

5. SPACE NEEDS

5.1 EXISTING DEMAND FOR PROGRAMS

The following section details specific demands or gaps in services discussed by stakeholders. Remarks are grouped by area of interest and components.

At Creekside:

The existing programming at Creekside is very robust as evidenced by over 180,000 visitors in 2014. The Center is a location for Bloomington Human Services, a division of the City that provides support to low income individuals and families, multicultural communities, youth, older adults and people with disabilities.

The Human Services Division contracts with nonprofit agencies to provide residents convenient access to human services at a local level. These include Loaves & Fishes, Optage Senior Dining, Fare for All, Senior Community Services and Martin Luther Care Center.

50+ Program

While Creekside is available to many organizations for events and rental, the 50+ Program is the largest daytime user and occupies the most square footage. This program is designed to keep older adults actively engaged in the community. The following programs are for the most part created and run by volunteers:

Cards:

Hearts
Bridge
Euchre
Cribbage
Club 500

Fitness and Recreation:

Bone Builders Exercise
Low Impact Exercise
Martial Arts/Self Defense
Gentle Yoga
Chair Yoga
Zumba Gold
Wii Bowling
Bocce
Billiards
Flower Club
Golf
Walking Club
Field Trips

Music:

Bloomingtones
Classic Country Music Jam
Crickets

Nutrition:

Noon Diner program
Buyers Club
Optage Home Delivered
Meals

Health and Wellness:

Blood Pressure Checks
Dakim Brain Fitness Program
Foot Care
Health Insurance Counseling
Hearing Testing

Arts and Crafts:

Boutique
Ceramics
Freeform Clay
Crafts and Quilting
Lapidary
Woodshop
Wood Carvers
Leatherworkers
Oil Painting
Watercolor
Needleworkers

Education:

Writers Club
Movie Monday's
OLLI Educational
Discussion Group
A Matter of Balance/Better
Choices
Stress Management Class
Free Lending Library
Coffee Talks
Poetry Class
Bloomington Academy for
Safe Elders (BASE)
Smart Driver program
Caregiver support group
Open Computer Lab
Advanced Computer User
Group
iPad Tutoring
AARP Workshops for
Families

Leadership:

Memorial Trust Fund
Evolve Leadership Class
50+ Leaders

While 50+ programming is robust at Creekside, enrollment in activities has fluctuated based on community interest. In addition, the lack of flexibility in the existing facility has limited programming and compromised offerings. Nonetheless, preserving the philosophy of the program – to provide a place for social interaction and allow for opportunities to contribute and give back to the community - should be maintained in a future community center.

In addition, the Core Team recognized the desire to reach a larger demographic and capture more seniors than currently participate in the existing programming. Through benchmarking, trends and market analysis, we have identified programs below that can expand their user base while remaining true to the mission of keeping older adults actively engaged in the community.

The seniors attending the stakeholder meetings were very vocal about wanting to continue senior programming activities. Seniors currently have dedicated daytime use of many rooms within Creekside Community Center. This dedicated use has limited the occupancy rate of some of the dedicated space to a range of 20% to 60%. The City could expand usage and programs if some of the dedicated senior spaces could be designed as multi-purpose space to serve a wider section of the community. Seniors are looking for program space within a community center and most of their needs could be met with the classroom/meeting room space, expanded fitness space and gymnasium space being proposed for a new community center. It appears that the highest demand for space by seniors tends to occur within typical core daytime hours. Spreading senior programs out over a longer period of time could improve space utilization within the proposed community center.

Gymnasium:

One of the most frequently heard comments during the community stakeholder process is the need for more gymnasium space. The School District staff reported that the demand and request for gym space in the Activity Centers by local sports associations exceeds what the School District can accommodate. As a result, many Bloomington based youth sport associations must travel outside of the City for access to indoor gym space. To compound this problem, there is no gymnasium space at the Community Center. A large gymnasium space with at least three full-sized basketball courts that can be used for a multitude of activities is recommended. The gym space should be a separate enclosed space with a multi-sport playing surface on one of the gymnasium spaces to accommodate a variety of programs including indoor soccer, in-line hockey, baseball batting cages, gymnastics, wrestling, pickleball, basketball and volleyball. This space can also be used as exhibit space and to supplement other community center demand for space and hosting events.

It should be noted that having a new gymnasium facility in Bloomington will not eliminate the need for Parks and Recreation and youth sports associations to have access to School District facilities. In fact, the current use of school facilities will likely continue at the current level even with a new gymnasium facility added to the community inventory of space.

