

## **Cover Letter Survey Results**

Birchwood had an excellent response to the Parks & Natural Resources Survey. There were 117 responses in all, about a 33% return rate. These came in a variety of ways:

- ❑ 67 Online
- ❑ 29 Paper returns
- ❑ 15 Megan interviews
- ❑ 6 Park visit interviews.

### **Observations/Recommendations:**

- ❑ There was a nearly even split to question 'Would you keep the parks as is?'
  - Ana points out, however, that most who said yes, also wanted maintenance.
- ❑ Tighe-Schmitz Park and the Walking Trails are the most used resources.
- ❑ Birch Beach, Kay Beach, and Bloomquist Park are all heavily used as well.
- ❑ The 3-pages on 'What I Like' should be featured somewhere.
- ❑ Pages 8-15 will be used to create the items to be voted on by all residents.
  - That is the next piece Larry will create.
  - The responses related to Dog Park should be shared with the other committee.
- ❑ Pages 16-18 are items the Parks Committee should explore for useful process ideas.
  - The top 3 Concerns on page 18 likely refer to one individual. How do we handle this?
- ❑ Pages 19-23 can be input to the Maintenance Plan the Committee produces.
  - When we ask people to vote, we should state that a maintenance plan is the highest priority for the Committee and will cover the suggestions made. No one needs to vote for this.
  - Their votes then become a vote for what new resources and/or rules are the highest priority to residents.
  - Judy has asked Houston to invite John Lund to a Committee meeting. John has created a maintenance plan in the past, and indicates there is reasonably updated version available. He also has process ideas to support maintenance.
- ❑ Page 24 all relates to 'improving' Tighe-Schmitz flooding.
  - I suggest that we point out to all residents that it is a natural wetland, not a field that can be readily drained.

**Parks Committee  
Aggregated Inputs**

Question	Yes	No	Neither
Would you prefer that parks remain just the way they are?	46	40	7

**Which Parks – Easements do you use?**

Resource	#
<b>Easements</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ash	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Birch	48
<input type="checkbox"/> Dellwood	32
<input type="checkbox"/> Elm	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Kay	43
<input type="checkbox"/> Curt Feistner	1
<b>Parks</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bloomquist	37
<input type="checkbox"/> Nordling	21
<input type="checkbox"/> Tighe-Schmitz	63
<input type="checkbox"/> Wildwood	9
<b>Activities</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Skating-Hockey Rink	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Music in the Parks	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Courts	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Tighe-Schmitz Playground	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 <sup>th</sup> of July Parade	2
<b>Trails</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> All	55

## What I Like & General Comments

### What I Like:

#### ***Natural Beauty***

- I like that our parks, easements, and walking areas are not cookie cutter spaces. They reflect our comfortable, natural looking neighborhoods adjacent to White Bear Lake.
- Very natural and beautiful. No need to dig up and make structures.
- Not too developed; matching Birchwood.
- Keep Birchwood natural.
- Like the natural trails and docks.
- I like the fact that the city has taken the initiative to preserve parks, easements, and open spaces.
- Walking trails & access to the lake.
- We like the easements and access to the lake.
- I enjoy the easements which provide lake access for residents.
- Relatively clean.
- Clean.
- We think Birchwood is, overall, taking pretty good care of the parks.
- I'm pretty happy with how the parks are.

#### ***Convenient & Not Crowded***

- Parks are convenient to our home.
- We like that the parks are not crowded.
- Not many children ever present.
- No fighting on use of equipment.
- I'm getting old, so I guess I'm lucky to be able to enjoy Tighe-Schmitz and Kay Beach without many problems.

#### ***Parks & Easements***

- We highly value parks and their contribution to community. We really appreciate the parks and easements we have access to because we live in Birchwood. THANK YOU to all who have worked on that through the years. It was really part of our decision to buy our home in July 2016.
- Location of parks.
- That we have them and are in walking distance.
- I frequently take my grandchild to the parks.
- The update to Kay Beach dock has made it more enjoyable to visit during walks with children (parents and children).
- Beach across the street.
- Field for running around (12-year-old).
- I like that dogs are allowed at the beaches.

### ***Walking Trails***

- ❑ Ash Walkway is a nice path for dog walkers and others seeking a short hike "in the woods".

### ***Playgrounds***

- ❑ When they were younger – I'd say the kids play area was beneficial.
- ❑ Monkey bars and playground at Tighe-Schmitz (10-year-old).
- ❑ The swings are fun to swing on at Tighe-Schmitz (1 and 3-year-old).
- ❑ Tighe Schmitz Park Our children spend a lot of time on the playground/swings. They like all aspects of it including the swings, monkey bars and everything else they climb on. We see children of all ages using it! I think removing the vulgar graffiti and weeds would be nice.
- ❑ Our 11-year-old really likes the playground area and specifically the zip line.

### ***Tennis Courts-Hockey Rink***

- ❑ Playing tennis with my friends at Bloomquist (13-year-old).
- ❑ Kids like to play tennis and ice skate - tennis courts are in great shape - hockey rink and warming house are awesome - drinking fountains at both parks & tennis courts (11-year-old)
- ❑ Tennis courts: Our entire family, including all grandparents use them regularly. They are in great condition!
- ❑ The Bloomquist Park tennis courts are highly utilized (and have been for forty years) and are a great community asset worthy of investment.
- ❑ The availability of Tennis courts will be great in the summer.
- ❑ Skating rink (10-year-old and adult).
- ❑ The warming house for the ice rink and open space available at Tighe-Schmitz park are great!
- ❑ The hockey rink is wonderful and the warming house is awesome. We play basketball in the summer on the rink, and it's great.
- ❑ Favorites would be the ice rink with warming house and the open field area.
- ❑ Warming house is great.
- ❑ Warming house and ice rink are great.
- ❑ The ice rink and warming house are nice/fun.

