



New Brighton Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails

The City of New Brighton has historically maintained a comprehensive park and recreation plan for the community. This section of the comprehensive plan is to provide (on general terms) an overview of existing conditions and a basic framework for the City of New Brighton's future park, recreation, open space and trail system. Attached to the comprehensive plan as an appendix is a more detailed and descriptive park by park analysis called the New Brighton Parks, Recreation, and Trails Strategic Plan completed by the Park and Recreation Department, Commission and Hoisington Koegler Group Inc. (with assistance from: Forecast Public Art, Change Inc., and Wilson Golf Group). This appendix is a "concept plan" only. When individual parks are to be improved, a detailed plan will be prepared and presented to the City Council with opportunity for the citizens of New Brighton to comment.

Existing Conditions and Trends

Parks, Trails and Recreation

The New Brighton Parks & Recreation Department consists of five divisions: Family Service Center, Recreation Programs, Forestry, Park Maintenance, and Brightwood Hills Golf Course. The department's 2005 annual budget was approximately \$2.8 million with 60% of the department's operating expenses covered through user fees, partnerships, and donations, while the remaining 40% is supported by taxes. Parks and recreation departments offer free access to parks and trails and offer lower cost services to youth and others. 60% is an excellent cost recovery ratio and among the highest recovery ratios in Minnesota and is significantly above the national average.

The City's 13 parks (12 neighborhood parks and one community park), contain 160 acres of park and open space. The parks offer playground equipment, trails, ball diamonds, soccer and football fields, disc golf, skate-boarding, climbing equipment, picnic facilities, tennis courts and basketball courts. Four parks (Freedom, Hansen, Totem Pole and Sunny Square) have neighborhood center buildings which function for recreation, group and community activities. Hansen Park is the largest and most frequently used city park.

The 70,000 square foot Family Service Center (FSC) is home to the Parks & Recreation Department and a focal point for the community. It serves as a gathering place for New Brighton and surrounding areas, having 300,000 visits annually for recreation, social, and business purposes. The FSC hosts birthday parties, weddings and social functions, and meetings. FSC facilities include the Eagles Nest Indoor Playground, banquet & conference rooms, fitness center, walking/running track, gymnasium, multi-purpose rooms, fitness studio, and a senior center.



The City owns and operates Brightwood Hills Golf Course, a 9-hole, par 30, municipal golf course located at 1975 Silver Lake Road, just south of Rice Creek Road. Brightwood Hills is home to many adult, junior, and senior golf leagues and offers adult and junior golf lessons.

The City has 21 miles of sidewalks. City trails are located within parks. Sidewalks are the backbone of the City's bike and walk system. Ramsey County owns and operates the 330 acre Long Lake Regional Park located in the northwest corner of the New Brighton. It offers opportunities for walking, biking, nature study, boating and picnicking. Rice Creek Trail is a regional trail located in the northern part of the city, which is connected by trail to Long Lake Regional Park to the east and the Mississippi River to the west.

Mounds View School District #621 has four schools within New Brighton, including Irondale High School and Highview Middle School. These school sites offer public access to some recreation facilities. New Brighton participates in cooperative recreation programming with the Mounds View School District #621 and the St. Anthony - New Brighton School District #282.

City Trends and Influences

As a fully developed city with a high proportion of senior citizens, New Brighton is on the cusp of change. The form and quality of that change will depend on many factors. It is clear that parks, recreation, and open space play significant roles in encouraging reinvestment in a community. Surveys have shown that parks and recreation opportunities are consistently among the top three reasons people cite for choosing a new city or neighborhood (along with schools and convenient location). A strong and vibrant park and recreation system protects existing investment and attracts new residents and businesses. The revitalization of parks, the addition of trails and the integration of public art will help shape community reinvestment and build vitality. Interstate highways 35W and 694 bisect New Brighton and tend to separate the City and neighborhoods. They also fragment community identity and present challenges to walk-ability and trail connections. The addition of signature features in parks (park signs and city park and trail system maps) can help build identity and sense of place. Parks are also great locations for public art and community gateway features.

It can be challenging to acquire additional new park, trail or open space land in a fully developed community. The Northwest Quadrant redevelopment changes land use from industrial to primarily residential. It is an example of pending redevelopment that will generate a need for additional parkland, trail connections and public space.

Partnerships and cooperative programs are increasing as local governments seek to maximize cost efficiency. New Brighton participates in a number of cooperative programs and has joint facility use agreements with public and private entities.

City of New Brighton Strategic Framework 2001-2005

The City established a strategic framework for addressing nine key themes. These themes are listed below along with the implication of those themes for recreation (in italics):

1. **Financing of Municipal Services** -- Creative and alternative revenue opportunities for financing municipal services that are viable, long-term, stable, and consistent with local service level expectations. *The New Brighton parks and recreation system is one of the most efficient in Minnesota and has a high cost recovery ratio and low tax revenue need. This level of efficiency*



should continue while recognizing that general tax investments are needed to keep the system performing at a high level.

2. **Strong Neighborhoods** -- Emphasis will be placed on maintaining a strong housing stock, increasing neighborhood and community communication, respecting diversity, and reinforcing neighborhood roles. *Parks, trails and recreation play a crucial role in neighborhood quality. Quality parks spawn quality neighborhoods. Property values increase with proximity to parks.*
3. **Community Development & Redevelopment** -- Several key redevelopment areas will provide the City with job growth, increased property tax base, more available goods and services, new residential lifecycle options and an overall physical revitalization of aging properties. *Redevelopment is frequently centered around a park, public space and art. These elements are important to people's decision to invest in or visit a community.*
4. **City Resources** -- The community needs to assure that it remains a professionally vibrant municipality, developing and involving local leadership in its democratic process and providing the physical and technological infrastructure to serve the needs of its employees and residents. *Parks and recreation plays an important and visible role in the community. Its positive influence on New Brighton's youth is vital to developing tomorrow's leaders.*
5. **Quality Lifecycle Housing** -- Ensuring the maintenance and structural quality of housing, encouraging reinvestment in existing housing stock, and increasing home ownership in the community. *Parks, trails and sidewalks contribute to strong neighborhoods and encourage reinvestment in housing.*
6. **Safe and Secure Community** -- Taking a proactive, preventative philosophy in considering the community's long term public safety needs. *Parks and community events bring people together and build sense of community. That sense of community and knowing your neighbors improves public safety. Trails and sidewalks play an important safety function by providing safe routes for walking and bicycling as well as supporting socialization.*
7. **Community Image** -- New Brighton's image is a suburban community with strong housing, a low crime rate, beautiful green space, and award-winning schools. It is an ideally situated community with an engaged citizenry. Will changing demographics, economics, etc., change New Brighton's image to the metropolitan area, region, and state? *New Brighton is segmented by highways that disrupt community identity. Parks, public places and public artworks are elements that define a sense of community as well as acting as gateways into the city.*
8. **Transportation Options and Opportunities** -- Ensuring safe and efficient transportation and successfully dealing with the increasingly pressing transportation needs will impact quality of life for all. *Trails and sidewalks provide a transportation and recreation function by providing safe routes for walking and bicycling. Trails and safe walking routes over highways are a need in New Brighton that should be integrated into the transportation and recreation systems.*
9. **Environment**--The City is committed to vigilant environmental habits to ensure the healthiest water, the safest land, and the best natural surroundings. *Parks and Recreation has the primary responsibility for managing public open space, waters and natural areas. Keeping New Brighton's natural environment healthy and setting an example for sustainable actions is a priority for the future.*



Recreation Market and Trends

Recreation is a broad and fluid market. Use of leisure time is full of choices. Location, access, facilities, marketing, etc. influence people's use of their free time. Municipal recreation services and facilities are constantly evolving to respond to this dynamic market. Recreation is a competitive situation with very mobile customers. Recreation users visit other cities' facilities and private facilities. Public recreation competes with entertainment (television, movies, etc.), technology (internet, computers, video games, etc.), private recreation providers (health and exercise clubs, other commercial recreation businesses) and other leisure time pursuits. Recreation is price, time and location sensitive, and includes many niche markets (i.e. community centers, aquatic centers, etc.).

Core functions of municipal recreation are to provide neighborhood parks for close to home recreation and community parks for active recreation (sports fields, courts and rinks) and/or passive recreation (picnicking, nature study, water sports, etc.) in more natural settings. Trails vary from striped lanes along a street for bicycling to paved off-road multi-use trails, to unpaved paths for walking, cross country skiing and mountain biking. County park systems typically provide larger parks focused on natural resource sites.

Recreation is influenced by many factors, including demographics, age of the population, time availability, climate, technology, media, economics, etc. New recreation activities emerge and the public is expected to provide facilities for these new activities. Examples of some important recreation trends are:

- Great interest in trails (walking, running, bicycling, in-line skating, mountain biking, cross country skiing, etc.).
- Expanded recreation participation by women and girls.
- Emerging activities: skateboarding, disk golf, off-leash dog areas, rugby, lacrosse, kickball, cricket, etc.

New Brighton Vision

To be the preferred place to play, live, work, and do business.

New Brighton Parks and Recreation Vision

Enhancing New Brighton through people, parks, and programs.

Our Mission

We are dedicated to delivering parks and recreation services that improve quality of life in New Brighton.

We commit to:

- 1. Improving Health*
- 2. Protecting Natural Resources*
- 3. Fostering Healthy Youth Development*
- 4. Sustaining Fiscal Responsibility*
- 5. Supporting Community Reinvestment*

The City of New Brighton, Minnesota has parks in every neighborhood, offers a host of recreation programs, owns Brightwood Hills Golf Course and operates the Family Service Center that is the envy of many communities.



The strategic planning process, in Appendix A, was framed by input from the public, stakeholders, community and recreation partners, city staff and officials. The first step, a recreation needs assessment, evaluated existing conditions, analyzed trends and gathered community input to determine recreation needs. Step two was the preparation of mission, vision, commitment statements, strategies and actions that will help guide decision-making and adapt to change over the next ten years.

The Strategic Plan looks at city-wide recreation while focusing on six primary topic areas. These topic areas were selected for emphasis due to their current and anticipated needs and to best serve the New Brighton community and visitors:

- Parks
- Trails & Sidewalks
- Brightwood Hills Golf Course
- Recreation Programs
- Youth Engagement
- Public Art

While most of the every day work - from keeping parks green and clean to providing a wide range of recreation activities - will continue, the goals and long term vision will be guided by this plan. It will ensure that resources are managed wisely and that parks and recreation services benefit residents, the community and the environment.

Commitment

1. Improving Health

We commit to improving health through safe, convenient, and accessible services.

Strategies

- Support active living and wellness
- Create a community pathway network
- Develop strategies for broad participation
- Ensure safe recreational places
- Promote the arts

Commitment

2. Protecting Natural Resources

We commit to protecting natural resources through sustainable policies and practices that preserve the environment for future generations.

Strategies

- Maintain a healthy urban forest and park system
- Preserve open space
- Foster environmental stewardship

Commitment

3. Fostering Healthy Youth Development

We commit to fostering healthy youth development through opportunities to learn positive life-long skills.

Strategies

- Expand youth leadership



- Facilitate partnerships
- Encourage play

Commitment

4. Sustaining Fiscal Responsibility

We commit to sustaining fiscal responsibility through sound, cost-effective resource management.

Strategies

- Develop sustainable revenues
- Expand community partnerships
- Protect and enhance community investment

Commitment

5. Supporting Community Reinvestment

We commit to supporting community reinvestment through parks, open spaces, and facilities.

Strategies

- Strengthen community identity
- Plan for long term renewal
- Communicate the benefit

1. Improving Health

Improving community health and providing residents with opportunities to improve their personal health is a core responsibility of New Brighton Parks and Recreation. This means providing access to the things that keep people well and happy - fitness and sports, open space and pathways, enjoying the arts, learning new skills, and building community spirit.

Increasing Access

Increasing access to parks and recreation means lessening physical barriers, like improving the walkability of key intersections, engaging partners to increase the opportunities for more active living, and constantly striving to increase participation in programs and activities.

Commitment

We commit to improving health through safe, convenient, and accessible services.

Strategies

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Support active living and wellness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build an inclusive approach to active living through outreach, awareness, partnerships, and infrastructure improvements.• Lessen physical, awareness, and access barriers to physical activity.• Nurture active kids through programs and facilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate active living strategies into new development and redevelopment. <p>Ensure safe recreational places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand safe places for youth.• Evaluate park visibility and lighting and make improvements.• Expand the Neighborhood Crime Watch into city parks and open spaces. |
|---|---|



Promote the arts.

- Adopt a public art strategic plan and policies.
- Establish an arts advisory group with a dedicated funding source to prepare policies, identify priorities, and initiate projects.
- Develop, finance, and implement a series of public art projects for the NW Quadrant development.

Create a community pathway network.

- Adopt a Trail and Sidewalk Master Plan.
- Build advocacy for trails and walkways.
- Plan and build key community trails and connections.
- Lessen barriers to walking/biking through pedestrian friendly

intersection improvements, bridges, and pathways.

- Seek partners and grants.

Develop strategies for broad participation.

- Increase awareness of programs, activities and facilities.
- Formalize participant and resident feedback and use information to improve quality, marketing, and timing of recreation programs.
- Strive to keep programs fresh and accessible.
- Emphasize golf league management and golf marketing/awareness.
- Form an advocacy and guidance committee for Brightwood Hills Golf Course.
- Add park and trail system maps in parks and city buildings.

2. Protecting Natural Resources

Parks and natural areas are the backbone of the city park system and provide important recreation, open space, public gathering space, and natural resource functions. We all have a stake in ensuring that our environment is preserved and enhanced.

Environmental Stewardship

The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to continuing high standards of park and public land management and pursuing a more sustainable approach to maintenance and management. The sustainable approach includes efforts to foster greater environmental stewardship throughout the city and expanding the park and open space system where appropriate.

Commitment

We commit to protecting natural resources through sustainable policies and practices that preserve the environment for future generations.

Strategies

Maintain a healthy urban forest and park system.

- Preserve, manage, and enhance habitat and vegetation.
- Continue the high standards of park and public land maintenance, and management by continued investment in personnel, equipment, and methods.
- Expand sustainable practices and invasive species management.

- Adopt storm water retention pond buffer zone and maintenance standards.
- Consider use of a green roof for the Family Service Center roof replacement in 2009.
- Use organic/eco-friendly maintenance supplies and materials.



Preserve open space.

- Acquire Jones Lake for trails, passive park use, and natural resource preservation.
- Adopt a no net parkland loss ordinance.

Foster environmental stewardship.

- Support use of best management practices and reduction of chemical use on private property.

- Promote native landscaping and greening initiatives.
- Establish community gardens.
- Develop and implement a community education and awareness program in partnership with other agencies.

3. Fostering Healthy Youth Development

Youth are our future. Parks and recreation play key roles in youth development through offering fun, safe places, learning opportunities, skill development, and socialization. Building healthy attitudes toward physical activity and community involvement in our youth will pay long-term dividends as they mature into healthy and productive adults.

Opportunities and Involvement

Valuing involvement of youth in community activities and program planning fosters youth leadership and develops positive role models. It is vital that all youth have opportunities to participate in recreation activities. This means a balance of program alternatives and activities that meet the wide range of youth interests and abilities. Expanding partnerships and taking a holistic and coordinated approach to providing opportunities for youth is needed to build positive life-long skills.

Commitment

We commit to fostering healthy youth development through opportunities to learn positive life-long skills.

Strategies

Expand youth leadership.

- Expand teen involvement in the community.
- Form a youth advisory committee to assist in service level decision-making.
- Promote service learning and community involvement.
- Redesign community approaches to utilize all youth's unique talents.

