1. Stormwater Management and Illicit Discharge Management
This project will involve an audit of City of Minnetonka ordinances related to stormwater discharge in the context of local watershed, State of Minnesota, and federal regulations, and recommend changes to the City’s regulations based on this analysis. Goals of the project include identifying specific illicit discharge and other stormwater issues to reduce surface water pollution, strengthening and integrating existing City stormwater management regulations, and streamlining the stormwater permitting process for projects to create a one-stop-permit that satisfies both City and watershed district requirements. The project will also include analysis of stormwater management options and best practices as they relate to the Ridgedale Mall, which presents unique stormwater issues.

2. Parking Regulations
The city’s zoning ordinance currently provides minimum parking standards for land uses. This approach has resulted in an excess of parking in some areas of the city. The city is interested in updating our parking regulations to (1) establish parking requirements based on average parking demand, not maximum parking demand; (2) provide more flexibility through use of shared parking; and (3) establish a maximum parking requirement.

3. Transportation Demand Management Policy
In the past, Minnetonka has required larger developments to create a transportation demand management (TDM) plan to decrease peak-hour demand on the road network. TDM plans are currently required in the I-394 corridor, but are not required by ordinance in other areas of the city. This project would evaluate the city's existing TDM ordinance requirements; review TDM ordinances, strategies, and best practices in comparable communities nationwide; establish a TDM policy for roadways throughout the city of Minnetonka; and suggest strategies or approaches for evaluating the success of existing and future TDM plans in reducing peak-hour demand.

4. Density and Housing Options Study
This project will examine the relationship between density and housing types in Minnetonka. The City would like to learn what approaches other communities have taken to provide a more diverse range of housing options for residents, with housing of various types, sizes, price points, and densities. Students will research local and national case studies of similar cities that document strategies used to provide a more diverse range of housing for aging residents, young families, and recent immigrants; analyze residential “market leakage” into neighboring communities such as Plymouth or Eden Prairie; and research and evaluate various alternatives to smaller-lot and new methods of subdivision.

5. Transit-Oriented Zoning District
Minnetonka is beginning station-area planning efforts for two proposed stations along the Southwest Light-Rail Transit Line (the Shady Oak and Opus Stations), as well as a sector study of transit service in the community. The city is interested in developing transit-oriented zoning district models for the major station areas and future transit hubs. Students will research case studies of TOD districts in similar cities; recommend model districts for station areas and transit hubs in Minnetonka, including appropriate transportation connections, land-use mixes, and parking requirements; and recommend guidelines for the city’s role in future redevelopment projects in these locations.
6. Redevelopment White Paper
The Minnetonka comprehensive plan focuses on future redevelopment in the city’s commercial village centers. The city is interested in establishing a new policy that articulates and guides the city’s role in future redevelopment projects. Students will research existing policies in other cities regarding how and when they assist with redevelopment, as well as national examples of successful public-private redevelopment partnerships that might inform creation of such a policy in Minnetonka.

7. Mid-Priced Housing Study
According to a recent Opportunity Cities study of Minnetonka conducted by the Urban Land Institute/Regional Council of Mayors (ULI/RCM), Minnetonka does well meeting its regional affordable housing targets and has an adequate supply of higher end housing. However, the city also has an aging housing stock and a lack of mid-priced housing that might appeal to empty-nesters looking to downsize or young families and professionals interested in move-up housing. The City would like to better understand the market for mid-priced housing in Minnetonka, and learn what approaches other comparable cities have taken to increase the amount of mid-priced housing in their communities.

8. Water and Energy Conservation and Surface Water Protection Program
Many businesses and industries in Minnetonka use and discharge a significant amount of water and use large amounts of energy as part of their operations. This project will develop an education and training program to assist businesses in the community to address water and energy conservation and surface water protection through their operations and site management. To inform development of the program, students will develop a case study based on collaboration with a Minnetonka-based company, including a cost analysis to assess the potential impact of pollution prevention strategies on the company’s bottom line.

9. Post Development Critique
The Minnetonka Planning Division routinely works with developers, and reviews and manages development projects in the community, some of which are initially contentious with neighbors who live nearby. Objections to the projects range from concerns about density and traffic to potential negative impacts on natural resources or community character. This project would revisit three past developments—the Glen Lake Redevelopment Project, the Crest Ridge Corporate Center, and the Goodwill Industries Development—that were contentious at the time the projects were under review to determine, several years after development, if community goals were met and neighborhood concerns were addressed, as well as if the developments remain controversial.

10. Water Resources Prioritization Plan
The City of Minnetonka contains a large number of lakes, creeks, and wetlands. However, the city has only limited financial resources to support preservation and restoration projects. The city would like assistance determining how financial resources should best be allocated to preserve high-quality water resources and restore high-priority impaired waters. This project will develop a prioritization plan to guide such investment.

11. Village Center Connections
Minnetonka’s comprehensive plan focuses redevelopment efforts in the city’s thirteen commercial village centers and encourages well-planned mixed uses as these areas redevelop. This project would consider how the village centers can be integrated into surrounding neighborhoods, most of which are zoned for residential uses. The project could include one or more of the following: (1) explore evidence-based route selection for trail connections that improve mobility and link village centers to each other
and to surrounding neighborhoods; (2) identify appropriate land uses for redevelopment of transitional areas between village centers and residential areas; (3) recommend buffering standards or regulations to reduce potential nuisance issues resulting from incompatible or conflicting land uses.

12. Conservation Development Standards
Conservation development approaches encourage sustainable development techniques that protect natural environmental features, preserve open space, protect natural habitats for wildlife, and maintain rural character. This project will examine the City of Minnetonka’s conservation development scorecard to assess its effectiveness in evaluating previous and proposed conservation developments. Student work will focus on whether the scorecard is influential in encouraging conservation strategies as part of development projects, and make recommendations of additional strategies and practices that could be advanced in a revised version of the scorecard.

13. Neighborhood Identities Project
Minnetonka has many neighborhoods with unique identities. However, neighborhood representation varies widely—from a few formal neighborhood organizations to numerous informal associations and, in many cases, no organizational representation at all. Residents would benefit from the creation of distinct neighborhood identities and formal neighborhood associations in three ways: more formal representation of their interests and concerns in future small area planning; a greater sense of place fostered by identification with their own geographic neighborhood; and a stronger sense of community fostered by more frequent socializing and interaction with neighbors. This project will survey existing neighborhood associations in Minnetonka to help the city understand what they do and how they function, as well as research local and national models for fashioning neighborhood identities and facilitating the creation of neighborhood organizations.

14. Rooftop Gardens
The City of Minnetonka has been reluctant to allow rooftop gardens on residential and commercial developments. Natural resources staff are interested in the policies, approaches, and best practices other communities have adopted with regard to this issue, regulatory barriers (such as state building codes, ADA requirements, etc.) to rooftop gardening, practical information about the pros and cons of allowing rooftop gardens, and an inventory of existing buildings in the city that are conducive to rooftop gardening.