Yoga
- Afro-Beats Dance Workout Wednesday evenings

BIPOC Senior Initiative with Hennepin County Funding

- Working with Hennepin County, grant funding will help to identify senior needs in the African, Hmong, and Latino communities
- Goal of the engagement sessions are to listen to elder community wants and needs and to gain insight on gaps and barriers to opportunities and services in Brooklyn Park and the Recreation & Parks department
- Create programs and services to meet needs and interests of BIPOC elders and address barriers to participation
- Staff are planning to implementing 1 – 2 pilot engagement listening sessions with African elders in 2023 and will expand outreach to additional communities in 2024 and beyond
- Grant provides funding to secure community liaisons to facilitate the engagement events, incentives for participants, food/beverages, and interpretation services

- Have identified St Alphonsus Pan-African Network, CAPI, ACER, CEAP, and Hmong senior day care services as community organizations to work with

Community Engagement Advisory Team (CEAT) Maple Grove Hospital

- Staff representative on CEAT
- Identify & establish community health priorities, plans and programs to improve the health status of the community

Driver Insurance Discount Classes (fees paid to AAA or MHSRC \$21 - \$30)

- 3-4 classes offered a month at the CAC from 2 organizations
- 8-hour initial course and 4-hour refresher courses offered
- Take class every 3 years to maintain a 10% discount on auto insurance
- AAA Roadwise Driver Course
- Minnesota Highway Safety Research Center 55+ Driver Discount Course

Fee Assistance

- Assistance is available to help residents access programs and services
- Qualifying programs include fitness, weekly activity groups, luncheon, speakers
- Up to 75% off qualifying programs

Life-Long Learning (most presentations are offered at no cost; classes have a minimal cost to cover instructor fee and supplies)

- Presentations around travel, housing, Medicare 101
- Community partner / resource presentations
- Brooklyn Community Band

Living Well Resource Fair (no fee to attend – vendors pay a booth fee)

- Offered 1 time a year
- Next resource fair will be Fall 2024 (was last offered May 2023)
- Working with Community Engagement to invite cultural community groups elders and their care givers
- Community resources around: housing, health care, travel, wellness
 - Including cultural nurses' associations
- Health screening opportunities

Luncheons (\$18 per meal)

- Catered Meal
- Entertainment
- Offered 4-6 times a year with a seasonal theme

North Hennepin Community College (fee will be based on instructor & supplies)

- Developing non-college classes with NHCC faculty to offer Life-Long Learning for community members on campus
 - Opportunities could include ceramics, creative writing, watercolor painting, photography, drawing, music

Technology Support / Tech Help (free service)

- Partnership with Senior Community Services
- Offered Wednesday mornings in-person at the Community Activity Center
- In-home help available with appointment

Travel Opportunities (fee is dependent on trip – most day trips are \$75 - \$100)

- Monthly Day Trips with Medicine Lake Tours
 - Fees include coach bus transportation from the CAC, meals, tickets/tours
- Travel Talks – Extended Travel with Landmark Tours

Pickleball (indoor \$3/day or insurance reimbursement | outdoor no fee)

- Indoor October – May at the CAC / Armory Gym
- Outdoor May – October at Norwood and Bass Creek Parks



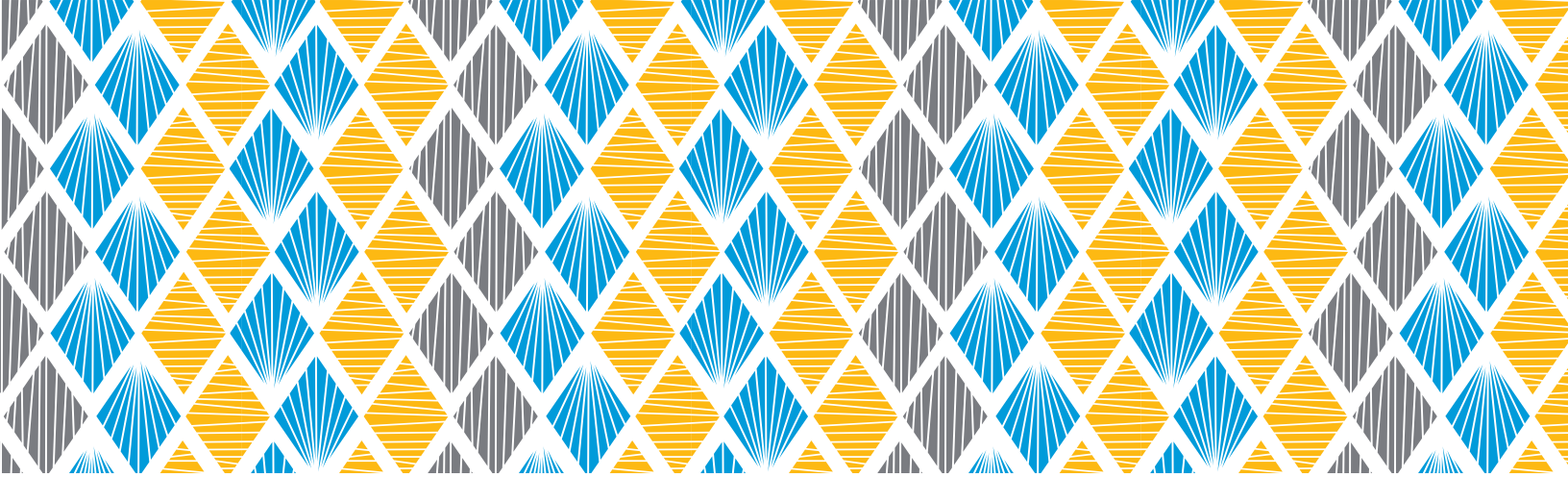
Becoming an Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park

Recommendations Report February 2019



Becoming an Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park

Recommendations Report



Prepared for the City of Brooklyn Park by Lydia Morken Consulting

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4-7
Introduction.....	7
Age-Friendly: Important for All	8-9
Attitude Adjustment: The Fundamentals	10
Aging in the Suburbs	11
The Role of Community	12
Age-Friendly in Context: A Profile of Brooklyn Park.....	13
The City’s Foundation for Age-Friendly Work.....	14-15
Brooklyn Park 2025: Strong Alignment with Age-Friendly	16
On the Horizon: Regional Collaboration?	17
Methodology.....	18-19
Findings: Resident and Key Stakeholder Engagement	20-25
Key Observations from Immigrant Communities	26
Case Study: Fitness Class Pilot for Older Liberians	27-28
Findings: City Departments	29-31
Recommendations.....	32-43
Recommendations by Age-Friendly Domain	32-34
Integration into City Government.....	34
Department-Specific Recommendations.....	34-39
How to Better Serve and Support Older Low-Income Residents and Residents of Color, Including Immigrants and Refugees	39-41
Beyond City Hall.....	41-43
Possible Approaches.....	44-46
Appendices	
Appendix A: Notes from City Department Meetings	47-50
Appendix B: Resident Engagement Details	51
Appendix C: Key Stakeholder Engagement.....	52
Appendix D: City Department Engagement	53
Appendix E: Task Force on Aging Recommendations.....	54-56
Appendix F: WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Network: To join or not to join?	57
Appendix G: Voices from the City’s Diverse Senior Population: A Report on Brooklyn Park’s Recreation and Parks Adult & Senior Adult Programs.....	58-75

Executive Summary

This report presents a case for making Brooklyn Park an age-friendly city and includes a set of recommendations for how the City can take formal and strategic steps to do so. Age-friendly cities are places that support and value older residents, recognize their enormous social and economic contributions to the community, and enable them to live with independence and dignity. More cities are undertaking this work in response to the aging population, but it is also about the fact that older adults, like everyone else, have a right to be able to participate in city life. Yet they are often excluded by default.

Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park builds on earlier City efforts: *Brooklyn Park 2025*, the City-led community planning effort conducted in 2016, and the work of the resident-led Task Force on Aging from 2014-15. Both highlight the fact that supporting and planning for older residents is a top community priority.

This recommendations report digs deeper into opportunities around more meaningful inclusion of older adults. It was developed based on findings from a two-fold engagement process undertaken over the course of 2018.

Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park looked both outward to the community and inward to City department operational practices to uncover baseline age-friendliness on both fronts. It sought answers to questions such as:

- What is working well, and where does more need to be done?
- What is important to residents?
- Where do City staff see opportunities to be more systematically inclusive of older adult concerns?

Importantly, the effort also aimed to capture voices from Brooklyn Park's older low-income residents, residents of color, and immigrants and refugees, whose input had not been specifically sought by local government before.

Below is a summary of select recommendations that emerged from this process. (Find more detail in the full report.) They are organized into four age-friendly domain areas similar to those used by the Task Force on Aging and based on the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities program: Community and Civic Participation; Housing; Public Spaces and Transportation; and Community and Support Services. An additional section addresses policies and practices specific to City departments. Some are straightforward and could be accomplished quickly, while others are broader in scope and have longer time horizons.

This is an exciting opportunity for the City and community members to think about how together we can fulfill the potential of the aging population.

This is an exciting opportunity for the City and community members to think about how together we can fulfill the potential of the aging population.



Summary: Recommendations for an Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park

1) Community & Civic Participation

- a) Bring information to people where they gather.
- b) Better utilize community organizations that can pass on information.
- c) Reach out to new senior housing residents who have relocated and know little about Brooklyn Park.
- d) Add an element of City support or partnership to an existing event in a community of color, immigrants, or refugees. The City can support rather than lead efforts to serve these diverse communities.

2) Public Spaces and Transportation

- a) Conduct a brief transportation audit as a means of better understanding current services and to highlight gaps and needs across various modes. Consider whether a circulator shuttle or other service would be appropriate to consider.
- b) Assess intersections known to be dangerous to pedestrians and develop a plan for safety improvements. Senior housing buildings are near problematic thoroughfares and intersections—such as Zane Avenue and Brooklyn Boulevard.

3) Housing

- a) Conduct a housing audit to assess current and planned housing stock, senior housing communities, current and anticipated need for affordable housing, etc. This information would help the City better understand its present circumstances and position it to create a more effective plan for appropriate and affordable housing options for older residents going forward.
- b) Develop an affordable housing plan related to older residents.

4) Community and Health Services

- a) Create a class on how to use local delivery services.
- b) Partner with/utilize existing organizations to better reach and support immigrant communities.
- c) Bring mini-versions of the annual resource fair to specific ethnic or cultural communities.
- d) Engage the business community in age-friendly business efforts through BP Business Forward, which has already expressed its interest in the work.

Inside City Government

Administration:

- 1) Consider pursuing a regional approach to age-friendly efforts. Maple Grove, Osseo and Hennepin County are all engaged in this work and opportunities may exist to collaborate on transportation, communication, and other areas.
- 2) Incorporate age-friendly training into staff training and new employee on-boarding.
- 3) Improve accessibility of City Hall. The front entrance is a long walk to where residents must go to pay bills or conduct other business.
- 4) Better address translation and interpretation needs that affect many older immigrants.
- 5) Develop a broader and more cohesive volunteer strategy.
- 6) Formalize practices for public meetings and similar events that ensure all attendees can hear and participate. E.g., require that all presenters and speakers—including attendees who comment or ask questions—use a microphone.
- 7) Consider age-friendly employment practices such as phased retirement, flexible schedules, and specific accommodations for working caregivers.

Summary: Recommendations for an Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park

Communication:

- 1) Be deliberate about messaging and communications related to older adults to ensure that negative stereotypes are not being perpetuated.
- 2) Ensure that City publications and the new website use age-friendly design practices in terms of font style and size, color contrast, etc.

Community Development:

- 1) Develop a housing strategy for older residents that goes beyond “senior housing.”
- 2) Use Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park to help operationalize existing age-friendly aspects of the comprehensive plan, such as residential universal design.
- 3) Develop educational materials urging landlords to incorporate universal design features into routine building upgrades.
- 4) Engage the business community in age-friendly business efforts through BP Business Forward, which has already expressed its interest in the work.

Operations and Maintenance

- 1) Invest in additional benches, lighting, and trail maintenance in key locations identified through Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park outreach and additional older resident input.

Police & Fire Departments

- 1) Consider an emerging model that involves embedding a social worker into the City’s emergency response teams. The dual benefits of this approach include better serving residents and freeing up police and fire resources to respond to real emergencies in a busy city by reducing the volume of repeated and unnecessary 9-1-1 calls.

Recreation and Parks:

- 1) Establish a policy to formalize giving space priority at the CAC to Senior Adult classes. This will help prevent the issue of those classes being cancelled when their rooms are rented for other events.
- 2) Increase older adult engagement in park bond reinvestment projects. The passing of the park bond referendum presents a well-timed opportunity to conduct older adult-specific engagement in major City projects.
- 3) Consider reduced-cost programming for low-income residents to allow their participation in Recreation and Parks programming.
- 4) Inclusion: Address the question of how people with physical limitations and/or cognitive decline can be accommodated in Recreation and Parks programming.



Introduction

In 2018 the City of Brooklyn Park dug deeper than it had before into learning about needs and opportunities related to its older residents. Like many other places, its population is aging. More than 20 percent of the city's population was 55 or older in 2016, up from 12.5 percent in 2000.¹

The health and wellbeing of older adults also emerged as a priority through *Brooklyn Park 2025*, a 2016 community planning process, reinforcing the work's importance for the community. A resident-led Task Force on Aging laid additional groundwork in 2014 and 2015, developing recommendations for how the City could better support older residents. (See Appendix E.)

This report is the culmination of the past year's work to better understand what older residents in Brooklyn Park want and need, and to help the City determine how best to respond to the findings. It is set in the framework of age-friendly cities. This rapidly spreading movement takes a community-wide approach to more deliberately including all ages to ensure that we can remain engaged and independent as long as possible as we grow older.

The report discusses the need for and value of age-friendly cities, and what was learned (and how) about older residents. It lingers on the findings from the city's older low-income residents and residents of color, including immigrants and refugees, as this is the City's first concerted effort of this degree to specifically explore the experiences of older adults in the many multicultural groups that reside in Brooklyn Park.

It closes with recommendations concerning how the City might choose to proceed given the needs and opportunities identified over the course of this process. This is primarily a strategy-level report to help the City understand the needs and determine how to approach this work in terms of time, funding, staff and other resources. It includes recommendations but is not an action plan laying out concrete steps and timelines to address specific issues. Instead it is an important step toward that stage.

¹ This report does not use a single age threshold to define the start of older age. It can be useful to break down the data in various ways to illustrate different things.

What is an age-friendly community?

In an age-friendly community, policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to "age actively" – that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society.

Age-friendly service providers, public officials, community leaders, faith leaders and business people:

- Recognize the great diversity among older persons,
- Promote their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life,
- Respect their decisions and lifestyle choices, and
- Anticipate and respond flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences.

— *World Health Organization*

Age-Friendly: Important for All

Population aging is pushing cities and other municipalities to confront certain realities. Most are moved to act by simple demographics, and the numbers are indeed compelling. The absolute number of older adults is growing, and so is the proportion.

- In the United States, in 1900 only one in 25 people was 65 years old or older. By 2030, one in 5 people will be 65-plus, and many places already approach or exceed that figure, including Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota.
- In Minnesota, more people will turn 65 in this decade than in the past four decades combined. In 1960, 38 percent of the population was 18 or younger and 10 percent was 65 or older. By 2030, those groups will each comprise about 21 percent of population.

- In Brooklyn Park, 10.2 percent of residents were 65-plus in 2017, up from 7.6 percent in 2010. (See more in Table 1.)

However, wise and truly inclusive communities know it is more fundamental than a demographic shift. People of all ages deserve to be deliberately included in a city's plans, projects, and policies, and cities benefit from enabling their residents to live with independence and dignity. The changing demographics simply highlight the fact that most governments have failed to adequately do so.

Some researchers frame this as a “right to the city” issue: all residents have rights to participate in decision-making regarding their physical environment and access to resources. This pertains especially to older adults, as our “zones of activity” tend to shrink as we age, making our immediate environments and resources even more important.

TABLE 1: Percent of Area Residents Aged 60+

Municipality	2010 Residents Aged 60+	2017: Residents Aged 60+
Brooklyn Park	11.6	15.4
Brooklyn Center	16.8	16.3
Maple Grove	11.1	18.7
Minneapolis	11.9	13.9
Osseo	32.4	35.1
Hennepin County	15.7	18.7
State of Minnesota	17.5	20.7

Sources: US Census Bureau 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Brooklyn Park's proportion of older residents is less than its neighbors' (Maple Grove, Osseo, and Brooklyn Center) and the county and State as a whole, and slightly more than that of Minneapolis. But the numbers are on track to rise, and 14.6 percent of the City's approximately 80,000 residents aged 60+ amounts to more than 11,600 people—not insignificant.

²Purcell, M. 2003. Citizenship and the right to the global city: Reimagining the capitalist world order. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27(3): 564–590.

Age-Friendly: Important for All

Yet cities and counties simply weren't planned with current lifespans in mind, and we continue to plan for and include older adults only minimally and usually with an outdated, ageist paradigm. While operating within the realm of "senior" is critical—senior housing, senior centers, senior services, etc.—age-friendly communities are much broader than this.

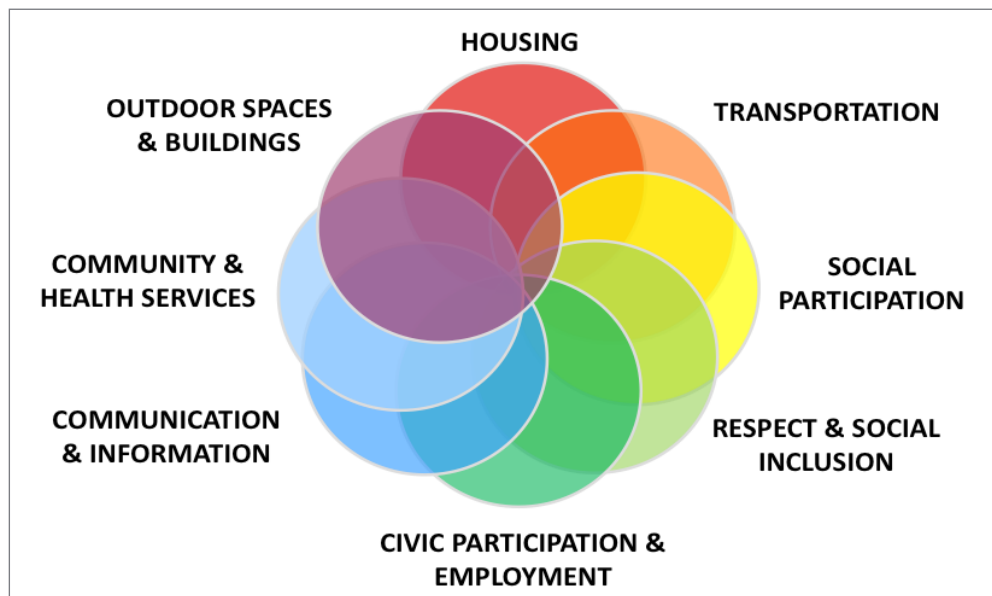
Instead of marginalizing older adults, we should recognize their value and help fulfill the potential of aging. After all, most of us will one day be a part of this group.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the global leader of age-friendly cities work. It created the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities around 2006, a program that provides a framework to guide member cities through steps to become better places for older people to live.

This work is spreading quickly, with more than 300 network members in the U.S., where it is now operated by AARP, and more than 700 worldwide. Many cities and counties are pursuing similar and substantial work outside of WHO's program, but the numbers are a helpful indicator of the interest in and uptake of this work. While Brooklyn Park has not (yet) joined the age-friendly network, it uses the program's framework as a guide. (See Appendix F for more on joining the network.)

The WHO/AARP program is organized into eight domains of livability, which identify key aspects of community life that should be explored and addressed through an age-friendly lens. Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park is using the below domains (Figure 1) to guide its work.

FIGURE 1: World Health Organization/AARP Domains of Livability



The WHO/AARP program is organized into eight domains of livability, which identify key aspects of community life that should be explored and addressed through an age-friendly lens.

³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Madrid Plan of Action for Ageing*, 2002.

Attitude Adjustment: The Fundamentals

Engrained biases against aging can prevent us from effectively addressing the issues related to this inevitable phenomenon.

Whether or not we realize it, most of us carry negative views of aging, including our own aging, and this has real implications for our health, well-being, and even how long we live. People want to distance themselves from the idea of “old” because we tend to associate it only with loss, decline, and feeling invisible, devalued, and “other-ed.”

Our society and systems tend to support and perpetuate these negative views, doing us all a disservice. What if our communities were planned and funded in a manner that allowed us to move more seamlessly into older age, without having to give up the ability to get around, remain socially connected, and live independent lives as long as possible? Our dread of older age may be replaced with a sense of optimism and possibility. Not to mention that cities could reap the economic and social benefits of a more fully engaged and independent populace.

Raising awareness of these biases and working to shake them loose are important aspects of age-friendly communities because they truly do have concrete implications. Below are some key points and facts that must underlie this work.

- Older residents are as fundamentally important as all other community members who have a right to move around and take part in city life. In most places older adults are eventually excluded or discriminated against by default when they cease to drive or lose independence in other ways.
- Older adults significantly contribute to the local economy. The term “longevity economy” was coined for this reason. Older people:
 - Hold the majority of consumer purchasing power
 - Are a valuable and growing segment of the workforce
 - Play critical roles as caregivers to spouses, partners, grandchildren and others
 - Volunteer at high rates
 - Make significant philanthropic and charitable contributions.
- “Seniors” are often lumped into one broad category, which can span up to five decades. Older adults are not a single monolithic group and should not be regarded as such. Whether you believe that older adulthood begins at 50, 65, or 70, each decade presents different stages of life, opportunities, and needs. The experience of aging is universal, but as we reach older age we become more diverse. There is no such thing as a typical 75-year-old. The physical and cognitive capacities of older people vary greatly, unlike those of most 40-year-olds, for example.
- Age is part of diversity and inclusion. Brooklyn Park has worked hard to engage and include its racially, ethnically, culturally, economically, and otherwise diverse residents, and it must explicitly include older residents in this regard.
- Gender, earlier life experiences, and culture determine how people age. This is especially important in a city like Brooklyn Park where residents have widely divergent life experiences due to ethnicity, race, culture, immigration status, and income level.

⁴World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/ageing/features/faq-ageism/en/>

⁵American Society on Aging. *Generations*, Fall 2015.

Aging in the Suburbs

Suburban populations are aging faster than those in cities.⁷ The Minneapolis/Saint Paul region's five all-suburban counties will see their 65-plus populations more than double—and in Carver County, quadruple—in the next 30 years.^{8,9}

Boomers raised their children in the suburbs and are staying put as they reach older adulthood.

Yet aging in suburbia poses challenges. As has been said, suburbs were designed to move cars, not people, and there are few other ways to get around. Low density and automobile-centric development made public transit impractical, expensive, and a low priority. Most of the suburban housing is single-family homes, often multi-level, with a yard to keep, and set apart from stores and services. Commercial areas have vast parking lots that are unfriendly to people on foot or bicycle, even if shops are relatively near each other.



Unlike pre-World War II eras, few people today walk to work, the store, or school. We've designed our suburban communities in a way that discourages physical activity and minimizes social interaction that was once part of everyday life. Today our daily routines rely almost completely on personal vehicles, which puts non-drivers of all ages in a particular difficult position.

