2014 Wrap-Up

It was a dynamic and exciting year for Brooklyn Park. Development activity shot forward as local businesses, developers and households continued to benefit from the national market’s growth. Thousands of jobs came to Brooklyn Park through the Target North Campus Expansion opening, the relocating of more than three business headquarters to Brooklyn Park, and other small business activity. Staff worked to find new ways to encourage and facilitate healthy development, engage business owners in decision-making, support neighborhood revitalization, welcome new businesses and residents to the city and keep existing businesses and residents here.

The city’s branding initiative was a focus throughout the year. The process helped the EDA, staff, and residents alike define Brooklyn Park’s already unique and dynamic identity as a thriving suburb full of diverse opportunities in employment, housing, culture, higher education, business and recreation. In addition, Kim Berggren was chosen as the new Community Development Director in the spring and the search began for a new Economic Development Director after the departure of Amy Baldwin in December.

Key Highlights

- There were over 30 development projects or new businesses in the city this year
- The EDA began work on 13 homes through the Foreclosure Recovery Initiative, bringing the program’s total number of rehabilitated homes to 162 since it began in 2009
- Staff developed Map Apps for residents and developers to easily access information about developments, city-owned property, and restaurants on the city’s website
- Spong completed work on the city’s re-branding initiative and began the brand implementation phase
- The EDA purchased 15 acres of land in the North-central area of the city in moving ahead with the Building to 2030 Plan
- Brooklyn Park residents established 31 official neighborhoods

(Top Right) Target opened its North campus expansion in the fall, adding thousands of jobs to the market (Top Left) North Hennepin Community College opened its new Bioscience and Health Career Center in the fall. (Bottom Left) City Hall’s flowers were in full bloom this summer. (Bottom Right) Mayor Lunde and Governor Dayton pitched in at the ground breaking for the Highway 610 Extension.
North Cross Business Park

One of the biggest successes this year was the North Cross Business Park project near Highway 610 and 93rd Avenue. United Properties broke ground on the park in August in the company of Governor Mark Dayton and MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben. By the end of the year the project was nearly complete.

The EDA and Community Development department were lauded for expediting the development process for United Properties. The company was on a very short timeline to begin construction, and the city was able to win the bid due to the quick and precise work of many city employees and the EDA. United Properties even donated $15,000 to a city public art fund in gratitude. This project was truly a success for the city.

The business park is now headquarters to two manufacturing companies: Würth Adams Nut & Bolt and Perbix Machine Co. Two other sites are included in the park plan for industrial, office, or hotel tenants. Both Würth Adams and Perbix were awarded funds from DEED’s Minnesota Job Creation Fund for bringing job opportunities to the city.

(Top Right) The Zane Avenue Trail, completed this summer, made the area much more pedestrian friendly. (Bottom Right) The Yates Sidewalk Project is shown before (left) and after improvements (right). (Bottom Left) United Properties’ Brandon Champeau hands Mayor Lunde a $15,000 check for a Brooklyn Park public art fund at the North Cross Business Park groundbreaking.
Grand Openings

- CorTrust Bank
- Dragon Star Supermarket
- Hwy 610 & Noble Park & Ride
- NHCC Bioscience & Health Career Center
- Olympus Surgical Technologies

New Businesses

- 9 Round Kickboxing
- Anytime Fitness
- Broadway Pizza
- Clearfield Technologies
- Goodwill Industries
- Injury Physicians
- Metro PCS
- Perbix Machine Co.
- Pioneer Critical Power
- Pita Pit
- Prairie Care
- Reflections Dental Care
- Wurth Adams Nut & Bolt Co.

Brooklyn Avenues for Homeless Youth Shelter

The Brooklyn Avenues Shelter broke ground in August, and is due to open in January 2015. The shelter is the first of its kind in Minnesota and was backed by an amazing amount of community support. It is an exciting initiative to reinforce Brooklyn Park’s mission of providing opportunities for all. The shelter will house 12 teens in transition in a 5,000 square foot residential facility with living spaces, staff offices, commercial kitchen, and computer lab. Staff and community members alike donated bedding, personal items, and decoration for the shelter. The project funding was a joint effort between the EDA, Avenues, the Otto Bremer Foundation and gifts and pledges from various area organizations and faith groups.

(Above) A large crowd came to the Avenues Shelter ground breaking. (Top right) Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton speaks at the Highway 610 Extension ground breaking. (Bottom Right) The Avenues for Homeless Youth Shelter was nearly completed at the end of 2014.

Highway 610 Expansion Project

Construction began on the extension of Highway 610 in October. Several dignitaries attended the ground breaking ceremony including Governor Mark Dayton, MNDOT Commissioner Charlie Zelle, DEED Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben, and many others. The $80 million project will extend Highway 610 from Elm Creek Boulevard and County Road 81 west to I-94. The project is anticipated to be complete by 2016.