Indoor Walking/Jogging Track:

Walking is rated as the top activities according to the NSGA (National Sporting Goods Association) and represents over 27,000 people in the primary service area. Having an opportunity to walk/jog in an indoor environment, especially during the harsh winters in Minnesota, is important in attracting a wider variety of customers to a Community Center. Walking is one of the most popular activities for seniors and access to a track would increase community center use by the general population.

Aquatics (Future Option):

Without doubt, a progressive and notable trend in aquatics continues to be the recreation pool concept. Incorporating water slides, current channels, fountains, zero depth entry and other water play features into a pool's design has proved to be extremely popular for the recreational user. The City of Bloomington does not have a public indoor leisure pool and this represents a gap in facilities for residents. However, a portion of the population can take advantage of the privately owned Waterpark of America. Recreation pools appeal to younger children (who are the largest segment of the population that swim) and to families. Creating a theme for the indoor recreation pool is important for enhancing the swimming experience and creating a unique marketing opportunity. These types of facilities are able to attract and draw larger crowds and people tend to come from a further distance and stay longer to utilize such pools. This all translates into the potential to sell more admissions and increase revenues. It is estimated conservatively that a recreation pool can generate up to 25% to 30% more revenue than a comparable conventional pool and the cost of operation, while being higher, may be offset through increased revenues. Of note is the fact that patrons seem willing to pay a higher user fee for a leisure pool than a conventional aquatic facility. However, that being said, building an indoor recreation pool would compete with the City's outdoor pool during the summer months and is the most expensive component to build and operate within a community center. Also, there are numerous indoor leisure pools in neighboring communities that are accessible within a short drive of Bloomington. Careful consideration should be given before selecting an aquatic component for the Community Center.

The School District has competitive pools that are meeting the competitive swim needs of the community and consequently a competitive lap pool is not recommended at this time. The recommendation to not include a competitive swim venue is also influenced by the fact that most competitive swimming pools require a significant subsidy to offset operating cost. The limited use and fee elasticity competitive swimmers are willing to pay are obstacles in recovering a greater percentage of operating cost through revenues.

Fitness:

Clearly the biggest missing ingredient of the existing Community Center is the lack of fitness equipment and programs. The Activity Centers at Jefferson and Kennedy High Schools provide an affordable alternative for the general public. Demographics indicate that almost 15% of Bloomington households have income of less than \$25,000 per year. The proposed community center, especially if paired with Public Health services in the same building, would be in a unique position to positively influence health and wellness for this underserved segment of the Bloomington population.

Statistically, exercise walking, exercise with equipment and aerobic exercise all rank in the top fifteen activities/sports most popular in the U.S, according to the National Sporting Goods Association statistics. Exercise and fitness are one of the components that will drive membership, daily admission and participation. As a result, the fitness component has become the cornerstone for many community centers by virtue of generating revenue and participation. In addition, fitness activities appeal to a wide range of ages to help combat obesity along with improving the quality of one's life. Maintaining wellness and fitness is very important to the baby boomers within the senior population. Obesity is becoming an epidemic in the United States, especially for youth, and socio-economic conditions have contributed to a higher incidence of obesity in lower income population than the population as a whole. Youth fitness is one component that can help address this issue locally and will differentiate the proposed community center from other facilities. However, fitness also is the one component that will create the greatest concern from the private sector. The private sector will claim unfair competition but the reality is that

the private sector caters to a different market niche than a public center, which has more focus on community. Clearly the private fitness providers in Bloomington have a singular focus for adult fitness and do not want more competition in the market place. The private sector realizes the importance of the fitness market and tries to promote themselves as public service providers. The fee structure programming and operating practices employed by the private sector is significantly different than a community-based center. As a result, there is enough market and difference in the operating philosophy and practices for the private sector and public facility to operate in the same service area.

An area within the fitness component that can accommodate health screenings and testing along with a treatment area would supplement the fitness programs and use. The fitness component of a community center would generate the most revenue per square foot within the facility and consequently should not be undersized or underemphasized.

Group fitness space is another supplemental area required for reaching the fitness and wellness market. The demand for Yoga, Zumba, Pilates, Spinning and group exercise is growing. Interest and participation in fitness classes are on the rise nationally, recording a significant increase in participation over the past 10 years. Group fitness space was strongly supported in the community stakeholder meetings, especially by existing group exercise participants. Group fitness space has proved to be a popular amenity in centers around the country and it is not uncommon to have between 25-40 classes per week in these spaces.

