

CHAPTER 5: Community Image, Economic Competitiveness & Stability





INTRODUCTION

In previous Chapters of this Plan the City’s commitment to redefining, reimagining and redeveloping key areas of the community are described; but this commitment is hollow without the City’s vision to elevate Brooklyn Center to an economically competitive City within the greater region. Economic competitiveness in the context of this Plan is the City’s ability to compete effectively for economic development that creates jobs, brings and retains corporations, successfully incubates new businesses and services on a local, regional, national and international scale. It also refers to the City’s ability to attract jobs and employment that serves its residents, and emphasizes opportunities and access to education, job skills matching and an improved quality of life for all of its residents – the idea that if we do better, we all do better together.

2040 Community Image, Economic Competitiveness & Stability Goals

- » Promote Brooklyn Center as an exceptional place for businesses, visitors and residents, both existing and new, because of its locational advantage and accessibility within the region.
- » Support the development of sustainable, resilient, and accessible neighborhoods in the city center that reinforce the City’s commitment to its diverse residents, neighborhoods, and businesses.
- » Explore meaningful ways to represent the community’s diversity through the City’s
- » Encourage and promote reinvestment in the City’s infrastructure including roadways, streetscapes, trails and utilities to signal Brooklyn Center’s commitment to the long-term success of its residents and businesses. branding, marketing and visual communications.
- » Recognize the opportunity and value of Brooklyn Center’s changing demographics and entrepreneurial attitudes to create an identity that embraces diversity as part of the City’s future.

** Supporting Strategies found in Chapter 2: Vision, Goals & Strategies*

5-1



The vision that Brooklyn Center can and should compete on not only a regional scale, but on a national and international scale may seem daunting particularly if the City spends too much time looking in its rear-view mirror. However, in order to move forward it is important for the City to understand its past and present because it provides valuable context from which the City can prepare its guide and roadmap for the future.

The purpose of this Chapter is to plan for economic development opportunities in the community that add refinement to Chapter 3: Land Use & Redevelopment and Chapter 4: Housing & Neighborhood contained in this Plan. As described throughout this Plan, the City is at a pivotal time and is faced with enormous opportunity to change and shape its future. The City recognizes that by working directly with the businesses and the community, we can create and maintain a strong economy and provide opportunities for all to be successful. The City is focused on capitalizing on this opportunity and is actively seeking ways to embrace the changes occurring in the community to make Brooklyn Center a great place to live, work, recreate and do business.

5-2

Repeatedly throughout this planning process the City's residents, stakeholders and policy-makers emphasized the need to nurture, support and grow local business. There is a common belief that the community is filled with an entrepreneurial spirit, residents who want the opportunity to work in Brooklyn Center with others who are passionate about making the City a great place to build and grow a business. The City is committed to finding ways to provide accessible, affordable and supportive opportunities for businesses to excel and thrive in the community – from small pop-up markets and kiosks to full-scale professional office buildings.

This Chapter is structured differently than others within this Plan because it is intended to serve an additional function beyond simply being a Chapter within this Plan. Instead this Chapter has enough background, socio-economic and existing conditions information to establish the context from which the aspirations and opportunities are derived to allow this Chapter to 'standalone' when needed – while still functioning as an integral and important part of this Plan.



EXISTING SOCIO-ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT OF RESIDENTS

One of the components that affects the community's ability to compete for economic development are the characteristics of the labor force available to new businesses and industries that may choose to relocate or grow in a region. Businesses need workers to prosper – and workers that have skills, education and characteristics that match their industry help make decisions to grow or locate in a community easier.

The following information is a summary of more detailed information is contained in the Background Report Appendix C, with additional discussion about key characteristics that most directly impact the City's economic development efforts. This information is a snapshot in time and should be used as a baseline – not as the future condition. For example, the City is expected to add more than 2,200 new households to the community over the next 20-years and those residents will add a new dynamic to the labor force that is not currently represented in the following data.

