

RCP Selects Carver County as Next Community Partner

The Resilient Communities Project (RCP) has selected Carver County in the Twin Cities west metro area as its partner community for the 2015–2016 academic year. The partnership will bring the expertise of University of Minnesota faculty and hundreds of graduate and professional students to sustainability-related projects identified by Carver County and its partners, which include the Carver County Community Development Agency; SouthWest Transit; Independent School District 112; and the Cities of Victoria, Chaska, and Watertown.

“Carver County and its partners are very pleased to be selected for this partnership with the University of Minnesota,” said Carver County Board Chair Randy Maluchnik. “The County’s proposal leverages long-standing relationships between partner agencies and communities in Carver County to address diverse challenges that result from the growth we are experiencing. The results University of Minnesota students will produce through this partnership will benefit our community for years to come.”

RCP organizes yearlong partnerships between the University of Minnesota and Minnesota communities. Each academic year, RCP chooses a city or county partner through a competitive request-for-proposal process, helps identify potential projects based on community-identified sustainability issues and needs, and matches those project needs with University of Minnesota courses.

The partnership provides the community with access to students from a wide range of programs and disciplines—from architecture, planning, and engineering to business, environmental sciences, and the humanities. Through work with RCP, the community is able to enhance its own capacity to advance sustainability. Students who participate in RCP projects benefit from real-world opportunities to apply their knowledge and training and bring



Courtesy of Carver County

Carver County’s proposal includes partnerships with the Carver County Community Development Agency; SouthWest Transit; Independent School District 112; and the Cities of Victoria, Chaska, and Watertown

energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to address local issues.

“We’re very excited about our upcoming partnership with Carver County,” said RCP director and Humphrey School of Public Affairs associate professor Carissa Slotterback. “The enthusiasm of staff from the County and its partner cities and organizations as well as their clear commitment to advancing sustainability and resilience will ensure a productive and enjoyable collaboration that will benefit Carver County and provide community-engaged learning opportunities for University of Minnesota students.”

Carver County’s winning proposal identifies 34 potential projects, including enhancing bike and pedestrian facilities near park-and-ride locations, creating safe routes to schools, providing school-based mental health programs, developing alternative energy

sources, evaluating storm water reuse opportunities, developing employment opportunities for ex-offenders, assessing the needs of adult learners, expanding school readiness and early childhood programs for high-risk populations, engaging with new immigrant groups and communities of color, crafting an eco-tourism marketing plan, exploring opportunities for preservation of a historic farmstead, and evaluating the County’s aquatic invasive species program.

Over the next few months, staff from RCP and from Carver County and its partners will begin to define the scope of the individual projects and match them with courses offered at the University in fall 2015 and spring 2016. RCP program manager Mike Greco will administer the partnership on behalf of the University, and Carver County planner Nate Kabat will coordinate the County’s participation in the program.