This model doesn't work for most of us as we get older, yet more than half of the country's 75 million baby boomers live in suburbs.¹⁰ And it's not just about accommodating boomers; many people are already old, and younger generations, of course, eventually will age, too. The shift to an older demographic will not be a temporary one as people continue to live longer and birth rates remain low.

More suburbs are working to retrofit themselves to respond to changing demographic trends. Fewer households have school-age children, more households have single occupants, and both boomers and millennials state preferences for walkable and mixed-use communities.^{11, 12}

It takes time and resources to change or create new housing and transportation, and age-friendliness isn't about infrastructure alone.

The shift to an older demographic will not be a temporary one as people continue to live longer and birth rates remain low.

⁶ World Health Organization, Active Ageing Policy. 2002.

⁷ Frey, William. January 2003. Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, The Brookings Institution. "Boomers and Seniors in the Suburbs: Aging Patterns in Census 2000."

⁸ Minnesota State Demographic Center. County population projections by age and sex. March 2017.

¹⁰ Bergal, Jenni. "Can car-centric suburbs adjust to aging baby boomers?" June 20, 2016. Pew Charitable Trusts.

¹¹ US Census Bureau. 2016 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

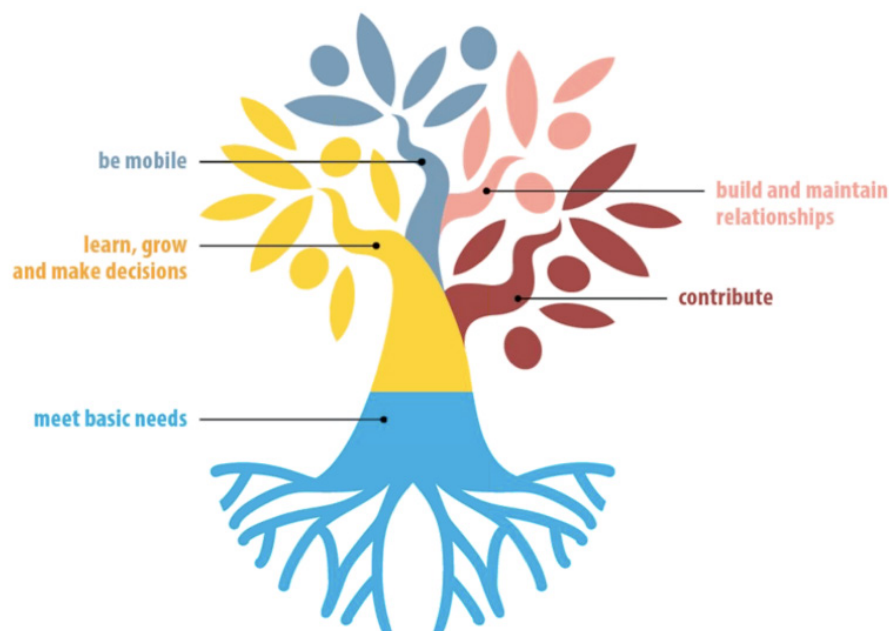
¹² American Planning Association. Investing in Place for Economic Growth and Competitiveness: Two generations' view on the future of communities: millennials, boomers, and new directions for planning and economic development. 2014.

The Role of Community

“Aging well” doesn’t happen only at the individual level. The term can imply that how we age is a function of factors all within our control—our choices and lifestyles. In fact, many variables and the interaction of those variables determine our health and well-being as we grow older.

The World Health Organization defines healthy aging as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age.” Why functional ability? Because healthy aging is not just about our physical and mental—or intrinsic—capacity, but also about how well we can function in our environment given that capacity.

Figure 2 illustrates what WHO identifies as the five domains of functional ability: meet basic needs; be mobile; build and maintain relationships; learn, grow and make decisions; and contribute. Similar to the eight domains of livability that shape age-friendly communities (see page 9), the domains of functional ability are closely interconnected.



“These abilities are essential to enable older people to do the things that they value. Together they enable older people to age safely in a place that is right for them, to continue to develop personally, to be included and to contribute to their communities while retaining their autonomy and health.” –World Report on Ageing and Health, World Health Organization, 2015

We all want to be autonomous, connected to others, and able to enjoy life—that doesn’t change with age. Local governments and communities play a significant role in shaping how we experience older age.

Aging in community is an evolution of aging in place. In fact, the American Planning Association has developed a policy guide around this concept. Going far beyond simply being able to remain in one’s own home, which can be a lonely and isolating endeavor, aging in community refers to “building vital communities that engage people of all ages and abilities in a shared, ongoing effort to advance the common good.”¹³

The aging population will impact society and government in a myriad of complex ways, many of which are beyond the scope of Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park. But local and regional initiatives are critical to responding to the needs and opportunities tied to more of us being and becoming older adults. Important work is possible and necessary at the community level, which also informs, supports, and reinforces broader efforts.

¹³Thomas and Blanchard. 2009. “Moving Beyond Place: Aging in Community.” *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*.

Age-Friendly in Context: A Profile of Brooklyn Park

Brooklyn Park, Minnesota is a vibrant suburb northwest of Minneapolis in Hennepin County. Situated on the west bank of the Mississippi River, it is the state's sixth largest city, with a population of 80,800 people. It is also the 11th fastest growing city in Minnesota.

Once a traditionally Midwestern and mostly white suburb, the city's trademark over the past two decades has become its remarkable racial and cultural diversity. Brooklyn Park's present demographics reflect where the state of Minnesota's will be in 2040. Fifty-four percent of residents are people of color, 22 percent are foreign-born, and more than a quarter speaks a language other than English at home. It is home to large Asian (namely Hmong, Vietnamese, and Lao) and African (especially from Liberia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ethiopia) populations, as well as many Hispanic/Latinx and African-American residents.

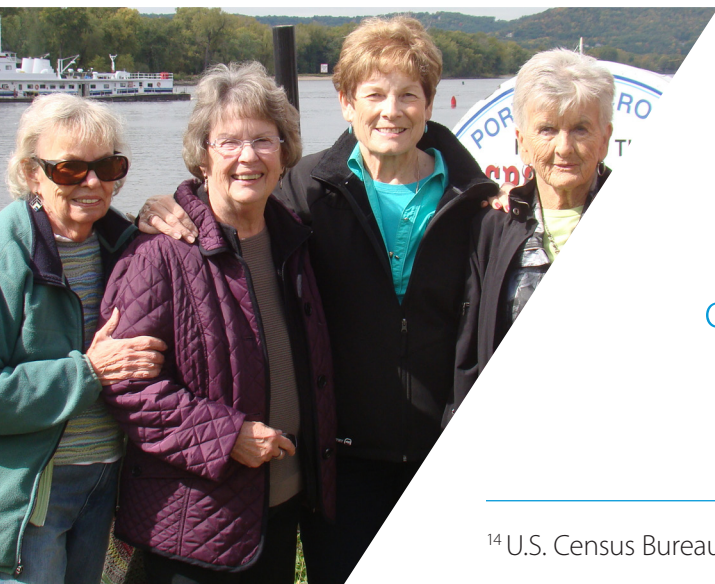
For this reason, the City has invested significant time and resources into community engagement to help ensure all residents feel welcome and included.

Brooklyn Park is unique in that it developed progressively, with homes in the south constructed largely in the 1960s and newer housing that spread north in later decades, with new developments still being constructed

in the northwestern neighborhoods. There is a \$90,557 difference in median household income between the highest and lowest median income census tracts. Therefore, as in other places with such income inequality, there are disparities in outcomes related to housing, employment, education and health.

This racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity provides a fascinating but complex context for Brooklyn Park's age-friendly work. Residents' experiences of growing older vary widely. We all become more diverse as we age, experiencing change or decline at different ages and rates. The demographic diversity in Brooklyn Park heightens this reality, and this will become increasingly true over time. Younger cohorts are more racially and ethnically diverse than older ones, though this will change as those younger generations grow older. In Minnesota, for example, people of color comprise only four percent of those aged 85 or older but 31 percent of children five and under.¹⁴

Perhaps for this reason Brooklyn Park is collectively younger than its neighbors, the county, and state as a whole. But its overall older adult population is growing, too, and will continue to do so.



Perhaps for this reason Brooklyn Park is collectively younger than its neighbors, the county, and state as a whole. But its overall older adult population is growing, too, and will continue to do so.

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2015, via the Minnesota State Demographer's Office.

The City’s Foundation for Age-Friendly Work

Brooklyn Park’s city government has a strong foundation for this work in terms of organizational culture and active support for the community’s older adults. Leaders already invest in the growth and evolution of the city as an organization, establishing a culture of continuous improvement and actively seeking ways to function at a higher level in service to residents. The following information and observations support the notion that the City as an organization is prepared to undertake a new way of thinking and operating. It also presents some of the key ways it has invested in its older residents to date.

- The City led a year-long community planning process called **Brooklyn Park 2025**, which used extensive resident input to develop six overarching goals (see page 21) in support of the its mission to be “a thriving community inspiring pride where opportunities exist for all.” *Brooklyn Park 2025* demonstrates the City’s commitment to better understanding and acting on residents’ desires, concerns, and priorities for a better community.
- The Community Long-Range Improvement Commission (CLIC) was the sponsoring Commission within the City that guided the **Task Force on Aging**, which developed a substantial foundation for age-friendly work in 2014 and 2015. Its recommendations (summarized at right) reinforce much of what was learned through

this year’s Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park efforts. They are organized into priority areas similar to the WHO domains of livability. Read more about the Task Force’s conclusions in Appendix E.

- Brooklyn Park has developed a reputation for having an **exceptional senior center**, housed within the Community Activity Center (CAC). The

Recreation and Parks’ Senior Adult programs are incredibly valued by and meaningful to participants and highly regarded by professionals in the community. This is due to the welcoming and caring culture established by key staff, popular classes, and the sense of community and lasting bonds that form between participants. One fitness instructor with extensive training

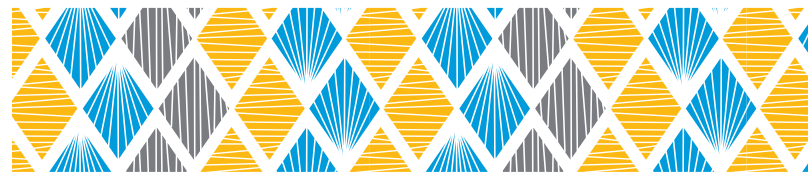
Brooklyn Park’s Task Force on Aging’s Recommendations (2015)



The City's Foundation for Age-Friendly Work

and education has helped many participants reduce chronic pain issues through a musculoskeletal approach. Other classes, such as watercolor painting, were also noted as having had profound impacts on participants.

- **The Dynamic Aging Resource Fair** is an important annual event that draws more than 350 attendees and 50 vendors, providing valuable opportunities for older adults and their families to learn about resources that are available within the community and to connect with key businesses and organizations. It includes quality speakers and workshops on a variety of topics, all free to the public. This event also provides an important chance for the City to share information with and gather input from older residents, most of which are in a “sharing and learning mode” at the event and ready to engage.
- City staff have a **learning mindset**, and the culture of continuous improvement encourages **ongoing professional development** opportunities—such as education sessions on various topics, access to consultants who share knowledge and expertise, and cross-departmental trainings. These include department-specific topics and cross-department topics—including age-friendliness—that help the City function as a single enterprise focused on the same goals and how to achieve them.
- Key leaders use **strategic approaches** to apply various lenses to the breadth of its work. Similar to age-friendly, race and equity lenses are being used to strengthen the City's work in those realms across the board. The City also created a position in the City Manager's office charged with ensuring that the City's strategic initiatives—such as Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park—make sense and align with larger goals and activities.
- The City established a **Community Engagement division**, now with a staff of three, to more effectively engage the city's increasingly diverse population in plans and projects. The City also has an internal racial equity initiative through which staff is trained in intercultural competence and how to apply a racial equity lens to policies, procedures and programs.
- Staff in key departments bring a **high-touch approach to service** to residents. Those extra efforts are especially important to older residents.
- Residents and professionals during the engagement process complimented the City's **exemplary police and fire departments**, noting that they are well-trained, progressive, professional, and respectful.



City staff have a learning mindset, and the culture of continuous improvement encourages ongoing professional development opportunities—such as education sessions on various topics, access to consultants who share knowledge and expertise, and cross-departmental trainings.

Brooklyn Park 2025: Strong Alignment with Age-Friendly

The following six goals were identified through *Brooklyn Park 2025*, each with several guiding strategies to support them. Many of these guiding strategies align with age-friendly goals, findings related to the age-friendly community engagement, or recommendations that emerged from the age-friendly process so far. Those strategies, all original parts of *BP 2025*, are noted below each goal. This further reinforces that age-friendly efforts are a natural part and extension of priorities already identified by the community, and that working to advance *BP 2025* goals will simultaneously support age-friendliness.

1) A united and welcoming community, strengthened by our diversity

- Our community's activities, events and services are inclusive, multi-cultural, and accessible.
- We have places and spaces for diverse communities to gather.
- Residents of every age contribute to our community.

2) Beautiful spaces and quality infrastructure make Brooklyn Park a unique destination

- Modern transportation options (drive, ride, walk, bike) connect people to education, jobs, and recreation.
- Quality recreation and park amenities inspire activity for all ages and interests.
- People of all ages and backgrounds enjoy financial stability.

This further reinforces that age-friendly efforts are a natural part and extension of priorities already identified by the community, and that working to advance *BP 2025* goals will simultaneously support age-friendliness.

3) A balanced economic environment that empowers businesses and people to thrive.

- Aging adults have services and amenities to thrive and age in place.
- Everyone has access to quality healthy food options.
- People have access to quality medical and emergency care.

4) People of all ages have what they need to feel healthy and safe.

- The community provides necessary supports and services for community members to overcome life challenges such as hunger, mental illness, and homelessness.

5) Partnerships that increase racial and economic equity empower residents and neighborhoods to prosper.

- The community provides necessary supports and services for community members to overcome life challenges such as hunger, mental illness, and homelessness.

6) Effective and engaging government recognized as a leader.

- The City provides quality services at a reasonable cost.
- Elected officials, commissions, and city staff reflect the diversity of the community and are culturally competent.
- City information is clear, accessible, and delivered in ways that meet the community's needs.

On the Horizon: Regional Collaboration?

Future opportunities for a regional-level approach may exist. Maple Grove and Osseo, two immediate neighbors of Brooklyn Park, are pursuing similar age-friendly work. Maple Grove joined the WHO/AARP Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in 2016; it launched and began implementing its three-year action plan in mid-2018. Osseo has been working with Hennepin County Public Health (HCPH) on a more “8 80” approach, which holds that if you build a city that works for an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old, it will be a great city for all.

Brooklyn Park could explore with these cities and others, perhaps in conjunction with Hennepin County, which has helped fund Osseo’s work and recently hired its first healthy aging coordinator, possible avenues of coordination and/or shared resources. This type of partnership would be new terrain but could ultimately save costs for all cities and acknowledges the reality that residents regularly traverse municipal boundaries for shopping, services, and recreation. It could also encourage support from state and federal government by demonstrating city and county commitment to and leadership around age-friendly efforts at a significant scale.

Potential avenues to explore:

Transportation: Several Twin Cities’ suburbs (including West St. Paul, Edina, White Bear Lake, and others) have launched circulator bus services aimed mostly at older residents. The shuttles run regular routes to key retail and other destinations, usually operating one day a week and charging only a small fare. Many Brooklyn Park residents raised the idea of creating a similar local service to address the issue of transportation as crucial to social connection and autonomy and as a means to staying active and contributing to the local economy. Because these types of services have been recently created and tested in the region, good models and experienced partners exist, though developing a municipally collaborative service would require some additional effort.

Communication and Information: Another issue frequently raised by residents was the need for a central information resource on issues related to aging. This could include health and medical needs, city services and programs, senior housing, public library information, county health and social services, transportation, recreation, and more. Existing services like Senior Linkage Line can be confusing and usually require callers to navigate through automated menus and wait on hold before speaking to a person. An information hub concentrated on resources and services in Brooklyn Park, Maple Grove, and Osseo—or perhaps northwest Hennepin County at large—could help residents easily find information about local or nearby services. This type of resource hub would involve partnership with relevant agencies and likely necessitate a dedicated part-time staff person. (The Northwest Hennepin Human Services Council, a Joint Powers Agreement of several area cities that included Brooklyn Park, formerly filled this role to some degree but was dissolved in early 2017.)

Economic development and local business: Local businesses are a very important part of community life. Regardless of our age and stage of life, we all need food, services, recreation, medication, and many household items. Businesses can work to understand and accommodate older customers’ needs concerning products, services, and physical design. Collectively, older adults wield enormous purchasing power, which should be additional motivation for businesses to actively cater to this growing group. The concept also includes local businesses as being age-friendly employers: how can they attract and support older workers?

Osseo created an age-friendly business guide, and Maple Grove is developing an age-friendly business program. In Brooklyn Park, BP Business Forward, a City-staffed initiative of local business owners, has stated interest in pursuing this work, and there may be value in exploring whether a regional approach to this topic holds possibility.

Methodology

This recommendations report was developed based on findings from a two-fold engagement process undertaken over the course of 2018. The process built on earlier work inside the City: *Brooklyn Park 2025*, the City-led community planning effort conducted in 2017, and the work of the resident-led Task Force on Aging from 2014-15.

Through *Brooklyn Park 2025* the community identified six goals, and the needs and well-being of older residents are woven throughout several of those goals and strategies. However, City leaders felt they needed to explore older adult needs more specifically. The Task Force on Aging, an effort of the Community Long-Range Improvement Commission, produced a set of recommendations, but it did not have the capacity to conduct more extensive engagement that would reflect varying needs of the city's diverse communities. Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park sought to capture those voices as well as to dig deeper into older adult concerns and opportunities community-wide.

This work involved looking both outward into the community and inward to city government to uncover baseline age-friendliness on both fronts.

- What is working well, and where does more need to be done?
- What is important to residents?
- Where do City staff see opportunities to be more systematically inclusive of older adult concerns?

Coordination with Hennepin County

It so happened that Brooklyn Park's Recreation and Park's Department Program, in partnership with Hennepin County Public Health, was undertaking a related project around the same time that Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park was getting under way. This partnership's focus was more targeted: gather input from older residents (50+) in Brooklyn Park related to needs, desires, gaps, challenges and barriers to accessing and/or participating in the City's Recreation and Parks Adult & Senior Adult programs. There was a specific focus on Brooklyn Park's low-income residents and/or residents of color, many but not all being immigrants or refugees.

This work included leading five focus groups for its project, and Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park participated in those sessions to gather insights for this report. The two projects were coordinated as needed throughout. While the Recreation and Parks Senior Program's report was written independently, the conclusions are consistent with those in this report. (See page 41 for more information about the conclusions; see Appendix G for the report.)



This work involved looking both outward into the community and inward to city government to uncover baseline age-friendliness on both fronts.

Methodology

External Engagement

The external community engagement for Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park involved 1) city residents, and 2) key community stakeholders, primarily professionals across various sectors whose work touches older adults.

City Residents

Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park followed the World Health Organization's principle of hearing directly from residents, understanding that the lived experiences of older adults are the core of the work. In Brooklyn Park this meant connecting with a cross-section of residents who reflect the community's ethnic and racial diversity. Ten focus groups and listening sessions were held, including five led by HCPH. This also included a presentation and discussion at a Brooklyn Park Community Assembly (regularly held forums for residents to learn about and discuss important community issues) and an interactive table at the Dynamic Aging Resource Fair, where input was gathered from many of the 350 attendees at that event. A handful of individual or small-group interviews with residents were also conducted. (See Appendix B for more details about resident engagement activities.)

Key Stakeholders/Community Partners

It was also critical to hear from professionals who work with older adults in various capacities to capture their perspectives and expertise. Meetings or interviews were held with 21 organizations and agencies across a range of sectors—including healthcare, senior housing communities, nonprofit service organizations, community education, churches and more. (See Appendix C for more details about stakeholder engagement activities.)

Internal Engagement

City Departments and Key Staff

Brooklyn Park also wanted to conduct a self-assessment of its own work as a local government to uncover opportunities to better serve and support older residents. The consultant presented to and led an interactive discussion with a large group of cross-departmental manager-level staff, and later met with small groups from individual departments. Both were opportunities to learn more about what staff observe and recommend from their varying roles and perspectives. (See Appendices A and C for more details about City department engagement activities.)

In Brooklyn Park this meant connecting with a cross-section of residents who reflect the community's ethnic and racial diversity.



Findings: Resident and Key Stakeholder Engagement

This section presents what was learned through many conversations with residents, key stakeholders, and professionals from different sectors whose work relates to the lives of older adults.

As previously noted, resident experiences vary widely in some regards. Defining factors tend to be race or ethnicity and socioeconomic status. These findings and subsequent discussion provide greater detail about the city's older low-income residents, residents of color, and immigrants and refugees due to associated complexities and the fact that there has been less exploration by government entities of their needs and circumstances. This summary reflects themes and notable responses; it is not exhaustive. Full results from any engagement session or interview are available upon request.

While the findings are roughly organized according to the WHO/AARP livability domains, keep in mind that all are interconnected. Improvements in one domain are likely to stimulate changes in another. For example, more transportation options will help address social isolation.

The findings are critical but not equivalent to a list of immediate action items for the City. Using this recommendations report, the City and community partners will develop a plan of action that identifies priorities, timelines, and resources.

(Note that some of the findings also function as recommendations; those have been pulled out and are included in the later Recommendations section.)

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

- People want walkability.
- They appreciate the trail system, but trails designed for use by both cyclists and pedestrians can feel treacherous and unsafe for walking.
- Residents enjoy trails but often must drive to reach them.
- The availability of benches—or lack thereof—can determine whether older adults use trails. (Some are currently lacking near SummerCrest Condominiums.)
- Certain streets/intersections were noted as dangerous for pedestrians, e.g., Zane Avenue and Brooklyn Boulevard. And in fact, two separate pedestrian fatalities—both older residents—occurred on Brooklyn Boulevard near Zane Avenue in fall 2018.

Housing

- Affordable senior housing is a fundamental issue. This came from residents and professionals alike. If more senior housing is constructed, it must be affordable. There is also a shortage of affordable rental housing.
- Many homeowners (mostly white) are concerned about being priced out of the community when trying to downsize to one-level homes/townhomes. New homes, even if smaller, cost more than their current homes and are unaffordable.

“My split-level house won’t age with me.”

– Resident



“When you’re in the apartment and lock the door, you’re safe. But coming in and out, [you] don’t feel safe.”

– Resident

Findings: Resident and Key Stakeholder Engagement

- Property taxes can get high for older residents on fixed incomes. As the housing market and other factors beyond their control change, taxes can increase significantly even if no improvements have been made to the property.
- Some lower-income residents of apartment buildings have basic safety concerns. Leaving their apartment or the building can expose them to unsafe situations. This can perpetuate greater isolation.
- Older immigrants can be put in vulnerable positions concerning housing. They may be reluctant to complain to a landlord for fear of eviction, may not know their rights, and may not have an advocate to help them navigate such situations.

