

Nature-Based Recreation: A Recipe for Community Health

City of Brooklyn Park,
Recreation and Parks Department



REC 3281

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The project on which this presentation is based was completed in collaboration with the City of Brooklyn Park as part of the 2016—2017 Resilient Communities Project (RCP) partnership. RCP is a program at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) that connects University faculty and students with Minnesota communities to address strategic projects that advance local resilience and sustainability.

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Background

Population: 75,781 people

Brooklyn Park is one of the most diverse communities in Minnesota. 52% of the community identifies as white.

Average Median Income: \$62,077. There is a large variety of income levels.

Nature Based Play: Natural play spaces are outdoor playgrounds that contain plants sand, terrain, rocks, water, and other natural elements as sources of play. Play spaces where natural elements are installed for decorative purpose only, or where children are prohibited from engaging with the material, are not natural play spaces. Another aspect of natural play spaces is the integration of any play structures with these natural elements.



City of Brooklyn Park

2010 U.S. Census

Median Household Income
By Census Tract

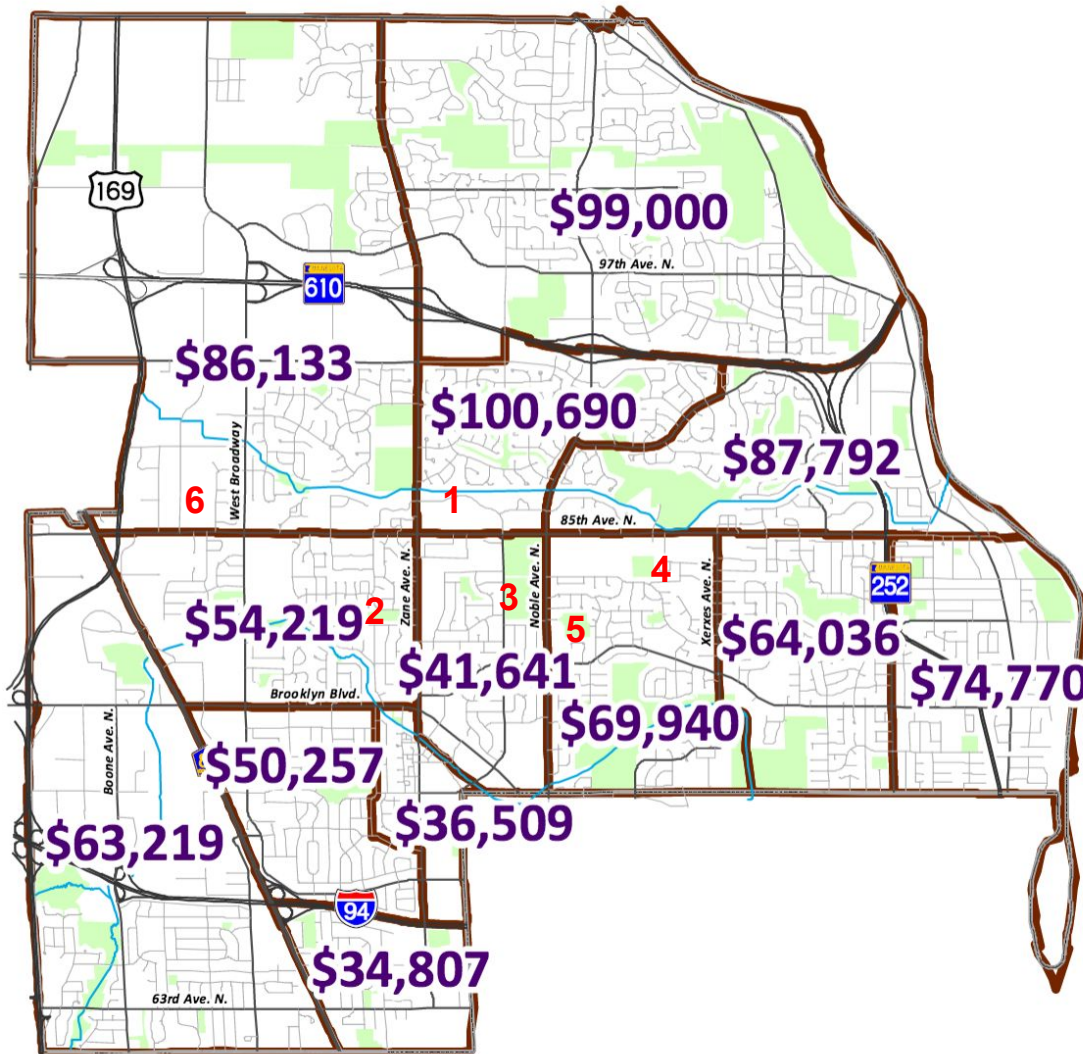
City 2010: \$62,077

City 2000: \$56,572

City 1990: N/A

 Census Tract Boundary

1. Community Activity Center
2. Hamilton Park
3. Central Park
4. Cottonwood Park
5. Birch Grove School Park
6. College Park



Evaluation-Logic Model

- Rationale
 - RCP helps to identify 15-30 potential projects that will advance local sustainability and resilience based on community identified environmental, social, and economic issues as needed.
- Inputs
 - Repairs for sports equipment at parks as needed
 - Designer or landscaper for creating new NBP models
 - Grants, community fundraiser, or donations to fund park or NBP upgrades
 - Volunteers for park repairs, maintenance, landscaping, or NBP installation
- Outputs
 - New nature-based play areas at parks as needed