### ***Soccer & Ball Fields***

- ❑ The soccer field and softball field are great and provide a large space for a variety of activities. Our family hosted 3 kickball tournaments this summer with friends and family and we are going to make it a tradition. We had a wet summer and all three times we played the field was very soggy which proved to be dangerous for me as I completely wiped out in the mud. Thankfully none of the grandparents slipped.

**Activities**

- ❑ For our village size, there are a good number of resources with varying uses: 4<sup>th</sup> of July at Wildwood Park, hockey rink, swimming, etc.
- ❑ Hiking, boating, swimming, skating, open field for team sports are all available for all to use. Rink and park space not in use by organized team use.
- ❑ Docks are great for swimming or visiting the lake.
- ❑ The beaches, dock associations, and boat storage processes seem to be working well.
- ❑ We like the music in the parks.
- ❑ Community potluck dinners at City Hall are engaging and informative.
- ❑ The 'Swim across the lake' is a wonderful challenge.

**General Comments:****Beautify Our Village**

- ❑ General beautification and maintenance needs to be done to public areas.
- ❑ Keep natural to walk through.
- ❑ Keep natural to walk through. That's why I moved here. There are dog parks within 4 miles – plenty of them.
- ❑ Benches along the walking trails; more landscaping, some plantings in the parks.
- ❑ Wildflowers.
- ❑ Maybe some nice flower baskets, ornamental trees, Christmas decorations or lights, or general beautification of the city (not just big trees).
- ❑ All groups who go around the lake pass our very visible Wildwood Park, and it should look nice. Better maintenance needed: park is never raked, and heavy leaf mulch has killed grass. Whoever mows the park should get off the heavy machine and pick up sticks and branches. Branches are piled by trees. Weed control needed.
- ❑ Community garden.

**Welcome Usage:**

- ❑ How to get kids doing things out side more?
- ❑ We now have a lot of younger families moving into Birchwood. We need to provide well-maintained playground equipment and keep up the ballfield, soccer area, and skating rinks in Tighe-Schmitz.
- ❑ A more welcoming feel for use by people who don't live next to the park areas. Right now they are made to feel as if they are the personal property of the direct neighbors and others are not welcome (especially kids) to gather there and utilize the space.
- ❑ Using what we have – some things lie idle almost all the time (so is it time to phase them out?)
- ❑ We as tax payers should be allowed to use ALL the city property.

**Keep & Maintain What We Have:**

- ❑ No issues, no concerns. No improvements, maintaining & enjoying how they are, no need for more concrete. Move to St. Paul or Woodbury if you want more concrete and fences.
- ❑ Parks are informal – low key – but not adequately maintained.
- ❑ Better care of our natural areas (not just hard infrastructure).
- ❑ Make our parks even better.
- ❑ Current resources need better maintenance – especially trails.
- ❑ Do not add anything new. Just replace rundown existing amenities. Please try to keep up what we have.
- ❑ City needs to do more with tree trimming.

***Improve Signage:***

- ❑ Knowing what areas are around.
- ❑ Put up ***signs*** pointing to where each Park is. We never could tell where they are. Thanks for the map.
- ❑ Need new signage. Signs are old out of date and rusty. Looks bad
- ❑ Signage is in need of updating. They are rusty and look bad.
- ❑ Fewer, but nicer and more natural looking signs.
- ❑ Public vs Private land more clearly defined.

***Docks:***

- ❑ Let's keep the current status; no going back to the dock association disagreements. Easements are all Birchwood's property and the city's responsibility to govern.
- ❑ I like the city policy that docks are for all residents to use.
- ❑ Small docks. With potential of more future use, it would be nice to have a wider dock space with more sitting space at the end.

## **New Resources – New Activities:**

### ***New Walking Paths***

- ❑ Nicer walking trails- I love the path that cuts through the woods & the one that goes up the hill by Owl street & through Nordling park - MORE of those kinds of places / paths.
- ❑ I really appreciate the walking trails and wish there was an even more comprehensive walking trail - not sure if we have the acreage for this, but it would be great.
- ❑ Provide a map to citizens about walking paths / how to "walk Birchwood".
- ❑ "Trekking Birchwood" can identify walks even beyond the village, e.g. to Hidden Park, Century College playing fields, Katherine Abbott Park, Park off Wedgewood Drive, Bossard Park, Bellaire Park.
- ❑ More walking paths.
- ❑ Longer walking paths.
- ❑ Make walking trails on all unimproved platted roads.
- ❑ Would love to see the easements and right of ways that the city currently has developed into more walking paths. These paths and easements are gems in our community, and a number of them have not been developed. They should be made available for the community to use.
- ❑ Walking path established, added and extended behind Brooks and McCormick's property (not sure if it is Ash or Birch walkway).
- ❑ Ash Trail should be extended across Birchwood Avenue and connect with Birch Street.
- ❑ Add a walking trail on the right-of-way behind Birchwood Ave.
- ❑ I would like to see the Ash Trail continue across Birchwood Ave. and open up an extended walking trail that would cost next to nothing to do.
- ❑ Extend the Ash trail across Birchwood Ave and use our existing open spaces. It is insanity that these are not utilized.
- ❑ Open up Ash easement to create another longer walking loop.

