

# 2040 PARK & TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The planning team would like to thank the numerous community members who attended public meetings and events throughout the planning process. The feedback was valuable and insightful. We would like to acknowledge the hard work of city staff, city council, PREC, the steering committee and stakeholders for providing insights, feedback and issues facing the city's parks and trail system. These conversations have enriched our understanding of the community of New Brighton, its needs, goals and vision for the future relating to its parks, trails and recreation.

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## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

A special thank you to the many community members who engaged in planning throughout this process at events, meetings and online!



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT OF NEED.....	7
SECTION 3: VISION PLAN.....	57
SECTION 4: PARK SYSTEM PLAN.....	63
SECTION 5: TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN.....	177
SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.....	215
APPENDIX.....	228



# Section 1

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

The City of New Brighton has an impressive park, trail and recreation system that provides abundant forms of recreation for its residents. The parks are adequately distributed within the system to be located within a 10-minute walking distance from the places of residence, contributing to the overall health, wellness and quality of life for the community.

New Brighton's Park and Trail System Master Plan is a strategic and comprehensive master plan that provides an overall community vision for the parks, trails and recreation for the City of New Brighton for the next 20 years.

This system plan is meant to provide recommendations that will guide future investments for development and improvements by establishing goals, policies and objectives through development of priorities in line with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

## Planning Process

A year-long planning process began with a project start-up meeting with city staff to explore goals, objectives and gather important city data. A critical piece of this plan was community engagement, which started immediately and was used to raise awareness of the project in order to understand the viewpoints of the residents to ensure the plan aligned with community sentiment and identified needs. At this stage, input was solicited through various channels, including an interactive online engagement platform, city social media, in-person interviews, and attendance at various community events.

The use of a steering committee with community members that represented varying organizations and viewpoints was included to provide additional community outreach, raise project awareness, develop goals and policies, and guide the decision-making process. Data collection and system evaluations were also conducted to understand the existing quality and condition of the parks, trails and recreation within New Brighton.

The findings and analysis from the engagement and data collection process provided guidance to the development of preliminary recommendations and concept plans in the draft system master plan. The draft master plan went through a comment and review process for further refinement and confirmation of priorities were evaluated for inclusion into the final system master plan report, presented and adopted by the **City of New Brighton on \_\_\_\_\_**, to be submitted to the Metropolitan Council as an amendment to the New Brighton 2040 Comprehensive Plan.



## Primary Goals and Initiatives

The following goals and initiatives, in alignment with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, were prepared as a guide for establishing both short and long term priorities for the parks, trails and recreation programs to better meet the needs and desires of the community over the next 20 years.

1. Strengthen Community Connections
2. Create Spaces to Gather & Interact
3. Celebrate Parks as Neighborhood Activity Centers
4. Create a Sense of Place and Feeling of Community
5. Safe, Comfortable & Attractive Streets
6. Sustain Fiscal & Environmental Responsibility

## Findings

Common themes that evolved from the planning process engagement include:

1. Desire for improved trail connectivity and safety throughout New Brighton.
2. High senior populations who like to be more active and would like more dedicated space.
3. Residents highly value the Community Center, Silverwood Park, Long Lake Regional Park and Lions Park.
4. Whereas 9 out of 10 city surveyed residents use the parks, only 1 out of 10 were satisfied with current conditions.
5. Desire for more teen activities, programming and challenging recreation.
6. Desire for more convenience (wifi in parks, restrooms, charging stations, equipment available to use, rec programs outside of working hours).
7. Desire for civic event space (farmers market, music in park, art/street fairs).
8. Desire for more inter-generational activities.
9. Hansen disc golf has niche market and is a big attraction.
10. Need for older youth and adult athletic fields (turf and ballfields).
11. Lack of ability to accommodate athletic tournaments.
12. Need for improved quality athletic fields and ability to rest fields.
13. Many of the parks have poor soils and/or poor construction resulting in lower quality and difficult maintenance.
14. A community desire for a splash pad, inclusive playground and a dog park.
15. Need for flexible and unique spaces – enhance sense of place.
16. Placemaking, public art and wayfinding desired throughout the city.
17. Sustainability and fiscal responsibility are important.



## Summary of Recommendations

The following summary of recommendations include both short and long term initiatives for the next 20 years to meet the goals of the community and are not identified in any particular order of priority as shown.

1. Create an improved community center with connected civic center campus for an improved experience and functionality that allows for revenue generation with connected flexible outdoor spaces for gatherings, social interaction and civic celebrations.
2. Redevelop and improve existing parks according to priority for improved overall quality and satisfaction for a more balanced system meeting the needs of the residents.
3. Develop and plan for an interconnected city-wide trail, walk and greenway network that connects to primary destinations such as parks, schools, the community center and city hall, areas of natural resources, lakes and water bodies, food and commercial areas, and adjacent communities and trail systems.
4. Continue effective methods of community engagement when developing or redeveloping parks, trails and open spaces and use public input, along with city goals, objectives and priorities, to inform design and planning.
5. Continue effective methods of community engagement and input to identify recreation programs and opportunities to be in alignment with current trends, desires and demographics.
6. Continue to seek and develop strong partnerships with other organizations (School District, Ramsey County, athletic associations, etc.) for mutually beneficial improvement and implementation strategies to further advance the recommendations of this plan.



*Community engagement is a critical component of the planning process.*



*Concept planning for specific park sites are part of this plan, refer to Section 4 Park System Plan.*

## Report Organization

The plan is organized into sections that cover various aspects of the system plan and is meant to provide information and findings for both broad general visioning (i.e.: general policies, strategic decision-making, setting priorities, and budget allocations) as well as day-to-day use by staff and those that will be implementing the plan to ensure a high level of consistency in interpretation.

The system plan is organized by the following sections:

Section 1: Executive Summary

Section 2: Assessment of Need

Section 3: Visioning Plan

Section 4: Parks Plan

Section 5: Trails Plan

Section 6: Implementation Plan

## How to Use the Plan

This plan is meant to be used a guide for the next 20 years. It is intended to be a living document with recommendations, standards and guidelines for system planning for park and trail development.

The plan should be reviewed, revised and implemented according to City Council and the Park, Recreation and Environmental Commission recommendations and approval. Recommendations within this document will require more analysis and planning prior to implementation.

It is recommended that the plan be reviewed by staff annually and updated comprehensively every ten years, due to the fact that economic conditions, funding opportunities and partnerships, community needs and desires change over time.

Use the plan as a guide and continue extensive community engagement for park and trail planning.



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