COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of New Prague is committed to serving the public in an efficient, effective and professional manner. The purpose of this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to review existing services and facilities and reflect on the impact of forecast growth upon said facilities and services. Contents include:

- An overview of existing municipal facilities
- An overview of other community facilities
- A description of municipal boards and commissions
- A summary of public input relating to municipal facilities and services; and
- Objectives and Policies for Community Facilities and Public Services

New Prague incorporated in 1891. The City is governed under a Home Rule Charter which was adopted January 1, 1995 and the most recent amendment was approved on November 17th, 2014 with the amendment becoming effective 90 days following its publication on November 27th, 2014. The City of New Prague operates with a “Council-Administrator Plan”. The City Administrator is responsible for administration of the City and its various departments.

It is noted that a “Space Needs and Facilities Evaluation Study – 2005” was completed by Buetow & Associates on January 20, 2006. The study reviewed various City Hall buildings including City Hall and associated facilities (which included the Fire Station at the time) and Public Works Shop.

II. EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Existing Structures

Locations of current municipal and community facilities are noted on Map 9-1.

1. **City Hall: 118 Central Avenue North**

   The City’s Administrative Offices are located in a two-story building, which was constructed in 1939 and fully renovated in 1987. Only minor updates have been made to the building since 1987. The current facility is in fair condition although a number of issues including ongoing maintenance and space limitations are noted in the “Space Needs and Facilities Evaluation Study – 2005” and since this time the building has only gotten older and the space needs even more pronounced. The offices of the City Administrator, Police Department, Planning Department, Building Department, Public Utilities Commission and a conference room are located on the main floor. It is noted that the south side office area is actually a converted garage area which has presented a variety of issues over the years. The second floor includes a newly created employee break room, a senior citizen room and a kitchen that is used for congregate dining and meals on wheels for elderly. The City Council Chambers (noting that at the time of writing City Council meetings are actually held at the School District Office Board Room) are also located on the second floor and is co-located with the senior citizen room. An elevator provides access to the various levels.

   Staff members for administrative functions include a City Administrator, Planning Director, Building Official, Administrative Services Coordinator, Accountant and Planning Clerk. Two Accounting Clerks also conduct utility billing and Golf Course accounting at City hall.

   The City Hall facility also contains the Police Department and Parks Department operations. Detailed information on each of these sections of the building and staffing follows.
Parks Department: 118 Central Avenue North
The parks department facility includes storage bays and open lockers as well as a meeting room space. The two full time staff include the Parks Maintenance Supervisor and a Parks Maintenance Worker and additionally there are various seasonal workers.

New Prague Police Department: 118 Central Avenue
The New Prague Police Department (NPPD) headquarters are located in the City Offices at 118 Central Avenue. The portion of the building where the Police Department is located is actually a converted garage space which has presented a variety of issues over the years.

The New Prague Police Department is comprised of nine full-time officers (which includes a Chief and a Sergeant), one licensed officer working part-time and two full time clerical staff. One of the full time officers are located within the school’s facilities. The NPPD provides around the clock services in the City of New Prague.

The emergency 911 service is coordinated through the sheriff’s department with the primary dispatch through Scott County. The NPPD also utilizes the Le Sueur County sheriff’s department. Crime levels have remained relatively stable; however the number of public service calls has increased over the past few years.

Needs identified by the Chief of Police include one additional full time officer and additional or new police facilities. The need for equipment rooms, upgraded bath and locker rooms, a more private patrol area, an upgraded interview room, separate holding area, alcohol testing room, a private waiting area for the public and additional garage space were acknowledged and should be considered as a part of an overall facilities plan.

2. Emergency Services Center: 503 / 505 5th Ave. NW

New Prague Fire Department / North Memorial Ambulance: 503 / 505 5th Ave. NW
The new fire hall facility, completed in April, 2009, includes six drive-through apparatus bays, open turnout gear lockers, offices, dayroom, small conference room, large meeting room and a kitchen, housed in approximately 17,000 sq. ft. All meetings/conferences are held in the large meeting room. Another portion of the facility, approximately 4,000 sq. ft., houses the North Memorial Ambulance service.