### ***Safe Biking/Walking Paths***

- ❑ Create a bike path or walking path (paved) that goes around the edge of Tighe-Schmitz park (a safe place for kids to ride bikes, scooters, & people to walk).
- ❑ I would also love to see bike/ walking paths put along busy roads, as they are now currently dangerous to walk along with the car traffic.
- ❑ Walking and biking path so the kids can safely get to parks and tennis courts.
- ❑ Let's make better/safer walking/biking paths in Birchwood.
- ❑ Safe walking trail along Cedar, Hall, Birchwood for pedestrian and bikes.
- ❑ Safe walking path along Cedar, Hall, Birchwood - it is really dangerous to be walking along there and for drivers who have to veer into another lane to avoid pedestrians.
- ❑ The Newsletter can inform residents of driving speeds once again, so safe walking/biking can be done.



**New Bike Trails**

- More bike trails.
- Paved pathways that one can push a stroller.
- Pave bike trail at Tighe-Schmitz.

**Easement Beaches:**

- Swim out raft.
- Sand at beaches.
- Easements / Beaches could use some fresh sand on the shore for beach goers to enjoy.

**Easement Upgrades:**

- Each easement should have a picnic table and a bench.
- All the picnic tables and benches in all the parks are in shambles. Need to replace with maintenance free.
- There are no picnic tables at easements.
- Put in more areas to sit at some of the parks.
- Possible additions for benches or picnic tables.
- Trash and recycling cans.
- Open easement between Oakridge Drive & E. County Line to foot traffic – improve safety!
- More Benches by the beaches so you can just sit and watch the water and the boats.
- Picnic tables at the easements.

**Ash Beach:**

- We use Ash easement the most. It appears neglected in comparison to the others. It is mowed regularly, but that is it. The rock 'steps' to the beach could be made safer for access.

**Kay Beach:**

- Have a Porta-Pottie by Kay Beach during summer months. Families with small children should have access to bathroom facilities by the city's designated swimming beach and playground.
- Make Kay Beach look like a Park – sand raked periodically, bushes trimmed back.
- Need fresh sand @ the parks & possibly the beach. Clean up Kay beach.
- Swim buoys installed at Kay Beach.
- Make Kay dock more stable. It needs longer poles? The cinder block remedy is a bit more injury prone.
- Trash cans at Kay beach and Playground area of Tighe Schmitz. More Benches by the beaches so you can just sit and watch the water and the boats.

**Dellwood:**

- New Dellwood picnic table/bench upgrades at lake easements.
- A nice picnic table at Dellwood.

**Music in the Parks:**

- ❑ Birch and Dellwood easements as well as the picnic/playground area of Tighe-Schmitz park need access to electricity for summer “Music in the Parks” series – as well as other possible community events.

**Kayak/Canoe Racks:**

- ❑ Need more.
- ❑ More canoe/kayak racks.
- ❑ Kayak racks at Kay Beach.
- ❑ More usable kayak/canoe racks (ones not located too high to access or hidden in tree branches).
- ❑ Challenge: easily accessible kayak slips. We have a large kayak and by the time we brought it down nearly all slips on all beaches were taken. Remaining spots were very difficult to access. Can the slips be moved for easier access or can more be added?

**Tennis Courts:**

- ❑ Tennis courts need new, *real* court surface. Get rid of sport court thing! This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most utilized public space & we would donate \$\$ if a new proper surface was put down.
- ❑ Need a tennis wall to hit against.
- ❑ Even though it's been a while since we have used them, we both enjoy having high-quality tennis courts nearby and hope to use them with our kids as they grow older.

**Volleyball Court:**

- ❑ Get the sand volleyball court back in operation. It used to be a great spot for older kids and families.
- ❑ No volleyball court any more.
- ❑ All 4 of us would like to see the completion of the sand volleyball court.
- ❑ Would love a sand volleyball court area.
- ❑ Completion of volleyball court at Tighe Schmitz (adult).
- ❑ Tighe-Schmitz volleyball courts.
- ❑ Fix up the volleyball court area.

