

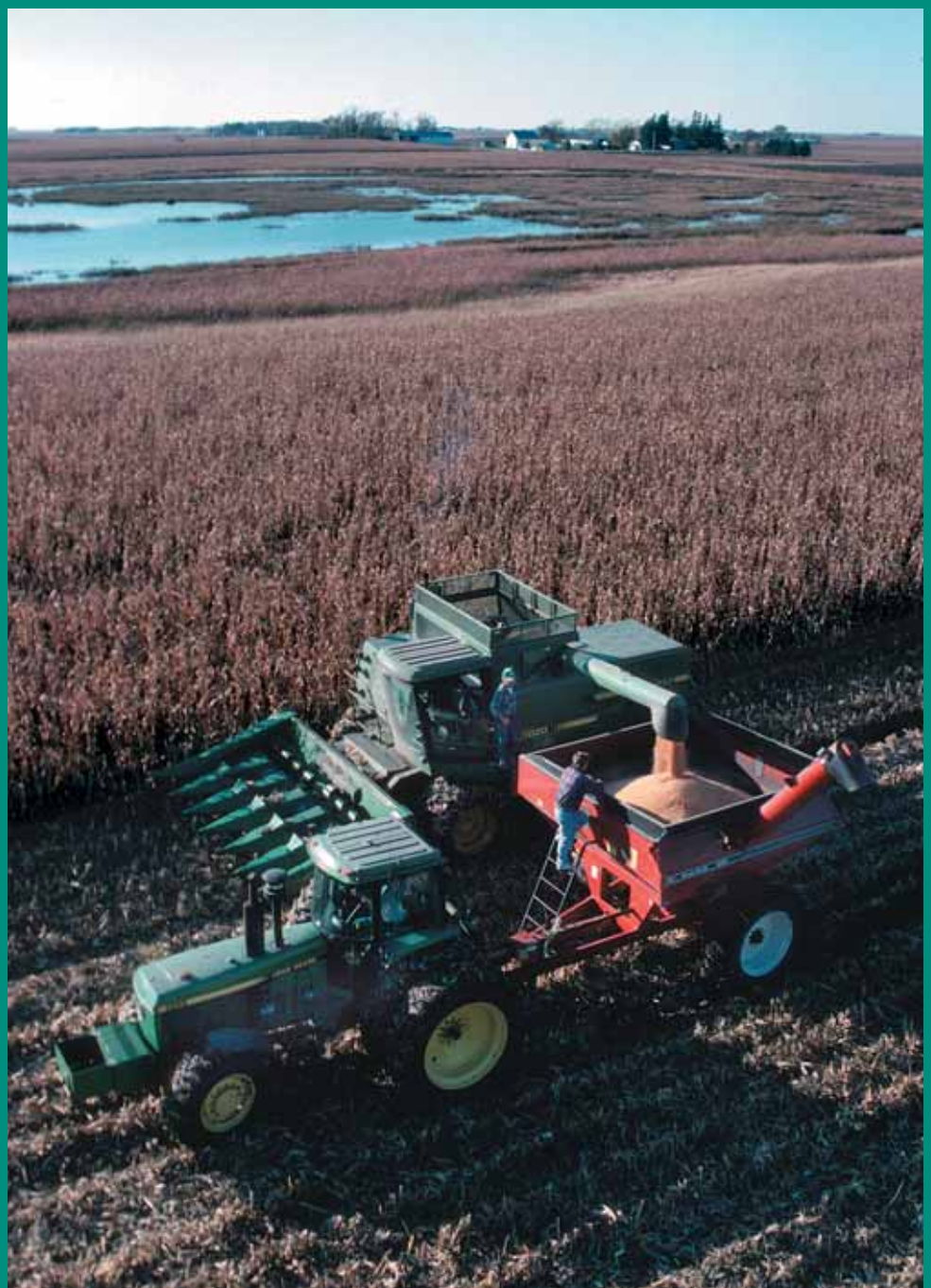


CURA REPORTER

Wetland Restoration in Agricultural Watersheds

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- Diversity Coalitions in Rural Minnesota
- New Parcel Study Report Available
- Oromo Community Engagement in the Cedar-Riverside Neighborhood
- Minnesota 3-D: Bringing Planning and Community Data Together Online
- Charles R. Krusell Fellowship Established
- CAP Receives McKnight and Blandin Foundation Grants



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Photo on Cover: A restored wetland adjacent to a cornfield. Photo by Tim McCabe, courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Assessing the Barriers to and Potential for Wetland Restoration in Agricultural Watersheds

by Gary R. Sands and Stephanie V. Johnson



Photo by Lynn Betts, courtesy of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service

Minnesota has lost the majority of its wetlands to settlement, agricultural activities, federal policies that encouraged drainage, and early negative public opinion of wetlands. During the past 30 years, the desire to preserve and restore wetlands has grown as society has increasingly realized the many ecological, hydrological, aesthetic, and recreational benefits wetlands provide. Even in light of this desire, wetland restoration has proven problematic because of conflicting land uses and values, lack of funding and resources, and inefficient and inconsistent federal and state programs. Local communities have attempted to overcome these problems by taking a more active role in wetland restoration.

This article examines the availability of programs that facilitate the restoration of wetlands and assesses the barriers to adoption of these programs. The research on which this article is based was supported in part by a grant from CURA's Faculty Interactive Research Program.