The New Prague Fire Department (NPFD) is comprised of 30 volunteer firefighters trained to First Responder and Firefighter II w/HazMat Ops state certifications. The department services the entire City of New Prague, its residents and commercial/industrial facilities, as well as parts of six different townships, including the City of Heidelberg located in Scott, LeSueur & Rice Counties. The 104.78 square miles of coverage area extends east to County Road 23 (Panama Ave.), north to County Road 8 (220th Street) west to Fabor Ave. and south to 320th Street and is illustrated on Map 9-2.

The New Prague Fire Department equipment consists of both City and rural owned apparatus including two Full-Response Engines, two Tankers (2000 & 3,500 gals.), Rescue truck, 75' Ladder Truck, two Brush trucks, a 6-Wheeler for grass/brush fires & off-road rescues, a dive gear trailer, a Chief’s Response vehicle and a Utility truck. Response is coordinated through the Scott County Dispatch Center's 9-1-1 system.

The New Prague Ambulance service, established in 1969, was disbanded in 2010 and was replaced in 2010 with North Memorial Ambulance. The Ambulance service area is 147 square miles and is illustrated on Map 9-3.

3. Municipal Utilities/Public Works – 300 East Main St.
The Public Works/Streets/Park Maintenance facilities are located at the following locations:
The New Prague Municipal Utility Building is located at 300 East Main Street. This building was remodeled in 1965 with more recent upgrades to electrical equipment and water facilities. The building is used for electrical generation equipment. A water distribution building, line shed and warehouse are also on site. New Prague’s electric service covers a large portion of the City limits with an exception of an area of the City on the south side, which is covered by MVEC. Standby generation is in place.

Electric. The electrical utility also occupies a 9,600 square foot industrial/warehouse building that was constructed in 1988 at 200 7th Street NW. The City purchased the building from Chart Industries. The electric utility includes four electrical workers.

4. Street Department: 507 12th Street NE - This building was constructed in 1996 and was expanded in 2011 with an 8,000 sq. ft. addition. The street department staff and equipment utilize it. The department includes 6.5 maintenance workers.

Storage facilities are located in several other locations throughout the City.

5. Wastewater Treatment Facility: 601 12th Street NE

The Wastewater Treatment Facility began construction in 2008 and was started up for the first time in the fall of 2010. The first discharge took place in February of 2011 following by full operation in the spring of 2012. The facility is a Biological Aerated Filter (BAF) plant which includes odor treatment units and drying of biosolids. The facility was constructed based on the need to meet more stringent testing regulations as well as 2030 population projections developed during the 2004/2005 Comprehensive Planning process which projected a population of just over 16,000 residents in New Prague. Cost of the project totaled over $30 million dollars. The Waste Water Treatment Facility includes 4 workers.

Other Community Facilities

1. Education: School District 721 serves the communities of New Prague as well as part of the City of Elko New Market and part of the City of Lonsdale, along with 11 townships in Scott, Le Sueur and Rice Counties. The school district served approximately 3,800 students in seven facilities: New Prague Senior High School constructed in 1998 and expanded in 2006 (9-12), New Prague Middle School constructed in 1975 initially as the high school (6-8), Eagle View Elementary constructed in 2006 (K-5 – located in Elko New Market), Falcon Ridge Elementary constructed in 1968 with a remodeling in 1992 (K-5), Raven Stream Elementary constructed in 2006 (K-5), the Central Education Campus remodeled in 1992, 1997 and 2007 (Grade 6, Special Services, Community Education, District Office, Operations, Alternative Learning Center and the Early Childhood Center (Ages Birth-5 and Parents). All facilities are located in New Prague except Eagle View Elementary as noted above. The district has a fleet of 32 buses, 29 vans and cars and 9 other vehicles through its transportation maintenance facility in New Prague. There are also a wealth of outdoor athletic and recreation facilities which complement the district’s indoor learning facilities. The school district boundary is illustrated on Map 9-4.