<p><b><i>New Activities:</i></b></p>
<p><b><i>Multiple Suggestions:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> More activity areas for teens (climbing wall, skateboard park, gaga pit, etc.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> New piece of equipment (gaga pit or something for older kids) at park.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It'd be neat if there were some activities on the easement grass areas: frisbee golf, horse shoes, bocce ball court... that type of thing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> More options for middle school kids, (volleyball, tetherball and improved basketball hoops)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Horseshoe Pits:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoe pit by tennis courts.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoe pits.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Pickle Ball Court:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pickle ball lines on the tennis courts.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pickle ball court is desired.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pickle ball court.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Add a pickle ball court (in the hockey rink?).</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Pleasure Skating Rink:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The pleasure rink was nonexistent this past year.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A well-kept pleasure skiing rink.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Tether Ball:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tetherball added at Tighe Schmitz.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Swimming Pool:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Swimming pool/pond.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Band Shell or Covered Picnic Area:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Band shell or large covered picnic area with fireplace.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Family Movie Night at the Park:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family movie night in the park! Much like music in the park but Saturday evenings at dusk.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Art in the Park:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Art classes, plein air painting, for adults and/or kids. Could be a good complement to the music in the park series.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Winter Sledding Hill:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Turn the hill connecting upper and lower Birch St into an official park and maintain/light it for winter sledding. In the 70s this was a hugely popular sledding hill for kids.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural Playground:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Is the space where we gather after the parade a 'park'? Maybe create some natural playground features like what is at Wildwood Elementary School (Mahtomedi)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vegetable-Flower Cutting Garden:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Community vegetable garden and flower cutting garden at Tighe-Schmitz.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Apiary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Apiary (I know, lawsuits could impede this.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Destination Playground Equipment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Dream #1: Destination playground equipment (equipment to support a single purpose).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Second Hockey Rink:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ An additional hockey rink at Tighe-Schmitz. The individual rink tends to be occupied by older kids for pickup games, it'd be nice to allow younger kids the space to skate/play hockey.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outhouses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ If we improve these areas and make them useful – I would hope we have decent outhouses to go along with it.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Striped Paths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Would be nice to have a designated path striped on street.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Poop Bags:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Poop bags at all parks to encourage people to pick up after dog. We already carry our own, but <b>this would provide no excuses for not cleaning up!</b></li> <li>❑ Dog poop bags dispensers placed along the walk areas.</li> <li>❑ Dog owners are responsible and pick-up after.</li> <li>❑ Keep dog dew out of Tighe-Schmitz.</li> <li>❑ Keep dog dew off playground equipment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parking:</b></p>

**Skateboard Park:**

- ❑ Dream #2: Skateboard park.
- ❑ Skatepark.
- ❑ Would the rink be suitable as a skate board area?
- ❑ A small skatepark near the hockey rink would be a great addition to Birchwood. The costs are relatively cheap as well.
- ❑ A skateboard/rollerblade/scooter/bike park somewhere in Birchwood!

**Playground Safety:**

- ❑ Safety compliance in playground areas.
- ❑ Concerns over playground safety violations.
- ❑ New infant swing seat which meets safety compliance guidelines.
- ❑ Upgrade playground equipment.
- ❑ Children play grounds updated - safer.
- ❑ The equipment at Blomquist is extremely limited and has very few safety features such as railings and hand bars. New up to current code playground equipment should be available at every park. A couple of swings would be good.

**New Playground Equipment:**

- ❑ New playground equipment.
- ❑ New or cleaned up playground equipment - for all ages - young to older kids.
- ❑ Playground equipment for bigger kids and a higher pull up bar.
- ❑ New and improved children's playground equipment at Bloomquist.
- ❑ The playground at TS park needs new equipment and the area around the equipment needs redoing.
- ❑ Updated play equipment for kids.
- ❑ Updated play equipment at Bloomquist or Tighe - Schmitz or both!
- ❑ Upgraded, accessible/universal playground equipment. (More specifically: redo the swings in Tighe-Schmitz playground to remove timbers (hazardous to children on swings and creates non-accessible space) and put in universal swings).
- ❑ The playground toys are very limited. The slide collects water at the bottom. I have to bring a rag to wipe it off. There are no toys for children under the age of two. Swings with baby seats would be a wonderful addition.
- ❑ Playground equipment is for younger kids (at park across from city hall - no swings, zip line, low monkey bars).
- ❑ Added equipment for 10-14-year-olds.

<p><b>New Rules:</b></p>
<p><b>Public Spaces:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ I would like to see public spaces such as old road plats marked so folks understand public vs private areas. There are some homeowners who try to camouflage public property and appear to claim it for their own. I have had homeowners kick me off what I believe to be public property.</li> <li>❑ We also have too many people from outside areas using our beaches and parks - increased parking and traffic in the summer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Boat Docks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Increase boat lengths to 20 feet max and allow canopies for lifts. I already have bunks(sp?) on lifts &amp; find it harder/unsafe to put cover on boat.</li> <li>❑ Challenge: The continued push against Birchwood residents putting boats on docks at a reduced price.</li> <li>❑ Change: Transparency on the Dock Association's part and publishing the process. Routinely examining the dock access process every few years to make sure it is still a fair process (it seems to be now).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Off-Leash Dogs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Ability to allow dog off leash in park with use of electronic collar and full control of our dog.</li> <li>❑ More attention to leashing dogs.</li> <li>❑ Also, enforcement of leash laws in and around parks/beaches and streets.</li> <li>❑ Enforced leash laws. I want to walk my dogs (on leashes) without being approached by other non-leashed dogs. My dogs are always leashed and not necessarily dog friendly, so we do not want to be approached by non-leashed dogs when walking at parks, beaches, walking paths, streets, etc.</li> <li>❑ Big problem with dogs off leash at beaches and parks. Beaches have become off leash dog parks. People do not clean up after their dogs.</li> <li>❑ Dogs should not be allowed at beaches or parks on or off leash.</li> <li>❑ WAY too many people with unleashed dogs at Kay beach. Frankly, I haven't seen a single dog ON a leash at Kay beach in 3-4 months.</li> <li>❑ Remove dogs from Kay Beach. With the number of kids that swim and play in the sand it is not a healthy or safe situation. Most dogs are not staying on leash.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Deer should be culled.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Cat owners keep them inside – no roaming cats.</li> <li>❑</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Need clarity and consistency on parking tickets in Birchwood - 9pm vs 2am.</li> </ul>

**Maintenance Volunteers/Communications:**

- ❑ Please improve communication with neighborhood about how we can help with the parks. If there were standing maintenance days a few times a season I could plan my schedule to participate.
- ❑ Maintenance and responsiveness/information solicitation/outreach to the community. Particularly as many new and young families with children are moving into Birchwood.
- ❑ I know our family would be happy to help / volunteer to fix things up.
- ❑ Volunteer to keep grounds clean, kind of like "Adopt a Park". Families could sign up for 1-month duration.

