Household Lifestyles and Their Relationship to Land-Use and Transportation Planning

Also inside:

- Addressing Barriers to Childcare Assistance: Collaborating to Tap the Potential of Childcare
- A Process Evaluation of the South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court
In This Issue:

- Household Lifestyles and Their Relationship to Land-Use and Transportation Planning ........................................... 3
- University Neighborhood Network: Connecting Classrooms to Community Projects ........................................ 12
- New Publication on Dual-System Youth Now Available ........ 12
- Addressing Barriers to Childcare Assistance: Collaborating to Tap the Potential of Childcare .......................... 13
- A Process Evaluation of the South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court ................................................................. 19
- Project Awards ........................................................................ 26
- CURA’s Website Has a New Look and New Features ............ 27
The idea that land-use patterns can influence people’s behavior is popular in urban planning circles these days. Low-density development, single-use zoning, and cul-de-sacs are the targets of the attack against sprawl, auto-dependent travel, and even obesity. Compact development, mixed land-uses, and urban design improvements (e.g., sidewalks, street crossings, and smaller blocks) have all been put forth as ways to reduce drive-alone travel, spur transit use, and increase levels of physical activity.

In response, local, state, and regional governments have begun actively promoting more compact and pedestrian-friendly community designs, and citizens, political leaders, and land-use and transportation planners have fervently embraced these concepts in the hope that such benefits will come to fruition. In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, one would be hard pressed to find any community not striving to make their built environment less auto-reliant and more pedestrian-friendly. The popular designs flourishing around 50th Street and France Avenue in Edina and Minneapolis, or Excelsior Boulevard and Grand Way in St. Louis Park have become the gold standard of urban planning in the metro area. But is there sufficient evidence to suggest that altering land-use patterns can make people drive less and walk more? Will such planning affect traffic congestion levels? Advocates quickly point to a flurry of studies that tell us with some certainty that households living in more urban and mixed-use communities tend to walk, use transit, or bicycle more than their suburban counterparts. Such findings are often flaunted in a manner akin to the mantra, “If you build more pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, walkers will come.”

This enthusiasm is refreshing; most would agree it is critically important to support planning efforts that make walking easy, more attractive, and available to the diverse and increasing population in the Twin Cities region. However, one needs to be mindful of the potentially false expectations such planning initiatives create, particularly concerning the potential for

---

Photo © Regents of the University of Minnesota. Used with permission of the Metropolitan Design Center.

Household Lifestyles and Their Relationship to Land-Use and Transportation Planning

by Kevin J. Krizek

Pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development along Excelsior Boulevard and Grand Way in St. Louis Park.
land-use planning, by itself, to significantly influence people’s behavior. To help inform this discussion, this article examines the linkages between different dimensions of household decision making, including the types of travel residents engage in, the types of activities they tend to pursue, and factors affecting their choice of neighborhood. I analyze these and other phenomena in a synergistic manner to uncover what I refer to as different household lifestyles. Recognizing how household decisions form together into different groups—not just knowing the impact of land use on travel—helps one better understand how relevant decisions relate to one another, the market segments of different populations, and subsequently the merits of various policy scenarios. The research upon which this article is based was supported by a grant from CURA’s Faculty Interactive Research Program.

Considerations in Building Pedestrian-Friendly Communities

The urban planning community is learning, not surprisingly, that encouraging walking and transit use, and reducing reliance on automobiles, are not as simple as building pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. Analyzing a single policy or environmental change without fully capturing other important influences on behavior may lead to errant conclusions and even overstate outcomes about that policy or environmental change. This is particularly true with matters related to where people decide to live and work, what they consider pedestrian-friendly, and how they spend their time on a daily basis. How such critical dimensions of human behavior relate to one another is suggestive of a tightly spun web that incorporates many factors; trying to unravel that web by isolating and pulling out the land-use planning thread is a particularly complex endeavor.

Put another way, and as any good textbook on statistical analysis would tell us, correlation does not mean causation. It is important to distinguish between documenting correlations between community design and behavior, and claiming that it is intuitive that community design can affect behavior. It is increasingly clear that the majority of previous work on this subject has not adequately captured an important element: the broader issues that help guide a household’s series of behavioral decisions, including where to live. These issues include lifestyles, preferences, and long-term versus short-term decisions.

Residents (or families) often select locations for their homes to match their desires for certain behaviors such as walking or using transit; this is an amenity they prioritize in choosing their home location. This suggests that differences in mode or frequency of travel between households in locations with different neighborhood designs should not be credited to the neighborhood design alone; the differences should be attributed in some measure to self-selection. In other words, people who are likely to walk choose to live in a neighborhood where they have a better chance of engaging in active travel. Consequently, efforts to use urban design to induce unwilling auto-oriented households to walk or use transit may be futile for at least two reasons. First, their auto-using behavior is likely a function of their overall preference for a certain type of community design. These preferences are typically manifestations of the adults in the household because they are the driving (pun intended) forces behind decisions about neighborhoods and travel patterns, thereby leaving out the choices or preferences of children. To twist a popular adage, “You can take the family out of the suburbs, but you can’t take reliance on the Chevy Suburban out of the family.” This in turn suggests that the success of land-use planning to induce walking or transit use may be limited to the relatively small numbers of people who currently live in or would move to neighborhoods that are pedestrian friendly. The complex relationship between these issues is important for policy officials in the Twin Cities metro and other urban areas to understand, so as to guard against overstated or even unintended outcomes of land-use policy.

Uncovering Different Household Lifestyles

The research reported here is intended to uncover the relationships between decisions about how an individual travels, where in the region they chose to live, and how they typically spend their time. Assessing the relative magnitude of each influence, however, does not do justice to the complex and mutually reinforcing phenomena at work. Each influence tends to reinforce and mutually inform the others, combining long-term decisions (e.g., where to live and associated neighborhood characteristics) with short-term decisions (e.g., daily travel and activity participation). These related phenomena can be thought of as a deftly spun and tangled web of preferences, constraints, and identity. Rather than unravel this web of household decision making, my research approaches such household decisions as a single, integrated phenomenon. By jointly analyzing household decisions related to type of residential neighborhood, travel characteristics, and activity choices, I discovered that decisions about these phenomena tend to tie together in different patterns of webs.

The particular pattern of the web represents different lifestyles. Although the term lifestyle is widely used in research on travel behavior, it is generally employed informally and with little analytical basis. Researchers use the term as a framework for describing clusters of long-term household choices about residential location, labor force activity, and auto ownership that predispose or condition patterns of daily activity and travel behavior. By examining combinations of decisions related to residential neighborhood type, travel characteristics, and daily activity participation, I found that these phenomena tend to cluster together to form different groups of populations. The combinations of various decisions produces the overall utility that a household derives from its lifestyle choices.

A lifestyle is not a rigid set of patterns that are followed every day, nor even over time. Under many conditions, a household’s chosen lifestyle serves to inform daily travel and activity behavior, as well as residential location decisions. Over time, individuals adapt to changing conditions and reassess their values, in some cases deferring current consumption or making strategic investments to realize a desired lifestyle in the future. From a transportation perspective, a battery of recent policies are aimed at increasing neighborhood accessibility, allowing residents to shop closer to home and drive fewer miles. But how do increased levels of neighborhood accessibility relate to how individuals complete daily errands? What is the potential of land-use planning, by itself, to reduce miles of vehicle travel?

Methodology

To help answer these questions, I compiled a relatively large data set from a variety of sources. Primary among them is the Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI) Home Interview Survey. This survey was administered by the Metropolitan Council to gather important information about the travel behavior...
and sociodemographic characteristics of individuals and households within the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. The data in the TBI were collected via 24-hour travel diaries and two subsequent household telephone interviews during the summer of 2001. Use of a stratified sampling design ensured an adequate representation of all households in the metro area with respect to household size and vehicle ownership.

Initially, almost 9,000 households were recruited to participate in the survey, and to provide both household and individual socioeconomic and demographic data. Subsequent to the demographic interview, households were assigned a travel day on which all household members at least five years of age were asked to complete 24-hour travel diaries. Participants were asked to record all travel behavior for a 24-hour period in which they documented each trip that was taken, including the origin and destination of the traveler, the mode of travel, the duration of the trip, and the primary activity at the destination (if one was involved). Household characteristics and household location were assigned to each individual in the survey. The reported data grouped people’s myriad daily activities into discrete categories, including going to work, attending school, attending to childcare activities, shopping, visiting friends or relatives, conducting personal business, eating a meal, or engaging in entertainment. In the interest of parsimony, I broke down the time people spent in these various activities into four general groups: work-related (which includes school), maintenance activities (i.e., purchase and consumption of convenience goods or personal services), discretionary activities (i.e., voluntary activities performed during free time), and time spent at home.

Using each individual’s home location, I then incorporated other data to measure the nature of the individual’s neighborhood. These measures included the amount of retail within walking distance of their home, the population density of the neighborhood, the quality of local schools, and the degree of regional accessibility. This last measure was computed using a standard gravity model, which considers both the employment size of two places (e.g., two retail centers) and the distance between them. This model provides a good measure of activity concentrations that have drawing power from various centers of the Twin Cities region. As a whole, these data do an exemplary job of capturing travel and sociodemographic characteristics of individuals and households across the seven-county metropolitan area, encompassing primarily the urbanized and suburbanized areas of the region. In sum, I was able to work with data for more than 10,000 individuals.

