

Become Our First Community Partner for the Inaugural Sustainable Working Landscapes Initiative (2015-2016)

The Augustana College Upper Mississippi Center (UMC) is accepting proposals from cities and counties to be our first community partner for the inaugural Sustainable Working Landscapes Initiative for 2015-2016. Cities, counties, and regional partnerships are eligible to apply

The Sustainable Working Landscapes Initiative (SWLI) is a year-long partnership between Augustana and a community partner (city or county). Community partners (you) identify a collection of high-priority projects that build stronger local and regional economies, more vibrant and livable communities, healthier and happier individuals, and a healthier environment. Experienced faculty from a diverse array of disciplines will lead teams of passionate, creative students and tackle community-driven projects within the framework of existing courses.

This intimate collaboration helps the community partner advance their priority initiatives, while students get experience creating cutting-edge solutions to persistent problems. Expertise is available on all aspects of sustainability (economic opportunities, community livability, public health, environmental health, social justice, etc.) and all stages of efforts (conceptual analysis, planning, designing, implementation, and evaluation). Because these projects are your priorities, the ideas, designs, and products students generate have real-world impact by providing the community with fresh ideas to address critical, but unmet community needs.

The partner community must support the effort through dedicated staff time and a local funding contribution. We anticipate that the selection process will be competitive. **The deadline for applications is 5:00pm on Friday, January 30, 2014. The community partner for the inaugural Initiative in 2015-2016 will be announced in April 2015.**

How to Get Started

1. Review the SWLI Request for Proposals (RFP) packet
2. Let us know you are interested in being our first community partner so we can help! Arrange a meeting(s) with UMC staff to discuss the initiative, brainstorm project ideas, and get assistance in completing your application by contacting Michael Reisner, UMC Director, at 309-794-3418 or michaelreisner@augustana.edu or Tara Cullison, SWLI Program Coordinator, at 309-794-7453 or taracullison@augustana.edu.
3. Attend the panel session to learn about the Initiative from the perspective of other city managers on October 23 or 24. Please RSVP by contacting Tara Cullison, SWLI Program Coordinator, at taracullison@augustana.edu or 309.794.7453
4. Complete and submit your application by January 30, 2015. UMC will review proposals and select the 2015-2016 community partner by April 2015.

Included in this Document

1. Program Overview
2. Partner Benefits
3. Augustana College Commitments
4. Community Staff & Financial Commitments
5. Identifying Potential Projects
6. Program Timeline
7. Proposal Components
8. Proposal Evaluation Criteria
9. Submitting Your Application

Program Overview

SWLI is a year-long partnership between Augustana College's Sustainable Working Landscapes Initiative (SWLI) and one community partner in Illinois or Iowa. Community partners (you) identify a collection of high-priority projects that build stronger local and regional economies, more vibrant and livable communities, healthier and happier individuals, and a healthier environment. Experienced faculty from a diverse array of disciplines lead teams of passionate, creative students and tackle community-driven projects within the framework of existing courses.

This intimate collaboration helps the community partner advance their priority initiatives, while students get experience creating cutting-edge solutions to persistent real-world problems. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems facing communities. The Initiative's primary value is from the enduring collaborations that measurably advance the community partner's initiatives, while providing students with cutting-edge learning opportunities.

Partner Benefits

Partners will benefit in numerous ways towards advancing their sustainability initiatives and can expect:

1. Earning a high rate of return on their investment via the hundreds of hours of work by enthusiastic Augustana students and experienced faculty on community-identified projects.
2. Gaining insights from an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving that draws on the breadth of knowledge and perspectives from a diverse array of disciplines spanning the social and natural sciences and humanities.
3. Gaining the depth of knowledge and expertise of experienced faculty knowledgeable of cutting edge research and practices in their perspective fields.
4. Formulating novel solutions that can move projects forward because students and faculty have the freedom to explore directions that are sometimes not available to partner staff or outside consultants as a result of budget or political constraints.
5. Increasing publicity and awareness of sustainability challenges facing the community and your efforts to address those challenges, and engaging more local partners and citizens in tackling such challenges.
6. Elevating energy and enthusiasm among partner staff and greater support from community stakeholders created by the student outreach in the community.

7. Building a pool of young, energetic, and creative students with experience solving real world problems facing society that can serve as candidates for future internships and staff positions.
8. Creating a pool of students who can serve as informal ambassadors for the partner and describe the successful collaboration at community meetings and forums.

