consider the effectiveness of—and the future of—the blogosphere for creating neighborhood (or community) identities within your city. For example, Seattle’s umbrella organization of blog ownership, Next Door Media, has amassed such a large audience that its numbers have recently surpassed those of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Instead of independent companies, would it be plausible to envision a future in which city government is providing resources for neighborhood blogs? If a blog is out of the question, what about other platforms such as Facebook or Meetup.com? Such platforms wouldn’t happen overnight, though something like a 3-year or even 5-year timeline would be reasonable.

2. Consider the traditional definition of “neighborhoods” and think about how they’ll be defined in the future. No longer might they be considered flat, two-dimensional areas on maps, but rather areas that connect people by a common activity. Will neighborhoods of the future be as place-based? Or virtual? Or some form of hybrid? Future iterations of this project should tackle these questions.

3. Listen to your communities. We found residents to be primarily indifferent to the creation of formal neighborhoods. We did, however, discover needs for connection among members of the community, and offered suggestions for connecting residents online, with each other and also on a deeper level with the city.

4. The city of Seattle has 22+ successful neighborhood blogs. Statistical analysis determines 4 of the city’s neighborhoods, with regard to size, could fit in Minnetonka.

5. We created a visual to explore the idea of “neighborhoods” as connected, fluid, crowd-sourced, and as spaces that could be distinguished by means that grow organically out of an area’s character and history—perhaps without labels.

6. We discussed creating a new definition for neighborhoods brought on by a shift in thinking, inspired by the prevalence of social media networks, toward communities, which can be borderless and connects people by common interests.

COMMUNITY AND GEOGRAPHY

We initially conducted research via case studies, ethnographic visits, map analysis, and attendance at a city open house.

We gathered data by conducting interviews in-person with Minnetonka residents, with select organizations, in an electronically distributed survey, and with Patrick Nolan, Sherwood Forest Association president.

We documented areas of engagement and disengagement.

We discussed creating a new definition for neighborhoods brought on by a shift in thinking, inspired by the prevalence of social media networks, toward communities, which can be borderless and connects people by common interests.

The city of Seattle has 22+ successful neighborhood blogs. Statistical analysis determines 4 of the city’s neighborhoods, with regard to size, could fit in Minnetonka.

This project was completed as part of PA 8202: Neighborhood Revitalization, a course at the University of Minnesota, with support from the Resilient Communities Project (RCP). RCP is an initiative of the Sustainability Faculty Network at the University of Minnesota, with funding and administrative support provided by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) and the Institute on the Environment (IonE). To learn more, visit rcp.umn.edu.