As explained earlier, my approach in this research was to consider—in an integrated manner—various decisions that an individual faces about his or her travel characteristics, how to spend minutes in the day, and the characteristics of where they choose to live. I call this web of decision making a lifestyle, and define it by measuring variables that loosely fall into one of those three groups:

\[
\text{LIFESTYLE}_{\text{classification}} = f(\text{Travel Characteristics, Time in Activities, Neighborhood Characteristics})
\]
Using the data that I assembled for this project, my next step was to employ two statistical procedures—factor analysis and factor loading—to uncover the lifestyles of the individuals surveyed. I used factor analysis to learn how each of the measures from the data initially related to one another. Factor analysis (also called principal component analysis) is a statistical technique designed to extract a smaller number of factors from a larger set of intercorrelated variables. It is often used to study the patterns of relationships among many variables with the goal of discovering how the nature of the measured variables relate to one another. By doing so, researchers are able to better understand how specific elements of one variable (e.g., time spent in discretionary activity) relate to measures of another variable (e.g., number of walking trips). Uncovering such relationships helps identify possible interdependencies or interrelationships between these variables that might otherwise not be apparent.

The results of the factor analysis are shown in Table 1. After interpreting the data, I identified five key factors, which appear as the column headings. Individual cells in the table reveal what are referred to as factor loadings. Put simply, the nature of the factors must be deduced from seeing which of the variables in the left-hand column are most heavily “loaded” (that is, have the most impact) on which factors.

For each factor, the variables with the highest factor loadings (above roughly 0.5 or below -0.5 in absolute value) are indicated in bold. For example, the first factor, amount of travel, shows a negative (low) value for the variable total minutes spent at home, suggesting that respondents who spend substantial amounts of time at home engage in less travel. Not surprisingly, the travel factor shows a positive (high) value for the variable total vehicle trips, suggesting that those who take more vehicle trips engage in more travel.

By examining the factor loadings, one can see the first factor represents the amount of travel as measured by total time spent in travel, the number of stops one makes each time one leaves home, total vehicle trips, and minutes spent at home. The second factor picks up neighborhood characteristics, including a measure of regional accessibility, how many shops are within one-half mile, household density, and the quality of the schools (measured by composite standardized test scores at the fifth-grade level). The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables measured</th>
<th>Amount of travel</th>
<th>Neighborhood characteristics (accessibility and school quality)</th>
<th>At-home and maintenance activities</th>
<th>Walking/transit use</th>
<th>Discretionary time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total minutes spent in travel</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of stops each time one leaves home</td>
<td>0.750</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total vehicle trips</td>
<td>0.752</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>-0.258</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total minutes spent at home</td>
<td>-0.687</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.509</td>
<td>-0.102</td>
<td>-0.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure of regional accessibility</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>0.762</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of retail stores within 1/2 mile</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>0.643</td>
<td>-0.031</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household density</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td>-0.023</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average test scores at the fifth-grade level</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>-0.718</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>-0.122</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total minutes in work-type activities</td>
<td>0.283</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>-0.914</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>-0.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total minutes in maintenance activities</td>
<td>0.418</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>-0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total walk trips</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.767</td>
<td>0.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total public bus trips</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td>-0.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total minutes in discretionary activities</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Factor Analysis for Key Lifestyle Factors

1 In statistical terms, the loadings are analogous to a Pearson’s r; the squared factor loading is the percent of variance in that variable explained by the factor.
third factor, at-home and maintenance activities, captures people who work few hours or don’t work at all (as detected by the high negative loadings on work minutes) and who tend to run errands (as detected by high positive factor loadings on minutes in maintenance activities). The fourth factor detects walking/transit use as measured by the percentage of individuals who were assigned to each cluster. The length and direction of the bar for each factor represents the value of the cluster center for the factor, which is analogous to a measure of the strength or intensity of that particular factor. The y-axis in Figure 1 therefore represents a value to be interpreted in relative terms to the other lifestyles.

The figure shows how patterns of factors representing different lifestyles emerge for each of the seven clusters. For example, spikes in high walking/transit use for Lifestyles 1, 2, and 3 indicate that individuals in each of these clusters have higher propensities for walking or using transit. Among these three lifestyles, there are also noticeable differences in other characteristics. For example, Lifestyle 1 represents people with relatively low levels of accessibility (indicated by the negative value for this factor)—most likely people living in suburban settings. This population is probably walking or using transit to get to or from their workplace or another destination. Lifestyles 2 and 3 are reasonably similar in nature, particularly because they live in areas with relatively high accessibility. These two lifestyles differ in two important respects, however. Lifestyle 2 tends to have more discretionary time, suggesting their walking may be related to social activities. Lifestyle 3 tends to have larger amounts of total travel, suggesting their walking may be done as part of daily travel.

The two spikes in factors for Lifestyle 5 suggest individuals who engage in a high amount of travel related to maintenance activities (e.g., grocery shopping or personal services); they also spend considerable amounts of time at home and not in work-related activities. Lifestyles 6 and 7—which represent almost two-thirds of the sample—share many of the same characteristics. A single feature differentiates them: neighborhood characteristics. Lifestyle 6 represents a population with lower levels of accessibility and higher school test scores, whereas Lifestyle 7 represents the reverse.

The first part of this research identified relatively homogeneous groupings of individuals into distinct lifestyles.
Figure 2. Home Locations of Individuals in Lifestyles 1, 2, 6, and 7

Lifestyle 1: Commuters who are walkers or transit users

Lifestyle 2: Urbanites who are walkers or transit users

Lifestyle 6: Suburbanites

Lifestyle 7: Urbanites
on the basis of travel characteristics, time spent in activities, and neighborhood characteristics. The final step examines the co-variation that exists between each of the lifestyle clusters, a variety of sociodemographic characteristics, and their location within the Twin Cities metropolitan region. For example, Figure 2 shows distinct differences between the home locations of Lifestyles 1 and 2. Commuters who walk or use transit to get to work (Lifestyle 1) have a greater tendency to live in outlying areas than do urbanites who walk or use transit but are not necessarily working (Lifestyle 2).

In addition, I explored whether a variety of other factors—including geographic location of residence, income, sex, age, owner vs. renter status, household size, and number of vehicles owned—had any relationship to the distinct lifestyles revealed by cluster analysis. Three sociodemographic characteristics—age, household size, and location of residence (living in either Minneapolis or St. Paul as opposed to suburban areas)—revealed interesting and statistically significant findings. Figures 3, 4, and 5 show the distributions for these three sociodemographic characteristics, respectively, for each of the seven lifestyle clusters. Figure 3 shows that Lifestyle 5 is disproportionately represented among individuals 40 to 59 years old. Figure 4 shows that the majority of households with four or more individuals are located in suburban environments (characteristic of Lifestyles 4, 5, and 6), and that there is little difference between walkers/transit users (Lifestyles 1, 2, and 3) with respect to household size.

The largest noticeable differences appear when one examines the populations who live in either Minneapolis or St. Paul proper versus suburban communities. Figure 5 shows how this characteristic clearly differentiates Lifestyle 6 from Lifestyle 7 (a phenomenon that can also be observed in Figure 2). This is not to suggest that every household categorized as a certain lifestyle adheres to all characteristics of that lifestyle; the lifestyles are based on general trends. For example, a fraction of individuals classified as Lifestyle 6 (suburbanites) live in Minneapolis or St. Paul, but may otherwise align closely with suburban behaviors. Likewise, individuals classified as Lifestyle 2 largely share the neighborhood characteristic of high accessibility, even though they may not all live in Minneapolis or St. Paul. Also of note is that disproportionate numbers of individuals from Lifestyles 4 and 5 reside in areas with less accessibility.

By way of summary, Table 2 describes the distinguishing characteristics for each lifestyle that my analysis found to be statistically significant or otherwise notable.

Conclusions and Policy Implications
This research uncovered a series of lifestyles in an attempt to illuminate relationships among decisions about how an individual travels, where in the region they choose to live, and how they spend their time. My aim was to
take a traditionally qualitative topic and turn it into something that could be more readily measured quantitatively. The exploratory nature of this approach as applied to land-use and transportation planning suggests that cluster analysis is best used in conjunction with other data analysis techniques. It may be used effectively to initially explore the data, or as a means of confirming group membership based on the results from other techniques. My approach produced results that can help planners and policy makers understand the size of some of the lifestyle clusters, associate them with general characteristics, and then surmise about the policy implications.

The good news for many urban planners is that my investigation uncovered three distinct lifestyles that employ walking or transit services (Lifestyles 1, 2, and 3). These three populations behave differently, and the manner in which they differ depends on their other associated characteristics of time use and neighborhood characteristics. The not so good news is that the combined population represented by these three lifestyles accounts for less than 8% of the study sample—suggesting the overwhelming majority of the population does not subscribe to a lifestyle conducive to walking or using transit. The 8% is roughly equivalent to the portion of the population in the Twin Cities metro area who ride transit or walk. If spurring transit and walking is a primary goal of urban planning initiatives, it might be best to look elsewhere than strategies that exclusively rely on land-use and transportation planning. This finding further supports the theory that the populations that take advantage of these modes are relatively small in size, and that these populations likely self-select into neighborhoods conducive to walking or transit use.