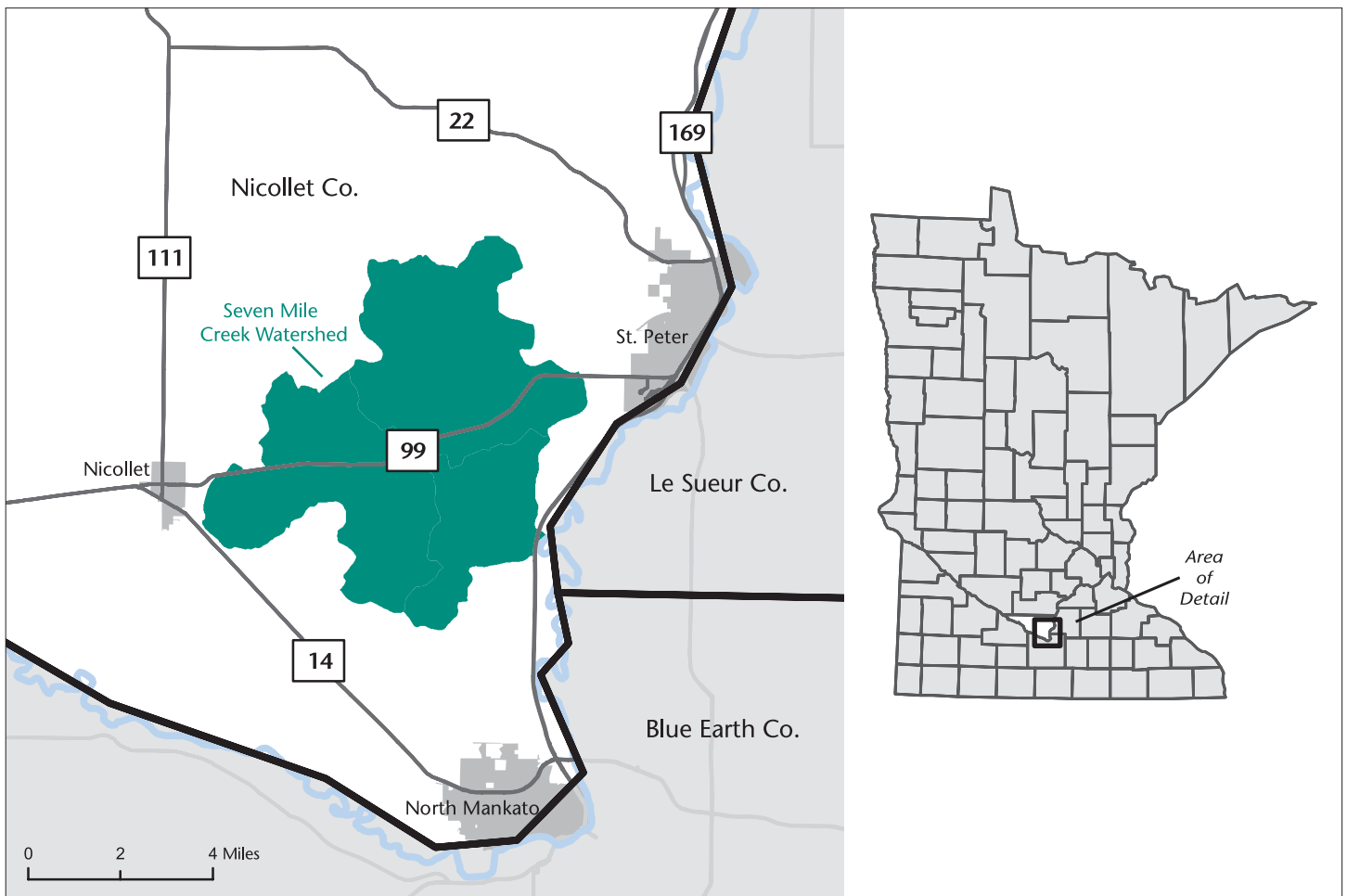
Methods

Our project examined recent restoration efforts in the Seven Mile Creek watershed, a small agricultural watershed located in south central Minnesota (Figure 1), to determine what features make wetland restoration programs successful and what barriers undermine restoration efforts. In addition,

the project identified possible solutions in response to these barriers in the hope of increasing wetland restoration on agricultural lands.

The first step in the project was to document how federal and state policies influence wetland losses in the United States. This allowed us to understand the restoration efforts occurring in the Seven Mile Creek watershed in the context of what was happening both nationally and in Minnesota. We gathered information on federal policies from an extensive literature review of government agency documents pertaining to wetlands produced by the U.S. Geologic Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation

Figure 1. Location of the Seven Mile Creek Watershed



Service, Farm Service Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and Council on Environmental Quality. We also examined articles in scientific and legal journals that discussed wetland losses and restorations, federal agricultural policies, agricultural conservation and best management practices, federal conservation programs, and waterfowl habitat management. For information on these topics specific to Minnesota, we evaluated documents and guidance statements from Minnesota's Department of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Board of Water and Soil Resources. Finally, we examined additional publications on Minnesota wetland activities produced by the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, the Minnesota North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited.

Next we examined wetland restoration efforts on the local level. We focused on activities in Brown, Nicollet, and Cottonwood counties because the

Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood Water Quality Board has been very active in encouraging wetland restorations on agricultural lands. The board has gathered and summarized extensive data on the various restorations occurring in these counties, much of which is available online at <http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/org/bnc/pubs.html>.

In addition to reviewing data and documents produced by the board, we talked with state and local officials, landowners, agricultural boards, and agricultural producers to get a sense of the government and public perception of wetland restorations. From our research and discussions, we established a list of what features help make restorations successful and what obstacles complicate or even prevent wetland restorations. Finally, we identified a number of possible solutions to these barriers and suggestions that may facilitate the restoration of wetlands.

The Impact of Federal and State Policies on Wetlands

During its early history, the United States witnessed an astonishing loss

of wetlands. Early settlers quickly drained wetlands, believing them to be nuisances that bred diseases, hampered overland travel, and restricted agricultural production. The loss of wetlands also stemmed from federal and state policies that encouraged wetland drainage and conversion. Numerous federal projects removed wetlands in the name of economic development, agricultural expansion, and urban growth. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encouraged settlers to remove wetlands by providing technical assistance with wetland drainage and promoting tile and open-ditch drainage as conservation methods. Early federal farm programs also encouraged wetland drainage by basing payments on crop acreage and yield, thereby creating financial incentives to drain wetlands to increase crop production. As a result of these early actions, the United States had lost approximately 50% of its wetlands by the end of the 20th century.

Many states, including Minnesota, also implemented policies that encouraged settlers to drain wetlands. In 1883, Minnesota authorized the construction

of public ditches to help drain wetlands and created a state drainage commission to provide farmers further assistance with draining wetlands. These policies, along with federal policies, resulted in Minnesota losing 53% of its wetlands since the state was settled in the mid-1800s; the state's agricultural regions have lost more than 90% of their presettlement wetlands.

In the early 1900s, public sentiment began to shift toward conservation as fish and waterfowl populations declined. Although federal and state policies still encouraged wetland drainage, many conservationists began to push for preservation of wetlands. In response, the federal government passed legislation to protect migratory bird habitat and also created the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which was charged with conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants, and their habitats. In the 1960s, the federal government began creating Waterfowl Production Areas and Wetland Management Districts to preserve wetlands critical to waterfowl and other wildlife. Minnesota also took an active role in protecting wetlands that were important waterfowl habitat. In 1951, Minnesota initiated the Save Minnesota Wetlands campaign, which allowed the state to purchase wetlands and designate them as Wetland Management Areas.

During the 1970s, interest in wetland protection dramatically increased when Congress passed numerous federal environmental statutes. The Clean Water Act created a federal regulatory scheme for wetlands. This legislation required individuals to obtain a federal permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers before filling or draining a wetlands connected to a navigable water body. In 1979, Minnesota also created a state regulatory scheme for wetlands when it identified "public waters wetlands." The state charged the Department of Natural Resources with regulating any activities that may impact these wetlands. In 1991, Minnesota added another layer of wetland protection when it passed the Wetlands Conservation Act, which protected all wetlands not covered under any of the other existing state and federal regulations.

Recognizing that agriculture was a major cause of wetland loss, the federal and state governments also began to alter agricultural policies. Approximately 60–65% of wetlands drained in North America had been drained for agricultural purposes. The 1985 U.S.