Transportation

- Transportation is likely the most significant and unifying challenge for older residents.
- Most non-drivers depend on friends and family to provide rides. Older adults may rely on adult children for transportation, but many of those children work and are available on a limited basis or only on weekends. Some residents described missing medical appointments or rescheduling surgeries because of their family's inability to give rides at needed times.
- A small percentage of residents use Metro Mobility, which requires a doctor's certification to ride. While it can be time-consuming and inconvenient, they still value it greatly because it provides a safe and affordable option.
- While most residents don't use public transit—in this case, the bus—some older Liberians take it regularly, and a handful of others rely on it. Of those who do not ride, reasons given include:
 - Play critical roles as caregivers to spouses, partners, grandchildren and others
 - No need for it because they drive
 - Don't know how to use the system
 - Safety concerns
 - Bus routes don't go to desired locations
 - Accessibility—concerns about being able to safely board and exit the bus without assistance
 - Fear of the unknown
- Many residents support the Bottineau light rail coming into the city and said they would ride it, though some said education on how to ride would be important. Those who drive also expressed concern about the need for convenient parking around the stations.
- A small number of residents, generally younger-older ones who still drive, have used ridesharing services like Uber and Lyft on occasion. For others there are concerns about cost, trust, and the ability of drivers to help riders in need of

“Let us participate in the economy.”

– *Tradition senior housing resident on the need for transportation services*



“I think of not being able to drive and it scares me to death.”

– *Recreation & Parks Senior Adult Program participant*



“Over time we have seen many of our neighbors stop driving, and that tends to isolate people. And then once they're isolated, the downhill spiral begins.”

– *Homeowners' association resident*

Findings: Resident and Key Stakeholder Engagement

extra assistance. So, while those services do provide important transportation options that allow spontaneity and autonomy, they are not being well utilized at this point for various reasons.

- Immigrants are most likely to walk as a means of transportation. This is mostly out of necessity, as they often do not have vehicles or licenses to drive.
- Many suggested the idea of a regular circulator shuttle service that would travel to grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, and other key destinations.
- Residents of senior housing tend to learn from each other about transportation options beyond driving a personal vehicle. Someone suggested a service that would help prepare people to transition to non-driving.
- Some senior housing communities have busses or vans, but the service is limited and does not allow for spontaneity.
- Some residents travel on scooters year-round as weather and sidewalk conditions allow. This provides an important means of getting around but can be treacherous in the winter.
- Some older immigrants may not drive or get licensed to drive because of concerns related to their immigration status. Many of these residents do or are willing to ride public transportation and would greatly benefit from additional options.

Civic Engagement & Employment

- Volunteering:
 - People would like a readily available, comprehensive source of local volunteer opportunity listings.
 - Others expressed the desire for more meaningful volunteer opportunities within the city—to help immigrants, school kids, the libraries, etc. in Brooklyn Park.
 - There is also desire for more sporadic opportunities rather than regular ongoing commitments.
 - Older adults are important to Recreation and Parks and other City departments as sources of volunteers and seasonal employees.
- Community groups and service clubs like the Brooklyn Park Lions contribute immensely through extensive volunteering throughout the community as well as by providing a source of purposeful social connection and support for its members. Membership in such organizations—Kiwanis and Rotary are other examples—is waning nationally, but these groups have served as important sources of social capital for years.

“It is hard to connect people to resources. You need that person-to-person help, and that’s what people want.”

– Senior Housing Administrator



Findings: Resident and Key Stakeholder Engagement

Communication & Information

- Communication is a complicated issue. People find, seek, and disregard information in their own ways.
- Numerous people noted a lack of easy-to-find information on topics related to aging and requested an information clearinghouse or resource hub. Existing services like the Senior Linkage Line can be confusing and overwhelming.
- Many residents, primarily white ones, value City publications and report reading them regularly—such as *Park Pages* (City newsletter), *Get Up & Go* (Recreation and Parks activity brochure), and *Adults on the Move* (Recreation and Parks Adult and Senior Adult brochure). Residents of color and immigrants were less likely to read these publications. Some aren't able to read English, some find the amount of information too overwhelming, and some are simply

disconnected from the world of City/CAC programming and don't consider the information applicable or of interest to them. Some suggested a more summarized flyer targeting older residents.

- Reaching older residents across the city's ethnic and multicultural communities can be especially difficult. For example, no one at the Lao focus group had heard about or attended the recent annual Tater Daze event, despite widespread marketing. However, they did attend the Brooklyn Park Lions Club smelt fry and said they learned about the event from posters around the city.
- Spanish-speaking residents said the lack of Spanish language marketing or informational materials feels exclusionary. Even though they know they can attend events or participate in certain activities, they still feel like guests and not truly part of it. Some of this is tied to immigration status or concerns.
- New residents of senior housing communities need more information about the city and local resources. Many move from out of town and are unfamiliar with the community but would like to become more connected.
- Some requested a class on how to use local delivery services. Who offers what and how do you use it?

“The more isolated you are the more vulnerable you are. That's known in the neighborhood.”

– Resident



Findings: Resident and Key Stakeholder Engagement

Social Participation

- We heard from residents themselves as well as from others who work with them that social isolation and loneliness are real and pervasive issues.
- Lack of transportation underlies a good deal of social isolation.
- Living in senior housing can provide important social connections and sense of community for some.
- Identifying isolated older people in the community can be a challenge (though there are some individuals who prefer to be isolated).
- Preventing isolation and loneliness by providing opportunities for social connection earlier is helpful.
- Isolation leads to greater vulnerability and a host of other issues.
- Social isolation exists within immigrant communities as well. Even older immigrants who live with extended family can be isolated from their friends and peers. Family support is critical but does not replace peer connection.
- Senior Adult Programs at the CAC are profoundly important to many participants as a forum for forming and building close friendships and supportive relationships. Many even remarked on the lack of Friday fitness classes in summer months because even the loss of one day a week is missed.

“I love this community center. It is extraordinarily important. It is so easy to become isolated. I have grown as a person because your door was open.”

– CAC Senior Adult Program participant



Providing MORE for the 50+ community! ← **adults on the move** →

<p>PROGRAMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Trainings • Classes • Defensive Driving 	<p>SOCIAL ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bingo • Card Clubs • Quilting • Book Clubs • Knitting Groups 	<p>FITNESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver Sneakers • Silver 'n Fit • Zumba • Pickleball • Nordic Walking 	<p>TRIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Trips • Tours • Extended Trips • Trips Abroad 	<p>EVENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunches & Entertainment • Senior Forum • Holiday Parties • Creative Chaos • STEP TO It Kickoff
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GetUp&Go

Findings: Resident and Key Stakeholder Engagement

Community & Health Services

- Caregiving takes a toll on an increasing number of residents. When asked about the mental health of older patients, one healthcare provider noted that it is caregivers who need the most support in assuring their own emotional and physical well-being.
- There is a need for broader understanding of and engagement with dementia.
- Grocery and pharmacy delivery services provide a lifeline to people who cannot easily get out. Hy-Vee and Walgreens were noted.
- Access to fresh and healthy food is an issue.
- There is a desire for more sit-down restaurants and less fast food.
- People would like more activities for grandparents and grandkids.
- Many residents—especially immigrants—are not aware of available resources, such as reserving rooms for free at City Hall or the library. Language differences also make it difficult for them to use the reservation systems.
- Many older immigrants from Liberia and Sierra Leone have limited health literacy, which contributes to high rates of hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease and stroke.
- One healthcare provider said that available resources don't really fit the community's older low-income residents of color, many of who are immigrants or refugees.
- Residents of SummerCrest Condominiums noted the City's thorough and well-trained fire department, and the mindful and respectful police department. Key stakeholders from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and Hennepin Health Care noted Brooklyn Park's progressive, well-trained and helpful police department.
- Some businesses that may not typically considered notable are valuable to some older residents. It is important to remember that people use business and services in ways that work for their circumstances, and that those choices are not always obvious or predictable. The list should not be considered exhaustive but was developed based on what was learned from residents and others involved in this effort.
 - ALDI is favored by older residents of Creekside Gables and Brooks Landing (affordable senior housing buildings) because they are able to walk to it and prices are low.
 - Convenience stores: Small markets like Kwik Trip, which sells fresh foods, and Speedy (formerly SuperAmerica) can become important sources of food and small necessities because of their proximity to some older residents' homes and the ease of going in and out of a smaller-scale business.
 - Wal-Mart is a preferred shopping destination due its low prices.
- Numerous Southeast Asian residents noted Dragon Star Supermarket (including its farmers market) and Sun Foods as important to them.
- The City's Farmers Market in Zane Sports Park is also valued by Southeast Asian and other residents.

Many residents—especially immigrants—are not aware of available resources, such as reserving rooms for free at City Hall or the library. Language differences also make it difficult for them to use the reservation systems.

Key Observations from Immigrant Communities

This section supplements the above findings by presenting some observations specific to the experiences of aging residents across varying cultural communities. They are, of course, to some extent generalizations, but were definite themes that ran through the course of the engagement for Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park.

Language is a barrier.

Many older immigrants do not speak or read English well enough to feel comfortable participating in existing community activities. They often aren't aware of community events and services in the first place for various reasons—including but not limited to language—but, moreover, attending English-based events is not appealing. Language has the power to make you feel seen, known, appreciated, and understood.

Integration is not a priority.

Generally, older immigrants expressed—sometimes via their family members—little interest in joining existing classes or programs. In addition to language, noted above, there are cultural differences. Hmong residents, for example, stated the need for purpose in their activities.

It is important to be learning or contributing. Activities just for fun, like Bingo, are of no interest. Further, fitness classes may include physical movements considered inappropriate in more conservative cultures. Even in cases where residents across cultural communities expressed interest in the same topics—such as learning to sew or use a computer—they prefer to do so within their own group.

But this sentiment extends beyond programs and activities. In general, older immigrants prefer to remain within their cultural communities. Connecting with the broader community for its own sake holds little value. While Brooklyn Park has one of the most active National Night Out events in the country, for instance, one Hmong focus group participant pointed to that event as the type that does not resonate with the Hmong community, particularly elders. They don't connect with the purpose.

In some cases, such as with many West African elders, residents continue to deal with trauma related to immigration and to live with significant daily stress due to health issues, food insecurity, financial concerns, and the ongoing demands of navigating a culture that may still be unfamiliar.

For older adults it is often even more important to connect with peers with common language, shared history, and a sense of familiarity and comfort. Integrating into the broader community was not a priority for multicultural residents, who preferred to stick to their own cultural groups. (In fact, white residents were the only ones to raise and encourage the idea of greater mixing of racial and ethnic groups.) Of course, this may change over time in immigrant communities as younger generations who were raised in the U.S. grow older.

“Alone Together”

Social isolation is common among older people from all backgrounds, but refugees and immigrants can experience it uniquely. Many live with their children and grandchildren but seldom leave the house or connect with friends in person. The care and support provided by family is critical, but people of all ages need connection with their peers, perhaps even more so for refugees and immigrants with difficult histories that continue to affect them. Providing or facilitating opportunities for social connection among isolated immigrants and elders would be of great value to them as well as to their families.

CASE STUDY: Fitness Class Pilot for Older Liberians

Following an Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park listening session with a group of Liberian elders, the City created a pilot fitness program for this community that ran between April and December 2018. Lessons from the pilot may help the City as it considers how to more effectively engage older residents of various ethnicities.

The listening session, held in partnership with the Organization of Liberians in Minnesota (OLM), involved mostly refugees who came to Minnesota due to civil war in Liberia. They have lived in Brooklyn Park anywhere from three years to two decades. Most had no formal education, and American English is their second language.

Although no participants had taken part in classes or programs at the Community Activity Center (CAC), many expressed interest in fitness or walking programs, among other things. Yet transportation challenges, cost, language barriers, and a general lack of interest in joining CAC classes meant existing programs weren't an option.

As a result, the City arranged to pilot a Walk With Ease class onsite at OLM, a known and trusted organization in Brooklyn Park's Liberian community. Walk With Ease is a program of The Arthritis Foundation and is regularly held at the CAC. The class was offered free of charge and taught by a highly trained and experienced instructor who teaches at the CAC and is a white woman native to Minnesota.

Between April and December 2018, the instructor taught Walk With Ease once a week at OLM to 10-12 participants—all but a few from Brooklyn Park—although participation decreased over time. The program duration was not pre-determined, and participants were not asked to commit to a nine-month session. (The City's Recreation and Parks fitness classes typically run on about three-month sessions.) Transportation and lunch were provided by OLM and/or participants. The class involved walking outdoors and inside and various other exercises provided by the instructor based on participants' interests and abilities.

Successes:

- Participants appreciated that the City came to them at a familiar and trusted location instead of asking them to travel to somewhere new or different, and they were more likely to participate as a result.
- Offering the class for free made it possible for people to participate in something that would typically be out of reach for them to access.
- A trusting and affectionate relationship formed between the instructor and participants, and participants appreciated the instructor's willingness to be flexible according to what they felt they were able to do on a given day.
- Participants engaged in movement and exercise for an hour each week when they otherwise would likely have just been sitting. They were also given exercise "homework," which, if completed, would increase their daily physical activity.
- The instructor's experience with biomechanics allowed her to help participants with immediate issues, such as knee pain while getting up from a chair, and participants greatly valued that type of help.



CASE STUDY: Fitness Class Pilot for Older Liberians

Challenges:

- Language differences made it hard to communicate details of physical movements and caused the instructor some concern about preventing injury. Nuances can be lost between Liberian English and American English.
- It was not uncommon to start late, end early, or have short-notice class cancellations. Cultural concepts of time and schedules did not always align.



Lessons:

- Success might look different for such a program. The City would need to rethink and define its desired outcomes at the start.
- Such a class requires an experienced and culturally competent instructor who can be flexible moment to moment and improvise as needed based on participants' needs, abilities, and interests.
- Holding the class every other week, instead of weekly, may be preferable for participants.
- A supportive and responsive partner organization is needed to help recruit participants, help with logistics, troubleshoot as needed, and generally serve as a trusted intermediary between the cultural group and city government.
- The City generally cannot afford to offer classes at no cost. Funding or budgets would need to be adjusted to accommodate participants who are unable to pay.
- There can be culturally driven misperceptions or lack of understanding about the availability of City funds to offer such programs. Additional education and communication on this topic could help.
- More time than usual may be needed to plan and teach a similar class in the future as City staff learn and evolve their processes and expectations to work across diverse cultures. Building relationships alone will take time in some cases.

A trusting and affectionate relationship formed between the instructor and participants, and participants appreciated the instructor's willingness to be flexible according to what they felt they were able to do on a given day.

FINDINGS: City Departments

Age-friendliness should permeate organization-wide. It involves all departments and staff at every level, though people often think of “seniors” in a more limited way.

The City engages with residents in many different capacities. Frontline staff such as members of the Police and Fire departments help residents in their homes every day, and front desk staff assist people visiting City Hall and the CAC. Others develop budgets and create plans, policies, and projects. Age-friendliness pertains to them all.

This section includes key observations and informal recommendations made by staff—or developed based on discussions with them—during meetings between June and October 2018. While important insights and information were shared at these meetings, a true action plan would require additional meetings and input, as well as engagement from community partners, to set priorities and determine strategies and timelines.

The following reflects a general assessment of each group or department based on input of staff that attended the meetings. Note that while the meetings were very productive, not all key staff were able to attend, and the information below should not be considered exhaustive. More details from meetings with each department can be found in Appendices A and D.

Note: Recommendations specific to each department can be found on page 34.

Age-friendliness should permeate organization-wide. It involves all departments and staff at every level, though people often think of “seniors” in a more limited way.

Administration and Finance (Public-facing staff)

This group included staff that perform a wide range of functions and interface with the public related to budget, community engagement, human resources, residential appraisals, utility billing, communications, and guest services via the front desk at City Hall. Several staff members were quite attuned to specific issues concerning older residents, especially those who had worked at the City for many years and observed shifts over time, due to an increasing number of older residents as well as changes in their attitudes, engagement, and expectations tied to generational shifts.

General readiness seemed to vary given that this discussion spanned a cross-section of departments that perform a variety of functions. Some had knowledgeable suggestions for improvements based on their experience and observations, while others were considering the issue for the first time.

Community Development

Community development touches a range of critical areas related to age-friendliness—planning for land use, housing, and transit; environmental and public health; building inspections and rental properties; and more. Because of the scope and importance of their work, additional meetings would need to be held, ideally with subsets of staff, to develop specific recommendations for this department.

Overall readiness appears to vary. This is a large department with many facets important to age-friendliness. Additional education or training for some would be helpful to increase understanding and better position staff to uncover opportunities for where older adults’ concerns could be integrated into their work. There is willingness and curiosity that with additional support and structure could translate into meaningful changes.

FINDINGS: City Departments

Here especially there would be both short-term and long-term approaches. For example, a short-term effort could be developing educational materials urging landlords to incorporate universal design features into routine building upgrades. A long-term effort could be developing a housing strategy for older residents that goes beyond senior housing buildings.

Because so much planning happens in this department, it is also a critical place for building age-friendly considerations into practices for City projects large and small. For example, one suggestion raised at the meeting was to make the incoming Bottineau Line light rail project age-friendly. This represents a great (and rare) opportunity on several fronts: ensure that older residents can easily use this important new infrastructure into which so much is being invested; gain experience and education for staff on how to make public transit maximally inclusive; and provide age-friendly leadership with other levels of government involved in the project.

While the light rail represents a special opportunity, more standard and routine projects are equally important as they, too, have direct impact on residents' lives and reflect the City's values and priorities on an ongoing basis.

Operations & Maintenance

Operations and Maintenance is a unified, well-organized department that is strongly positioned to take on age-friendly efforts. With an established ethos of high-touch customer service, Operations and Maintenance is attuned and responsive to older residents' needs. Because of the nature of its work and its existing department-wide culture of providing high-level service, there are fewer systems-level recommendations for this department, but a few items are noted in the recommendations section.

Worth noting:

One of the most distinctive things about this department is that it manages a unique relationship between the City and homeowner associations (HOAs) that greatly benefits HOA residents, many of whom are older adults. Instead of hiring and paying a contractor directly, an HOA can tag onto an existing City project—such as a street improvement—and pay the City instead. This saves HOA residents a good deal of money, although it does involve extra staff hours to plan and oversee the HOA dimension of these shared projects. As many HOA residents are older adults, this arrangement, which predates any formal age-friendliness efforts, is a good example of how a city can adopt a system-level approach to an aspect of its work and benefit a great number of older residents over time.

Police and Fire Departments

Leadership from the Police and Fire departments is primed to act to advance age-friendliness in their departments. All clearly identified and concurred about priority needs and gaps—namely, an inability to provide follow-up to residents after emergency calls that would connect them with appropriate resources and prevent future unnecessary calls. With older adults this usually means calls from people who have fallen, need assistance related to a chronic health condition, or simply need some human connection. The number of calls received and amount of time spent at the city's many group homes—a significant number of which house older adults—was also noted.

Department leaders hold visions for systems-level change that would bring more strategic and effective responses to what they see as the true issues that need to be addressed.

FINDINGS: City Departments

Recreation & Parks Department

Recreation and Parks holds possibility on several fronts but requires more exploration. Readiness seems to vary given the spectrum of roles and different levels of familiarity with the topic. Additional education and discussion would help some staff better understand how their roles connect with age-friendliness and where opportunity lies to integrate older adults.

This department plays a major and very visible role with older adults through its popular Adult and Senior Adult Programs—including numerous fitness classes, book and cards clubs, knitting groups, educational classes, trips, special events, and more. Recreation and Parks dedicates a full-time staff person to Senior Adult (50+) programming, and the department is well known for its varied and well-run programs that cater to older adults across a spectrum of programs and services for all ages, interests, and ability levels.

Less obvious but also very important is the fact that older residents are highly valued seasonal employees of the Recreation and Parks Department, and many older adults take advantage of Edinburgh USA, a public golf course owned and operated by the City of Brooklyn Park. Older residents also serve as volunteers in various capacities through Recreation and Parks, including at Historic Eidem Farm and for Senior Adult Programs.

Some youth-focused parks programming indirectly relates to older residents due to the fact that many grandparents provide regular care for grandchildren who are involved in the Recreation and Parks programs. Particularly through Recreation on the Go, which brings programming to youth on-site at apartment buildings and complexes (among other locations), there may be opportunities to connect with and support the grandparents who also are present because they serve as full- or part-time caregivers to the children who participate. Those residents may also benefit from Recreation and Parks programming but may be unlikely to otherwise seek it out.

Community Activity Center (CAC) Customer Services and Maintenance Team

Many staff at the CAC have been in their roles a long time and have had the opportunity to observe changes over the years—related to the culture of aging as well as changes to the CAC facility itself.

The CAC front desk often functions like a concierge service. People ask all manner of questions—from simple information about a trip to recommendations for which class suits them best. There is a strong element of customer service involved in these roles, including maintenance staff, who themselves frequently interact with residents and program participants. Staff at all levels seem to strive for high-level customer service and work to “get a yes” for people as much as possible.

While the CAC’s front desk and lobby areas need improvement in their physical design and accessibility, staff are attentive and welcoming and provide a positive first point of contact for participants, which can be especially important for some older adults who make a point of stopping to visit on their way into the building.

Because they deal with older residents very frequently, overall readiness to undertake age-friendly work is quite high.

These are all important facets of Recreation and Parks’ interface with older adults, yet they are all largely disconnected at present. A more unified strategy, framed by age-friendliness, would be helpful.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are organized into three categories:

1) Recommendations by Age-Friendly Domain

2) Integration into City Government, including:

- Department-specific recommendations
- Recommendations for how to better serve and support older low-income residents and residents of color, including immigrants and refugees.

3) Beyond City Hall: Partnering to lead change in the broader community.

Recommendations by Age-Friendly Domain

The following set of recommendations is organized according to the four priority areas identified by Brooklyn Park's Task Force on Aging in 2015 and slightly modified here. Many are pulled from earlier sections of the report and are compiled here for easy reference. Some represent general tactics the City could employ to advance age-friendliness, and some could be translated to an action plan by adding partners, timelines, progress indicators, etc.

These should be considered a starting point; recommendations on topics like housing and transportation, especially, would need more in-depth analysis and input from City departments and community partners who have more intimate knowledge of current issues and efforts and the local and regional landscape in their respective areas.

1) Community Information and Participation

a) **Create a central information resource** for a range of topics related to aging and community services and programs. Subsections of this hub could target key ethnic or cultural groups. This could also include information about current volunteer opportunities, or that could be a separate effort. Dedicated staff, or perhaps a volunteer coordinator, would be

needed to keep this current and useful and ideally to be available to speak or meet with people who have questions.

b) **Bring information to people where they gather.**

Finding residents at their familiar and trusted locations will likely be an effective way to supplement existing communication tactics. It would require more staff time, but that in-person outreach will also help cultivate connection to the City.

c) **Partner with community organizations to pass on information.**

Organizations like CEAP, for example, could help disseminate information through its channels, such as Meals on Wheels, and the Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota could help reach Lao residents of Brooklyn Park. This may involve developing new partnerships—or new facets of existing partnerships—of which funding would be an appropriate part.

d) **Better address translation and interpretation needs in the City.**

Older immigrants rely on their family members to take care of bill payment, phone calls, transportation, and many other things—in part because of the language barrier. As the City considers its Inclusion Plan, developing a process and plan for interpretive services will be important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

e) **Reach out to new senior housing residents.** Many residents of senior housing buildings have relocated from other cities or states and know little about Brooklyn Park. It is easy for them to remain somewhat disconnected from the local community as many needs are often met within the facility, even for those still relatively independent. The City could work with senior housing administrators to:

- i. Develop materials from the City that would be included in new residents' welcome packets. They could include a city profile, information about elected officials, Recreation & Parks adult programs, a city map, etc.
- ii. Organize guided tours of the city to acquaint new residents with their new home and show them where key destinations are located. In addition to making new residents feel valued and included, this could also encourage them to patronize local businesses rather than leaving the community for shopping and other outings, and be a chance to inform them of volunteer opportunities within the City.

f) **Add an element of City support or partnership to an existing event in a community of color, immigrants, or refugees.** The City can support rather than lead efforts to serve these diverse communities.

