Recreation and parks contribute to community livability, resident health, provide education and support, and contribute to the image and beauty of the City. Parks are the places where people go to play, socialize, celebrate, learn, and recharge.

Today, Brooklyn Park’s recreation and park system is good. Many of the fundamental purposes of recreation and parks are being accomplished, including:

- Diverse and engaging programming
- Places to play
- Access to natural areas
- Well maintained parks

Brooklyn Park is planning for the future of its recreation and parks system. The purpose of the Recreation and Parks Master Plan is to guide future investments to ensure the recreation and parks system continues to meet the needs of the community and be economically sustainable.

The Recreation and Parks Master Plan establishes goals, objectives, actions and tools to help the city, residents, and partner organizations work together to guide the system from Good to Great over the next 25 years. The draft master plan identifies 6 priority actions for the future.

6 Priority Actions:
1. Improve public access to the Mississippi River
2. Create more unique parks
3. Create a more connected trail system with a new greenway in the southern portion of the city
4. Integrate arts into the park system
5. Provide more equitable access to recreation programs and parks
6. Add new specialized facilities such as aquatics and an indoor field house or domed sports field and expand on non-traditional offerings such as skateboard parks, disc golf, community gardens, and dog parks
The Draft Master Plan Document has 6 chapters. It includes an overview of planning context and plan purpose, an overview of recreation trends, a summary of existing conditions, a needs assessment, a definition of six focus areas and goals for recreation and parks, objectives that will help attain those goals, 6 priority actions, and a suite of tools designed to help implement the plan.

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

It is evident that Brooklyn Park has a well loved and cared for recreation and park system. With over 56 parks and 1,287 acres of parkland, there are ample opportunities for a wide variety of recreation experiences from community gardening to little league tournaments. Residents are satisfied with the recreation and parks system with 93% of residents rating park and recreation facilities as excellent-good (2011 Brooklyn Park Community Survey). Parks are often resident’s favorite places and play a vital role in making Brooklyn Park an attractive place to live, work and play.

**CHAPTER 2: HOW WE SEE THINGS CHANGING**

Brooklyn Park is becoming more diverse (age, race and income) which, in turn, is putting pressure on the Recreation and Parks Department to provide more diverse recreation offerings. Trends, including: a more health conscious public; interest in non-traditional sports such as skateboarding, disc golf, and geocaching; active older adults; climate change; and increased interest in environmental sustainability are changing the way residents recreate. At the same time, the current economic downturn has tightened city budgets reducing the funds available for new facilities. The need for change in the context of limited funds requires that the recreation and parks department be strategic in its future investments and that it diversify its funding sources to remain economically sustainable.

**CHAPTER 3: WHERE WE ARE TODAY**

Today, the recreation and parks system is GOOD and there is a strong desire to make it GREAT.

Needs for the future include:

- Move from good system to a great system that generates community pride and identity and acts as a catalyst for development by including art, greater attention to aesthetics, and unique community-scale facilities.
- Fine-tune the facility mix (add aquatics, multi-purpose turf fields, basketball courts, specialty facilities, high quality indoor gym space).
- Better connect the bike-walk system and make it safer.
- Continue to renovate parks to make them more welcoming, safer, and more reflective of the community’s diversity.
- Better access to programs for low mobility populations (physical and financial access).
- Remain sustainable by matching resources with future needs and desires.
Brooklyn Park’s Recreation and Parks Purpose

Building on the city’s mission “A thriving community, inspiring pride, where opportunities exist for all,” Recreation and Parks envisions its own department-wide purpose:

To engage the entire community in providing flexible, welcoming, and exciting play for all.

Recreation and Parks must provide for play—of many types and to many people. Beyond that, the purpose statement recognizes four critical elements of the entire recreation and parks system.

- **Flexible:** The system will be able to make adjustments over time without significant capital investment. This idea addresses the changing demographics of the community and will allow Recreation and Parks to more effectively meet resident desires.

- **Welcome:** All residents should, above all, perceive that they are free to enjoy park facilities and programs. They should feel comfortable in the parks and when participating in programs. Recreation and Parks strives to make this the case throughout the system, and will continue to make this a high priority.

