

U of M Planning Students Help Advance Resilience in Rosemount

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During 2014-2015 school year, students in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program at the University of Minnesota have had the opportunity to engage in a variety of sustainability and resilience-related projects in the City of Rosemount. The City is currently partnering with the University of Minnesota through the Resilient Communities Project (RCP). The RCP program facilitates year-long partnerships with Minnesota communities to address the growing interest in finding sustainability solutions to issues facing our communities.

RCP chooses its partner community through a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process. RCP then serves as a central “matchmaker,” connecting the partner community’s projects to existing courses at the U of M. In its first three years, RCP has partnered with three communities on over 50 projects, with over 60 course matches in dozens of academic departments in 11 colleges on the Twin Cities and Duluth campuses of the U of M. RCP has provided opportunities for community-based sustainability education for over 500 students.

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Among those students engaging with the partner communities are urban planning graduate students. They have had the opportunity to work on a number of projects that have offered deep insights into the challenges and opportunities of sustainability at the community scale. In addition, students have gained important “real world” planning experience that will serve them well as they move into the urban planning practice. Here’s a sample of some of the projects that urban planning students have had the opportunity to work on with the City of Rosemount.

Economic Development/Eco-Business Park

As Rosemount continues to grow in population, the community is balancing its residential growth with commercial-industrial development that can provide local jobs for residents and grow the city’s tax base.

Students in PA 5512: Workforce and Economic Devel-



Rosemount (cont.)

opment, taught by Senior Associate Dean of Extension Dr. Brent Hales, are learning the principles of asset-based community development and using this approach to inform short-term and long-term economic and community development strategies for Rosemount. In addition to providing general recommendations for how the City can capitalize on existing community assets to expand its commercial and industrial sectors, students will offer ideas for developing an eco-green business park in the community, as well as suggestions for improving the City's economic development website.

Greenhouse Emissions/Climate Adaptation

Although climate change is a global issue, its impacts are felt locally. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has reported that climate change is already affecting Minnesota's environmental, economic, and social systems. A team of students in PA 5242: Environmental Planning, Policy, and Decision Making, taught by Dr. Carissa Slotterback, is identifying the potential local impacts of climate change in Rosemount, as well as specific regulatory and other strategies to reduce the community's vulnerability to these impacts and adapt to a changing climate.

Urban Agriculture

Many communities are exploring opportunities to expand urban agricultural production to achieve environmental, social, and economic benefits. As a historically agricultural community that includes an abundance of agriculturally zoned land, a popular City-run community garden program, and an active farmer's market, the City is interested in expanding urban agriculture activities.



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Working with a team of students in the PA 5242 course described above, the City is exploring opportunities to take advantage of its agricultural land, support new urban agricultural production, and explore opportunities for enhancing food-centered economic development strategies. The students are proposing efforts organized a theme of "Rooted in Rosemount." Practices such as agro-tourism, community-based food processing, and small-scale food aggregation strategies are being evaluated.

These practical learning experiences are producing valuable insights and resources for Rosemount and the same time ensuring that graduating urban planning students are well-prepared for working in communities and on the most pressing planning issues of our time.



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