In return, community partners create and support these unique real-world, interdisciplinary-collaborative learning opportunities. Partners do so by identifying high-need, high-priority sustainability projects, dedicating staff-time to oversee and mentor students, creating related internship opportunities, and providing funding to cooperatively support the direct operating costs of the SWLI.

Augustana College Commitments

From October 2014 through January 2015, UMC Director Michael Reisner and SWLI Program Coordinator Tara Cullison will work with community partner staff to develop and refine a list of potential projects. During spring and summer of 2015, Augustana SWLI staff, faculty, and student fellows will meet with selected partner staff and community stakeholders to develop a comprehensive scope-of-work for each project and participating course(s) to guide work throughout the project duration. The scope of work will include a problem statement, potential issues or directions for student exploration, specific project activities (data and information collection, site visits), expected outcomes and final deliverables.

Depending on the level of matching funds from partners and complexity of the proposed projects, Augustana has the capacity to address 10-20 projects during the partnership year, matching each project with one or more courses to complete the necessary work. Projects will be carried out using existing courses and senior inquiry research projects between June 2015 and May of 2015 (summer, fall, winter, and spring terms).

Augustana faculty and staff will provide ongoing support throughout the process to ensure high-quality outcomes that meet the partner's needs. Support will include coordinating Augustana resources, identifying and coordinating necessary data and information for the projects, maintaining a project website, coordinating media outreach, soliciting feedback from partner staff, and troubleshooting as needed. This coordination through the UMC and SWLO offers significant benefits and efficiencies over stand-alone projects that partners might coordinate with individual faculty.

Outcomes for each project will be documented in a final report and presentation. In collaboration with the community partner, project results will be disseminated through the Augustana website, social media, and traditional media outlets. At the conclusion of the project, Augustana faculty and staff are available to work with the partner to develop a strategy to implement, monitor, and evaluate sustainability efforts implemented from projects.

Community Staff & Financial Commitments

A key element of a successful partnership is staff involvement. Ideally, the partner will have one or more staff champions of proposed projects that can actively encourage participation in the partnership. Each partner must identify a staff person to serve as the Program Coordinator and serve as the liaison between the partner and Augustana SWLI. The Program Coordinator should be involved enough in each project to know the project's scope, current status, and Augustana faculty involved. The Program Coordinator's time commitment will vary depending on the number and complexity of projects and level of

involvement with each project. They should expect to spend 5-10 hours per week for the 12 months to coordinate the 10-20 projects. The number of hours will vary, with more time required during the scoping (April-August 2015) and initial work on the projects (start of fall term in August 2015, winter term in November 2015, and spring term in March 2016). If you are applying to SWLI as a multi-community partnership, each government entity will need to designate a Program Coordinator responsible for all projects involving that entity.

Partners will also identify staff to serve as leads for each project that is successfully matched with one or more college courses. Once the projects have begun, Project Leads should become the primary partner contact for students and faculty working on the project and thereby reduce the time commitment of the Program Coordinator. We anticipate that each Project Lead will spend an average of 2-4 hours per week on the project for each term the project is in progress. Project Leads will compile information and materials, mentor students/faculty during site visits, attend meetings with faculty and students, participate in reviews and presentations of student work, review and edit final deliverables, and participate in kickoff and end-of-year events.

Before the start of the academic year, the community will be expected to compile and provide background documents for each project, including but not limited to background reports and memos, GIS maps and layers, community datasets, aerial photographs, prior plans, etc.

The SWLI offers the community partner a high level of access to the wide-ranging expertise at Augustana College related to building stronger communities. Augustana UMC staff identify and facilitate one-on-one connections between city staff and faculty members from a diverse array of disciplines to develop meaningful projects that respond to local needs and priorities. High quality project work will be completed primarily by upper level undergraduate students with direct oversight by faculty and SWMI staff. The SWLI provides:

1. Program management and project coordination support
2. Reimbursement of project-related travel and material costs to support student participation in the program
3. Reimbursement for student faculty visits to and field work in the community
4. Compilation, editing, printing, and distribution of final reports
5. Publicity for and hosting of kickoff and end-of-year celebration events
6. Student-created materials for display in the partner community
7. Publicity through social, print, and broadcast media
8. Digital archiving of coursework materials
9. Works with the Augustana communications and marketing office to coordinate publicity, and with the Augustana library to coordinate the network of necessary resources available to students and the partner community.