From another perspective, almost one-fifth of the study sample falls into Lifestyle 5, which represents individuals who tend not to work and who run many errands. Not surprisingly, these individuals hail from relatively large families, live in suburban settings, and report the highest amount of overall travel. Will more transit-supportive designs affect the travel behavior of this 20% of the population? Not likely. Their decisions may largely be a reflection of the cost of housing, the quality of schools, and their preferences for consumer goods acquired via auto trips.

One interesting finding from this research is that almost two-thirds of the study sample, represented by Lifestyles 6 and 7, behave in remarkably similar ways. The only differentiating feature of these lifestyles are the neighborhood characteristics, which fall closely along the lines of city versus suburb. This analysis suggests that for a majority of the urban and suburban population, there are few differences in terms of how such individuals spend their time or travel on a daily basis. Again, any planning improvements intended to mitigate travel solely through land-use planning would appear to have limited value because they are essentially directed at the behavior of the roughly one-third of the population that does not fall into Lifestyle 6 or 7.

The issues at the heart of this study have direct policy significance. Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lifestyle</th>
<th>Predominant behavioral, sociodemographic/economic, and geographic characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Commuters who are walkers or transit users:</strong> People who tend to spend more time at work and who are walkers or transit users (possibly to travel to and from work or at their work location). Tend to be dispersed geographically throughout the region and have little discretionary time.</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Urbanites who are walkers or transit users:</strong> People who walk or use transit (not necessarily for work), but who engage in relatively low levels of travel overall. Strong presence within the central cities.</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Urbanite travelers with high walking/transit use:</strong> Individuals with notably high rates of walking and transit use, and high rates of overall travel. Tend to hail from households that are small in size and to live in urban settings.</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Suburbanites with high discretionary time:</strong> People with high levels of discretionary time, but with average characteristics otherwise. Disproportionate share of individuals under 18 years of age. Tend to live in suburban residences.</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Suburbanite stay-at-home maintenance runners:</strong> People who engage in high amounts of travel for maintenance activities, but otherwise spend large amounts of time at home and engage in little work activity outside the home. A high population of 40 and 50 year olds. Tend to live in suburban residences.</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Suburbanites:</strong> People who live in suburban areas, with high household size, relatively lower levels of overall travel, and average characteristics otherwise.</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Urbanites:</strong> Concentrated within the Interstate 494/694 beltway. Tend to shy away from walking or transit use.</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
officials are able to better surmise the potential impact of various policy options by knowing the size of potential markets. Take, for example, the Smart Commute Mortgage Program in the Twin Cities, which aims to encourage lower income families to purchase homes in transit-accessible neighborhoods. The 8% of the study sample who walk or use transit would be a prime market to target. Alternately, constructing light-rail systems, beltways, or higher-density neighborhoods may influence decisions about daily activities, travel, and residential and workplace location. But the populations who may take advantage of higher density neighborhoods are largely of two types. The first are people who would switch their behavior for such types of neighborhood. The research I’ve presented here is unable to shed light on this population. The second are households who already take advantage of such opportunities, which I have shown is a reasonably small percentage of the total population.

Providing people with more discretionary time and access to pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and destinations might influence their health. They could more easily walk more often. But the impact of any such changes must not be overstated; an increase in walking is not necessarily synonymous with a reduction in auto dependence. People may still drive to run errands, pick up children, and buy groceries. They may just walk in addition to engaging in such auto-centered activities. Acknowledging that policies might more realistically achieve some goals than others (e.g., increasing physical activity versus lowering automobile use) is one matter. Suggesting that some of these goals may be more effectively reached through land-use planning strategies based on the lifestyle clusters I have identified here is a more complex endeavor. The bottom line is that, based on the results of this study, I would be remiss to conclude that mixed-use or higher density development would trigger noticeable changes in travel, time use, or even residential location decisions. There appears to be a relatively large and stable population in the Twin Cities metro who subscribe to Lifestyle 6 and who behave in reasonably homogenous ways that would be hard to modify by using urban design levers alone.

The approach presented here can help policy makers better understand how various phenomena interact within the context of household lifestyle choices. Continued research and more careful attention to how these decisions unfold, as well as to the role that attitudinal preferences play in such decisions, may help transportation planners better design land-use and transportation initiatives to achieve their objectives. A more thorough understanding of the complex relationships involved in household lifestyle choices will ultimately assist policy makers to construct better informed policies about the built environment.

Kevin J. Krizek is assistant professor in the Urban and Regional Planning Program at the University of Minnesota’s Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. He directs the Active Communities/Transportation (ACT) Research Group, a collection of students, faculty, and researchers at the University of Minnesota conducting research on land-use and transportation policies and programs relating to active communities and transportation. The author would like to thank Pamela Jo Johnson for diligently compiling the data used in this research; Bradley Ellis for helping to initially collect much of the information used in this project; and Ahmed El-Geneidy for assistance preparing maps for the project.

This study was supported by CURA’s Faculty Interactive Research Program. The program was created to encourage University faculty to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with community groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. These grants are available to regular faculty members at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis.
University Neighborhood Network: Connecting Classrooms to Community Projects

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs is pleased to announce that the new and improved University Neighborhood Network (UNN) database is now up and running. Designed with busy faculty and community organization staff in mind, the new database is easier to use, includes more interactive features and better search capabilities, and eliminates the unfortunate problems users sometimes encountered with the previous UNN database system.

The online UNN database is designed to quickly connect metro area community organizations that have clearly defined projects with classes taught by faculty at Twin Cities colleges and universities. The process is simple. Faculty members visit the UNN website to complete a one-time registration form to open a faculty account. Once registered, faculty use a web-based form to post information about courses they are teaching next term that require students to engage in community-based research projects as part of the course requirements. The course information is automatically e-mailed to more than 150 community organizations in the Twin Cities metropolitan area who participate in the University Neighborhood Network to make them aware of the opportunity. In response, interested community organizations can link from the e-mail to a web-based form, where they can propose projects that meet their needs and the criteria outlined by the faculty member who posted the course. Once a community organization has posted a project, faculty and students can choose to respond to those projects that best meet the course requirements and the interests of the students.

The University Neighborhood Network takes advantage of the extensive relationships that CURA has created with community organizations in Minnesota, and provides concrete benefits to all participants. Community organizations benefit from relationships with faculty engaged in community-based research, as well as students who can provide research assistance and other resources. Faculty and students likewise benefit from real-world opportunities to apply course material to meet an existing community need.

To become eligible to enter course information for winter or spring 2006 term, interested faculty at Twin Cities colleges or universities are invited to register an account with the new UNN database system at www.unn.umn.edu (click on “New Faculty”). Once you’ve registered an account, you will also receive occasional updates about future training sessions, as well as reminders about upcoming deadlines for entering new course information for the next term.

To learn more about the UNN database, visit www.unn.umn.edu. For a demonstration or presentation on how to use UNN, contact Heidi Eschenbacher, UNN faculty promoter, at 612-625-9533 or esch0002@umn.edu.

New Publication on Dual-System Youth Now Available

The September 2005 issue of Practice Notes, titled “Double Jeopardy: Youth Involved in Dual Systems of Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice—Mental Health Screening,” is now available from the University of Minnesota’s Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. Edited by CURA research associate and social service program coordinator Esther Wattenberg, Practice Notes is a review of research findings and policy and program initiatives that have implications for the practice field.

This edition of Practice Notes (#17, September 2005) considers the population of youngsters in Minnesota who are dually involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The issue includes an analysis of statewide and national trends with respect to dual-system youth, a discussion of the relationship between maltreatment and delinquency, common questions and answers regarding dual-system youth and mental health screening, and a consideration of persistent challenges of and best practices for working with dual-system youth.

Practice Notes is available at ssw.che.umn.edu/CASCW/pn_805.html. Hard copies are also available upon request by contacting Mary Kaye LaPointe at 612-625-6550 or welle003@umn.edu.
Trisha, a 25-year-old mother of two, is a Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) welfare-to-work success. Despite her history of chronic mental illness and domestic abuse, she has been successfully employed by one of Hennepin County’s largest retailers, even winning an employee-of-the-month award.

Ironically, Trisha’s accomplishments have resulted in unintended negative consequences for her oldest child. During the holidays, Trisha’s hours of employment were changed to accommodate the busier nights and weekends of the high-volume retail season. Under MFIP rules for childcare reimbursement, Trisha’s one-year-old son, Tyler, was no longer able to attend his favorite childcare center because Trisha, now working primarily evenings and weekends, was ineligible for childcare assistance covering a daytime program.

In the evenings and on weekends, various acquaintances cared for Tyler. The consistent and predictable relationships Tyler had developed with his teachers and that had been nurtured each day, 10 hours per day, five days per week, were lost.

When his mother resumed her Monday-through-Friday work schedule after the holidays, Tyler returned to his childcare center much clingier and more withdrawn, unable to trust that these significant relationships would not be lost again. Although most children can weather a brief disruption, Tyler could not. Two months later, in March, Tyler was again withdrawn from childcare when his mother was ordered on bed rest for complications from pregnancy. Because she was unable to work, childcare authorization was terminated. Trisha, with an extremely limited support system, was forced to keep Tyler in his crib for hours during the day as she remained confined to bed.