Dome/Field House (Future Option):

Some interest was expressed for a field house to expand training opportunity for traditional outdoor sports like football, soccer, lacrosse, rugby, baseball and softball. Since most of this interest was generated from competitive sport organizations and high school sports teams, a field house component is not recommended at this time. This is a project better suited for a future phase and collaboration with the School District.

Meeting Room/Classroom/Multi-Purpose:

Multi-purpose meeting room space was supported through the stakeholder process. There were several different opinions as to what size the multi-purpose spaces should be. Multi-purpose space provides support for other activities in a center, class room opportunities, meetings and small receptions. A sufficient amount of square footage is needed for meetings and multi-purpose space. Typically in community centers, meeting room space does not generate enough revenue to be a self-supporting component and the City of Bloomington is no exception. These spaces are valuable as support spaces and the multi-use flexibility enables the facility to meet a wide variety of program needs. Including adequate storage space to enable flexibility is an important component to these rooms. The classrooms are needed to meet a wide range of programs that have a multi-generational appeal and help meet the enrichment and senior programming needs of the community.

Teen Center:

There is no existing Teen Center within Creekside Community Center. At one point the City converted one of the Community Center rooms into a teen area. Although appreciated by the organization that represents teens, the teen area in the Community Center ultimately failed because the center lacked the components that are interesting and appealing to teens. Clearly there is a gap in providing teen services in the community and to meet this need will require some dedicated space and different hours of operation from a traditional community center to be attractive to teens. The teen population could easily share rooms and equipment with other Community Center groups including the seniors.

Child Watch Area:

One key component to support the fitness element in the Community Center is a child watch area. Having the ability to drop off a pre-school or young child in the supervised area is very important for support of group exercise and general fitness opportunities. In most community center settings a child watch operation will only recover 40% to 60% of the cost to provide the child watch services. However, having access to child watch for parents will increase facility membership and program participation. Many facilities look at child watch as a membership service that supports programming and membership.

Indoor Playground/Birthday Party Room

A major focus on the programming of a typical community center focuses on young people. These spaces are designed to attract young people to the proposed community center and provide the spaces that differentiate the Bloomington facility from other service providers. An indoor themed playground introduces a concept for indoor recreation that has proven successful in the Twin Cities by providing a themed playground designed to attract elementary and pre-school aged children. A multi-purpose birthday party room is an opportunity to generate revenue and could experience significant use as seen in other metro community centers.

Additional City Services with Space Needs:

There are two City services that are in need of City investment due to inadequate and deteriorating facilities. The Public Health Division is in need of right-sized offices and clinic space for their clients. Motor Vehicle also requires right sized offices and waiting space for their clients.

One unique aspect of the needs in the city is the desire to provide several local government services in one location. The team discussed many advantages of including Public Health and Motor Vehicle under one roof as a convenience to residents. These services, along with social service programs such as Loaves & Fishes, welcome a diverse population to the center. Additionally, health and wellness programming available on a sliding fee makes these amenities accessible to all Bloomington residents. There are many studies, including one by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which identify obesity as a major public concern. Further, those on a low socioeconomic status scale often have the highest rates of obesity and health related illness. A facility that promotes healthy lifestyles, through leisure and fitness activities, could lower healthcare cost, improve longevity, and be a great benefit to residents of Bloomington.

5.2 PROPOSED PROGRAM

The vision for a purpose-built community center is to accommodate existing programs that are thriving and create space for new programs that will attract and serve more residents. This list of spaces was informed by market analysis, community input, benchmarking peer facilities and the desire to offer more opportunities to Bloomington residents.

The proposed center should have a “family” orientation and meet the broad based leisure and health needs of the community. Multi-use, flexibility of space and versatility of operation are important and the facility should not be seen as just a senior center. The focus of the center’s diverse market segments and activities should be a function of space utilization rather than space. Intergenerational use must be emphasized and the center needs to truly have something for everyone.

The ability to deal with the delicate balance between programming and drop-in needs will determine how accessible the facility will be perceived. Programs (leagues and classes) clash with drop-in users and can become very disruptive users. Care must be given to manage the balance between drop-in activities and programming needs.

The recommended spaces include the following:

Community Gathering

A key priority identified by the Core Team was to develop a community center that functions as a central hub for community gathering. This is reflected in the variety of program spaces that encourage multi-generational, multi-cultural and multi-economic users.