**Brooklyn Center is expected
to add more than 2,200
new households over the next
20 years.**

- Sources: Metropolitan Council

5-3

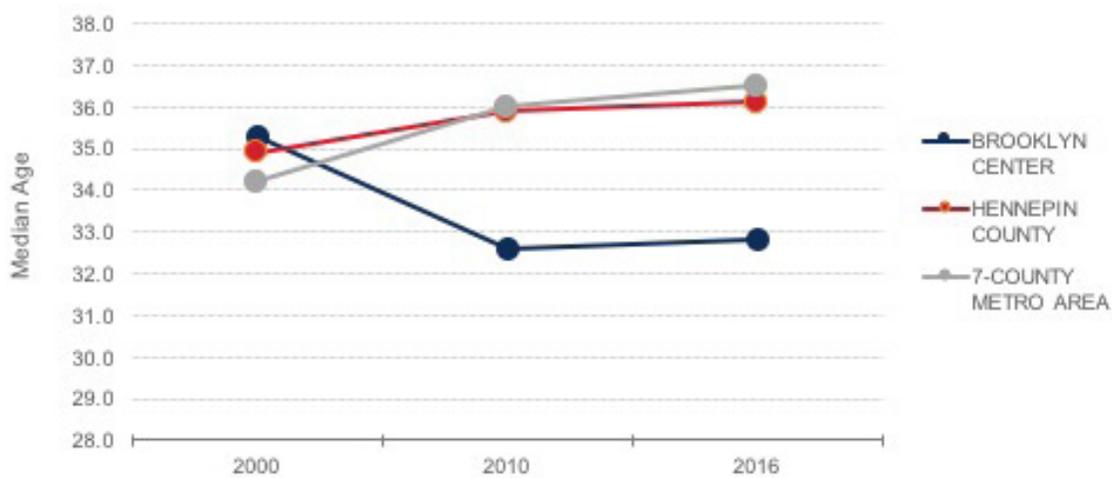
Existing Labor Force Characteristics

The following information was collected from a variety of resources including the US Census, DEED, ACS 2011 – 2016, the Metropolitan Council, Perkins+Will and SHC. More information regarding changes by decade and larger distribution trends can be found in the Background Report Appendix C.

Age

The age profile of the City plays an important role in economic development from the respect of what types of goods and services the population may demand, and also indicates the number of people that may be in the labor force now and in the future. As shown in Figure 5-1: Median Age 2000 – 2016, Brooklyn Center's Median Age is well below that of Hennepin County and the metro area.

Figure 5-1: Median Age 2000-2016



Sources: US Census; Metropolitan Council; Perkins+Will

5-4

In addition to Brooklyn Center's median age that is lower than that of Hennepin County and the 7-County metropolitan area, the City's share of the population Under 5 and between 5 and 17 represents a higher distribution of this age cohort than that of the County and the 7-County metropolitan area. This means that the number of young people that are either just entering the labor force or that will enter the labor force in the next decade is a significant proportion of the City's population. This has ramifications for the City's economic development efforts and emphasizes the importance of the City proactively partnering with schools, post-secondary institutions and other job skills training efforts to make sure that young people's skills are developed to match the needs of current and future employers.



Racial & Ethnic Composition

Brooklyn Center is a diverse community and is one of the only communities in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area with a majority-minority population. Additionally, the City's population has the second highest percentage of foreign-born residents in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, with 21%, or 1 in 5 residents, born outside the United States. As shown in the Background Report, the City's population is nearly 60% non-white, which is in contrast to Hennepin County (29.6%) and the 7-County Metro Area (25.2%). This difference means Brooklyn Center's residents are more diverse and represent more racial/ethnic groups than the surrounding communities. When celebrated, this diversity is an opportunity to make the City a dynamic integrated community that can serve as a model for the greater region—a region that is expected to demographically evolve similarly to the Brooklyn Center over the next planning period. Throughout this planning process residents, stakeholders and policy-makers expressed their belief that the City's diversity is a key differentiator in the region and that the opportunity to create a vibrant business community is inevitable as long as the right commitments and policies are put in place to foster economic development that benefits a range of business opportunities.

While the diverse resident population offers an exceptional opportunity, it also represents a challenge to ensure the City is responsive, supportive and integrative of its efforts to meet the needs of the changing population. In 2017, the City of Brooklyn Center partnered with Everybody In to provide a comprehensive report on racial equality within the City. The report identified and confirmed some existing racial disparities in the City, which provides valuable insight into what types of changes the City could employ to create a more equitable community for the future of all Brooklyn Center residents. The City is committed to continuing efforts to evaluate ways to reduce racial disparities that exist as they relate the economic stability of its residents, including access to livable wage jobs, home ownership opportunities, financial literacy and wealth creation, and job pathways training.

