The Resilient Communities Project–Carver County Partnership

2016 Upper Midwest Regional/APA Minnesota Planners Conference

September 29, 2016

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Director, Resilient Communities Project
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)
University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Photos by Carissa Slotterback, Mike Greco, and Steve Schneider
What Is RCP?
Mike Greco, Resilient Communities Project, University of Minnesota

Overview of RCP-Carver County Partnership
Transportation Planning and Design Projects
Nate Kabat, City of Chaska (formerly Carver County)

Parks Planning and Community Engagement Project
Sam Pertz, Carver County Parks
What Is RCP?

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

Building Community-University Partnerships for Sustainability
What Is RCP?

Connects existing courses at the University of Minnesota
...taught in their existing ways
...by existing faculty
...to a single city/county
...over an academic year
...to work on sustainability-related projects
...identified by city/county staff
How Does the Model Work?

Partner competitively selected (RFP) + contributes financially
City/County defines 15–30 projects + identifies project leads
RCP matches each project with one or more U of MN courses
Project leads, faculty, and RCP staff collaboratively:
  — clarify and scope projects
  — identify and engage community partners and stakeholders
Students complete projects as part of regular coursework
Students deliver final presentations + work products to city/county
Why the Model Works

Projects are part of city work-plan
Grassroots matchmaking (city staff + faculty)
Participation is opt-in
Multiple students/teams in each class
Frequent communication
Engagement with local residents, businesses, organizations (creates buy-in)
Everyone has ‘skin in the game’ (financial, political)
RCP: The First Four Years

4 communities
- Minnetonka
- North St. Paul
- Rosemount
- Carver County

88 locally identified projects

141 U of MN courses

39 departments

11 academic colleges

1300+ students

- Carlson School of Management
- College of Continuing Education
- College of Design
- College of Education & Human Development
- College of Food, Agriculture, & Natural Resource Sciences
- College of Liberal Arts
- College of Science & Engineering
- Humphrey School of Public Affairs
- Law School
- School of Public Health
- UMD—College of Education & Human Service Professions
Partner Community
Access to faculty + 1000s of hours of student time
Student knowledge, creativity, and energy
Multidisciplinary perspective on issues
Groundwork for engaging consultants

Faculty
Efficient access to high-quality community-based projects
Recognition/visibility for community-engaged teaching
Feedback loop between research and practice

Students
Well-organized + meaningful community-based projects
“Real world” experience related to sustainability and resilience
Professional networking opportunities

Shared benefits
Enhanced long-term capacity

Ongoing relationships

Visibility for local sustainability efforts

Best practices, tools, and cases for other communities

Broader benefits
Resilient Communities Project

Carver County

7 Community Partners

30 Projects

50+ Courses

100s of Students

Nate Kabat, AICP, Assistant City Administrator, City of Chaska
About the Partnership

Cities of Chaska, Victoria, Watertown
SouthWest Transit
Carver County CDA
Eastern Carver County School District
County Departments

- Planning & Water Management/WMO
- Historical Society
- Public Health
- Parks
- Land Management

Funding Partners:

- Social Services
- Administration
- Facilities
- GIS
- Public Works
Projects

32 projects pursued

Topic areas:

• Environmental Stewardship
• Housing Opportunity
• Alternative Transportation
• Human Services

• Community Engagement & Education
• Building Community Identity
• Effective Administration
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<th>Carver County Projects</th>
<th>Partner Projects</th>
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<td>Alternative Energy Development and Regulation</td>
<td>Chaska Solar Fields</td>
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<td>County Facility Energy Performance</td>
<td>Chaska Municipal Services Building Expansion</td>
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<td>Storm Water Reuse Practices</td>
<td>Safe Routes to School</td>
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<td>Watertown Whitewater Park</td>
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<td>Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic Count Program</td>
<td>Victoria Firefighter Recruitment, Retention + Staffing</td>
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<td>School-Based Mental Health Programming</td>
<td>Trail Wayfinding Signage Plan</td>
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<td>Childhood Maltreatment</td>
<td>Eco-Tourism Marketing Plan</td>
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<td>Manufactured Home Park Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Victoria Water Conservation + Education Program</td>
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<td>Ex-Offender Employment Infrastructure</td>
<td>Implementation of GIS Tools</td>
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<td>Trauma-Informed Economic Assistance</td>
<td>Field Turf Maintenance Practices</td>
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<td>Downtown Quality</td>
<td>Watertown Residential Marketing</td>
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<td>Latino Community Engagement Exploration</td>
<td>Assessing Adult Learner Needs</td>
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<td>School Readiness and Early Childhood Programs</td>
<td>Carver County CDA Branding</td>
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<td>Measuring Innovation</td>
<td>Affordable Rent and Owner-Occupied Housing</td>
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<td>Aquatic Invasive Species Program Evaluation</td>
<td>Housing Improvement</td>
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<td>Community Land Trusts</td>
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<td>Historic Andrew Peterson Farmstead</td>
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<td>Park &amp; Ride Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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# Courses

