

# SCOTT COUNTY PEDESTRIAN AND TRAIL GAP ANALYSIS

## RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROJECT | RCP 39

### About the Partner

Scott County, located in the southwest Twin Cities metropolitan area, has a population of 151,000 (2020 Census) and is home to eight cities, ten townships, and the Shakopee-Mdewakanton Sioux Reservation. The county is 365 square miles in area, and is bounded on the west and north by the Minnesota River.

The county was originally organized in 1853 and named in honor of General Winfield Scott. Today, Scott County is one of Minnesota's fastest-growing communities, with the construction of the Highway 169 Bloomington Ferry Bridge in 1996 opening the county to development opportunities. Although there is a growing mix of commercial, industrial, housing, and entertainment development, the county is still primarily rural with a strong agricultural sector.

### Project Description

Scott County and the eight Cities within the County have limited resources to invest in improvements to the trail and sidewalk infrastructure. Construction of the existing trail and sidewalk system has occurred largely as part of road reconstruction projects and through the land-development process, leaving numerous gaps in the system. The purpose of this project is to review the existing trail and sidewalk infrastructure to understand where gaps in the system exist along County Roads, particularly in the more urbanized areas of the county. Ultimately, the County hopes to develop a scoring system that can be used to inform decision making for future public investment by prioritizing implementation of trail segment construction.

To help bring this analysis to realization, students will be asked to review the existing sidewalk and trail system along County Roads in the eight cities, using the County's current GIS dataset as a starting point. Students will use available aerial imagery and site visits (as needed) to validate the dataset. Students will also interview representatives from each City, and review city comprehensive plans and other policy documents, to understand the pedestrian and trail infrastructure needs and priorities at the local level. Based on a review of the relevant academic and professional practice literature, students will identify best practices and key factors (such as land use, population density, construction cost, etc.) for prioritizing trail segments for construction or reconstruction. Ultimately, it is hoped that students will then develop and pilot a scoring system that can be used to inform future public investments in the pedestrian and trail system in Scott County.



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## Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas for Students to Explore

1. Based on GIS analysis, aerial imagery, and site visits (as needed), where do trail and pedestrian gaps exist in the current system along County roads in urbanized areas?
2. Based on current comprehensive plans, policy documents, and interviews with city representatives, what are the needs and priorities of each city with respect to improving the trail and pedestrian system?
3. What are best practices and key factors for prioritizing trail segments for construction or reconstruction? Factors to consider might include (but are not limited to) land use, planned improvements, population density, population demographics, employment opportunities, roadway conditions, access to transit, engineering/construction costs, etc.
4. What are rough estimates for the cost of engineering and construction for new trails segments based on surface type, trail width, and other factors?
5. Develop a GIS-based methodology for prioritizing implementation of future pedestrian and trail segments.

## How Student Work Will Build Community Sustainability, Equity, or Resilience

Outcomes of this project will help the County and Cities equitably prioritize future investments in the sidewalk and trail network, allowing for orderly and efficient expenditure of public funds. Once constructed, the trails and sidewalks will provide transportation options and access to residents, particularly those without personal vehicles.

### Potential Partners or Stakeholders

Cities of Belle Plaine, Credit River, Elko New Market, Jordan, New Prague, Prior Lake, Savage, Shakopee

Scott County residents, landowners, and business owners

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community

### Existing Plans and Reports

- 2040 Scott County Comprehensive Plan
- Scott County ADA Transition Plan
- 2040 City comprehensive plans
- City bicycle or pedestrian master plans

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