The value of these items is estimated at over \$100,000 for the partnership year. Augustana recognizes that budgets are tight and is covering a substantial majority of the program administration costs; including the Program Manager's salary.

However, we ask that partners make a financial contribution in the form of a program fee based on a sliding scale that takes into account the number and complexity of the projects and requested outcomes and deliverables. There is no required minimum contribution towards program fees. The partner's

anticipated contribution is only one of many factors that will be considered in the project selection process. The program fees will cover the costs of coordination between Augustana faculty/staff and the partners; student and faculty site visits and data collection efforts; lab, software, and field study equipment needed to complete work; compilation, printing, and distribution of high-quality final reports and deliverables; publicity and hosting events; and student-created outreach materials.

Partner communities may choose to fund their local contribution through collaboration with other groups, such as counties and state agencies, school and watershed districts, private developers, business partners, and chambers of commerce. SWLI staff and Augustana College Advancement Office staff can assist communities in identifying potential partners and funding sources on a project-by-project basis.

Prospective partner communities should be specific in their proposals about the proposed amount of the local financial contribution, and are encouraged to contact SWLI staff to discuss potential sources of funding to support the contribution.

Identifying Potential Projects

SWLI staff will be available to assist you with your application at any stage; including introducing the SWLI program to staff, elected officials, or project partners; helping brainstorm potential projects; and finalizing your proposal for submission to the SWLI. One of the overarching goals of the SWLI is to build life-long partnerships between Augustana College and communities by assisting them in solving high-priority problems they are facing. Early collaboration to ensure shared buy-in concerning the problem will lead to better projects, so please contact us to discuss your proposal.

Projects may be drawn from individual community departments (e.g. public works, community development, finance, administration, planning, public safety, health and community services, environmental management, parks and recreation, etc.) or pursued through cross-departmental partnerships. This information packet contains a partial list of courses at Augustana College that could address sustainability projects as part of their curriculum (**Attachment 1**). The SWLI is modeled after the highly successful University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year and Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities' CityLabs program. A brief description of some of the projects completed by students in these programs is attached for your review (**Attachment 2**). These documents should provide a general idea of the range of projects that students can address.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the SWLI's Program Coordinator during the preparation of their application to discuss their proposed projects. As with much of the SWLI, successful development of a project list is best accomplished through dialogue in which: (1) the partner proposes a preliminary list of projects and project partners; (2) SWLI and community staff meet to discuss the projects and possible modifications to better match the project's scope and scale with the availability and interest of Augustana courses and faculty; and (3) SWLI staff suggest additional projects, based on the College's capacity and the community's interests, that could meet the applicant's goals. Experience shows such dialogue is critical to generating project lists that directly meet the community's needs and closely match the capacity of the SWLI and Augustana College.

In formulating projects, applicants are strongly encourage to collaborate with other entities, such as neighboring cities, county or state agencies, watershed districts, school districts, nonprofit organizations, local businesses, professional or business associations, etc. These entities can serve as stakeholders on

individual SWLI projects, become partners who assist with long-term implementation and monitoring, and provide funding to support the community's participation in the program.

Augustana will identify and match faculty and courses with proposed projects as part of its review of each partner's proposal. We anticipate three levels of projects based on their complexity and time necessary to complete the anticipated outcomes and deliverables:

- Level 1: smallest, least complex projects that likely only require the expertise of faculty/students from one discipline; and project outcomes & deliverables that can be completed in 1 ten-week course (3-4 months)
- Level 2: larger, more complex projects that are likely to require the expertise of faculty/students from 2-3 disciplines; and/or completing project outcomes & deliverables will require 2-3 courses and/or 2 ten-week terms (5-6 months)
- Level 3: largest, most complex projects that are likely to require the expertise of faculty/students from >4 disciplines; or completing project outcomes & deliverables will require >3 courses and/or 3 or more ten-week terms (9-12 months)

Fall terms typically run from late August-early November, winter terms from mid-November to mid-February, and spring terms from early March to mid-May. Yearlong projects would run from August 2015-May 2016.

Program Timeline

October 1, 2014: Augustana College UMC issues request for proposals for 2015-2016 partner community and begins accepting applications.

October 23-24, 2014: Community partners are invited to hear the perspective of city managers who have recently participated in programs after which the Augustana SWLI is modeled.