Wetlands conservation began in earnest in the 1960s and 1970s, as federal and state programs were adopted to preserve wetlands critical to waterfowl and other wildlife.

Farm Bill included a so-called "swampbuster provision" that denied federal farm payments to farmers who drained wetlands on their property. The federal government also created a variety of voluntary conservation programs that help conserve or restore wetlands by encouraging landowners to take land out of crop production. These programs provide the landowner with financial and technical assistance, offer annual rental payments over the term of the contract, and provide for the purchase of temporary or permanent easements. The State of Minnesota also created several voluntary conservation programs that encourage wetland preservation. Taken together, these federal and state programs set goals of protecting and improving water quality, reducing soil erosion, planting permanent native vegetation, restoring previously drained wetlands, and enhancing fish and wildlife habitats. The remainder of this section discusses the many federal and state programs that provide landowners with financial incentives to restore or maintain wetlands on agricultural lands.

Wetlands Reserve Program. The 1990 U.S. Farm Bill established the Wetlands Reserve Program to restore, enhance, and protect degraded wetlands through the acquisition of permanent or 30-year easements. The 1996 U.S. Farm Bill expanded the program by adding cost-share assistance for costs associated with restoring the wetlands. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation

Service (NRCS) administers the program and assists landowners by providing technical and financial support. Land eligible for the program includes farmed or converted wetlands and the surrounding upland buffer (areas of land in permanent vegetation that help filter pollutants and reduce erosion).

Under the Wetlands Reserve Program, NRCS may protect wetlands by acquiring easements on wetlands or by providing cost assistance for wetland restorations. For instance, NRCS can purchase a permanent or 30-year easement on wetland acreage. An easement is a restriction landowners voluntarily place on uses of their property in exchange for some type of payment from another party. When selling an easement, the landowner retains legal title to the property but agrees to abide by the restrictions placed on the property. Under a Wetlands Reserve Program easement agreement, the landowner agrees to maintain the land as a wetlands. In exchange, NRCS pays the landowner the lesser of the agricultural value of the land, the established payment cap, or the amount offered by the landowner. NRCS may also protect wetlands by providing cost-share assistance with restoration costs. NRCS will pay up to 50% of restoration costs under a 30-year easement, but that limit increases to 75% if the landowner transfers a permanent easement.

The 1996 U.S. Farm Bill specified that the Wetlands Reserve Program

budget is to be divided equally among permanent easements, 30-year easements, and cost-share assistance for restoration work. Because landowners are most interested in permanent easements, many states have long waiting lists for enrollment in the permanent easement program. At the end of 2005, Minnesota had enrolled 58,000 acres in the Wetlands Reserve Program but still had a backlog of about \$100 million in applications.

Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program. In 2004, Minnesota was the second state to receive funds for the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program, which is a five-year partnership between NRCS and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). USDA committed \$15 million to the program and Minnesota contributed \$1.2 million from the Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve Program. Under the program, farmers receive financial and technical assistance with projects to restore wetlands and increase wildlife habitat. The goal is to restore 7,250 acres in Minnesota. In 2005, the program included 15 easements totaling 2,307 acres, achieving one-third of its goal in the first year.

Conservation Reserve Program. Congress established the Conservation Reserve Program as part of the 1985 U.S. Farm Bill and amended the program under subsequent farm bills. The program seeks to protect surface and groundwater quality, create wildlife habitat, improve soil productivity, and reduce soil erosion. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the program and receives technical assistance from NRCS and the U.S. Forest Service. Under the program, FSA establishes 10- to 15-year contracts with landowners to retire highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive lands. Landowners receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to cover establishment costs. By the end of 2006, Minnesota had restored 366,823 acres of wetlands under the Conservation Reserve Program.

Landowners can participate in the program through either general or continuous sign-up. General sign-up allows landowners to compete nationally to enroll lands for specified enrollment periods. Many of the Conservation Reserve Program's general sign-up contracts will expire in the next several years, but FSA has allowed landowners to re-enroll or extend these contracts to prevent the loss of

substantial acreage from the program. USDA estimates that 80–85% of the currently enrolled acres will remain in the program. In 1996, FSA initiated continuous, noncompetitive sign-up with the creation of the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program. Under this program, landowners may enroll land at any time but the land must be enhanced through specific high-priority conservation practices, such as filter strips, riparian buffers, or wetland restorations. The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program includes two specific programs, the Conservation

Reserve Enhancement Program and the Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program. The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program and its associated programs offer annual rental payments and up-front enrollment and practice incentives. These programs also offer up to 50% cost-share assistance for establishing permanent vegetative cover.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. FSA created the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program in 1997 to further advance the Conservation Reserve Program's environmental goals. The Conservation



Photo by Lynn Betts, courtesy of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service

The federal government has created a number of voluntary conservation programs that provide landowners with technical assistance and financial incentives to restore wetlands by taking land out of crop production.

Reserve Enhancement Program authorizes cooperative conservation efforts between state and federal governments. These cooperative efforts seek to address significant state and national water quality, soil erosion, and wildlife habitat issues related to agriculture. The BWSR administers the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program at the state level and Soil and Water Conservation Districts manage the program locally. FSA, NRCS, and other state agencies also assist with the program.

The Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program combines the efforts of the Conservation Reserve Program and the Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve Program to restore wetlands and retire environmentally sensitive cropland from production. Minnesota's first Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program endeavored to create and restore up to 100,000 acres of environmentally sensitive lands in the Minnesota River Basin. The goals of the program were to restore wildlife habitat and improve water quality. USDA provided \$163 million to the program, while Minnesota provided \$81.4 million for the program. Wetland restorations accounted for more than 50% of the land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and more than 2,000 acres of those wetland restorations intercepted agricultural drainage tile. In 2005, Minnesota began a second Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to protect up to 120,000 acres of environmentally sensitive lands in the Red River watershed, the lower Mississippi River watershed, and the Missouri River and Des Moines River watersheds. The program also set a goal of restoring 24,000 acres of wetlands. FSA contributed \$200 million to the program, and state funding provided an additional \$53 million. Under the program, landowners may enroll land in the Conservation Reserve Program (14- to 15-year contracts) and Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve Program (45-year or permanent easements). Landowners may then receive financial incentives from both programs to remove lands from agricultural production and maintain or establish permanent cover on the land.

Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program. In 2001, USDA initiated the Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program, which provided for noncompetitive, continuous enrollment for up to 500,000 acres of small non-flood plain wetlands and adjacent upland in six states in

the upper Midwest region (Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana). Farmers may enroll farmed or previously converted wetlands that have been impacted by farming activities. The enrolled land can be up to 40 acres, which may include up to 10 acres of wetlands and up to three times as many upland buffer acres. Landowners sign 10- to 15-year contracts in exchange for annual rental payments, incentive payments, and up to 50% cost-share assistance for establishing permanent cover. The 2002 U.S. Farm Bill extended the Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program to all states and increased the enrollment cap to one million acres. Maximum wetland size increased to 10 acres, but only 5 acres are eligible to receive rental payments. By the end of 2006, Minnesota had 34,107 acres enrolled in the Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program, which included 10,119 acres of wetlands and 23,988 acres of upland buffer.

Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve Program. In 1986, Minnesota launched the Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve Program. BWSR manages the program at the state level and Soil and Water Conservation Districts administer the program locally. The goals of the program are to protect and improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildlife habitats, increase permanent cover acreage, and restore wetlands. To accomplish these goals, the program purchases easements on marginal or environmentally sensitive agricultural lands. Those lands are then enrolled in the standard Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve Program, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, or the Permanent Wetlands Preserve Program. Farmers receive direct payments for easements and cost-share assistance with restoring permanent cover on the land or establishing conservation practices.

Local Efforts to Restore Wetlands on Agricultural Lands

Wetland restoration efforts do not occur only at the state and federal level; local government bodies also work to restore wetlands. The Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood Water Quality Board (hereafter referred to as the board) spent the last five years encouraging the restoration of wetlands in the Seven Mile Creek watershed.

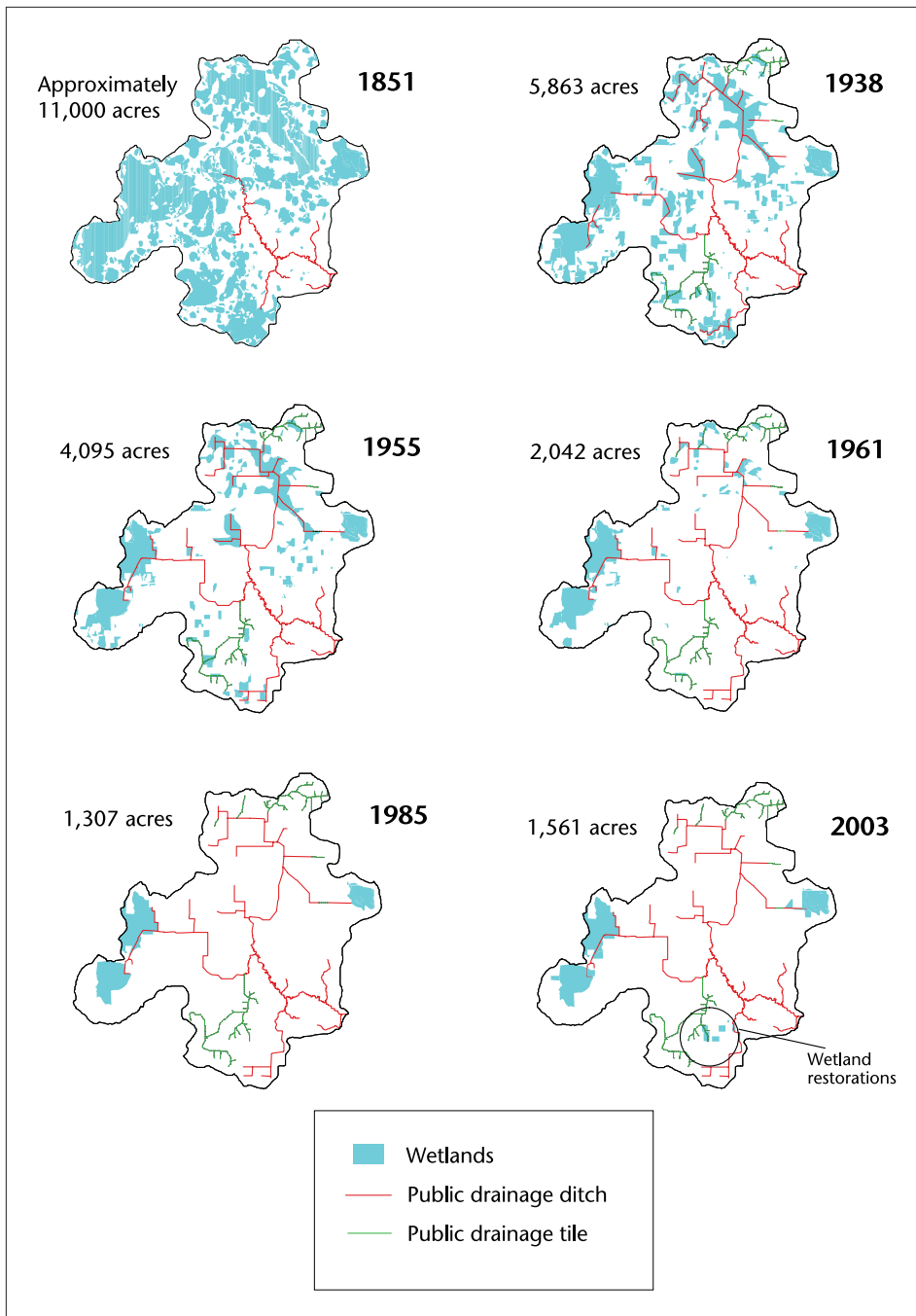
Since presettlement times, the three-county area of Brown, Nicollet, and Cottonwood has lost an estimated

375,000 acres (98.7%) of its wetlands. Brown County lost 194,000 acres of wetlands for an estimated 99% loss, Nicollet lost 141,000 acres for a 97.9% loss, and Cottonwood lost 40,000 acres for a 100% loss.

Analyses of presettlement maps and survey notes indicate that about 50% of the Seven Mile Creek watershed was once covered by natural wetlands (Figure 2). Of those wetlands, it is estimated that 88% have been converted to cropland. About 47% of those losses occurred between the late 1800s and 1938, when an estimated 5,200 acres was lost. From 1938 to 1985, an additional 4,500 acres—or 78% of the remaining wetlands—were drained and converted to cropland. This translates to an average annual net wetland loss of 100 acres per year. During that same time period, the watershed installed 25 miles of public drainage ditches and approximately 600 miles of public and private subsurface drainage systems. Corn and soybean acreage increased from covering 30% of the watershed to covering 96% of the land in the watershed. The most rapid percentage change, a 50% wetland decrease, occurred between 1955 and 1961, because of the construction of two county drainage ditch systems in 1955. A driving force behind these drainage alterations was the desire to expand agricultural production in the watershed. However, the extensive system of tile lines and public ditches negatively impacts water quality by rapidly moving water off the landscape. This rapid drainage of water prevents the landscape from naturally filtering out sediments, bacteria, and nutrients from the water. Since 1985, the wetland-loss trend has been reversed. Wetland increases in the Seven Mile Creek watershed are a direct result of conservation programs combined with grants from private and state water resource protection programs.