St. Wenceslaus School, a private catholic school, is located at 227 E. Main Street. St. Wenceslaus School serves preschool through grade 8. St. Wenceslaus School is accredited by Minnesota Non-public Schools Accrediting Association (MNSAA), and is a member of the following local and national organizations: National Middle School Association (NMSA), National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

Other educational programs offered in New Prague include Community Education/Summer Recreation.
2. **Mayo Clinic Heath System New Prague - Hospital.** As a part of Mayo clinic in the Midwest, Mayo Clinic Health System – New Prague is a 25-bed, non-profit, acute care hospital located at 301 2nd Street NE. Established over sixty years ago by community leaders and local healthcare professionals, Queen of Peace Hospital integrated with Mayo Clinic Health System in 2011 and assumed the name of Mayo Clinic Health System – New Prague (MCHS-New Prague). The Hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and was named a Critical Access Hospital on December 1, 2004.

In addition to the Hospital in New Prague, MCHS-NP offers primary care clinics in New Prague, Belle Plaine and Montgomery and a Women’s Health Specialty Clinic in New Prague. On-site hospital-based Outpatient Specialty Clinics vary in availability from multiple days a week to one day per month and include Urology, GI, Orthopedics, Neurology, ENT, Audiology, and Oncology. Hospital services include General Surgery, Progressive and Transitional Care, Medical/Surgical Care, Emergency Services and Obstetrics. Diagnostic, Therapy and Support Services include Pharmacy, Radiology, Lab, Sleep Study, Physical/Occupational and Speech Therapies, Respiratory Therapy, and Cardiac/Pulmonary Rehab.

Additional services affiliated with MCHS-NP include the Fitness Center which is open to the public and offers strength, cardio, and group exercise classes, a senior independent living facility called Queen’s Court, and Peace Center which is a food shelf and clothing distribution service.

3. **Library.** The New Prague Memorial Library is part of the Scott County Library System and is located at 400 East Main Street, on the north side of Memorial Park. The library is open at various times during the week with 2,275 service hours per year, or an average of 47 hours per week. According to the 2013 State Report from the New Prague Branch of the Scott County Library System, the population of the legal service area was 8,808, with 8,116 total registered borrowers (includes borrowers from other counties who use the New Prague library). In 2013 the library had 71,944 visits, 7,810 users of in-library electronic resources and circulation of 97,863.

The New Prague library, in 2013, carried 24,706 books, 1,804 audio materials, 1,044 video materials, 89 Multi-format materials, 32 print magazine subscriptions, and 94 other physical materials. The New Prague Library employees 1.69 full time equivalent librarians and 2.57 total paid other staff (includes Library Associates and Library Aides.) The 8,000 square foot facility was last remodeled in the year 2000. In 2013 the library hosted 65 children’s library programs with an attendance of 1,974, 3 young adult library programs with an attendance of 27, and 14 adult library programs with an attendance of 196.

A remodeling project in 2000 was completed with plans to meet the demands of the population for the next 20 years however another addition, the Mary J. Tikalsky Reading Room was opened in December of 2008 with a donation from Joe and Emmy Tikalsky as well as a public library construction grant from the Minnesota Department of Education State Library Services.

Future needs of the Library, according to the Scott County Library Director, includes more meeting room space, quiet study room space and computer station space along with more computers to fill the space.

4. **Post Office:** 124 Main Street East. The New Prague Post Office serves the cities of New Prague and adjacent townships. Although there have been discussions in the past for a future expanded post office, staff at the USPS has noted an expansion or relocation is not in the short term plans and is dependent upon federal funding.

5. **New Prague Golf Club** is located at 400 Lexington Avenue South. This municipal owned 18-hole golf course and clubhouse are on the south side of Memorial Park. A maintenance building houses maintenance staff for the Golf course. The golf club serves members and non-members and hosts various leagues and events. The club house was remodeled in 2006 and the road/parking lot was
reconstructed in 2006. The facility is currently operated through a contract with Golf Management Enterprises (GME) and has been operated through this arrangement since February 2011.