- Support development of mentoring networks.
- Support youth initiated grant opportunities.
- Value and celebrate unique contributions of young people.

Facilitate partnerships.

- Consider intergenerational activities.
- Identify and build local champions for youth development.

Encourage play.

- Foster an "everyone plays" approach to recreation programs and activities.
- Expand access to recreation programs and "safe places to hang out".
- Provide healthy options during out-of-school time.



- Develop safe and supportive community opportunities that engage and challenge all youth.

4. Sustaining Fiscal Responsibility

Keeping New Brighton's parks, pathways, open spaces, and recreation facilities operating efficiently requires on-going investment of financial capital. The quality of City recreation services and facilities depends in part on maximizing available funding while seeking alternative funding sources to meet future needs. It also depends on stakeholders and the public valuing parks and recreation services and facilities.

New Brighton Parks and Recreation Department has a track record of efficient delivery of services. The department's revenue-to-expense ratio is twice as efficient as the national average. The department will continue to raise the bar in quality and accountability through improvements in technology, communications, and operations.

Commitment

We commit to sustaining fiscal responsibility through sound, cost-effective resource management.

Strategies

- **Develop sustainable revenues.**
 - Expand grassroots parks and recreation advocacy.
 - Pursue alternative revenue sources.
 - Adopt a cost-recovery policy.
 - Improve golf course activity and revenue tracking.
- **Expand community partnerships.**
 - Expand Parks and Recreation's role as a facilitator for agencies, groups and individuals.
 - Continue to expand partnerships.
 - Build constituencies and advocacy groups (golf, youth, trails, etc.).
 - Enhance community events in local parks.
 - Work with area partners for development of a sports facility (indoor and outdoor athletics) at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant property in Arden Hills.
- **Protect and enhance community investment.**
 - Recognize the value of the investment in parks and recreation.
 - Continue fiscally responsible maintenance and operation activities.
 - Assure financial integrity through open, accessible, and accurate processes.
 - Develop long term facility and equipment replacement plans and budgets.
 - Expand golf league and community use of Brightwood Hills Golf Course.
 - Protect the city's investment by keeping parks and recreation fresh and vital.

5. Supporting Community Reinvestment

As a fully developed community in a highly accessible location, the City of New Brighton is well positioned for continued revitalization and renewal. Renewal will occur through countless private and public actions. The Parks and Recreation Department plays a vital role in assuring community and individual quality of life. Parks, recreation, trails, arts, and open spaces are often the catalyst that inspires private investment and builds identity and sense of community.



Building Community

The New Brighton Parks and Recreation Department will work to create strong neighborhoods through parks and programs, fostering reinvestment through arts and gathering places, by connecting the city with pathways, and through community events. The success of those efforts is tied to residents and business owners recognizing and valuing the benefits that parks and recreation brings to the community, organizations, and individuals.

The intent is to continue to invest in parks and recreation with an eye to stimulating private revitalization and neighborhood improvement. Through good work, satisfied residents, and increased emphasis on communications, the benefits of parks and recreation will be fully realized and acknowledged.

Commitment

We commit to supporting community reinvestment through parks, open spaces, and facilities.

Strategies

Enhance community identity.

- Promote the arts in everyday life.
- Create a signature element in each park.
- Add new park identification signs.
- Create community gateways.

Plan for long-term renewal.

- Use parks, recreation, and activities as key amenities for community revitalization.
- Parks and open space make key elements of the Northwest Quadrant redevelopment.
- Revitalize neighborhood and community parks with aesthetic and access improvements.
- Continue to fine tune and reinvest in facilities and services to keep the Family Service Center fresh and attractive to residents, visitors, and organizations.
- Improve athletic field quality.

Communicate the benefits.

- Use the VIP (Vision Insight Planning) model to consistently portray park and recreation actions and benefits.
- Illustrate the economic benefits of parks, open space, and recreation on property values, visitation, and development.
- Emphasize recreation's role in economic development, building sense of community, strengthening safety, promoting health, protecting natural resources, providing recreation and social experiences, fostering human development, and culture.
- Continue to expand outreach to renters.
- Continue to engage the community through community events and celebrations.
- Enhance communications through expanded use of the City's web site, e-mail, local newspapers, and the city newsletter.



Facility Needs

The following is a summary of the facility needs for parks, trails, sidewalks and Brightwood Hills Golf Course. These needs are based on evaluations of the facilities and public and stakeholder input. See the attached Focus Area Strategic Plans (in Part Four of Appendix A) for further information and recommendations.

1. Parks

Parks are the fundamental physical and programmatic elements of the city recreation system. In addition to active and passive recreation services, parks provide open space and act as community gathering places and neighborhood focal points.

New Brighton's parks are in good condition, provide good recreation value and are convenient to most residents. City parks provide close-to-home recreation; some provide fields, courts and rinks for organized sports. Park facilities and maintenance received high satisfaction ratings from survey respondents and stakeholders.

Residents feel that improvements to passive parks and open space should be a focus of city efforts in the future. This translates to improvements to existing natural resource areas and acquisition of open space (such as the Jones Lake area). This does not mean that improvements to active parks and fields should not occur. Quality fields, courts and rinks are a priority for many people and are desired by organized sports groups.

Hansen Park is the most popular city park. Its mix of trails, picnic facilities, disc golf course, children's play area, creek and natural setting contribute to its popularity. It also has poor soils, limited parking on the south end (near the disc course), awkward drop off and vehicle circulation and recently lost a picnic shelter to vandalism. Hansen Park should be reconfigured to address these issues and in particular those related to the parkland's natural resources.

Fine-tuning of neighborhood parks is needed. Many parks need some aesthetic improvements such as colorful landscaping, additional shade trees and screening of portable toilets. Handicapped access to some park facilities can be improved. In some cases, loop trail connections are needed, and in others, facilities are in need of replacement. A planned systematic renovation program is needed to replace worn out equipment and facilities, respond to changing recreation and community needs, keep aesthetics at a high level and to assure that the city parks remain fresh, vital and functional.

Awareness of city parks should be improved. While most residents are familiar with the park closest to their home, many residents are unaware of other city parks and facilities. Park identification signage and park and trail system maps can help bridge that gap. Each park should have a memorable "signature" feature. This can be a natural amenity like a sliding hill, or wooded grove or a man made element like a unique play area, picnic shelter or work of art.

Over 85% of New Brighton residents live within ¼ mile (typical walking distance) of a park. Of the four significant gap areas, the provision of parks, public space and trail access in the new Northwest quadrant, and acquisition of the land around Jones Lake are priorities.



A sub-regional sport complex is being contemplated for a 75 acre parcel in the northern portion of the Twin City Army Ammunition Plant site in Arden Hills, which is being planned for redevelopment into housing, businesses and public space. This is the prime opportunity for New Brighton to have convenient access to a large athletic facility. There is considerable interest by youth and adult sports organizations and participants for such a facility.

2. Trails & Sidewalks

Walking and biking are two of the most popular and desired recreation activities in the City of New Brighton. Trails and sidewalks embrace recreation and are a means of safe transportation linking residents to each other and to important community gathering places.

There are very few trails in New Brighton. The few city trails are small trail sections in some city parks and the longer trails in Hansen Park. Ramsey County has trails in Long Lake Park, Rice Creek West Regional Trail, Rice Creek North Regional Trail, and Highway 96 Regional Trail. Trails were not as popular during New Brighton's period of development as they are today. The lack of trails in New Brighton puts it at a competitive disadvantage compared to other cities. Many people and businesses choose a home or work location based on access to trails and parks. Trails also improve property values. Studies show that property in close proximity to trails that link parks and open space have a higher property values than land with no access to trails.

The city sidewalk system has a good network of walks, but they often encounter barriers at freeway overpasses. The freeway network increases the difficulty to have a first class walking and biking network.

The City of New Brighton conducted a public opinion survey in October 2005 to measure residents' opinions about parks and recreation and city services (please refer to Appendix A for detailed information). The survey results indicated that 685 households (84%) had someone participate in walking/hiking and 410 (50%) participated in bicycling in the last three years.

Resident's listed trails, along with passive parks, park maintenance and upkeep, and communications as the highest priorities for the future.

Residents mentioned many specific trail location needs. Concerns included "can not walk to store," "hard to bike in commercial areas," "more trails for biking makes it easier to get on a bike than in a car," "crossing the freeway is not safe." Some of the needed improvements included better connections to Long Lake Park, the NW Quadrant area, the Family Service Center, shopping centers, parks, library, schools, etc., and minimizing barriers such as the bridge crossings over I-35W and I-694. In addition, improvements to trail loops such as in Hansen Park and looped routes elsewhere in the City would provide improved recreation opportunities. Trail signage and lighting were identified as needs in order to help visitors find their way safely along trails. New Brighton residents clearly want more trails and safer places to walk and bike.

Arden Hills and Shoreview have well-developed trail networks. Minneapolis, St. Anthony and Roseville are adding the NE Diagonal trail in 2006-07. Connections from New Brighton to these trails can dramatically expand residents' access to trails for recreation and transportation.



Trails and sidewalks are a key component in active living. The ease and safety of walking and biking influences peoples' choices about exercising outdoors or walking or biking for commuting purposes or pleasure.

Adding trails and creating safe and comfortable walking and biking connections across I-35W and I-694 are a significant need and should be a priority for the future. Construction of these trail connections should take place when MNDOT is replacing or re-decking bridges. It is forecasted that three of the following four bridges will be replaced within the next five years. As discussed at the New Brighton City Council work session on May 8, 2012, the "...Council would like to be involved and perhaps influence the trail connectivity of these bridges and roads to New Brighton and its surroundings". These trail connections are premier gateways and vital links connecting east and west.

The major trail connections across I-35W are as follows:

Hwy 96 – to make a functional access of regional significance across I-35W, it must be created as a 12' multi-use trail/sidewalk. Ideally, this connection would consist of a 6' sidewalk on one side of the bridge and a 12' trail on the opposite side of the bridge. To accommodate on-road bicyclists, a 4' minimum width shoulder should also be included. This connection would create a safe environment for pedestrians to link up to regional trail systems in the City of Shoreview. MnDOT has tentatively scheduled a future bridge project for 2014.

10th St. NW – to make a functional access across I-35W, it must be created as a 12' multi-use trail/sidewalk. Ideally, this connection would consist of a 6' sidewalk on one side of the bridge and a 12' trail on the opposite side of the bridge. To accommodate on-road bicyclists, a 4' minimum width shoulder should also be included. This connection would create a safe route for students and adults to Mounds View High School. MnDOT has tentatively scheduled a future bridge project for 2016.

Co. Rd. E2 – to make a functional access across I-35W, it must be created as a 12' multi-use trail/sidewalk. Ideally, the connection would consist of a 6' sidewalk on one side of the bridge and a 12' trail on the opposite side of the bridge. To accommodate on-road bicyclists, a 4' minimum width shoulder should also be included. This connection would create a safe environment for pedestrians traveling east to the City of Arden Hills. MnDOT has tentatively scheduled a future bridge project for 2016.

The major trail connections across I-694 are as follows:

Old Hwy 8 – to make a functional access across I-694, it must be created as a 12' multi-use trail/sidewalk. Ideally, the connection would consist of a 6' sidewalk on one side of the bridge and a 12' trail on the opposite side of the bridge. To accommodate on-road bicyclists, a 4' minimum width shoulder should also be included. This connection would create a safe environment for pedestrians traveling to New Brighton Exchange, Long Lake Regional Park, and the New Brighton Community Center.

These proposed trail/sidewalk connections and bridge projects are illustrated in Figure 10-1.

The City should build on the momentum and interest in the walkable community demonstration program at Silver Lake Road and I-694 to foster additional trail and walk advocacy, funding and projects.

3. Brightwood Hills Golf Course



The strategic planning process, in Appendix A, finds the Brightwood Hills course and clubhouse to be in good physical condition. Golfers and non-golfers were very satisfied with the course and feel it is an asset to the community for its recreation, community and open space benefits. Long term goals are to increase use of the course and increase revenue. The primary needs are to expand marketing to leagues and to expand non-golf use of the course. There is also a need to improve financial reporting through software and tracking systems. Forming a Brightwood Hills advisory group could help with marketing and course advocacy/improvement.

Only small physical improvements are needed, including:

- Enhancement of the “curb appeal and identity” from Silver Lake Road.
- Concentration of picnicking and outdoor dining areas next to the clubhouse.
- Moving the practice greens closer to the clubhouse.
- Adding access to drinking water on the course.

Park Physical Improvements

Within each park there are unique improvements that are recommended to improve accessibility, enhance aesthetics and increase park use. The recommended improvements to each park are listed below and are also shown graphically in Appendix A.

Brightwood Hills Golf Course

- Evaluate the feasibility and cost/benefit of adding a miniature golf course.
- Remove picnic shelters and move eating areas/picnicking next to the clubhouse.
- Create a practice range.
- Create an additional putting green.
- Replace maintenance buildings with one larger building that could potentially be used for the miniature golf operations.
- Screen maintenance area from golf uses.
- Remove or trim conifers by parking lot to increase visibility of the clubhouse.
- Move sign to increase visibility.
- Add a golf sign of golf image to the fence along Silver Lake Road.
- Add aerator to pond to improve water quality and to draw attention to the course.

Creekview Park

- Improve Buckthorn control.
- Consider additional wood chip trail on west side of creek.
- Add plantings to screen homes adjacent to the park.

Driftwood Park

- Upgrade shelter building.
- Reconfigure volleyball and playground area for improved function and safety.

Family Service Center

- Create a direct access between building entrance and the plaza at the corner of 10th Street and Old Highway 8.
- Improve visibility of FSC from the Interstate.



- Consider use of green infrastructure such as a green roof as replacement projects occur.

Freedom Park

- Break up large bituminous area with landscape islands.
- Add outdoor fire ring and seating.
- Add bike rack near shelter building.
- Improve building and sign landscaping.

Hansen Park

- Reconfigure/expand disc golf. Use the reconfiguration to improve parking access and lessen neighborhood issues with active use of the south parking lot.
- Add boardwalk and/or improve trail surface around pond.
- Improve park building drop-off – move skating rink.
- Replace large picnic shelter
- Reconfigure skating rink and open skating.
- Add lighting to pond loop trail.
- Add additional bridge for shorter pond loop trail.
- Improve or remove ball fields and create a “no-mow” zone natural area northwest of the pond.

Hidden Oaks Park

- Add looped trails.
- Add parking by shelter.
- Consider cul-de-sac on 29th Avenue.
- Add trail connections on the east side of the park and around the wetland/pond and tennis courts.
- Add cross walk between existing parking area and park to the west.

Innsbruck Park

- Upgrade playground for handicap accessibility.
- Screen houses from park.
- Buffer parking lot from neighbors.

Meadow Wood Park

- Plant hillside near entrance with shrubs to minimize erosion.

Pike Lake Trail

- Add lake access/pier.
- Add trail lights.

Silver Oaks Park

- Add water fountain.
- Reroute east trail entrance along parking lot drive.
- Possibly reroute southwest trail entrance farther to the east to lessen slope.
- Improve accessibility of basketball court and play areas with trails.

Sunny Square Park



- Add accessible entrance to building.
- Add trail access to regional trail.

Totem Pole Park

- Add a looped trail within the park.
- Study potential to improve parking lot safety: evaluate the possibility of detaching the parking lot from Foss Road.

Vermont Park

- Acquire park in-holding.
- Add looped trail.
- Prepare a master plan for the park for future reinvestment.

Veterans Park

- Add pond aerator to improve pond water quality.
- Add trail spur to gazebo for handicap accessibility.
- Add maintenance strip around gazebo.
- Create sculpture garden around pond.
- Create prairie around pond to minimize goose problems.

