Advancing Sustainable Transportation and Community-Engaged Learning Through the Resilient Communities Project
Mike Greco, AICP

Director, Resilient Communities Project
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) – U of MN
What Is RCP?

The mission of the Resilient Communities Project is to connect communities in Minnesota with the wide-ranging knowledge and expertise of University of Minnesota faculty and students to advance local sustainability and resilience.

Building Community-University Partnerships for Sustainability
Program Objectives

Building local capacity around sustainability and resilience
Training students to be future sustainability practitioners
Producing case studies, best practices, and tools that can inform sustainability practice
What Is RCP?

Connects existing courses at the University of Minnesota
...taught in their existing ways
...by existing faculty
...to a single city/county
...over an academic year
...to work on sustainability-related projects
...identified by city/county staff
How Does the Model Work?

Partner competitively selected (RFP) + contributes financially
City/County defines 15–30 projects + identifies project leads
RCP matches each project with one or more U of MN courses
Project leads, faculty, and RCP staff collaboratively:
  — clarify and scope projects
  — identify and engage community partners and stakeholders
Students complete projects as part of regular coursework
Students deliver final presentations + work products to city/county
Why the Model Works

Projects are part of city work-plan
Grassroots matchmaking (city staff + faculty)
Participation is opt-in
Multiple students/teams in each class
Frequent communication
Engagement with local residents, businesses, organizations (creates buy-in)
Everyone has ‘skin in the game’ (financial, political, a grade)
RCP: The First Four Years

4 communities
- Minnetonka
- North St. Paul
- Rosemount
- Carver County

88 locally identified projects

141 U of MN courses

39 departments

11 academic colleges

1300+ students
Transportation-Related Projects

Safe routes to schools
Living streets and capital improvements
Transportation demand management
Suburban transit-oriented development
Non-motorized transportation assessment
Travel shed analysis for transit planning
Trail wayfinding plan
Pedestrian safety and public realm improvements
Marketing transit sustainability
Partner Community
Access to faculty + 1000s of hours of student time
Student knowledge, creativity, and energy
Multidisciplinary perspective on issues
Groundwork for engaging consultants

Faculty
Efficient access to high-quality community-based projects
Recognition/visibility for community-engaged teaching
Feedback loop between research and practice

Students
Well-organized + meaningful community-based projects
“Real world” experience related to sustainability and resilience
Professional networking opportunities
Tyler Olsen

Graduate of Department of Civil, Environmental and Geo-Engineering
College of Science and Engineering – U of MN
• Spring 2016
• Stormwater BMPs — TMDL for Grace Chain of Lakes
• Partner: Carver County
• Teammates: Leena Jaakola, Sarah Barnett, John Earl
PROJECT OVERVIEW

• Grace Chain of Lakes (Chaska, MN)

• BMP Assessment and Feasibility—built off of previous study

• Geospatial analysis (GIS) and BMP modeling (P8)

• Final Deliverable: Best Combination of BMPs
PROGRAM BENEFITS

• Industry experience

• Connections with practicing engineers

• Project management
James Wheeler, MLA AIA

Lecturer, School of Architecture
College of Design – U of MN
PUBLIC INTEREST DESIGN

North Saint Paul Living Streets Project

Design Workshop: ARCH 3250
Instructor: James Wheeler
Group Members: Aicha Boujnikh, Abbey Seitz, Francisco Tenorio, Rebekah Trad, Leah Bauch, Tara Werkmeister
CONDENSED LIVING STREETS GUIDE

WHAT IS IT?
The condensed version that we created highlights the key points covered in the original document in an abbreviated manner that will keep the reader engaged. This version is available in an electronic PDF version or a hard copy.
WHAT IS IT?

Through a door-to-door data collection method, current street conditions and rendered images with Living Streets elements are compared, to both educate community members on the plan, and gain an understanding of their preferences.
WHAT IS IT?

The Carry On RainGarden is a portable educational device that allows audiences to learn first hand about both the aesthetic qualities and the stormwater mitigating effects of rainwater gardens.
WHAT IS IT?

The LivingStreetLab is a toolkit that allows the user to explore and learn the different components that make up Living Streets. The Living Street Box will be displayed in a location where users can build and play on their own, and used in workshops that promote sustainable community development.
Sarah Sularz, MLA

Graduate of Department of Landscape Architecture
College of Design – U of MN
Whole 'Hoods in which more people walk or cycle, rather than drive, are safer, nicer, places to live.

People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks are more likely to be active at least 30 mins a day.

Using MultiModal transportation systems, including bicycles and commuter buses can reduce roadway emissions up to 22% annually.

Health studies show that for every $1 spent on trails, there are $3 in savings in direct medical costs.

CONVENIENCE IS KEY!

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convenient facilities such as access to water, seating, and safety elements can increase usership.

11 different routes departing from 7 different P&R stations, serving 45+ miles.

People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks are 47% more likely to be active at least 30 mins a day.


www.co.carver.mn.us

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COMMUNITY BENEFITS
Nate Kabat, AICP

Assistant City Administrator
City of Chaska
Resilient Communities Project  
Carver County

Nate Kabat, City of Chaska  
Assistant City Administrator  
CTS Transportation Research Conference | November 3, 2016
Carver County’s Partnership

- Cities of Chaska, Victoria, Watertown
- SouthWest Transit
- Carver County CDA
- Eastern Carver County School District
- Carver County Water Management Org.

County Departments

- Planning & Water Management
- Historical Society
- Public Health
- Parks
- Land Management

- Social Services
- Administration
- Facilities
- GIS
- Public Works
Projects

- 32 Project pursued
- Topic Areas
  - Environmental Stewardship
  - Housing Opportunity
  - Alternative Transportation
  - Human Services
  - Community Engagement & Education
  - Building Community Identity
  - Effective Administration
Community Project Leadership

• Developing partners & community buy-in
• Identifying mission aligned projects
• Coordination across organizations and departments
• Staff workloads & expectations
• Supporting student work
• Continuing momentum - measuring outcomes, & sharing across communities
Questions?
Thank you!

Website: rcp.umn.edu
E-mail: rcp@umn.edu
Twitter: @RCPumn
Facebook: RCPumn

Photos: Steve Schneider and Mike Greco