

Resilient Communities Project–City of Minnetonka 2012–2013 Partnership

The mission of the Resilient Communities Project is to connect communities in Minnesota with the wide-ranging expertise of University of Minnesota faculty and students to address pressing local issues in ways that advance sustainability and resilience.



During the 2012–2013 academic year, RCP partnered with the City of Minnetonka, a fully developed suburb in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, on 14 community-identified projects. These projects were matched with 25 courses spanning 12 departments across 8 academic colleges at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus, engaging more than 200 students.

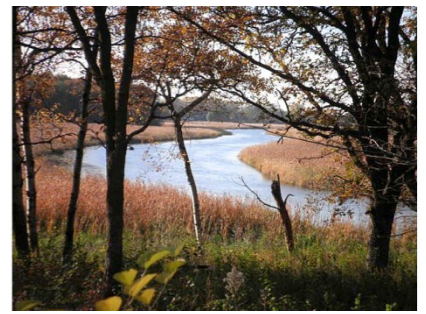
Housing

Density and Housing Options Study	Identified existing policies that inhibit affordable and mid-priced housing, as well as strategies to encourage a more diverse range of housing options
Housing and Aging in Place	Investigated opportunities to help residents age in place through a broader range of housing options, more compact urban design, better transportation options, and improved access to social services and other assistance
Mid-Priced Housing Market Analysis	Conducted a GIS analysis to determine where residential “market leakage” to other communities is occurring for mid-priced housing that appeals to empty-nesters looking to downsize or young families who desire move-up housing
Housing Program Evaluation	Evaluated an existing housing rehabilitation program for low- to medium-income residents to determine why the program is underused, and provided recommendations to improve program promotion, administration, and logistics

Environment

Storm Water and Illicit Discharge Regulation	Conducted an audit of storm water discharge ordinances, and provided recommendations for strengthening regulations and streamlining permitting process
Water Management at Ridgedale Mall	Analyzed Ridgedale Mall redevelopment site and identified specific interventions for reducing storm water runoff and surface water pollution
Water and Energy Conservation	Developed education and outreach strategies to assist businesses in the community to address water and energy conservation through operations and site management
Water Resources Prioritization Plan	Modeled leaf litter nutrient inputs and nutrient and chloride surface transport within four priority watersheds, and developed a prioritization plan to guide future investments to preserve and restore water quality
Green Roofs and Rooftop Gardens	Conducted an ethnographic analysis to understand perceptions among residents, developers, and community about green roofs, and recommended innovative best practices for implementing green roofs in a northern climate and suburban context





Civic Engagement	
Neighborhood Identities and Resident Engagement	Recommended strategies for strengthening social ties and community by augmenting existing social networks among residents rather than pursuing creation of geographically-defined neighborhood associations
Land Use and Development	
Post-Development Critique	Revisited three controversial past developments to evaluate project outcomes, and recommended strategies to improve the public input process to ensure the needs and concerns of both developers and residents are being considered
Conservation Development Standards	Created a conservation development scorecard to encourage sustainable developments that protect natural environmental features, preserve open space, protect natural habitats for wildlife, and maintain rural character
Parking and Land Use	Reviewed existing parking regulations, computed average parking demand, and recommended innovative parking management strategies to reduce excess parking
Transportation	
* Transportation Demand Management Policy	Reviewed TDM ordinances and best practices in comparable suburban communities nationwide and recommended an innovative two-phase TDM policy to reduce peak-hour demand
Transit-Oriented Development on the Southwest Light-Rail Transit Line	Developed detailed policy-oriented case studies of TOD districts in similar cities, recommended model districts for proposed future station areas and transit hubs in Minnetonka, and recommended guidelines for the city's financial and policy role in future redevelopment projects in these locations

* Received the annual "Best Student Project" award from the Minnesota chapter of the American Planning Association

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Resilient Communities Project

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Resilient Communities Project—City of North St. Paul 2013–2014 Partnership

The mission of the Resilient Communities Project is to connect communities in Minnesota with the wide-ranging expertise of University of Minnesota faculty and students to address pressing local issues in ways that advance sustainability and resilience.