A number of best management practices, such as altering the timing and amount of fertilizer application, can help reduce excess nutrients from entering water bodies, but these practices alone cannot achieve the desired improvements in water quality. The board recognized this need when it became concerned with high nitrate levels in the watershed. In response, the board began to promote the use of conservation drainage as a way of reducing nitrate transportation from drained lands. Conservation

Figure 2. Historical Distribution of Wetlands in the Seven Mile Creek Watershed, 1851–2003



Source: Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood Water Quality Board

drainage seeks to improve water quality by incorporating environmentally friendly practices and structures into existing drainage infrastructure without adversely affecting drainage performance or crop production.

Several conservation drainage techniques exist, but the board focused on intercepting subsurface drainage tile systems with nitrate-reducing environments—that is, wetlands. This technique involves routing nutrient-rich water from drainage tiles into a restored wetlands. Using a water-level control structure,

the water remains in the wetlands for a period of time, allowing the nitrates in the water to convert into nitrogen gas. Eventually, the water slowly flows back to the drainage system. Studies by Iowa State University have demonstrated that wetlands can remove 30–80% of the nitrates in water. The studies also showed that one acre of wetlands can efficiently filter nitrates from up to 100 acres of cultivated land. Restored wetlands provide the additional benefits of creating wildlife habitat, increasing water storage space, and removing

pressure on the drainage system, which results in improved field drainage.

To maximize its funding, the board used the Conservation Reserve Program and Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program to help make wetland restorations more financially attractive to landowners. Using these programs' funding opportunities enabled the board to direct its funding toward marketing, administrative, and technical services. The board also used its funding to provide a one-time signing incentive of \$5,625 per wetlands area. The board views the program as a success because it resulted in 16 restored wetlands covering 272 acres, with 3 wetlands (67 acres) enrolled in permanent easements and the remaining wetlands (205 acres) enrolled in 15-year contracts. In addition, the wetlands exhibited an average 75% reduction in nitrates. Each year, these wetlands will prevent approximately 6,000 pounds of nitrates and 1,250 tons of sediment from entering the Minnesota River. These restored wetlands provide critical wildlife habitat, and each wetland area has shown a significant increase in biodiversity. More than 43 different species of plants and animals were observed in just the first year of restoration. The wetlands have also improved the area's hydrology by storing about 250 acre-feet of water on the landscape. One site showed a 50% reduction in the intensity of peak flow rates and many landowners reported that drainage improved in the agricultural fields surrounding the wetlands. Some of the participating landowners were so pleased with the results obtained that they expressed interest in converting their temporary contracts into permanent easements.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood Water Quality Board's experiences demonstrate that local efforts can dramatically improve the success of restoring wetlands. The board believed that a key component of its success came from providing local technical and administrative assistance. By providing local assistance with wetland restorations, the board greatly strengthened relationships with landowners by giving them a convenient, easily accessible source of support. The board also could reassure landowners that they would receive assistance with installing and maintaining the wetlands. By making support accessible and dependable, the board fostered trust in the programs,



Restored wetlands filter out nitrate runoff from cultivated fields, provide critical wildlife habitat, and may improve drainage on adjacent agricultural land.

thereby increasing landowners' willingness to participate in the programs. Providing local support also helped the board accelerate the wetland restoration process so that it only required about 6 to 12 months instead of the usual 24 to 36 months. The board streamlined the process by assisting with Conservation Reserve Program sign-up, identifying potential restoration sites with geographic information systems (GIS) tools, performing in-house topographic surveys, designing wetland restorations for specific sites, coordinating the multiple steps involved with a restoration effort, and supervising the various contractors and vendors involved in the project. As a result of the board's assistance, the restoration process became less complicated for landowners and allowed them to obtain results more quickly.

Numerous challenges to the adoption of wetland restoration programs still exist. One obstacle to providing stronger local support is that some

local conservation offices experience significant employee turnover or simply lack a sufficient number of employees. This turnover may cause inefficiencies in administering the conservation programs, as new employees need time to learn the programs and establish relationships with local landowners. These inefficiencies may lengthen the wetland restoration process and increase expenses, which in turn may dissuade landowners from participating in the programs. Possible solutions to this obstacle include generating more funding to raise salaries, increasing the number of local staff, and providing greater resources to staff. Federal and state governments also could dedicate permanent funding for additional technical and conservation program staff positions at the local level. These efforts may improve staff retention and increase the efficiency of program administration.

Another key obstacle that local agencies must address is private landowner resistance to restoring wetlands

on their property. Landowners may resist restoring wetlands for a variety of reasons, including time and financial concerns. For example, landowners may not view wetland restorations as the most economical use of their land. Federal agricultural commodity subsidies are based on crop acres, so landowners may resist converting cropland into wetlands because it would mean a reduction in those subsidies. Also, financial incentives may not cover all costs associated with wetland restoration, so landowners may have to invest money in equipment and materials to restore and maintain those wetlands. On several of the board's projects, landowners paid approximately \$3,000 in restoration costs because program funding did not cover the full cost of the restoration. Finally, landowners may not recognize the full value of wetland restorations because not all benefits can be framed in economic terms.

A number of potential solutions exist to address the financial concerns

of landowners. For instance, private organizations may be able to provide financial assistance. Groups such as Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, the Minnesota Water Association, and The Nature Conservancy encourage wetland restorations and may be interested in investing money in wetland restorations or partnering on projects. State and federal governments could simply increase the funding for conservation programs to make wetland restorations more financially attractive to landowners. The state also could address landowners' financial concerns by reducing or removing property taxes on land converted to wetlands. This tax reduction would effectively lower long-term costs to landowners associated with restoring a wetlands. Finally, the state could use market approaches to encourage wetland restoration. For example, Minnesota currently has a wetland banking program that allows individuals to earn wetland credits if they restore or create a wetlands and "deposit" those credits in a wetland bank. Landowners who participate in the wetland banking program would be able to receive economic returns from their restorations. Minnesota also could use nutrient-trading systems in watersheds with impaired waters. Landowners could earn nitrate credits from their restored wetlands and sell those credits to point (localized) pollution sources that cannot meet the reductions imposed by the watershed's total maximum daily load plan, which establishes the total amount of a pollutant that a water body may receive from all sources without exceeding water-quality standards.

In addition to increasing landowners' financial returns, local agencies also could emphasize the many noneconomic benefits of restored wetlands. These include increased wildlife habitat, aesthetic and recreational opportunities, enhanced drainage, improved water quality, and expanded water storage. Local agencies also could show landowners how some of these noneconomic benefits may actually improve the financial performance of the surrounding cultivated land. For example, improved drainage can enhance crop production and increased water storage can reduce crop losses due to flooding.