Tyler is now 23 months old, has mild developmental delays, and presents as a very withdrawn, whiny, anxious child. He has been enrolled in and withdrawn from his childcare center four times during the last nine months, each disruption having occurred because of changes in his mother’s status within the MFIP childcare authorization process. Because of its precarious fiscal status, Tyler’s childcare center can no longer serve families who are ineligible for reimbursements for any period of time, no matter how brief. Unfortunately, when Tyler once again became eligible for childcare, his slot in the toddler classroom had been filled by another child, and Tyler and his mom were forced to look for a new childcare center.

The childcare center’s decision not to provide temporary financial assistance to families such as Trisha and Tyler is the result of legislated decreases in childcare subsidies. Many childcare centers across the state have had to make similar decisions. As eligibility requirements for welfare-to-work families tighten, it has become more difficult for families to obtain consistent childcare funding, and as subsidies for childcare centers have been decreased and frozen, it has become more difficult for centers to cover the lapses in eligibility that result from these tightened requirements. As a result of the instability of the MFIP authorization process, many poor but working families have been forced out of high-quality childcare centers.

The disconnect between MFIP services and requirements—between addressing Tyler’s needs and holding his mother accountable to the requirements of welfare-to-work—is a consistent theme for hundreds of families in Minnesota. This disconnect has also directly influenced the implementation of a University of Minnesota–community research project that was designed to assess the Baby’s Space model for child and family service provision.

Supported by a CURA Faculty Interactive Research Program grant, with additional funding from The Bush Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, and the Irving Harris Foundation, Baby’s Space integrates child and family services for overburdened welfare-to-work families with infants and toddlers into existing Hennepin County Strong Beginnings community-based childcare centers. Parent services in the Baby’s Space model include home visiting, childbirth education and coaching (doula) services, family fun nights, parent education, and videotaping of the parent-child interaction for educational purposes and advocacy. A key foundation of the Strong Beginnings–Baby’s Space Partnership is the belief in the importance of relationship-based work at all levels of the process, from the parent and child to the childcare directors and funders.
The Importance of High-Quality Childcare

Research reported by the National Research Council and the National Institute of Child Health and Development\(^1\) has shown that high-quality childcare centers represent an underutilized avenue to engaging parents in making life choices that ultimately support the healthy development of their children. The parent’s choice to be self-reliant and earning a livable income through employment ultimately supports the healthy development of children. Engaging parents through relationships with the workers in an integrated team approach is more effective in connecting the dots between the parent’s mandated efforts toward self-sufficiency and her children’s early educational opportunities in quality childcare.

Tyler and Trisha’s family profile exemplifies how the integration of parent support services within a childcare center is effective at enhancing parenting skills and knowledge and engaging parents in making life choices to best support their families. The Strong Beginnings–Baby’s Space childcare center was a primary factor in helping this mom expand her parenting skills and increase her understanding of her son’s need to be in quality childcare when she was unable to care for him. The family facilitator who worked with Trisha facilitated her participation in regular prenatal medical appointments; provided childbirth/doula services during her pregnancy and delivery of her second child; and eventually secured her eligibility for adult mental health case management services, something she would not have accomplished on her own.

Still, it is doubtful that Tyler will be ready for kindergarten. Young children need interactions with consistent, predictable, responsive, nurturing caregivers for optimal development to occur; especially for babies and toddlers, it is in everyday moments that learning occurs. Research by the National

---


---

To ensure optimal development, young children need interactions with consistent, responsive, nurturing caregivers.
single mothers—off welfare, with little regard for the quality of care children receive. Funding for childcare is determined by the parent’s compliance with a complicated set of requirements for work and school intended to move her toward self-sufficiency. Compliance with the requirements is typically reviewed monthly. If the parent does not meet the eligibility requirements, funding is withdrawn and her child is removed from a developmentally stimulating childcare environment and the important relationships they have established. If a parent is successful at finding employment at a reasonable living wage, the legislated increase in sliding fee co-payments often results in quality childcare becoming unaffordable. As a result, children are frequently moved to unlicensed care.

The following sections consider the effects of the current systems on individual stakeholders.

**Children.** The effect of the complex MFIP authorization processes on children, particularly infants and toddlers, is disruption in caregiving at a time when a child’s day-to-day interactions with caregivers contribute profoundly to early identity formation, emotional and behavioral regulation, and the development of attachment, all of which set the course for the child’s future development. The anxiety created for young children who experience these relationship disruptions contributes to difficulties with emotional and behavioral regulation, making them more challenging for parents, caregivers, and eventually teachers. Unfortunately, by the time a parent becomes eligible for MFIP childcare subsidies again, the childcare center that was so familiar to the child may no longer have a slot available.

**Parents.** The complexity of the initial authorization process presents a barrier for parents, many of whom have no transportation or limited literacy skills. The legislated changes in eligibility for MFIP and for sliding-fee subsidies have resulted in tighter restrictions and a greater burden for qualifying families, many of whom face multiple challenges, including teen parenting, chemical dependency, and mental illness. Most remarkable is that although parents are expected to locate childcare on their own, given only a list of community resources, they are accountable to at least three separate social workers during this process.

Paradoxically, for those who are moving from welfare to work or who work in low-wage jobs, it is the competing goals and strategies of the systems themselves that have created many of the barriers to accessing quality childcare. A parent enrolled in MFIP is required to either attend school, engage in a “job search,” or be employed. The parent must be in contact with three separate social workers—potentially located at three different sites—throughout this process: the community-based employment service provider, the childcare worker, and the financial assistance worker. A fourth worker is assigned if a parent receives child support. Data privacy laws impose limitations on direct communication between these social workers, and there is no forum for them to communicate face-to-face with each other, much less to collaborate together with the parent.

The parent’s responsibility and culpability in creating or contributing to unstable childcare arrangements cannot be ignored. When a parent, for whatever reason, does not submit required paperwork on time or does not comply with elements of an employment plan, the childcare subsidy is stopped. Fairly or not, the child is punished for the sins of the parent. The situation is even more frustrating when one recognizes that the complexity of the process of qualifying for and maintaining childcare authorization is enough to confound even the most well-intentioned parent.

**Childcare Centers.** The complexities of the system with regard to both the initial childcare authorization process and the process of maintaining authorization contribute to childcare centers losing significant revenue as they struggle to serve children and families. The six centers participating in the CAP project reported revenue losses from unreimbursed childcare ranging from $32,000 to $147,000 in 2004 (Table 1). Some childcare centers serving poor neighborhoods have already closed their doors and others are in jeopardy. A December 2004 survey by the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association titled *Centers in Change* indicates that cutting staff has been the most frequently used strategy to respond to these financial challenges, jeopardizing the quality of care for children and families. Teachers and other children at the center also experience grief from the resulting lost relationships.

During the four to six weeks that it can take for a parent’s initial childcare application to be processed, childcare centers are solely dependent on

### Table 1. Reported Reimbursement Losses for Childcare Centers Participating in the Childcare Authorization Project, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Childcare center</th>
<th>Amount of childcare not reimbursed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site One</td>
<td>$39,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Two</td>
<td>$9,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Three</td>
<td>$110,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Four</td>
<td>$32,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Five</td>
<td>$81,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Six</td>
<td>$147,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$418,753</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Lost revenue for Site Two is significantly lower than that reported for other sites because this site served a much smaller number of children of MFIP participants and because data was available from this site for only eight months of the year.
the employment service provider’s recommendation (not authorization) of childcare. In cases where the childcare application is ultimately denied, the center is faced with a dilemma: cut their losses and discharge the child from care, or continue to work with the parent to straighten out the ineligibility factors (which the parent may or may not be upfront about) and get future care reimbursed through subsidy. The dilemma is made more difficult when part, but not all, of the childcare request is authorized. Figure 1 reflects the total cost, in weekly increments, of Strong Beginnings childcare for one infant and one toddler. If a Strong Beginnings center opts to allow these two unauthorized children to attend childcare for any weekly period, it does so with the risk that the parent may ultimately be deemed ineligible for childcare assistance for all or part of the time that childcare was delivered.

Maintaining authorization now requires undergoing a monthly review and approval process, as opposed to the former three- to six-month review. This involves an extraordinary amount of paperwork on the part of the parent and the childcare center. The time lapses that occur in paperwork processing may result, unknown to the center, in a child being in care long past the expiration of the authorization. In one case, a teen parent dropped off her child daily, complaining about how much homework she had, until finally communication between the school and the childcare worker revealed that she had not been in school for two months. The childcare center was not reimbursed for the child’s care. Situations such as these have a twofold negative effect: significant financial loss may affect quality of care for all children in the center, and the center may, in the future, be less able or less likely to accept the risk of enrolling a child in need of care but without authorization. This in turn may have an effect on the parent’s ability to accept or keep a job, ultimately reducing even further the possibility of gaining childcare authorization.