October 2014-January 2015: SWLI staff is available to meet and discuss potential projects and brainstorm project ideas, and refine proposals. SWLI staff will reach out to community partners and meet with those tentatively interested in applying.

January 30, 2015: Proposals are due to the UMC by 5:00pm

April 2015: SWLI notifies the community selected to be the inaugural partner in 2015-2016. SWLI and the community partner coordinate media to announce the partnership. The SWLI and community partner finalize the matching of proposed projects and Augustana courses and faculty

Proposal Components

Your SWLI proposal should include the following components:

1. **Community Partner Information.** Provide partner name and contact information for the partner's SWLI Program Coordinator (email, phone, mailing address, etc.), who will serve as the primary contact person for the application. If your application involves multiple communities, please provide the above information about each of the communities, but designate only one primary contact person for your application.

2. **Proposed Project List & Descriptions.** Provide a description of each of the partner's proposed projects. The SWLI Program Coordinator Tara Cullison and UMC Director Michael Reisner are available to assist you in developing the project descriptions. Provide a list of 10-20 proposed projects. For each project, provide the following information:
- a. Project name
 - b. Project Summary: briefly describe (2-3 sentences) each project and identify the designated Project Lead for the project. *Example Project Summary: Complete a survey of the composition and structure of urban forests. Project Lead: Jane Doe, Parks and Recreation Department*
 - c. Project Description: provide a narrative description of the project's overall scale and scope and anticipated project level 1, 2, 3, (see above description); describe the specific, achievable, and measureable sustainability objectives addressed by the project; describe the related sustainability problems that students may be able to address; and describe anticipated outcomes and deliverables from SWLI courses.
 - d. Project Relevance and Priority: describe the relationship of the project to the community's stated short-term and long term strategic goals (ideally as embodied in a strategic plan or work plan), and explain the potential of the completed project to positively impact the larger community. Partners should also describe the specific ways they intend to measure the success of the SWLI projects after the partnership ends.
 - e. Resources: Describe the city staff involved in the project including the SWLI Program Coordinator and Project Leads for each proposed project including an estimate of the hours per week dedicated to the program (*i.e. 4 hours per week for 10-week term*); describe other resources available to complete project (materials, supplies, equipment, etc.); describe any related internships you are willing to sponsor; and describe amount of financial contribution (program fee) to support the SWLI and the funding source(s).
 - f. Describe existing plans, reports, documents, or other information that are relevant to the project.
 - g. Other Partners: describe the role of potential partner organizations and provide contact information for the lead contact person for such organization; describe any external stakeholders that could play a role in the project and explain how they might be involved.

We encourage communities to contact SWLI Program Coordinator Tara Cullison or UMC Director Michael Reisner to set up a brainstorming meeting to facilitate development of their project list.

3. **Demonstration of Support:** include letters of support from key decision-makers (mayor, city manager, elected governing body, executive director, board of directors, etc.). If you have a sustainability plan, business plan, budget, or other document that shows the partner's commitment to sustainability, please reference this document in your application.
4. **Proposed Local Funding Contribution:** Indicate the amount of local contribution available and the source(s) of those funds. Note that the local contribution must be paid to Augustana College no later than August 31, 2015.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

A panel of Augustana faculty and staff will evaluate applications using the following criteria:

1. **Top-Level Support:** Partner decision-makers (city/county manager or administrator, major elected officials, and/or department heads) should specifically describe their willingness to direct staff to devote time, resources, and participate in the project and related courses and mentor students.
2. **Project Relevance & On-The-Ground Impact:** Projects should directly relate to the community's stated short-term and long term strategic goals (ideally as embodied in a strategic plan or work plan), and should demonstrate the potential to have a measure positive impact on the larger community. Partners should also describe the specific ways they intend to measure the success of the SWLI projects after the partnership ends.
3. **Likelihood of Match among Projects and Courses:** Projects; including anticipated deliverables, must be within the ability of Augustana faculty and students. Augustana will identify faculty and students that are able and willing to complete projects based on existing courses, research interests/capacity, and interests. Early collaboration with the SWLI Program Coordinator and UMC Director during the project development phase will maximize the changes of a strong match. Augustana does not guarantee that all locally identified projects will be matched with a course.
4. **Sustainability:** A significant number of the projects should involve specific, achievable, and measureable objectives designed to address a social, economic, or environmental sustainability problem.
5. **Local financial Contribution:** The local financial contribution offers an indication of the community's commitment and value attributed to the partnership. Prospective partners should specify the amount of their funding contribution to support the SWLI and its source(s). Priority will be given to projects with sufficient levels of funding to ensure completion taking into account the anticipated size, complexity, and duration of the projects. The level of financial support will vary depending on the number and complexity of the proposed projects, the number of courses necessary to deliver the expected outcomes and deliverables, and level of student/faculty engagement in each course.
6. **Academic Calendar and Logistics Match:** Priority will be given to projects compatible with the Augustana academic calendar, existing courses and other learning opportunities, and the program capacity of academic departments.
7. **External Partnerships:** Projects that involve other organizations, such as school districts, state agencies, non-profit organizations, small businesses or professional organizations, etc. are especially desirable. Your application should specifically indicate how these partnerships would function and how participation of these entities would enhance the project.