Another barrier to efforts to restore wetlands is that landowners also may view the process as requiring a significant investment of time, given that each

step of the restoration process involves research, planning, and coordination. Planting and maintaining wetlands may seem fairly time-consuming to landowners. Each year, landowners must devote time to maintaining the wetlands and staying current with new and changing techniques. Dealing with administrative details of various conservation programs can be complicated, thus making landowners reluctant to participate because of potential hassles and frustrations. The board addressed many of these concerns by providing technical and administrative support at the local level. This local support reduced the time requirements of landowners and provided an easy source for information. Increased communication among the various involved parties can reduce landowners' skepticism of the program by fostering stronger relationships and trust. Local agencies can further reduce skepticism by promoting successful restorations in the areas. Landowners generally are more receptive to a program after hearing about a neighbor's success with the program. It is especially persuasive if the neighbor benefited economically from the program. Thus, local agencies should focus on promoting both the economic and noneconomic benefits of successful wetland restoration projects, emphasizing how each landowner specifically benefited from the project.

Another obstacle limiting the restoration of wetlands is that landowners often lack information about various aspects of the wetland restoration process. Landowners may not know conservation programs exist or that they are eligible for the programs. Also, landowners may be misinformed about the program's exact purpose and requirements. To address this lack of information, local agencies can educate landowners about wetland restorations, nutrient management, and conservation programs. Improved education would help increase knowledge among landowners who might be interested in wetland restorations. One method the board found to be successful was targeting landowners with personalized information about the program. The board mailed proposals that focused on how each individual landowner would benefit economically from restoring a wetlands on their property, followed by either a phone call or onsite visit. Not only could landowners be better informed, but individuals in county government positions, local conservation offices, water agencies, and agricultural organizations could also be better informed, because the opinions of these individuals are important to landowners in the community.

Site limitations and lack of information about a site are other factors that may constrain wetlands restoration or



Landowners may resist restoring wetlands because of the time commitment required or because of lack of information. Providing technical and administrative assistance to landowners can help to overcome these concerns. Here a district conservationist discusses future plans for a restored wetland.

Photo by Lynn Betts, courtesy of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service

limit the benefits of such projects. For instance, landowners may not know the exact locations or even the existence of drainage tile lines on their property. Thus, even if desirable restoration sites are identified, it may be difficult to locate subsurface drainage tiles to intercept. The Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood Water Quality Board wanted each restored wetland to intercept a subsurface drainage tile, but due to topographic, financial, and site limitations, only about one-fourth of the wetlands did so. Topographic features limited the number of desirable sites because the board wanted to use gravity flow to fill the wetlands. This method is much more cost-effective than creating a gradient through excavation of the site or pulling the subsurface drain to the surface. Because of the relatively flat landscape of the Seven Mile Creek watershed, few sites provided the topography necessary for gravity flow. Site characteristics may also limit the acreage of cropland that actually benefits from the drainage and nutrient treatment the wetlands provide. Although the Iowa State University study found that 1 acre of wetlands can filter pollutants from up to 100 acres of cultivated land, each acre of wetlands restored with the board's assistance only drained between 11 and 40 acres. This result decreased the cost-effectiveness of the wetland restoration. To assist in locating desirable sites for wetland restoration, local agencies could encourage and assist landowners to document the location of drainage tile lines on their property. State agencies can help by giving local agencies and landowners greater access to the state's GIS information for watersheds. Increased access to GIS information about the landscape also would allow local agencies to identify desirable locations that will maximize the cost-effectiveness of nitrate removal.

One of the largest obstacles to wetland restorations is the lack of funding for the various conservation programs. Although numerous state and federal conservation programs exist, many of those programs have been consistently underfunded or were scaled back over time. For example, the 2002 U.S. Farm Bill authorized enrollment of up to 250,000 acres per year in the Wetlands Reserve Program. In subsequent years, the authorization level dropped to 246,833 acres in 2003, 189,000 acres in 2004, 154,500 acres in 2005, and 150,000 acres in 2006. As a result of such scale backs,



Restored wetlands in the Seven Mile Creek watershed.

many applications are left unfunded. In 2005, the federal government failed to fund 3,204 applications for the Wetlands Reserve Program, amounting to 461,794 acres and \$625 million in funding. Minnesota alone had 371 unfunded applications worth \$60.5 million and covering 59,276 acres.

The lack of funding may be addressed in a variety of ways. For instance, recent challenges to the United States' domestic subsidies may provide an opportunity to increase funding for conservation programs. In 2002, the World Trade Organization (WTO) concluded that the United States' domestic subsidies were trade-distorting and ruled that the United States must reduce commodity subsidies. In response to the WTO ruling, the federal government could shift some funding from domestic subsidies toward agricultural conservation programs. The 2007 U.S. Farm Bill includes proposals that will expand the Wetlands Reserve Program and a number of other conservation programs. However, there is no guarantee these proposals will be approved because the United States' large federal deficit may prompt a general reduction in agricultural spending.

The federal government is not the only funding source for wetland restorations; funding may also come from the state. In May 2006, the Minnesota state legislature passed the Clean Water Legacy Act and allocated almost \$25 million to enable local communities to clean up the state's most polluted lakes, rivers, and streams. One of the goals for the money was to restore and

protect wetlands in Minnesota. Future allocations will fund more wetland restoration projects and agricultural best management practices. Even with funding increases from the federal and state government, the increased funding to ethanol production may hamper wetland restoration efforts. With ethanol production expected to reach eight billion gallons per year in 2008, there will be tremendous pressure on farmers to produce large volumes of corn. The 2005 U.S. Energy Bill encourages the production of ethanol, derived from corn, through credits and loan guarantees. The 2002 U.S. Farm Bill already subsidizes corn and the 2007 U.S. Farm Bill proposes even more funding for ethanol production. The economic incentives in the energy bill and both the 2002 and 2007 farm bills can make planting corn more profitable than restoring wetlands. Ethanol production may lose some funding as more groups raise concerns about the environmental impacts of increasing corn and ethanol production, but at least for the near future, the federal government will encourage corn production.

In conclusion, the experiences of the Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood Water Quality Board demonstrate that wetland restorations can coexist with agricultural uses of the land. Wetland restorations can even improve the agricultural uses of the land by improving the drainage of surrounding cropland and storing water on the landscape. In addition, wetland restorations improve water quality and provide essential wildlife habitat, while also allowing a landowner

to maintain crop production. A number of barriers to wetland restoration efforts remain, but continued efforts to find solutions to these barriers will ensure that wetland restoration is accomplished on agricultural lands.

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National Research Council Releases New Parcel Study Report

Earlier this year, the National Research Council released *National Land Parcel Data: A Vision for the Future*, the council's first look at land parcel data since the 1980s. The report envisions a distributed system of land parcel data that is housed with appropriate data stewards but is accessible through a central web-based interface. Counties and other units of government that maintain parcel data for their own purposes would publish a critical portion of that data to the distributed system. The report calls for national funding to assist local governments and support state efforts to coordinate and provide assistance. Will Craig, associate director at CURA and a member of the Committee on Land Parcel Databases, which produced the report, says that the report "provides a vision that Minnesota can use to support and coordinate parcel-mapping activities within our borders."