5-5



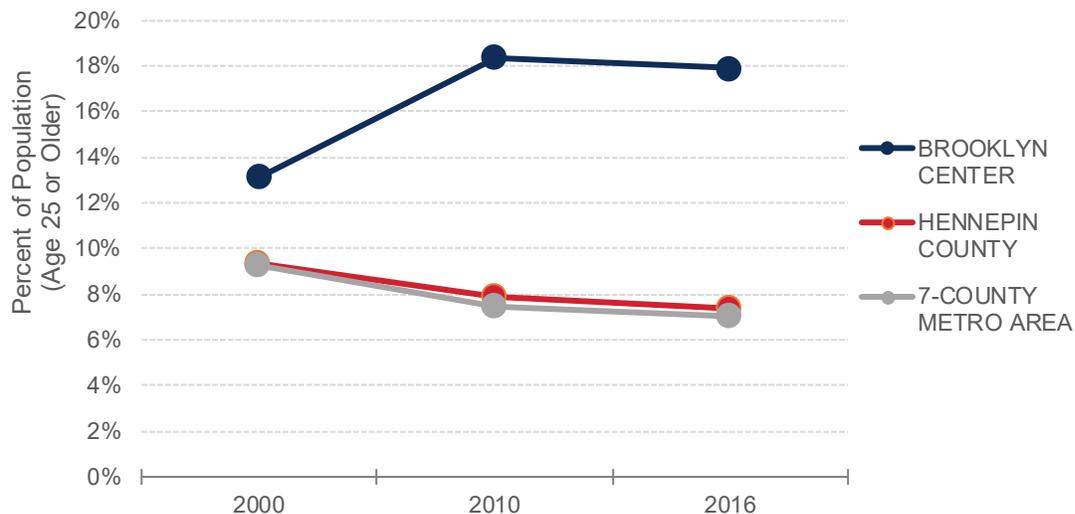
Education

Educational attainment is an important characteristic of the labor force and is one of the considerations a business or company evaluates when choosing to grow or locate within a community. Unlike age or racial/ethnic characteristics, educational attainment has the potential to be directly changed and influenced through improved policies and objectives. That is, you can't change someone's age, but you can change and improve the accessibility and availability of education and job skills training to the population.

As of 2016, 82% of Brooklyn Center residents have graduated high school and of those residents approximately 20% have a bachelor or graduate/professional degree. While the majority of the population over the age of 25 has a high school diploma, the percent of the population that did not graduate from high school is more than that of Hennepin County and the 7-County metro area. (See Figure 5-2. Change in the Population without a High School Diploma 2000-2016).

Figure 5-2. Change in the Population without a High School Diploma 2000-2016

5-6



Sources: US Census; Metropolitan Council; Perkins+Will

The good news is that after a spike between 2000 and 2010 in residents without a High School Diploma, the trend line appears to be decreasing between 2010 and 2016. Even with the slight recovery, the City's percentage of the population without a diploma is still more than 10% higher than that of the County and the 7-County Metro Area. One of the most important efforts the City has identified in this planning process is the need to identify ways to get the City's youth involved and committed to education.



Ensuring that the population has adequate educational opportunities and that education is accessible and attainable is a key component of the residents' ability to obtain and maintain livable wage jobs. The City of Brooklyn Center has multiple post-secondary educational institutions within proximity to the City including North Hennepin Community College and Hennepin Technical College, the University of Minnesota and various private post-secondary universities and colleges located within Minneapolis and Saint Paul. While these campuses are not located in the City of Brooklyn Center, several are within 5-miles of the City and are accessible by car, transit and bikeways or trails.

Income/Wages

In 2016 the median household income was \$46,400 which is a slight increase from the information contained within the Background Report from 2016 which identified median household income as \$44,855. As shown in the Background Report, the City's median household income is more than \$20,000 less than that of Hennepin County and the 7-County Metropolitan Area. While there are many factors that contribute to why Brooklyn Center's household incomes are less, it is most important to understand what it means for current residents. When household incomes are less it means that residents have less choice in meeting every day needs such as housing, goods, services and transportation. Additionally, residents likely have less disposable income to spend which directly affects businesses, particularly those in retail and commercial uses.

5-7

Adding complexity to the evaluation is the number of residents in the City that are at or below the federal poverty level. In 2016 the poverty level was defined as \$24,563 for a family of four, and generally a greater number of residents living in Brooklyn Center have incomes that place them below the poverty level and below 200% of the poverty level than in other neighboring cities. As shown in the Background Report, as of 2016 approximately 19.2% of Brooklyn Center residents had incomes below the poverty level, and over 44% were below 200% of the poverty level.