Employment Service Providers. An employment service provider, who is selected from a list of authorized providers, draws up the plan for training or employment of each MFIP parent. This worker recommends approval for childcare authorization to one of Hennepin County’s childcare workers. However, the childcare worker may deny authorization for childcare based on additional information not available to the employment service provider, such as the presence of an unemployed father in the home or an outstanding childcare bill. In the meantime, the parent may already have identified a childcare center that would risk enrolling the child based on the employment service provider’s recommendation and the parent’s need to start a job immediately. Weeks later, the childcare worker may deny the authorization based on additional information. The child is then removed from the relationships already developed in childcare, the parent must decide whether to leave the child with informal caregivers (neighbors, relatives) or quit working, and the childcare center has lost weeks of revenue from unreimbursed childcare.

The employment service providers are expected to meet federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reporting requirements when considering reimbursement for childcare costs for the parents with whom they work. To meet these requirements, employment service providers are dependant on parents completing tracking forms that detail their job search. Completing paperwork is often difficult for parents,
and the employment service provider may not be aware of the challenges they face, such as caring for a sick child, literacy problems, or depression. Data privacy restrictions prevent employment service providers from communicating with other social workers involved with the family. Conversely, prospective employers may have a job available but cannot wait three to four weeks for the time it takes the parent to become authorized for childcare. This adversely affects the employability of MFIP parents.

Generating Solutions

The current MFIP system is fragmented and difficult to negotiate for everyone involved. Unfortunately, it is children—our youngest and most vulnerable citizens—who are most directly impacted by the barriers and complications of funding. By developing a more coordinated system that is customized to the integrated needs of families, childcare centers, and employment service providers, the unintentional roadblocks within the system can be overcome. Using the natural relationships that develop between children, parents, teachers, directors, and employment counselors, an integrated approach that focuses on the whole family can support both the child's stable enrollment in childcare and the parent's work stability.

The Power of Relationships. For participating childcare centers, the rate of parent engagement is high, despite the parents' struggles with inadequate housing, unsafe neighborhoods, domestic violence, mental health problems, and their own negative educational experiences. The Strong Beginnings childcare centers very intentionally cultivate relationships with families to provide quality care. It is the contention of the CAP committee that the positive relationships high-quality childcare centers have developed with many of their MFIP families can be extended to include other members of the parents’ MFIP “team.” With the employment service provider, childcare worker, and other workers coming together more intentionally and visibly in the best interest of the whole family, the parent will experience a less fragmented, more supportive system, encouraging her toward success. This will result in more parents successfully seeking, obtaining, and maintaining employment, and more children benefiting from continuous, consistent, responsive high-quality care. More secure, developmentally competent children are more satisfying to a parent, resulting in healthier parent-child relationships.

Proposal for a Service Integration Pilot. The CAP committee, with leadership from the University of Minnesota and Hennepin County, has developed a proposal for a Service Integration Pilot project. Under the CAP pilot project, an integrated service team would be formed on an as-needed basis and would include the following members: the parent engaged in an MFIP job search, the parent’s employment service provider, the parent’s childcare worker, and the Baby’s Space family facilitator or the Strong Beginnings family service coordinator from the childcare center. Targeting MFIP families who are engaged in a job search and who have already lost childcare authorization, this team would work together to develop an integrated family service plan that would include not only the parent’s employment plan, but also the child and family’s participation in the childcare center. The individual members would be assembled at the request of a participating childcare center when a parent meets the target population criteria. The CAP team would then develop a modified MFIP, family-focused employment plan that would include the goals of continuous childcare authorization, stable childcare arrangements, and utilization of childcare center resources to help parents in their job search and maintenance efforts. Currently, Hennepin County is considering the merits of the Service Integration Pilot project, which when implemented will be evaluated to determine how effective the plans are at (1) improving stability of the child’s experience in childcare, (2) decreasing the amount of time when a parent is ineligible for subsidy due to unemployment or noncompliance with MFIP requirements, and (3) reducing the revenue loss of childcare centers due to loss of childcare reimbursement.

This approach to encouraging compliance is based on the difficulty many parents face in managing the paperwork that accompanies childcare authorization. Parents of children under six years of age who are engaged in a job search are required to document 87 hours of search activities per month (roughly four hours per day). For many such parents, the problem is not in completing the required number of hours, but in completing the job search tracking forms by which their compliance is measured. The participating Strong Beginnings and Baby’s Space Partnership centers have family facilitators who...
who could assist parents with the task of documentation. These centers have daily contact and interaction with these parents as they greet parents and children, offer support and advocacy, and provide parent education and referral services. The CAP pilot will allow the employment service providers access to these relationships, to encourage and support parent compliance with the reporting requirements by addressing the needs of both the parent and child in the context of the family.

The family’s team will offer support, problem-solving, and encouragement in a collaborative setting. This team approach is intended not only to support the family, but also to enhance the contribution of each of the team members by regular communication and coordination of objectives. It is not anticipated that there will be additional cost to the system from this pilot project, other than allowing participating worker and childcare representatives the extra time needed for training and collaboration.

Over a two-year period, both the parent’s success in complying with MFIP and the child’s developmental outcomes will be compared with a control group of MFIP families for whom the services are delivered as usual.

This collaborative, integrated approach acknowledges that the overarching goal is for family success, which includes healthy, developmentally on-track children and self-sufficient, competent parents. The committee believes this pilot is a start toward encouraging the success of MFIP families now, as well as breaking the chain of intergenerational welfare dependence. For the CAP committee participants, it has been an eye-opening experience to sit together and be educated about the complexities of the multiple systems and processes involved in MFIP. It has helped the participants to empathize not only with the challenges that parents and children face, but also with each other, as all have attempted to accomplish specific tasks in relative isolation within this fragmented system. Collaboration has, across the board, energized each participant to create a more integrated system—one that not only promises to provide a more effective, more holistic, and family-friendlier system for welfare reform, but also results in enhanced job satisfaction as part of a larger, long-range solution to the hopelessness of intergenerational poverty.

What Remains to be Done
The challenges that arise at the nexus of finances for quality care and education and the well-being of children reveal some of the most critical issues facing Minnesota today. Below are specific actions and outcomes necessary to address the difficulties facing many low-income working families. The dual risk of poverty and instability for our youngest citizens must be addressed to assure that all children are ready to start and able to succeed in the public school system. Our collective experience resoundingly supports these directives.

1. Increase the number of low-income, high-risk children who are prepared to enter kindergarten by ensuring that these children have consistent access to high-quality childcare centers.

2. Increase the number of MFIP adults who become self-reliant and able to earn a livable income by using the relationships and resources that high-quality childcare centers offer to draw the link for parents between their children’s development and their compliance with their MFIP employment plan.

3. Ensure continuous reimbursement to high-quality childcare centers for childcare actually delivered by stabilizing childcare authorizations through the use and coordination of team resources in such a way as to improve childcare and employment-requirement compliance on the part of the parent.

4. Improve employment service providers’ federal participation rates by implementing the above strategies.

The good news is that it is known what children and families need. Continued public support for high-quality childcare has the potential to promote the healthy development of children and self-sufficiency for low-income families. The collaborative discussions described above have suggested that the key to success will be taking to other communities what the Strong Beginnings—Baby’s Space Partnership has learned about the power of relationships, and transferring this awareness to the larger systems within which everyone involved must operate. The collaboration believes it can effect change in a fragmented system by cultivating relationships between all the stakeholders—the employment service providers, the childcare workers, the childcare providers, county program managers, and the families themselves. It will take sitting at the table together and holding paramount the needs of both the child and parent.

The needs of children like Tyler are as worthy of consideration as is the need to move his mother from welfare to work. Indeed, considering Tyler’s need for quality, developmentally enhancing relationships and experiences is part of the long-range solution to welfare reform. But more than that, Tyler is deserving of society’s caring response because he and all of Minnesota’s children are worthy in and of themselves.

Terrie Rose, Ph.D., L.P., is the former associate director of the Irving B. Harris Training Center for Infant and Toddler Development at the University of Minnesota. She is currently in private practice working on models of social entrepreneurship that blend research, practice, and public and private funding to improve the quality of childcare and mental health services for young children and their families. Michele Fallon, L.I.C.S.W., is the clinical director for Baby’s Space Partnerships. She is currently a staff member with the Harris Programs at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Early Education and Development. Amos Deinard, M.D., M.P.H., is associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota. His research, training, and advocacy is focused on underserved populations. This document was developed in collaboration with Karen Miller, principal planning analyst, Hennepin County Human Services.

This study was supported by a grant from CURA’s Faculty Interactive Research Program. The program was created to encourage University faculty to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with community groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. These grants are available to regular faculty members at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis. Additional funding was provided by The Bush Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, and the Irving Harris Foundation.
Drug courts represent a shift in how the criminal justice system handles individuals arrested for drug-related offenses. The first drug court appeared in Miami, Florida, in 1989 as a response to clogged court docket, jail crowding, and high recidivism rates among drug offenders. This program was innovative for a couple of reasons. Foremost, it departed from the “lock ’em up” strategy prevalent in the 1980s, and instead sought to treat drug offenders for their addiction. Other unique features of this program included a cooperative (rather than adversarial) team-oriented approach and direct judicial involvement with the supervision of drug offenders.

Since 1989, the drug court concept has spread rapidly throughout the country. Currently, drug courts operate in almost every state and in several federal jurisdictions.

