

Ridgedale Town Green

From parking lot to park

Many communities are realizing that their commercial and retail spaces will look different in the future. The city of Minnetonka took the opportunity to start planning for a new community park, which is included in plans for a senior housing development in the southwest corner of Ridgedale Mall.

Minnetonka staff partnered with Hennepin County's Active Living team to take a fresh look at their planning process for the incoming Town Green park. This partnership allowed staff to:

- Address walking and biking connections to the future park
- Gather input from community members, particularly young families and mall employees who use transit
- Incorporate innovative community engagement methods into city events to encourage people to think about how they use public spaces in different ways

Engagement strategies

The partnership helped the city learn what people wanted to see in the Town Green park. Minnetonka residents and visitors encountered multiple opportunities to share what they wanted to do in the space, what kind of style or feel they wanted in the park, and provide additional suggestions and concerns. Engagement strategies included:

- Engagement with employees at Ridgedale Mall
- Project display at Ridgedale Mall
- Online survey and email-blast
- Postcards
- Ridgedale Library open house
- Senior Advisory Committee presentation
- Rock at Ridgedale event



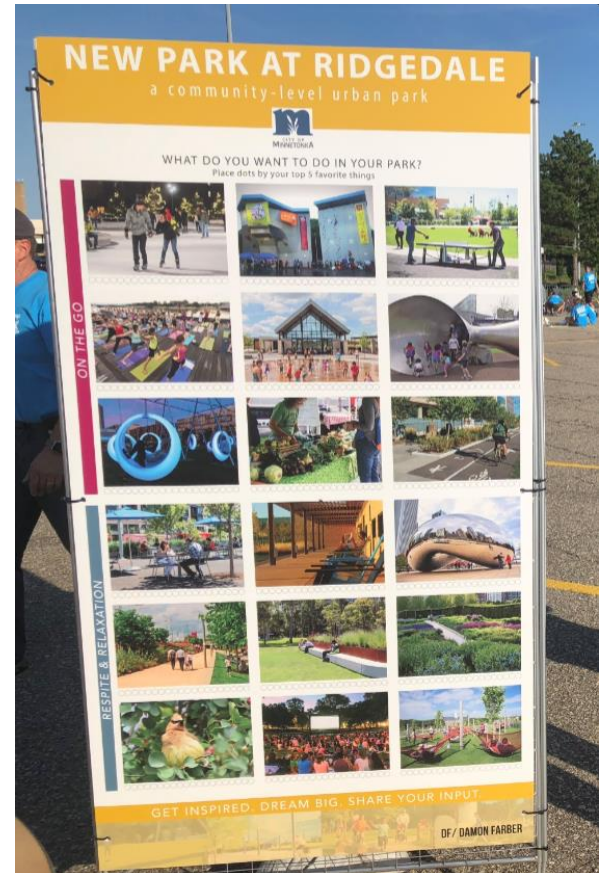
Rock at Ridgedale

Creating fun and positive experiences in a space is a great way to get people to see its potential. Minnetonka staff hosted a free community concert on the site of the future Town Green park to invite residents, mall employees and other visitors to consider the potential of converting a portion of the parking lot to a park, and provide feedback to the city and their consultants.

In addition to live music and food trucks, the park area was marked off and artists with Springboard for the Arts Ready-Go Art Carts were on hand to inspire people to think creatively and imaginatively about the space's potential, asking people:

- Who would you visit the park with?
- How would you get to the park?
- How can this space be welcoming and inclusive to visitors and future residents?

A variety of engagement opportunities were available to help collect feedback, including dot voting, a picture wagon, comment cards, and even a ping pong game with questions to generate new and fun ideas for the future park.



What did the city hear?

Participants cast more than 2,000 votes at Rock at Ridgedale, the Ridgedale Library, the city's open house, and through other dot-voting opportunities. In addition more than 700 responded to the online survey looking at potential programming, amenities, inclusivity, and other topics.

Consultant Damon Farber, described the responses as a "signature and unique community space that helps create an identity for the Ridgedale area." Responses show a strong interest in a multi-generational park that incorporates natural elements and active living.



Funding for this project was provided from the Minnesota Department of Health through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP). SHIP supports community-driven solutions to expand opportunities for active living, healthy eating and commercial tobacco-free living.