 - More appealing recreation opportunities for the community that encourage socialization
Community engagement
 - Increase physical activity time in children and adults
 - Encouraging physical, cognitive, and emotional development
 - Creating connection with nature

Evaluation-Logic Model Continued..

- Reactions
 - Repeat engagement at new NBP areas
 - Bringing new customers with varying backgrounds to the parks
 - Increased satisfaction with park offerings
- Learning Outcomes
 - Exposure to new types of recreation and play
 - Impact on personal interests, encouraging exploration in nature
- Behavioral Outcomes
 - Enhanced social integration among groups of people
- Impacts
 - Love for nature
 - Increased family involvement, improved family relations
 - Awareness and support for nature and outdoor activities

Evaluation Method-Observation

Nature Based Play Site Observation

Site Name: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator Name: _____

Natural Play Areas are outdoor spaces designated for play that are made of natural components such as plants, logs, water, sand, mud, boulders, hills and trees. These components represent the larger wild environment in a way that feels safe and manageable to young visitors and their parents while inviting imaginative and explorative play (Oregon).

- **Natural features**

- o Natural spaces

- o Trees and foliage

- o Open and unlandscaped fields

- o Minimal design structures, still functional

- o Natural structures

- o Rocks to climb and play on

- o Shaded spaces

- o Natural habitats

- o Multipurpose lawn spaces

- o Water feature

- o Sand, mulch, recycled rubber, playground pebble gravel, etc

- o Tiered spaces (levels)

- o Messy materials (mud, sand, twigs, etc)

- o Gathering spaces

- **Physical features**

- o Hard-surface play area

- o Dramatic play structures

- o Trees and natural areas

- o Active-play equipment

- o Fences, gates, walls

- o Green houses

- o Transitional spaces

- o Accessibility

Evaluation Method-Observation

- Safety

- Fences around hazards

- Appropriate equipment

- Litter-free area

- Fully functioning equipment

- Secured equipment

- No water hazards

- No entanglement hazards

- No traffic hazards

- Does the area?