Submitting Your Application

Email your completed application in PDF format to:

Michael Reisner
UMC Sustainable Working Landscapes Initiative
michaelreisner@augustana.edu

Applications are due by 5pm on Friday, January 30, 2015

Attachment 1

Partial list of Augustana courses that could complete a Sustainable Working Landscapes Initiative Project

Business & Education Division

Accounting

- Government & Non Profit Accounting
- Corporate Accounting

Business Administration

- Business policy
- Systems analysis and design
- Financial management
- Advertising
- Marketing research methods
- Operations management
- Social issues in management
- Entrepreneurship
- Organizational behavior
- Human resource management

Economics

- Environmental economics

Education

- School & society

Fine & Performing Arts

Art

- Introduction to graphic design
- Photography
- Sculpture
- Graphic design

Communications Studies

- Civic engagement
- Principles of public relations
- Organizational communication
- Business & professional communication

Social action research
Communications and emerging technologies
Intercultural communication

History, Philosophy, & Religion

History

Public history
Social and cultural history
Illinois history
Local history
Oral history

Religion

Environmental ethics
Prayer, community, and transformation

Language & Literature

English

Environmental literature
Professional writing

Natural Science

Biology

Plant ecology
Applied ecology
Entomology
General ecology
Aquatic biology
Environmental studies capstone

Chemistry

Environmental chemistry

Computer Science

Programming language

Geography

Cartography
Cultural geography
Urban and transportation systems

Historical geography
Urban and regional planning
Water and land resources
Land resources management
Landforms and landscapes
GIS and remote sensing

Geology

Environmental geology
Energy resources & the environment
Hydrogeology

Math

Probability and statistics

Physics

Computer applications

Social Science

Political Science

Politics of environmental policy
Race, wealth, and inequality in American politics
Women and politics
Public administration

Psychology

Abnormal psychology
Child psychology
Social psychology
Cognitive psychology
Industrial organizational psychology

Sociology & Anthropology

Ethnographic research
Survey research methods
Crime & society
Citizenship
Population problems
Social gerontology
American race and ethnic relations
Families: Social welfare and policy

Comparative social welfare and policy

Cultural anthropology

Women and Gender Studies

Gender and sexuality

Global issues in women's studies

Attachment 2

Descriptions of Projects Completed by Programs Similar to the Sustainable Working Landscapes Initiative

*** All projects completed by teams of students in existing courses or sequences of courses**

Humanity Courses

Single Discipline

- History students created oral histories to tell the story of St. Paul's historic elm trees and used this lens to convey the value of the city's urban forests and the impacts the loss of these iconic trees has on the community
- Art students designed pieces of community art (murals, sculptures, etc.) to beautify a neighborhood and build awareness of important community-identified issues
- Art students mapped cultural resources of several neighborhoods

Multiple Disciplines

- Art & English students created an intercultural communications plan to enhance outreach of the park and recreation department programming to new immigrant communities
- Art and anthropology students mapped cultural assets of a neighborhood as the first step in enhancing the sense of community
- Teams of Graphic Arts, Communications, & English students completed a design project to create distinctive yet functional visual communications that deliver important information about stormwater across a diversity of cultures and languages. Students also developed alternative stencil designs for stormwater drains to remind residents not to dump things down the sewers
- Teams of Graphic Design & Communications students conducted background research on the city's historical and current identity by soliciting input from residents, city staff, and appointed and elected officials to create several design alternatives for a new graphic identity that the City can use for signs, business forms and marketing materials, communications media (website, Facebook account, newsletter)
- Teams of Art & Communications students proposed a strategy for facilitating long-term community engagement around the public and to enhance sense of community and pride