All parks (Physical improvements to all parks).

- Add portable toilet screens
- Add an information kiosk with park and trail system map for a uniform system-wide design
- Add bench and waste receptacles with concrete slabs of a uniform system-wide design.
- Add park identification signs.
- Provide landscaping around signs to add color, texture and interest.

Park Land Acquisition

Most residents have good convenient access to parks. Approximately 85% of residents live within walking distance (1/4 mile) of a park. The exceptions are "gaps" or areas where parks are not as convenient. (See Park Service Area Analysis in Appendix A). There are four primary service area gaps that warrant attention.

1. West of Long Lake - This neighborhood was developed without a nearby neighborhood park and Long Lake limits close access to Long Lake Regional Park (east shore of Long Lake). Should the opportunity arise the city should consider acquiring at least 1-3 acres of usable land for a neighborhood park.

The proximity of Brightwood Hills Golf course to this area reinforces the important open space and recreation role that the course plays for the neighborhood and city. Recreation use and access to Brightwood Hills should be expanded.

2. East of Old Highway 8/8th Avenue NW - This area contains a mix of single family and multi-family housing and industrial uses. New multi-family residential development is occurring along Old Highway 8. This makes the acquisition of land around Jones Lake an important action. Jones Lake is a small lake/large wetland that offers opportunities for public open space, a loop walking trail, and other passive recreation uses. A public park around Jones Lake would enhance



the neighborhood, give the city an important walking trail, preserve a wildlife habitat area and act as a stimulus for further investment in the area.

3. North of I-694 at Old Highway 8 - The area north of I-694 at Old Highway 8 was formerly an industrial area so there was little need for city parks in this area. This location is now the site of a new mixed-use development with a significant number of new housing units to be added over the next 10 years (Northwest Quadrant). This change from industrial to predominantly residential land use creates a need for recreation and open space. Because of the more urban nature of the Northwest Quadrant redevelopment, this park and public space is likely to be a smaller, more intensely used urban park, space containing walking paths, plazas, gardens and public art. Trails and convenient access to nearby Long Lake Regional Park must also be a part of the redevelopment.
4. County Road E and Silver Lake Road Area. This area has a small gap where residents are more than 1/4 mile from a city park. There is little opportunity to add significant park space in this area. The recent addition of Silverwood Park (Three Rivers Park District) located south of County Rd E and west of Silver Lake Road in St. Anthony provides passive recreation opportunities for this area.

Program and Service Needs

1. Recreation Programs

New Brighton provides recreation programs for youths, adults and seniors. These recreation programs are a venue for the community to live active, healthy, and social lives. The programs engage children after school and during the summer months, offer a healthy and social lifestyle for seniors, and offer after work or weekend enjoyment for adults. They are essential to the city.

The recreation programs are very successful in New Brighton. There is a need to ensure their success and push to become even better and more suited to the individual's needs. Enhancements in communications, public input, marketing and program revisions are identified needs to keep programs fresh and vital.

Communications bring people into the loop of recreation programs. It keeps people informed of changes and additions as well as supporting return customers. Without a strong communications network, the programs may quickly fall out of favor with the people of New Brighton. According to the New Brighton Community Survey, in Appendix A, some of the people in the city do not get the New Brighton Bulletin and other mailings due to zip code issues. Also there is an expressed wish to add e-mail addresses as a form of communication with the city.

Public input is a necessity for a governmental body to become successful in all aspects of community development. Conducting a public opinion survey on a regular basis (i.e. every five years) helps determine the pulse of the community and allows the city to better meet resident and business needs. The survey gathers the freshest ideas about New Brighton and gets feedback regarding program and facility satisfaction, needs, trends and priorities.

Marketing is just as important as communication and public input. The City is like any other business, it is trying to sell products to its users. New Brighton needs to create an appealing product for its people.



Program revisions are needed to keep the programs fresh. This could be as simple as changing the name of the program to changing the program completely. Revisions could take place every year when a program is lacking attendance. Programs that work should not be changed.

2. Youth Engagement

There is a large array of programs and activities available to New Brighton kids. These are offered by the City, schools, churches and other groups. The professionals serving them appear connected and collaborative. These relationships and thoughtful communications are great strengths to build from. Youth are our future and it is important to provide healthy, engaging and productive activities to allow youth to reach their potential.

The identified needs for youth engagement are: a mix of after-school and all-day summer programming; safe places for teens to hang out; youth engagement of community; intergenerational programs; demographic forecasts; team sports and athletics; relationships with surrounding communities; marketing for programs and services; and making New Brighton a healthy place for kids.

Older (14-18 yr old) teens appear to want “safe places to hang out” and activities more than structured programs. There is a need for improved access to casual recreational activities (basketball, volleyball, swimming, etc.), rather than organized team sports.

Through youth engagement, older teens could be more involved in the community either through volunteerism or employment initiatives. Parks and Recreation does a good job of growing staff, but if more or different programs are to emerge to meet future needs, young people could be included in planning and carrying out those programs.

The graying of New Brighton provides an opportunity to involve seniors and young people in creative ways with inter-generational programs

Partnerships between New Brighton and other surrounding communities are good, but could be strengthened. Parks and recreation users frequently cross geopolitical boundaries to find programs for kids.

An improved communication and marketing strategy is needed to let kids and parents know what is going on and where to go for services. This may best be done using the Internet as many kids are very tech savvy and connected via the Web.

3. Public Art

Public art is an important element of community spirit, vitality and identity. Public art helps define sense of place and enhances public space. New Brighton is evolving and redeveloping and wants to enhance sense of community and strengthen city identity. Projects like the Northwest Quadrant redevelopment are examples of creative and market-driven change that responds to an evolving community. It is important that the NW Quadrant incorporate public art and public space. Most new successful redevelopments in the Twin City area focus on a lively public space and incorporate public art as defining and accent elements.



The Council, Commission and public input gathered during this process supports public art in New Brighton. The key questions are: how? and, where? The Public Art Strategic Plan provides a framework for establishing a public art process in New Brighton. It is clear that the NW Quadrant, city buildings and city parks hold the greatest initial opportunities. It is also clear that policy makers favor functional art elements. These can be many things such as benches, signs, lighting, play areas, gardens, plazas, buildings, bridges, shelters, etc. Art can be incorporated into city improvement and replacement projects.

There is also considerable interest in expanding fine arts and cultural arts programs, classes and events. These activities enliven a city and build communities. The Parks and Recreation Department can play a key leadership role in fostering an arts community.

4. Benefits of Parks and Recreation

The benefits of parks and recreation go beyond parks and programs and extend community wide. In general there is a lack of understanding of the important and diverse role that recreation plays in the community and in people's lives. Those benefits such as community building, health and wellness, safety, human and cultural development, recreation experiences, natural resource stewardship, etc. should be consistently portrayed in communications within the City and to the public. Increasing awareness leads to advocacy and builds constituency for parks, recreation, trails and community improvements.

Deficiencies/needs

Table 10 - 1 Park Land Needs

Park Land Needs	Standard Acres/ 1,000 pop.*	Needs (AC)	<u>Available</u>
Small parks/playgrounds	0.25 – 0.5	5.75 – 11.5	22.0
Neighborhood Parks	1.0 – 2.0	23.0 – 46.0	58.5
Community/Open Space Parks	5.0 – 8.0	115.0 – 184.0	167.0
TOTALS	6.25 – 10.5	143.75 – 241.5	247.5

* Based on a population of 23,000 and NRPA standards of 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 population

Existing Parks Inventory

According to the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Strategic Plan in Appendix A, during the various neighborhood meetings it became evident that parks in New Brighton are the primary neighborhood activity centers and are the parts of the community that residents identify most with. Overall the community is very satisfied with its park system. Based on national park standards, New Brighton has an adequate land supply of various park types to meet its current population base. The most significant changes in the park system will consist of programs, which must adapt to a changing demographic profile and user demand. Please refer to Appendix F for park inventory maps.



Park Standards

Table 10 - 3 Park Standards

Park Type	Size Parameters (AC)	Radius of Service Area(mi)
School Parks	3 to 10	0.5
Neighborhood Parks	3 to 10	0.5
Community Parks	10 to 25	2.0
Athletic Parks	20 to 40	N/A
Open Space Parks	Varies	N/A
Regional Parks	100 +	N/A
Special Purpose Facilities	Varies	N/A

Future Park System

Including schools, the City has an adequate supply of park land in its park system per NRPA standards. The future park system includes the following elements:

- **School Parks**
These are smaller elementary school parks with a limited amount of facilities including playground equipment and ball fields. School parks are parks where the City programs athletic activities or leagues. They are three- to ten-acres in size.
- **Neighborhood Parks**
The function of neighborhood parks is primarily to service the neighborhood that immediately surrounds the park. These are also relatively small parks ranging in size from three to ten acres. Neighborhood parks have some structured or programmed play within them, most notably in the form of ball fields. Other components include picnic facilities and active play areas plus playground equipment. Neighborhood parks are intended to accommodate both active and passive activities. They are intended to correlate with the neighborhood's demographics and geographic size. Neighborhood parks are not simply places for active recreational play but are also intended to facilitate neighborhood interaction and social activities. They are gathering places, places where residents of all lifestyles and backgrounds are encouraged to interact as productive and healthful members of the neighborhood community.
- **Community Parks**
These are generally larger than neighborhood parks and are intended to serve the entire community. Where neighborhood parks tend to be similar in character and design, consistent with neighborhood demographics, community parks are unique in that they are one-of-a-kind facilities that service the entire population of New Brighton. These parks accommodate both active and passive recreational activities including programmed athletic events, tennis courts, basketball courts, picnic areas, trails and nature interpretation. They are intended to function as gathering places for larger community events.



- **Athletic Parks**

Athletic parks are those found in conjunction with school facilities. These accommodate athletic events and, in particular, school athletic events. These are structured and programmed facilities that serve the entire community but are not under the jurisdiction of the City of New Brighton.

- **Open Space Parks and Greenways**

The City currently has two such parks including Creekview and Hansen Parks. These are primarily for the purpose of preserving important natural resources (e.g. wetlands, woodlands, etc.). These parks accommodate more passive activities like walking and wildlife interpretation rather than athletic activities. Greenways create connections or linkages which are extensions of the park system and connect important natural resource elements while re-establishing important historical wetland and drainage patterns. These are generally very large parks whose primary purpose is the protection of valuable natural resources.

- **Regional Parks**

These are very large parks which serve the larger regional population and, in particular, Ramsey County. Long Lake Regional Park is the only such facility in the City of New Brighton. Regional parks contain specialized elements which are not likely to be provided by a municipality. They are not parks having elements of an athletic park but provide unique one-of-a-kind type facilities like swimming beaches, nature trails and interpretation, cross-country skiing and support facilities like picnicking. These parks give heavy emphasis to the preservation and management of flora and fauna and resident interpretation of them.

- **Special Purpose Recreational Facilities**

These are facilities which provide indoor recreation and specialized public outdoor recreation facilities. Uses include community centers with indoor playgrounds, swimming pools, racket court facilities, gymnasiums, community rooms and outdoor facilities like golf courses, driving ranges, miniature golf courses and parks and facilities which provide opportunities for historical interpretation.

Trails & Sidewalk Strategic Plan

Policies

The City's park, recreation and trails policies are to:

Intergovernmental Cooperation

1. Expand cooperative agreements with other units of government and school districts 282 and 621 to best utilize the City's parks, recreation and open space facilities.
2. Consider the acquisition of tax-forfeited properties or surplus government land for recreation uses which are consistent with adopted park plans.

Existing Park Maintenance, Expansion and Restructuring

3. Give primary emphasis to the expansion of existing parks rather than the development of new facilities where possible to make parks more compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.



4. Restructure or redesign parks over time, as money can be made available, to make them consistent with the demographics of neighborhoods and the community.
5. Maintain a level of activity within parks that is compatible with the park's surroundings, especially in neighborhood settings.
6. Maintain the existing urban forest at Hansen Park and expand it wherever the City's park system allows and monies are available.

Trails and Connections

7. Establish a safe and convenient greenway/trail system which interconnects schools, parks, community recreation facilities and other community activity centers.
8. Employ a variety of means to protect greenways utilizing public acquisition and greenway easements.

Special Uses and Programs

9. Continue to support golf course improvements and remodeling using golf course revenues as the primary source of funding.
10. Continue to keep the Family Service Center one of the main focal points for resident involvement.

Background

The following is an evaluation of the City of New Brighton's sidewalk and trail system, a discussion of trail and sidewalk trends & needs and specific strategies and recommendations for improving trails and sidewalks in New Brighton.

Trails are the most used and most desired recreation feature. They appeal to all ages and abilities and also perform an alternative transportation function. It can be difficult to add new trails or sidewalks in established neighborhoods. However, the lack of trails in New Brighton is a significant deterrent to new investment and quality of life. The barriers of I-35W and I-694 inhibit pedestrian movement and bicycle use. These safety issues make the addition of trails and sidewalks an even greater priority. Fortunately there are grant and funding sources to assist with trail construction and partners abound. Also, the City is close to other neighboring trail systems. Creating connections to those systems will expand access for New Brighton residents.

The City should commit resources to make New Brighton a walkable community within 10 years. This will pay dividends to the community in terms of accessibility and community identity and will enhance quality of life for all residents, businesses and organizations.

Existing Conditions

According to the 2005 public opinion survey in Appendix A, walking and biking are of the most popular and desired recreation activities in the City of New Brighton. Trails and sidewalks perform a recreation, transportation and safety function linking residents to each other and to important community gathering places.



The sidewalk system has a good network of walks, the City has 21 miles of sidewalks, but they often encounter barriers at freeway overpasses. The freeway barriers increase the difficulty to have a first class walking and biking network.

While the City has a good network of sidewalks, there are very few trails in New Brighton. The City's few trails are short sections in some city parks and more popular longer trails in Hansen Park.

Trails were not as popular during New Brighton's period of development as they are today. The lack of trails in New Brighton puts it at a competitive disadvantage compared to other cities. Many people and businesses choose houses or work locations based on access to trails and parks. Trails also improve property values. Studies show that properties in close proximity to trails that link parks and open space have a higher property value than land with no access to trails.

Specific Existing Trail and Sidewalk Observations / Opportunities

1. Sidewalks exist on most/all high traffic roadways, on only one side (requiring more crossings by pedestrians).
2. Low volume, residential streets have few parked cars. City staff feels they are safe for walking and biking on.
3. Schools have good sidewalk connections and marked roadway crossings. The city has a snow plowing plan to get these walks clear by school opening time.
4. City has few trails (vs. sidewalks). They exist mainly in parks and a few key connections along the north side of I-694. Residents complain they have no place to bike off of the street, in-line skate or for a pleasurable walk.
5. Many residents bike on the sidewalk, and are confused as to whether this is legal. The city feels it is safe due to low volumes of usage.
6. Large barriers to pedestrians and bicyclists moving through the community include; I-694, I-35W, railroads, and Long Lake. The city center area (10th St/Old Highway 8) has poor trail connections with the rest of the city. 10th St NW and Old Highway 8 have high volumes of traffic and the sidewalk system is un-continuous, requiring multiple crossings. There are no safe bike trail connections.
7. A dangerous crossing situation exists at Long Lake Road and I-694; this is an uncontrolled intersection, with poor visibility (this interchange will be updated as part of the 35W/694 reconstruction).
8. Traffic control/calming is lacking in some situations making roadway shoulder use and crossings dangerous.
9. Trail and sidewalk construction is sometimes more difficult in a built community vs. a newly developing community due to the lack of easements or right-of-way.
10. Trail funding is one of the few project types that still has a number of different Federal and State grant/funding opportunities. All State and Federal funding sources require a local match.
11. The City of New Brighton, Ramsey County and other area cities are presently involved in a walkable communities planning effort which is designed to raise awareness of the need for making cities more pedestrian friendly and safer and to initiate design solutions at key intersections.
12. Development of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail segment within the city will link to the developed segments within the cities of Arden Hills and Shoreview and will provide a trail access to the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve located in Anoka County.