6. **New Prague Area Community Pool** is located at 401 Lexington Avenue South. In the fall of 1983 a group of New Prague residents initiated a grassroots effort to fund an outdoor swimming pool. The City of New Prague provided a site on the north side of the baseball field just east of Memorial Park. A fund drive began in February of 1984 that canvassed each home in ISD 721 seeking financial or in kind donations. The New Prague Area Community Pool, Inc. formed as a non-profit entity and over three years $225,000 was collected with the pool opening in August of 1984. It featured a kiddie pool, a swimming pool, bath house with showers, changing rooms, and a concession area. In September of 1987 the corporation sold the pool facility to the City of New Prague for $1.00 and dissolved. Today the operation is under a Joint Powers Agreement with ISD 721 and maintenance costs are the responsibility of the City. In June of 2010 the City of New Prague hired USAquatics to complete a facility assessment and project study which determined that the existing facility does not provide the appropriate aquatic venue for a community the size of New Prague and listed a number of options ranging from closing the pool, repairing what exists, renovating and expanding the existing pool, converting it to a spray pad or wet deck or constructing a brand new aquatic facility at a new site. The City also surveyed residents of the City and School District during the month of July 2014 and received over 1,000 survey responses. The survey was made available online and a hard copy of the survey was also mailed to all addresses within the New Prague School District Boundaries (6,131 total) by July 1st, 2014. The survey period ended on July 21st, 2014. A total of 1,056 surveys were received and of those received, 696 were filled out and returned via hard copy and 360 were filled out online. The overall response rate of just over 17% was considered good. The results of the survey were presented to the City Council on September 2, 2014. The City shared this information with the School Board to determine if a joint effort could be made to address the available aquatic amenities for area residents. The results of the survey are attached as an exhibit to this chapter.

7. **Residential Rental property.** The City owns a rental home north of City hall. The 1-1/2 story rental home was constructed in 1900. It is a 728 square foot, 3 bedroom, one-bathroom home located on parcel #24-003045-0. The property was acquired along with two other homes, which have since been demolished. The home is currently being rented out. The City also owns a rental home located at 303 1st Street SE which, long term, is to be used for space needs for the electric generation plant located directly to the north.

8. **Yard Waste Site.** The yard waste site is located at 1503 Columbus Ave. N. The yard waste site is only for use by those who reside within the corporate City Limits. The yard is not open when it is raining or too wet. No commercial services yard waste is accepted.

9. **Chamber of Commerce.** The New Prague Chamber of Commerce, is currently supported by just over 200 businesses. The 8 member board coordinates a number of events to promote and enhance the community which include a shop local campaign and special events such as the Holiday Parade of Lights, Dozinky Days and the New Prague Half Marathon / 5K Run.

**III. MUNICIPAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

The City of New Prague has several boards, commissions and committees that shape the policies and decisions of City government. The City encourages citizens to volunteer to serve on these entities and provide their input. A brief description of each entity and its duties follows:

1. **City Council.** The New Prague City Council consists of a mayor, who serves a two-year term, and four council members who serve four-year terms.
2. **Charter Commission.** The New Prague Charter Commission consists of 9 members including two City Council members. The Charter Commission was re-formed in 2014 after years of inactivity.

3. **Park Board.** The Park Board consists of seven voting members appointed by the City Council (including a City Council member) plus an additional youth representative. The Board advises the City Council on matters pertaining to the development and redevelopment of City parks and the greenway trail. Park Board terms are for four years while the youth representative term is only one year.

4. **Planning Commission.** The Planning Commission consists of five members appointed by the City Council (including one City Council member). The Commission serves four-year terms and acts as an advisory body to the City Council in matters of directing the future physical development of the City. The Commission, upon request of the Council, makes studies, investigations, and recommendations to the Council regarding matters affecting zoning, platting and public improvements.

5. **New Prague Economic Development Authority.** The Economic Development Authority for the City of New Prague includes a seven-member board (including two City Council members) that meets on a monthly basis concerning industrial and commercial development. The terms for the members are each 6 years.

6. **New Prague Housing and Redevelopment Authority.** The Economic Development Authority for the City of New Prague consists of five commissioners who are the City Council Members.