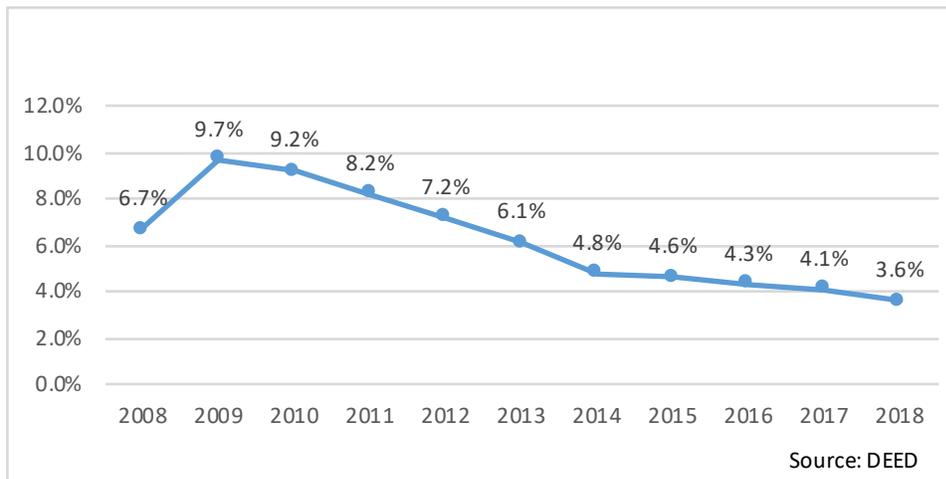
Because of some of these statistics the City Council knew it was important to make efforts to try and reverse this trendline and to proactively identify ways to help the City's residents gain greater economic stability. As part of this effort, in 2017 the Brooklyn Center City Council adopted strategic priorities for the City that focused on ways to improve the quality of life for the community. Given the high poverty rate relative to the region, the City Council identified Resident Economic Stability as one of the six strategic priorities. This priority, among other things, focuses on the creation and attraction of jobs with livable wages to the community.



Unemployment

The Great Recession in the late 2000s significantly impacted the nation, and hit Brooklyn Center's residents particularly hard where the unemployment rate rose to 9.7%. Since that time, the unemployment rate has gradually declined and in 2018 was around 3.6% (See Figure 5-3 Average Annual Unemployment for Brooklyn Center Residents). The City's overall unemployment rate is similar to that of the region, which is currently hovering between 3.0 and 3.5%. The unemployment rates are slightly higher among minority populations, in particular the African American and Eastern African populations that according to a report released by DEED in January 2018 was approximately 7.5% across the State. This disparity highlights the need for more focused attention on education and job skills training to help lessen the gap across all populations.

Figure 5-3. Average Annual Unemployment for Brooklyn Center Residents



Where Residents Work and Commute

Understanding where current residents work and who holds the existing jobs are important characteristics to consider when promoting Brooklyn Center’s economic competitiveness within the region. Given that Brooklyn Center shares a border with Minneapolis, it is not surprising that the City of Minneapolis is the top workplace for people who live in Brooklyn Center, in fact of the City’s workers more than 4 times as many workers work in Minneapolis than Brooklyn Center. Residents of Minneapolis are, in turn, the top employed within the City outnumbering Brooklyn Center residents by more than 500. These trends are important to understand and consider as new businesses evaluate and consider the City. Not only is there potential to capitalize on more local residents returning to the City for work, but because the City is so accessible within the region businesses have a labor pool that extends far beyond the City’s borders into cities such as Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Brooklyn Park and other surrounding suburbs.

Top 5 Workplaces of People Who Live in Brooklyn Center	
Minneapolis	3,348
Saint Paul	889
Brooklyn Center	826
Brooklyn Park	813
Plymouth	771

Top 5 Residences of People Who Work in Brooklyn Center	
Minneapolis	1,367
Brooklyn Park	1,161
Brooklyn Center	826
Saint Paul	673
Maple Grove	456

As described in the Background Report, commute time to work is an important factor in considering where to work because it directly impacts the amount of time spent away from other activities. As of 2015, the median travel time to work of Brooklyn Center’s residents was approximately 22.6 minutes, which was slightly above Hennepin County (22.2 minutes) and slightly below the 7-County Metro Area (23.1 minutes). This demonstrates that Brooklyn Center is well positioned within the region, but also signals opportunities to further reduce how much time residents spend in their cars if more jobs were to become available in the community. Today, a significant portion of Brooklyn Center residents drive alone in their own personal vehicles to their place of work which can be costly, and can also increase stress. This represents an opportunity if the City increases the number of jobs in Brooklyn Center, and residents are well suited and matched to the jobs, then Brooklyn Center residents have the chance to choose an alternate mode of transportation such as transit, walking or biking to work.



