

Brown And Douglas Community Centers In Winston-Salem

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Introduction

The Brown & Douglas Neighborhood Center is not located in Indiana or Loudoun County, as the original proposal states. It is a City of Winston-Salem recreation facility at Piney Grove Park, 4725 Indiana Avenue, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Current city programming includes activities such as yoga, chair exercise, tai chi, chair volleyball, line dancing, walking, games, gardening, and fall-prevention programs. Any proposal for a tennis program or ice-skating facility must therefore begin with the actual location, existing users, park space, climate, city planning process, and community needs. A program should not be justified mainly by the ambition to create a professional team or raise gate revenue. Neighborhood recreation exists first to improve accessible physical activity, social connection, youth development, and quality of life. Competition and earned revenue can support those purposes, but they should not replace them. This revised feasibility analysis recommends a phased, inclusive racquet-sports program connected to Brown & Douglas and evaluates an ice-skating concept more cautiously. The limited information in the original budget does not support constructing a permanent ice rink, which would require far more than equipment purchases. A seasonal partnership or temporary synthetic-rink event would be a more responsible pilot. (City of Winston-Salem, n.d.-a)

Community Needs and Program Philosophy

The philosophy should be “recreation first, development second, competition when appropriate.” Participants may include children trying a sport for the first time, teenagers seeking structured activity, adults interested in fitness, older residents, and people with disabilities. A program designed only for players who can become professionals would exclude most of the neighborhood and create unrealistic expectations. Tennis and related racquet sports can support cardiovascular fitness, coordination, confidence, social interaction, and intergenerational activity. The center already serves many adults and older residents, so scheduling should protect current programs while adding youth and family sessions rather than displacing one group for another. (City of Winston-Salem, n.d.-b)

Community engagement should occur before equipment is purchased. Staff can conduct short surveys, listening sessions, and demonstration days to determine interest, age groups, transportation needs, preferred times, fees, and barriers. Nearby schools, parks, tennis organizations, health providers, and youth groups may become partners. The program should include equipment lending

because requiring every participant to buy a racquet, shoes, and clothing would restrict access. Adaptive equipment, lower nets, smaller courts, foam balls, and beginner formats can make instruction safer and more welcoming. Safeguarding policies, background checks, hydration plans, heat procedures, first-aid capacity, and clear supervision ratios are essential.

Phased Racquet-Sports Proposal

The first phase should be a low-cost pilot rather than immediate creation of a traveling team. The center can offer six- to eight-week beginner clinics using existing or nearby courts, portable nets, and shared equipment. Because the official city program list already includes table tennis at Brown & Douglas, staff can build from an existing racquet-sport culture. Tennis, pickleball, and table tennis can be presented as related options rather than competitors. Qualified instructors should teach movement, grip, stroke mechanics, rules, sportsmanship, and injury prevention. Participation data and feedback can then guide a second phase involving regular leagues, family play, and advanced coaching.

A competitive team should emerge only if enough participants demonstrate sustained interest and skill. Its mission should emphasize development, education, and representation of the community, not winning against “any team.” Players should meet attendance and conduct expectations, and competition should not consume the resources needed for open recreation. Partnerships with established tennis clubs or associations may provide volunteer coaches, used equipment, court access, and tournament opportunities. Transportation and entry fees must be included in the budget. Revenue from modest registration, sponsorship, grants, fundraising events, and merchandise can help, but programs should remain affordable. Gate receipts are unlikely to be a reliable primary source for a new neighborhood team. (National Recreation and Park Association, n.d.)

Budget and Evaluation

The original proposal lists \$50,000 available and an additional \$80,000 needed without explaining construction, staffing, or annual operations. A credible budget separates one-time and recurring costs. One-time expenses may include portable nets, racquets, balls, storage, first-aid supplies, signage, and court improvements. Recurring expenses include instructor pay, insurance, maintenance, background screening, transportation, tournament fees, replacement equipment, marketing, and administration. Capital work on public property requires city approval and may involve accessibility, drainage, lighting, procurement, and environmental review. A responsible proposal should present several cost levels rather than one unsupported total.

Success should be measured through participation, retention, demographic reach, participant satisfaction, physical-activity confidence, safety incidents, and progression into leadership or advanced play. Revenue is a useful sustainability measure but not the main outcome. Staff should

review whether girls, low-income families, older adults, and people with disabilities can participate. If attendance falls, the response should be to examine timing, transportation, instruction quality, and program fit rather than blaming the community.

