

University enters into new partnership for community sustainability *Humphrey School faculty member at the lead*

► **The City of Minnetonka and the** University of Minnesota will partner on the Resilient Communities Project (RCP), an initiative that will bring the expertise of hundreds of graduate students and faculty members to tackle sustainability-related projects identified by this community partner.

RCP faculty director, Humphrey School of Public Affairs associate professor **Carissa Schively Slotterback**, notes, “We are excited to advance an innovative and collaborative model of sustainability education that can build long-term capacity in the partner community, create new opportunities for engaged teaching for faculty members, and train the next generation of students to address the challenges of building sustainable and resilient communities.”

The partnership is the first of many anticipated in the years to come. Each academic year, RCP will choose a partner city through a competitive request-

for-proposal process. University courses will be matched with projects based on community-identified sustainability issues and needs. This fall, students and faculty members from 11 University courses began addressing Minnetonka’s sustainability needs, as well as helping the city to create a strategy to evaluate and monitor ongoing sustainability efforts.

Master of Urban and Regional Planning students will work with other graduate students across the University—in such departments as architecture, law, bioproducts and biosystems engineering, and natural resources science and management—to gain experience tackling real-world issues. Minnetonka (and future communities) will gain expertise from seven colleges at the University to address a wide array of projects, such as storm water management and illicit discharge regulation, density and housing options, water and energy conservation,

surface water projection, prioritization of water resources, and conservation development standards.

“The Resilient Communities Project is an excellent opportunity to partner with the University of Minnesota in completing some of the many projects that the city council and staff have identified as important to maintaining Minnetonka’s quality of life now and into the future,” says Geralyn Barone, Minnetonka city manager. “We look forward to seeing the results of the project and hope it will provide students with a valuable learning experience.”

RCP is an initiative of the Sustainability Faculty Network. Schively Slotterback helped to form the network in 2010 with funding from the University’s Graduate School. The group convenes more than 60 faculty members from across campus to enhance graduate education opportunities on sustainability issues. ■

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- The bridging of disciplines across the University and larger community to advance public affairs scholarship; and
- Public engagement and scholarship to address important issues and to solve problems facing Minnesota, the nation, and the world in a non-partisan setting.

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