7. **New Prague Utilities Commission.** The Utilities Commission consists of five members (including one City Council member) appointed by the City Council. Each Commissioner serves a four-year term. The Commission meets on a monthly basis to discuss municipal utilities including water and electrical service.

8. **Golf Board.** The Golf Board is a seven member appointed by the City Council to oversee the activities of the municipal golf course. Members serve a three-year term. One of the seven members is a City Council member.

IV. **PUBLIC INPUT**

While not completed specifically for the Comprehensive Plan, the City conducted a “Performance Measurement Survey” which was posted online via a “Survey Monkey” survey from November 1, 2011 through December 16, 2011. The survey was also mailed out to 2,916 households and businesses (utility billing customers) with their November utility bills. A total of 576 surveys were received, with 100 being received online and the other 476 being received via a paper survey form at City hall for an overall response rate of 19.75% from the survey’s mailed out. It should be noted, however, that the City’s official population is 7,321 so the response rate and comments received are representative of only a small portion of the overall population. The following were the questions that were asked on the survey along with the top two response rates and key themes from the written comments:

1. **How would you rate the overall appearance of the City?**
   
   89% Excellent / Good
   
   93 Comments:
   23.6% noted that they felt Downtown was in poor condition or had too many vacant buildings
   8.6% noted that the old gas station on the west end of Main Street was an eye sore

2. **How would you describe your overall feeling of safety in the City?**
98% Safe/Somewhat Safe

45 Comments:
17.7% noted Concerns about Thefts from Vehicles
13.3% noted a lack of street lights
6.6% noted concerns about home burglaries

3. How would you rate the overall quality of fire protection services in the City?
86% Excellent / Good

30 comments:
6.7% noted concerns about alcohol consumption by members
Many comments note they haven’t used the services or needed it

4. How would you rate the overall condition of City streets?
68% Excellent / Good

88 comments:
15.9% noted specific poor streets north of Main Street near downtown
5.7% noted concerns about sidewalks being in poor condition
A majority of the comments note “many streets in need of repair” (as reflected in the 32% of overall responses saying they are fair/poor)

5. How would you rate the overall quality of snowplowing on City streets?
74% Excellent / Good

96 comments:
13.5% noted that they felt plowing started too late
10.4% noted that plowing is not being done to the curb as it should be
10.4% noted that intersections become dangerous due to snow pile
(23% of all respondents feel the plowing is fair/poor)

6. How would you rate the dependability and overall quality of City sanitary sewer service?
89% Excellent / Good

27 comments:
55.5% noted the high cost of the sanitary sewer bill each month

7. How would you rate the dependability and overall quality of the City water supply?
88% Excellent / Good

39 comments:
33.3% noted a poor taste and/or smell
23.1% noted the water to be “hard” and of poor appearance
15.4% noted the water was expensive

8. How would you rate the overall quality of City recreational programs and facilities (e.g. parks, trails, park facilities, etc.)?
83% Excellent / Good

89 comments:
47.7% noted the need for more trails or better connected trails
7.7% noted the need for an off-leash dog park
4.4% noted the need for a teen center or more teen park activities

9. How would you rate the overall quality of services provided by the City?

88% Excellent / Good

82 comments:
7.3% noted a need for more shopping/dining options
6.1% noted that they felt taxes were too high

A community survey was however, completed in conjunction with the updating of the Comprehensive Plan in 2004 which requested input from residents and business leaders regarding municipal facilities and services. Respondents were asked a number of questions. A summary of results relating to community facilities and services follows:

1. Medical Services. Participants were asked, “Are there any health care services that are lacking in the community?” Four individuals or 20% responded, “yes”, while the remaining 16 or 80% indicated there were no services lacking. Those noting deficiencies suggested mental health services, OB/Women’s health, stronger pediatrics and more volunteers with the ambulance department or privatization with the hospital.

2. Programs and Services. Participants were asked, “Are there any programs, services or resources that are not located in the community now that would be beneficial?” Of the 20 respondents, 12 said “no”, while the remaining eight suggested items such as a community center, bus system or other public transportation, improved programs for seniors and county programming serving families with WIC and immunizations.