Many changes have occurred since the council's last parcel data report was produced in the 1980s. Hurricane Katrina and attacks on the World Trade Center have increased awareness of the value of parcel data. Technical changes have increased capabilities and decreased costs of creating land information systems. Finally, the Internet has made

it easier to access data and has encouraged use of information in decision making. However, as Craig notes, "large parts of this country are still using nineteenth-century technology to manage their taxation and ownership records. This is the Information Age. Better technology can save money and lives."

The report contains nine recommendations regarding a national land parcel data system:

1. A panel should decide whether the Bureau of Land Management can be the lead federal agency in the national land parcel effort.
2. The Federal Geographic Data Committee should consider the parcel as a basic resource for various OMB A-16 mandated data themes.
3. A Federal Land Parcel Coordinator should be empowered to develop and maintain a single database of land parcels owned or managed by the federal government.
4. A National Land Parcel Coordinator should be established to develop and oversee a land parcel data business plan for the nation, including federal, local, state, and tribal partners.
5. An Indian Lands Parcel Coordinator should be established by the Office of Special Trustee for Tribal Lands.
6. Congress and the Census Bureau should explore modifying Title 13 so that building addresses and coordinates can be made public.
7. State Coordinators should be established in each state to develop plans and relationships with local government. The goal of these efforts is to achieve border-to-border parcel coverage for all publicly and privately owned property within the state.
8. The National Land Parcel Coordinator should develop an inter-governmental funding program for the development and maintenance of parcel data, including incentives to participate for those counties with fully developed systems and financial support for those who do not.
9. Local government is expected to put into the public domain both parcel geometry and a very limited set of attributes. This should become a minimum requirement to receive federal funds directly associated with property, such as disaster relief.

The full *National Land Parcel Data* report is available for purchase online at http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=11978.

Diversity Coalitions in Rural Minnesota Communities

by Tamara Downs Schwei and Katherine Fennelly



Photo courtesy of Milo Larson, Faribault Diversity Coalition

The Faribault Diversity Coalition's Community Garden Project includes 20 foreign-born and U.S.-born families from the community who garden together on a plot provided by Our Savior's Lutheran Church. The project's purpose is to provide additional food resources for the families involved and to foster cross-cultural exchange among community members.

Although Minnesota has a predominantly White, native-born population, in recent years it has experienced large increases in its foreign-born population, leading to Minnesota being designated a “nontraditional destination state.” More than half of the foreign-born population entered Minnesota between 1990 and 2000, increasing its immigrant population by 138%, compared to 57% nationwide. Concentrations of immigrants are particularly notable in

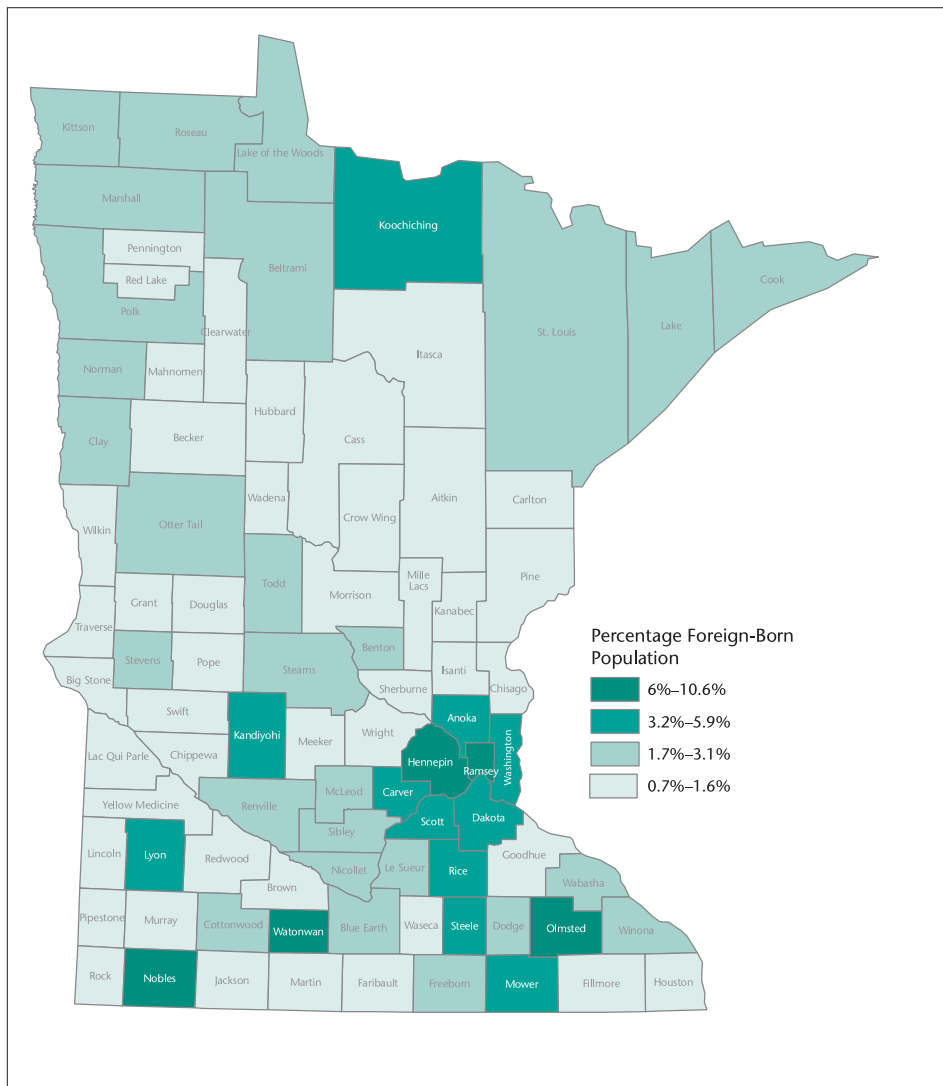
metropolitan-area communities and in rural towns and counties with meat- and poultry-processing plants (Figure 1).

As the number of immigrants has grown, some U.S.-born residents have been welcoming, while others have responded with fear and resentment. Negative attitudes toward immigrants can be particularly strong in rural and exurban areas, both nationally and in Minnesota (Table 1). As a result, immigrants living outside of central cities may find themselves in hostile

environments, isolated from needed services.

Coexisting with xenophobic attitudes are the lesser known positive efforts of local residents who work tirelessly, and sometimes in isolation, to improve cross-cultural relations. These programs, which we will refer to as *diversity coalitions*, are the subject of this article. We define diversity coalitions as organizations that are open to community members and that have programs that aim to improve relations between U.S.- and foreign-born

Figure 1. Concentrations of Foreign-Born Immigrants in Minnesota by County, 2000



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 1. Community Attitudes in Minnesota Toward Immigrants, Minnesota Community Survey, 2004

Immigrants. . .	Percentage of respondents agreeing			
	Urban areas	Exurban areas	Rural areas	All
Are hurting our quality of life	36%	52%	51%	47%
Take jobs nobody else wants	27%	35%	37%	33%
Contribute to cultural diversity	17%	38%	34%	30%
Are a drain on public schools	30%	34%	22%	27%
Are hardworking, make a valuable contribution	33%	23%	21%	25%
Do not assimilate	4%	13%	4%	7%
Get too many government handouts	1%	8%	5%	5%

Source: Stan Greenberg, Anna Greenberg, and Julie Hootkin. *The Changing Shape of Minnesota: Reinvigorating Community and Government in the New Minnesota*. Washington, D.C.: Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner Research, Inc., 2004.

residents. Not all of the organizations we examined are coalitions in a formal sense, but all reach out to diverse community members and sponsor programs with the aforementioned goal.