- Encourage play

- Stimulate senses

- Stimulate curiosity

- Support physical needs

- Support social needs

- Allow adult-child interaction

- Allow child-child interaction

- Support active play

- Support creative play

- Support imaginative play

- Support group play

- Support games

- Involve art or music

- Involve science

- Support nature-child interaction

Evaluation Method-The 7 C's

1. Character
2. Context
3. Connectivity
4. Change
5. Chance
6. Clarity
7. Challenge

BirchGrove School Park



Birchgrove School Park



Central Park



College Park



College Park



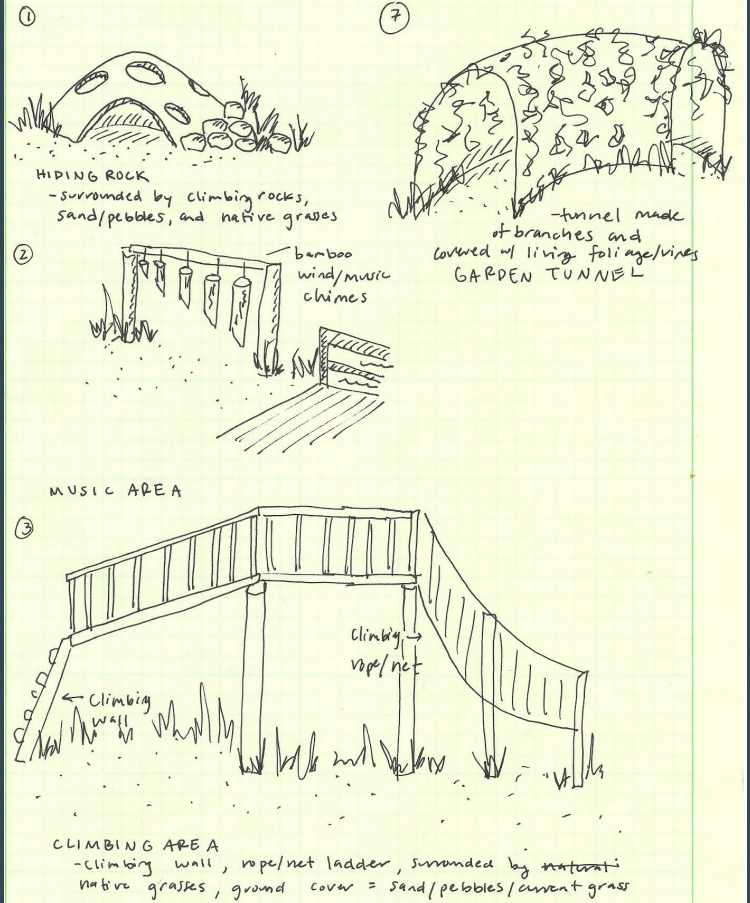
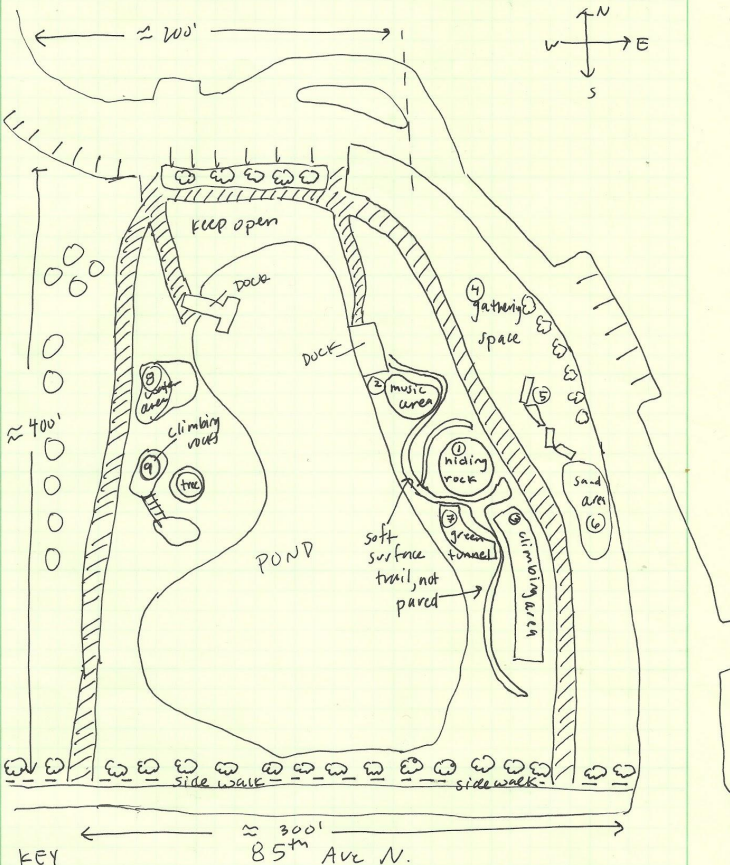
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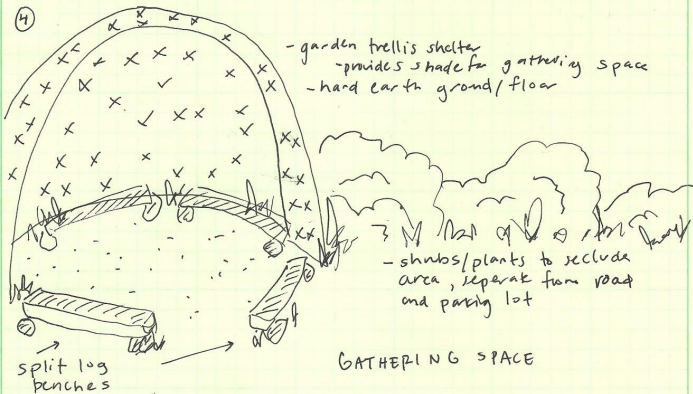


