

# CHASKA PEDESTRAIN AND BICYCLE EVALUTATION PLAN

## RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROJECT | RCP 49

### About the Partner

Chaska is an outer ring suburb located southwest of Minneapolis. It is Carver County's largest city and the county seat. The land was originally occupied by the Mdewakanton Dakota people and, according to the Minnesota Historical Society, the name "Chaska" is derived from a common Dakota name given to a first-born son. The city encompasses 17.7 square miles, and its historic downtown is adjacent to the Minnesota River, which played a significant role in its early identity as a trading post and commerce hub. Chaska was incorporated as a city in 1891, and its industry was first centered on brick manufacturing and agricultural processing. Rapid growth and transition to a metropolitan community began in the 1950s and 60s. In 2020, Chaska had a population of roughly 27,800 people, with a median age of 37.2 and a median household income of \$99,988. The three largest racial/ethnic groups in Chaska are White (Non-Hispanic) (82.2%), Multi-Racial (Hispanic) (3.59%), and Multi-Racial (Non-Hispanic) (3.46%).



**City of Chaska**

### Project Description

In March 2024, the Chaska City Council adopted a 2040 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, which supports expansion of trail and sidewalk networks in the city. It also offers recommendations for improving opportunities for walking and bicycling for both recreational and transportation purposes. The plan recommendations are built around a "6 Es" approach: engineering and planning, education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation, and equity.

Chaska seeks research support to develop an initial measurement and evaluation program that establishes baseline data for pedestrian and bicycle usage and can be used to track progress over time. In order to prioritize investment, the City desires to understand trail system use and user perspectives, including the perspectives of those who do not currently use city trails. The information gathered through evaluation efforts will help the City ascertain needs, demonstrate the value of the City's trail and sidewalk network and new investments, and support a culture of walking and biking in the community. Evaluation metrics, such as trail counts, user feedback, outreach strategies to non-users, and implementation tracking, will improve the overall effectiveness of the City's plan.



**Resilient Communities Project**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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

1. How have other cities successfully evaluated their bike and pedestrian usage? What criteria and modalities were used in peer cities? How accurate, easy to use, and expensive were those evaluation methods?
2. What variables should Chaska measure in its evaluation plan? What strategies or technologies are most useful to the Chaska context?
3. Design an implementation plan, trail use count strategy, and survey or other tools, to use for data collection.

## How Student Work Will Build Community Resilience

This project will support Chaska’s overall community health and environmental sustainability goals to increase pedestrian and bicycle use and decrease pollution associated with automobile transportation. Collecting trail- and sidewalk-use data will help the City understand where new facilities and other investments are most needed. A key component of the evaluation plan will be a trail-use counting program, which will help City planners understand user characteristics such as transportation mode, age, gender, ability, ethnicity, and other factors that can help to advance the equity component of the “6 Es.”

### Potential Partners or Stakeholders

- Chaska Residents & Staff
- Carver County Public Health
- Carver County Parks
- Chaska Downtown Business Alliance

### Existing Plans and Reports

- [Chaska 2040 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan](#)
- [Met Council 2040 Transportation Plan](#)
- [Met Council 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan](#)

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