



Humphrey School students work to help cities become more sustainable

► **The City of Minnetonka needs**

answers to important sustainability challenges, like trying to compete with neighboring suburbs that offer higher-density, lower-priced housing; identifying best practices for building green roofs and rooftop gardens; and fostering a stronger sense of identity among its neighborhoods. The answers lie, in part, with students from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs through the Resilient Communities Program (RCP).

“RCP gives students experience working in communities on practical projects,” says **Carissa Schively Slotterback**, director of the RCP and an associate professor at the Humphrey School. With seed funding from the University’s Institute on the Environment and Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, RCP brings together students and faculty members from eight University of Minnesota schools and colleges to partner with a Minnesota community for a whole academic year. The 2012–13 partnership with Minnetonka is RCP’s pilot program.

“It’s been exciting to see students

do presentations in communities and interact with stakeholders, including elected officials, community staff, and residents,” Schively Slotterback says.

“We have a niche that Minnetonka would like us to fill,” says **David Thorpe** (MURP ’11), who is part of a team researching development options near two stops along the proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit Line. “It gives us real-world experience by providing a good glimpse of the complexity and innovation that goes into transitway development.”

RCP chooses a city partner through a competitive request-for-proposal process and helps identify potential projects based on community-identified sustainability issues and needs. The city’s project needs are then matched with University of Minnesota courses. Through a number of courses, Humphrey School students have contributed to many of the projects during RCP’s first year:

- Neighborhood Revitalization students prepared a report that describes how neighborhoods in Seattle, Philadelphia, and some Twin

Cities communities use blogs and social media, as well as other tools, to engage neighborhoods and enhance identity.

- Students in a Networks and Places class worked on a parking and land use project that explored innovative strategies for managing Minnetonka’s parking issues.
- Six students in Environmental Planning, Policy, and Decision Making identified best practices for building green roofs in a suburban and northern climate.

“The key focus of RCP is establishing a sustained relationship with a community that helps that community move the ball down the field a lot quicker than it would be able to do on its own,” says Schively Slotterback about the importance of completing several projects throughout the year.

Next year’s RCP partner community is North St. Paul. Smaller than Minnetonka, North St. Paul is an older city with a strong focus on redevelopment and community engagement, making for a new set of challenges for students to address. ■

The Humphrey School of Public Affairs inspires, educates, and supports innovative leaders to advance the common good in a diverse world. The School pursues its mission by using its resources and those of the University to integrate:

- Preparation of students for leadership in public affairs;
- The bridging of disciplines across the University and larger community to advance public affairs scholarship; and
- Public engagement and scholarship to address important issues and to solve problems facing Minnesota, the nation, and the world in a non-partisan setting.

The School offers five graduate degree programs and is home to several research/outreach centers and programs. While hospitable to a wide range of viewpoints, the Humphrey School does not take positions on issues. The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

Humphrey School News is published periodically by the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota
301–19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Dean: Eric Schwartz
Editor: Julie C. Lund (julie@umn.edu)

Website: www.hhh.umn.edu