EDA Purchased Land

In May, the EDA purchased three tax-forfeit parcels in the area of Zane Avenue and Oak Grove Parkway at a Hennepin County Auction. Later in the year, a fourth adjacent parcel was purchased from a private owner, creating a 15 acre development opportunity.
Business Vitality

MCCD and Open to Business

Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) continued to offer business consulting services at City Hall one day monthly and by appointment through the Open to Business Program. This year, residents and business owners continued to utilize the Brooklyn Park program more than any other city metro-wide. Participants received help reviewing business plans and providing general direction on how to start a business.

92 people received
325 hours of assistance
7 loans
Totaling $324,720
Leveraging $1,516,368

Highlights from this year’s Open to Business consulting and the EDA’s partnership with MCCD include:

- **Quantronic Corporation** – Received an MCCD loan of $119,000 to purchase its building at 8300 89th Avenue N.
- **Lu’s Sandwiches, LLC** – Brooklyn Park resident received an MCCD loan of $12,500 to open a sandwich shop in Minneapolis.
- **Zamin’s Minnesota Company** – Brooklyn Park resident started an import and wholesale clothing company. The resident received $10,000 in MCCD financing.
- **Eye Doc Inc.** – Brooklyn Park resident Sandy Pham purchased an office condo in Brooklyn Center and accessed $170,000 in capital to open her 2nd eye clinic location in the north metro.

New Outreach in 2014

Staff attended **Employee Welcome Events** in September at the new Olympus Surgical Technologies Campus and at the Target Campus. City staff shared information with employees about licensing, housing, new development, recreation opportunities and community events. Many of the employees are new to Brooklyn Park and enjoyed learning about opportunities in the city.

(Above) Alisha Gray and Todd Lason hosted a tour of the city for Target employees as part of Target’s onboarding process.

The staff has also been working to provide **easy access to resources for businesses**, including loan and grant opportunities for energy savings, responsible waste management and recycling. Brooklyn Park businesses have already taken advantage of these resources; Rotation Engineering completed a long-term energy audit by Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) this year, and Mad Jack’s Sports Café experienced savings after a CEE “One Stop Lighting Shop” overhaul.
Business Forward Annual Forum

The 3rd Annual Business Forward Forum took place on October 9 at Edinburgh USA. Approximately 100 business representatives, brokers, bankers, and community stakeholders attended. At the event, attendees learned about new development, city initiatives, and heard from keynote speaker Toby Madden of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. They also had time to network with community resource providers, including Xcel Energy, Brooklyn Park Community Engagement, and MN DEED. The Business Forward Forum is a tool for boosting the city’s business retention and expansion efforts, and for engaging and supporting businesses in the community.

Annual Banker Breakfast

More than 40 regional business bankers attended this year’s Banker Breakfast on March 12. Central Minnesota Development Company (CMDC) spoke to the group about business financing opportunities, and Cindy Sherman and Amy Baldwin discussed Brooklyn Park development activity. Rob Smolund of the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) also answered questions regarding MCCD’s micro loan and small business advising services.

First Broker Event

The EDA’s first annual Broker Event in July was a huge success with over 90 attendees. The event aimed to alert brokers to the ample opportunities in Brooklyn Park, and featured a virtual tour of development projects and a broker/developer panel of industry experts.

(Above) There were over 90 attendees at the city’s first Broker Event in July.
Brooklyn Park by the Numbers

Brooklyn Park Development Corporation (BPDC) made one loan of $150,000 to Gamet Manufacturing to purchase a building to relocate from St. Paul to Brooklyn Park.

Jobs

+3,000

jobs added in Brooklyn Park since 2009, a 12% increase compared to an 8% increase in Hennepin County.

Percent Change in Tax Capacity per Capita, 2009-2014

BP -31% from $1042 to $714
Housing & Neighborhoods

This was an exciting year in housing initiatives for the city. Economic Development staff continued working on key housing strategies, launched new programs, and advocated for housing policy change at the regional and federal level.

Grants & Loans

In 2014 two new programs were launched to help homeowners make necessary repairs. The Emergency Assistance Program and RENEW were both launched to make deferred and 0% interest loans to moderate and low-income homeowners. The Front Yard Fix-Up grant program, which is in its second year, helps homeowners make improvements and necessary fixes to the front yard of their home and some façade improvement as well. Over $50,000 has been awarded in grants, which has leveraged an additional $35,000 of investment.