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Community Activity Center, Pond Area

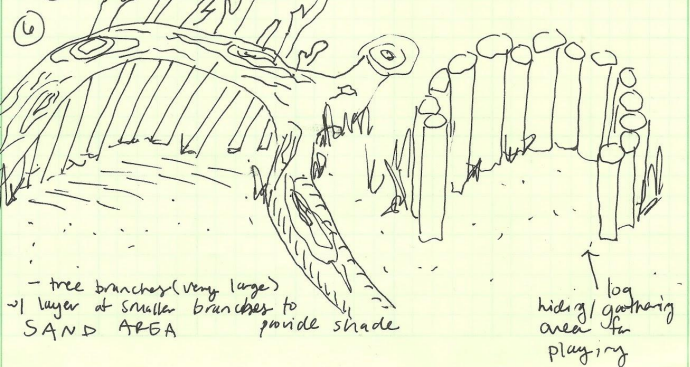




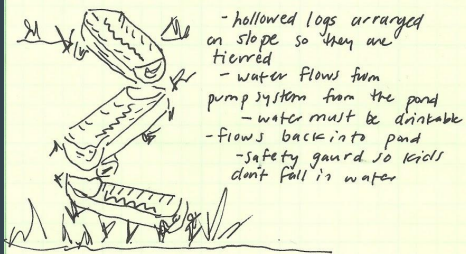


⑤ CLIMBING / BALANCING LOGS

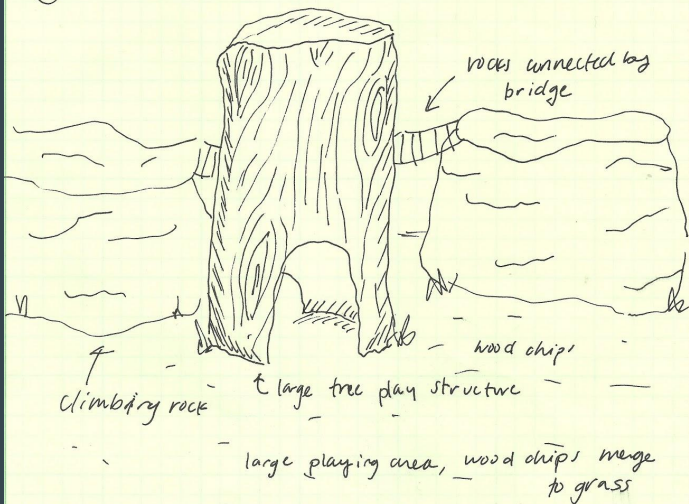
- large, smooth logs connecting gathering space to sand area
- some are railed
- surrounded by sand, grass