The existing Rice Creek West Regional Trail runs through the northern part of the city, linking to the Mississippi River.

Role and Importance of Trails and Sidewalks

Trails and sidewalks are important because they have proven to increase livability of communities. Trails and sidewalks create safe connections throughout the community, linking residents to each other and to important community gathering places. They give residents an opportunity to exercise, meet neighbors, patrol neighborhoods, an alternative to driving, and open residents' eyes to their surroundings and give them a sense of belonging and ownership. Trails are typically multi-use (for pedestrians, bicycles, in-line skaters, etc.) and sidewalks are typically for pedestrian use along roadways.

Trails are the most used and most desired recreation element. People of all ages and abilities use trails and sidewalks. Trails perform a recreation, transportation and safety function. Trails are an attraction to new residents and business. The lack of trails in New Brighton puts it at a competitive disadvantage compared to other cities. Trails also improve property values. Studies show that properties in close proximity to trails that link parks and open space have higher property values than land with no access to trails.

Cities with good sidewalk and trail systems have more opportunities for residents to recreate and lead an active life. Leading an active life has been shown to improve health and wellness, reduce health care costs and increase vitality.

Trends and Influences on Trails and Sidewalks

Recreational trail use has become very popular, especially as our society ages and people recognize the importance of exercise. Walking, jogging bicycling, and in-line skating are popular forms of exercise that are accessible to a large population.

People are looking for more walkable neighborhoods to live in.

Studies show that urban residents are generally healthier and less prone to obesity than suburban residents (where sidewalks are not as prevalent).

The 2005 New Brighton Community Survey in Appendix A showed that walking and bicycling are the most popular recreational activities among New Brighton residents.

Surrounding cities are planning and building trail connections. This includes trails in St. Anthony, Roseville, Minneapolis, Arden Hills, and Ramsey County trails.

Community Input

The City of New Brighton conducted a public opinion survey in October 2005 to measure residents' opinions about parks and recreation and city services. Please refer to Appendix A of this document to see the resident survey.

Typical Trail and Sidewalk Types and Use Considerations

The best type of pathway for a location depends on many variables, including the type and number of users expected, the level of safety required (traffic, isolation, visibility, etc.) and the constraints of the location.



Appropriate City Trail Standards:

- Designated Bike Route: On road, signed and mapped, use on low volume residential streets (no special striping).
- Bike Lanes: On-road striped bike lanes, signed, striped & mapped. Used on streets with wide shoulders, used by experienced bikers/commuters.
- Multi-use Trail: Bituminous trail separated from road (8-10ft). Width determined by volume of usage and site constraints. Multi-use by all ages and abilities. Can function as sidewalk and trail. Necessary on high volume roads.
- Sidewalk: Typically concrete (6 foot width). Best for walkers only. Could be used as trail if low volume usage.
- Unpaved Trail: Gravel, woodchip, or turf. Best for recreational walking experience.
- Boardwalk: Typically wood. Required for sensitive site conditions, creates a unique trail experience.

Best Trail Surface:

- Paved: Trails are typically bituminous to create handicapped and stroller access and a smoother and softer (than concrete) surface for a variety of recreational uses.
- Bituminous vs. Concrete: Sidewalks are typically concrete to create a more decorative, stronger, longer lasting surface, but is a generally harsher surface for running, walking, and rollerblading (due to jointing pattern).
- Unpaved: Trails for hiking can be turf, dirt, woodchip, or gravel.
- Boardwalk: Trails for site sensitive areas.

Types of Trail Users / Abilities and Needs:

- Pedestrians: hikers –able bodied, walkers w/dogs, recreational walkers, walkers with wheels – handicapped, strollers, destination walkers (bus stops, shopping, parking lot).
- Bicyclists/in-line skaters: children, families w/children, adults, commuters, experienced riders.

Trail and sidewalk locations/ placement/safety:

- Traffic control/calming for safer crossings and roadway shoulder use (where appropriate).
- Do not encourage/build trail crossings at busy uncontrolled roadways.
- Install appropriate lighting along trails and at roadway crossings.
- Fewer roadway crossings (trails on both sides or road)
- Many of the main roadways have large shoulders with no parking (12ft), offering opportunities for bike lanes. Consider traffic volumes and intended users to decide if on-road or separated trails are more appropriate.
- Tie into roadway upgrades (transportation plan). Bridges over 694 to be re-done (Long Lake Road, Old Hwy 8, Co Rd. F, CO Rd. E2)



- Connect key destinations in the city; The Family Service Center, Rice Creek West Regional Trail, Rice Creek North Regional Trail, Highway 96 Regional Trail, Long Lake Regional Park, city parks, schools, bus stops/routes, commercial areas.
- Connect to key destinations just outside the city; Silverwood Regional Park, Arden Hills Library, St. Anthony commercial area, St. Anthony Community Services and Pool, Arden Hills Army Ammunition Plant redevelopment, Lake Johanna and Tony Schmidt Regional Park.
- Look for opportunities to create trails with minimal street crossings, and along aesthetically enjoyable landscapes to improve safety and enjoyment by users.

Strategic Directions

Commit to Trail and Sidewalk System Goals

Along with a Master Trail and Sidewalk Plan, a set of goals is used to direct decisions and actions; opportunities and circumstances may effect plan trail locations. Following are a list of recommended goals:

1. **Maintenance and Safety:** Trails and sidewalks should be safe and include appropriate lighting, buffers from traffic, well-maintained surfaces, and safe roadway crossings.
2. **Enjoyment:** Trails should be destinations in themselves, located in safe, pleasant environments, away from traffic. Provide support features to improve experience.
3. **Provide Connections and Loops:** Trails and sidewalks should connect key destinations (parks, stores, libraries, family centers), and avoid trails that end and leave user with no safe routes. Trails and sidewalks should create loops for users to complete a circular route from one beginning location. Connect to larger trail systems beyond city boundaries (St. Anthony, Rice Creek, Arden Hills, Minneapolis Grand Rounds, Fridley).
4. **Access from Residential Areas:** Trails and sidewalks should have safe accessibility from residents' homes to encourage alternative to car use, and increase ease of use.
5. **Increase Use:** Communications/ information and events on New Brighton trail and sidewalk system should be produced to inform, encourage and expand types of users.
6. **A Community Resource:** The Trails and sidewalks system should make New Brighton more livable and should become one of the reasons to live and stay in New Brighton.
7. **Create Walkable Neighborhoods:** All new developments place importance on safe and enjoyable pedestrian/bike connection and less reliance on car, thus reducing demands on roadway and parking network, and providing a healthier alternative to automobile use.
8. **Increase Property Values:** The trail and sidewalk system tied to parks and open spaces can increase property values and generate increased property tax revenues. Studies show that properties next to parks and trails have increased in value compared to properties with no parks and/or trails nearby.
9. **Promote Active Living Lifestyles:** Trails and sidewalks are the number one source of exercise for most people. A comprehensive system of trails and sidewalks allow people to lead a more active lifestyle, which leads to increased health.

Trail and Sidewalk System Plan Strategies

A Master Trail and Sidewalk Plan is a part of the City's updated Comprehensive Plan and the following priority routes are recommended to be included.

(Refer to Figure 3: Recommended City Sidewalk and Trail System Plan in the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Strategic Plan located in Appendix A.)



1. Create trail “loop” around Long Lake by signing an on-road trail along Long Lake Road and building a trail link under the railroad at the Long Lake boat launch through the NE Quadrant development and to Long Lake Regional Park.
2. Create stronger trail connections to the Family Service Center: Put resources into getting safe trails along Old Hwy 8, 10th St. NW, and at the bridges of Long Lake Road & Hwy 8 over I-694.
3. Create an on-road bike route through the neighborhood on the west side of Pike Lake such that residents can connect to existing trail connections to Long Lake Regional Park.
4. Create trail loop around Jones Lake.
5. Create trail connection from Co. Rd. E to 7th St. through Hansen Park.
6. Create on-road bike route on 16th Street to link to Springbrook Nature Center and Moore Lake Beach. Coordinate with Fridley’s trail plans.
7. Consider sidewalks/trails on both sides of high traffic roadways (Silver Lake Road, Old Hwy 8, Co. Rd. E, 10th St. NW, etc.) to increase safety and reduce need to cross road.
8. Consider changing high use concrete sidewalks into wider multi-use bituminous trails to accommodate pedestrian and bicyclists and to get bicyclists off dangerous high traffic roadways, especially along Silver Lake Road.
9. Create on-road bike lanes through striping and signing on roadway shoulders along Silver Lake Road, 7th Street, Rice Creek Road and Long Lake Road.
10. Plan with adjacent cities to create a regional trail connection south to the Minneapolis Grand Rounds Park System. This regional connection has the potential to connect the Ramsey County Rice Creek Regional Trail system through New Brighton and St. Anthony to the Minneapolis Parkway Trail system for a large regional trail loop passing through the heart of New Brighton.

Trails Committee Action Strategies:

- Priorities for New Brighton roads:
 - Create a comprehensive signage plan for trails and parks consistent with the communities surrounding New Brighton
 - Construct a sidewalk on north side of 10th street to the Family Service Center from the intersection of Old HWY 8 and 10th St NW
 - Increase promotion of parks and trail assets on the city website
 - Construct a sidewalk on the east side of Long Lake Rd from Rice Creek trail to Irondale High School
 - Construct a barrier between traffic and the sidewalk on Old HWY 8 bridge over I-694
 - Create a trail moving north-south adjacent to the rail line
 - Widen the sidewalk on Silver Lake Rd south of I-694
 - Work in cooperation with surrounding communities to create connection between New Brighton and the Northstar Commuter line
- Priorities for Ramsey County roads
 - Construct multi-use trail crossings over I-35W at HWY 96, 10th St. NW and Cty Rd E2. These are premier gateway crossings connecting east and west. These trail improvements will be needed when MNDOT replaces or re-decks the bridges.
 - Hwy 96, County Road E2 and 10th St. NW bridges are also major pedestrian connections for New Brighton residents to cross I-35W. The pathway improvements on these bridges are vital to the New Brighton community.



- Old Hwy 8 bridge over I-694 is a major pedestrian connection to link a safe environment for pedestrians to travel to the New Brighton Exchange, Long Lake Regional Park, and the New Brighton Community Center. The improvement will be needed when MNDOT replaces or re-decks the Old Hwy 8 bridge.
- Create a safer crossing from Pike Lake Trail to Long Lake Regional park
- Construct a trail from Long Lake Regional Park train depot along Rush Lake north to Old HWY 8

Strategic Plan Action Strategies

1. Include a Trail and Sidewalk System Plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.
2. Build grass-roots citizen advocacy for trails.
3. Increase citizen awareness through mapping and printed literature: Create and post park and trail maps in parks and in public buildings. Include in new resident packets. Market parks and trails as part of a more livable community to attract new residents and keep current residents.
4. Require trail and sidewalk plans of all new development and have a review process.
5. Plan and advocate for safe trail routes through new I-694 interchanges and related roadway/bridge improvements for Northwest Quadrant development. This area is the heart of the city and needs to be well connected to the rest of the city.
6. Transportation planning should take into account and encourage bicycle and pedestrian usage.
7. Include trails in transportation planning; look for opportunities to use or reclaim right of way for trails or walks when streets are rebuilt.
8. Include art in trail amenity design, such as benches, gateways, signage, etc.
9. Increase citizen awareness and usage through events: incorporate events using the trail system for greater awareness and expanded users groups. Fund raising walks, youth bike rides, etc.

Funding Strategies

1. City Street Funds.
2. Property Tax Assessments.
3. Grants: Federal, State, Regional, Met Council with Ramsey County Parks.
4. Transportation Grants: TEA-21 Federal grants, State and County.
5. Work with other bodies: Interstate reconstruction - Insist that all replacement/reconstructed bridges are pedestrian and bike friendly. Development - Require trails and sidewalks as part of new development and redevelopment.
6. Bond referendums: Citizen approved city tax obligation used to pay for specific improvements such as trails, bridges or walkways.

Other agencies offer trail opportunities within and beyond City limits.

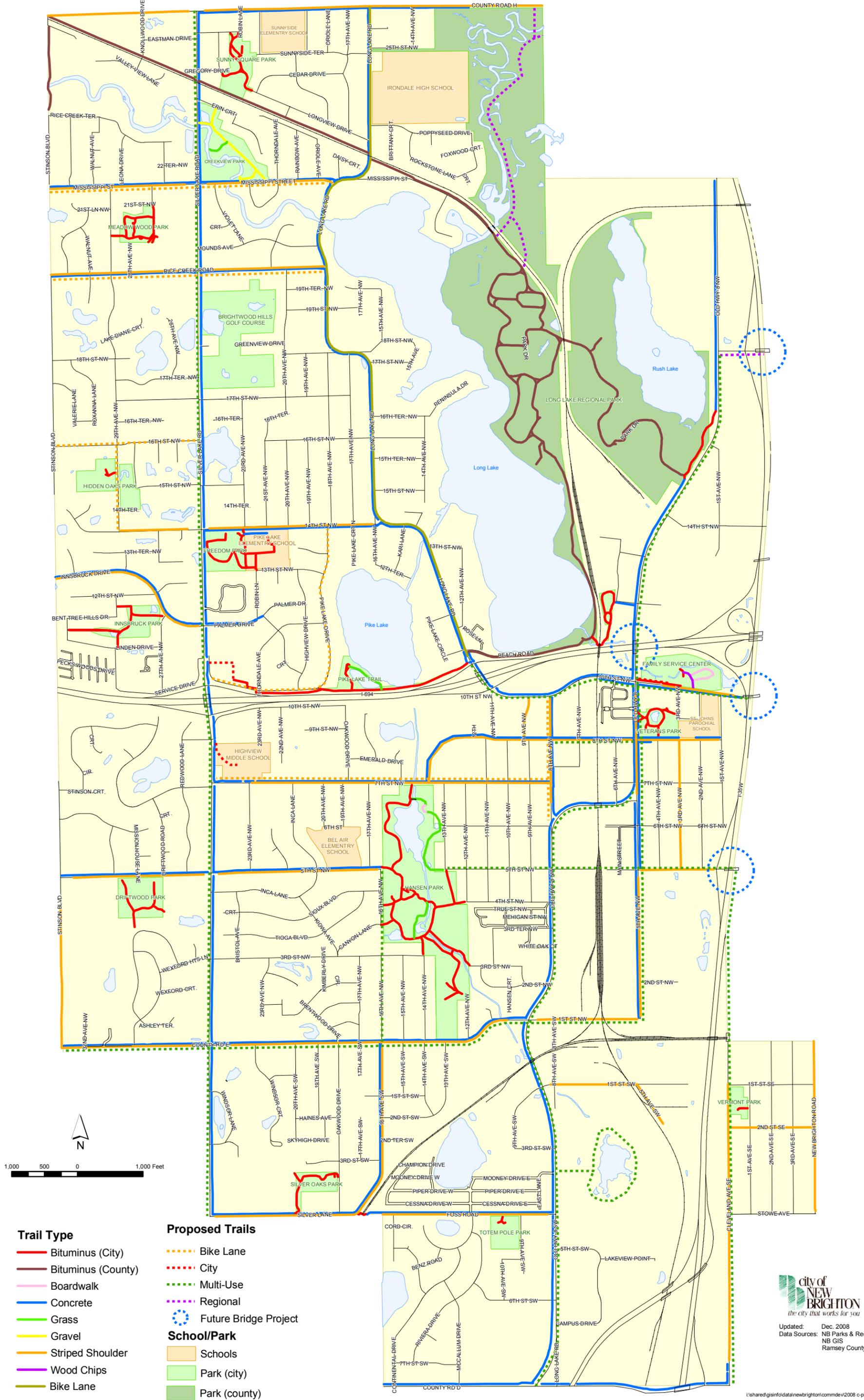
- Ramsey County owns and operates Long Lake Regional Park, a 202 acre regional park located in the northeast corner of New Brighton. It offers opportunities for walking, biking, nature study, boating and picnicking.
- Rice Creek West Regional Trail is located in the northern part of the city and connects Long Lake Regional Park with to the Mississippi River.