Grants/Loans Breakdown

- Homeowner EDA Loans (2)
- Emergency Assistance
- Deferred Loans* (2)
- Front Yard Fix-up Grants* (39)
- MN Housing Loans/CEE (25)
- Federal Home Loan Bank (51)

* Designates CDBG funds

Housing Updates

- The City filed a formal complaint with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to challenge regional policies negatively impacting the city.

- In partnership with the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) the city launched a new pilot program, RENEW, to target very low-income home-owners with 0% interest rehabilitation loans.

- The spring 22nd Annual Realtor Forum was well attended. Keynotes featured the branding and neighborhood initiative campaigns.

- The Emergency Assistance program was established to help homeowners with health, safety, and code enforcement issues.

- The City continued to own a 4-plex transitional housing apartment property at 7600 69th Ave N where otherwise homeless families contract to live for up to 24 months while working to become self-reliant.

119 loans/grants for a total of

$790,106
Foreclosure Recovery Initiative

This initiative is a multi-year strategy to bring foreclosed homes back into stable homeownership, and includes a homebuyer assistance program and an acquisition/rehabilitation program. By 2016, the City plans to recover approximately 245 homes total through the program. By the end of 2014, the EDA had recovered 232 properties through the initiative, which began in 2009. The EDA is using approximately $9.5 million in federal stimulus, Community Development Block Grant, state, and tax increment funding.

The EDA maintains partnerships with for-profit and non-profit developers, including Robert Engstrom Capital Management LLC, PRG Inc., MyHomeSource LLC, eStoreMasters LLC, Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity and Homes Within Reach. These partners have had access to the EDA Loan Fund since 2011 to receive loans for construction financing at a 3% interest rate when development gap funding is available from a grant source. Over the last four years, the loan fund has provided over $10.8 million of supplemental financing and has accumulated over $85,000 of interest.

The Foreclosure Recovery Initiative benefits the community by:

- Helping to stabilize Brooklyn Park’s neighborhoods by getting new owners to occupy formerly vacant homes.
- Giving new life to previously under-maintained foreclosed homes by providing upgrades to siding, windows, roofs, driveways, or mechanical, plumbing & electrical systems.
- Ensuring that rehabilitated homes meet green standards, offer energy efficiency, and are free from lead & radon hazards
- Creating jobs for local contractors, real estate agents, etc.

By the end of 2014, the total number of homes rehabilitated by the program rose to 174, and homes were in various stages of the recovery process:

- **8 homes** under rehabilitation
- **2 homes** under contract for resale
- **1 home** remodeled/for sale
- **1 property** land banked
- **162 homes** remodeled, sold, and re-occupied by owner-occupants

(Pictured) Three previously foreclosed homes the city rehabilitated this year through the Foreclosure Recovery Initiative. The initiative rehabilitates both the interior and exterior of the home to take it from the “worst house on the block to the best house on the block”.

Program Highlights

- Brooklyn Park received a commemorative plaque recognizing our foreclosure recovery work from the Minnesota Foreclosure Partners Council
- In 2015, Brooklyn Park expects to receive additional NSP1 Minnesota Housing Finance Agency funding from Hennepin County
- Development partner, Robert Engstrom Capital Management, LLC was awarded $87,500 from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, which will be used toward the rehabilitation of 5 single family homes in Brooklyn Park

By the end of 2014, the total number of homes rehabilitated by the program rose to 174, and homes were in various stages of the recovery process:

- **8 homes** under rehabilitation
- **2 homes** under contract for resale
- **1 home** remodeled/for sale
- **1 property** land banked
- **162 homes** remodeled, sold, and re-occupied by owner-occupants
Summer Blossom Garden & Landscape Program

The Summer Blossom Program, which recognizes residents and businesses who strive to improve the city’s landscape through creating attractive gardens, was a success again this year with winners in each of the seven categories. Winners were awarded engraved garden pavers and a $200 gift card, and were formally recognized by City Council. For the first time ever, staff made an online virtual “Tour” map of all the winning gardens to both promote the program and provide some recognition for the winners.

Home Stretch Workshops

The City again held three Home Stretch workshops, which is a required eight hour class for all first time homebuyers receiving public funds for down payment and closing cost assistance. The class is presented by Community Action Partnership for Suburban Hennepin (CAPSH) and addresses all aspects of home buying.

Brooklyn Park Neighborhoods

In 2014 the City Council approved Brooklyn Park’s 31 neighborhoods, which were established through a long, resident-driven community engagement initiative during which the Neighborhoods Task Force received input from over 700 residents. The city is currently in the process of aligning city services to the new neighborhood system. Additionally, the process has given the City a platform to engage residents in activities specific to their own neighborhood, and has raised awareness around events, public meetings, pond and street care, National Night Out and the city’s crime alert system Tip-411.
In 2013, the city’s Economic Development Authority approved the hiring of public relations firm Spong to help create a brand strategy to reframe how people perceive Brooklyn Park.