PAST AND PRESENT INDUSTRY TRENDS IN BROOKLYN CENTER

Since the Great Recession ended in the late 2000s, the City has experienced steady employment growth and as of 2017 has a total of 13,272 jobs which outpaces the most recent projections. To further understand how the jobs are distributed in the community the City prepared a Background Report in 2017 as part of this planning process. The following sections highlight the top four industries of the City's past and present, which represents nearly 85% of the City's jobs. This information provides valuable insight into the employment trends and types of jobs over the past 16-years and provides an indication of the types of jobs that the City may wish to target for future economic development. The information that follows is a compilation of information collected from staff, residents, businesses and stakeholders during this planning process as well as a synthesis of more detailed information contained in the Background Report Appendix C.

Industry: Retail

5-10

As described and introduced in Chapter 3: Land Use & Redevelopment the City's past economic identity is heavily attached to the retail industry. Though many residents, stakeholders and policy makers consider this industry to be one of the most significant contributors to jobs in the City, it accounted for approximately 17% of the jobs in the City with approximately 2,228 jobs. While this is not a small percentage of jobs, it does represent a decrease in jobs available from 2010 when nearly 23% of the City's jobs were within the retail industry, and there were approximately 3,767 jobs. This shift in retail employment was an important consideration for the community because it so heavily relied on being a regional retail destination for so many decades. The following sections provide background and context for this retail shift, and describes some recent trends occurring in the City's redevelopment areas.

Brookdale Mall and its Surroundings

For decades the City of Brooklyn Center's economy was anchored by Brookdale Mall and surrounding retail uses. Brookdale Mall was one of the first regional indoor fully climate-controlled retail centers in the state and as a result attracted shoppers from the larger north metropolitan region. Brookdale was truly a regional attraction, and Brooklyn Center's residents benefited not only from accesses to shopping and services but from a significant number of retail jobs that were available due to the presence of the Mall.

The retail focus of the City's economic engine was a double-edged sword because while there were many more jobs per capita when Brookdale Mall was in operation, the jobs were not high-wage jobs and many were not livable wages. Regardless, Brookdale Mall and adjacent



retail users remained the dominant economic driver in the City through the 1990s and did not experience dramatic changes until the mid-2000's when Brookdale lost its first anchor. Once the first anchor closed, Brookdale Mall began its steady and eventual full decline that led to its closing the late 2000s. The closure aligned with the housing bust and Great Recession that had vast impact at the National scale, but it impacted Brooklyn Center in ways that no one could have predicted with far reaching implications throughout the community. Between 2000 and 2010 the City lost more than 2,200 retail jobs which is equivalent to nearly a 60% reduction in the number of retail jobs available in the community. (See Background Report Appendix C). The decline was not only impactful because it eliminated jobs from the City that many of its residents were employed in, but because it signaled a massive change in the retail industry on a larger regional and national scale that we are still learning about.

Once Brookdale Mall closed adjacent supporting users also began to close leaving behind a large contiguous core of available land for redevelopment in the 'center' of the City. This mass exodus occurred as the City was preparing the previous 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and policy-makers were faced with the overwhelming task of figuring out what to do with this now large underutilized area of the community that was once defined the central area and character of the community.

As a first step in redeveloping the area, the City and its Economic Development Authority proactively purchased properties as they became available to ensure that a comprehensive approach to redevelopment could be implemented. After many years of acquisitions and process, the City was able to redevelop portions of the land into what is now Shingle Creek Crossing. Shingle Creek Crossing is a new retail destination with predominantly nation retailers and is anchored by big box stores. This area continues to evolve with new retailers being brought online with HOM Furniture being the most recent addition to the area. The efforts to revitalize this area are working and some recovery of the jobs lost between 2000 and 2010 has occurred, with more than 700 new retail jobs added between 2010 and 2016. While the City does not expect to recover all the retail jobs lost during the Great Recession because of industry-wide retail changes, it does anticipate some additional growth over the planning period particularly in areas such as Shingle Creek Crossing.

