



## Special Call for Proposals: Comprehensive Plan Implementation

### Application Information for the 2022–2023 Academic Year

The University of Minnesota’s Resilient Communities Project (RCP, [rcp.umn.edu](http://rcp.umn.edu)), in partnership with the Metropolitan Council ([metrocouncil.org](http://metrocouncil.org)), is accepting proposals from **townships, cities, and counties located in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area** for our **Comprehensive Plan Implementation Partnerships** during the University’s 2022–2023 academic year.

This special call for proposals is intended for **local government agencies seeking to collaborate with the University of Minnesota on projects that build community resilience, advance equity, and implement elements of a locally adopted 2040 comprehensive plan**. Successful applicants will benefit from research and technical assistance provided by graduate and professional students and faculty at the University of Minnesota, from a variety of departments and disciplines. The selection process is competitive, and successful applicants must support the effort through **dedicated staff time** and a modest **local financial contribution**.

**Eligibility:** Local government agencies (township, city, and county) located in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. To be eligible, communities must be within the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council.

**Deadline for Proposals:** August 15, 2022. Proposals must be **submitted by email** as a single PDF file to [rcp@umn.edu](mailto:rcp@umn.edu).

*RCP staff are available to help with development of your proposal at any stage—from introducing the RCP program and model to your staff, elected officials, and other stakeholders to helping brainstorm ideas for projects. Contact [rcp@umn.edu](mailto:rcp@umn.edu) to get started!*



Resilient Communities Project

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Building Community-University Partnerships for Resilience



Center for Urban and  
Regional Affairs | **cura**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



## OVERVIEW OF RCP

The Resilient Communities Project (RCP) is a partnership between the University of Minnesota and local government agencies in Minnesota that engages students and faculty from across the university to work on locally identified projects that advance community sustainability, equity, and resilience. Graduate and professional students and faculty address the partner’s research and technical assistance needs through course-based or independent student projects, providing easy and efficient access to research and expertise available anywhere within the University of Minnesota system.

For this special request for proposals, RCP is partnering with the Metropolitan Council to provide matching funds to support participation in RCP by townships, cities, and counties within the Council’s jurisdiction. Funds will offset the cost to communities of participating in the program by providing a portion of the required local financial contribution. RCP and the Council particularly encourage projects that address one or more of the following:

- Sustainable land use
- Integrated water resources planning
- Multi-modal transportation planning
- Energy planning
- Capital improvement planning
- Urban tree canopy
- Environmental justice
- Climate vulnerability
- Partnerships
- Systems change

## HOW AN RCP PARTNERSHIP WORKS

For this special request for proposals, RCP will select up to five (5) partner communities for the 2022–2023 academic year (June 2022 to August 2023). The collaboration will begin with a series of planning and orientation meetings in summer 2022, with U of MN students and faculty actively working on projects beginning in fall (September) or spring (January) semesters, depending on course availability. During summer 2023, RCP and the Metropolitan Council will work with participating communities to document outcomes and next steps, facilitate peer learning among participants, and translate project findings and recommendations for broader use in communities throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

### *Partner Community Commitment*

A key element of a successful RCP project is commitment and involvement from local government agency staff. Communities selected for a partnership will be expected to **identify a project lead**—an individual staff member who will be the primary point of contact for U of MN students, faculty, and staff working on that project. Project leads are responsible for

- attending an initial RCP orientation session;
- participating in project scoping meetings;
- preparing and providing background materials related to the project;
- pitching projects to students and faculty during class meeting times on the U of MN Minneapolis or St. Paul campuses;
- leading site visits in the community;
- attending regular project meetings;

- initiating and coordinating the participation of residents, community organizations, or other stakeholders in the project;
- participating in periodic reviews of student work throughout the semester; and
- coordinating and attending final project presentations on the U of MN campuses and/or in the community.

**Project leads should anticipate spending an average of 3–5 hours per week on the project during each semester the project is active.**

During summer 2023, project leads and other relevant staff and stakeholders from the partner community will be expected to participate in follow-up discussions and interviews about the project, the project outcomes, and how other communities might benefit from the work.