***Dog Park (5 for, 4 against):***

- ❑ Dog park should be added.
- ❑ Add a dog park.
- ❑ As the owners of two yellow labs, we would be interested in a dog park, if the location/area is suitable and it makes sense.
- ❑ I would love a dog exercise area if it is secured/fenced.
- ❑ I think the baseball field and backstop should be abandoned and changed into the dog park area. To have the dog parks behind the village hall would be a lot of work when you already have the baseball field that can easily be changed over. The baseball area is an eyesore place that no-one has used for years. The two dog park areas by the village hall would be full of mosquitos and wood ticks.
  
- ❑ Dog park is a bad idea.
- ❑ No dog park.
- ❑ A dog park would also be horrible as we cannot even maintain what we already have.
- ❑ We don't need a dog park. We need to update and clean our exciting parks!

## Strategy

### **Need for Parks Committee:**

- ❑ We believe the Parks Committee is vital to ensure residents know with whom to voice their concerns.
- ❑ The Parks Committee, consisting of multiple people with different viewpoints, is vital to ensure all Birchwood residents are treated equally. Additionally, to ensure residents believe their concerns are heard by people who can do something about it and will make it a priority amongst everything else going on in Birchwood.
- ❑ The Parks Committee will ensure appropriate action or non-action is taken.
- ❑ Making sure the parks and equipment reflect the resident's evolving needs.
- ❑ This means a balancing of traditional resources versus an aging population and/or new families moving into town.
- ❑ Be careful that the people who are affected by decisions made are properly heard and not simply outvoted by others who do not have to face the consequences of the decision.
- ❑ Practices that are environmentally sound.
- ❑ If we have these resources, then let's designate money to maintain for its designated use. I think we should define a designated use for each park and then maintain the park for that objective (e.g. tennis, open space, skateboard, swimming). Not every park can serve multiple uses. Determine the highest and best use that meets citizen interest, and then maintain the park or easement for its use. It may be necessary to contract out maintenance if no volunteers can be found on a regular basis.

### **Preservations:**

- ❑ Preserve natural woodland and wetland where possible.

### **Focus:**

- ❑ Lack of **focus** by previous parks committee. Make Kay Beach/Tighe-Schmitz the **focus** area. Create dog friendly parks and walking paths – poop bag dispensers and allowing dogs **room** to exercise (not the dinky dog parks being proposed).
- ❑ Ongoing upkeep and improvements are necessary. Long term visioning creates focus for effort and expenditures.

### **Maintenance Plan:**

- ❑ A detailed plan for maintaining our parks, easements, and trails exists. John Lund can update the Parks Committee on this plan.
- ❑ The last survey conducted by the Parks Committee showed that Birchwood residents really use and appreciate our parks and open spaces. My main interest in the formation of the Parks Committee years ago was that the parks be maintained.... Park benches painted when need be, invasive species removed, paths maintained. At the time, the parks budget was pretty small. A mistake, I thought, for taking care of one of the aspects that makes Birchwood so special. Birchwood needs to CONSISTENTLY maintain what it has. This has been a problem in the village for a long time.



**Universal Design Elements:**

- ❑ I would also like to really encourage the council/parks committee to incorporate universal design elements in the park so that children and adults of all abilities are able to play together without barriers. Here is a great example of an inclusive playground built in Portland: <http://harpersplayground.org/>

**Invasive Species:**

- ❑ Residents should be encouraged by information and "incentives" to eliminate invasive plants from their properties: e.g. buckthorn and garlic mustard.

**Fiscal Management:**

- ❑ Don't waste my tax money.
- ❑ Keep Birchwood an affordable place to live by keeping spending under control.
- ❑ I appreciate our low taxes, but more \$\$ should be spent on upkeep around town - I don't mind slightly higher taxes or even if it was a fund we could choose to donate to - Say, \$50-\$500 annually for various projects.
- ❑ I would like to see some money allocated toward improving and maintaining the parks and facilities and not just a reliance on volunteer help.
- ❑ If appropriate, hire a maintenance person.
- ❑ Make smart investments that create the most long-term value for the city. Bare minimum investments with mostly volunteer labor are not always the best solution and sometimes create more problems than they solve.
- ❑ It is time to spend money to improve our wonderful amenities, not everything can be done with volunteers.
- ❑ Maintain the parks in a cost-effective fashion.
- ❑ City carrying dock liability insurance now that increased access by all residents.
- ❑ Allow local sports teams to use the Tighe - Schmitz soccer and baseball fields for revenue.
- ❑ Working together collaboratively to obtain funds to actually improve something or adding new equipment.
- ❑ Budget is too sparse.
- ❑ More upkeep necessary.
- ❑ People willing to have taxes increased to cover cost.

**Maintenance Grants:**

- ❑ Make funding available and actively pursue grants to make improvements and maintain existing areas.