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- Highway 96 Regional Trail is partially complete and open to the city of New Brighton. The trail is proposed to be extended west to Long Lake Regional Park through Arden Hills and New Brighton
 - Rice Creek North Regional Trail would follow Rice Creek in the northeast part of the city. The trail in the city is undeveloped at this time.
 - Minneapolis, St. Anthony and Roseville are adding the NE Diagonal trail in 2006-07. Connections from New Brighton to these trails can dramatically expand residents' access to trails for recreation and transportation.

Please refer to the Master Trails Map on the next page to see the connections being discussed.

Figure 10-1 Pathways Parks & Schools





Brightwood Hills Golf Course Operations and Marketing Strategy

Summary

Brightwood Hills Golf Course is an essential recreation facility and element of the park system. The focus of the strategic plan is to:

1. Continue the current standards of operations and maintenance to maintain a high level of user satisfaction.
2. Explore ways to attract new users.
3. Enhance and use management information systems to provide timely guidance on operational issues and opportunities.
4. Establish a clear and sustainable financing strategy.
5. Create a policy guide for course operations and management.

Issues and Opportunities

Community Support

During the fall of 2005, the City conducted a public opinion survey. Please refer to Appendix A in this document for the detailed results of the community survey. The survey concluded that 89% of the residents of New Brighton view Brightwood Hills as a value to the community.

User Satisfaction

User input collected during the planning process demonstrated a high level of satisfaction for current approaches to the operation and maintenance of Brightwood Hills. The users did not identify any critical flaw to be addressed by this plan. This input did, however, discover opportunities of enhancement of the user experience and satisfaction.

User Survey

User input collected during the planning process showed a strong positive evaluation of both course condition and facilities operation.

A golf course user survey was conducted in September 2005. Course patrons were asked to complete a 46-question survey form. A total of 124 surveys were submitted. These surveys provide some interesting insights about the users of Brightwood Hills.

- The majority of those surveyed (69%) do not live in New Brighton.
- A slightly higher proportion of the users are female (56%).
- The median age of the respondents was 44 years old.
- These users had a long term relationship with the course, playing at Brightwood Hills an average of eight years.
- At the time of the survey, the respondents had played an average of 18 rounds at Brightwood Hills in 2005.
- Two-thirds of those surveyed played in leagues.
- The season pass was not popular among the survey participants, with only 16% purchasing a pass in 2005.



The majority of survey questions addressed satisfaction with the operation and maintenance of the course. The survey asked for a response on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). The chart in Table 1 contains the average response for each element of the survey. The overall results show a strong level of user satisfaction for all facets of operation and maintenance. Several responses warrant additional discussion:

- The weakest level of satisfaction came in the areas of availability of drinking water and availability of the beverage cart. Focus group participants also expressed desired for improvements in this area (see additional information on the focus group in the next section).
- Some of the strongest positive responses focused on the courteousness and helpfulness of maintenance and clubhouse staff.
- The lower rated maintenance items were more directed at golfer etiquette (i.e. – divots repaired and broken tees removed) than at city actions.

Strategic Plan

Vision for Brightwood Hills

Brightwood Hills is a unique combination of recreation facility, park and open space. As a recreation facility, the City seeks to provide an excellent experience for golfers of all ages and skills. As a park, the City seeks to integrate other activities that are compatible with and supportive of the golf course. As open space, the City seeks to maintain and enhance the natural features of Brightwood Hills.

Strategies

Management Practices

A key strategy for Brightwood Hills is “stay the course”. The City should continue to use management practices and investments that result in a high quality and user friendly golf experience.

The City must attract and retain competent and personable staff. Brightwood Hills staff are the ambassadors of golf in New Brighton. Treatment by staff influences customer perception as much as the condition of the course.

The City should create and use management information about the course. Specific actions related to this strategy include:

1. Continue to integrate all relevant information into a common reporting system.
2. Explore ways of refining and enhancing information produced by existing point of sale software.
3. Create means of collecting and reporting details about daily rounds played.
4. Develop and maintain a base of information for current and new customers. This process is initiated when the players call for tee times or visit the golf course. Information to be collected includes name, phone number, mailing address, and email address. The information can be compiled using general spreadsheet or database software or by software specifically designed for this purpose.



The City should establish a “golf advisory committee.” This group provides an ongoing link between the City, users and neighbors. The primary role of the committee would be to assist staff in the evaluation of program and pricing options. Having user participation in the process enhances the potential for success in key decisions.

Operations

Making golfing at Brightwood Hills the best possible use of the user’s time and money will be the guiding principle. The focus of this plan is on ways to sustain and enhance current practices. Two specific actions identified during the planning process are:

1. Explore ways to improve the general availability of drinking water and beverages to golfers, with particular attention given to hot days.
2. Encourage user awareness and support of actions to support maintenance of the course, including removal of broken tees and repair of divots.

The user survey should be conducted annually beginning in late August. The survey provides an important communications tool between Brightwood Hills and its users.

A Brightwood Hills Operation Policy Manual was created by the City and Wilson Golf Group as part of this strategic planning process. The manual was based on a draft manual provided by Wilson Golf and was refined by City staff to meet Brightwood Hills needs. The manual establishes policies for clubhouse, league, maintenance and marketing operations.

Financial Management

The City should convert the golf course from an enterprise fund to a special revenue fund. This change will allow for clearer and more conscious decision-making about the use of general revenues to support operations.

It is important that the golf course maintain the best possible financial condition. To this end, all fees and charges should be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis. The purpose of the review is to maximize revenue without creating economic barriers to the numbers of rounds played. Particular attention should be given to special pricing options. Any discounting of green fees should be based on the following:

- Encouraging the use of unused or underutilized tee times. Reduced fees should never apply to prime tee times.
- Attracting new customers to the course.
- Enhancing effectiveness of discount by limiting use by single golfer. Requiring use by foursome brings in more golfers and promotes efficient use of course.
- Limiting special pricing to certain times and days to meet the needs of the course, not the needs of the customer.

Special pricing should also consider options to enhance income by packing green fees with cart rental and a meal.



Leagues

Brightwood Hills should focus on filling up the golf course with leagues and golf outings, thereby producing a steady core business that will consider Brightwood Hills their “home course” and will produce additional rounds by league members on non-league days. Leagues and outings will play at inclement weather times and have a positive effect on the bottom line of the golf course. This approach allocates the prime tee times to league play. The City will explore other ways to promote the use of remaining tee times. More detailed strategies on league design appear in the Brightwood Hills Operations Policy Manual.

An early registration period should be offered to leagues from the previous year. This policy rewards ongoing patronage of Brightwood Hills.

The annual marketing program for league play at Brightwood Hills should include the following:

1. The league informational brochure/flyer should be prepared for both print and electronic distribution.
2. The brochure should be posted on the City’s website, including registration forms and schedules.
3. League information should be published in all Park and Recreation program guides.
4. City newsletters should contain instructions on how to obtain league information.
5. A coordinated system should be established for tracking the receipt and response to inquiries by phone and email. All inquiries should obtain name, phone number, mailing address and email to facilitate follow up.
6. Staff at Brightwood Hills should promote and hand out flyers in the spring to customers playing the golf course.

Standing Tee Times

One night per week (day depends on league interest) should be set aside to sell standing tee times. These times would be dedicated to a foursome of golfers that want to play together every week, but do not want to join a league. Forward reservations should require prepayment to protect these prime times against no shows and short shows.

Physical Improvements

The strategic planning process shown in Appendix A, finds the Brightwood Hills course and clubhouse to be in good physical condition. The focus of the plan is to maintain the current level of quality. The recommended physical improvements are:

Enhancement of the “curb appeal” from Silver Lake Road.

- Improved identification signage through relocation of the existing sign to a more visible location and the addition of golf signage/images along the course fence.
- Adding golf related art.
- Adding a spray aerator to the pond along Silver Lake Road.



- Trimming the existing evergreen trees located between the pond and the parking area to improve visibility.
- Screening the maintenance area from the parking lot and cart paths.
- Concentration of picnicking and outdoor dining areas next to the clubhouse.
- Moving the practice greens closer to the clubhouse.

Programming

- Better food and beverage selections and presentation in the clubhouse.
- Evaluate green fees pricing.
- Expand course non-golf use of the course. I.e. Monthly winter events at the course (1st Saturday each month?) to build broader community support.
- Increase access to drinking water on the course.

Recreation Program Strategies

Role and Importance of Recreation Programs

Recreation programs have many benefits to the community and to participants. Among the major benefits are:

1. Recreation and active living are important to personal health.
2. Recreation and parks build stronger families and healthier communities.
3. Recreation reduces health care, social service and police/justice costs.
4. Recreation and parks are significant economic generators.

There is growing recognition of the importance of keeping active and fit. This renewal of interest in "active living" is a response to increased obesity, health issues associated with lack of exercise, a desire for personal wellness, and the benefits of building a series of connections to others, community, and the environment. There is also significant interest in life-long learning, which recreation can help fulfill.

Most recreation programs can be divided into four major categories:

- Youth
- Senior
- Adult
- Family

Recreation is essential to the development of our children and youth: We learn motor skills (physical) through play and sports. We learn social skills through play and sports. We learn creativity through play and arts/cultural activity. We develop intellectual capacities and concepts through play – and many other life skills. With changing demographics, perceived negative youth behavior, increase of “latchkey” kids, and need for education attainment, youth recreation programming has become a vital role in youths’ and their parents’ lives. Recreation, sports, and arts/culture reduce self-destructive behavior and negative social activity in youth – an antidote to



smoking, substance abuse, suicide, and depression. Recreation, sports, and arts/culture reduce crime – particularly effective with juvenile delinquents.

Recreation programs for senior citizens offer exercise for body and mind, health education and socialization. Without recreation programs, many seniors would not get the health or social benefits they need. Recreation and active living helps people live longer – adding up to two years to life expectancy, prolongs independent living for seniors, significantly reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke, combats diabetes and back pain, helps in preventing site specific cancers, reduces stress and aids mental health and well-being.

Adult recreation programs offer many types of benefits to adults. Adults join the programs to learn, participate in a sport or activity, keep fit, live a healthy lifestyle, and to meet new people. These amenities are invaluable for the healthy development of a community.

Recreation for everyone is a very important element within the greater structure of New Brighton's community. The programs offer not only exercise, but also a chance to socialize and have fun with other community members. Better quality recreation programs can also potentially attract new taxpayers to the city. Families that play together – stay together. Children and youth remain connected; couples that share leisure interests are more likely to stay together.

Recreation, sports, and arts/culture produce leaders who serve their communities in many ways. Recreation and parks are often the catalysts that build strong, self-sufficient communities (sports groups, arts guilds, adopt-a-park). Culture helps people understand their neighbors, their history, and their environment.

Recommendations:

Generally, the Parks and Recreation Department runs the recreation programs very well. The programs are working for the people that are currently engaged with the activities. However, there is room for improvement. There are three primary areas for strategic improvement - communications/awareness, user feedback and program content.

a) Communication/ Awareness

The marketing and communications within New Brighton are fairly successful according to the public opinion survey results. Citizens, for the most part, are receiving mailings sent out by the City.

- **Communication is the key to successful recreation programming.**
- **Assure that recreation staff members are well connected with their user groups** (seniors, youth, families, cultural groups, etc.).
- **Create a calendar of events to be included in the recreation brochures.** Add four-month pullout calendars for youth, teen, adult, and senior activities.
- **Organize a volunteer senior newsletter and get more recreation information in the local newspapers.**



- **Make sure everyone in the city is receiving our mailings.** Some of the households that are within the City are not receiving the Parks and Recreation brochure. The residents that do get the brochure often times may not recognize it as a city mailing.
- **Create an appeal to the many different types of individuals.** The recreation brochure has a large target audience. It has to appeal to many different types of individuals. Each citizen deserves the right to recreation programming that fits his or her personality and cultural background. The City should look at school and census demographics to match target markets' needs by geographic area. According to the demographics of the 1990 and 2000 Census, two out of the six neighborhoods in New Brighton experienced growth of African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics by nearly 300%. This data suggests that portions of the city may have different recreation needs than the others.
- **The quality of recreation brochure should match the type of community it is intended for.** The current Recreation Brochure is constructed of newsprint paper, with color graphics and is easy to read. It is suggested by the Peer Focus Group within Appendix A that a recreation brochure should have a nice cover and cover graphics to announce that this is the recreation brochure. If the citizen gets a brochure that looks like junk mail, they may treat it like junk mail. Besides having a nice cover, other options may be added such as, referencing community education information, pull out calendars, and adding city information so the recreation brochure is more of a one-stop-shop for city programming. Contrary to the Peer Focus Group, City Staff has suggested that a fancy brochure may seem too expensive for such a conservative community.
- **Send out welcome packages to newcomers to let them know what their new community has to offer.** The packets could be something like the ones you get at the post office during a change of address. It could have an introduction to the City of New Brighton, recreation brochures, tasteful advertisements for local restaurants, shops, and businesses, and City contacts and general information.
- **Try renaming old programs to a newer name.** Renaming an older program to a flashier name has been known to increase the participation rate. Also, including some buzz words like camp, excursion, unique, trailblazing, etc. are going to catch the readers eye more often than just "boys swimming." New Brighton, for the most part, does a good job of naming their programs appropriately. Besides the name of the program, the descriptive text that goes with the program advertisement must not be taken lightly. The text is what readers scour for facts and exciting aspects of the program. The exciting and flashy name draws people to the text; the text should be very well composed, sinuous as a meandering river.

b) **User/ Resident Feedback**

- **Formalize user and public feedback methods and use the input to drive program decisions.** User feedback is essential to the learning process of any institution. Feedback will give the city a starting point in tuning their needs to better suit the publics' concerns. The formalization of this process will greatly



improve the efficiency of the input data. The time and money in the front end of the formalization process will pay large dividends in the future for both the fiscal and fun factors.