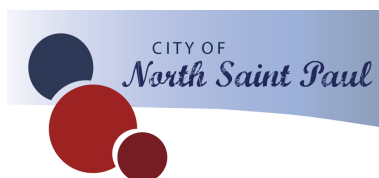
During the 2013–2014 academic year, RCP partnered with the City of North St. Paul, a first-ring suburb in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, on 16 community-identified projects. These projects were matched with 34 courses spanning 17 departments across 11 academic colleges at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus, engaging more than 300 students.

Housing, Land Use, and Community Development

Live/Work Housing	Evaluated potential of live/work housing to enhance livability, promote economic development, and increase housing density
Downtown Revitalization Strategies	Analyzed parking needs, conducted a market analysis for the downtown area, and offered recommendations for strategies to revitalize North St. Paul's downtown business district
Redevelopment-Ready Community	Designed an evaluation program to assess the city's current development review process and regulations based on input from developers, investors, business owners, commercial real estate brokers, and lending institutions
Housing Conservation and Aging in Place	Evaluated existing housing and community design characteristics, and made recommendations for regulations, public investments, and local policies to upgrade existing housing stock and support aging in place

Environment

Green Energy Initiative	Investigated regulatory changes and incentives to support green energy initiatives, community-based energy development, distributed generation systems, district energy approaches, and net-zero-carbon development
Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan	Provided an inventory of trees in North St. Paul, conducted a cost-benefit analysis to develop recommendations for managing EAB in the city, and developed a protocol for how to gain community support for the management plan and communicate the risks of EAB to homeowners
Conservation Improvement Projects	Designed an evaluation plan to assess existing conservation and energy efficiency programs, including whether the programs are being effectively marketed, and whether incentives being offered are consistent with homeowners' or business owners' needs and interests related to conservation and energy efficiency
Environmental Education Initiative	Developed recommendations for a long-range operations and management plan for the Southwood Park nature reserve, as well as educational programming for residents and users of the park
Storm Water Management	Investigated cost-effective solutions to remediate local flooding issues and reduce total suspended solids and phosphorus load to local and downstream lakes





Civic Engagement

Engaging Underrepresented Groups	Developed an engagement strategy for unengaged or underrepresented populations in the city, including a process for getting residents engaged in neighborhood and community issues
Civic Engagement and Communication	Conducted an assessment of the city's current communications efforts and future needs, and provided recommendations for how to better engage residents in their local government and community
Public Art Plan	Designed a participation process for developing a public art plan, including a strategy for facilitating long-term community engagement around public art and ideas for how to reengage the city's existing but inactive arts council

Administration and Marketing

Staff Satisfaction and Staff Development	Designed an evaluation program to assess staff satisfaction, including what staff want or need in their day-to-day work environment, as well as what incentives or educational opportunities would encourage them to continue working at the city; developed recommendations for improving staff morale and fostering staff development.
Community Branding	Created design alternatives for a new graphic identity that the City can use for signs, business forms and marketing materials, communications media (website, Facebook account, newsletter), and other materials

Land Use and Transportation

Community Gardening Planning	Designed a community engagement process for developing a community gardening policy and identifying key garden site opportunities in the community; documented best practices related to fostering and supporting community gardening
Living Streets and Capital Improvements	Documented the benefits of a living streets approach to strengthen the case to residents for street improvements; developed a visual preference survey and living streets model to better engage residents around street reconstruction projects

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Resilient Communities Project–City of Rosemount 2014–2015 Partnership

The mission of the Resilient Communities Project is to connect communities in Minnesota with the wide-ranging expertise of University of Minnesota faculty and students to address pressing local issues in ways that advance sustainability and resilience.



During the 2014–2015 academic year, RCP partnered with the City of Rosemount, a developing outer-ring suburb in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, on 30 community-identified projects. These projects were matched with 45 courses spanning 16 departments across 10 colleges at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and Duluth campuses, engaging more than 400 students in applied, real-world projects.