3. Communication and Public Input. Survey participants were asked, “Do you feel you are informed about City Council decisions?” Over ¾ of the respondents reported they did, 9% noted they did not, 9% did not comment and 5% were undecided.

Participants were also asked, “How can the City provide better opportunities for input and participation (public access TV, open houses, web site, etc.)?” The number one response or suggestion was the development of a website (12 responses) followed by public access TV (9), televising of public meetings (5), open house meetings (5), more advertisements in the local paper and City newsletter (4).

4. Community Facility Needs. Participants were asked, “Are public buildings adequate to handle current and future growth (e.g. City hall, library, schools, community center related facilities...). If no, what facilities are in need of expansion?” Responses are as follows: City hall (14), expand fire hall (10), additional schools (9), new or upgraded ambulance facility (6), expand the police station (4), expand the hockey/ice rink (2), senior center (1), park maintenance building in the future (1), and budgeting for future capital improvements (1).

5. Community Input Meeting. During a community input meeting participants were asked what challenges the City of New Prague is facing. Comments relating to community facilities and services included maintaining the school system and maintaining public safety and a low crime rate. Participants of the community input meeting were also asked what community needs exist. The number one response from participants was City facilities including City hall, fire, police and ambulance, with three of the four groups identifying this as a need.
V. PROJECTED GROWTH

The population is forecasted to increase from 7,378 people in 2011 (according to the State Demographer Estimate) to 12,990 people by the year 2035, a 76% increase. The projected growth will reasonably require the expansion of existing administrative and protection services. Such services will not only result in a demand for increased public employees, but also increased facility space and increased capital equipment costs. The expansion of administrative facilities and capital equipment purchases should be included in a capital improvement/equipment program.

In order to meet the projected growth and accomplish identified objectives a number of policies have been outlined below.

VI. MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

OBJECTIVES

1. To provide for adequate facilities and staff to operate and maintain the essential services for current and future residents and businesses in the community.

2. To continue to serve the citizens of New Prague in an efficient, friendly, and cost effective manner.

3. To plan for future space needs, including the evaluation of the feasibility of construction of a new City hall facility which would house all office staff for general City government functions, utility commission office staff and the police department.

4. To continue to update and maintain facilities and operations.

5. To continue to evaluate technology and the need to incorporate technology in carrying out the functions of the City.

6. To provide citizens the opportunity to participate in local government as well as inform citizens of municipal activities.

POLICIES

1. Upon receiving concept plans, the City shall review its provision of services including, but not limited to, public administration, public utilities and public protection services such as police and fire service to ensure said services which are reasonably necessitated by proposed subdivisions and must be provided at public expense, can be reasonably provided within two (2) fiscal years of approval of the proposed subdivision. If said services cannot be reasonably provided, the subdivision shall be deemed premature.

2. The City should monitor and assess the condition and adequacy of existing municipal structures and consider the completion of an updated public facilities study to identify possible future space needs and locations, particularly for City hall. The City should establish long-term solutions to anticipated building/office space needs. Routine maintenance and repair costs should be allotted for in the annual budget. Reconstruction, remodeling and/or construction of facilities should be addressed in a Capital Improvement Plan.

3. The City should work in cooperation with the school district and other taxing entities to coordinate potential referendums for public facilities, if possible, to minimize the impact on taxpayers.

4. The City should continue working with MnDOT, Scott County, Le Sueur County, Helena Township and Lanesburg Township to ensure coordinated growth of land uses, transportation systems and regional recreational areas and trails.
5. The City should continue to update its web site with current information as a means of informing and updating community members as well as allowing them to conveniently conduct City business through online services.
New Prague Aquatic Survey Summary:

A total of 6,131 surveys were mailed to all City of New Prague residents, as well as to those residing within the New Prague school district boundaries. Surveys were also available for completion on-line.

Of the surveys mailed out a total of 696 surveys (11.4%) were returned to City Hall and another 360 (5.8%) were completed on-line for a grand total of 1,056 returned surveys (17.2%).

