economic conditions of North Minneapolis by engaging in activities designed to transform West Broadway into a place where neighborhood residents have access to goods, services, and amenities to meet their social and entertainment needs. The coalition planned to start an outdoor urban market in the summer of 2011 and needed research assistance in site selection, successful business models, and available funding sources. The new market will provide economic development opportunities for local farmers and entrepreneurs and provide improved access to fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy food options. Alicia Uzarek, an urban and regional planning graduate student at the Humphrey School, researched potential sites, business models, and vendors for the market. The results are being used to identify funding opportunities and inform how to create the market. 

Program: Neighborhood Partnerships for Community Research (NPCR)

Public Parking in a Minneapolis Neighborhood in Transition. The Corcoran Neighborhood Organization (CNO) is a citizen-participation organization that strives to strengthen, improve, and protect the unique character, livability, and social fabric of the neighborhood. The supply, demand, and cost of public parking have become central issues in the public conversation about the dense urban development under way on sites to the west of the Lake Street/Midtown light-rail transit station. These sites are currently vacant, underutilized, and/or used for temporary surface parking, reflecting the established “suburban” land-use patterns of the larger Hiawatha-Lake area. This pattern stands in sharp contrast, however, to the dense, urban, transit-oriented land-use pattern that is coming to the project area. A coordinated solution to parking is paramount to the success of the Corcoran neighborhood, and the successful realization of CNO’s land-use plan. Sasha Bergman, an urban and regional planning graduate student in the Humphrey School, defined and articulated the demand for parking in the project area and researched various solutions. The results are being used to guide and inform the community process around new development in the project area. Program: Neighborhood Partnerships for Community Research (NPCR)

David Forrest Awarded CURA Dissertation Research Grant

CURA is pleased to announce David Forrest, a doctoral student in the Department of Political Science, as the first recipient of the CURA Dissertation Research Grant. The grant provides one year of support to a Ph.D. candidate in good academic standing at the University of Minnesota for the purpose of completing dissertation research on a significant issue or topic related to urban areas in the upper Midwest region.

Joe Soss, Cowles Professor for the Study of Public Service at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, praised Forrest in his letter of support as “one of the most impressive graduate students I have worked with.” He noted that Forrest’s dissertation research “has the potential to make significant contributions to the scholarly literatures on policy advocacy, political representation, and the positioning of marginalized populations in U.S. politics,” as well as to “yield some important lessons and warnings for people who work on poverty and housing advocacy.”

Against the backdrop of the recent housing crisis and recession, Forrest’s research explores the role that political activists play as representatives of marginalized groups of urban poor people, focusing specifically on anti-poverty activists in Minneapolis and their efforts regarding housing and the foreclosure crisis, public education, and welfare rights. Using field research and drawing on contemporary democratic theory, Forrest investigates how political activists’ efforts serve to construct the “urban poor” as a political group with a shared identity, and position them as stakeholders in relation to institutions such as school boards and banks. Ultimately, Forrest is interested in understanding how these constructions impact both the voice of the urban poor in the policy-making process and the larger structural causes of poverty in the United States.

An article summarizing Forrest’s dissertation research will appear in a future issue of the CURA Reporter. For more information about the CURA Dissertation Research Grant program, visit www.cura.umn.edu/Dissertation.php.