- **Continue to perform Public Opinion Surveys.** One of the primary public input tools is the mail-back public opinion survey. The survey is used to obtain user feedback regarding program and facility satisfaction, needs, trends and priorities. The survey content should be based on staff and commission input as well as recreation stakeholder taskforce input and should be sent to the City Council for their review prior to mailing. The survey should also be graphically pleasing and user-friendly. They should be sent out a few times a decade to “take the pulse” of the community. The public opinion survey is statistically valid and is the most efficient means to gather information from the whole community (recreation users and non-users). The survey serves as a baseline for setting realistic and achievable goals for the future of New Brighton.

c) **Program Content**

- **Continue to keep the recreation program content and timing fresh and in tune with community needs.**
- **Continue to expand culturally based recreation programs.** Research the demographics of the community, and focus the programs on the cultural profiles within the community. Fill in the cultural gap where minorities may feel left out.
- **Expand arts programs and activities.** The Public Art Focus Area Plan in Appendix A contains ideas and strategies for enhancing public art in New Brighton. This should be extended to additional arts and culture program offerings. Creativity and design through art is about problem solving, which can be applied to almost every activity.
- **Fill in the age gap where teenagers have a hard time finding something constructive to do.** Between the ages of 14 and 18, kids have a hard time figuring out exactly what activities they wish to participate. Most of the scholastic activities are very competitive in high school, vying for a scholarship or a place on a collegiate team. Kids that don’t show interest in competitive sports may be missing out on many social and physical activities. They need a venue to support their needs.
- **Create a Senior Advisory Committee to oversee the creation of senior programs.** This advisory committee would be responsible for voicing the opinions of the senior population within New Brighton. They are the people that are receiving the products and would like to have a large say in what they are.
- **Involve kids in decision-making.** Let them have input on what types of recreation activities are offered. As with the senior advisory group, it is suggested that kids and young adults have a voice for the creation of programs in their community. Kids could sit in on Commission meetings and have a seat in City Council meetings. Also young children should be heard. Kids visiting the



Eagles Nest Play Area could draw pictures of their favorite activities, thus giving an idea of what they would like to see from the City's recreation programs.

- **Introduce alternative sports camps and tournaments.** Step away from the “norm.” Cricket, lacrosse, disc golf, skateboarding, in-line skating, etc. are gaining popularity among today's youth. New Brighton has a great skate park; a tournament, similar to ESPN's X-Games could be held to attract many visitors to the area.
- **Offer one-day sports camps.** One-day sports camps would be a free service to the public. They would be an introductory experience to interested residents so they can figure out what a program or sport is before they commit to a three-month long program.
- **Tie the programs to a mission or vision.** All the programs should be adopted for a purpose. If they have no reason for being there, and they are not cohesive with the vision or mission of the community, they should be dropped.
- **Recreation programs should be well thought out and fit with the overall mission of the community and the New Brighton Parks, Recreation and Trails Strategic Plan.**

Youth Engagement Strategies

An Assessment of Youth Development in New Brighton

These findings and this section is the review of Change Inc. in Appendix A. In considering the youth development capacities of the City of New Brighton, Change Inc. conducted a review of youth programs and practices between August 2005 and February 2006. After compiling an inventory of services (attached), a literature review of available surveys, studies and reports, interviews with a small sample of professionals, structured teen focus groups and individual conversations with area youth, we offer the following observations of existing conditions:

- New Brighton is a vibrant community that values its children and young people. We were genuinely impressed by the sense of place and comfort that young people expressed in where they lived. Kids generally thought their schools, churches, parks and police were supportive and the adults they had contact with truly cared. The array and availability of programs and activities available through the Parks and Recreation Department, schools and community education, athletic councils, churches and private nonprofit organizations is impressive considering the relative size of New Brighton's youth population. The Family Service Center and Eagles Nest, as well as the 12 parks and numerous green spaces, are valued (and used) by the whole community. School programs are strong and recognized for their excellence. Vital social services, provided primarily through nonprofit organizations and Ramsey County, are accessible and available to most youth and families. Social and academic indicators on the most recent Minnesota Student Survey Results were consistent with comparable communities' trends and it could be said that, like Lake Wobegone, the children are collectively “above average.” For most kids New Brighton is viewed as a good place to grow up.



- New Brighton is intrinsically connected to its neighbors. Being positioned at the crossroads of I-35 and I-694 and being equidistant from Minneapolis and St. Paul gives New Brighton a unique position in the metro complex. The city's proximity to economic, cultural and social opportunities is an advantage that many suburban communities would envy. The ability to draw neighboring residents to recreation programs and facilities while having options available to New Brighton residents in nearby communities appears to be balanced and works reasonably well. While there is some friendly competition between communities it doesn't appear as divisive as in some other parts of the metro area. Drawing from 10 municipalities, the Mounds View School District is the largest institutional presence in the lives of New Brighton children and youth. As the "home" of Irondale High, Highview Middle, Bel Air and Sunnyside Schools as well as the Pike Lake Community Education Center, New Brighton is the geographical center of the school district. This presents both opportunities and responsibilities. New Brighton is critically invested in the success of the district and must work diligently to sustain its collaborative relationships with the schools.
- Collaborative youth programming and practice exists but appears to be fraying. There is ample evidence of people pulling talents and resources together to support children and early teens. In addition to operating their own programs and camps, the New Brighton Parks and Recreation Department partners with many players in the youth serving community - from athletic associations, to community education and schools, to residential complexes, to public charter schools, to nonprofits and churches. There appears to be a comfort level with innovation and a facility for building alliances by departmental leaders. People in the local youth serving community, small as it is, seem to know and trust each other. Diminishing school enrollments as well as severe reductions in governmental resources and funding appears to be testing some of these collaborative arrangements however. The next 5-10 years will reveal whether the New Brighton community can come together to buttress its collective capacity or downsize expectations and move to manage its own organization and "turf." A graying resident population, higher local property taxes, increasing cultural diversity, reduced state and county funding, under funded social services, big development projects and increased infrastructure needs – all will test the community's capacity to support its collective well being through collaboration and investment in children and youth.

Needs

Even though there is an impressive array of recreation programs, activities and facilities available to New Brighton kids, there are needs, questions and observations that need to be addressed if the community truly wants to embrace a strong youth development agenda. Ten themes of "need" emerged:

- **Out-of-School Time Opportunities:** The mix of (and access to) after-school and all-day summer recreation programming – particularly for low-income elementary and middle school youth (quality, location and transportation) appears to be underdeveloped. Integration of academic enrichment and recreation programming should be recognized as a current and future need - a review process that clarifies family/school/community goals would be helpful.
- **Youth Friendly "Chill" Places:** Older (14-18 yr old) teens want "safe places to hang out" and fun activities more than structured "programs." Places where they hang out now are a concern because of real and perceived inappropriate (or unlawful) behavior. Access to casual recreational activities (basketball, volleyball, swimming, dancing, arts, etc.) – rather than team sports needs to be encouraged.



- Youth Engagement and Leadership: Older teens could also be more engaged in community life either through volunteerism or employment. The Parks and Recreation Department staff do a good job – but if more or different programs are to emerge to meet future needs, young people should be included more in planning and carrying out those programs.
- Inter-generational Interface: The graying of New Brighton provides an opportunity to involve seniors and young people in creative ways. It is worth exploring.
- School Facility Access: Demographic forecasts – schools are closing – what will the impact be on the current array of recreation programs and facilities?
- Housing/Growth Impact: With the new NW Quadrant development - who is expected to live there and what social services/supports are anticipated?
- Team sports and athletics: How do recreational, intramural and “traveling” leagues co-exist and collaborate?
- Regional Planning and Stewardship: What is the covenant between New Brighton and other surrounding communities? It appears that parks and recreation users frequently cross geo-political boundaries to find programs for kids. What are the regional needs and who is best suited to serve them?
- Marketing: Is the practice of marketing programs and services maximizing opportunity? How well do you communicate with kids and parents about what’s available? Does the fee and pricing structure of youth recreation programs affect capacity and availability?
- Vision Driven Collaboration: Can New Brighton sustain a “healthy youth/healthy community” initiative? Work was done in the mid-late 90’s following a Search Institute study. What happened? What didn’t? Did champions emerge? What were the lessons learned?

Strategies

As stated before, it’s our impression that New Brighton is doing a fine job of providing recreation and pro-social experiences for children and youth – particularly those whose families can financially afford them. However, we remain intrigued by what’s possible in New Brighton if it decided to more comprehensively address the needs and improve the capacities of all its children.

It is common to ask the question: “what should the city or its Parks and Recreation Department’s role be in youth development?” Beyond being stewards of the public land and managers of resources – the question is not answerable by an outside consultant. That has to come from leaders in the department and the community they serve. If they truly want – and intend – to see improved skill development and economic opportunity, stronger academic achievement, better physical health, more socially appropriate behavior and less crime, stronger families and neighborhoods, and more hope, they can do it in a number of ways, playing various roles - if they are willing to change their civic culture and invite participation and leadership from others.

None of the following strategies provide a magic bullet or guarantees of successful, quantifiable youth development outcomes. However, the recommendations presented are gleaned from research of best practices that appear to be plausible for New Brighton based on the capacities we’ve seen. Programs and



services can be built from youth development principles in small endeavors and/or taken to a larger scale when embraced by multiple partners city-wide. Bottom line, healthy youth community building requires leadership and investment that overtly articulates that young people are important and that their success is vital to the collective well-being.

It is our recommendation that the City of New Brighton Parks & Recreation Department:

- 1) **Involve young people in decision-making:** Minimally, departmental leaders need to establish a consistent practice of actively involving young people in their mission. Creating opportunities to formally ask young people what they want to do, where they want to go, what they want to achieve, how they want to contribute and how efforts should be evaluated would be a start. Clearly, as veteran consumers of recreation and athletic programs they have opinions about what programs/facilities should be offered and/or how they might be improved. How can young people better access the FSC gym? Is the drinking at Driftwood Park really a problem? Is our brochure or website attractive to teens or are there other ways to market recreation? The department might invite involvement from youth on other city issues. Input from young people (ages 12-20) as to how they truly see their community could yield new insights and perspectives on public needs - or the process might affirm adult opinions but still build shared ownership in the result. If you are building a new housing/retail/industrial development - ask young people how it will change their lives or how they'd like to see it. If you're hiring a new police chief, what do they think are desirable qualities and how can we all improve public safety? Surveys, focus groups, teen councils or "town hall" summits have all been productive strategies for youth input and engagement. Though these may have been tried in the past - and little happened as a result - reconsider why they were deemed unsuccessful. What were the expectations? Did we share responsibility for the results? Did we follow-up on recommendations and negotiate strategies? Can we ritualize youth empowerment and involvement in decision-making? Communicating with young people AND LISTENING is the most important thing community leaders can do to build healthy communities that support youth development.
- 2) **Promote Youth Leadership and Engagement:** Leadership is not genetic, nor is it accidental - it's learned through experience and nurturance. Recognize young people through their life phases and build their capacities to contribute. Through sports teams, schools, camp programs, scouting, and church, young people frequently display problem solving, empathy and an ability to unite their peers to accomplish shared goals. Parks and Recreation programs are tremendous laboratories for human development and leadership. Building a practice of sharing responsibility for program outcomes with young people is seldom an expectation for professional staff - but it can be done. Celebrate the contributions they make and recognize them as citizens. Build a fun, meaningful role for youth through structured volunteerism programs (coordinated with school service learning efforts). Have them design after school programs and activities for younger kids, coach teams and lead camps, create drama programs, perform at senior residences, form a "chore corps," run an Earth Day program, hold a "Crazy Olympics", etc. Keep track of those that demonstrate leadership abilities and peer respect and continue to facilitate their development through increased responsibilities and recognition. When they are old enough - hire them. You can make youth leadership a measurable objective of your department and city.
- 3) **Identify and Convene Community Champions:** In every successful community youth development effort there has been identifiable leadership that is capable of encouraging and inviting partners. In St. Louis Park, MN a former superintendent of schools began the conversations which led to the nationally renown Children First initiative, in Minneapolis Mayor



Don Fraser began the Youth Coordinating Board to promote intergovernmental collaborative planning and community action for kids 0-21, in Chicago a retired corporate CEO began a huge early childhood development campaign – the list goes on and on but the lesson learned is that it takes champions to make change. In each case these leaders knew that supporting community youth development must weave the strengths of the public, private and voluntary sectors into a fabric that shared passion for children and shared accountability for results. To do so, leaders had to attract other known leaders and also had to encourage and recognize new leaders. In 1997, following a survey of youth conditions in New Brighton, a number of area leaders and parents met and formed the Community Partners with Youth (CPY) organization. A similar experience happened in 1974 when the Northwest Youth and Family Services (NYFS) agency began. Both are vital and important organizations but it is not suggested that New Brighton needs a new nonprofit to deliver a new service or program. Rather, it is recommended that people come together to discuss how they can define what kind of community they want to become (relative to youth development) and how they can support each other and engage all interested partners. The Mounds View School Board has committed to 2006-07 goals which include improving “its relationships with community leaders, organizations, civic groups and governmental groups” as well as “the development of a long-term facility.” Both are significant opportunities for conversation about broader youth development interest and goals. Dr. Jan Witthuhn would be a strong ally and a good place to start - along with leaders from the city, CPY, NYFS, YMCA, Christ the King Church and youth and adult leaders involved in Parks & Recreation programs. See where the common desires, needs and passions are – where there are needs and barriers – and determine what’s possible. Collaboration is a highly unnatural act; it has to be built on curiosity, conversation, confession and passion. Someone has to start that conversation.

- 4) **Expand Your Knowledge and Capacity:** If New Brighton is serious about considering a broader youth development agenda it would be wise to learn from others. There are many “relatives” in the area that can provide guidance and support as you explore strategies for community building. The University of Minnesota (Extension 4H) sponsors the MN Youth Work Institute, the emerging Youth Community Connection Program, and the Youth Work Matters training program. Located in Minneapolis, Search Institute is also a phenomenal resource for practical research and support for community youth development. There are people out here who have done it – call on them for insights and help.

Conclusion

As stated before, New Brighton is a community that obviously values its children and youth. The strong array of programs, the collegial relationships of youth serving professionals and the positive reports of young people all suggest that this is a community that is committed and hopeful. The instigation of a long-range strategic planning process for its Parks & Recreation Department is further evidence of this community’s vitality. Improving on a good thing is always wise. The needs we’ve identified are to be considered as opportunities rather than deficits and the strategies listed are relevant to future consideration of any youth development programming – on any scale.



Public Art Strategic Plan

Public Art Recommendations

1. Develop, finance, and implement a series of public art projects for the NW Quadrant development.
2. Establish an arts advisory group with a dedicated funding source to prepare policies, identify priorities, and initiate projects on behalf of the City.

Role/importance of Public Art

Public art, in many of its forms, can serve New Brighton by:

- Enhancing the aesthetic of standard public improvements and building projects;
- Engaging community in creating places and shaping their city;
- Generating traffic and creating a sense of destination;
- Building a unique character and identity apart from neighboring cities and the urban core; and
- Attracting and retaining a base of residents, employers, and visitors.

Public art can play a vital role in transforming New Brighton into a destination, a distinct place within the metropolitan area. Expanding access to the arts enhances the quality of life in New Brighton. Public art can also acknowledge and celebrate the city's history through commemorative art, memorials and interpretive projects.

Existing conditions

While there are relatively few arts and culture offerings in the City of New Brighton, it is strategically located at one of the busiest intersections in the State—694 and 35W, and therefore opportunities abound to attract drivers to experience the city. New Brighton is home to a small number of public art works, including a few traditional memorials, including the Challenger Memorial at City Hall, a WWII and a 9/11 plaque, and there is the Totem Pole at Totem Pole Park. The city currently has no formal method for planning, funding, or implementing public art activities. There has been no recent commissioning of artworks, nor involving artists in public improvement projects.

There is an absence of established arts groups, cultural amenities, or arts, culture, and entertainment venues. Local cultural resources include the Mounds View Community Theater (and High School Art Programs), the Mounds View Orchestra Marching Band, and the annual Stockyard Days festival, featuring performances and a craft fair. In spite of a lack of aesthetics and design in most of the city's architecture and cityscape, New Brighton has many places of worship, including the Bigelow Chapel at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, winner of the 2006 Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects.

The city benefits from the cultural resources of Minneapolis and St. Paul—homes to many talented artists with public art experience, including sculptors, muralists, mosaic artists, performers and landscape artists. In addition to public art programs and organizations in the Twin Cities, at the University of Minnesota and at the State Arts Board, New Brighton is near other suburban communities engaged in public art activities, such as Vadnais Heights, St. Louis Park, Edina, Eden Prairie, Wayzata, and others.