The main goals of drug court programs are to screen out drug offenders early in the criminal justice process, get them immediately into a treatment-oriented program, and have probation officials and one or more judges continually monitor them. The close involvement of the judicial branch allows continuity in monitoring and supervision and prevents individuals from getting lost as they are shuffled through different agencies. Additionally, judges are in the unique position of being able to provide immediate consequences for individuals who relapse and to provide immediate rewards for those who progress through the program.

In April 2002, the South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court began operation in Duluth, Minnesota. This article summarizes information gathered by researchers at the University of Minnesota at Duluth, in concert with program staff, as part of an ongoing evaluation of the program. This research was funded by the Center for Community and Regional Research at the University of Minnesota at Duluth through a grant from CURA, and by Arrowhead Regional Corrections. We report here process-related information—specifi-
cally whether the drug court program is doing what it set out to accomplish in terms of client enrollment, supervision, and treatment. We also explore some intermediate outcomes—whether the drug court reduced illicit drug use or risk for future offending among participants.

The South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court Program

The South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court Program is a collaborative effort among the Sixth Judicial Court, public defenders, St. Louis County prosecutors, Arrowhead Regional Corrections, and local service providers. Modeled after previous drug courts, the primary goal of the program is to divert drug offenders out of the traditional criminal justice system and into residential or outpatient drug treatment. The drug court team—consisting of the drug court judge, probation officers, a prosecutor, and treatment staff—monitors each client. The drug court team meets weekly to review cases, and the judge then follows through with recommendations during the court reviews. The ultimate goal of the drug court is for participants to abstain from illicit drugs and other criminal behavior.

Participants in the drug court program proceed through three phases, during which restrictions, reviews, and drug testing become less frequent. For example, in phase 1, participants appear in court for weekly reviews, but by phase 3, the reviews are conducted on a monthly basis. Drug court guidelines specify that to graduate, participants must spend at least one year in the program and have one year of clean urinalyses.

A Profile of Drug Court Clients

The sample of drug court participants we studied included all individuals who were, at any time after conviction, supervised in drug court from its inception in April 2002 until June 2004 (a total of 62 participants). Table 1 provides a profile of the drug court participants we studied, including demographics, criminal history/risk level, and drug and alcohol use. Of primary importance here is whether those admitted into drug court are the type of individuals the court was designed to serve. Specifically, concern was expressed during the planning stage that although the intent of the program is to serve those with serious addictions, the program might end up enrolling low-risk (i.e., young, petty, first-time) offenders. This concern raises two related research questions. First, what is the risk level of drug court clients? Second, what is the addiction level of drug court clients?

Table 1 reveals that the average age of a drug court participant was 34 years, with racial minorities (27%) and females (39%) accounting for a substantial portion of the participants. With respect to the criminal history/risk level of drug court clients, the average risk score, as measured by the Level of Supervision Inventory–Revised (LSI), was 29.1 The distribution of scores ranged from a low of 12 to a high of 48. The maximum score on the LSI is 54, and a score of 29 falls in the moderate risk category. Regarding specific measures of criminal history, the average number of prior convictions is just below three, and 43% of the participants were incarcerated for a prior offense. Overall then, with regard to risk for recidivism and prior record, offenders enrolled in drug court are not young, first-time, petty offenders. Rather, both criminal history (prior convictions and prior incarceration) and the total LSI score suggest a medium to medium-low risk group.

Because of the unique focus of drug courts, it is important to inspect the degree to which drug court participants evidence drug and alcohol problems. The LSI provides a drug/alcohol problem scale derived from a number of items regarding alcohol and drug use (e.g., current and past problems with drugs and alcohol, whether drug offenses contributed to law violations, marital/family problems, or school/work problems). The maximum drug scale score is 9, and the average score on this scale for drug court clients was 5.8. Therefore, drug court participants evidenced, on average, roughly 65% of possible risk indicators in this section.

We also examined the type of illicit drugs that drug court participants reported abusing during the LSI interview. More than half of the participants (55%) evidenced problems (e.g., job, family, law problems) related to marijuana. The remainder of the participants reported abusing a variety of other drugs, most notably methamphetamine (16%) and cocaine (11%). The “other” category (3%) included primarily prescription drugs.

1 The LSI–Revised is a quantitative instrument that predicts risk for recidivism. A probation officer completes the instrument with information from a structured interview with the offender and from outside sources, including the arrest report and case file.

The Drug Court Process—Supervision and Treatment

The goal of the drug court is to reduce or eliminate substance abuse and ultimately all criminal offending. The strategy for reducing substance abuse in the South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court (like other drug courts) is a combination of residual or outpatient substance-abuse treatment and urinalysis (UA), with quick, graduated consequences for failed UAs or other noncompliance. Additionally, the drug court judge and probation officers provide supervision and guidance. In this section, we present an overview of how the participants progressed (or are progressing) through the drug court, including the level of treatment and supervision provided to clients.

Current Status and Retention Rate of the Drug Court Participants

Within the sample of drug court participants we studied, 40% of individuals have graduated and an additional 39% are spread across phases 1, 2, and 3. Those who graduated took, on average, 16 months to complete the program. The remaining individuals are either on warrant status (11%), were terminated from the program (7%), or opted out of drug court (3%). The option to voluntarily withdraw (opt out) from drug court was a part of the original program protocol but has since been rescinded. Of the four individuals terminated from drug court, two were arrested for new drug-related offenses and one for assault. The final termination was a result of repeated failures (i.e., positive UAs, noncompliance) over an extended period of time.

The individuals on warrant status have absconded from the drug court. Warrant status is relatively common for any community supervision program and creates some difficulty in calculating the overall retention rate of the drug court. Retention rates are an important baseline measure of any treatment program. Most program evaluators would agree that a program in which a large portion of the participants fail (i.e., they are revoked or kicked out) is ineffective. This is an especially salient issue for those addicted to drugs and alcohol. So, what is the retention rate for the drug court participants we studied? If one assumes...
that those on warrant status will not return to drug court, then they must be included as “failures,” and the retention rate becomes 79%. However, if the assumption is that these individuals will be returned to the program, the retention rate is 90%.

**Level of Supervision—Probation Contacts, Court Appearances, and Urinalyses.** The main issue here is whether drug court participants are being supervised at the levels outlined in the drug court protocol. The drug court team supervises drug court participants primarily through weekly staff meetings and courtroom reviews. Additionally, a probation officer supervises the participants through office, phone, and field visits. Finally, the drug court team depends upon the results of drug testing (urinalysis, or UA) to help supervise participants. The drug court protocol specifies the level of supervision, including the number of UAs, expected for each phase of the drug court process. These expected supervision levels are summarized, where possible, in the first three columns of Table 2. For example, the phase 1 protocol specifies one UA plus additional “random UAs” per week. Phase 2 requires one random UA per week, and phase 3 calls simply for random UAs.

The last two columns in Table 2 indicate the actual levels of supervision. Unfortunately, the data do not allow us to specify the level of supervision during each phase. For example, we know the number of probation contacts that a drug court client has, but not when (i.e., during what phase) those contacts occurred. The data do
allow us to calculate overall levels of supervision for the participants we studied, or for particular subgroups. To attempt to mirror the protocol, we describe actual mean (average) supervision levels using both the whole sample (participants who have moved through all phases of the program) and a subsample of those who are still in phases 1 and 2. We would expect that those in the subsample would show higher levels of supervision, consistent with the drug court protocol.

The drug court protocol specifies a minimum of one weekly UA for phases 1 and 2 of the drug court program. Thereafter, only random UAs are required. Table 2 reveals that drug court clients in phases 1 and 2 are being tested for illicit drug use an average of almost twice per week. The full sample (many of whom are either in phase 3 or have graduated), still averages 1.4 UAs per week. With regard to urinalysis then, the level of supervision is consistent with (or greater than) that outlined in the protocol.

The drug court protocol specifies that the probation officer will see clients at least once weekly in the “home, office, or work” during phase 1. Further, probation officers are to make “random work and home checks in person or by phone.” In phases 2 and 3, the protocol mandates only random home/work checks by the probation officer. The data do not permit us to distinguish “home checks” or “work checks.” Rather, contacts are categorized as office contacts, field contacts, or phone contacts. On a monthly basis then, we would expect a minimum of four non-phone probation contacts per month during phase 1. After phase 1, that number should decline. These data

### Table 2. Expected and Actual Levels of Supervision of South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expected supervision</th>
<th>Actual supervision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 1 protocol</td>
<td>Phase 2 protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinalyses per week</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation office and field contacts per month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation phone contacts per month</td>
<td>random</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court contacts per month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The phases 1 and 2 sample included 13 participants.
† The phase 3 sample included 62 participants.

### Table 3. South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court Program Treatment Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of treatment</th>
<th>Treatment progress</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Mean (average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential drug treatment</td>
<td>Attended treatment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment progress</td>
<td>Successful completion</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days in treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpatient drug treatment</td>
<td>Attended treatment</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment progress</td>
<td>Successful completion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive treatment</td>
<td>Attended treatment</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment progress</td>
<td>Successful completion</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any drug treatment</td>
<td>Attended treatment</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
suggest that regardless of phase, drug court clients are averaging about one field or office contact per month, and one phone contact per month. Actual probation supervision appears to be less than what is outlined in the drug court protocol.

