

CHASKA NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING TOOLBOX

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROJECT | RCP 53

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

As the City of Chaska transitions from a growing suburb into a more developed community, traffic patterns and resident expectations about automobile traffic change. New neighborhoods, infill development, and redevelopment contribute to real and perceived traffic pattern impacts for existing neighborhoods. These impacts can include higher traffic volumes, changes in peak volume times, changes in driver speeds, increases in bike and pedestrian traffic, and fluctuations in the presence of children, student drivers, and older adults in residential areas as family units grow and change.

Residents who observe and experience these neighborhood street traffic pattern changes frequently share their concerns with City staff and City Council members. While everyone wants to help solve the problem, the root causes and best solutions are not always clear. City staff would benefit from a traffic calming toolbox and the creation of a more formal evaluation process to help identify possible acceptable treatments that could be implemented when warranted. The City desires a multifaceted toolbox that includes, but goes beyond, engineering solutions to encompass approaches like enforcement, neighborhood engagement, and education strategies that offer equitable solutions and measurable impacts.



Resilient Communities Project

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas for Students to Explore

1. What is the best way to receive and evaluate neighborhood concerns about traffic safety on neighborhood streets? What can Chaska learn from other communities that have put programs, policies, or practices in place to manage traffic safety concerns and requests?
2. What engineering strategies could be used to calm traffic on neighborhood streets and what are the costs? How can the city best determine when these strategies are warranted (i.e., a matrix or decision tree)?
3. What evidence-based strategies beyond engineering solutions can be used to calm traffic through enforcement, education, encouragement, and engagement?
4. How can the city provide equitable solutions that balance the needs of all residents and stakeholders, including bikers, pedestrians, and automobile users?

How Student Work Will Build Community Resilience

This project will better position City staff to work with residents on neighborhood traffic concerns by clarifying process, identifying options, and defining appropriate deployment for them. Residents will feel more empowered to pursue improvements to their neighborhoods. In addition, this research and toolkit will be adapted for use by and made available to other Twin Cities metro area communities through a partnership with the Metropolitan Council.

Potential Partners or Stakeholders

- Carver County Public Health
- Neighborhood representatives

Existing Plans and Reports

- City of Chaska 2040 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan
- Metropolitan Council Thrive 2040, and 2040 Transportation Policy Plan

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