2) Public Spaces & Transportation

- a) **Conduct a brief transportation audit** as a means of better understanding current services and modes of transit in Brooklyn Park and to highlight gaps and needs across various modes. Include exploration of a municipally collaborative approach.
- b) **Use findings from the audit to determine whether a circulator shuttle or other service would be appropriate to consider.**
The audit could also help make the case for the need.

c) **Assess intersections known to be dangerous to pedestrians** and develop a plan for safety improvements. Senior housing buildings are near problematic thoroughfares and intersections—such as Zane Avenue and Brooklyn Boulevard—and older residents frequently cross those streets on foot. Hennepin County's Public Health and Public Works departments worked with Creekside Gables to improve safety at Zane Avenue and Brooklyn Boulevard intersection, which resulted in a new crosswalk sign.

Additional safety improvements in this area would be beneficial, partnering with the County as needed.

- d) **Add benches for resting** at key locations along trails.
- e) **Adapt current venues or provide space** for what cultural communities have said is important to them—e.g., Hmong residents would like running water and basic kitchen facilities at local park shelters.

3) Housing

- a) **Conduct a housing audit** to assess current and planned housing stock, senior housing communities, current and anticipated need for affordable housing, etc. This information would help the City better understand its present circumstances and position it to create a more effective plan for appropriate and affordable housing options for older residents going forward.
- b) **Develop an affordable housing plan related to older residents.**
- c) **Consider how partnerships with senior housing communities** could mutually benefit residents and the City. For example, classes could be held on-site at facilities where space allows, administrators could help share information with residents; or facilities could partner in a future transportation service program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4) Community and Support Services

- a) **Create a class on how to use local delivery services.** Who offers what and how do you use it? This could also be a way to engage the business community.
- b) **Partner with/utilize existing organizations**—such as the Liberian Health Initiative and Sierra Leone Nurses Association—to better reach immigrant communities.
- c) **Bring mini-versions of the resource fair to specific ethnic or cultural communities.** This would help reach residents who would benefit from the resources but would not attend the larger resource fair held annually at the CAC.
- d) **Develop or support more activities aimed at grandparents and grandchildren.** The growing number of grandparents who spend time caring for grandchildren is creating greater need for such programs. This could include adapting Recreation and Parks' Recreation on the Go program for older adults, either separately or in conjunction with youth.

Integration into City Government

This portion of the recommendations deals with how exactly the City could embed age-friendliness into its own inner workings. The recommendations are not, for the most part, mutually exclusive.

The City should work to ensure that:

- There is broad-based awareness and understanding of the work among City employees.
 - It develops an action plan that is included as part of its annual work plan.
 - There are known, understood, and routinely followed procedures for integrating age-friendly considerations into the work of each department.
- The City's interface with older adults is not limited—in perception or reality—to Recreation & Parks Older Adult programs, although this remains a critical dimension of the work.

Department-Specific Recommendations

These recommendations were developed as a result of meetings with—and in some cases specifically suggested by—key staff in various departments. They are a strong basis for this work but should not be considered the final word. Additional discussion would be needed in all departments to identify and vet additional strategies and priorities. For more context see assessment on page 29 and Appendix A.

Administration Department

- 1) **On-boarding:** Add age-friendly training to onboarding for all new employees. This could include written materials as well as discussion of age-friendliness with designated staff (to include conceptual framework, how it is operationalized across the City, how it would apply to the given employee's role/department, etc.).
- 2) **Staff trainings:** Perception and understanding of aging should be addressed as a critical foundation of this work.
 - a. Frameworks Institute's "Reframing Aging" offers social science-based toolkits and presentations that address appropriate language and communications to use when promoting positive aging and related policies. This would help dismantle ageist beliefs we all carry and be important to establishing an informed organizational culture.
 - b. Dementia Friends or other dementia education training improves understanding of, compassion toward, and respect for people with dementia and their caregivers. Such trainings are around one hour in length and available from various trainers in the area. All staff could

RECOMMENDATIONS

benefit from this work, especially those who regularly interact with the public.

- 3) **Improve physical spaces in City Hall** to accommodate residents with mobility limitations. Handicapped parking is close to the front door, but the front door is far from the area inside where people must go to pay bills or conduct other business.
 - Some residents have requested that wheelchairs be made available for in-building use, but liability concerns have been reported as an impediment. Revisit this possibility as a potentially simple way to help accommodate people with mobility challenges.
 - The DMV counters have one wheelchair accessible counter, but the walk-up counters do not allow for walkers or similar devices.
- 4) **Better address translation and interpretation needs.** Older immigrants rely on their family members to take care of bill payment, phone calls, transportation, and many other things—in part because of the language barrier. (Note: this issue will be addressed as part of other City efforts related to inclusion and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).)
- 5) **Formalize practices for public meetings and similar events that ensure all attendees can hear and participate.**
 - a. Audio: Require that all presenters and speakers—including attendees who comment or ask questions—use a microphone to ensure that everyone present can hear what is being said.
 - b. Visual: Ensure that City presentations use large, sans-serif fonts to improve readability by attendees with poorer vision.
- 6) **Be an age-friendly employer.**
 - a. Explore the possibility of arrangements such as phased retirement, flexible schedules, or similar programs that allow a more gradual transition from full-time work to retirement. These programs could also benefit the City by preventing abrupt loss of institutional knowledge that many older workers carry with them.
 - b. Ensure employees know that Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policies include paid time off for caregiving of aging family members. And, as the number of working caregivers is increasing, consider going above and beyond FMLA by expanding such policies to allow for accommodations such as flexible schedules, paid or unpaid time off specifically for caregiving, HR staff trained in eldercare resources, and ensuring a workplace culture supportive of caregiving. In addition to more satisfied and productive employees, recent research also shows that employers get a positive return on investment on such policies.¹
- 7) **Educate residents about assessments:** Provide additional information on and/or hold community meetings to educate property owners about the process used to appraise homes to determine property tax increases. Some find it confusing and frustrating to receive a property tax increase following an appraisal, even if they haven't made any improvements to their homes.
- 8) **Volunteerism: Develop a broader and more cohesive volunteer strategy** to evaluate the nature and effectiveness of the current approach and determine where needs and opportunities exist. Meaningful and well-organized volunteer opportunities are mutually

¹ AARP and ReACT. "Determining the Return on Investment: Supportive Policies for Employee Caregivers." (2016).

RECOMMENDATIONS

beneficial for the City and residents, but the City must be realistic about the fact that managing volunteers is a time-consuming and delicate business that must be done well in order to attract and retain volunteers. Older adults already provide a great deal of volunteer capital to the City, but the work could be made more effective with a more thoughtful and strategic approach. (Note: While this recommendation is currently noted under Administration, the City will want to determine exactly how this should be approached and whether key departments, such as Community Engagement and Recreation and Parks, should develop their own strategies or whether it should be City-wide.)

- 9) Overall, formalize the application of an **age-friendly lens to all routine upgrades** made across the City—to buildings, intersections, parks, etc.
- 10) Consider pursuing a **regional approach** to age-friendly work. Maple Grove, Osseo, and Hennepin County have been working on age-friendly initiatives in various ways, and opportunities may exist to collaborate around transportation, communication, economic development, and/or other areas.

Communication

- 1) **Be deliberate about messaging and communications.** Develop key messages and communications for this work in keeping with research-based language and framing recommendations that promote updated thinking and don't perpetuate ageist stereotypes. Key staff could be trained for this (at no cost).

Recommended resource: FrameWorks Institute's Reframing Aging project

- 2) Ensure that **City publications and online information sources/publications use age-friendly practices** in terms of font style and size, color contrast, etc.

- 3) **Ensure new City website is designed using age-friendly practices.** As the City develops and prepares to launch a new website, it should adhere to best practices for age-friendly website design, which are readily available online. (This is separate from accessible web design).

Community Development Department

- 1) **Hold additional meetings with staff**, or subsets of staff according to their functions, to uncover more opportunities to integrate inclusion of older residents into planning and processes.
- 2) Develop a **housing plan for older adults** that addresses different types of senior housing buildings; single-level townhomes, condominiums and similar units; the size and design of new single-family homes; and home modifications that could help older adults live at home longer.
- 3) **Use Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park to help operationalize existing age-friendly aspects of the Comprehensive Plan**, such as residential universal design, life-cycle housing, and affordability. Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park could be used as a driver and a resource to help this department accomplish goals it has already set out.
- 4) Integrate age-friendly design elements in the incoming **Bottineau light rail project**. Ensure that older residents can easily use this important new infrastructure into which so much is being invested, particularly given the shortage of transportation options.
- 5) **Develop educational materials** urging landlords to incorporate universal design features into routine building upgrades.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6) **Engage the business community.** BP Business Forward, an initiative led by local business owners and staffed by the City, would be a ready vehicle for leading age-friendly business efforts. This group works to ensure a strong business climate in Brooklyn Park and serves as an organized voice of the business community. Its Advisory Board actively supports the City's age-friendly work and is interested in spearheading efforts to make age-friendly local businesses part of that effort. This could include:
- Educating local businesses on age-friendly practices, both general and industry-specific
 - Developing age-friendly standards which, when met, could result in a certification
 - Creating marketing strategies that help promote local businesses as age-friendly

Operations & Maintenance Department

- 1) **Invest in additional benches, lighting, and trail maintenance** in key places determined through Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park outreach and additional older resident input. (Note: the Park Bond Reinvestment Plan should help support such efforts.)
- Trails in good repair with adequate seating and lighting can determine whether an older resident is able to take advantage of trails that the City and County have invested a great deal in creating. Residents from SummerCrest, for example, noted that although they have trails near their building, a lack of benches means that some residents are unable to use them.
- 2) **Continue to deliver the high-level service** that helps define this department. If additional resources are needed to uphold this service, they should be provided.

Police & Fire Departments

- 1) **Consider an emerging model that involves embedding a social worker into the City's emergency response teams.** The dual benefits of this approach include better serving residents and freeing up police and fire resources to respond to real emergencies in a busy city by reducing the volume of unnecessary 9-1-1 calls.

As mentioned earlier in the report, residents and professionals alike throughout the engagement process praised Brooklyn Park's police and fire departments for being well-trained, progressive, and respectful. The City should take fuller advantage of the department leaders' readiness to bring more meaningful assistance to residents who need help.

A promising model that some cities have adopted is embedding a social worker in their emergency response teams. In fact, Brooklyn Park will soon launch such a program, joining other cities like Saint Paul and Rochester in testing this approach. All three cities are focusing on mental health.

The social worker fills a critical gap by being able to connect residents with the resources they need, thereby providing long-term solutions in addition to simply resolving the immediate issue that triggered the emergency call. This not only benefits residents by connecting them to the appropriate services, but also relieves demand on City resources by reducing the number of unnecessary or preventable 9-1-1 calls.

Brooklyn Park is partnering with Hennepin County to launch and fund the effort. In Saint Paul, a nonprofit called People Incorporated, the Twin Cities' largest provider of mental health services, is paying for the social worker's position. In Rochester, the city is funding the position itself, being convinced of its value after a four-month pilot period.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City should consider taking a similar approach to address additional issues that face its Police, Fire, and Community Development departments. An embedded social worker with a broader focus could help older residents who call frequently for lift assist after taking a fall, for medical situations related to chronic health conditions, and even to assuage loneliness. While City Council may be reluctant to take on what historically has been the county's domain, Hennepin County caseworkers are overloaded and unable to attend to more than the most urgent cases.

Environmental health staff from Brooklyn Park's Community Development department articulated the same need: the ability to provide follow-up for residents with complex issues that can't be addressed in a single visit.

The current default approach involves City staff responding to repeated preventable 9-1-1 calls to address problems they can't solve. This serves neither staff nor residents well.

Recreation & Parks Department

- 1) **Establish a policy that formalizes space priority for Senior Adult classes.** This would address the issue of those classes being cancelled in favor of space rentals for other events and demonstrate that the City recognizes and values the classes' importance to participants. Establishing a dedicated space could also be explored.
- 2) **Increase older adult engagement in Park Bond Reinvestment Plan projects.**
 - a) Brooklyn Park voters passed a \$26 million park and natural resource bond referendum in November 2018. The City will soon begin work to implement this multi-faceted project, which presents a well-timed opportunity to conduct older adult-specific engagement in major City projects. Older residents' input and ideas are needed not only related to expanding the senior center, but also on improvements to the trail system, park reinvestments, and new ball- and other athletic fields. (Many grandparents attend grandchildren's sporting events!) A well-conceived engagement plan should be created to meaningfully capture the input of older residents for facilities that will directly impact them.
 - b) **Consider reduced-cost programming or scholarships for low-income residents to allow their participation in Recreation & Parks programming.** Budgets and funding would need to be structured accordingly.
 - c) **Inclusion: Address the question of how people with physical limitations and/or cognitive decline can be accommodated in Recreation & Parks programming.** As it stands, an individual who needs special assistance cannot safely participate in most BP Recreation and Parks standard programming, as current staffing does not allow for providing that assistance while also overseeing the other participants and activity. However, this situation can and does arise.

Currently, Recreation and Parks does offer adaptive



RECOMMENDATIONS

recreation and inclusion services to accommodate people with varying physical and cognitive abilities. The City is aware of the need to more directly confront the issue of serving older residents with limited mobility and dementia.

- a) **Create an inclusion policy** (if none exists) and ensure it includes people with mobility challenges and those living with dementia.
- b) **Develop a plan** for how Recreation & Parks can put this into practice in its programs. Among other questions, address the following: What kind of staffing would be required? What kind of training would they need? How would participants who need extra assistance be identified? Are specific programs offered for people with dementia (and their caregivers) or mobility challenges, or would accommodations be added to existing classes or events to allow them to safely participate?
- c) When an **Inclusion Specialist** is hired, utilize that person to flesh out these strategies and policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS: How to better serve and support older low-income residents and residents of color, including immigrants and refugees

Community engagement efforts conducted among some of the city's various racial and ethnic groups were important and revealing. This was the first time that an effort targeting the experience of low-income residents and older residents of color—many of whom were immigrants or refugees—had been undertaken. Yet it became clear during that process these initial learnings are only a starting point. Deeper digging is needed to uncover enough about the needs and desires of various groups in order to really begin to respond effectively.

However, a few general lessons emerged:

This work will take time. Plan accordingly. In addition to seeking input from older residents of color and low-income residents for Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park over the course of 2018, Recreation & Parks also ramped up efforts to bring City programming and events to various cultural groups during this period. They included a series of fitness classes for older Liberians (see case study on page 31 for more details) as well as one-time events at Brooks Landing, an affordable senior high-rise with many black residents, and Eden Park Apartments, a market-rate apartment complex with many Hispanic/Latinx residents.

The experiences of planning and holding these activities, as well as the focus groups, provide “food for thought” concerning how to approach engaging multicultural communities. Considerably more time and effort than staff were used to were required to connect with appropriate contacts, get responses, gather participants, etc. There are likely various reasons for this and it is not objectively problematic, but it does mean that staff may need more time than is typically allocated to do this work. The experience is common enough that it should be factored in to planning and apportioning resources. This may change over time as relationships and routines are developed, but at present there is often more than meets the eye when it comes to engaging the city's various cultural groups.

Historically, most local government systems, processes, and organizational culture have been developed by and for white residents. As the population diversifies, the City of Brooklyn Park is working to become a more informed and culturally competent institution that both understands and can effectively respond to residents' needs and desires. This is and will continue to be a process during which City leaders and staff will both unlearn and relearn ways of engaging with and responding to its changing populace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Don't create; facilitate. Residents drew an important distinction. In some cases, they don't want, need, or expect the City to provide them with specific services, programs, or activities. Many needs are already met within the cultural community, so the City's role could be approached as one that complements or strengthens what's already happening inside the communities. For example:

- Add an element of City support or partnership to an existing event in a cultural community.
- Consider adapting current venues or providing spaces for what cultural communities have said is important to them. For example, catering policies at the CAC have required using one of three approved caterers. This has been a barrier for cultural groups who consider food a centerpiece of family gatherings and would otherwise like to rent space at the CAC for special events. Among residents specifically mentioned wanting park shelters with kitchen facilities; they currently leave the city to gather at venues in other communities. (Note: Since this input was gathered, the City has moved to change its catering policy, and park shelters with kitchen facilities may be constructed with funding from the park bond referendum approved by residents in November 2018.)

Better support and utilize partner organizations. Community organizations created by and for members of various cultural communities are vital links to better understanding and supporting diverse older residents. These organizations serve as bridges between residents and the City and the community at large and provide firsthand knowledge of needs and challenges. Partnership opportunities exist with larger more established organizations like CEAP; smaller and newer efforts like the Liberian Health Initiative; and several others.

Bring it to the people. The CAC is beloved by current participants, but many older residents who would benefit from its programs don't attend for a range of reasons including transportation, language, culture, and cost, among others.

Programs

The concept behind Recreation & Parks' successful Recreation on the Go program for youth could be adapted to bring older residents quality programming at sites that they prefer, such as senior housing communities, churches, or community partner organizations. Each class or activity would be developed collaboratively with a partner organization and residents. There also may be opportunity to engage grandparents of grandchildren who participate in Recreation on the Go.

Resource Fair

Mini-versions of the annual resource fair could be brought offsite to expand its reach. Working harder to broaden attendance at the existing resource fair is likely not the answer for immigrants who have language and cultural differences or other residents with no connection to the CAC. Instead, mini-resource fairs could be organized for specific cultural communities and held at familiar and convenient locations with resources and services customized to each group. Again, all content would be planned jointly with representatives from that community to ensure the resources and services are relevant and that residents are bought in to the effort.

(These efforts should be approached with the knowledge that organizing events with multicultural groups can require more staff time and effort, as discussed above.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Make translation official. Given the role of language as a major barrier to communication, participation, and inclusion, a recommendation was made to formalize and deepen how the City approaches translation. It is possible to provide impromptu translation services, but a translator could be more effective if s/he were acquainted with the context of whatever work was being discussed and understood the City's goals. This could be pursued in tandem with related efforts to further engage older residents from the city's varied cultural communities and could be brought in under broader inclusion efforts.

Hennepin County: On the Same Page

As noted in the Methodology section, the City's Recreation and Parks Senior Adult Programs and Hennepin County Public Health conducted a related and complementary effort over the course of 2018 while the City of Brooklyn Park undertook engagement for Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park. (See Methodology for more detail.) The resulting report, while developed independently from this one, reached many of the same conclusions concerning what was learned about older residents of color, low-income residents, and immigrant and refugee communities.

Notably, both reports conclude that:

- Transportation and communication are priority concerns that cut across all backgrounds, cultural groups, and income levels.
- The City's role can be facilitative in supporting older residents of color and from immigrant and refugee groups. It need not always lead the charge.
- Programs should be brought into the community at trusted locations where people already gather.
- Partnering with community organizations can help reach multicultural residents with important information about programs, services, and events.

- Consider offering reduced-cost Recreation and Parks programming for low-income participants.
- More conversation is needed to build relationships, understand needs, and determine the best ways to move forward.

This overlap reinforces the takeaways from both reports and can help guide both the City and County as they determine strategies and next steps for more effectively engaging residents of varying cultures, ethnicities, and income levels.

Beyond City Hall

A true age-friendly community requires action, commitment, and intellectual contributions from many community partners beyond local government. As City leaders consider how to advance age-friendliness in areas beyond its direct purview, they can opt for several approaches.

Strategic Partnerships: We Don't Do This Alone

Key organizations in Brooklyn Park provide critical services to many older residents, each offering its own expertise. More established partnerships with other community organizations, which may in some cases include funding, could be important to reaching various cultural communities with information about events and services. These partnerships could also help the City learn about needs and opportunities within various ethnic communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The organizations listed below would be valuable partners in helping the City connect with and support older immigrants, refugees, and residents of color.

- **ACER (African Career, Education, and Resource Inc.)** is based in Brooklyn Park and supports, advocates for, and empowers African immigrants in north and northwest suburbs of Minneapolis. It could help the City understand and communicate with older Africans and their families in the community.
- **CAPI USA** is an immigrant-led nonprofit focused on helping the state's newest immigrants and refugees and could be an important link to those groups in Brooklyn Park.
- **Lao Association of Minnesota** is based in Minneapolis but serves many Lao residents of Brooklyn Park. It organized a group of Lao residents of Brooklyn Park to participate in a focus group related to Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park (see page 18 for more information). They could help the City better understand the needs of Lao elders, a culture distinct from Hmong, and connect older Lao residents to information and services.
- **Liberian Health Initiative** and **Sierra Leone Nurses Association:** These organizations are providing critical services to elders in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean communities by addressing social isolation and health literacy. Both organizations were begun out of passion for the work and have grown into small but significant organizations. Leaders bring firsthand knowledge of the culture and language and can effectively connect elders with health education and resources and opportunities to socialize with their peers. They are also important conduits of information to the City concerning the reality of elders' needs in their respective communities.
- **Organization for Liberians of Minnesota (OLM)** is an important organization in Brooklyn Park's Liberian community. It already provides some elder services and partnered with the City to pilot a fitness class to a group of older Liberian immigrants during 2018. The City has partnered with OLM in other ways, including a presentation from OLM to City staff related to the City's racial equity work.

These additional partners would also be important or helpful in becoming an age-friendly community more broadly. The list is not exhaustive.

- **Community Emergency Assistance Programs (CEAP)** is a critical service provider in the community. This forward-thinking organization is well equipped to do more on several fronts—including basic services, nutrition, and transportation—given more resources.
- **Community Education** is offered through the four school districts that cover Brooklyn Park. A partnership is currently being explored through Recreation and Parks and Anoka-Hennepin Community Education to share resources and coordinate planning.
- **Hennepin County Public Health; Hennepin County Active Living**
Hennepin County could provide technical or potentially financial assistance in some age-friendly efforts. It recently hired a healthy aging coordinator within the Public Health Department to help advance this type of work throughout the county, and Active Living could support the City's work to increase opportunities for greater walkability and health equity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Convene and Facilitate

One proven model for achieving large-scale change is collective action, on which much has been written, but in short involves a group of people or organizations working together toward a common goal that cannot be accomplished individually.

Many organizations expressed interest in participating in this work, yet most lack the time, resources, or expertise needed to initiate and lead an effort. The City, though it has its own time and resource constraints, is well-positioned to convene partners and facilitate work. It has laid the groundwork for this role by investing considerable resources into Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park, and it can take advantage of momentum built and relationships developed during work to date.

The City would optimally hire a consultant due to the time and expertise necessary to launch such an effort. The City

would function as the “backbone” organization, meaning it would serve as the convener and project manager. It would also involve recruiting community partners, by getting them to come to the table and committing to actively participating in a process to achieve change a new scale in a new way, together.

To keep the project at a targeted and more manageable scope, it could involve one issue within the realm of age-friendly—such as housing, communication, or establishing greater connections between organizations that serve older adults to create a pipeline of information flow and referrals. It could also be a way to approach the possibility of a municipally collaborative transportation service.