In mid-2014, Spong began the Discovery Phase of its work and interviewed over 250 stakeholders to learn more about the current perceptions about the city. Spong found that perceptions of the city were not in line with the current realities of living, working and playing in Brooklyn Park. As a result, Spong recommended the brand territory of “Unexpected” to capture the essence of the community. It found that Brooklyn Park is a city of unexpected vitality and opportunity, and the brand should reflect the new reality of the city. To further promote this concept Spong provided a refreshed logo and the tagline Unique. United. Undiscovered.

The focus of the refreshed brand is to promote all the things about the city that people may not expect – engaged and connected residents, amazing restaurants, ethnic foods, thriving neighborhoods, parks and recreation and a wide variety in housing stock. Spong created an extensive brand manual as a guide for city staff to use when creating marketing materials, mailings and everyday documents. This brand manual, and proper and creative use of it, should bring to life the unexpected, yet very real, vitality and appeal of Brooklyn Park.
Regional Engagement

Planning and Development staff continued to be engaged in the activities of the Economic Development Association of Minnesota (EDAM). Staff members have also been fostering relationships with other cities and regional organizations due to the Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit (LRT) project.

Kim Berggren serves on both the Metro Cities’ Housing and Economic Development Committee, and the League of Minnesota Cities Legislative Committee and Development Finance Task Force.

Kim Berggren, Emily Carr and Matt Ides received certification as a Housing Development Finance Professional (HDFP) from the National Development Council. HDFP Certification is a professional credential given to individuals who successfully complete NDC’s intensive housing development finance training series, which includes instruction in development programs and single and multi-family housing finance.

The Council also approved financial support of Greater MSP, a private non-profit organization dedicated to advancing a coordinated regional economic development strategy, business retention, expansion and recruitment strategies, and to promoting the region’s assets internationally. Greater MSP has previously helped the city secure development projects, including Olympus Surgical Technologies in 2013, which brought over 200 jobs and almost $400,000 in tax revenue to the city when it opened in 2014.

Regional Events

- Housing Collaborative Institute (HCI) presentation regarding the Neighborhood Indicators Project
  Kim Berggren, Matthew Ides, & Josie Shardlow, Presenters

- International Economic Development Council’s Spring Conference Presentation
  Amy Baldwin, Presenter

(Above) Amy Baldwin served as a panelist for the MNCAR Emerging Brokers Event.

- MNCAR Emerging Brokers Event
  Amy Baldwin, Panelist (above)

- MN Real Estate Journal’s Industrial and Economic Development Annual Summit
  Amy Baldwin, Panelist

- Transforming Local Government Conference in Denver, CO
  Amy Baldwin and Alisha Gray presented on Business Forward; Mike Sable and Kim Berggren presented on Cities Unlimited

- Get Up & Geo 2014 Presentation
  Emily Carr and Teegan Wydra, Presenters
Looking to 2015

LRT Blue Line Extension

2015 will be an impactful year for the Metro Blue Line Extension (Bottineau LRT) project planning. In partnership with Hennepin County, community engagement and community input around station area planning will begin for Brooklyn Park’s five proposed stations. Additionally, the City Council will appoint five community members to serve on a Community Advisory Board as well as a Business Advisory Board.

Transforming Local Government Conference

Alisha Gray, Business Development Coordinator, and Josie Shardlow, Community Relations Specialist, were selected to present at the 2015 Transforming Local Government Conference in Phoenix, Arizona in April of 2015. They will be speaking about Brooklyn Park’s work building community resilience through the branding initiative and place making.

Dedication to the Future of Brooklyn Park

As the economy continues to improve, EDA staff expects 2015 to be a busy year with lots of new development opportunities for the community. The City continues to move forward with its “Building to 2030” plan to develop the area along Highway 610, and is excited about all the opportunities that are ahead. Above all, the City and EDA Staff will continue to strive to keep Brooklyn Park a thriving community inspiring pride where opportunities exist for all.

Stay Tuned...

• The city will welcome a new Economic Development Director and City Manager in 2015
• Light Rail Transit planning will continue for the Blue Line Extension (formerly known as Bottineau), which will have five metro stops in Brooklyn Park
• Branding will be implemented over the year, as new materials are distributed to the community
• The Economic Division will be hiring a new Project Facilitator position to manage brand implementation citywide, and to help support the division’s growing number of projects
• The Foreclosure Recovery Initiative is due to receive new NSP1 funds from Hennepin County to continue work rehabilitating foreclosed homes and revitalizing Brooklyn Park’s neighborhoods

(Above) The Building to 2030 Task Force toured many metro suburbs to get an idea of what other cities are doing with new development.