5-11

Key Corridors

In addition to the core retail center in the City, there are several major roadway corridors that provide additional opportunities for retail and commercial service users. For example Brooklyn Boulevard is a high-volume roadway corridor that carries cars, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. The corridor is an important connection through the City and is dotted with small retail, institutional and residential uses. The corridor is identified within this Plan as an important neighborhood and community roadway connection and is guided for redevelopment as Brooklyn Boulevard is reconstructed over the next five years. Retail users such as fast food, convenience,

auto repair and car sales dot the corridor and the City only expects the strength of this corridor to continue and evolve. Additionally, the City is bisected by both Highway 100 and I-94/I-694 which leads to exceptional regional access particularly near key interchanges. An example of a recent redevelopment effort is Topgolf which opened in the Fall of 2018. Topgolf is expected to be a regional entertainment/service destination that provides patrons opportunities to meet, play, eat and enjoy a drink. As the City continues to change and evolve, the City anticipates that new demand and pressure for similar types of retail and service destinations will be most prevalent along major roadway corridors.

Industry: Production, Distribution, and Repair

Though many residents and policy-makers often point to retail as the most prevalent industry and job provider in the City, the Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) industry sector provides the most employment opportunities in the community. Like the Retail sector, the PDR industry sector was heavily impacted by the Great Recession and the City lost approximately 1,100 jobs between 2000 and 2016; however, even with that decline the PDR industry still provides the most jobs in the community and accounts for over 3,100 jobs in the City.

5-12

The City recognizes this as an important industry to maintain in the community now and into the future. The Future Land Use Plan specifically identifies, supports and plans for land uses that will continue to promote and maintain light industrial uses and business, light manufacturing and other similar businesses. Most recently some of the City's industrial and light industrial users have expanded, remodeled and reinvested and it is the City's desire to continue to ensure policies and regulations support the businesses' ability to stay in the community for the long-term.

Industry: Educational and Medical Services

Trailing slightly behind the PDR industry, the Educational and Medical Services (Eds/Meds) industry is booming across the region and is slowly beginning to accelerate its presence in the City. Most notably Medtronic recently remodeled and added to its facility sending a message to the community of its long-term commitment to stay and grow. While the industry experienced a large loss of jobs between 2005 and 2010, it has rebounded significantly between 2010 and 2016 adding back nearly all the jobs it lost in the economic downturn.

This industry is projected to continue to grow and gain momentum in the region and the City is well positioned to capitalize on that trend given its proximity to major roadways, post-secondary institutions and availability of land. As shown in the Future Land Use Plan, the City



has guided significant land area that would be supportive of these uses and could be integrated at a small or large scale within many of the City's mixed-use land designations.

Industry: Knowledge (Consists of 'knowledge-based' industry sectors, such as Information, Finance and Professional Management)

The number of jobs available in the knowledge industry has stayed relatively flat over the last 10-years with modest increases, but it remains an important industry in the City comprising nearly 19% of the City's jobs. These jobs will continue to play an important role in the City and opportunities to expand these uses will be available within the redevelopment areas of the City. It is difficult to anticipate what or if any major 'knowledge' based businesses will choose to locate in the community, but with the quantity of land available in the redevelopment areas it is possible given the City's desire to create compact, walkable and experience-based development. All of these characteristics are becoming more desirable amenities to all workers, but particularly with office-based workers.

Industry: Hospitality and Tourism (Worth Noting)

Though not one of the top four industries in the community, this Chapter would be remiss if it did not highlight the hospitality and tourism industry in the community. The City's proximity to downtown Minneapolis and Saint Paul, coupled with its accessibility to major highways and freeways throughout the west metro make Brooklyn Center a great place for hotels, conference centers and other hospitality uses. While the City's employment in this industry has seen some decline over the past 16-years, it has remained relatively flat over the past 5-years and there is no indication further loss of employment in this industry is anticipated. In fact, when the C-Line becomes operational it will make the City even more accessible to both the Minneapolis and Saint Paul downtown business districts, as well as the MSP International Airport. This area is well connected and includes the Earle Brown Conference and Event Center as well as several hotels all within reasonable distance of the transit station, and is also highly accessible by car with ample on-site parking. Though tourism and hospitality are constantly evolving, there is potential for this industry to expand and grow in the City given the current market dynamics and availability of land for redevelopment.

5-13



FUTURE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The existing socio-economic characteristics of the community coupled with the City's past and present industry trends provide the baseline from which a plan for economic development can be refined. The City has several systems, policies and objectives in place to help guide and facilitate economic development, and this Plan is intended to assist the City, policy-makers and prospective businesses in making thoughtful and proactive plans that make the City a great place for residents – and a great place to do business.