Social Sciences

Single Discipline

- Psychology students developed and implemented a program to recruit, manage, and retain volunteers to increase safety of the city's parks
- Communications students developed a marketing and communications plan for a Youth Job Corps program to reach, engage, and retain youth 12-21 years-old whom were looking to develop professionally and connect with potential employers
- Communications students developed podcasts to highlight key city initiatives
- Public Policy students provided city personnel with recommended strategies that could be used to increase and enhance outreach and participation from marginalized minority neighborhoods
- Public policy students created a detailed strategic plan for the Fire Department to guide future development and programming
- Urban planning students developed four alternative conceptual development plans for a site intended to spark revitalization throughout the surrounding neighborhood. Students were asked to consider a long-term plan that considered the context of the surrounding neighborhood/city and addressed building uses, transportation issues, economic development goals, and other factors
- Urban Studies students assessed pedestrian transportation needs in downtown Saint Paul
- Journalism students assessed citizen awareness of community-wide disaster planning and developed an outreach plan to enhance emergency preparation and response
- Journalism students developed a public relations campaign to help transit district increase voter support for local tax levy
- Education students developed an environmental education program for several city parks and preserves
- Business students evaluated city staff satisfaction with their job; assessed incentives that would encourage them to continue working at the city; and developed recommendations for improving staff morale and fostering staff development
- Business students created a business plan and strategy for a park property with an active hazelnut farm to increase revenues and recreational use
- Business students produced a pricing and cost recovery strategy for the city's recreation department to reduce reliance on general fund support while increasing awareness and program use
- Business students evaluated why a housing rehabilitation program for low to medium income residents was being underutilized and provided recommendations to improve such utilization

- Business Administration students developed a new pricing and cost recovery strategy for a recreation program and marketing strategy to increase revenues
- Business students evaluated the workforce of the city, evaluated gaps between supply and demand for quality workers, and used focus groups to understand reasons for attracting and retaining new workers (especially those under 40). Students surveyed other cities' workforces and proposed recommendations for improvement
- Economic students assessed street conditions and estimated the value of improvements by estimating the impact of better conditions on surrounding property values

Multiple Disciplines

- Business Operations & Management students worked with city staff and the public to develop a long-term management and business plan for a nature preserve
- Public Policy and Political Science students evaluated several controversial development projects to assess whether community goals were met and neighborhood concerns were addressed. Students made recommendations to the city for enhancing public input from a broader group of stakeholders, including marginalized populations
- Communications, Sociology, and Education students surveyed existing formal neighborhood associations, informal associations, and other social networks (clubs, schools, recreational activities etc.) to assess how residents view their community and made recommendations on how to strengthen social ties and community cohesiveness
- Geography and Computer Science students produced a digital map of locations of interest identified by city officials and community members. They then developed an implementation plan to connect points of interest via walking and biking trails, sidewalks, bike routes, etc.
- Communications and Public Policy students developed an engagement model to reach underrepresented populations in order to strengthen neighborhood crime watch associations
- Teams of Planning, Public Policy, and Business Administration students evaluated demographic/economic trends and infrastructure/neighborhood amenities, to develop concepts for the redevelopment of an industrial property
- Teams of Political Science, Public Administration, and Business students examined the degree to which housing combining living units and workspace for artisans/craftspeople/entrepreneurs to pursue their endeavors could revitalize a traditional working class neighborhood. Students evaluated whether such unique live/work housing actually enhanced livability, created jobs, promoted more equitable economic development, and increased housing density
- Teams of Urban Policy & Environmental Studies students identified key areas for urban agriculture and formulated ideas for an urban agriculture policy for the city
- Teams of Non-Profit Management & Communications students revised an animal shelter's fundraising strategies and proposed new fundraising events and donor campaign

- Teams of Economics & Statistics students evaluated the impact of a United Way program on children literacy rates
- A city's Redevelopment Master Plan identified strategies for revitalization of the downtown, including compression of the downtown retail core, supporting streetscape and other improvements to enhance the pedestrian experience in the downtown. The plan also identified "niche" businesses that would thrive in the downtown to guide future redevelopment efforts. Public Policy students analyzed parking needs, conducted a market analysis for the downtown area, and offered recommendations for related strategies to revitalize North St. Paul's downtown business district. Students from a capstone Business course on economic development investigated options for business improvement districts as another strategy to revitalize downtown