Court reviews, in which participants discuss their progress with the judge in open court, are a central component to drug courts. During the review, the judge receives updates on the participants’ progress and rewards or punishes clients based upon their progress and the results of their drug tests. Participants move from weekly to monthly court reviews as they progress from phase 1 to phase 3. The data indicate that the court reviews are progressing as envisioned. The subsample of early phase participants average three court reviews per month, and the full sample averages two court reviews per month.

Treatments—Substance Abuse and Cognitive Skills. A distinguishing feature of drug courts is the provision of substance-abuse treatment. In the South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court, private vendors provide both residential and outpatient drug treatment. To qualify for public funding of treatment, drug court clients must be found to be “chemically dependent” (addicted) or be engaging in “chemical abuse.” A county social worker assesses individuals based on criteria outlined by the state of Minnesota and offers them the “least restrictive referral consistent with sound clinical judgment.”

Treatment participation for the drug court participants is outlined in Table 3. The data indicate that 32% of the participants (20 people) attended residential treatment for an average of about 60 days. Of those 20 individuals, all either successfully completed the treatment or are currently in progress. One-half of the drug court participants (29 people) participated in outpatient drug treatment. The vast majority of these individuals (69%) successfully completed treatment, with the remainder being either in progress (17%) or unsuccessfully terminated (14%). The unsuccessful terminations resulted either from the client being terminated from drug court, or the client being moved from outpatient to residential treatment. When residential and outpatient substance-abuse treatment are combined (the section in Table 3 labeled “any drug treatment”), we find that roughly two-thirds (65%) of the drug court participants went through some form of drug treatment. This figure is smaller than the sum of residential and outpatient categories because some participants experienced both types of treatment.

A 65% treatment rate is substantial. Nevertheless, that leaves roughly one-third of the participants in a program designed for drug offenders without any treatment specifically tailored to substance abuse. After consulting members of the drug court team, as well as the St. Louis County assessor for substance abuse, it appears that most of the treatment gap stems from a disparity between state criteria for public funding (which pays for drug treatment) and the drug court team’s assessment of substance abuse. In other words, one-third of drug court participants (whom the drug court team feels have significant substance-abuse problems) do not meet state criteria for public funding.

The drug court team, in conjunction with a private vendor, started a cognitive-oriented outpatient program to provide some treatment to those who did not qualify for public funding. These sessions focused on changing faulty thinking (rationalizations) and building cognitive skills. Although substance abuse is not a primary focus, these programs target the rationalizations and attitudes that support both criminal behavior and substance abuse. As the drug court evolved, this cognitive program expanded to include those who had already completed residential or outpatient drug treatment. As indicated in Table 3, 71% of the drug court participants we studied attended this treatment. By combining the general cognitive treatment with drug specific treatment, we find that 90% of participants received some form of correctional treatment. Looking only at drug court graduates—which recognizes that some individuals were terminated prior to treatment—we find that 24 of the 25 graduates (96%) received some form of treatment.

Intermediate Outcomes among Drug Court Graduates
Thus far, we have discussed primarily process measures—whether the program is operating as originally envisioned. We turn now to outcome measures for those who have graduated the drug court (25 participants). That is, we look at whether drug court reduced the risk that these individuals will recidivate. We strongly caution against drawing firm conclusions from these data for two reasons. First, the sample size is relatively small. Second, because this is the first cohort of graduates, these individuals moved more quickly through the phases (i.e., they had fewer setbacks) than other participants. They may be the “cream of the crop,” and may not be representative of future drug court graduates.

A major objective of drug court is to reduce or eliminate the use of illicit substances among clients. The most obvious measures of this objective are data from urinalysis screens. Indeed, the drug court protocol specifies that to graduate, participants must have clean UAs for at least one year. Among graduates, 7 individuals (28%) had no positive UA screens throughout the drug court process. The remaining 18 individuals (72%) had at least one positive UA prior to graduation. For those individuals with at least one positive UA, the average time between their last positive UA and graduation was roughly one year (368 days). Overall then, there is evidence that drug court did reduce substance use among graduates.

Given this reduction of substance use, we anticipated that both the LSI drug sub-score and the LSI total score would decline for those who were re-tested. Of the 25 graduates, 16 were administered the LSI near their graduation date. The LSI scores for entry into and exit from drug court (and the difference in those scores) are shown in Table 4. As expected, both the LSI total score and the LSI drug sub-score were lower upon graduation than entry. Furthermore, because various components of the drug court program sought to affect both the attitude (cognitive treatment) and employment of clients, we include the LSI sub-scores measuring these components. All attitude/orientation scale of the LSI contains items that tap whether an individual has attitudes that support crime, or are poor toward the sentence or supervision. The employment scale includes items that measure recent and past employment stability as well as education. For both scales, the average scores for drug court participants improved as they progressed through drug court.
Drug court clients almost universally agreed that their probation officer was fair, concerned, and respectful, and most said the probation officer helped them to stay drug free.

Apart from the close-ended questions, survey respondents were asked in an open-ended format what they liked most and least about the drug court. In describing what they liked most about the drug court, respondents generally pointed to one of three areas:

1. the staff and the team atmosphere (“support from the team and the people in drug court,” “concern about your well-being,” “the involvement of the drug court team”)
2. keeping sober/straight (“getting a chance to straighten my life out,” “being sober,” “getting a chance to put my life back together”) 
3. the legal benefits of drug court (“not in jail,” “felony conviction won’t be on my record”) 

Table 4. Mean Level of Supervision Inventory–Revised (LSI) Scores for Select South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court Graduates (16 participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LSI total score*</th>
<th>LSI drug sub-score*</th>
<th>LSI attitude/orientation sub-score*</th>
<th>LSI employment sub-score*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At drug court entry</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At drug court exit</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in mean scores</td>
<td>8.9†</td>
<td>3.7†</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.9†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Higher values for the LSI total score and sub-scores reflect greater risk for recidivism. Thus, lower employment and attitude sub-scores reflect an increase in employment consistency and pro-social attitudes, respectively.

† Statistically significant mean difference at the p <0.01 level using paired t-test, which means there is a less than 1% probability that the difference in mean scores is a result of chance.

2003, and again later in April 2004. Drug court staff distributed the surveys during one of the weekly court review sessions. The survey respondents were explicitly told that the survey was anonymous, and that they should not put their name or any identifier on the survey. Respondents placed completed surveys in a box in the back of the courtroom, further ensuring anonymity. Of the 40 individuals enrolled in drug court during the time of the first survey, 35 individuals (87%) turned in usable surveys. For the second survey, 41 out of 47 individuals (87%) returned usable surveys.

The participants were asked to respond to a variety of statements regarding the drug court judge and probation officers, as well as the general drug court process. Response categories for these questions included “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree.” For presentation, we collapsed the answers to indicate whether the respondent generally agreed or disagreed with the statement.

Overall, drug court clients had a favorable impression toward the drug court and toward those who provide supervision. In both surveys, more than 80% of drug court clients agreed that visits with the judge helped them to stay drug free, and more than 90% of those surveyed agreed that the judge was fair, respectful, and concerned about them. Similar attitudes were apparent for the probation officer assigned to drug court clients. Drug court participants almost universally agreed that their probation officer was fair (93% on the first survey, 97% on the second), concerned (90%, 100%), and respectful (95%, 100%). Additionally, the vast majority agreed that the probation officer helped them to stay drug free (85%, 88%) and that expectations were reasonable (82%, 77%).

With regard to general attitudes toward the drug court, as well as toward specific components of the program, the results are again largely positive. Figure 1 reveals that in both surveys, more than 80% of respondents agreed that they were personally helped through drug court, that they were better off in drug court than in other sanctioning programs, and that drug court was easier than jail or prison. Further, the vast majority of offenders agreed that drug court helped them to appear for treatment (77% in the first survey, 82% in the second survey), probation officer meetings (91%, 93%), and court review sessions (83%, 89%) on a regular basis.
In contrast to statements about what they liked most about drug court, their responses to what they liked least had one overriding theme—the amount of time they spent reporting for drug court–related activities such as court reviews, “call-ins,” treatment, and urinalyses. Responses included, “all of the requirements,” “time consuming UAs,” and “showing up too much.”

**Conclusions**

Based on our research findings, the South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court attained the majority of its process-related goals. Although this study offers reason to be cautiously optimistic about the success of the South St. Louis County Adult Drug Court, firm conclusions about the effectiveness of the drug court must wait until we complete an outcome study using an adequate comparison group and follow-up period.

With this caveat in mind, several general policy considerations appear warranted based on our evaluation of the South St. Louis County program. First, to the extent that space in drug court programs is limited, program planners should allow risk for offending and addiction levels to guide decisions about who is accepted into the program. Specifically, those who have a higher risk for recidivism and those addicted to “hard” drugs should be given preference. Because these individuals are more likely to meet minimum criteria for publicly funded treatment, more drug court participants will receive drug treatment. Moreover, the treatment literature suggests that intensive services such as those offered by the drug court are better suited to higher risk clients.

Second, drug court administrators should think carefully about the duties and caseloads of the probation officers assigned to drug court clients. Follow-up interviews suggested that supervision levels did not meet expectations because the probation officer assigned to drug court clients faced an ever-increasing caseload, and took on multiple roles in the drug court (e.g., data collection, appearances at court reviews, traditional office and field visits). In response to this, the South St. Louis Drug Court has added an additional probation officer.