⑧ WATER AREA

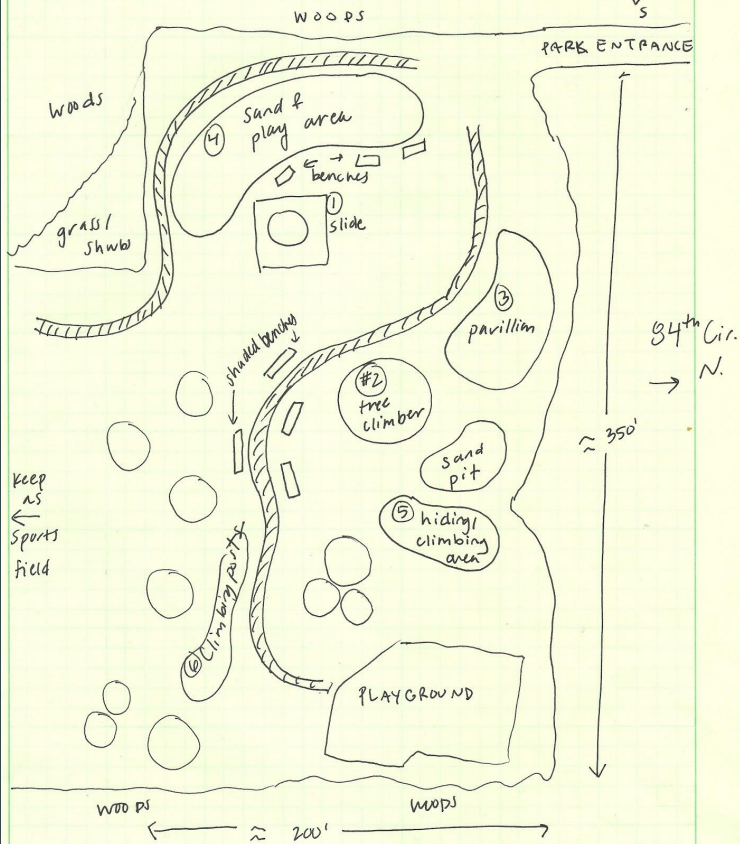
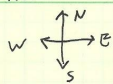