This would likely be a multi-year effort to help develop and implement community-wide strategies involving multiple partners.

Possible Approaches

This section lays out broad strategies for tackling work in the first few years.

OPTION A

Phase 1:

1) Determine the *structure* of the first year's work: who will lead, and how will the work be formalized across the City?

- To advance the work to a meaningful level with real outcomes, someone must be officially charged with doing so. To this end, the City should continue its work with its age-friendly consultant. The work generally happens on two levels: higher-level strategy and project management. The consultant could lead strategy and implementation (in partnership with key staff when relevant), while staff could lead project management, especially with internal work. (Given recent staffing changes, the team may need to determine what arrangement would work best.)
- In addition to these day-to-day leads, an internal team should meet regularly to track and guide the work. This could be a continuation of the current team or an expansion thereof.

2) Develop an *action plan* to determine strategies for moving the work forward. The plan could span 2-3 years and include work both inside city government as well as out in the community. It would include or reflect recommendations from this report but differ in that specific goals and action items would be created, and each action item would be tied to partners, a timeline and indicators for progress. The plan could be organized by the Task Force on Aging's four priority areas, or a variation on those domains, and written by the consultant.

• **City Government:**

- Building on this report, the consultant could take City department work to the next level by conducting further work with staff to educate, identify opportunities, set priorities, formalize strategies, and establish timelines for internal integration of age-friendliness.

• **Community:**

- Use community engagement findings and this report as a basis for creating an action plan.
- Community partners should play a role in developing the action plan and would need to be engaged accordingly. Partners could be identified by City staff and the consultant.
- Partners must also help implement the plan. Their role in that stage should be addressed at this point, too, by getting their buy-in and commitment. Ideally a community-based age-friendly team or several smaller teams focused on specific domains would be developed as part of this process to help create the plan and prepare to implement it.

• **Consultant role:**

In addition to work with City departments, the consultant could help lead the work on various fronts, most importantly engaging community partners and writing the action plan. This should also include staying connected to Hennepin County's work in the age-friendly arena as they invest more resources in this work and identifying opportunities for partnership with the County as well as individual cities related to a possible regional approach.

Possible Approaches

- 3) Quick Wins!** Based on this report, identify a few quick wins, get them done, and spread the word. This will help demonstrate the City's commitment, build excitement, and help balance out the longer-term horizons of much of the other work. Some candidates for "quick wins" are:
- Establish a policy that formalizes space priority for Senior Adult classes.
 - Reach out to new residents at senior housing communities with a tour of the city. (A tour was conducted with Tradition residents in October; St Therese also expressed interest in this and could be an early partner.)
 - Add benches in needed locations along trails near SummerCrest Condominiums.
 - Organize a community engagement session with older immigrants related to the park bond. (No one in our Lao focus group, for example, had heard about the aquatic facility proposal but all were supportive of the idea.)

Phase 2:

- 1) Implement action plan.** The nature of implementation will be determined by the structures set up and partners engaged during Phase I.
- a. **City government:** Departments will be doing internal work related to embedding age-friendliness into their own areas and engaged in the external aspects of the plan where it makes sense.
 - b. **Community:** Ideally, representatives from partner organizations will be actively engaged in implementing the plan they helped to develop.
 - c. **Consultant:** The consultant could continue to guide the work at this stage, though Phase I would also inform that role. It may include the following: ongoing work with City departments; leading or supporting implementation of action plan items; working with community partners engaged in the effort.

- 2) Create a progress report after year one** to evaluate and share updates with the community and stakeholders.

- 3) Reevaluate the structure of the work and adjust** according to City resources, successes and challenges to date, and partner engagement.

- 4) Determine the long-term structure of the work in terms of staff and work routines.** Formalize the approach and commitment with a written document describing how age-friendly considerations have been incorporated in the City's ongoing work.

Costs:

- Many recommendations from this report can be implemented at little to no cost beyond staff time. Specific projects, if pursued, could carry price tags—such as installing additional benches along trails.
- Consultant costs would vary depending on the scope of the work undertaken but could range from \$15,000 to \$30,000 for Phase I and \$15,000-\$25,000 for Phase II. This is a rough estimate.

Possible Approaches

OPTION B

This would be a scaled-back version of Option 1 in that Phase 1 would focus strictly on implementing recommendations related to embedding age-friendliness in City government (although that work would also, of course, involve and benefit residents). Only in Phase 2 would the City begin active engagement of community partners to create and implement a broader action plan. One advantage would be cost savings due to work being spread out. Another might be having fewer moving pieces at once.

Costs: This range would be less, closer to \$8,000 to \$15,000 in Phase I and \$15,000 to \$25,000 in Phase II.

Possible Funding Sources

The below list provides some potential sources of funding for various aspects of Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park. These could be applied to either Option A or B above. While the City would need to continue to invest its own resources, funding through these or similar channels would make additional or expanded work possible as well as help legitimize and energize the initiative by having been chosen to receive competitive grant funds.

1) Bush Foundation Community Innovation Grants

are awarded in amounts between \$10,000 and \$200,000. They fund initiatives that identify a need and work to create a solution, ideally engaging the community and working collaboratively with partners along the way. There are no deadlines.

2) AARP Livability Community Challenge Grants

are quick-action grants. The entire process—from application to implementation to reporting—lasts about nine months. Grants range from several hundred to several thousand dollars. They support quick changes that lead to long-term improvement in four key areas: transportation and mobility; creating vibrant public places; availability of housing; and other community improvements. The 2019 process opens on February 20, with more information available soon thereafter.

3) Allina Neighborhood Connection grants

support communities in building social connections, among the same group of adults, through healthy eating and physical activity. They must include at least six events for the same group of people, with priority given to people more likely to experience health inequities. The application period runs from November 2018 to February 14, 2019 and will likely be similar next year.

4) State of Minnesota SHIP grants

(through Hennepin County). Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) grants fund several areas each year, such as Active Living, Healthy Eating, Tobacco Prevention and Control, and others. Most relevant to Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park would be efforts related to dementia. Brooklyn Park could also work with the County to advance the idea of a regional-level age-friendly effort, particularly related to the possibility forming of a regional Age-Friendly Community Leadership Team (CLT).

APPENDICES: Appendix A

Notes from City Department Meetings

APPENDIX A: Notes from City Department Meetings

The following section summarizes notes from meetings between the initiative's age-friendly consultant and key staff from several departments. They are intended to provide a sense of issues, concerns, opportunities, and questions related to age-friendliness from the perspective of these staff, and to share what helped inform recommendations concerning City departments earlier in the report. The notes are summaries and not exhaustive. See Appendix A for more detail about meeting attendees and dates.

Administration and Finance (Public-facing staff)

• Physical design/infrastructure:

- o Physical spaces in City Hall should be improved to accommodate residents with mobility challenges who need to conduct business at City Hall. Handicapped parking is near the front door, but the front door is far from the ultimate destination inside the building.
- a. Residents have requested wheelchair availability in the building to help them travel this distance, but it is apparently not permitted due to liability concerns.
- b. Counter setups at the motor vehicle service desk are not conducive to people with walkers. There is one ADA compliant station to accommodate wheelchairs.

• Customer service:

- o There is a need to be able to step up customer service to assist older residents requesting additional services; they advocate for themselves more than they used to.
- o Some older residents seek general help almost like concierge services. Staff get requests to help arrange rides through Uber or similar or to track down various pieces of information, such as the address for and directions to the nearest Social Security office.
- o Finance is considering creating budget briefs for residents to provide more easily understandable information about how the city is spending taxpayers' money. This would benefit all residents, including older ones.

• Utilities:

- o Older residents have trouble getting to their basements to check their water meters. The City sends out personnel free of charge to help.
- o People want many options for paying their utility bills: in-person, over the phone, through the City's website, and through apps. There are a wide range of preferences and expectations, driven in part by age.
- o Utility rate increases are problematic for older adults on fixed incomes.

• Human Resources:

- o Not all job applicants have computer skills needed to apply for jobs, yet that is the only way to apply. Support systems are available over the phone and in-person, but sometimes HR staff will simply create and complete a simple application for someone for a straightforward seasonal position to simplify the process and as a service to the resident.
- o People dislike forced use of technology. They want to be able to reserve a room over the phone, but that service is no longer available. Staff get asked to find workarounds for using technology. "Can't you just...?"

APPENDICES: Appendix A

Notes from City Department Meetings

• Assessing:

- Older residents on fixed incomes can find it confusing and frustrating to receive a property tax increase. Even if they haven't made any improvements, their home can increase in value. The Assessing Department has recently started leaving information for people not home during appraisals, but more could be done to help communicate on this issue to resident homeowners, especially older ones.

• Inclusion/Language:

- Older immigrants rely on their family members to take care of bill payments, phone calls, and other business that may involve the City—in part because of the language barrier. There are translation needs for many residents.

Community Development

• Housing:

- There is a gap in senior affordable housing.
- The city needs lifecycle housing.
- There are few multi-unit options, though apartments are viewed negatively.
- Universal design:
 - Community Development does trainings for landlords related to keeping things up to code. This could be an opportunity to include recommendations promoting age-friendly and/or universal design features. It could be part of an inspection report as a recommendation, not an actual code issue. For example, what kind of doorknobs are being used? Accessible hardware comes up on commercial buildings but not yet on residential ones. The City could engage people in how these codes affect them.

- Residential universal design is a recommendation in the comp plan, but there are no details. The City could help educate developers or contractors about why it is important.

- Transit: What would age-friendliness look like for LRT? The City should consider this.
- Environmental and public health staff observe a strong need to provide more resources to residents who need help. "We need tools to connect people to. Who can we tell people to call?"

• Staff Training/Engagement:

- The City/Community Development could use more attention to staff training and behavior. For example, it would help to make microphone use in public meetings mandatory to ensure that hearing impaired attendees can hear. This has been an issue in the past.
- Would it be possible for staff to help residents on staff time? Perhaps 8-16 hours per year could be dedicated to volunteering in that way. This could be brought before Council.

Fire and Police Departments

- Overall themes from department leaders:
 - They believe they have an opportunity to be more strategic instead of just reactive and response-driven
 - They would like to shift to a community risk reduction approach and away from public education.
- The Police Department sees its role in age-friendliness as being able to make appropriate referrals to older people who need assistance.
 - An easy majority of fire department calls are medical and preventable. Many calls from older adults are related to lift assist, chronic illness, or simply loneliness. Responders can deal with the immediate situation but have very little capacity to connect residents to resources that would help them address

APPENDICES: Appendix A

Notes from City Department Meetings

the root problem (and prevent additional 9-1-1 calls). On an emergency call, responders don't have anywhere to refer or send people who need further help. Residents are sometimes brought to the hospital for lack of a more fitting next step.

- o The City has a regular referral program with North Memorial's Community Paramedic program, which can be used with residents who have made emergency calls more than twice. This program is effective in dealing with people who need additional help.
- o Many police departments are embedding social workers or mental health specialists in the department/on response teams, and that person takes charge of the follow up. While this is typically the county's domain, Adult Protection Services through Hennepin County can often do what is needed in terms of case management due to their own resource constraints.
- Council may not realize the degree to which group homes, of which there are many in Brooklyn Park, drain police resources. Minimal licensing requirements can mean that some homes are operated poorly, and police are at these places all the time. They estimate that about half of the city's group homes house older adults with cognitive or medical issues.
- Has the City come up with policies to allow city employees time deal with aging parents? This is needed and would be valued.

Operations & Maintenance Department

- Older property owners need help with snow shoveling/removal, and there are few community resources to help them. (Staff will sometimes go out and clear snow themselves!)
- This department has heavy contact with the public. They answer calls all day (two full-time staff answer phones) and are also out in people's homes and yards.

- Since 2003 they offer a unique arrangement with homeowner associations (HOAs) to the benefit of residents, many of whom are older. HOAs sometimes get to tag onto existing projects, such as a street improvement, and they greatly appreciate that because it is much cheaper than hiring their own contractors directly. (It does cost the City in terms of staff time.)
- They believe it is important to be able to be a resource for people, but "high-touch services stretch us."
- There are opportunities related to trails, such as wayfinding, benches, and lighting, but these cost money.

Recreation & Parks Department

- People in seasonal positions are increasingly older adults, and they are highly valued employees. City staff appreciate their attention to detail and their maturity that allows them to deal with a range of situations that might arise.
- There is the question of a volunteer coordinator, but this is delicate business given the way volunteering is currently structured throughout city departments right now. Volunteering can tricky business. People seem to think a volunteer coordinator could be housed in Community Engagement, but there is not consensus on the issue.
- There may be opportunities to use Recreation on the Go aimed at children to engage older adults who are grandparents and frequently care for grandchildren. Rec on the Go can help build trust through whole families, not just kids. There may be opportunities to be more active right on site at places such as Huntington Apartments.
- Integration and Inclusion Services: What does this look like for older adults? The department needs to address this question.

APPENDICES: Appendix A

Notes from City Department Meetings

CAC Front Desk and Maintenance Staff

- The front desk almost functions like a concierge service, fielding requests and questions on a wide variety of issues.
- There is definite growth in number of older people using the CAC.
- There is a strong customer service dimension to this work.
- Staff try hard to “get a yes” for people or at least move in that direction.
- Participants are required to check in at the front desk for their classes. The City purposely does it that way because they value the personal contact with people.
- Brooklyn Park offers a lot compared to other community centers, and the staff are a big part of what make it special.

APPENDICES: Appendix B

Resident Engagement Details

APPENDIX B: Resident Engagement Details

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	PRIMARY DEMOGRAPHIC	EVENT/PARTNER ORGANIZATION	DATE
Listening session (about 20 people)	Liberian	Organization for Liberians of MN	3/28/18
Table at Dynamic Aging Resource Fair with interactive engagement	Primarily white, many were Senior Adult program participants	City: Recreation & Parks	4/11/18
Focus group—range of ages (10 people)	SE Asian, mostly Hmong and Lao	City: organized by Community Engagement and CM Susan Pha	4/24/18
Presentation and group discussion	Variety	City: Community Assembly event	4/26/18
Listening session/open house	Senior Adult program participants, primarily white	City: Recreation & Parks	4/30/18
Listening session/open house	Senior Adult program participants, primarily white	City: Recreation & Parks	5/10/18
Focus group with Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers through CEAP (9 people)	White	CEAP	5/11/18
Interview with two individuals (Pat)	Black	N/A	6/18/18
Focus group in partnership with Hennepin County Public Health (about 13)	Lao	Lao Assistance Center of MN	7/19/18
Focus group (10 people)	White senior housing residents	Tradition (rental senior housing)	8/1/18
Focus group (10-15 people)	Black senior housing residents (most not Liberian or other W African immigrants)	Brooks Landing (rental senior housing)	9/11/18
Focus group (8-10 people) in partnership with Hennepin County Public Health	Hispanic/Latinx residents of varying ages	Eden Park Apartments	9/18/18
Focus group (8 people)	White	SummerCrest Condominiums	10/9/18

APPENDICES: Appendix C

Key Stakeholder Engagement

APPENDIX C: Key Stakeholder Engagement

NAME	ORGANIZATION	SECTOR	DATE
Kay King	Older Adults Program Coordinator and Community Educator, NAMI MN	Mental health	4/3/18
Clare Brumback	Executive Director, CEAP	Nonprofit/social services	4/3/18
Brad Kerschner	Director of Programs, CEAP	Nonprofit/social services	4/3/18
Lyla Pagels	Coordinator, Faith Community Nurse Program, Mercy Hospital/Allina	Healthcare	5/8/18
Noella Fath-Cutter	Adult Learning Coordinator, Anoka-Hennepin Community Ed	Community Education	5/17/18
Anne-Marie Bartlett	Quality in Living Specialist, Saint Therese at Oxbow Lake	Senior housing	6/8/18
Mary Synstelien	Member of parish council, St Alphonsus Catholic Church	Faith community	6/13/18
Sunny Chanthanouvong (and other LACM staff)	Executive Director, Lao Assistance Center of MN	Non-profit/immigrant services	6/25/18
Arthur Biah	President & CEO, Liberian Health Initiative; Special Investigator/ Nurse Evaluator, MN Department of Health	Non-profit/immigrant health services	6/30/18
Renee Cardarelle	Associate Executive Director, Lao Assistance Center of MN	Non-profit/social services	7/8/18
Kumba Kanu	Founder, Sierra Leone Nurses Association; Certified Nurse Practitioner, Park Nicollet	Non-profit/immigrant health services	7/20/18
Emily O'Connor	Coordinating Librarian, Adult Services, Hennepin County Library	Library	7/20/18
Melissa Henderson	Marketing and Enrichment Coordinator, Osseo Area Schools	Community Education	7/23/18
Brenda Kennelly	Clinic Manager, Brooklyn Park, Hennepin Healthcare	Healthcare	7/24/18
Emilia Jackson	Community Health Worker, Brooklyn Park, Hennepin Healthcare	Healthcare	7/24/18
Paula	Community Health Worker, Brooklyn Park, Hennepin Healthcare	Healthcare	7/24/18
Candice Bartelle	Admissions Representative, North Hennepin Community College	Education	7/29/18
Jennifer Olson	Director of Community Relations, Tradition	Senior housing	8/1/18
Zenobia Carson	Office Administrator & Event Planner, Creekside Gables	Senior housing	8/8/18
Beth Lelonek	Director of Sales and Marketing, Waterford Living	Senior housing	9/17/18
Mary Rooney	Director of Community Relations, Waterford Living	Senior housing	9/17/18
Paul Metzler	Executive Director, Saint Therese at Oxbow Lake	Senior housing	9/24/18
Diane Dickmeyer	Robbinsdale Area Schools	Community Education	10/3/18
Advisory Board	BP Business Forward	Business association	11/9/18
Kylie Ryan	Registered dietician, Hy-Vee	Retail/grocer	12/4/2018
Brooklyn Park Lions Club	Community/Lions members	Community group	11/5/18

APPENDICES: Appendix D

City Department Engagement

APPENDIX D: City Department Engagement

EVENT / GROUP / DEPARTMENT	DATE
Kickoff Meeting – cross-departmental: Kaela Dickens, Kathy Fraser (CLIC), Cory Funk, Gretchen Garman (Hennepin County Public Health), Gina Magstadt, Todd Seitz, Josie Shardlow, Jay Stroebel, Jody Yungers, Dan Zelazny	2/15/18
Community Long-range Improvement Commission (CLIC) meeting	7/12/18
Manager-level staff meeting (large group, cross-departmental)	6/19/18
Joint Commissions and Council meeting	8/6/18
Rec and Parks: Don Berry, Eve Burlingame, Pat Busch, Greg Hoag, Jen Gillard, Pat Milton, Steve Gulenchyn, Michelle Margo, Pam McBride, Marc Ofsthun, Mark Palm, Brad Tullberg, Jody Yungers	8/7/18
Community Development: Bruce Bloxham, Kim Berggren, Erik Hanson, Keith Jullie, Jason Newby, Al Peterson, Gail Trenholm	8/10/18
Police and Fire departments: John Cunningham, Craig Enevoldsen, Jeff St. Martin, Todd Seitz	8/14/18
Operations and Maintenance: Dan Ruiz, Steve Nauer, Greg Hoag, Jon Watson	10/17/18
CAC Front Desk and Maintenance Staff: Pam Neuman, Mike Oravez, Mark Palm, Wayne Roehrich, Randi Schmidt	10/25/18
Administration and Finance: Jeanette Boit-Kania, Claudia Diggs, Chris Kuecker, Janis Lajon, Xp Lee, Linda Mozis, Josie Shardlow, Xai Vue, Joe Wulfing	10/29/18

APPENDICES: Appendix E

Task Force on Aging Recommendations

APPENDIX E: Task Force on Aging Recommendations

An effort of the Community Long-Range Improvement Commission (CLIC)¹⁴, the citizen-led Task Force on Aging developed the following conclusions and recommendations to the City of Brooklyn Park in 2015. The Task Force's work is an important foundation for the current age-friendly efforts and is referenced earlier in this report.

Becoming an Age-Friendly City August 2015

The Task Force on Aging was charged by the CLIC (Citizens Long-Range Improvement Committee) to review issues, assess resources, identify gaps and offer to assist the city when addressing the changing and aging demographics within Brooklyn Park.

Four themes kept resurfacing throughout the study:

1. It is difficult to define who is "senior." The Task Force defined seniors as persons over 50 years of age. The terms seniors, aging and 50+ are used intermittently throughout this report.
2. Many communities have already accomplished similar studies, developed policies and programs addressing the aging population in their areas. The Task Force utilized existing data and tools to help us locally.
3. Brooklyn Park has many good things going for seniors yet the areas needing improvement will require long term commitment and vision. Services need to be able to adapt with the diverse cultures and needs of seniors. Existing services such as those available through the Senior Center, Parks and Rec, and CAC will need to expand or enhance their capacity as this population increases.
4. The Task Force adopted the philosophy that when a community enhances and respects the lives of its youth and seniors the lives of all other age groups are more enhanced and respected.

The Task Force feels that a best practice way for Brooklyn Park to address concerns for seniors is to use the vision, tools and policies that already exist with the Age Friendly City initiative. By adopting these best practices, the lives of all age groups in Brooklyn Park will be enhanced and respected.

An Age Friendly City initiative is a comprehensive effort to prepare the world's urban centers for an increasingly older adult population. Age friendly cities optimize opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as people grow older.

The City of Brooklyn Park does currently have many strengths, as outlined below:

Community and Civic Participation

- Many opportunities for involvement through volunteer groups, city commissions/committees and Recreation and Parks Department
- Community Cafes hosting by city on important or trending issues
- Community Engagement Initiative
- City website, Get Up and Go brochure and Park Pages provided information on current activities and volunteer opportunities
- Nextdoor.com the Neighborhood Initiative, and National Night Out offer community building opportunities and connections

¹⁶CLIC has since been renamed the Community Long-range Improvement Commission.

APPENDICES: Appendix E

Task Force on Aging Recommendations

Housing

- City offers a variety of housing options in independent living, assisted living and subsidized housing.
- Range of housing prices and types are available, however limited in supply.

Public Spaces and Transportation

- Many existing parks in the city park system, as well as Three Rivers Parks
- New library to open in 2016
- Existing Senior Center, CAC, and Recreation and Parks Department
- Some transportation options in Metro Mobility, local bus system and taxi

Health and Social Services

- Hennepin County Service Center is on the border of Brooklyn Park
- City currently has medical clinics within city limits that offer general/basic medical care
- Four hospitals near the City of Brooklyn Park
- Recreation and Parks/CAC offer a fitness center
- Many of the existing private health clubs within the city offer senior fitness options
- Community offers some free meal services

The committee is making recommendations to the city to ensure effective planning for the dramatic demographic changes that are happening within the senior community.

The initiatives of an Age-Friendly City address:

- Transportation
- Outdoor spaces and building
- Community support and health services
- Communication and information
- Civic participation and employment
- Respect and social inclusion
- Social participation
- Housing
- Healthcare

Goals of an Age-Friendly City:

- Empower individuals as they age to live independently and vibrantly.
- Support communities as they foster quality of life and community connectedness in a manner that meets the wide-ranging needs and preferences of older individuals and their families.
- Ensure that city planning and city funded programs are responsive to the needs and preferences of older residents and are designed to support their lifestyles and choices.