Question 1: Household Location:

Those residing within New Prague corporate city limits accounted for a total of 664 (63%) of the surveys submitted, while those residing outside of New Prague corporate city limits accounted for the remaining 390 surveys submitted (37%). *Note this totals 1,054 since two of the returned surveys did not have information related to this question completed.

Question 2: Age range(s) of those living in your household:

![Survey Results](image)
When comparing the age ranges represented in the completed surveys to the age ranges in census estimates, it is clear that each age range was represented fairly. No age groups were over or under accounted for and the results of submitted surveys closely mirrored the census estimates.

**Question 3: Number of people in your household:**

Two member households accounted for the largest group at 31%. The second largest percentage of households was those with 4 members at 26%. Five person households came in third at 15%.
**Question 4: Current Pool usage:**

Of those surveyed, 64% reported having utilized the existing outdoor pool while 36% reported no one in their household utilized the outdoor pool facility.

**Question 5: Quality of the New Prague pool and amenities**

![Current Pool Quality](chart)

The majority of survey respondents felt the quality of the existing outdoor pool facility was “Fair” (34%), “No Answer” was the second most common response (30%), and a rating of “Poor” followed (18%).

**Question 6: Priority the City should place on outdoor aquatics:**

When asked about the priority the City of New Prague should place on outdoor aquatics, almost half (47%) of those surveyed answered that the priority should be “High” (30%) or “Very High” (17%). “Medium” (25%), “Low” (14%), “Don’t Know” (7%) and “None” (6%).

**Question 7: Importance of expanded aquatics for citizens and visitors:**

468 (44%) responded that it is “Very Important” to provide expanded aquatics, 343 (32%) felt it was “Somewhat Important”, 107 (10%) stated it was “Not Very Important”, 80 (8%) felt it was “Very Unimportant” and 58 (5%) provided “No Answer”.

**Question 8: Frequency of current pool use:**

The largest response group (39%) stated they “Never” use the current facility. The second largest group (13%) reported attending the current facility “1-2 times per month”, followed by “Several times per week” (10%).
**Question 9: Reasons for utilizing the New Prague pool:**

The most common reason for using the current facility was recreational swimming. Swimming lessons and convenient location rounded out the top three responses.

**Question 10: Reasons for NOT utilizing the New Prague pool:**

- Facility is out of date (25%)
- Does not have desired aquatic amenities (25%)
- No Answer (16%)
- Other (14%)
- No swimmers in household (13%)
- Don’t use outdoor pools (6%)
- Lifeguard concerns (2%)

The top four reasons written in as “Other” were: facility too crowded, lacks dedicated adult swim times, water too cold and facility is too small.

**Question 11: Use of Swimming Pool facilities outside of New Prague:**

![Households Utilizing Pools Outside of New Prague](chart)

**Question 12: Other Swimming Pool locations utilized:**

The survey provided 7 nearby facilities for selection, as well as an option for “Other”. Over 20 additional/different facilities were written in under this category. Based on the above information, it is clear that the New Prague pool is losing a very large number of potential patrons to other facilities. 1,220 selections were made for other facilities with several of those surveyed reported attending multiple facilities outside of New Prague (This also does not take
into account the number of household members that attended each selection). This suggests a loss of several thousand potential patrons that are seeking better facilities, attractions and amenities elsewhere.

The top 5 listed facilities are as follows:

- Faribault – 255 (21%)
- Shakopee Swim Pond – 203 (17%)
- Apple Valley outdoor – 89 (7%)
- Waseca – 80 (7%)
- Montgomery – 73 (6%)

**Question 13: Frequency of attending other facilities:**

When asked about utilizing pool facilities outside of New Prague, over half (55%) reported using other facilities. Over 1/3rd (37%) reported attending these facilities 1-2 times per month or more.

**Question 14: Reasons for utilizing the New Prague pool or facilities outside of New Prague:**

The above graph represents the response to the primary ways survey responders and members of their households utilize the New Prague pool or other facilities outside of New Prague.