The following table is taken directly from the Metropolitan Council's 2015 System Statement for the City of Brooklyn Center. It highlights that within the region, Brooklyn Center is projected to grow – grow its population, its households and its jobs.

Table 5-1. Metropolitan Council Forecasts - 2015 System Statement

Forecast Year	Population	Households	Employment
2010	30,104	10,756	11,001
2020	31,400	11,300	13,000
2030	33,000	12,300	13,800
2040	35,400	13,300	14,600

Source: Metropolitan Council

5-14

If employment increases then there will be new businesses that choose to locate in the City, and residents will have opportunities to open new shops and business, and existing businesses will hopefully prosper and expand. But equally as important, is the hope that existing and new residents are afforded opportunities to work in those jobs, and that the jobs have livable wages, are accessible and exceptional places to work.

Presented throughout this Chapter, and throughout this Plan, is the City's demand to help create a more equitable environment for all of the City's residents – that residents of every age, ethnicity and background have access to education, job training, transportation and livable wage jobs. This is a tall order, but one that the City is committed to working towards through implementation of policies, programs and engaging in key partnerships to help bring this objective to fruition.

The City is on its way to improved economic competitiveness and intends to capitalize on the current momentum. Recently Brooklyn Center has seen an increase in redevelopment interest in the community and it is anticipated that this trend will continue into the foreseeable future. As touched on in previous sections of this Chapter, 2018 saw several new businesses come to the community such as Topgolf, Fairfield Inn and Suites, HOM Furniture, and Bank of America, which are recently opened or under construction. Existing businesses are also expanding; both



Luther Auto Dealerships and Medtronic underwent multi-million-dollar expansions in 2018. Building permit valuation has been steadily rising over the past several years, and 2018 saw the highest investment in these terms since 2012. As the City meets with business owners, consistently the City's affordable land costs, proximity to Minneapolis, and access to regional freeways are attributed to the reason for their investment in the community.

The following sections highlight some of the tools, programs, and organizations available to help the City reach its objectives. Specific implementation strategies are not included, but instead can be found in Chapter 9: Implementation. This is deliberate because the implementation of this Chapter is so closely integrated with the other sections of this Plan and cannot be considered independently if they are to be successful.

Economic Tools

Economic Development Authority (EDA)

The Brooklyn Center Economic Development Authority (EDA) was established for the purposes of providing an impetus for economic development, increase employment opportunities, and to promote other public benefits as defined by the City. The EDA supports developments that would not otherwise occur if solely dependent on private investment in the near future. The EDA has the ability to purchase land for economic development purposes and to approve economic incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing, as defined later in this section.

5-15

The City of Brooklyn Center utilizes or has the ability to utilize several financing tools to assist and support development and redevelopment consistent with the goals and strategies established by the City Council. The City has adopted a Business Subsidy Policy that outlines the conditions under which a project would receive subsidy. The City will evaluate this policy to ensure that it effectively prioritizes projects that forward the City's goals as they relate to job creation, redevelopment, and housing.

The EDA has the ability to implement the following incentives:

- **Tax Increment Financing**

The EDA can use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and pooled TIF funds to cover eligible expenses related to redevelopment projects that have extraordinary costs that would make a project otherwise not feasible. TIF is used to catalyze redevelopment that the market may not yet be able to bear on its own.

- **Tax Abatement**

Minnesota law authorizes political subdivisions to grant property tax abatements for economic development. Abatements may be either permanent forgiveness or temporary deferral of property tax obligations. Abatements can be used for a broad range of projects and purposes, if the City finds that public benefits exceed the costs of the abatement. Permitted use of abatements include: general economic development, public infrastructure construction, redevelopment of blighted areas, providing access to services for residents, deferring or phasing in a large property tax increase, stabilizing the tax base resulting from the updated utility valuation administrative rules, and providing relief for businesses who have disrupted access due to public transportation projects.

- **Revolving Loan Fund**

The City has a revolving loan fund that is intended to incentivize new businesses and existing business expansion. The City will seek out ways to increase the funding available in the program, as well as explore other programs that incentivize investment and job growth in the City.

5-16

- **Other Business Resources and Support**

The City partners with the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers and Hennepin County to offer the Open to Business Program, which provides technical assistance to local businesses. The program provides unlimited consulting for prospective entrepreneurs in need of guidance to take their business from idea to operation. Existing businesses are also able to take advantage of Open to Business's services as they expand or face operational challenges. Several local and regional organizations, including Neighborhood Development Center, Metropolitan Economic Development Association, African Career, Education and Resource, Inc. (ACER), and WomenVenture, provide additional technical assistance services in the City.