Evaluating an Ice-Skating Concept

A permanent refrigerated ice rink is a complex capital facility. It requires land, engineering, refrigeration, energy, water, resurfacing equipment, specialized staff, skates in many sizes, insurance, safety barriers, maintenance, and year-round financial planning. The original proposed amount of \$250,000 is unlikely to represent the full cost of construction and operation, and Winston-Salem's climate increases refrigeration demand. The proposal also shifts between Brown & Douglas and the YMCA of Northwest North Carolina without clarifying ownership or responsibility. A city center cannot assume that another organization will host and finance a facility.

A pilot can test demand without committing to permanent construction. The city, YMCA, or a sponsor could organize a limited seasonal event using a temporary synthetic surface or partner with an existing regional rink for transportation and introductory sessions. Participants would need helmets, properly fitted skates, gloves, instruction, supervision, and emergency procedures. The pilot should record attendance, cost per participant, injuries, repeat interest, and willingness to travel. If demand is strong, a regional feasibility study—not a simple equipment list—could evaluate location, market, energy use, accessibility, and public-private financing. This approach protects public funds while still allowing residents to experience the activity.

Governance should be defined before launch. The city would retain responsibility for facility scheduling, safety standards, fee approval, and public accountability, while a partner organization might provide coaching or sponsorship. A written memorandum should identify who hires staff, owns equipment, handles registration data, responds to injuries, and evaluates complaints. Volunteer enthusiasm is valuable but cannot substitute for clear authority. Youth programs should have codes of conduct for coaches, parents, and participants, including procedures for bullying, harassment, and inappropriate contact. Communication should be available through more than one channel so that families without constant internet access are not excluded.

Seasonal planning is also necessary. Outdoor tennis in North Carolina can be disrupted by heat, thunderstorms, and winter weather. Early-morning or evening sessions, shaded rest areas, hydration, air-quality monitoring, and indoor alternatives can improve continuity. The program can use bad-weather days for rules, strategy, fitness, equipment care, and leadership workshops. Older adults may prefer slower-paced clinics or pickleball, while teenagers may respond to music, short-format competition, and opportunities to coach younger children. A single program name can contain several pathways without forcing every participant toward tournament play.

Long-term sustainability depends on staff capacity. If an initial grant purchases equipment but no

operating funds support instruction and maintenance, the program may disappear after one season. A three-year plan should estimate replacement cycles, wages, storage, court repairs, transportation, and administrative time. It should identify which costs remain public, which can be supported by sponsors, and which fees are affordable. Scholarships should be automatic and discreet rather than requiring families to prove hardship publicly. Transparent annual reporting can show residents how funds were used and whether promised outcomes were achieved.

Marketing should be local and relational rather than expensive. Schools, neighborhood associations, libraries, faith communities, health clinics, and existing center classes can share registration information. Demonstration events can let residents try equipment before committing. Photos and participant stories may support fundraising only with informed permission, especially for minors. Publicity should not portray the neighborhood as deficient and in need of rescue; it should present residents as partners whose interests and knowledge shape the program.

The program should also coordinate with transit and safe walking routes because a free activity is not accessible when participants cannot reach it. Evening sessions require lighting, secure pickup procedures, and clear closing times.

Accessibility must be reviewed throughout implementation, not added after launch.

Annual evaluation should be shared publicly in plain language and should include resident feedback, participation trends, safety results, scholarship use, and recommendations for the following season. This closes the planning cycle and gives the neighborhood a meaningful role in deciding whether the program should expand, change, or end.

Conclusion

Brown & Douglas Neighborhood Center can strengthen community recreation through a phased racquet-sports program grounded in actual local needs. The proposal should begin with inclusive clinics, shared equipment, qualified instruction, partnerships, and evaluation before forming a competitive team. Its mission should prioritize health, belonging, youth development, and lifelong participation rather than professional success or gate revenue. A permanent ice rink is not supported by the original evidence or budget, but a seasonal partnership or temporary pilot could test interest responsibly. Accurate location, realistic costs, accessibility, safety, and community voice transform the original idea from an optimistic equipment list into a defensible public recreation plan.

References

City of Winston-Salem. (n.d.-a). *Recreation centers*.

City of Winston-Salem. (n.d.-b). *Recreation center programs*.

National Recreation and Park Association. (n.d.). *Youth sports and recreation resources*.