The Task Force identified that many established services and resources are available for Brooklyn Park's aging population to utilize or participate in. The Task Force did identify three major areas for improvement where gaps currently have a negative impact on the lives of our 50+ population:

1. Seniors of all ages have limited awareness of their resources and have an extremely difficult time understanding, navigating and accessing departments, services and their policies.
2. Existing and new development needs to implement more age friendly standards when trying to accommodate growing needs and desires of the changing and aging population.
3. Seniors have great difficulty accessing transportation when it becomes desirable for them to reduce dependence on their automobiles.

APPENDICES: Appendix E

Task Force on Aging Recommendations

The Task Force is recommending the following:

1. Appoint a staff member and an advisory group to ensure a commitment to the citizens in regard to communication, programming, resource development and accessibility.

Ensure the group is reflective our culturally diverse community. A City appointed staff member with the support of the advisory group would manage the vision and goals of the Age Friendly initiative on an on-going basis. This position would be a point of contact to:

- Conduct on-going community assessment to determine age friendliness and cultural responsiveness.
- Ensure coordination of existing and new services with the community. This would include transportation, housing, health, recreation, volunteerism and social services.
- Identify opportunities in future programs or development to include age friendly initiatives (i.e. transportation options, healthcare services, design elements, business development, housing types, and recreational programs).

2. Establish a resource center (HUB). This would be a one stop shop resource for ease in disseminating information.

3. Review all housing and business development and redevelopment for opportunities to be age friendly. Future development/redevelopment planning is critical. City and staff need to be keenly aware of how future development will impact the residents. This is an opportunity for them to build into the new and redevelopment projects age friendly initiatives. This will be most important when reviewing upcoming transportation initiatives and future housing, healthcare and business development.

4. Address lack of and/or difficulty accessing transportation options for the short term as well as plan for the long term.

Lack of convenient, accessible and affordable transportation is a key issue facing the city today. While the possibility of the LRT coming through Brooklyn Park is on the horizon there is a direct need for immediate increased transportation options such as more frequent buses, more convenient routes, and alternative forms of transportation in cabs and ride sharing.

The 50+ population is a vibrant, talented, engaged demographic. The Task Force reviewed and suggested goals and recommendations in the following areas:

- Community and Civic Participation
- Housing
- Public Space and Transportation
- Health and Social Services

This is an approach used by the Age Friendly Initiative and is outlined in the attached power point. This information can be used as a guide and resource for the proposed Advisory Committee or identified staff to understand and address the needs and desires of the changing and aging population of Brooklyn Park.

In addition to the PowerPoint presentation, attached is a checklist for essential features in an age friendly city. City staff, the planning commission and developers should review the checklist to ensure whenever possible key features are being incorporated into all future development and redevelopment as appropriate.

APPENDICES: Appendix F

WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Network

APPENDIX F: WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Network: To join or not to join?

As a result of the Task Force on Aging's work, CLIC recommended that the City of Brooklyn Park become a certified age-friendly city by 2020. This referred to the WHO/AARP Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. To clarify, there is only membership in the network; there is no certification or designation of age-friendliness (a common misperception). A city that joins the network commits to a process and to be accountable for taking steps and demonstrating work through that process.

Joining the network involves the following steps over the course of five years:

Step 1: Complete an application and provide a mayoral letter of commitment.

Step 2: Conduct a community assessment of older adult needs.

Step 3: Create a three-year action plan.

Step 4: Implement the plan and evaluate progress.

Step 5: Refine as needed and continue the work. (Ongoing work makes this a cycle of continuous improvement.)

Brooklyn Park has already completed Step 2, which is significant, and would be poised to begin Step 3 of creating an action plan.

As the City decides whether to make this commitment, here are some considerations:

Benefits:

- Network membership can lend legitimacy or cachet to the work and officially put Brooklyn Park on the map of age-friendly communities. It could also help recruit community partners to participate, although cities can demonstrate their commitment and seriousness in other ways.
- There is no financial commitment involved in joining. Cities can undertake this work as they are able, and in many places' grassroots teams of community members and organizations lead the work. While cities do often invest some funds in the work—which certainly makes more possible—part of the idea is that many changes or improvements can be made at low cost.

Possible drawbacks:

- Committing to the process attaches set timelines and deliverables to the work. This structure can help keeping the work focused and moving and ensure that a thorough process is being followed. Some communities and initiative leaders find this beneficial or even necessary. However, if a city's work has enough substance, momentum, and leadership commitment already, the network structure and requirements may not be needed to drive the effort and can become another aspect of the work that needs to be managed. Many communities are doing this type of work—and doing it well—without joining the network.

Additional points:

- There is no funding support tied to membership. AARP offers occasional grant opportunities for such work, but any community is eligible to apply for and be awarded grant funding, not only network members.
- Resources on age-friendly communities through WHO and AARP are available to any community, not only network members.

APPENDIX G

Voice from the City's Diverse Senior Population: A Report on Brooklyn Park's Recreation and Parks Adult & Senior Adult Programs

**CITY OF BROOKLYN PARK'S RECREATION AND PARKS
ADULT & SENIOR ADULT PROGRAMS**

VOICES FROM THE CITY'S DIVERSE SENIOR POPULATION
A PROJECT WITH HENNEPIN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
OVERVIEW OF FOCUS GROUPS	5
FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT SURVEY QUESTIONS	6
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS AND LISTENING SESSIONS	7
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FOCUS GROUP RESULTS	9
ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS	10
APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS & LISTENING SESSIONS	11

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, Brooklyn Park's Park and Recreation Adult & Senior Adult Programs began a partnership with Hennepin County Public Health (HCPH) through a Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) contract. Through collaboration with local public health and city and community-led improvements, SHIP is working to create healthier communities across Minnesota by expanding opportunities for active living, healthy eating and tobacco-free living.

The goal of this partnership was to gather input from the 50+ community in Brooklyn Park on their needs, desires, gaps, challenges and barriers to accessing and/or participating in physical activity opportunities through Brooklyn Park's Recreation and Parks Adult & Senior Adult Programs. There was a specific focus on Brooklyn Park's diverse racial and ethnic populations.

Located in the suburban northwest outer ring of Hennepin County, the City of Brooklyn Park is a diverse community with populations of color being 54% of the population.¹⁷ The 50+ community makes us almost one third, or 27% of the city's population.¹⁸

Below is physical activity and social connectedness data from Hennepin County's 2014 Survey of the Health of All the Population and Environment (SHAPE) results for the Northwest outer ring suburbs 50+ population.

SHAPE is series of surveys collecting information on the health of residents in Hennepin County and the factors that affect their health across a broad range of topics. It is administered every four years and helps in understanding how healthy residents are, examine differences in health among different communities, and understand how social factors such as income, education, and employment affect health.

Knowing that zip code and social factors are indicators of population's health, it is important to consider this data while examining the health of the 50+ population in Brooklyn Park, with a close look at residents physical activity and social connectedness.

¹⁷ Metropolitan Council, Community Profiles. Population by Race and Ethnicity in Brooklyn Park. ACS 2012-2016. Available at <https://stats.metc.state.mn.us/profile/detail.aspx?c=R11000#POPRACTEETH>. (Accessed 11/7/18).

¹⁸ Metropolitan Council, Community Profiles. Population by Age and Gender in Brooklyn Park. ACS 2012-2016. Available at <https://stats.metc.state.mn.us/profile/detail.aspx?c=R11000#POPAGEGENDER>. (Accessed 11/7/18).

*Physical activity among residents 50 and older**

	# of participants that responded Yes	Percentage that responded Yes
<i>Any leisure time physical activity</i>	432	86%
<i>Sufficiently active, moderate/vigorous</i>	387	79%

*Social Connectedness**

How often are you involved in school, community, or neighborhood activities?

	Among 50-64		Among 65 and older	
	# of participants	Percentage	# of participants	Percentage
<i>Weekly</i>	75	27%	71	33%
<i>Monthly</i>	33	11%	25	11%
<i>Several times a year</i>	67	27%	34	14%
<i>About once a year</i>	39	12%	31	12%
<i>Less often than yearly</i>	23	6%	22	9%
<i>Never</i>	54	17%	52	21%

How often do you get together or talk with friends or neighbors?

	Among 50-64		Among 65 and older	
	# of participants	Percentage	# of participants	Percentage
<i>Daily</i>	104	33%	109	46%
<i>Weekly</i>	128	44%	90	40%
<i>Monthly</i>	32	12%	11	3%
<i>Less often than monthly</i>	25	10%	24	10%
<i>Never</i>	2	1%	2	0.4%

People in this neighborhood are willing to help one another.

	Among 50-64		Among 65 and older	
	# of participants	Percentage	# of participants	Percentage
<i>Strongly agree</i>	137	52%	110	48%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	126	40%	112	48%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	22	7%	11	4%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	5	1%	3	1%

**Includes: Brooklyn Park, Champlin, Corcoran, Dayton, Hanover, Hassan Township, Maple Grove, Medicine Lake, Osseo, Plymouth, Rogers*

OVERVIEW OF FOCUS GROUPS

Below are the locations where focus groups were held in Brooklyn Park, as well as a complete overview of the focus group participants, results from participant survey questions, highlights of focus groups' key findings, recommendations, and a summary of key findings from the focus groups and listening sessions.

<i>Focus Group Sites</i>	Date of Focus Group	Race/Ethnicity of Participants	# of Participants
<i>Creekside Gables Apartments</i>	5/23/18	African American (1), Hispanic (1)	2
<i>Lao Assistance Center of MN (LACM)</i>	7/19/18	Laotian (15)	15
<i>Organization of Liberians in MN (OLM)</i>	7/18/18	Liberian (9)	9
<i>Brook's Landing Apartments</i>	9/11/18	African American (8), Liberian (2), Indian & Nigerian (1), White (1)	12
<i>Eden Park Apartments</i>	9/18/18	Hispanic/Latinx (7), Black or African American (1)	8

- Number of participants who completed the survey: 46
 - Female participants: 34 or 74%
 - Male participants: 12 or 26%
- Age range: 40-86
 - Average age: 64
- City of residence: 91% of participants live in Brooklyn Park
- Range of years living in Brooklyn Park: 1.5-26 years
 - Average length of time living in Brooklyn Park: 12 years

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT SURVEY QUESTIONS

Physical Activity

<i>In an average week, how many days do you walk or engage in other physical activity?</i>	# of Participants	Percentage
<i>0 days per week</i>	4	9%
<i>1-2 days per week</i>	5	11%
<i>3-4 days per week</i>	10	22%
<i>5-6 days per week</i>	8	17%
<i>7 days per week</i>	19	41%

Social Connectedness

<i>How often do you feel isolated from others?</i>	# of Participants	Percentage
<i>Hardly ever</i>	22	48%
<i>Some of the time</i>	19	41%
<i>Often</i>	4	9%
<i>Never</i>	1	2%

<i>How often do you get the social and emotional support you need?</i>	# of Participants	Percentage
<i>Always</i>	19	41%
<i>Usually</i>	5	11%
<i>Sometimes</i>	18	39%
<i>Rarely</i>	0	0%
<i>Never</i>	4	9%

<i>How often do you get together or talk with friends or neighbors?</i>	# of Participants	Percentage
<i>Daily</i>	26	57%
<i>Weekly</i>	15	33%
<i>Monthly</i>	1	2%
<i>Less often than monthly</i>	3	7%
<i>Never</i>	1	2%

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS AND LISTENING SESSIONS

Notes: For detailed results from each individual focus group, please see Appendix A: Summary of Key Findings from the Focus Groups and Listening Session, starting on page 11.

Activities:

- Aging looks different for people of different ages. What a 50-year-old is interested in and able to do might be similar or different from a 70-year-old.
- Being an active, older adult is a combination of being physically and socially active, maintaining independence and being connected to one's cultural and faith activities.
- The majority of participants are not aware of Brooklyn Park's Park & Recreation Adult & Senior Adult Programs or the Get Up & Go magazine.
 - Participants who are aware of the magazine either cannot read it because English is not their first language or are overwhelmed by it and discard it.
- Activities participants wished the City of Brooklyn Park would offer include: walking; swimming; Zumba/dance; English classes; computer classes; cooking and baking classes; CPR classes; volunteer opportunities; and crocheting, knitting, sewing, embroidering classes.
 - Participants want activities that include the whole family and that are held at their apartment, cultural organization they are members of and/or neighborhood based.

Social participation:

- Socializing and connecting through one's place of faith (church or temple) is important.
- Participants who are members of an organization such as LACM or OLM rely on these groups for their social connectivity and learning about what is going on in their immediate community and the city.
- More than one focus group expressed a need for a community gathering space in Brooklyn Park in order to host culturally relevant activities and/or events, as well as to just gather and socialize.
 - The community gathering space needs to be a trusted, multi-generational place.
 - Participants are not aware of community gathering spaces already available in Brooklyn Park or how to use/reserve those spaces.

Access:

- All participants expressed that transportation is the number one barrier for participating in activities.
- The majority of participants from all cultural groups are dependent on their family and friends for transportation.
- Some participants walk or use their scooters to move around their neighborhood but that is often dependent on their health status, distance of activity and weather.

- A minority of participants use Metro Transit. Laotian seniors were less likely to use Metro Transit than any of the other participants groups.
- Challenges the participants experience in accessing activities include: cost, not understanding how to register and participate due to language differences, the location/distance of the activity, providing weekday childcare for grandchildren and the activities are not family-focused.

Communication and awareness:

- Participants, who are members of an organization such as LACM or OLM, learn about activities through word-of-mouth, phone calls, text alerts and the organizations' staff.
- Participants want to learn about activities through senior friendly flyers that can be shared through their place of faith, apartment building, and community leaders.

What will improve the quality of life for the aging in Brooklyn Park?

- Convenient, reliable transportation.
- Communication about activities is available in their language, as well as make sure the activities have staff and/or volunteers who can speak their language.

Additional information:

- The Minnesota Laotian interpretation of 'senior' is different from the Western interpretation. They do not identify with '50+'. An 'elder' is considered a first-generation immigrant who might be as young as 40 years old but is more connected to the Laotian culture and language.
- Elder isolation in the Lao community is a big issue. Adult daycare centers are becoming more common, but they are private, therefore expensive and you must have qualified insurance to cover the participant.
- Lao elders are aging in place with their adult children and their children's families. They experience mental health issues that stem from depression, their children not being successful, future finances, and trauma from immigration.
- Throughout all the cultural groups, there are residents who, daily, do not leave their apartment or apartment building and are very isolated.
- Many seniors rely on their adult children and grandchildren to help them understand, participate in and access neighborhood and city activities.
- When planning for inclusivity in activities, there is not a one-size fits all approach to including the diverse senior populations in Brooklyn Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

1. **Continued conversation and exploration.** Build off the relationships that have been developed through this project with the Lao, African-born, African-American and Hispanic/Latinx communities. Develop a 2019 plan to:
 - Share this report with the four cultural communities and community partners.
 - Explore further unanswered questions and/or next step ideas.
2. **Adult & Senior Adult Programming.** Take programming out into the neighborhoods.
 - Facilitate programs that different cultural groups are interested in and that the whole family can participate in.
 - Provide opportunities outside of physical activities. Opportunities where seniors can connect socially, as well as provide a learning/educational opportunity.
 - Hold programs at apartment buildings, trusted community gathering spaces, parks, etc.
3. **Transportation.** Explore further the transportation barriers seniors in Brooklyn Park experience.
 - Look at all modes of transportation – Metro Transit, walking, biking, using scooters, shared rides, etc.
 - Consider cost, accessibility, language of information, reliability, etc.
 - Provide educational opportunities on how to use the various modes of transportation to move around Brooklyn Park, accessing activities and services specific to the diverse senior populations.
 - Partner with local community-based organizations, cultural organizations, places of faith, etc. to identify possible solutions.
4. **Cultural expertise.** The city does not have to be the expert. The city can also play a facilitative role.
 - Provide physical space and opportunities in neighborhoods and the city where cultural groups can gather and hold activities and/or events.
5. **Marketing and communication.** Research and develop new communication tools and channels to reach the diverse senior populations in Brooklyn Park.
 - Always keep in mind age, language, reading ability, and where residents reside.
 - Utilize current groups to help communicate, such as established cultural organizations, places of faith, CEAP/Meals on Wheels, clinics, etc.
 - Consider culturally specific social media, radio, TV or newspaper as communication options.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Adult & Senior Adult Program budget.** Consider budgetary options and opportunities to provide free and/or reduced cost programming for disparate populations who cannot participate due to financial constraints.
2. **Resource Fair.** Host an annual resource fair intended for the diverse senior cultural groups in Brooklyn Park.
 - Organize a planning committee with leaders and volunteers from each of the cultural groups to identify the resources, classes, and activities that would form the resource fair.
3. **Health-in-All Policies approach.** As the City of Brooklyn Park considers its broader age-friendly strategy, including how that will be reflected in city policy and implemented, participate in a Health-in-All-Policies presentation and resources from Hennepin County Public Health.
4. **Measurement and evaluation.** Develop goals and tools to assess, measure and evaluate the impact and reach of any improvements or changes that are made.
 - Identify and include qualitative measures, such as participant impact stories and photos.

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS & LISTENING SESSIONS**Creekside Gables Apartments***Activities:*

- Aging looks different for different people of different ages. What a 50-year-old is interested in and able to do might be similar or different from a 70-year-old.
- Activities of interest: quilting, crocheting, using computers, vegetable canning, field trips, apartment activities
- Activities they wished the City of Brooklyn Park would offer: walks to nearby parks, sit and relax in

Social participation:

- Participants mentioned that when they are identifying places for their family to gather, they look outside the City of Brooklyn Park.
- Stay connected through their job.

Access:

- Transportation is the number one barrier for participating in activities.
- Roads and intersections are busy and unsafe for seniors.

Communication and awareness:

- Participants want to learn about activities/opportunities in Brooklyn Park through flyers and their apartment's monthly resident calendar.

What will improve the quality of life for the aging in Brooklyn Park?

- When asked where they see themselves in 5-10 years, neither participant indicated they see themselves living in Brooklyn Park.
- Participants expressed concerns about not being able to stay busy or engaged, leaving their home.
- Participants also express concerns about feeling unsafe and observing crime near the shopping plaza on Brooklyn Boulevard (that includes Aldi, Family Dollar, a pizza restaurant and other establishments).
- Participants value services offered through the Community Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP).

Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota (LACM)*Activities:*

- Physical activities: men play tennis (at Noble Sports Park, Park Center High School, and Central Park); golf; kawtwara; perform traditional dances at the Temple, Festival of

Nations, and LACM events; exercise at LA Fitness; walk and bike outdoors in the summer; exercise inside during winter.

- Other activities: women enjoy socializing (talking and sharing), fishing, gardening, going to Temple, volunteering at Lao Advance, picnicking by lakes or backyard
- Everyone grocery shops at the farmers market on Zane and 92nd, as well as Dragon Star and Sun Food. The Zane farmers market is bigger, and they like it better.
- Activities they wished the City of Brooklyn Park would offer: walking, Tai Chi, swimming programs, Lao water aerobics

Social participation:

- Participants connect with family and friends via email, Facebook, letters, in person conversations, phone calls and through being involved at LACM.
- On separate occasions, the director of LACM and a participant expressed a need for a community gathering space in Brooklyn Park to hold culturally relevant activities/events and to just gather and socialize.
 - Space needs to be a trusted place for people to gather and multi-generational
 - Seniors do not know how to reserve rooms via the library or city hall.

Access:

- Many participants receive rides from family members.
- If the activity/event/appointment is close, they walk.
- Some drive or call for a car service.
- No one takes bus or taxis because they do not understand how to catch the bus or how to read the schedule. If they understood, they would go. There was an interest in participating in a Metro Transit class.
- Challenges for participating in activities/events: money/no job, taking care of grandkids, language barriers, and location/distance.

Communication and awareness:

- Awareness of Brooklyn Park's Park & Recreation Adult & Senior Adult Programs: most participants said they have no awareness of this department or programs. Some do see the Get Up and Go magazine but discard it away because they cannot read it.
- Participants communicate through Facebook, word-of-mouth, phone calls, staff from LACM – one-on-one and via alert texts (but they do not text back and forth, just receive the texts).

What will improve the quality of life for the aging in Brooklyn Park?

- More security – more patrols near Brooklyn Boulevard, behind Bowlero.
- Gym or exercise space, swimming pool and classes.
- Lao language classes, especially for the youth.

- Participants enjoy going to LACM to learn about resources, programming and volunteering.
- They would like to be able to go to the Temple and fundraising parties and festivals more easily. The Temple is also a place where elders can receive information/learn what is happening in Brooklyn Park.

Additional information:

- The Minnesota Laotian interpretation of 'senior' is different from the Western interpretation. They do not identify with '50+'. 'Elder' is considered first generation immigrants who might be as young as 40 years old but are more tied to the Lao language and culture.
- Elder isolation in the Lao community is a big issue. There is adult day care, but it is private, and you have to qualify for it.
- Elders are aging in place with their adult children and their children's families.
- They have mental health issues that stem from depression, children not being successful, future finances, trauma from immigration.
- Core services are missing them.
- Middle-aged Lao people also experience stress. Many are immigrants and caring for their elderly parents with no support.

Organization of Liberians in Minnesota (OLM)

Activities:

- Being an active adult means: moving around, jogging, going to church, not being dependent on anybody, swimming, Walk With Ease class, visiting with their sister, walking their grandson to the park.
- Other activities: sewing, jogging, walking to the library.
- Activities they wished the City of Brooklyn Park would offer: small gym at Brook's Landing with an instructor providing classes, social activities such as cooking and baking classes' senior yoga, movie nights, singing together, English classes, knitting and sewing, organized field trip to the Mall of America.

Social participation:

- Residents want to connect and socialize in a non-living environment.

Access:

- Residents move around by city bus, their church provides bus services to and from church only, walk to the library for using the computer.

- Do not feel transportation is reliable. Metro Mobility does not bring them to places they want to go to. In general, they know how the city bus system works.
- Mentioned that there are many people who live in different places and want to socialize but are limited by transportation.
- Stressed that their number one challenge for participating in any type of activity is transportation.

Communication and awareness:

- Awareness of Brooklyn Park's Park & Recreation Adult & Senior Adult Programs: nobody was aware of programs except for the Walk With Ease program that Brooklyn Park's Park and Recreation, Department Adult & Senior Adult Programs is piloting with OLM.
- Learn about Brooklyn Park activities/events through church, friends, their community leaders, television, computer at the library.
- Participants would like to learn about Brooklyn Park activities/events through their leaders, newspapers/Star Tribune, younger community members (for elders who cannot read), and OLM.

What will improve the quality of life for the aging in Brooklyn Park?

- More computer knowledge, social activities, having a representative from the Liberian community at the Hennepin County Northwest Human Service Center, and accessible and affordable housing.

Additional information:

This additional information was learned from another listening session with OLM in May 2018 -

- Activities participants are interested in: cooking classes; learning how to knit, sew, embroidery; basic computer classes; read, write and speak American English.
- Transportation: some participants walk, most received rides from family and friends.
- What would improve their quality of life in Brooklyn Park? Better transportation - more buses, more convenient bus stops.

Brook's Landing Apartments

Activities:

- Being an active adult means: independence, being alive, being able to get things done, your part of civic community, moving around, jogging, going to church, not just sitting at home.
- Physical activities: fishing, making coffee for the community room, cooking and cleaning in the kitchen.
- Other activities: socializing with neighbors and friends, bingo, crocheting, playing cards, going to adult daycare. As a grandfather, go to the school for grandkids activities.