Multipurpose Space

The multipurpose space in the proposed center is large enough to hold 225 seats at round tables or 400 seats lecture style and could have hard surface floor for dancing, performance and card tournaments. The room would be optimally flexible so that the space could be configured to host lectures, church services, meals, or fitness activities and serve the groups currently utilizing the Minnesota Valley Room at Creekside Community Center. This space is recommended to be dividable into three separate areas for multiple program functions. Supporting spaces include general storage, AV control room and a full service kitchen.

Child Watch Area

This space requires about 1,640 square feet with a separate quiet room, activity room that includes an area for the children to play games and toys and child-sized restrooms. The childcare area should be adjacent to outdoor space and have direct access to the indoor playground. Ideally the childcare area is located near the lobby of the building with good visibility from the front desk or administrative area.

Indoor Playground

A themed area designed for children ages 1-10 featuring a fun land with creative and interactive play equipment including a complex matrix of tubes, spiral slides, climbing apparatus, interactive music, hollow logs, and multi-level play structure is recommended. This space should be approximately 2,000 square feet and would be a community attractor drawing visitors from further than the primary service area.

Multiuse rooms

Six multiuse rooms, flexible for a variety of programs, along with two meeting rooms available for rental and adjacent storage would be equipped for optimum flexibility and ease of use. The multiuse rooms would be large enough for groups of thirty. Specific uses, such as ceramics, woodworking, etc. could be determined with a statistically valid community survey in the next step of a Community Center project. The meeting rooms would be large enough for twelve and adjacent to the gymnasium or indoor playground for birthday party rental to maximize revenue generation.

Weight/Cardiovascular Area

Weight and cardio equipment are amenities that can be found elsewhere in Bloomington, however our team felt that a comprehensive community center that lacked such components would limit memberships and fail to meet minimum expectations of users. An area of at least 5,500 square feet that includes free weights, selectorized machines and cardiovascular equipment for youth and adult fitness, sport specific training, rehab/exercise and stretching is recommended.

Aerobic/Fitness/Dance Studios

Designated fitness spaces could extend offerings for senior-led wellness classes such as chair yoga, Zumba, etc., while also providing rooms for exercise classes geared for all ages. An area approximately 2,000 square feet that features a mirrored wall, dance bars mounted on the wall, free-floating impact floor, sound system, storage area and storage cubbies. One smaller fitness room of approximately 1,500 square feet is recommended to accommodate spinning classes, yoga and smaller classes not requiring the size of the main aerobic room. These rooms should have a free-floating wood floor and adjustable lighting to adjust/modify the environment for yoga and relaxation classes.

Running/Jogging/Walking Track

A ten-foot wide track that surrounds the gymnasium and goes through other parts of the facility could be used for walking or jogging. This component was the highest priority by many stakeholders sighting that winter use would be a primary draw. The track component is approximately 6,000 square feet.

Gymnasium Facilities

The Core Team expressed a strong desire for gymnasium space, available for use by athletic associations and the public. Three basketball courts are proposed for a new facility, with two having hardwood floor surface for athletic events and the third having a multi-purpose synthetic floor surface for more flexible programming. Meeting rooms could be adjacent to the gymnasium, allowing for an attractive amenity for community members looking for rentable space. A space that is approximately 18,000 square feet and divisible into three gym areas (each with a 50' by 84' basketball court) by a drop curtain is recommended. This area would allow for adequate space between courts and at ends to accommodate player benches and spectator seating. The main gymnasium space could be set up for a variety of activities including youth/adult basketball, youth/adult volleyball and potential exhibit space. Built-in seating at each end should be included.

Optional Considerations

Public Health

A unique aspect of a future community center in Bloomington, the addition of Public Health within the center offers many advantages including a welcome environment for a diverse population, community awareness of health and wellness programming, and a facility that promotes healthy lifestyles for the residents of Bloomington.