Finally, jurisdictions that are implementing a drug court should consider devising a plan to deal with those offenders who abscond from the program. The plan might include a timeline for attempting to track down absconders (e.g., a set time before police are sent to investigate), and a schedule of consequences if and when they are returned to drug court.

Jeff Maahs is assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Minnesota at Duluth. His research and teaching interests include criminological theory, corrections, and legal issues in criminology.

Matt Makarios was an undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota at Duluth at the time of this project. He has since graduated and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in criminal justice at the University of Cincinnati. His research interests include explanations of female offending, effective treatments for criminal offenders, and prison privatization.

This research was funded by the Center for Community and Regional Research (CCRR) through a grant from CURA, which provides CCRR’s base funding. Located on the University of Minnesota at Duluth (UMD) campus, CCRR supports cooperative research involving UMD faculty, UMD students, and community agencies in northeastern Minnesota.
Project Awards

To keep our readers up-to-date about CURA projects, each issue of the CURA Reporter features a few capsule descriptions of new projects under way. The projects highlighted in this issue are made possible through CURA’s Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) program, which has been building partnerships between community-based organizations in the Twin Cities and local colleges and universities around community-building activities since 1993. These projects represent only a portion of those that will receive support from CURA and its partners during the coming year.

■ Available Affordable Rental Housing. Seward Redesign is a nonprofit community development corporation that serves the greater Longfellow community of central Minneapolis and surrounding neighborhoods. Seward Redesign builds constructive working relationships that engage residents, businesses, and institutions in sustainable development activities to benefit the community. In collaboration with Seward Neighborhood Group and Longfellow Community Council, Seward Redesign plans to build on demographic research completed during the last several years to compile a profile on the availability of affordable rental housing in the community. Avigya Karki, a graduate student in the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, will gather specifics about the size and type of units, rental rates, rent restrictions, subsidies, vacancy rates, ownership, and future plans to sell or improve rental properties in the study area. Karki will also develop a database that will track ongoing development in major transit corridors, including the Hiawatha Greenway and light-rail transit (LRT) corridors. The research will inform a community-based planning process to create an integrated development plan that identifies specific sites and types of housing desired by the neighborhoods, including those that will help combat pressures for gentrification in the LRT corridor.

■ Job Disparities and Economic Development Opportunities. The African American Action Committee (AAAC) is a group of local Brooklyn Park homeowners, small business owners, and tenants formed to organize and empower disadvantaged people of color living in the northwest suburb. The organization is concerned that African American residents are not included in jobs or economic development activity in Brooklyn Park. Yolanda Cunningham, a graduate student in the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, will collect data on current employment of people of color by the city, as well as city contracts with minority contractors and vendors. The AAAC hopes to use the data to develop a strategic plan and course of action to address job disparities in Brooklyn Park.

■ Homeownership and Community Development in St. Paul. The St. Paul Coalition for Community Development is a coalition of 12 community developers formed in 1984. The coalition’s mission is to revitalize and sustain St. Paul’s neighborhoods by developing, maintaining, and rehabilitating residential housing, and by creating jobs and restoring economic vitality to neighborhood commercial, industrial, and manufacturing districts. Robert Russell, a graduate student in the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, will assist the coalition by examining the median sale price of homes in St. Paul by neighborhood, as well as the amount of subsidy that would be needed to make homes affordable at various income levels. In addition, Russell will compile and map data on projects undertaken by St. Paul community development corporations (CDC) during the last 30 years. The research will benefit community developers by documenting the scope of CDC work to address neighborhood housing needs, supplying information to assess the disconnect between the cost of ownership housing and the incomes of residents, and providing data to make the case for targeting additional resources to community development activities that assist low-income families to become homeowners.

■ Media Coverage of the Twin Cities Hmong Community. Hmong National Development (HND) is a nonprofit organization active in get-out-the-vote campaigns and issues relating to the media and the Hmong community. During the past year, the Twin Cities Hmong community has received extensive media coverage, with stories covering the shootings by Chai Vang, the troubles of St. Paul police officer Tou Cha, financial difficulties surrounding the new Hmong funeral home, and the controversy over the activities of General Vang Pao. Many Hmong believe that the media coverage has had a negative impact on the Hmong community, and some Hmong report an upturn in anti-Hmong behavior. Hlee Lee, an undergraduate student at the University of St. Thomas, will inventory news coverage about the Hmong in the Twin Cities media during the past year and compare it with media coverage of the Hmong in other parts of the United States. Lee will also survey local Hmong about their perceptions of Twin Cities media, interview Hmong reporters, and study what other groups dissatisfied with media coverage have done to address the problem. If the research shows serious dissatisfaction with Twin Cities media coverage of the Hmong community, HND plans to develop and carry out strategies to change how local media cover the Hmong community.

■ Pedestrian Lighting in the Sheridan Neighborhood. The mission of the Sheridan Neighborhood Organization is to facilitate connections between Sheridan’s residents, businesses, and institutions to preserve the neighborhood’s strengths, address its changing needs, and improve the community. The organization wants to install pedestrian-level lighting on the 13th Avenue business corridor and along University Avenue, Second Street, and Marshall Street. Adam Maleitzke, an undergraduate in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota, will develop a manual that examines the specific conditions of the Sheridan neighborhood, outlines the steps for installing pedestrian-level lighting, and provides case studies of similar successful projects. The Sheridan Neighborhood Organization will use the manual to educate the community on the options for creating and installing pedestrian-level lighting and to develop a plan for the neighborhood. The manual also can be used by other neighborhood organizations interested in pursuing a pedestrian lighting project.
Northeast Futures Community Engagement Mapping. The mission of the Northeast Community Development Corporation (NE CDC) is to promote economic development in Northeast Minneapolis. The organization has formed a partnership with the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association and the Northeast Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce to initiate a two-year community visioning and planning process called the Northeast Futures Project. The project is grounded in the belief that mapping development and land-use data and trends—on a neighborhood level, on a community-wide level, and within the context of Northeast Minneapolis’ adjacent first-ring suburban communities—will be an effective community engagement tool. The goal of the project is to involve 10,000 participants and to provide community education on development and land-use issues to 2,000 individuals. Andrea Petersen, a graduate student in the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, will obtain data sets, adapt city zoning overlays, check facts, and interview stakeholders to create a map that will identify the location and status of current, planned, pending, potential, and likely housing and job-generating development sites in Northeast Minneapolis. This map will give stakeholders a comprehensive graphic representation of the current and future development situation in Northeast Minneapolis and assist in grassroots planning and visioning.

Valley Organizing Project: Community Benefits Agreement Negotiating Points. The Harrison Neighborhood Association (HNA) is a multi-issue, multiconstituent organization that employs a variety of strategies and programs to empower residents and revitalize the Harrison neighborhood. The Valley Organizing Project is a two-part community-driven effort to undo nearly a century of urban policies and land-use decisions that have contributed to the environmental deterioration, social marginalization, and economic decline of the area and around Harrison known as the Bassett Creek Valley and Heritage Park (formerly the Sumner-Glenwood neighborhoods). Aron Khoury, a graduate student in the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, will identify feasible negotiating points that HNA can use in a community benefits agreement that will be applied to the Bassett Creek Valley Redevelopment Plan. The final product will be a document detailing the most feasible job-creation and housing goals that meet neighborhood interests. This research will quantify the neighborhood’s interests to balance the needs of the master developer and ensure the community benefits from the redevelopment.

Creating a New Public Space in Stevens Square: Case Studies in Community Art Center Design. The Stevens Square Center for the Arts (SSCA) is a neighborhood-based community arts center located in the Stevens Square neighborhood of Minneapolis. The organization was formed as a partnership between artists at the annual Red Hot Art Festival, the Stevens Square Community Organization, and JAS Apartments in 2003 as a means to redevelop vacant office space in the neighborhood into a community arts center. There is significant development interest in the Stevens Square neighborhood and it is likely that the current building that houses SSCA may be redeveloped into a new project. To help SSCA identify a new location, Erica Christenson, a graduate student in the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, will compile case studies of existing arts centers (either local or national) that incorporate a housing component and at least two of the following characteristics: gallery space, artist work studios, community meeting space, or flexible performance space. The SSCA will use the research to identify successful components of other community arts centers that might be considered in the design of a new building, and to provide a template of building design needs to interested developers, many of whom are unaccustomed to designing commercial space for the specific needs of a community arts center.

CURA’s Website Has a New Look and New Features

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs recently redesigned its website to include more information about CURA programs, projects, and publications, and to make it easier for visitors to locate the information they are looking for. The new web design includes:

- new navigational features that reduce the need to click or scroll to locate information
- customized pages that highlight frequently used resources for community organizations, policy makers, faculty, and students
- links to the best Minnesota web resources in each of CURA’s core research areas
- a keyword searchable publications catalog of more than 2,000 publications and reports available from CURA
- an experts page to help locate CURA staff with expertise on a variety of urban and regional affairs issues
- easier access to information about grants and technical assistance available from CURA and its affiliated programs

You can visit CURA’s website at www.cura.umn.edu. Look for more new features on our site in the coming months!