⑨



Cottonwood Park



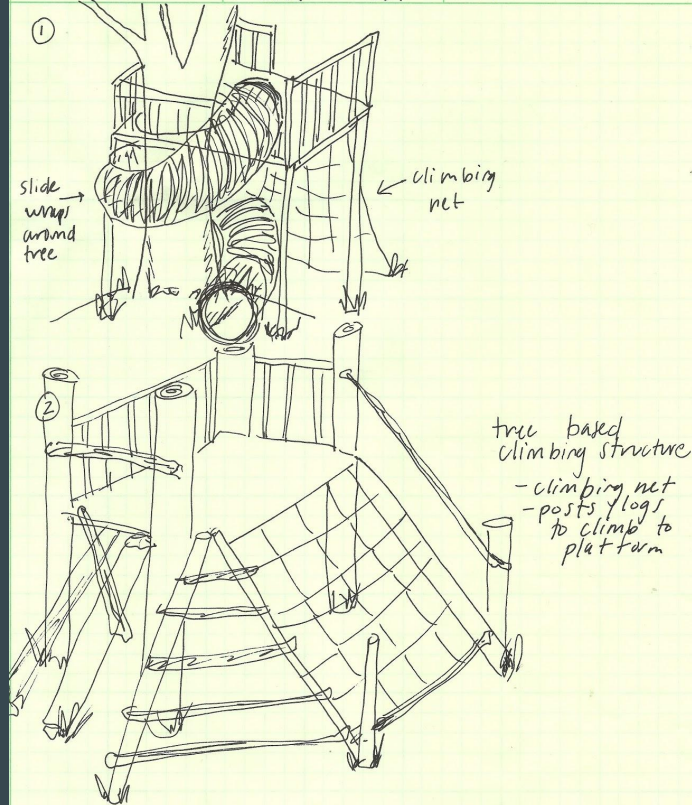


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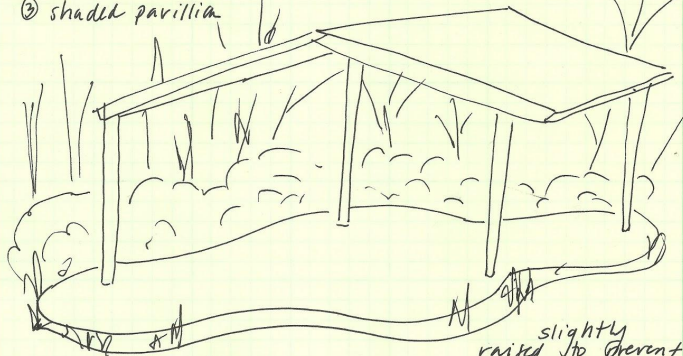
○ = existing trees

▨ walking path

↓ 83rd Ave. N.

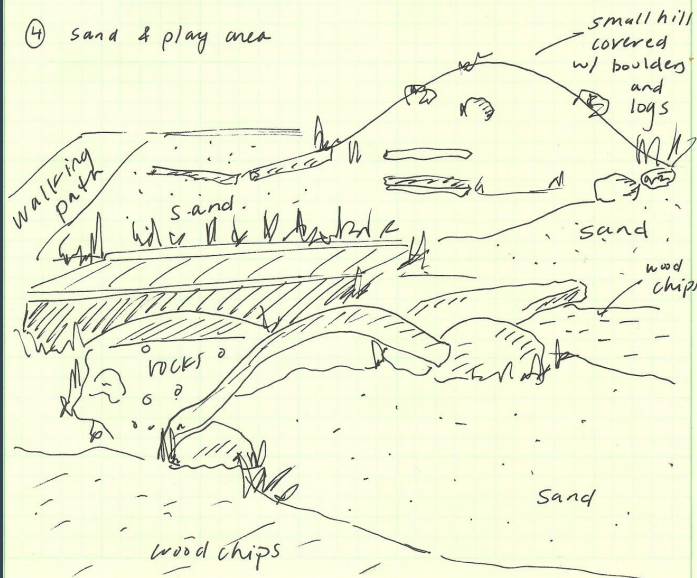


③ shaded pavillia



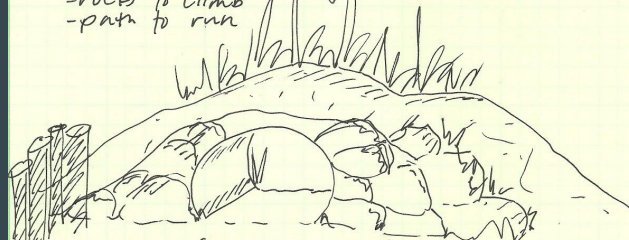
filled with picnic tables
 slightly raised to prevent muddy area

④ sand & play area



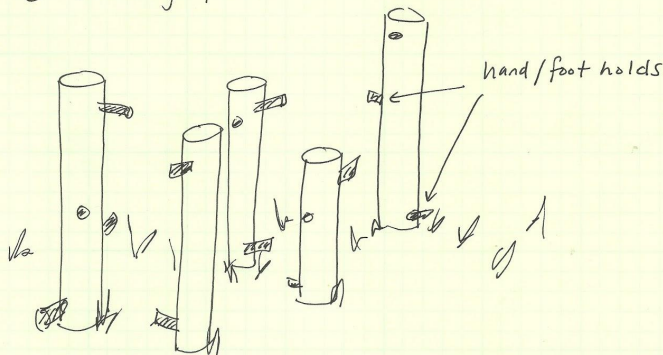
⑤ Hiding / climbing area

- tunnel to crawl through
- rocks to climb
- path to run



sand

⑥ climbing posts



Hamilton Park



Experience

- Communication
- Time