- **Exciting:** Parks and recreation programs offer challenges not available anywhere else. People come to the parks or participate in programs to see or do something different, to escape from their work lives, and to socialize and play with friends and family. Recreation and Parks will continue to operate a system that provides excitement in play.

- **Engaged with the Entire Community.** The desire to serve all Brooklyn Park residents, along with the desire to collaborate with the community and businesses on improvements, is what drives Recreation and Parks.

To accomplish the purpose of Brooklyn Park Recreation and Parks, the Master Plan addresses six focus areas, each of which has a single, overarching goal and a series of specific objectives.

The six focus areas are: **Engagement, Maintenance and Safety, Facilities and Parks, Programs, Trails, and Funding.**

The objectives are the specific tasks Recreation and Parks will undertake in order to accomplish the focus area goals and the overall purpose (and, by extension, the city’s mission).

CHAPTER 6: PRIORITY ACTIONS AND TOOL KIT

The Recreation and Parks Master Plan identifies 6 PRIORITY ACTIONS needed to take the recreation and parks system from GOOD to GREAT. In addition, Chapter 6 will include tools to help achieve the plan priorities and goals and implement the objectives. The tools include Activity Delivery Guidelines, Park Classifications, and Recreation Facility Standards.
1. Improve public access to the Mississippi River

2. Create more unique parks

3. Create a more connected trail system with a new greenway in the southern portion of the city

4. Integrate arts into the park system

5. Provide more equitable access to recreation programs and parks

6. Add new specialized facilities such as aquatics and an indoor field house or domed sports field and expand on non-traditional offerings such as skateboard parks, disc golf, community gardens, and dog parks.

New community park and potential catalyst for development/redevelopment. Potential location for outdoor performance space and/or arts center.

Look for opportunities to establish a new park with picnicking and amplified sound west of CR-81.

Develop an urban greenway along Bass Creek and Shingle Creek connecting to the Mississippi River.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER
Near Term:
- Enhance & expand River Park
- Enhance Mississippi River Trail
- Provide access to river islands for special programs

Long Term:
- Redevelopment of land adjacent to the river
- Establish continuous public open space along the river edge

Legend
- Proposed Priority Actions
  - Parks with unique community-wide use
  - New urban greenway
  - Mississippi River Corridor
  - Planned Regional Trails
  - Priority Trail Network
  - Regional Trails
  - Internal Park Walking Trails

Informational
- Existing Parks
- Trail
- Sidewalk
- Planned Trail
- Planned Sidewalk
- Schools
1. IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

The Mississippi River is Brooklyn Park’s largest natural resource. Today, much of the river corridor is developed with single family homes and there is limited visual or public access to the river. Long term (50+ years) redevelopment of the river corridor is an exciting opportunity to increase access to Brooklyn Park’s #1 natural resource and create economic development opportunities.

The draft master plan recommends:

☐ Over time, redevelop the Mississippi River Corridor to create a public open space along the river’s edge. A first step to this will be amending the city’s comprehensive plan to guide the area for redevelopment with a public open space along the Mississippi River.

☐ In the near term, enhance access to the river on existing public land by:
  ■ Increasing use of River Park by adding community-scale facilities and programs. Expand the park boundaries as opportunities allow.
  ■ Enhance the Mississippi River Trail with landscaping, lighting, and furnishings (drinking fountains, benches, bike racks, interpretation), and formal rest areas in locations with river views.
  ■ Provide access to islands in the Mississippi River for special programs

2. CREATE MORE UNIQUE PARKS

Brooklyn Park is one of the most diverse communities in Minnesota; it has racial, ethnic, economic, and age diversity. It is logical that the recreation and park system should reflect this diversity. More unique parks, reflective of diverse demographics and interests, will help take the recreation and parks system from good to great.

The draft master plan recommends:

☐ Integrate community involvement in the design and planning processes for parks to ensure they reflect the community’s diversity.

☐ Build a new, signature, community park in the Northwest/Target Campus Area as a catalyst for development/redevelopment. The new park would be a potential location for an outdoor performance space, large scale picnicking venue, or arts center.

☐ Establish a new park along the CR 81 corridor to serve the southwest portion of the city and act as an amenity for development/redevelopment along the CR 81 Corridor.