Senior Community Services Offices

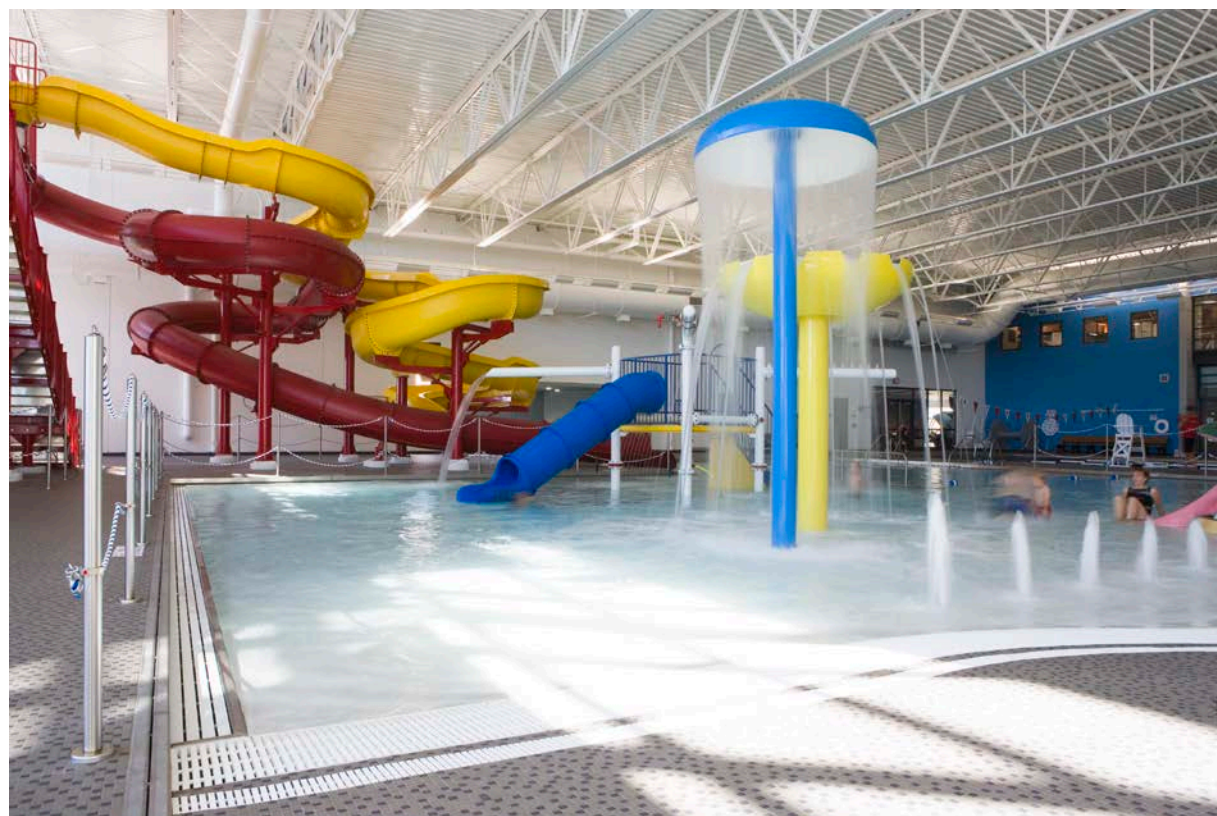
Offices available for Senior Community Services would allow for continued programming similar to those currently offered at Creekside Community Center.

Motor Vehicle

Office and customer service space for Motor Vehicle would be a convenience to residents and offer an opportunity to showcase services of Public Health as well as recreation and fitness activities available in the proposed community center.

Aquatics

Indoor aquatic program has long been on the wish list for the community. Competitive swimming needs are being met by the School District, but recreational swimming in the community is lacking. An indoor aquatic program has potential to bring more members, interest, value and use. However, this is the most expensive component to construct and operate in a community center. A leisure pool has intergenerational appeal and could attract larger crowds from a further distance.



Site Amenities (Future Options)

The Task Force identified a number of site related programs and improvements to ensure the community center could capitalize on the unique programming of a new community gathering space.

Bocce Ball

Outdoor bocce ball courts for all ages would allow for the community to enjoy both the community center and the site.

Splash Pad

A draw for younger families, a splash pad would be a nice addition to the outdoor recreation opportunities in the community.

Community Garden Space

A designated community garden space would be an ideal location for an expansion of community education courses, reinforce the center's message of community health and wellness, and provide a beautiful space for the community to gather outside.

Picnic Space

Picnic space would serve as an outdoor extension of the multipurpose space and provide diners with views and access to the new site amenities and the center.

Domed Field House

It was noted through stakeholder meetings, and at subsequent meetings, that there is a strong desire for a domed field house in Bloomington. Currently, athletic groups have to pay surrounding communities for use of their turf during the winter months.