**Concerns:**

- ❑ Senior male adult leaning on playground equipment at Tighe-Schmitz park frequently. May be of concern to young families wanting to use the playground.
- ❑ There is old gentleman that many of us have seen around Tighe Schmitz Park. He moved in 50 years ago, when he was 27. Tighe Schmitz wasn't a park and was a nature preserve back then. He was not happy when they started turning it into a public park 45 years ago, and he's been upset about it since. He said it is, "like the projects", as it disturbs his "peace and tranquilly at his house because what we hear (children playing in the background of our conversation) comes right into my house." He does his best to make it uncomfortable for families that use it but we will continue to do so. Unfortunate.
- ❑ There's a creepy guy who lives behind the playground and Tighe Schmitz. Is there any way to send him to adult day care or something? I don't like him near my kid.
- ❑ I do not feel safe in Blomquist Park with my granddaughter. It is extremely isolated. When I talked with two park committee members about this, they mentioned the neighbors like the overgrown brush and shrubs for visual reasons and to keep the noise down. The neighbors purchased their homes knowing the community park was there. We have noise ordinances. Children playing and laughing are some of the most beautiful sounds around. Some of our newer residents didn't even know there was a park by the tennis courts. Additionally, the park clean up found poison ivy on the park. Children might run after a ball and contract poison ivy. That is an issue to consider.
- ❑ No sidewalks or safe way to get between playgrounds/parks. Bigger issue, but we do not currently let our kids go between parks without supervision because of lack of sidewalks - no great way to bike because roads are narrow and cars go fast down Birchwood Avenue now with new stop signs. May have slowed on Hall Avenue, but traffic increased on Birchwood Ave by city hall.
- ❑ Paved walkways would be a significant improvement. Pushing a stroller on any of the paths is an extremely unpleasant experience and they are not handicapped accessible. With no sidewalks and no paved paths, taking an infant or toddler for a walk is not an easy nor safe experience. To walk to the beach park is unsafe.
- ❑ If there is any consideration about replacing equipment in the playground area, my husband has mentioned that he doesn't feel like the swings are safe (he feels the bars are too close to the swing path), and we both feel that the timbers framing the swing area on the ground are too close/not safe. I have witnessed a young girl fall off the swing and narrowly miss hitting her head on the timbers.
- ❑ The city needs to patrol the docks more since now all residents can use them.
- ❑ Traffic. With 5 easements to the lake and the FOOT traffic that creates, auto traffic is a concern. Speed limit signs should be visible (branches trimmed back) and strategically placed. White crosswalk paint continually maintained.
- ❑ Beware of continuous development and addition of facilities that will contribute to light and noise pollution. Preserve as best we can the character of Birchwood.

### **Maintenance - General:**

- ❑ I prefer the parks the way they are: but, they should be ***maintained better***.
- ❑ I'd like to see a regular maintenance schedule established for the parks in general and the park facilities specifically. The tennis courts, for example, should get new nets and pavement patching done on a regular basis, not just on a reactionary basis.
- ❑ Upkeep.
- ❑ Better maintenance. Taking care of what we have.
- ❑ Lack of maintenance. Lack of care, unkempt appearance.
- ❑ Let's keep up/maintain the parks we have.
- ❑ Get rid of the weeds/burrs!
- ❑ Better maintenance please. Fields over grown.
- ❑ Maintenance and upgrades.
- ❑ Better maintenance, tree trimming, weeding, etc.
- ❑ Get rid of weeds at all parks/easements. have a walking path again in TS.
- ❑ Most areas seem to be barely maintained.
- ❑ There are numerous areas where lack of maintenance is an issue.
- ❑ Improve on continuing and ongoing maintenance.
- ❑ We need to preserve or replace what we have to keep our parks looking good.
- ❑ Just maintain the current level of upkeep and development.
- ❑ Long list of repairs and enhancements.
- ❑ General weed control and maintenance.
- ❑ Remove some of the trees that were planted by the park, eventually it will make it difficult to see kids for safety reasons.
- ❑ The parks and natural areas appear neglected. Only very basic maintenance occurs. Weedy areas take over.
- ❑ Maintenance issues. It seems things are done to improve the parks and then they are not maintained. i.e. - the walkway at Tighe Schmitz, the wildflowers and trees planted at Nordling Park, buckthorn removal in other areas that is not done properly so the buckthorn grows back.
- ❑ We must keep parks, easements, and walking paths well maintained.
- ❑ Better maintained. Too much overgrowth especially at the beaches.
- ❑ Maintain removal of Buckthorn and other noxious weeds.
- ❑ Remove buckthorn.
- ❑ Our parks are not kept up! Walking paths are a mess! Steps are full of weeds. Garbage at the parks. Overgrown tennis courts. Playgrounds aren't kept up. Playgrounds need updating. Fields are under water. Hockey rink is never open when it should be. Dog feces always left behind. Dogs re always odd leash. No lights. Overgrown beaches. Docks aren't safe. Baseball field is 90% unusable. Money needs to be spent to update our parks. We cannot depend on volunteers!
- ❑ Clean up so we can use them!!! The soccer field is always underwater, the baseball field is overgrown, the hockey rinks never have attendants and is always closed, the tennis courts have weeds and are uneven, the walking paths are weeding and full of dog feces, the docks are broken....please spend money and clean up the parks and do not depend on volunteers.