Housing and Community

Private Student Housing for DCTC	Investigated options for private housing for Dakota County Technical College students to reduce commuting
Neighborhood Cohesion	Identified strategies to support healthy neighborhood cohesion among residents, as well as integration of neighborhoods into the larger Rosemount community
Homeowner Association Collaboration	Identified opportunities for collaboration and partnership with homeowners associations to provide public benefit and improved services
Community Gathering Spaces	Investigated the characteristics of place-making in a suburban setting and opportunities for community place-making through redesign or redevelopment

Civic Engagement and Community Relations

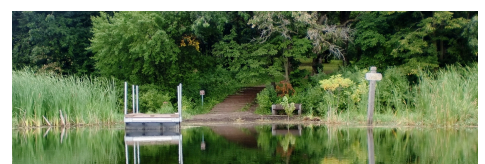
Communications Methods	Identified methods of information dissemination most effective for communicating with underserved or hard-to-reach populations such as youth, seniors, and non-native residents
Resident Participation in Parks and Recreation Capital Planning	Identified strategies for better-publicizing existing parks and recreation amenities and engaging residents in future capital planning for these services
Cultural Integration	Inventoried, evaluated, and identified gaps in services and programs geared toward new immigrant groups in Rosemount

Human Wellness

Safe Youth Driving Behavior	Investigated successful programs and partnerships to reduce teen traffic accident risks
Healthy and Safe Youth Behavior	Conducted a program inventory, evaluation, and gap analysis of mental health services and substance education and prevention programs that serve youth
Employee Wellness Programming	Assessed work- and home-related stressors for Rosemount city employees, and provided recommendations for improved employee wellness

Administration and Public Works

Daytime Staffing at Fire Department	Developed recommendations to increase the amount of on-call volunteer firefighters available during daytime hours
Athletic Stadium Turf Options	Analyzed the lifecycle costs of using synthetic turf versus natural turf grass on public athletic fields
Turf Management and Landscaping	Identified strategies to reduce long-term turf and landscaping inputs and maintenance costs
Alternative Sources of Energy	Assessed and made recommendations for use of alternative energy sources to power municipal facilities, such as solar, wind, and geothermal



Parks and Recreation	
Recreational Programming for Children's Interaction with Nature	Assessed park and recreation systems to identify opportunities to introduce nature-based recreation and play for children
Recreational Opportunities for Underserved Populations	Evaluated how well current recreational offerings meet the needs of people with disabilities, seniors, and new immigrants and recommended improvements to better serve these groups
Community Gardens	Assessed existing community gardening program and recommended programmatic changes to improve gardeners' success, reduce administrative burden on staff, and balance use of public spaces for gardening against other recreational uses and needs
Environment	
Climate Adaptation	Identified potential local impacts of climate change, as well as strategies to reduce the community's vulnerability to these impacts
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Study	Identified strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the municipal and individual business and household levels
Storm Water Management	Identified opportunities and design strategies for storm water infiltration that balance aesthetics and functionality, reduce long-term maintenance costs, manage winter snow melt, and provide opportunities for other passive uses
Water Reuse and Conservation	Investigated the feasibility of reusing storm water and treated effluent for irrigation on public and private property
Oak Savannah and Riverfront Restoration	Evaluated existing restoration activities in the Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor and recommended an overall restoration strategy to coordinate these efforts and incorporate public access opportunities
Park Restoration and Environmental Education	Created a plan to manage buckthorn and emerald ash borer in City parks and use this opportunity to educate residents about the ecosystem service value of management and restoration
Land Use and Transportation	
Urban Agriculture	Explored opportunities to capitalize on the existing local agricultural economy in Rosemount by supporting locally grown food, agritourism, and value-added agricultural products
Non-Motorized Transportation Assessment	Designed an evaluation plan to assess the impact of non-motorized transportation plans and investments in Rosemount
Travel Shed Analysis	Conducted a travel shed analysis of where Rosemount residents and employees work and live to inform future transit and transportation planning
Economic Development	
Analysis of Dakota County Business Clusters	Analyzed business clusters in dakota county to identify opportunities for rosemount to capitalize on existing and emerging clusters
Eco-Green Business Park	Explored opportunities for attracting green businesses and encouraging adoption of green building/manufacturing standards for a future green business park
Economic Development Website	Evaluated rosemount's existing economic development website and recommended improvements to better meet the needs of developers and the business community

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