Natural Sciences

Single Discipline

- Engineering students evaluated the feasibility of reclaiming rainwater off rooftops of several city Public Works buildings
- Geography students completed a digital atlas of city maps to provide more user-friendly details of public facilities, services and information to tourists
- Environmental Studies students conducted a design analysis of a proposed mall development site that presented unique stormwater management issues. They used the analysis to identify specific mitigation strategies to reduce stormwater runoff and surface water pollution from the site
- Public health students developed a communication campaign for a local non-profit to encourage healthier behaviors
- Statistics students analyzed a city dataset of home prices and neighborhood walkability

Multiple Disciplines

- Biology & Geography students assessed resident, developer, and community leaders' attitudes towards green roofs, rooftop gardens and other green infrastructure. Students also completed an ethnographic analysis to understand the social context around green infrastructure in the community. Students then made recommendations on best practices for green roofs within the context of the city
- Teams of Geography, Public Health, and Urban Planning and Transportation students: (1) designed a prototype public participation process to engage residents for the implementation phase of a capital improvement project; (2) documented the social, economic, and environmental benefits of such improvements; (3) used visual preference surveys and other engagement methods to build awareness and support for such improvement
- Geography and Environmental Studies students developed conceptual plans for a new interpretative trail in an existing urban preserve

Interdisciplinary

- Most of the housing stock of the city was post–World War II vintage, and many of the homes were in need of repair or upgrading. However, many aging residents do not have the financial resources, skills, or assistance to make improvements or repairs. The purpose of this project was to develop programs or policies that would stabilize the housing stock in the community and provide housing options that make it possible for residents to age in place
 - Students in a Public Health course focused on promoting independence in housing and community. They evaluated existing housing and community design characteristics and made recommendations for regulations, standards, and public policies to support aging in place and upgrading existing housing stock
 - Another course conducted aging-specific in-home assessments with volunteer residents and their caregivers that included their housing situation, resource management, formal and informal support systems, mental health, and cognitive abilities. Students identified gaps in services and made recommendations for what the city could do to address these gaps
 - Another course in Public Health conducted focus groups with volunteer senior residents to identify their specific needs, challenges, and concerns related to aging in place (either in their current homes or in another home in the community) and made recommendations for how the city can support this type of living
 - Finally, an urban planning course researched and made recommendations for programs, policies, and strategies the city could use to support aging in place and in order to make the city truly a “community for a lifetime.”
- With the recent discovery of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the damage from the borer is an issue every community in the region will soon need to address. Roughly one-third of the trees in North St. Paul are ash, including 80% of the trees in parks and 80% of the trees on the north side of town. The City had no plan in place to respond to the invasion of the EAB
 - Students in a Biology course completed an inventory of trees in North St. Paul and then used a cost-benefit analysis to develop recommendations for managing EAB in the city
 - Students in a Communications course developed a plan and protocol to explain EAB risk to landowners and gain community support for the management plan
- Teams of Urban Planning, Biology, Environmental Studies, and Art courses developed a restoration plan to reconnect an urban stream and its associated green space to the surrounding neighborhood. Students also designed an educational mural to highlight the project and engage the community
- Students from three different disciplines developed strategies to build connections between cultures in a neighborhood
 - Journalism students developed a plan to improve communication between the city and its minority populations
 - Arts and Geography students mapped cultural resources of minority neighborhoods
 - Urban Planning students recommended strategies for better engaging rapidly growing minority populations
- Teams of Business, Geography, and Environmental Studies students developed a neighborhood profile for a proposed redevelopment site including: assessment of demographic and economic conditions, land use and area infrastructure, and neighborhood amenities. Using the opportunities and constraints identified by the profile, students developed alternative concepts for redevelopment of the site

- Teams of Urban Planning, Environmental Studies, Geography, and Finance students created a property management plan for city real estate that considered highest and best uses, environmental issues, long-range plans, etc.
- Teams of Geography, Environmental Studies, and Public Administration students developed proposals for a post-industrial property that considered the social, environmental, and history of the site
- Teams of Geography, Urban Planning, and Environmental Studies formulated alternatives for increasing connectivity between existing city trails, parks, bicycle routes