It should be noted that four of the top five responses (Play areas, Waterslides, Lazy River and Zero Depth areas) are all features or amenities not presently offered at the New Prague pool.
**Question 15:** Why do you use aquatic facilities other than the New Prague pool:

![Bar graph showing reasons for utilizing other facilities]

**Question 16:** What benefit should public pools/aquatic facilities provide:

When asked what the main benefit public pools and aquatic facilities should provide to citizens and visitors, Recreation/play areas for children (34%) and Teaching people to swim (25%) accounted for over half of the responses followed by Aquatic Exercise (14%), a Place to Socialize (12%) and to Bring revenue to the City (10%).

**Question 17:** Desired features:

- Waterslides – (13%)
- Shaded seating – (12%)
- Zero-depth entry – (11%)
- Lazy river – (11%)
- Concession area – (9%)
- Spray features – (8%)
- Tot slides – (7%)
- Lap swimming – (7%)
- Dropslide – (6%)
- 1M diving – (6%)
**Question 18: Frequency of visiting your ideal aquatic center:**

When asked how often during the swimming season they or members of their household would visit a new aquatic facility that offered the features they most preferred, over half (55%) reported they would attend 1-2 times per month or more. Attending Several times per week (25%), and attending Never (24%) received the most responses.

**Question 19: Focus of a new facility:**

![Pie chart showing the distribution of respondents for each age group. Pre-School Age: 6%, Grade School: 7%, Teens: 10%, College Age: 18%, Families: 46%, Adults: 9%, Seniors: 4%.]

**Question 20: Support for tax increase (answered only by City Residents)**

![Bar chart showing tax increase support. Yes: 100%, No: 0%.]
When only City Residents were asked if they would support a property tax increase to help fund an outdoor pool project with the features and amenities most important to their household, 427 (60%) of those surveyed were in support of a tax increase while 285 (40%) were opposed to a property tax increase to fund the project.

**Question 21: Amount of supported property tax increase:**

![Maximum Property Tax Increase](image)

226 (31%) of those surveyed stated they would be willing to pay “Nothing” in terms of property tax increases to support a facility. 413 (56%) reported they would be willing to support a property tax increase of at least $25, while 95 (13%) stated they “Didn't Know”.

**Question 22/23: Maximum Daily admission fee:**

When asked what the maximum daily admission price they would be willing to pay for an “Adult” or “Child” the majority responded that they did not know. For an “Adult” admission, $5 – 5.99 ranked second (21%), Less than $4 third (17%), followed by $4 – 4.99 (16%). For a “Child” admission $3 – 3.99 ranked second (18%), $4 – 4.99 third (16%), followed by $2 – 2.99 (14%).
**Question 24:** Maximum Family Pass fee:

![Seasonal Family Pass (Maximum Price) chart]

**Question 25:** Type of payment:

When asked how they would most likely pay to visit the facility, over half (67%) noted they would either Pay per Visit (36%) or by purchasing a Seasonal Family Pass (31%). Those surveyed who were unsure how they would pay ranked third (21%).

**Question 26:** Choice of options:

Those surveyed were asked about the future of aquatics in New Prague, specifically which of the listed options they would be most in favor of. The following is the list of Options individuals were asked to choose from:

- Option 1 – Close the existing outdoor pool (9%)
- Option 2 – Repair the existing pool - no added amenities (9%)
- Option 3 – Renovate and expand the existing pool - added amenities (16%)
- Option 4 – Convert the existing pool into a spray pad/wet deck (2%)
- Option 5 – New outdoor aquatic facility (48%)
Question 27: Comments:

Numerous additional comments were received and those comments spanned a wide range of ideas and suggestions. The most frequent comments provided referenced an indoor facility of some variety that would allow for year-round use. Suggestions were made for an indoor/outdoor pool at a Community Center, partnering with the School District on an indoor facility, looking at options of a joint venture with a YMCA or Health Care facility.

Additional comments received noted money could be spent better elsewhere and that taxes should not be raised as some thought they were already too high. Others yet suggested fundraising, grants or alternative funding sources be looked at for funding.

Several comments also referenced facilities such as Stewartville and Glencoe being nicer than the New Prague pool despite having smaller populations. Many comments also noted driving 20-45 miles away to visit newer aquatic facilities that had more to offer than New Prague.