- Awareness of Brooklyn Park's Park & Recreation Adult & Senior Adult Programs: nobody was aware
- Activities they wished the City of Brooklyn Park would offer: how to use a computer, cooking and baking classes, physical activity instructor for seniors, sewing activities. Participants also expressed they would like these activities offered in their apartment building.

Social participation:

- Participants expressed that a big part of how they identify with their cultural community is through their church.

Access:

- Transportation is a barrier because it is not reliable, especially in the winter. Not everyone has access to Metro Mobility and public transportation is not a solution for most elderly people. Some participants do ride the local bus.
- Participants shared that some residents in the building use scooters and they even go to activities or run errands using their scooter when the weather is nice. Some participants walk. People would like a shuttle for Walmart, Cub, Walgreens, etc.

Communication and awareness:

- Participants learn about activities through flyers and booklets. Some do see the Get Up and Go magazine, but it is too much information, they do not read, throw away it away.
- Participants want senior friendly flyers. They do look at notices. See some updates on their building's community bulletin board.
- There is limited use of social media.

Additional information:

- Participants shared that most elderly residents do not often leave the apartment building. They hang out with friends and neighbors all day. Participants want more activities that are organized.

Eden Park Apartments

Activities:

- Being an active adult: gardening (Eden Park garden), having [community] space to go to and talk (many participants agreed), cooking classes, attending English classes (many participants agreed), helping in their neighborhood, volunteering.
- Physical activities: walking to and around the park, gardening, weight lifting. Participating in activities with a group were liked more, noting the importance of socializing.

- Other activities: church, volunteering, caring for grandchildren. Many [households] rely on one car per family and the person who works uses the car. Participants shared that many people from their community hold 2-3 jobs. Older adults depend on their kids to drive them places.
- Awareness of Brooklyn Park's Park & Recreation Adult & Senior Adult Programs: four participants said they have seen the catalog but do not understand it or what is in it because they do not speak English.
- Activities they wished the City of Brooklyn Park would offer: walking with a group, Zumba, dance, knitting and embroidering, CPR class, cooking classes, English classes, volunteer opportunities. Participants want activities that connect parents with kids, family activities.

Social participation:

- Activities: going to church, social activities, volunteering in their neighborhood.
- What do you need to be able to be connected socially in Brooklyn Park? Transportation, soccer games for men (comment by one male participant).

Access:

- Participants get to activities by bus, walking, depend on their children, their husband drives them.
- Challenges they have participating in activities: they depend on their daughter to go out (said one of the oldest participants), not speaking English is a barrier, cost, transportation, not knowing what is available, need activities for the whole family/neighborhood to socialize and connect.

Communication and awareness:

- Participants shared that they do not know what is happening in the city or where to find information.
- They want to learn about activities through a flyer, word-of-mouth, text message and invitation in Spanish. The activity or event needs to have staff/volunteers who speak Spanish.

What will improve the quality of life for the aging in Brooklyn Park?

- Decreasing barriers, such as language and transportation. Send invitations in Spanish. If information about city activities/events is in English, participants think it is only for the "Anglo" community.

Additional information:

This additional information was learned from an interview with a Latina staff member at Zanewood Teen Center. She was asked to provide her perspective on seniors in her Hispanic/Latinx community.

- Most grandparents do not work and are taken care of by their children and family.
- Grandchildren often translate conversations and written documents for their parents and grandparents.
- The staff member did not know about the concept of a retirement home. She thinks this is a cultural thing and would not place her parents or grandparents in a retirement home.
- Seniors socialize among family; family gatherings are at parks, near water.
- Immigrant families tend to live more collectively than individually.
- Seniors move around the community through their children or grandchildren driving them, walking or the entire family uses Metro Transit.
- Seniors grocery shop with the family, not individually.
- The best way to communicate city activities or events is through senior friendly flyers.



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February 13, 2019 9:03 PM

City of Brooklyn Park Council Work Session			
Meeting Date:	September 5, 2023	Originating Department:	Fire / Recreation & Parks
Agenda Item:	C.2	Prepared By:	Shawn Conway, Fire Chief Brad Tullberg, Recreation & Parks Director
Agenda Section:	Discussion Items/ General Action Items	Presented By:	Shawn Conway, Brad Tullberg,
Item:	Discuss Central Fire Station Construction and Community Activity Center Improvements		

Summary:

After the July 31 “Big Ticket Item” discussion, staff is seeking guidance on how to proceed with the Central Fire Station construction, Community Activity Center (CAC) improvements and Senior Center project. These projects are interconnected as the direction of the Central Fire Station project will dictate next steps in the CAC and Senior Center projects.

Fire Department Director Chief Conway will present supporting information for the Fire Station infrastructure project in the areas of: proposed project timelines, planning phases, and funding options. The primary focus will be on the Central Fire Station as this project is tied to the development of the Senior Center, with an overview of recommendations for the remaining three stations (East, West and North).

Recreation & Parks Director Tullberg will provide an overview of the potential components of Community Activity Center improvements, project background, usage summaries, project impacts and funding options. The Central Fire Station project directly affects the scope of the CAC improvements project and Senior Center.

City of Brooklyn Park Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission			
Agenda Item:	8.1	Meeting Date:	September 20, 2023
Agenda Section:	Written Reports	Presented By:	Pam McBride, Youth Services Manager; Jen Gillard, Recreation Manager
Recreation & Parks Director Proposed Action	Program and Events Update		

SEPTEMBER 2023

- 5 School year Fusion begins at Zanewood
- 5 Fall hours begin at Historic Eidem Farm
- 5 Stories on the Porch at Historic Eidem Farm
- 5 Henna class begins
- 6 Brooklyn Park Farmers Market at NHCC West Parking Lot
- 6 Concert in the Courtyard at NHCC – Top Flight
- 11 Dance classes begin
- 11 Rec on the Go- Huntington and Autumn Ridge begins
- 13 Brooklyn Park Farmers Market at NHCC West Parking Lot
- 13 Concert in the Courtyard at NHCC – Capri Big Band
- 19 Painting on the Farm
- 20 Sewing 101 begins at Lakeland Park
- 20 Cricut class at Hamilton Park
- 20 Brooklyn Park Farmers Market at NHCC West Parking Lot
- 20 Concert in the Courtyard at NHCC – Salsa Del Soul
- 20 AOTM Day Trip – Harmony Amish Tour
- 21 AOTM Oktoberfest Luncheon at Edinburgh USA
- 22 Movie in the Park – Black Panther
- 25 Fall youth sports classes begin
- 27 Brooklyn Park Farmers Market at NHCC West Parking Lot

OCTOBER 2023

- 6 Movie on the Barn at Eidem Farm
- 7 Fall on the Farm at Eidem Farm
- 9 Kids Paint workshop at Eidem Farm
- 10 Good in the Hood food distribution at Zanewood
- 14 LatinoFest at CAC
- 19 Fall Festival Family Craft Day at Zanewood
- 27 Ghostly Gala at CAC
- 28 Spooktacular at Zanewood

Weekly drop-in activities for adults 50+ at the CAC Monday-Friday

Wednesday weekly Tech Support for Seniors at the CAC

Weekly Fitness classes at the CAC Mon/Tues/Wed – additional classes to begin September on Tues/Fri

Weekly drop-in activities for youth and teens at Zanewood Recreation Center Monday-Friday

Program and Event Updates:

Brooklyn Park Youth Outreach Team and Intervention Services

The Brooklyn Park Youth Outreach Team works M-F from 5:00-9:00pm each day in the community connecting young people to resources, redirecting negative energy, sharing positive activities, and working in partnership with police to maintain a safe and healthy community.

Intervention Team is increasing access of Intervention Services with a form that is accessible through a QR code to providers and people supporting young people. This form is used to connect and provide essential services.



Perfect Hues Young Girls group- ages, 13-15 years old, Every Wednesday, 4:30-6:30pm at Zanewood
Perfect Hues Young Women's group- ages 16- 18 year old, every Thursday, 4:30- 6:30pm at Norwood Park

Adult Fitness

Fall sessions of adult fitness classes kicked-off the week of September 11 at the Community Activity Center. This includes our regularly scheduled Monday & Wednesday morning fitness classes, Monday evening afro-beats dance, and Tuesday evening yoga. Additionally, this Fall we have welcomed a new adult fitness instructor: Jenilee Davidson who has began teaching classes on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Jenilee's new classes include Silver Strength & Core, Silver sneakers Classic, and Silver Sneakers dance/Zumba.

Adults on the Move

Recreation & Parks participated in the St Therese at Oxbow Lake Community Fair on August 23. This was a great opportunity where staff made new connections and shared opportunities for programs, fitness, and resources with the community.

September is National Falls Prevention Awareness Month, led by the National Council on Aging. September 13 the Recreation & Parks and Fire Departments hosted a Living Well in Brooklyn Park – From Awareness to Action Seminar, sharing information on Falls Prevention, resources for preventing falls in your home, falls assessment materials, and City department updates. The day had valuable information shared with attendees and great conversation throughout the day.

Landmark Tours will share opportunities for inclusive extended travel services with Brooklyn Park seniors on Monday, September 18. Over the years several Brooklyn Park residents have traveled with Landmark Tours, they continue to bring exciting, unique, fun trips to meet a variety of interests!

Brooklyn Park R&P is partnering with the cities of Brooklyn Center, Crystal, Golden Valley, New Hope, and Robbinsdale for the 4th Annual Oktoberfest Luncheon on Thursday, October 21 at Edinburgh Golf Course. The day will be filled with music, food, and fun!

Foot Care is a new monthly service offered at the Community Activity Center and going very well! 'The Foot Nurse,' Katie Sikel, is a RN that travels to multiple community centers around the metro area offering this service to seniors. Foot care as you age becomes more important – maintaining healthy feet promotes a healthy lifestyle, comfort, mobility, and independence. Foot Care is available on the last Friday of each month, appointments are made directly with Katie.

Day Trips

August 23 was a sold-out trip with 53 attendees to the Chanhassen Dinner Theater to see a matinee performance of *Jersey Boys*.

September 20 a group will travel to Harmony MN for the day to visit an Amish community and enjoy at the Branding Iron in Preston MN.

Weekly Adult Social Groups

Weekly social activity groups continue to renew 2023 yearly membership, with 172 people enrolled in one or more weekly activities. Members have access to 14 activity groups per week. Social activity groups include:

several art/craft groups, cribbage, bingo, poker, Mah Jongh, 65 Rummy, 500 Cards, Dominoes, Scrabble, and a Book Club.

Age-Friendly Communities

Through a grant from Hennepin County staff are working to host listening sessions with two community groups serving BIPOC elders in Brooklyn Park. The goal is to listen to community wants and needs and to gain insight on gaps and barriers to opportunities and services in Recreation & Parks. The grant provides funding to secure two community liaisons to facilitate the engagement events, incentives for participants, food/beverages, and interpretation services.

Events

In partnership with Honored 2 Help, the 2023 Back to School BBQ was a great success. This year there was attendance of over 2,600 and 1,424 backpacks were distributed. The event featured free food, backpack giveaway, inflatables, game truck, local organizations, and a DJ.

Movies in Brooklyn Park

There are three movies scheduled for this year with the first showing at Village Creek Park on September 20 from 7-9pm. Puss in Boots will be showing at the farm on October 6 from 7-9pm and Addams Family 2 is planned for October 22 from 1-3pm at the CAC.

Farmers Market

The farmers market has an average of 650 attendees per day. The market this year features about 20 vendors with products such as produce, candles, wood crafts, honey, baked goods, hair and skin care, and coffee. 2023 is the first year the farmers market is being held at the North Hennepin Community College parking lot on Broadway. So far, the market has had an increase in attendance compared to last year's numbers when the market was held in the old Brooklyn Park library parking lot.

Concert in the Courtyard

Concerts in the Courtyard take place every Wednesday, August 2 – September 20 from 6-7pm after the Farmers Market at North Hennepin Community College Courtyard. The average attendance in August was 25 attendees. Due to heat the August 23 concert was moved indoors to the North Hennepin Fine Arts Center.

Aquatics

Fall aquatics programs kicked-off the week of September 9 with nearly 300 participants and 180 families enrolled in September-October swim programs between Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday program offerings. Offerings included group, private & paired lessons, adaptive aquatics classes, adult lessons, aqua teen classes, and our new Women & Girls only swim class taking place on Monday evenings. Programs are held at the Jackson Middle School pool and the Brooklyn Middle School pool. Fall session one of swim will run through October 31, with the November-December session kicking-off the week of November 4.

Adaptive Recreation/ Inclusion Services:

Fall Adaptive recreation programs will include adaptive aquatics and fitness classes, as well as Reach for Resources programs, including Snacks & Cinema, Non- Competitive Soccer at Park Center High School, and Geocaching & S'mores at the Historic Eidem Farm.

On Wednesday, September 27, Erin Bonikowske, Adaptive Recreation Specialist, and Cassidy Wester, Aquatics & Fitness Specialist, will present at the Minnesota Recreation & Parks Association Conference. The presentation, titled 'Adaptive Aquatics: Make a Splash, Make an Impact', will focus on Brooklyn Park's adaptive aquatics programs and inclusion services within swimming lessons. Cassidy and Erin will discuss the importance of implementing inclusive practices, concepts, and strategies within general aquatics programs, provide an overview and implementation process for Brooklyn Park Adaptive Aquatics programs, and discuss ADA requirements for pools and program access.

Dance

Registration is open for the 2023-24 dance season. New dancers can try classes for free in September before they register for the whole school year. This year is the 50th anniversary of Brooklyn Park Dance. It will also be the 50th anniversary and retirement of our long-time dance coordinator and instructor, Sherry Dease. The dance

teams will be working throughout the season for a special send off performance to recognize her work with Brooklyn Park Dance.

Youth Sports

Fall youth sports and gymnastics classes begin the week of September 25 at Crestview Elementary School and Park Center Senior High School.

Adult Sports

Pickleball is in full swing with use at Norwood and Bass Creek Parks. Play will move indoors at the Community Activity Center in October when the weather turns cold. Adult fall softball league runs August 23-September 21.

Eidem Farm

New fall hours kicked off for Historic Eidem Farm on September 5 and the farm plans to be open regularly Monday-Thursday 9am-12pm and Saturday 9-12pm after construction wraps up on September 25.

Construction is well underway at Historic Eidem Farm, thanks to the Operations and Management crew who have been hard at work breaking ground for the new accessible pathways. Interpretive signage will be installed during the week of September 18. Total daily attendance from June 20-September 9 was 1913 visitors. Many visitors were happy to learn that Stories on the Porch will continue into Fall at 10:30am on Tuesdays.

Upcoming Programs:

September 19: Painting on the Farm-fall tree design

October 3: Painting on the Farm-colorful pumpkin design

October 9: Kids Paint workshop at the Farm

Zanewood Programming

Zanewood Recreation Center offers recreation and youth development programs in a safe and positive environment for kids and teens. Zanewood also offers Outreach, community service, and youth mentoring opportunities delivered by committed and competent community partners.

Zanewood Programs for Grades 6-12

Teen Zone: Free, drop-in program, M-F from 2-8:00pm

ZW Teen open gym: Hoop IT UP! Monday & Wednesdays from 6-8pm

Zanewood Meals program: Free, M-F from 2-5:00pm

TKO Drumline: Practices Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 6-8pm; performance schedule varies

Music Studio: Tuesday's and Thursdays from 4:00-6:00pm- free

Chess Club- September 5- December 19- Monday's and Friday's 4-6:00

Young Adult programming

Young Adult Open gym-Wednesday from 7:00- 9:00. \$3 BP resident/ \$5 non-resident

Youth Entrepreneurship Program- ages 16- 24- June 10, Phase 1: August 23-September 27; Phase 2: October 11-November 15th

Arts and Engagement

"The Wood" podcast launched January 23rd. Please view at brooklynpark.org NEW podcast coming soon.

The Art of Henna class- Tuesdays, September 5- October 24, 5-7:00pm at Norwood Park, Ages 16+

Sewing 101 at Lakeland Park Wednesdays September 20- November 8, 6-8:00pm

Fall Festival Family Craft Day- at Zanewood Rec Center- October 19th from 5:30pm-7:30pm

Citywide Photo contest: Our people, Our Places, Our BP starting July 24th, more info on website

Cricut class – Wednesdays, September 20- October 25th 5:00-7:00pm-adults, Thursdays-TEENS 4:00- 6:00pm starting September 21st

K- 5th grade programming

Fusion Sites: September 12- December 19, ages 5-12- Fall Sites 2023

Zanewood Recreation Center - 7100 Zane Ave North. 4:00- 6:00pm

Rec on the Go: September 12- December 19, ages 5-12- Fall Sites 2023

- Huntington Apartments- 5805 73rd Avenue North Tuesday/ Thursday- 3-6pm
- Autumn Ridge Apts –8516 63rd Ave North- Wednesdays, 4-6pm

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider: N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues: N/A

Attachments:

City of Brooklyn Park Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission

Agenda Item:	8.2	Meeting Date:	September 20, 2023
Agenda Section:	Written Reports	Presented By:	Marcus Hill, Facilities and Parks Manager Greg Hoag, Parks & Building Maintenance Manager
Recreation & Parks Director Proposed Action	Park Project Updates		

Overview:

1. MISSISSIPPI GATEWAY REGIONAL PARK / ENVIRONMENTAL NATURE AREA

Funding Source(s): OSLAD Fund

Project Update:

Development of the Brooklyn Park side of the park includes expansion of the off-leash dog area, relocation of the archery range, addition of a large picnic shelter and restroom facilities along with an expanded parking area is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2023.

The project was advertised for bid beginning February 16, 2023 with bids being due on March 16, 2023. Project contracts were awarded on March 30, 2023. Utility and initial construction is planned to begin during the summer of 2023. Staff have been working on the project so that it will be phased now to allow the dog park to be used throughout most of the project. Construction will continue in 2024 and 2025 and a re-grand opening will be held in 2026. Construction began on April 17, 2023.

New Update

Construction of the maintenance facility is moving along quickly. The foundation work for the Gateway Center is underway so the building can be enclosed before winter.

2. HOMETOWN BALLFIELD at Noble Sports Park (September 2022 – May 2023)

Funding Source(s): Park Bond Reinvestment Project

Project Update: The Hometown Ballfield project was approved at the July 11, 2022 City Council meeting. The city has approved and processed purchase orders to Upper Midwest Athletic Construction (UMAC) and SAAFE. UMAC will prepare all site work except bleachers and press box. SAAFE will construct the bleachers and the press box. Construction began September 15th, 2022.

Construction is substantially complete with a few punch list items remaining. The baseball field held its first game on June 8th and has hosted numerous games and practices since. The community has expressed their gratitude and excitement of the new ball field and would like to have a grand opening when the project is finalized. This event will likely be a partnership between BPAA and the city of Brooklyn Park that will involve a wiffle ball game, food trucks, and much more. The date is TBD but the planning of the grand re-opening is currently happening. Staff are waiting on the installation of turf in the batting cages for the project to be complete.

3. EAB UPDATE

Funding Source(s): Heritage Fund

Project Update: Work will continue in 2023. As part of our ongoing Grant work 50 new trees were planted at Trinity Gardens Park on June 1st.

4. NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Funding Source(s): Park Bond Reinvestment Project & Heritage Fund

Project Update: Staff continues reviewing priorities of the Natural Resource Management Plan. A Five-Year Priority Implementation Plan has been developed by working with Stantec. Work will continue in 2023 in key park areas.

5. COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER IMPROVEMENTS

(2022 planning, 2023-2024 construction)

Funding Source(s): Park Bond Reinvestment Projects

- **COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER**

Project Overview: The plan is to improve the entrance to the facility, create an accessible customer service desk, update bathrooms, and create a welcoming and inviting community center for all customers.

Staff worked with the JLG/292 Design Group to evaluate the possibility of converting one ice arena into three basketball courts. A final concept design was provided to staff in January and refined in February. JLG/292 Design Group provided cost estimates in the range of \$12 - \$15 million for the improvements to the CAC including improved entrances, informal gathering space, relocated office space, improved parking and possible Arena conversion to gym space. The City of Brooklyn Park was awarded \$5 million in state bonding funds during the 2023 Legislative Session to support the improvements to the Community Activity Center.

Project Update: The CAC Improvements project was discussed at the September 5th City Council work session along with the Central Fire Station and Senior Center. The City Council asked for more information about the ice arena operations, as well as other options for a gym facility at the Community Activity Center. Staff will be gathering this information to share with City council at a later date that is not yet determined.

- **SENIOR CENTER (2023 planning, 2023-2024 construction)**

Project Overview: This improvement would add dedicated space for senior programming and adult fitness space. Final design and components will be developed when a final location is determined. The Senior Center is being considered with the CAC improvements and Fire Station projects. If a new Central Fire station is constructed on the site of the former Hennepin County Library, the current Central Fire Station could be remodeled into a new space dedicated to fitness and social activities for older adults

Project Update: The project took a small step forward after the September 5th City Council work session. The City Council gave direction to go ahead and start the process for planning for a new Central Fire Station, which could lead to the repurposing of the current Central Fire Station to be used as a Senior Center.

- **TEEN CENTER (2022-23 planning, 2023-2024 construction)**

Project Overview: The Zanewood Recreation Center has been a popular hub for youth services and recreation activities. The programming happening the space has outgrown the facility and additional program space is needed. Staff will work with a design consultant (Design by Melo) to determine if new space should be constructed, existing space should be renovated, or a combination of both.

Project Update: Zanewood staff have been meeting bi-weekly to discuss the mission, vision, goals, and amenities of the new Youth and Teen Recreation Center. The Zanewood staff met with the Communications Manager to develop a strategic communication plan to inform the public about the project along pictures, and social media campaigns. The project kickoff meeting was held April 6,

2023. Staff are currently in phase 1 of the project. Phase 1 includes: staff interviews, program observations, facility assessments, community engagement strategic planning meetings, and first design concepts. Staff have set dates to begin the community engagement efforts in June through the summer. These community engagement efforts will consist of staff engagement with Youthprise and work with the community engagement division within the city to spread the message of the new Teen center at community events. The plan is to engage with the residents at different summer programming and our large-scale community events.

The City of Brooklyn Park has submitted a \$4 million request for federal funding through Senator Klobuchar and Representative Phillips office to help support the Youth and Teen Recreation Center project. Juneteenth was the first event of our community engagement phase of the project. We were able to gather survey data on the amenities that the residents of Brooklyn Park would like to see in the new building.

Youthprise led 2 community engagement sessions for Families at Zanewood Recreation and also led 3 youth community engagement sessions for teens. In these session, Youthprise led a series of activities, information sharing, and prototyping. This information was helpful to inform our first initial concepts and helped generate youth and community voice into the initial designs.

Design by Melo is currently working with internal staff on preliminary concepts and engaging other departments into these designs such as: EDA (workforce development), PD, Fire. We want to engage all our partners into the initial concepts to gather input from everyone who will be involved in the new Teen Center.

September updates would include the 3 conceptual design options that have been submitted for pricing. The pricing will help determine the final option that we will choose to start the second phase of designing each space within the Teen Center. This month we also met with Brooklyn Park Police Chief and also with Workforce development talking about lobby space and what a potential workforce development space would look like in the Teen center.