New Brighton has several developments underway, planned, or being considered for the future. These include public infrastructure and improvement projects, public space development, parks, trails, and recreational facilities. These projects present opportunities to integrate public art in the short term, and suggest the need to establish policies, procedures, and management strategies for the long term.



Given its strategic location at the intersection of two major interstate highways, New Brighton has the potential to increase its visibility and improve its tax base through investment and quality of life enhancements. Among the many opportunities for investment available to the city, public art and establishing cultural amenities should be a priority.

Trends and influences

Today, creative city planners and builders are responding to the new market pressures, and public art is seen as an important ingredient.

Nationally, there are over 350 city-managed public art programs, mostly utilizing a percent-for-art model (an ordinance mandating a portion of the city's capital budget be used for public art). Many more communities however, engage in public art activities without an ordinance or formal city program. This is true for several suburban communities in the Twin Cities metro region.

Evaluation/findings/needs

Given the fact that New Brighton benefits from the resources of surrounding urban and suburban communities, it is easy to understand why the City might not feel the need to invest in arts and culture. However, New Brighton should strive to better serve its resident, who knows what other communities have to offer, especially the younger generations of homebuyers. Simultaneously, by investing in beautification and cultural amenities, the city can avoid being perceived by some outsiders as a pass-through community with little reason to stop, and rarely attracts new business investment and residential improvements.

During the planning process in Appendix A, consultant Jack Becker (of FORECAST Public Artworks) made presentations about public art to various City stakeholders, including Planning, Parks, Economic Development, the City Council, and guests at an open Town Hall meeting. Participants at the presentations made the following comments:

- Public art can help make New Brighton a destination.
- New Brighton needs a sense of identity and place.
- There aren't many art programs in Park and Rec. We should consider opportunities in future parks projects.
- Make space available for art throughout the Northwest Quadrant project, including long-term goals to include public art citywide.
- Integrate public art with capital facilities planning.
- Establish a relationship between the arts and the city's economic development goals and planned projects.
- Include art that fits our community.

Response to a survey conducted at the Town Hall meeting regarding possible locations for—or types of—public art included:

Bike & trail facilities	(10)
Seating	(8)
Sculpture	(6)
Sidewalk installation	(6)
Eco/land art, green space	(4)
Street banners	(3)



- Lighting (3)
- Street median (3)
- Water feature (2)
- Mosaic (2)

Other suggestions listed:

- Gazebo or bandstand for performing arts
- Focal points in parks & landscape & along walkways
- Paintings in public places
- Bridges (to create city identity)

Art opportunities

In addition to input received at stakeholder group meetings, the Town Hall meeting, and a focus group meeting held in December, consultant Jack Becker toured the city to evaluate strategic sites. The following potential opportunities/sites were identified:

Table 10 - 4 Site Public Art Potential

Entrances to the city.	Roadside markers/signs
Gathering places.	Outdoor sculpture or landmark such as City Hall, Family Service Center, park centers.
Family Service Center (entry or rear of property facing highway).	Large-scale sculpture.
Major intersections with set backs, such as the Rose Garden.	Fixed or temporary sculpture.
Bridges over I-694 or I-35W.	Concrete form liner reliefs.
NW Quadrant development sites.	Functional elements (drinking fountain, seating, bike racks, railings, pedestrian bridge, lighting, ponds/water feature, pavement treatment, wall reliefs in buildings, library art, etc.).
City Hall and Family Service Center.	Temporary exhibits, such as photographs from City's history.
Stockyard Days.	Art installations and events (sculptures or performances).
Highway 8 light poles.	Artist-designed street banners.
Golf Course.	Snow or ice sculptures in winter.
Water towers.	Mural or digital art wrap.
Schools.	Artists in residence program.
New recreation development projects.	Integrated art elements.
Retaining wall behind water tower.	Wall relief artwork.

The following are priority sites the City should consider for the next two years:

1. The NW Quadrant (seating, drinking fountain, and other functional or decorative elements integrated).



2. The Family Service Center (an outdoor landmark visible from the highway).
3. Artistic street banner project for Highway 8.
4. Artist's enhancement to the bridge replacement over I-694
5. Artist in the schools (a residency encouraging youth to participate in placemaking).
6. Art displays inside City Hall and outside the Safety Center.

Administration of Public Art Program

Administration of the public art program is ultimately the responsibility of the City, however, staffing tasks and requirements may be contracted to outside sources as needed. These tasks and requirements include:

1. Organize stakeholder and community meetings.
2. Notify artists of upcoming public art projects.
3. Write and disseminate request for proposals and calls for artists.
4. Act as liaison between the artists, community, project architect, engineers, construction manager and general contractor as appropriate.
5. Assist in developing public art plan and policies.
6. Assist in grant and proposal writing to obtain additional program funding.
7. Manage and coordinate arts projects on a day-to-day basis.
8. Convene the Stakeholders Committee for each project.
9. Develop artist contracts.
10. Schedule site and artist studio visits.
11. Plan and organize receptions and dedications.
12. Conduct evaluations and documentation of completed Percent-for-Art projects.
13. Survey artworks identifying those that require special maintenance, restoration, and conservation (preferably once every two years); Arrange for consultation with a qualified conservator/restorationist to perform needed work.
14. Act as a liaison to other City agencies, the county and state arts programs.

Any plan for public art should address policies pertaining to governance, and describe funding mechanisms, maintenance, conservation, gifts and loans, documentation and evaluation. For the first year, with a limited budget, a full-time program manager with support staff is recommended (or the equivalent in contracted services). This is critical to insure that projects are properly planned, managed, and reported to the City Manager for review.

Maintenance of Artwork

Routine maintenance of an artwork becomes the responsibility of the agency that houses the artwork. Maintenance and vandalism considerations should be part of the design process. Maintenance and durability of the materials and the art location should be evaluated early on as part of creation of a sustainable art project. As part of the contractual requirements, the artist should develop a maintenance program in cooperation with the appropriate City agency for the proper day-to-day maintenance of their artwork. The artist should specify what materials were used to fabricate their work in the maintenance program correspondence. The agency will be responsible for communicating this information to its custodial staff.* This agency will also be responsible for providing the necessary tools or equipment to ensure proper daily maintenance of public artworks.

*Note: Custodial staff may need training and / or supervision.

Conservation of Art Collection

Should conservation or repair work be necessary or repairs needed, the artist should be notified immediately, and a qualified conservator or restorationist should also be consulted. The artist should be hired to perform or supervise the repair and conservation of the work for a reasonable fee. The appropriate City agency should



handle conservation. The City Manager must approve emergency repairs to prevent loss or damage to an artwork. Due to their aesthetic judgment and familiarity with art materials, fabrication methods, and artistic intent, art professionals are required to evaluate artwork and to select the proper conservator. Every effort will be made to contact the artist and to maintain artistic integrity (as per the Visual Artists Rights Act).

Documentation

Visual and written documentation of the artwork as installed and intended by the artist is a necessary element of both the public education and conservation programs. What the artist had in mind when designing the piece, what materials and fabrication methods were used, and how the piece should be maintained and conserved is vital information that can ensure the success of a project. One practical concern in acquiring thorough documentation of each project is finding the appropriate space to store the material archivally. The documentation should be housed in a place where it can be organized in a safe and easily accessible manner. Professional photography of the finished work, site preparation, and lighting and signage are separate costs that should be borne by the City.

Funding Strategies

The City should investigate eligible sources of funds for public art, including allocations from the capital budgets of various departments, general fund allocation for program management and maintenance, and fundraising strategies for augmenting city resources, including grant requests to government, foundation, corporation, and other appropriate entities, as well as private fundraising activities (such as allowing citizens to make gifts dedicated to memorials or new art projects). The city should also leverage funds of private developers, state and county agencies involved in public improvement project in New Brighton, and special service districts, such as the Highway 8 corridor.

Depending on the nature of projects planned, grants and corporate sponsorships are a possible source of support. For example, a memorial to a golf pro from New Brighton to be located at the City's golf course, would be of interest to local golf supply companies, private clubs, and corporations sponsoring golf tournaments. A project involving artists in residence at local public schools might attract funding from The McKnight Foundation or Target Foundation, given their interests in community-based projects and families.

Gifts and Loans

Because there are usually very limited funds to protect, maintain, preserve, and conserve public artworks, and there is a finite number of suitable sites on most City-owned property for these works, a careful review process should be established to evaluate proposed gifts. Any gift of art to be located on City property should undergo a review process to determine if it should be accepted.

Similar to the criteria for the selection of public art projects, gifts should first be considered on artistic merit, including the qualifications and proven ability of the commissioned artist. Equally important considerations include context in the City's art collection and programming, site appropriateness, oversight responsibility, maintenance requirements, and the City's liability. Potential gifts to the City should carry a proposed maintenance agreement between the City and the donor. As part of this agreement the City should require a guarantee of maintenance, preservation, and conservation in perpetuity from the donor—unless the commissioning City agency responsible for siting a potential gift agrees to fund the performance of these duties.

Development of future art projects

If the Public Art Program needs to determine the kinds of artwork that can be considered for a certain commission level, the practical and aesthetic needs of the building or space should be the first guide. Sites



should be selected based on their public access (visual or actual) and their ability to accommodate another aesthetic voice in the architectural design, after which a variety of artwork possibilities can be suggested. For example, a public plaza, particularly one in which people may sit, is often a prime site for artwork. If the budget is fairly small, the artwork might use elements already included in the construction budget, such as pavers or landscaping. If the budget is more substantial, freestanding artist-fabricated elements (sculpture or custom seating) might be possible.

Recommendations

Short-term

It is recommended that the city allocate resources and staff/consultant time toward integrating artistic elements in the Northwest Quadrant development. By starting early, the city can maximize the potential for the entire development to strive for the highest aesthetic quality and creative design. Priority sites in the NW Quadrant will be determined by the criteria established by key stakeholders and amount of funds available.

It is critical that the city identify and commit a significant amount of funds toward the Northwest Quadrant development (roughly equivalent to 1.5% of the entire construction budget). An equal amount of support in services and infrastructure support should be requested from the developer (s). This could be in the form of running plumbing for drinking fountains, electrical for lighting, foundations for artworks, and construction/engineering documents for contractors.

The city should hire a consultant by June, 2006 to review plans for the Northwest Quadrant in detail and work closely with the designers and engineers to maximize resources and realize the potential of high priority public art possibilities.

Long-term

It is recommended that the city develop and approve a formal public art policy. The process should involve constituent recommendations and input from a consultant to formulate policies and procedures, as well as strategies for dedicated funding mechanisms designed to provide for art in opportunities as they arise. Priorities will be developed as part of this process.

The city should investigate eligible sources of funds for public art, including allocations from the capital budgets of various departments, general fund allocation for program management and maintenance, and fundraising strategies for augmenting city resources, including grant requests to government, foundation, corporation, and other appropriate entities, as well as private fundraising activities (such as allowing citizens to make gifts dedicated to memorials or new art projects). The city should also leverage funds of private developers, state and county agencies involved in public improvement project in New Brighton, and special service districts, such as the Highway 8 corridor.

- The City Manager should form a Steering Committee, to oversee the process of formulating appropriate strategies and recommending priority projects to pursue. The Steering Committee should consist of stakeholder group representatives (approximately 10-12 people). Their charge would be as follows:
 - Establish criteria for future efforts, including short- and long-term needs (starting with Northwest Quadrant). What is the identity of New Brighton that the city wants to promote? What is the city's mission?



- Identify at least one temporary, one short-term and one long-term project to develop. Demonstrate how these meet criteria.
- Prepare description, timeline, budget, etc. for each project.
- Identify funding sources (short-term and long-term)
- Make recommendations to City Council for adoption.
- Use consultant to manage process, facilitate the first three projects. Identify staff person as liaison to consultant throughout.
- Hold at least one public meeting to share planning strategy. Get media coverage in local papers. Use city web site to full extent.

Focus Area Strategic Plans

Parks Evaluation Focus Area

Existing Conditions

New Brighton has 11 neighborhood parks, one community park, and one community center (Family Service Center) that are well distributed across the city. Approximately 85% of New Brighton residents live within 1/4 mile (typical walking distance) of a park. Four schools, a municipal golf course and Ramsey County's Long Lake Regional Park and Rice Creek West Regional Trail also serve New Brighton residents' outdoor recreational needs.

New Brighton has a very good park system. In Appendix A, a 2005 survey of city residents (New Brighton Community Survey) found a high level of satisfaction with park and recreation facilities. An evaluation of city parks, walks, trails and facilities found a well used and well maintained system. However, residents' use and awareness of the park system tend to be limited to the park nearest to their home or Hansen Park. Some of the city's neighborhood parks are hidden or difficult to find because they are located behind commercial or residential development. In addition, City park signs are old and have poor visibility from roads or walks. Some of the existing park infrastructure, playgrounds, backstops, benches, etc. are showing signs of age and are in need of updating to improve function and aesthetics. Significant park improvements at Hansen Park, Freedom Park, Sunny Square Park, and Totem Pole Park occurred in 2001-2. Other park improvements have occurred since 2002, and the city has a regular facility replacement program for its playground equipment sites and other park infrastructure. While the park system is in good condition it can be fine-tuned to better meet the needs of the community and to serve as a key element in the continued revitalization and improvement of New Brighton.

Role and Importance of Parks

City parks can and should be a focal element of existing and new neighborhoods in order to attract new residents, visitors and businesses and to improve the quality of life in the City of New Brighton. The Northwest Quadrant redevelopment presents just such an opportunity to develop parks that meet the recreational needs of the expected new residents in this area and to be an attraction to visitors.

Parks provide both personal and social benefits. Parks help provide community awareness, define neighborhoods, act as gathering places, and provide open space and active and passive recreation opportunities for the entire family. Community centers, such as the FSC, also provide both personal and social benefits. Community centers help provide community awareness, act as a gathering place, and establish a sense of community.



Parks have a positive effect upon property values. Studies show that the value of property near parks is increased due to the influence of the park. The positive effects of parks upon property values extend up to 3/4 mile from the park boundary. Value increases are more significant for passive parks, natural areas, and parks with water features. Parks promote tourism and contribute to community vitality.

Parks protect natural resources and provide open spaces. Parks and community centers are sources of civic identity and pride and improve community appeal and function

Personal benefits include providing a place for exercise, fitness & conditioning, a place for fun and entertainment, relaxation, learning and education about nature and personal development. Parks and community centers are a great place to meet people, participate in group activities and build community.

Trends and influences

Emphasis on quality

One trend in parks, and society in general, is an emphasis on quality. People want to play hockey on indoor ice rather than in outdoor rinks, more and more ballfields are being built with dugouts, comfortable bleachers, irrigated or artificial turf, etc. For the most part, the City is no longer building new parks and now has an opportunity to focus resources on providing more than functional facilities and equipment. Attractive spaces and facilities will attract more park users and keep them coming back. An emphasis on quality can include a number of improvement types:

- Screening of unsightly areas such as restrooms, utilities and off-site views.
- Garden/Landscape accents around signs, seating areas, etc. to provide color, texture and visual interest and to attract the park user's eye.
- Picnic shelters or other "signature" park elements can help create a positive park identity.
- Attractive park signs to help the user identify with the place and the city.
- Improved materials such as brick, block or stone, rather than wood, which are more durable, and give an impression of greater wealth.
- Providing concrete bench and picnic pads to improve aesthetics and maintenance.
- Multi-use indoor field house.

