

# MINNESOTA DAILY

## Students, city partner for sustainability

University students and faculty will work on development projects with North St. Paul.

By **Julia Marshall**

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University of Minnesota students and faculty members are partnering with North St. Paul for a variety of sustainability projects this year.

Hundreds of graduate and professional students are expected to work with the city on environmentally-friendly development as part of the Resilient Communities Project, a program that offers students a chance to apply their learning to real-world situations.

Seven cities submitted proposals to the University, but faculty members chose North St. Paul because of its interest in sustainability.

Students and faculty from 20 different departments will work on 21 various projects with the city, including street redesign, economic development, crime prevention and waste management.

Mary Hammes, a second-year graduate student in the natural resources science and management program, will be working on environmental education for the city as part of her graduate thesis.

“It’s a dual purpose,” she said. “It’ll serve my thesis, and then I’ll help on the report to give to North St. Paul.”

Some North St. Paul residents said they hope the partnership will increase economic development in the area.

Paul Anderson, chairman of North St. Paul’s Design and Historical Review Commission, said the city’s downtown needs improvement. The city’s expansion has slowed over the past few decades, he said, and he hopes to compete with increased development in neighboring towns.

North St. Paul has about 11,500 residents, and Anderson said working with the University will alleviate city employees’ workload.

“It really will make a difference because it’s hard for our small staff ... to do as much as needs to be done to make progress,” he said.

David Nelson, a 38-year resident of North St. Paul, said he’s excited for the students to begin work but hopes the development doesn’t detract from the city’s character.

“The main thing is to keep the small-town flavor,” he said. “We don’t want to expand and make it like a big shopping mall.”

Ange Wang, a College of Design professor working on the project, said program leaders will communicate with the community to address concerns like Nelson’s.

“Anytime you engage community members in a project, it has much more sustainable results than if you don’t engage them,” Wang said. “People need to feel a part of something.”