☐ Continue to celebrate Brooklyn Park’s history at Eidem Homestead. It is a potential location for the local historical society, farmer’s market, or an expansion of community gardens.

☐ Maintain and improve facilities at Central Park, Oak Grove Park, Brookdale Park, and the Community Activity Center.
3. CREATE A MORE CONNECTED TRAIL SYSTEM

Trails are one of the most desired and economical recreation amenities. They bring the park system closer to every resident, are usable by all ages and abilities, offer transportation alternatives, and support active living.

The draft master plan recommends:

- Create a new urban greenway (linear park and trail) along Bass and Shingle Creeks to the Mississippi River, connecting existing neighborhoods, parks, trails, and natural areas.
- Fill existing trail gaps with a priority on creating a one half to one mile grid of trails and sidewalks city-wide on major roads and a one quarter to one half mile wide grid in low mobility areas.
- Build trail network enhancements including: trails on both sides of major roads, adding bike lanes, safer road crossings, and plowing more trails for winter use.
- Expand walking loops in community parks.

4. INTEGRATE ARTS INTO THE PARK SYSTEM

Arts can provide a layer of richness that draws people to recreation programs and parks, makes residents feel welcome, and sets the City’s recreation and parks system apart from those in neighboring communities.

Draft master plan recommendations include:

- Add signature art pieces in community parks.
- Build an outdoor performance space in the city, possible locations include new parks in the northwest or southwest.
- Incorporate art into park infrastructure such as benches, picnic shelters, fencing, and walkways.
- Look for opportunities to include active art in parks.
- With partners, look for opportunities to locate an arts center in the city.
5. PROVIDE MORE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO RECREATION PROGRAMS AND PARKS

Serving all Brooklyn Park residents regardless of race, income, age, or ability is a fundamental purpose of recreation and parks. To that end, the draft master plan recommends continuing to improve on equitable physical distribution of facilities and increased emphasis on breaking down transportation and economic barriers to participation.

Draft master plan recommendations include:

- Increase physical access to programs by working with partners to expand program locations, developing a program for mobile recreation (where programs are brought to parks), working with partners to expand bus and shuttle service to program location, and providing universally accessible facilities.

- Lessen financial barriers to participation by focusing on low cost/no cost recreation facilities, continuing to use a tiered pricing model for programs, and offering sliding scale fees, scholarships, and subsidized rentals.

- Remove cultural barriers to participation by involving residents in the design and planning process for parks; actively recruiting minority residents and recent immigrants as volunteers and interns; establishing a park liaisons program, reducing language barriers, more actively marketing activities and events, and offering more specialized programs.

6. ADD KEY RECREATION FACILITIES

Providing a variety of recreation facilities that meet recreation needs and desires is what makes a park system fun for everyone. While Brooklyn Park offers a diverse range of facilities, the draft master plan recommends updating the facility mix.

This includes:

- Aquatics: add an indoor pool and interactive water play features to the facility mix.

- Indoor recreation: add a field house or domed sports fields, as well as providing greater access to high quality gym

- Outdoor recreation: provide more non-traditional sports facilities, such as skate parks and disc golf; add community garden spaces and dog parks; increase the number of multi-purpose sport fields for soccer, football, lacrosse, and rugby.
Focus areas, goals and action oriented objectives create a road map for system investment over the next 25 years.

- Identifies 6 priority actions for moving the system from Good to Great.
- Fosters strong partnerships, including public-private partnerships.
- Identifies opportunities for parks and open space to act as catalysts for economic development.
- Provides a defensible rationale and tools for system-wide decision-making.
- Allows for efficient resource allocation (budgeting and staffing).

May 10 to June 8 - public input on draft master plan

- May 10th 6:30PM - 8:30PM Community Open House at Community Activity Center.

- May 10th to June 8th:
  - View the draft plan on-line and provide input.
  - http://www.brooklynparkrecrparkplan.com
  - Look for summary information at City events including:
    - May 10th - Summer Open House at Zanewood Recreation Center
    - May 17th - Hartkopf Park Master Plan Meeting - 6:30-8:00 PM Park Brook Elementary
    - May 23rd - Street Smarts for Seniors

BROOKLYN PARK Recreation and Parks Master Plan
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Click here to answer a few questions about the Draft Recreation and Parks Master Plan.