### ***RCP and University Commitment***

RCP staff with knowledge of the broad range of academic departments and resources at the University and with expertise in community resilience, project management, and communications will provide ongoing support to ensure high-quality outcomes that meet your agency's needs. This includes recruiting and coordinating university resources (students, faculty, staff, and courses), facilitating project scoping, identifying and coordinating delivery of data and background information for projects, maintaining a Basecamp project management system, coordinating communications and media outreach about the partnership, planning and staffing campus and community events, reimbursing project-related travel and material costs to support student and faculty participation in the program, promoting partnership activities through social and earned media, and troubleshooting projects as needed.

Outcomes from each University course, student team, or individual student that participates in a project will be documented in a final presentation and report (or other agreed-upon deliverable) at the conclusion of the project. All work products will be licensed through a Creative Commons agreement that allows your agency and others to reproduce, distribute, or adapt the work for non-commercial purposes.

### ***Metropolitan Council Commitment***

*Thrive MSP 2040* (<https://metro council.org/Planning/Projects/Thrive-2040.aspx>), the regional policy development guide, includes policies on sustainability and implementation strategies for building resilience in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region. The Metropolitan Council has focused on performing resilience planning for its infrastructure and operations, while also providing technical assistance to local communities to perform their own work on resilience and sustainability planning. Since 2015, the Metropolitan Council has engaged with local communities in providing technical assistance on planning for resilience in this current comprehensive planning cycle. Such assistance has increased the local commitment to building more resilient communities.

This partnership with RCP allows the Council the opportunity to assist communities in meeting the commitments outlined within their 2040 comprehensive plans, while also promoting good

practices in the region through the provision of technical resources to assist other communities with the implementation of their resilience and sustainability policies.

The Council commits to providing technical assistance and feedback to participating communities throughout the project duration, including assisting participating communities in using Council data, tools, and resources, and in translating the project outcomes, framework, and lessons learned to a larger audience within the region. The Council, in partnership with RCP, will coordinate the summer 2023 work of packaging the project results into technical assistance for other communities.

## **FINANCIAL COST OF THE PROGRAM**

For projects proposed and accepted under this special request for proposals, the Metropolitan Council will provide matching funds to offset the cost of participation in the RCP program. The local financial contribution for selected communities is **\$2,000 per project**, with a \$5,000 per-project match from the Metropolitan Council. This guarantees that each project will be matched with up to two (2) University of Minnesota graduate or professional courses or independent student teams, as well as supplemental assistance to document project outcomes, facilitate peer learning, and translate project findings and recommendations for broader use. Any additional matches with U of MN courses or student teams may incur additional costs (pending your agency's pre-approval of such expenditures).

## **HOW TO APPLY**

### ***Submitting Your Proposal***

Proposals must be **submitted by email** as a single PDF file sent to [rcp@umn.edu](mailto:rcp@umn.edu).

RCP staff are available to help with development of your proposal at any stage—from introducing the RCP program and model to staff, elected officials, and other stakeholders to helping brainstorm ideas for projects or preparing a proposal for submission. Contact us at [rcp@umn.edu](mailto:rcp@umn.edu) for assistance or with questions.



### ***Deadline for Proposals***

Proposals must be received by **August 15, 2022**. Communities selected for participation will be notified in September 2022.

### ***Required Proposal Components***

- 1. Partner Information:** Provide (a) the name of your community, (b) estimated current population and number of households in the geographic area you service or represent, (c) total annual budget, (d) the total number of staff your agency employs, and (e) a link to your most recent Metropolitan Council–approved comprehensive plan.

2. **Proposed Project(s):** Provide individual descriptions of **one to three (1–3) projects** (up to two of which may be selected for the partnership). Projects should address high-priority issues for your community, involve research questions or technical assistance needs appropriate for graduate-level student work, and must tie directly to the implementation of one or more elements of your community’s adopted 2040 comprehensive plan. Projects should demonstrably build community resilience to economic, social, technological, or environmental changes, as well as advance equity.

Preference will be given to projects that provide replicable practices or frameworks for other Twin Cities metropolitan area communities, use Metropolitan Council resources, and function as examples and studies for future Council workshops or training sessions to share best practices and lessons learned.