## U of MN Departments

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<th>Housing Studies</th>
<th>Architecture</th>
<th>Maternal &amp; Child Health</th>
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<td>Civil, Environmental, &amp; Geo-</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Public Health Administration &amp; Policy</td>
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<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>Horticulture</td>
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<td>Graphic Design</td>
<td>Organizational Leadership, Policy &amp; Development</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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<td>Law</td>
<td>Landscape Architecture</td>
<td>Geographic Information Systems</td>
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<td>Journalism</td>
<td>Urban &amp; Regional Planning</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>German, Dutch &amp; Scandinavian</td>
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<td>Forest &amp; Natural Resources Management</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
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<td>Bioproducts &amp; Biosystems Engineering</td>
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**Project: SRTS**

**Project Goal:** Evaluate the Chaska Community Center and School District 112 middle and elementary school complex, located at Highway 41 and Engler Boulevard, to recommend improvements that would enhance bike and pedestrian access to the area and circulation within the complex.

**CEGE 3201:** Introduction to Transportation Engineering
Instructor: Dr. David Levinson

**ARCH 3250:** Community Design Practice
Instructor: James Wheeler
Project: SRTS

CEGE 3201 | ARCH 3250

Students identified and confirmed numerous concerns:

• Hazardous pedestrian/bicycle conditions along CSAH 10 and SH 41
• High traffic volumes and speeds at the intersection
• Gaps in the sidewalk and trail network along CSAH 10 and surrounding neighborhoods.
• Onsite circulation challenges for vehicles and pedestrians
• Morning and afternoon pick-up/drop-off
Multiple recommendations to help staff think in new ways

- Raised Crosswalks
- Porkchop v. Sharp Right Turns

Think beyond engineering
Project: Park & Ride Bike and Ped Facilities LA 8554

**Project Goal:** Inventory the current pedestrian and bicycle environment at SouthWest Transit park-and-ride facilities, identify options for improvements, and prioritize improvements for implementation.

**LA 8554: Project Programming (Master of L.Arch. capstone)**
Student: Sarah Sularz
Advisor: Joe Favour
Project: Park & Ride Bike and Ped Facilities  LA 8554

Key Issues Identified:
• Disconnected sidewalks
• Hidden entrances
• Underutilized parking structure
• Uncontrolled intersections

Recommendations:
• Entry point signage
• Outdoor bicycle parking stalls
• Bike lockers/Bike Corral
• Seating & shading
• Development to increase mixed uses
• Community space (ie. outdoor market)
Project: Park & Ride Bike and Ped Facilities  LA 8554

Reimagined SouthWest Station and surroundings
What does RCP provide?

- Improved relationships
- Project recommendations
- New approaches and ideas
- Heightened staff engagement
- Permission to explore
Contact Me

Nate Kabat, AICP
Assistant City Administrator | City of Chaska
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Overview:

- CC Park Objectives
- Assistance from RCP
- Utilization of Information/Products
- Benefits to Agency/RCP Partnership
CC Parks Objectives:

Carver County Growing in Diversity

- Enhance Engagement with Diverse Populations
  - Better informed planning documents
  - Greater understanding of barriers
  - P&OS Design & development desires by underrepresented groups
  - Adaptation of park services
    - Facilities
    - Recreation Services
    - General Amenities
  - Comply with Met. Council requirements
    - Funding
    - Planning
CC Parks Objectives:

- Current/Upcoming Public Processes
  - 2040 Comp Plan
  - Waconia Regional Park Master Plan
  - Future Park System Development
Capstone Project – 5 Master Students
- Entire Spring Semester
- Graduation Requirement
- Assembly of “Increasing Engagement Guide”
- Presentation of Findings & Guide
  - Staff & Carver County Parks Commission
In-depth Thinking & Concentrated Effort

Framework to Best Practices

Tools for Success
- Relative & Realistic
- Local and Regional Research
- Conversations with Practitioners in Field

Sustainable Model
- Continued Equity with Groups
Benefits to Agency/RCP Partnership:

Win–win!

Agency:
- Concentrated Effort
- Quality Work – often times otherwise Consulted
- RCP/Edu. Agency – Sizeable Resource
- Fresh Ideas & Approach
- Excitement!
- Potential Future Employees

Students:
- Fulfill School Requirements
  - Real Experience within area of Study/Career Path
- Skill Development with the Professional World
  - Materials, Communications, Expectations, Deadlines, Meetings etc.
- Real Life Test of Knowledge
- Networking with Professionals
Questions?

Resilient Communities Project

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