Desire for natural areas and open space

As the population ages and the amount of natural areas and open spaces diminish in urban environments, natural areas and open space become more valued by residents. There is a growing need for passive recreation places to walk to, to sit in, to have a picnic, to watch birds or other wildlife. Even for those who do not use these natural or open spaces, there is a comfort knowing that these areas exist and have been preserved.

Desire for walking and biking paths

Use of trails has become the number one recreation activity in America. In Appendix A, the 2005 community survey showed that walking, hiking and bicycling are the top recreation activities in New Brighton. Trails have universal appeal for all ages and abilities. They perform recreation and transportation functions. People like connectivity, trail loops and destinations. Roads have become busy, noisy and unsafe for walking. Trails or walks detached from roads have especially become popular as a quick way to increase recreation in our busy lives.



Need for accessibility

As the population ages and diversity increases, there are greater numbers of people with special needs. Providing handi-capable facilities and places gives equal access to all city parks.

Dog parks

Off-leash dog areas have become popular along with an increase in the number of pets and pet advocacy groups. Dog parks provide a safe and social place to walk and exercise dogs as well as their owners.

Flexible spaces

Emerging sports and trends, such as rugby, lacrosse and ultimate Frisbee put an increasing demand on field spaces of different sizes and configurations. To meet the growing and ever-changing demands, flexible field spaces are growing in importance. Similarly, to get more use out of existing field spaces, conversions to artificial turf fields can provide greater durability and extended use. Large green spaces can act as a venue for a community celebration and the next day host a soccer tournament. Urban plazas provide space to stroll, sit, eat, read, meet friends as well as act as a site for a farmer's market, arts and craft shows, theaters or other venues.

Other trends

The Mounds View School District has had declining student enrollment for the several years and enrollment is forecast to continue to decline slightly. New Brighton – St. Anthony School District enrollment has been stable.

An aging population will result in lesser demands for active recreation facilities and greater demand for more passive uses such as walking, nature watching, and gathering. Similarly, interest in public art and other aesthetic improvements can be expected with an aging population.

Evaluation/ Findings/ Needs

(Please refer to Appendix A for further information regarding this section.)

Park evaluation

An evaluation of each park was conducted in 2005. The evaluation found that the parks were in good condition, but there is a need for fine-tuning access improvements, trail additions, and aesthetic improvements along with regularly scheduled replacement of key facilities. The evaluation and improvement recommendations for each park are attached.

Community survey findings

A 2005 survey of city residents (New Brighton Community Survey) found a high level of satisfaction with parks and recreation facilities. An evaluation of city parks, walks, trails and facilities found a well-used and well maintained system. However, resident's use and awareness of the park system tend to be limited to the park nearest to their home or those parks being programmed for community recreation. Hansen Park received the greatest use primarily because of the large and diverse trail system, the pleasant setting and the mix of active and passive recreation opportunities.

Recreation association input

Input from athletic associations in the Mounds View School District area (including all of New Brighton) on athletic facility needs has been gathered on a regular basis since 1999. The 2005



input identified a need for additional full sized baseball fields, multi-use turf fields, and continued improvement in field condition within the five-city school district area.

One major need is a sports complex that would serve regional indoor and outdoor athletic needs. It could consist of sports fields and an indoor arena. The preferred location for a sports complex is a 75 acre site in the Twin City Army Ammunition Plant property in Arden Hills. Development of the sports complex is envisioned as a public-private partnership. The City of New Brighton should continue to be an active advocate along with other partners for acquisition and development of a sports complex for youth and adult sports, training and tournaments.

Recommendations

The parks of New Brighton are in good condition. Their needs are identified in this evaluation based on public and stakeholder input. The primary need is to continue to protect the public investment in parks and to make sure they fulfill their potential in terms of recreation access, community building and aesthetics. The park improvement needs fall into three general categories (aesthetic, awareness and physical improvements).

Strategic Directions

Overall aesthetic improvements should be incorporated into the parks capital improvement plan and should be included with regularly scheduled facility improvements. For instance, when a playground is improved, benches and trash containers, accent landscaping, and other improvements should be incorporated into the overall project. Sign improvements should occur throughout the park system as a single project.

Goals

The benefits of park and recreation (community building, health and wellness, safety, human and cultural development, recreation experiences, natural resource stewardship, etc.) should be recognized and resource allocation should keep pace with the importance of park's and recreation's role in the community.

Aesthetic improvements

Small aesthetic improvements to parks are a simple way to begin revitalizing parks and park facilities, improve the overall image of the parks, and to help develop an overall park system identity. Possible aesthetic improvements include:

- Creating new park identification signs for all parks that help promote the desired image of the park and the entire park system.
- Accent landscaping around signs to add color, texture and interest. Signs should be identifiable landmarks for parks around the city.
- Screening of off-site land uses, utilities, portable bathrooms, or other undesirable views.
- Create a park system-wide bench and waste receptacle detail with concrete slabs to promote the desired image of the park and the entire park system and to minimize maintenance.
- Creation of a "signature element" within each park as a way to create a specific park identity and attraction, such as a large picnic shelter, a unique playground, a sliding hill, a winter sports area, etc.



Increase awareness

One finding of community public opinion survey and public open house meetings was that New Brighton residents typically use the park nearest their home and are generally not aware of other park and trail facilities available to them elsewhere in the city. To remedy this, the following improvements should be considered:

- Within each park and at each city building there should be a map of the park and trail system.
- Remove barriers that impede views into parks, such as at Brightwood Hills Golf Course from Silver Lake Road.
- Add park directional signs on City streets to make parks/ trails easier to locate.
- Create attractive landscaped gateway signs at key entrance points into the city to identify the city. These could be comprised of park or park-like elements with seating, drinking fountains, kiosk signs, etc.
- A uniform color and design for park elements such as benches or trash receptacles help to create a design theme and identity as a city park.

Priorities and Action Plan

New Brighton Parks, Recreation and Trails Strategic Plan (Appendix A) Recommended Short-term Priorities (1-3 years)

Trails and Sidewalks

1. Build on the momentum of the Walkable Community Demonstration Program to foster trail and sidewalk advocacy, funding and projects.
2. Adopt a Trails and Sidewalk System Plan as part of the New Brighton Comprehensive Plan.
3. Create a trail loop around Long Lake by establishing an on-road bike lane along Long Lake Road to Rice Creek Trail and Long Lake Regional Park, adding trails through the NE Quadrant development and a multi-use trail link under the railroad to Long Lake Regional Park. This includes improving Long Lake/I-694 intersection safety through signalization or other means.

Parks and Open Space

1. Hansen Park Master Plan and renovation.
2. Aerate ponds at Brightwood Hills Golf Course & Veteran's Park.
3. Add identification signs, way-finding signs, and park and trail system maps.
4. Focus on tree preservation and reforestation.

Brightwood Hills Golf Course

1. Expanded marketing of leagues and non-golf use.
2. Form a Brightwood Hills advisory group.
3. Improve reporting and tracking systems.
4. Convert Brightwood from an enterprise fund to a special revenue fund.

Recreation Programs

1. Formalize user and public feedback and use input to tune program offerings.
2. Fill the program gap for teenagers with constructive activities beyond competitive sports.



Youth engagement

1. Inventory youth leadership and volunteer opportunities.
2. Develop a Friday night place specifically designed for teens.
3. Convene a task force to develop intergenerational activities and programs.
4. Form a youth action council to assist with planning, marketing and carrying out youth programs, activities and development.

Public Art

1. Commit city and developer funds and actions for public art and public space in the NW Quadrant.
2. Secure temporary displays of local art in City Hall and Family Service Center.
3. Establish a New Brighton Arts Committee and formalize public art efforts.

Communication and Resource Strategies

- ❑ Promote and facilitate active living (regular physical activity). Increase awareness of, and offerings to combat obesity.
- ❑ Consistently portray the benefits of parks and recreation (community building, health & wellness, safety, human & cultural development, recreation experiences, natural resource stewardship, etc.).
- ❑ Resource allocation should keep pace with needs and parks and recreation's role in community revitalization.
- ❑ Improved interdepartmental and Commission/Council cooperation and communications are needed to fully realize the benefits of a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community

Recreation Needs Assessment

(Please refer to Appendix A for further information regarding this section.)

Community Input

Community and stakeholder input is a key element in determining existing needs and future opportunities. A community public opinion survey, several focus group meetings, user surveys and interviews were used to assure a wide and comprehensive range of input. The following is a summary of the process and key findings. The survey results and meeting summaries are attached as appendices.

Community Public Opinion Survey

The City of New Brighton conducted a survey of the community in October 2005 to measure residents' opinions about parks, recreation and community services. The mail-back survey was sent to 3,500 randomly selected households. The mailing went to 2,433 owner occupied residences and 1,067 rental residences to match 70%/30% owner/renter distribution in the City. The target response rate was a minimum of 400 returns and a ± 5 margin of error. 820 completed surveys were received for a 23% return rate. This high rate of response results in a ± 3 % margin of error at a 95% level of confidence. See the appendices for a copy the survey form and results.



Key Findings and Evaluation

a.) **New Brighton is an Involved Community** – 23% response and plenty of resident comments.

- History of dialog and community engagement.
- High survey response rate (interest in the community and parks and recreation).
- Homeowner response high. Renter response low.

Survey respondents are similar to community demographics, except +65 yrs old age segment responses are over-represented by the survey and ages 20-64 are under-represented by the survey response numbers.

Recreation Strategic Plan implications:

- Continue to engage the community. (Next step: Communicate needs & draft strategic direction).
- Build constituencies and advocacy groups (golf, youth, trails, etc.).
- Continue to expand outreach to renters.

b.) **Residents' top recreation activities are walking and biking.**

Evaluation of City walk and bike opportunities:

Walking

Sidewalks: Fair – Good

Hansen Park: Very good

Long Lake County Park: Very good

Biking

Very limited supply of trails – Virtually no city trails.

Rice Creek Regional Trail

Good trail systems nearby in Shoreview and Arden Hills

Survey results represent the “chicken & the egg” factor regarding trails. Some residents may find the existing trails acceptable because they have not experienced a more cohesive system.

Trails: #1 importance to Metro area residents. Important to community revitalization because they are multi-use (walk, bike, in-line skate, run, etc.), they are used by all ages and abilities and serve recreation and transportation roles.

Recreation Strategic Plan implications:

- Trails are a recommended focal area of capital improvements and implementation.
- It is challenging to add new trails in a developed community.
- Lots of grant and partnership opportunities.
- Priority: Plan and build a few key major trails and connections to adjoining trails.
- Long term: Build spur network over time.
- Eliminate barriers (Highway and busy street crossings).
- Create safe routes (busy streets, between neighborhoods and schools and parks, in parks, connections to adjacent communities).

c.) **Visitation**

High Use Areas: Family Service Center - 66% of respondents (up from 1998 - 50%)
Hansen Park, Brightwood Hills Golf Course, Freedom Park



Lower Visitation: Some neighborhood parks (Vermont, Meadow Wood, Creekview, Totem Pole)

Recreation Strategic Plan implications:

- Passive park use, FSC use, golf and trail use is high and important to the whole community. Focus efforts there.
- Trail users go to Hansen, Long Lake or outside of New Brighton.
- Evaluate Jones Lake acquisition as outlined in Comprehensive Plan (trails & passive park).

d.) Lack of time is biggest barrier to recreation use.

- Symptom of society and our lifestyles.

Recreation Strategic Plan implications:

- Focus on close to home, quality places: Passive parks, walk/bike trails.
- Keep FSC and parks "fresh" with reinvestment.
- Enhance community events in local parks (park block parties, etc.)

e.) High level of satisfaction – 80% to 90% satisfaction rating.

Recreation -

Higher Satisfaction and Importance:

- Trails, Park Maintenance
- Communications
- Passive Parks
- Family Service Center.

Lower Satisfaction and Lower Importance:

- History and Culture (unknown aspect to most people)
- Swimming (local pool issue)
- Golf (specialized use)

Recreation Strategic Plan implications:

- Keep up the good work and investment on core areas: Parks, park maintenance, trails/walks, communications and the Family Service Center.
- Fine tune services. Keep them fresh.
- Focus on areas of lesser satisfaction: History, culture, arts, trails, swimming.

City Services -

Higher Satisfaction and Importance:

- Fire
- Police
- Street maintenance
- Snow plowing

Lower Satisfaction and Lower Importance:

- Redevelopment (the "change" issue)
- City website (unknown item to many people)
- Stockyard Days (unknown to many and not "fresh" to some)



Lower Satisfaction and Higher Importance:

- Drinking water (past history)
- Street lighting

f.) Brightwood Hills Golf Course is important to the community.

- 89% felt Brightwood is a value to the community.
- Only 7% felt Brightwood was a value only if it makes an annual operating profit.

Recreation Strategic Plan implications:

- Strong community support for the course. Recognized as a community asset.
- Modest level of City funding support is acceptable for recreation and open space benefits.
- Expand awareness and marketing of the course.
- Expand community use of the course (seasonal and non-golf use).

g.) Effective communications about Parks and Recreation.

- Existing strong communications with the community.
- Communications are important to residents.

Primary recreation information sources:

- Recreation brochures
- Local newspapers
- City newsletter
- Direct mailings

Recreation Strategic Plan implications:

- Continue strong communications. Expand use of web site, e-mail, local newspapers, and city newsletter.
- Add park and trail system maps in parks and city buildings.

h.) Recreation programs

- Participants are satisfied, but many people do not participate.
- Time constraints are the biggest barrier to participation.

Recreation Strategic Plan implications:

- Emphasize weekday evening and Saturday morning program offerings.
- Improve quality, marketing and timing of programs.
- Concentrate on resident and user feedback to keep programs fresh and accessible.

Table 10-5 Comparison of Survey Responses with City Demographics

	City Demographics (2000 Census)	Survey Respondents
Age 0-5	7%	6%
Age 6-19	19%	20%
Age 20- 64	63%	56%
Age 65+	13%	18%



Home owners	67%	94%
Renters	33%	6%

Focus Group Sessions

Focus group sessions were held with various groups to gather more detailed information about New Brighton recreation needs and opportunities. Focus group sessions were held with the following groups and on the following topics:

- New Brighton Parks and Recreation Department staff
- New Brighton Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission
- Recreation Peer Group - Recreation experts from other cities and agencies
- Brightwood Hills Golf Course users and neighbors
- Seniors
- Youth
- Public Art and Community Arts

Summaries of the focus group sessions are attached in the appendices.

Commissions and Council Input

Meetings were held with the New Brighton City Council, Planning Commission, and Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission to gather input on recreation issues and opportunities. Their input helped define the strategic plan content. The Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission and City Council reviewed and provided direction on drafts of the Vision, Mission, Commitment Statements, Strategies and Actions and helped determine priorities for implementation.

Town Hall and Neighborhood Meetings

The City of New Brighton holds an annual Town Hall meeting as a means to connect with residents and business owners. A presentation was made to participants at the fall 2005 meeting to inform them about the strategic planning process and to gather input on needs and opportunities for recreation improvements. Meeting attendees completed questionnaires about recreation desires and noted park, trail, golf and public art ideas.

The City holds annual meetings at neighborhood park buildings to gather community input about city needs, issues and opportunities. At a series of four meetings in January-February 2006, city staff presented draft plans for park and trail improvements and received residents' input about those draft recommendations. That input was used to refine improvement recommendations.

Other Stakeholder Input

Interviews were held with the City of St. Anthony, New Brighton-St. Anthony School District #282, Mounds View School District #621, and youth service providers. Input from a series of meetings with area recreation associations and surrounding cities' recreation department managers in 2005 was incorporated into the planning effort. Presentations on public art opportunities were made to the City Council, Planning Commission and other groups. This input helped define the strategic plan.