Project proposals should be consistent with the community’s 2040 comprehensive plan, while indicating conformance and consistency with Council plans and policies.

**For each project**, provide the following information:

- a. **Project name/title.** Should be descriptive of the project.
- b. **Project lead.** Identify one staff person who will serve as the primary contact for the project, as well as their job title, department, e-mail address, and phone number. *This individual must be able to commit an average of 3–5 hours per week to the project each academic semester that the project is active, as well as occasional time during summer 2022 and summer 2023.*
- c. **A 1–2 paragraph description of the project.** At minimum, this paragraph should address the following questions: What is the **context** for the project? Why is this project a **priority** at this time? What are your agency’s **ultimate goals/objectives** related to the project or the larger issues the project addresses? How will the student work be **used to further the goals of your comprehensive plan**?
- d. **3–5 specific issues, questions, ideas, or problems for consideration that you want students to address.** What are the key things that would help to advance local efforts on this project or on the issues this project touches?
- e. **Resilience impact.** How will this project serve to advance resilience in your community? RCP defines resilience as *the capacity of individuals, institutions, communities, and natural systems to survive, adapt, and thrive in the face of economic, social, technological, and environmental changes, stresses, and shocks.*
- f. **Equity impact.** How will this project serve to advance equity in your community? The Metropolitan Council defines equity in *Thrive MSP 2040* ([metro council.org/About-Us/why-we-matter/Equity.aspx](https://metro council.org/About-Us/why-we-matter/Equity.aspx)) as follows: *“Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change.”*
- g. **Community partners or stakeholders.** Identify partners or stakeholders (external to your agency) that will participate in the project—for example, other government

agencies, nonprofit or community organizations, resident or neighborhood groups, or local businesses. *Describe specifically* how these individuals or organizations will be involved, what they will do, and how their participation will benefit the project. *NOTE: It is NOT necessary to include partners or stakeholders for every project proposed.*

- h. **Statement confirming consistency and conformance with authorized and adopted plans.** The proposal should include a short statement confirming that the project conforms to and is consistent with the community's comprehensive plan, and the plans and policies of the Metropolitan Council.
- 3. **Demonstration of Support:** Include letters of support or formal resolutions supporting your agency's application to and participation in the Resilient Communities Project from **one or more** of the following: city/county manager or administrator, mayor, elected governing body (city council, county board, etc.), relevant department heads. If appropriate, you may also wish to include demonstrations of support from proposed partner/stakeholder organizations or agencies, as well as external funding entities.

## Proposal Evaluation Criteria

RCP and the Metropolitan Council staff will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

1. **Top-Level Support and Administrative Capacity:** Senior staff show a commitment to participate in the RCP program and to direct staff time and resources to the partnership.
2. **Clear Project Focus:** Projects are well formulated, issues or questions for investigation are defined, and there is a clear project goal.
3. **Project Relevance and Impact:** Clear description of how project results will be used, as well as how the project will serve to build community resilience, advance equity, and implement elements of a locally adopted 2040 comprehensive plan.
4. **Community Engagement:** Where appropriate, projects include a commitment to meaningfully engage through the partnership those residents and stakeholders directly affected by the issue, as a means of integrating local knowledge and concerns, as well as strengthening and broadening community support for local resilience and equity efforts.
5. **External Partnerships:** Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with other local entities (e.g. neighboring cities, counties, watershed districts, transportation districts, school districts, business or professional organizations, private funders, research or educational institutions) to formulate projects, share partnership costs, and broaden support for any policies, programs, or other initiatives that result from working with the University
6. **Likelihood of a University Match:** Projects must be within the capability of University of Minnesota graduate or professional students, and should involve substantive research and/or technical assistance needs, not menial tasks or low-level administrative work. *NOTE: While RCP works diligently to match projects, we cannot guarantee matches for all projects.*
7. **Shared learning:** Partner community staff should demonstrate a willingness to assist RCP and the Metropolitan Council in distilling the project experience to inform the creation of technical resources that can be used by other communities in the region.