### **Maintenance – Walking Paths**

- ❑ Improve walking paths.
- ❑ Upgrade the trails.
- ❑ Trails.
- ❑ More walking trails! Sidewalks would also be nice.
- ❑ Better maintenance on the current walking paths, especially grotto steps.
- ❑ I would like to see the paths woodchipped again.
- ❑ Trails: put down additional wood chips.
- ❑ WALKING PATHS in our town on the roads or at least cleaning the debris off the sides of the roads. Cutting back weeds/trees for safe walking and hiking.
- ❑ I would like to see the walking trails maintained. Right now, it is hard to push a stroller through without the weeds along the trail pulling on the strollers.
- ❑ Walking paths should be woodchipped and brush kept clear for safe walking/biking
- ❑ One is very limited in options for a walk with an infant or toddler without walking or crossing Cedar/Hall. Paved paths would allow everyone access to a safer walking environment. Parents could then walk along quieter streets along the paths.
- ❑ Repair the walking path that we spent money on to put in.
- ❑ Tighe-Schmitz park trail cleaned up.
- ❑ Keep steps from White Pine lane well-trimmed - lots of people push strollers.
- ❑ Maintain bike trails.

**Birch Beach:**

- ❑ Some regulations not being adhered to - golf cart on beach as example.
- ❑ Rain garden not maintained, not pumped out- retaining wall removed. (Can Shifsky pump it out?)

**Hockey Rink/Basketball:**

- ❑ There needs to be someone managing the overall skating rink.
- ❑ The hockey rink needs cement repairs, weeding, & painting to go with the **awesome** warming house! This is the most utilized public spot we have & kids, teens, adults are using it as soon as ice can be made. **Make it your #1 priority!!**
- ❑ Even hockey rink and warming house starting to look dated.
- ❑ Ice house/ice maintained in winter.
- ❑ Keep up the new warming house.
- ❑ We both love the hockey rink and warming house. Really disappointed to hear that it is closed now.
- ❑ Figure skating area is uneven. Hockey skaters dominate the rink.
- ❑ Replace basketball nets at hockey rink.
- ❑ Painted basketball lines and better hoops in the rink.
- ❑ Better basketball backboards in the skating rink for summer (13-year-old).
- ❑ Improving the basketball hoops / courts in the skating rink, possibly painting some court lines.
- ❑ Also, would like to see the basketball court painted with lines and new nets.
- ❑ Basketball hoops fixed up.
- ❑ Better basketball hoops.
- ❑ Ice maintenance.
- ❑ Need to hire a good hockey rink manager. The past 2 years the rink has not been kept up like it has been in past years.
- ❑ The rink is great but might need some repair with boards.
- ❑ The ice rink was not maintained last year and was unusable.
- ❑ Be maintained for use - addition of basketball nets.
- ❑ Updated / replaced basketball backboards at the skating rink at Tighe-Schmitz park would be really nice.
- ❑ No basketball nets in hockey rink for summer use.
- ❑ Please keep an eye on the condition of the cement in the hockey rink as there is cracking which could affect basketball playing.

## Maintenance – Parks

### **General:**

- Our parks are a great asset to our community, but they are not maintained or kept up at all. Each week the grass is mowed and that is all that is done to maintain our parks. All the parks, especially Tighe Schmidt, are full of weeds.
- I like the current parks but they need serious updating.
- Regular maintenance that makes the parks inviting to young families.
- Keeping parks clean, mowed and accessible for all to enjoy.
- Open views of park enhance safety and allow residents to see who is in the park before they round a corner.
- I would love to have fewer weeds in the parks, continue maintain the surfaces so it feels welcoming to young families that continue to visit parks.
- Parks are not being maintained or monitored by staff so that mowing/weed-whacking cleanup occurs.
- General up keep of our parks. I spent about 2 hours weeding the sand around the playground and did not quite finish.
- More and better benches in parks and public spaces.
- Let's make it safe, accessible and with age appropriate equipment for all children.

### **Bloomquist:**

- The Bloomquist cleared area is not very big.
- Swings at Bloomquist.
- Add swings to Bloomquist park.
- Playground doesn't work for toddlers.
- Equipment gets too hot.
- Needs swings for both abled and disabled kids.
- Bloomquist is too private and feels dangerous, woods need thinning.
- Bloomquist park is hidden and people don't know it exists.
- I am disappointed with the limitations and upkeep of our parks. The shrubs around Bloomquist park are overgrown to the point of my being concerned as to what we may come upon when we get there.
- Tennis courts need weeding yearly clean up.
- Creating a better/safer entry into Bloomquist Park (easier for strollers, wagons, wheels) Right now, it's awkward to enter/exit by the Cedar/Birchwood intersection. Traffic isn't aware of the park entrance, so they move fast through there making it unsafe. The crosswalk by Oakridge Drive is a lengthy distance west and pedestrians have to travel on the narrow shoulder next to traffic to reach the park.

### **Nordling:**

- I would like to see more maintenance and care in Nordling Park. This would include the end of Birchwood Ave leading up to the trail, the trail, and the vegetation.
- Despite efforts to control weeds & replant in Nordling Park, it seems to be overgrown.
- Paths need to be re-chipped.
- Mow right of ways for safer walking.
- Add a street light or some sort of lighting in Nordling Park.
- Nordling Park Walkway after a rain can be flooded with water and un-passable.