Dedicated City Staff Support

In addition to the various programs that the City offers, in 2018, the City created a new position, the Business and Workforce Development Specialist, tasked with provided support and services to the business community, including working with prospective businesses on site selection and relocation services. The position also provides direct project-related support and business engagement, such as one-on-one meetings with business owners, participation in the local Brooklyn Center Business Association, and reviewing City policies and regulations for opportunities to better support economic development. For businesses seeking State of



Minnesota financing via the Minnesota Investment Fund or the Job Creation Fund, the position facilitates the process, with the City serving as a conduit for contractual procedures and funds distribution. As it is a new position, the tools and resources continue to be developed and evolve. The position has been tasked with:

- Developing a Business Retention and Expansion Program
- Developing New Business Welcome Packets
- Developing materials to educate businesses on property maintenance and nuisance ordinances
- Seeking programs and partnerships to provide additional resources to new and existing businesses
- Marketing EDA-owned property
- Organizing the First Saturday Pop-up market to assist small local businesses with finding local customers

5-17



Partnerships

Partnerships with other agencies and organizations bring additional resources to local businesses. Partnerships include two local Chambers of Commerce: North Hennepin Area Chamber of Commerce and Twin West Chamber of Commerce. Each Chamber of Commerce serves the business community with recurring programming, lobbying, networking, and advocacy. The Brooklyn Center Business Association represents local businesses and offers opportunities to share information and network. The Liberian Business Association provides similar culturally-specific support and connectedness. The State of Minnesota started offering workshops for small business owners and prospective entrepreneurs in 2017. Greater MSP provides global promotion of the region by staffing booths at tradeshows, publishing site selector magazines, and facilitating new business or relocation efforts. Hennepin County offers an Economic Gardening Program that provides mid-sized business owners with needed resources, mentoring, and knowledge to grow take their businesses to the next level. Minneapolis Northwest Tourism supports the hospitality industry and provides marketing and branding to the cities of Brooklyn Park, Maple Grove, and Brooklyn Center.

5-18 Workforce Development Tools

Minnesota is experiencing a labor shortage, expected to continue over the next ten years. According to the Minnesota State Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota businesses will add 205,000 jobs to the economy over the next decade and the labor force is projected to increase by only 68,400 workers. Today, the State's online job board has 80,000 position openings and the State's unemployment rate is around 3.7 percent.

Expected Baby Boomer retirements will also have an impact. According to DEED, one in every five jobs in Minnesota is now held by workers who are within 10 years of—or already at — retirement age. Moreover, these pending retirements will impact industry sectors differently. For example, 30% of the transportation and warehousing sector is within this retirement-ready group, along with 28% of the educational services sector, and 24% of manufacturing.

Connecting residents, particularly underserved residents, in the community with available jobs presents one opportunity to begin to address the current labor shortage, and to forward the City's Resident Economic Stability goals. Barriers exist, however, in connecting those in our community that are unemployed or underemployed and these available jobs. High-demand living-wage jobs require some level of post-secondary education. Lack of educational attainment and social networks represent prominent barriers to those in the community that are unemployed or underemployed.



The City of Brooklyn Center is proactively exploring solutions to support the local workforce. The City continues to build partnerships with secondary and post-secondary educational institutions and organizations including Hennepin Technical College, North Hennepin Community College, Hennepin-Carver Workforce Board, and the Hennepin North Workforce Center. Brooklyn Center also participated in the Hennepin County Workforce Leadership Council, which assembled leaders from the public and private sectors and philanthropic community to compare strategies and collaborate on creating industry-specific career pipelines. The City also continues to support workforce development efforts by the North Hennepin Area Chamber of Commerce and TwinWest Chamber of Commerce.

Finally, since 2014 the City has partnered with the City of Brooklyn Park and the Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth on the BrookLynk program. BrookLynk’s mission is to “coordinate partnerships that prepare employers to engage the next generation of workers and to connect young people in the cities of Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park facing barriers to employment with the skills, experience, and professional social networks needed to develop their pathway to college and career.” Since December 2017, BrookLynk is housed in the Economic Development and Housing Division of Brooklyn Park’s Community Development Department in partnership with the City of Brooklyn Center and with support from the Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth and program funding partners.



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