6. HISTORIC EIDEM FARM INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Funding Source(s): Park Bond Reinvestment Projects

Project Update: Staff have engaged with Bluestem Heritage Group to help develop the design and signage language for each individual sign and kiosk. The design work for the signs and the kiosk is complete. We have received the Interpretive signage and posts and are ready for installation. The site work has officially started with concrete slab being poured and footings have been poured for the new kiosk and entrance into the farm. The paths will be filled with a new material that will make the trails accessible. Staff also plan to repaint the parking lot lines with new handicap parking spots.

7. PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENT

Funding Source(s): Heritage Fund

Project Update: The replacement of Edinbrook, Sunny Acres & Lakeland Parks playgrounds was approved by City Council on December 12, 2022. Installation at all three parks is complete. Tessman Brooklyn Acres playgrounds are currently being re-painted to help extend their useful life. On August 28th City Council approved the City Park playground replacement project. Installation will be delayed until 2024 depending on the timing of equipment availability.

8. HISTORIC EIDEM FARM VISITOR CENTER (2022 planning, 2023-24 construction)

Funding Source(s): Park Bond Reinvestment Projects

Project Update: No new update at this time.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider: N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues: N/A

Attachments:

CITY OF BROOKLYN PARK RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION			
Agenda Item:	8.3	Meeting Date:	September 20, 2023
Agenda Section:	Written Reports	Presented By:	Brad Tullberg, Director of Recreation and Parks
Recreation & Parks Director Proposed Action	Directors Report		

Overview:

1. 2024 Budget Update

The Recreation and Parks department submitted their preliminary budget with some inflationary adjustments to supplies and seasonal salaries. In addition, the department made the following requests:

- Increase Farm Specialist from .75 to 1.0 FTE (\$17,606)
- Add Youth and Adult Sports Specialist .75 FTE (\$80,240)
- Add FT Events Specialist to support Festival of Nations (\$111,219)
- Increase supplies expenses to support expanded events (\$50,0000)
- Increase Rentals expenses to support events (+25,766)

Finance Director Green presented a preliminary budget at the September 5th work session. Additional information will be provided throughout the month with a Maximum Levy amount to be set at the September 25th City Council meeting.

2. Good in the Hood Food Distribution

On Tuesday September 12th, Zanewood Recreation Center hosted its first Good in the Hood food distribution. This pilot program will be serving 24 families, but there will be enough food for 30. Families in need have been identified by staff and the Youth Outreach team. Recreation and Parks staff helped serve families as they loaded up on groceries like eggs, milk, beef, chicken, vegetables and snacks. If the pilot program is successful, Zanewood may be able to serve up to 400 families.

3. Community Activity Center Improvements

The Community Activity Center Improvements has been a hot topic for ice and court users. Staff presented at City Council on September 5th (see attached PP) and City Council asked for a great deal more information that staff is working to gather. Also, a petition supporting the following was presented to City Council on Monday September 11, 2023:

- Clear data driven goals for the project
- Community engagement with stakeholders and general public before a vote is taken
- Additional proposal that includes courts without the removal of Rink One

4. Senior Center Updates

At the September 5th City Council work session, Brooklyn Park fire department was given direction to begin the planning process for constructing a new central fire station. The City Council will need to approve the design contract before any work can begin. This impacts the timing of the Senior Center project as it is the first step in the possible repurposing of the existing central fire station after a new station is built.

Attachments:

8.3.3 COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER IMPROVEMENTS

Community Activity Center Improvements

City Council Work Session
September 5, 2023

Brad Tullberg, Recreation & Parks Director

Project Components & Funding

Total Project Cost estimated to be \$15M and has three components

1. Improvements to the Entrances and Corridors

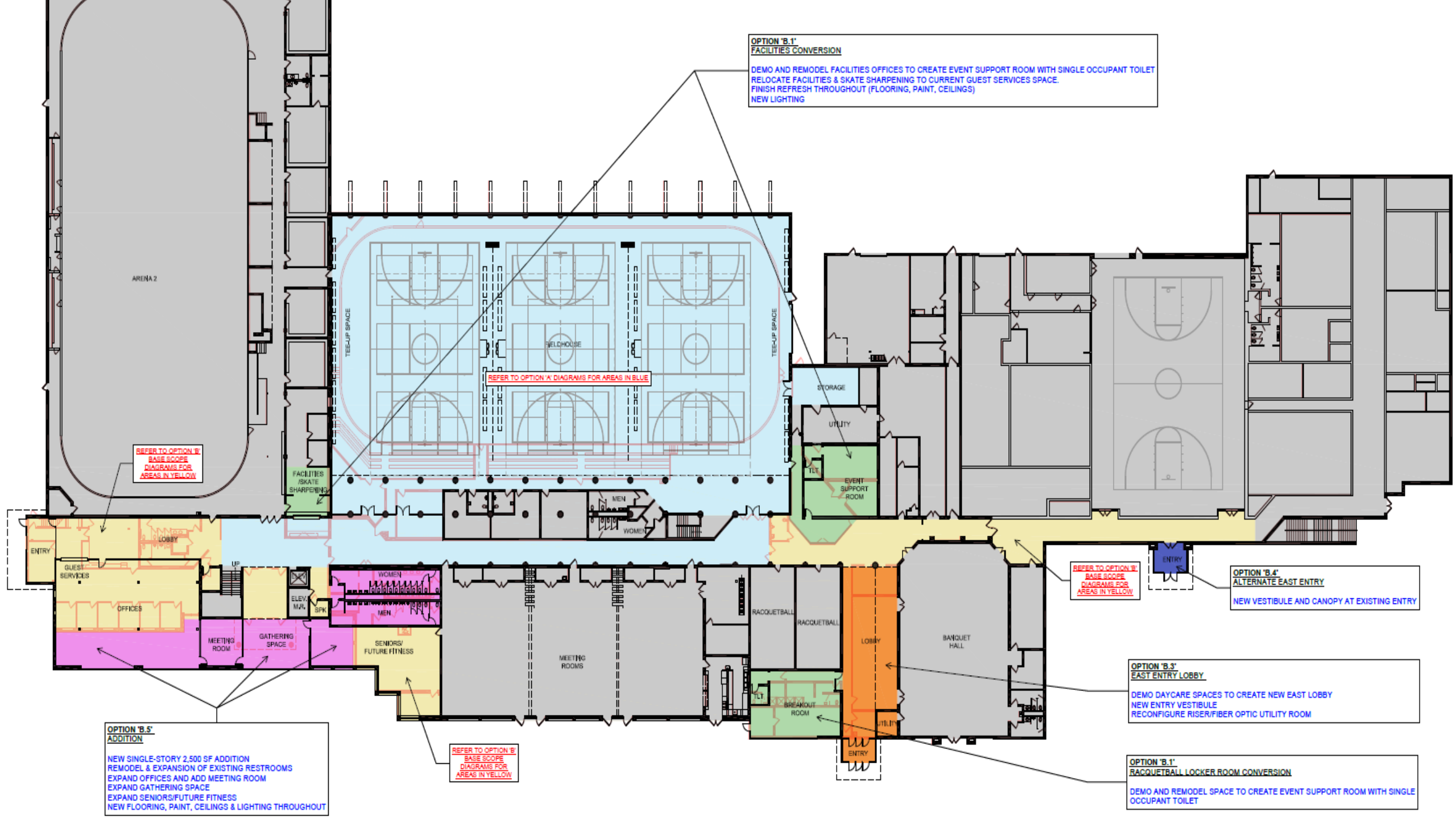
- Estimated Cost \$6.1M
- West facing entrance, relocated offices, east entrance improvements
- \$2M allocated from 2018 Park Bond Referendum

2. Conversion of Arena #1 to multi court gym space

- Estimated Cost \$6.5M
- Convert space to 3 multi use courts (basketball, volleyball, pickleball or event space)
- \$5M State of MN Bonding

3. Exterior Grounds and Parking Improvements

- Estimated Cost \$2M
- Outdoor events space and improved traffic flow. Move 85th Avenue entrance
- Funding to be determined



OPTION 'B.1'
FACILITIES CONVERSION
 DEMO AND REMODEL FACILITIES OFFICES TO CREATE EVENT SUPPORT ROOM WITH SINGLE OCCUPANT TOILET
 RELOCATE FACILITIES & SKATE SHARPENING TO CURRENT GUEST SERVICES SPACE.
 FINISH REFRESH THROUGHOUT (FLOORING, PAINT, CEILINGS)
 NEW LIGHTING

REFER TO OPTION 'A' DIAGRAMS FOR AREAS IN BLUE

REFER TO OPTION 'E' BASE SCOPE DIAGRAMS FOR AREAS IN YELLOW

REFER TO OPTION 'E' BASE SCOPE DIAGRAMS FOR AREAS IN YELLOW

OPTION 'B.4'
ALTERNATE EAST ENTRY
 NEW VESTIBULE AND CANOPY AT EXISTING ENTRY

OPTION 'B.3'
EAST ENTRY LOBBY
 DEMO DAYCARE SPACES TO CREATE NEW EAST LOBBY
 NEW ENTRY VESTIBULE
 RECONFIGURE RISER/FIBER OPTIC UTILITY ROOM

OPTION 'B.1'
RACQUETBALL LOCKER ROOM CONVERSION
 DEMO AND REMODEL SPACE TO CREATE EVENT SUPPORT ROOM WITH SINGLE OCCUPANT TOILET

OPTION 'B.5'
ADDITION
 NEW SINGLE-STORY 2,500 SF ADDITION
 REMODEL & EXPANSION OF EXISTING RESTROOMS
 EXPAND OFFICES AND ADD MEETING ROOM
 EXPAND GATHERING SPACE
 EXPAND SENIORS/FUTURE FITNESS
 NEW FLOORING, PAINT, CEILINGS & LIGHTING THROUGHOUT

REFER TO OPTION 'E' BASE SCOPE DIAGRAMS FOR AREAS IN YELLOW

FACILITIES
 SKATE SHARPENING

STORAGE

UTILITY

TEL

EVENT SUPPORT ROOM

MEN

WOMEN

WOMEN

MEN

SENIORS/
 FUTURE FITNESS

MEETING ROOMS

RACQUETBALL

RACQUETBALL

LOBBY

BANQUET HALL

TEL

BREAKOUT ROOM

UTILITY

ENTRY

ENTRY

LOBBY

ENTRY

GUEST SERVICES

OFFICES

MEETING ROOM

GATHERING SPACE

ELEV.

MEN

WOMEN

SPK

UP

ARENA 2

TEE-UP SPACE

FIELDHOUSE

TEE-UP SPACE

EDINBROOK TERRACE

ZANE AVENUE N

FUTURE FIRE STATION

FIRE FIGHTER PARKING

OPTION C: OMIT THIS SCOPE OF WORK

WEST PARKING 238 SPACES

STAFF & SERVICE PARKING 23 SPACES

NORTH PARKING 118 SPACES

NATIONAL GROUND ENTRY

OPTION C: OMIT THIS SCOPE OF WORK

OPTION C: OMIT THIS SCOPE OF WORK

WEST PARKING 238 SPACES

RECONSTRUCT PARKING AS REQ'D FOR C&C CONNECTION TO 85TH AVE N

SENIORS

PUMP HOUSE

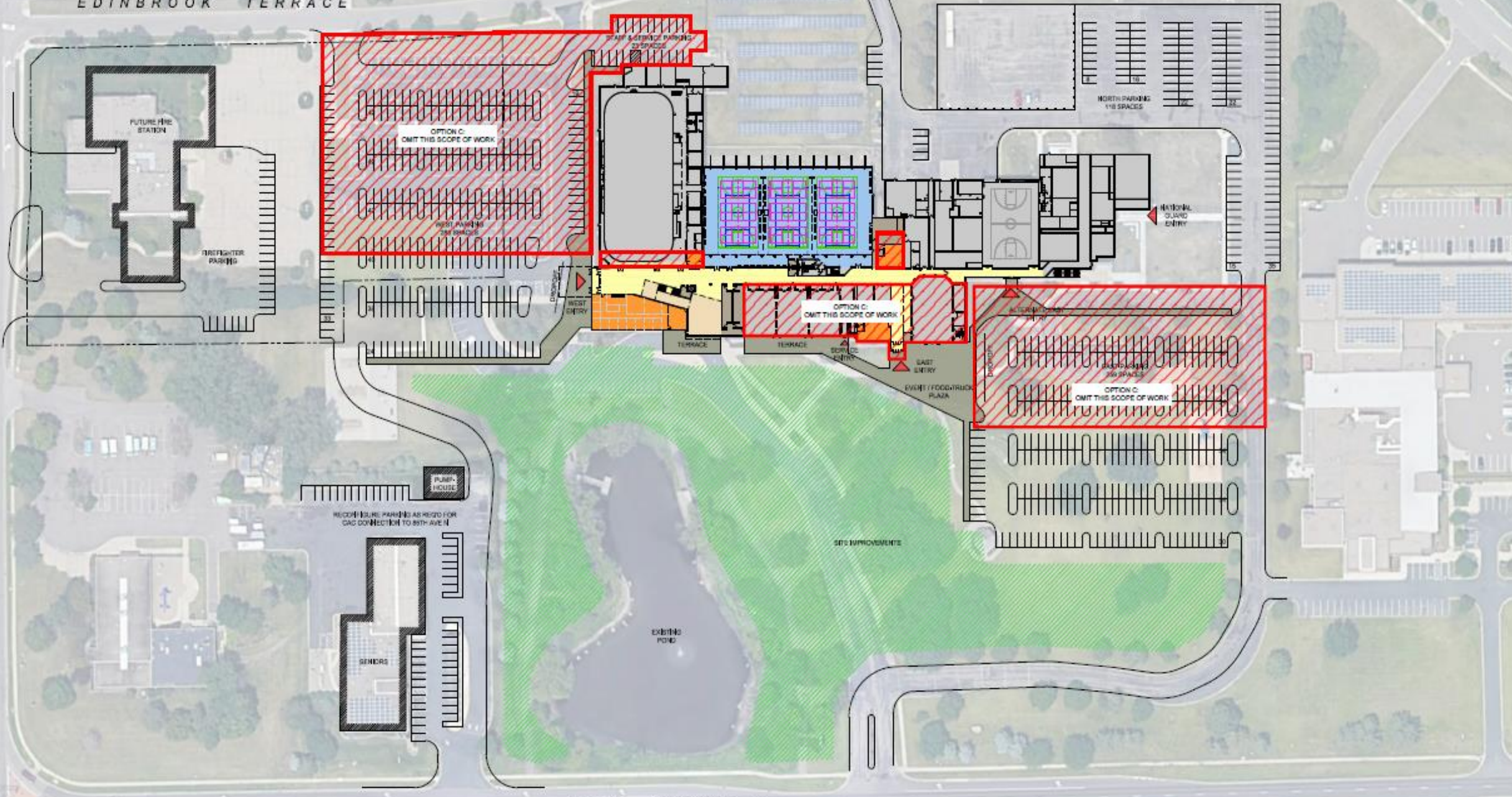
SE'S IMPROVEMENTS

EXISTING POND

EAST ENTRY

FOOD/TRUCK PLAZA

85TH AVENUE N



Engagement

- City Council – July 25, 2022
 - Decision not to proceed with aquatics
- Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission – November 16, 2022
 - Part of RPAC written reports in September and October
- City Council – Legislative Agenda – January 17, 2023
- City Council – Park Project Update – March 6, 2023
- May 2023 – Individual User Group meetings
- August 21, 2023 – TRFSC, OMGHA, and CPYHA Meeting

Delayed due to unknowns with Central Fire Station & funding

Project Background

- Staff evaluated other possible options for gym space
 - North Metro Youth Hockey's dissolution – late 2022
- Since 2018, staff continue to hear concerns about demand for gym space
- Maple Grove Community Center adding an ice rink in 2025
- Renovation of space is the most cost-effective option vs. new construction
- Requests for additional indoor pickleball space
- Creating a community center with ice and courts to support broader usage by Brooklyn Park residents

North Metro Youth Hockey Participation

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
155	164	158	121	119	96	91	55

- North Metro Youth Hockey served players in Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Fridley & Columbia Heights
- NMYHA Served the Brooklyn Park players in the Park Center High School boundary
- Players will now be part of the Osseo-Maple Grove Hockey Association
- Players in Osseo High School boundary play for Osseo Maple Grove Hockey Association
- Players in the Champlin Park High School boundary play for Champlin Park Youth Hockey

User Group Participation

ORGANIZATION	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	BROOKLYN PARK PARTICIPANTS
Three Rivers Figure Skating Club	96	40
Champlin Park Youth Hockey Assn.	320	111
Osseo Maple Grove Hockey Assn	1150	48
BPAA Basketball	536	358
Park Center Traveling Basketball	140	124

- Information provided by user groups from 2022-23 season

2023-24 Ice Season Usage

Organization	Organization Location	Arena #1 Hours	Arena #2 Hours	Total Hours
Three Rivers Figure Skating Club	Brooklyn Park	12	940.5	952.5
Wayzata Youth Hockey Association	Plymouth	406.25	288.5	694.75
Champlin Park Youth Hockey Association	Champlin	147.25	181.75	329
Showcase	Saint Louis Park	141	140	281
Totino Grace HS Boys Hockey	Fridley	213	30	243
Osseo Maple Grove Hockey Association	Maple Grove	114.25	56.75	171
MN Blades	Robbinsdale	49	47	96
Ice Show Ice (TRFSC)	Brooklyn Park	82.75	0	82.75
MN Lakers	Champlin	31	38	69
Midwest Hockey	Mound	28	27	55
Team Minnesota	Burnsville	36.25	18	54.25
Northland Hockey Group	Shoreview	23	23	46
Minnesota Hockey	Saint Paul	15	14	29
WHAM - Lightning	Maple Grove	16	5	21
Meagher-MASH	Plymouth	10	10	20
Delano Youth Hockey Association	Delano	10.25	8.5	18.75
Anderson Goaltending	Brooklyn Park	10.75	0	10.75

- 581 hours of TRFSC ice are morning ice at no cost
- Users with more than 10 hours rented between 8/14/23 and 5/26/24
- Summer ice use is not affected as only rink 2 is used in summer

Ice Usage Notes

- Staff propose a model that allows for TRFSC, CPYHA and OMGHA to get a similar number of hours as 2023-24 season
 - There would not be enough hours to support Totino Grace
 - Skating Lessons would continue on rink 2
- Rink 1 selected because Rink 2 allows for continued year-round use
- Rink 2 would remain available for off-season programs in the Spring, Summer and Fall.
- No impact to Summer ice as Rink 1 does not operate in Summer

Project Impacts

Benefits

- Broadens community use of the Community Activity Center
- Provides community gym space scheduled by city staff
- Provides space to support events indoors and outdoors

Concerns

- TRFSC Competition and Ice Show changes
 - Staff would work with TRFSC to help replace the revenue from competition
 - Ice Show can be accommodated on Rink 2
- Loss of local economic impact of hockey tournaments
- Limits the ability of ice groups to expand programs at CAC

Ice Arena Financials

Ice Arena #1 Revenues

2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
\$288,643	\$314,951	\$211,262	\$300,552	\$298,617

Ice Arena Fund Info

	2023 Budget	2022 Actual	2021 Actual	2020 Actual*	2019 Actual	2018 Actual
REVENUE TOTALS	\$ 879,081	\$ 880,911	\$ 862,075	\$ 621,709	\$ 918,434	\$ 890,757
Transfer In	\$ 92,431	\$ 152,069	\$ 146,200	\$ 143,866	\$ 218,200	\$ 148,000
REVENUE GRAND TOTAL	\$ 786,650	\$ 728,842	\$ 715,875	\$ 477,843	\$ 700,234	\$ 742,757
EXPENSE TOTALS	\$ 879,081	\$ 780,347	\$ 877,871	\$ 770,978	\$ 958,657	\$ 822,818
Transfer Out	\$ 0	\$ 110,000	\$ 146,200	\$ 143,866	\$ 148,000	\$ 148,000
EXPENSE GRAND TOTAL	\$879,081	\$670,347	\$731,671	\$627,112	\$810,657	\$674,818
Net Grand Totals	(\$ 92,431)	\$ 58,495	(\$ 15,796)	(\$ 149,269)	(\$ 110,423)	\$ 67,939

Projected Gym revenues

	Courts	Price / Court	Projected Revenue
Community Group – weekdays	3	\$5	\$ 7,800
Community Group - weekends	3	\$5	\$ 9,360
Private Gym Rental - weekdays	3	\$55	\$ 64,350
Private Gym Rental - weekend	3	\$55	\$ 77,220
Pickleball	9		\$ 31,500
Open Gym			\$ 20,000
Leagues and Non-Prime Rentals			\$ 20,000

- Electric savings estimated to be \$45k, staff savings undetermined
- Additional City savings from Building Supervision fees (Approx. \$30k in 2024)
- Revenues (\$231,550) plus Estimated Savings (\$75,000) equals \$305,230 net
- Private Gym rentals factored at 75% capacity
- Prime hours M-F 6pm -10pm, Weekends 8am – 8pm
- Same fee structure as school gym space

CAC Improvements Funding

- Funding currently identified
 - \$2M for CAC Entrance Improvements from 2018 Park Bond Referendum
 - \$2M for dedicated Senior Center space from 2018 Park Bond Referendum
 - \$5M for CAC Improvements from State of Minnesota
 - Must include conversion of arena to gym space
 - Approximately \$6-8M gap
- Possible Funding Options are:
 - Possible re-allocation of Park Bond Referendum funds
 - Referendum
 - City Council approved bonding
 - OSLAD

CAC Improvement Options

- Entrance improvements as planned in 2018 Park Bond Referendum and continue programming “as-is” (\$2M)
- Allow external groups to pay a premium to rent ice
- Construct a new space for gyms and keep both rinks – \$12.5M in 2018
- CAC Improvement project as proposed and work with users to minimize impacts

CAC Improvements Timeline

POTENTIAL PROJECT TIMELINE FOR CAC IMPROVEMENTS

September/ October 2023 –
Community Engagement



October – Begin Design
Development



February 2024 – Start
Construction documents



June 2024 – Bidding



September 2024 – Construction

Senior Center

- Challenges to the CAC & Senior Center Planning Project
 - \$2M allocated in the 2018 Park Bond Referendum
 - Primary Objectives
 - Dedicated Space for senior programming activities
 - Ease of access to building from parking / less congested entrances
 - Project delayed awaiting Central Fire decision
 - Seniors growing frustrated since 2018 Park Bond Referendum approved
 - Preferred option is to re-purpose Central Fire to Senior Center
 - If not located at former Central Fire, additional space would be designed at CAC

Input needed

- What additional information does City Council need related to the CAC Improvements and Senior Center project?
- Should staff continue planning for conversion of Rink 1 to gym space?

QUESTIONS?

Brad Tullberg

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Twitter: [@brooklynpark](https://twitter.com/brooklynpark)

YouTube: [/user/brooklynparkmncity](https://www.youtube.com/user/brooklynparkmncity)

Thank You!

**Brooklyn
Park**



Unique.

United.

Undiscovered.

Public Comment

Public Comment from impacted organizations

- Three Rivers Figure Skating Club
- Champlin Park Youth Hockey
- Osseo Maple Grove Youth Hockey
- Totino Grace High School
- Brooklyn Park Athletic Association Basketball
- Park Center Traveling Basketball League