**Soccer Field:**

- ❑ The soccer nets need replacing.
- ❑ Mow the soccer field.
- ❑ Would like to see the soccer field cleaned up and made more useable.
- ❑ Our girls did not use the soccer field as it was under water most of the summer. Additionally, the walking path is overgrown and needs regular maintenance.

**Ball Field:**

- ❑ Would like to see the baseball area cleaned up and made more useable.
- ❑ Maintenance of the baseball diamond (fencing is falling down & doesn't meet the ground so balls roll under & weeds-gravel are not maintained).
- ❑ The Tighe-S "ball field" has had little use in recent times because of wet conditions and perhaps other reasons. Possible future uses should be evaluated and work done to make the area suitable for those uses.
- ❑ Have the baseball field dragged so kids could use it. Repair the backstop.
- ❑ Weeds on the softball (kickball) field (10-year-old).
- ❑ The Tighe-Schmitz ballfield should either be maintained or demolished.
- ❑ I also think that it would be nice to weed the baseball field and repair the fencing.
- ❑ No bases on baseball field/diamond (we've purchased some and used for practices).
- ❑ Improve/maintain the baseball/backstop would be a bonus.

**Halls Marsh:**

- ❑ My biggest issue is the illegal dumping in the Hall's Marsh. There is a Totem pole in there, cut decorative birch branches non- native perennial plants from people's homes. There looks like someone has cleared out trees from the marsh. There was also asphalt dumped in it last year. There is a lot of garbage that also ends up in it. We need to educate people on the natural benefits of the Hall's Marsh and to respect it and to keep it clean.
- ❑ A 'dock' or something that goes into Hall's Marsh, with some explanation of the geology/plant/animal life there; it wouldn't have to go too far (20-30 feet).

**Playground Equipment**

- ❑ Play structures are old and outdated. New gravel/mulch is needed as well.
- ❑ Park equipment upkeep.
- ❑ Playground equipment is worn / written on / outdated.
- ❑ Maintenance of existing equipment in the parks.
- ❑ Update the playground equipment.
- ❑ The jungle gym and swing set need replacing.
- ❑ Playground needs to be cleaned, repaired, replaced / updated. New sand and gravel needs to be put around playgrounds.
- ❑ We would like better maintenance of the playground area in Tighe-Schmitz park. More sand needed, etc.
- ❑ Removing weeds and vulgar graffiti on Tighe Schmitz playground equipment.
- ❑ "Cleaning up" / improving the playground equipment.
- ❑ If or when the sand is replenished at the playground, our 11-year old thinks it should be finer grain vs. the pebbles.

### **Tighe Schmitz Flooding/Drainage:**

- ❑ Flooding in Tighe-Schmitz park.
- ❑ Natural areas stay the same but Tighe Schmidt needs an uplift. Raise the bog to make useful. Two bonuses: a usable baseball field and a volleyball court would be fun!
- ❑ Flooding of soccer field.
- ❑ Improve water drainage at Tighe-Schmitz park.
- ❑ Drainage – causing mosquitos and making path inaccessible. Fix the drainage and place more gravel in parking and walk paths (gravel, not sand).
- ❑ Need to fill fields so they don't flood.
- ❑ Be able to walk in the park after a rain storm (prevent standing water).
- ❑ I would like to have the water drained from Tighe Schmitz park. People walk down from the White Pine Lane trail, and often when we get to the park, it is swampy.
- ❑ Drainage issues at Tighe-Schmitz.
- ❑ Water saturation of Tighe Schmitz Park areas make it less usable and appealing.
- ❑ Drainage of parks.
- ❑ Repair drainage on soccer fields especially place where walking path ends off Grotto Street.
- ❑ Tighe Schmitz becomes very swampy after a heavy rain.
- ❑ Tighe Schmidt needs to be raised to be usable.
- ❑ Tighe Schmitz park playing field is always so wet! Too wet for a picnic. Too many mosquitos (not much we can do about that one).
- ❑ Tighe Schmitz drainage is an issue; resolving it would make the park more usable.
- ❑ Tighe-Schmitz Park field is often under water and unusable.
- ❑ Drainage issues and weeds.
- ❑ Water/puddles at Tighe. Fields wet for days.
- ❑ Tighe-Schmitz water issues remedied.
- ❑ Standing water in TS park after rainfall.
- ❑ Soccer field is wet for days after a rain (13-year-old and adult)
- ❑ Try to "dry out" soccer field and softball field at Tighe-Schmitz.
- ❑ My biggest complaint would be the flooding with rains. I don't like the kids to play in the fields because they always seem to be muddy.
- ❑ I would like to see Tighe-Schmitz park drain properly so that it is usable in the non-winter months. Kids/adults.
- ❑ The soggy water in the open field. It is not useful for days even with a normal rain fall. Fixing this would be great, our number one!
- ❑ Agree on the soccer field/playground/trails near Tighe-Schmitz being soaked for days after a hard rain. Makes it difficult to play.
- ❑ Grotto to Tighe-Schmitz is often wet.
- ❑ Improve grading and drainage to make Tighe-Schmitz an all-season/all-weather park.
- ❑ How muddy / wet it can be at Tighe-Schmitz. It'd be nice if something could be done to keep this park usable in the wetter seasons!
- ❑ Maintaining and managing water runoff. Providing useable space year-round.
- ❑ Acknowledge Tighe-Schmitz is a natural wetland and restore portions to natural state.