The locations, membership, goals, or successes of diversity coalitions have not been previously examined in-depth. To remedy this, we conducted a census of these organizations in rural Minnesota communities. We studied the kinds of programs they conduct, their sources of funding, and how they document implicit and explicit objectives and accomplishments. We paid particular attention to the organizations' levels of inclusivity in goal-setting, governance, and membership, and the extent to which they advocate for immigrant rights or attempt to reduce xenophobia among U.S.-born residents, rather than merely perpetuating the status quo.

The project culminated with a networking conference in April 2007 to present the results of the research; to stimulate communities to critically examine the makeup, power structures, purposes, and expected outcomes of diversity coalitions; and to promote regional collaboration and communication.

The research on which this article is based and the related conference were supported in part through funds provided by the senior author's appointment as the 2006–2007 Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota. Additional funding was provided by a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation.

Methodology

To conduct the census of diversity coalitions, we began by identifying nonmetro Minnesota communities that had at least 5% foreign-born residents in 2000.¹ We then searched directories of ethnic organizations and Internet listings of nonprofits in these localities. We did not include programs that worked only with foreign-born residents. The searches yielded 50 potential programs. In the summer of 2006, we completed initial telephone interviews with 34 (68%) of the 50 programs (Figure 2). Efforts to reach the remaining 16 programs were abandoned after multiple unsuccessful attempts.

In the second phase of the project, we conducted in-depth interviews with a subset of the identified rural diversity coalition programs. We stratified

¹ We included a few rural communities with fewer than 5% foreign-born if we knew of diversity coalitions in the towns.

Figure 2. Diversity Coalitions in Nonmetropolitan Areas of Minnesota, 2006–2007

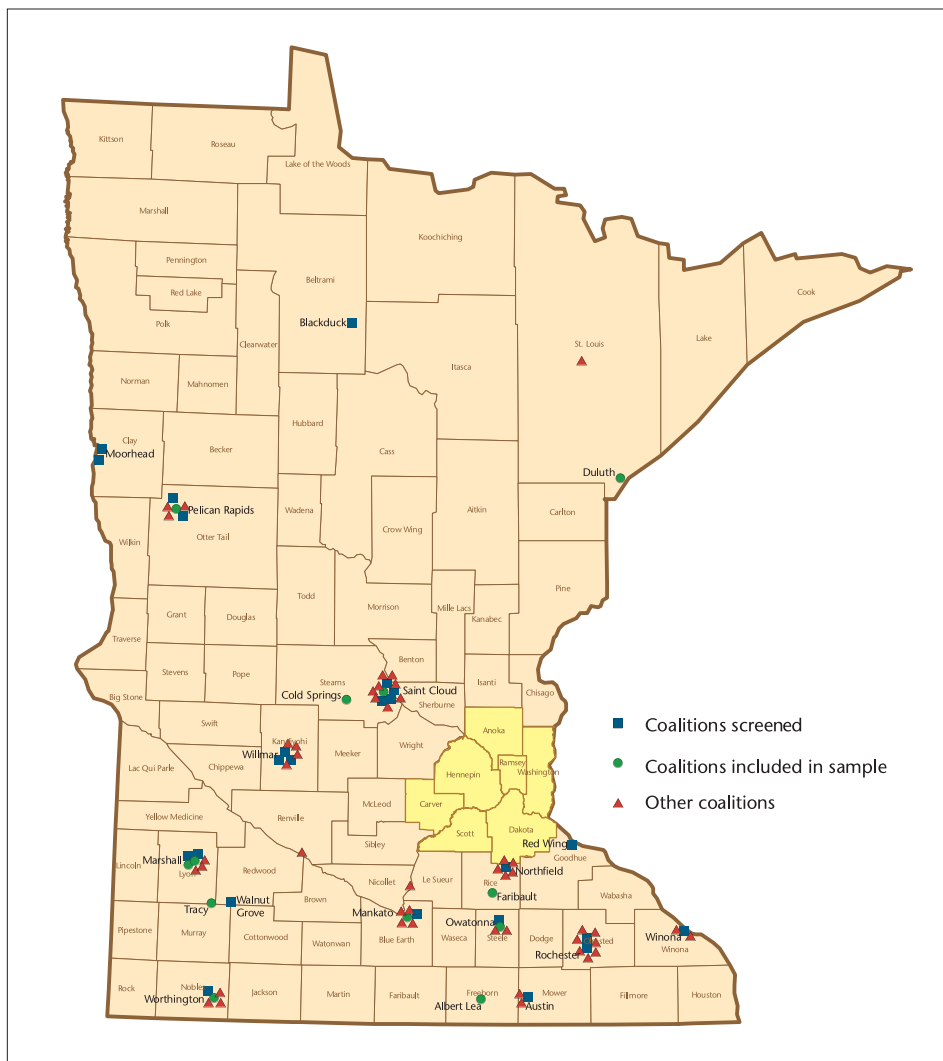


Table 2. Percentage of Student Enrollments in K–12 that Are Students of Color in Selected Rural Minnesota Communities, 2001–2007 (by School Year)

City	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005	2005–2006	2006–2007	Percentage change 2001–2007
Albert Lea	14%	15%	15%	15%	16%	18%	+ 29%
Cold Spring	1%	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%	+ 400%
Faribault	17%	18%	20%	22%	23%	25%	+ 47%
Mankato	10%	11%	12%	13%	14%	14%	+ 40%
Marshall	17%	17%	16%	17%	18%	19%	+ 12%
Owatonna	13%	14%	15%	16%	16%	17%	+ 31%
Pelican Rapids	20%	23%	25%	27%	29%	32%	+ 60%
St. Cloud	11%	13%	14%	16%	18%	21%	+ 91%
Tracy	19%	19%	22%	22%	23%	21%	+ 11%
Worthington	35%	38%	41%	42%	44%	46%	+ 31%

Source: Data Center, Minnesota Department of Education. “School and District Enrollment Files.” <http://cfl.state.mn.us/datactr/enroll/index.htm>

the 34 screened programs by the kinds of services they offered and randomly selected 10 programs that represented 2 programs from each of five program types: recreational programs; K–12 programs; community educational forums; community festivals/dinners; and civic engagement/organizing/lobbying organizations. We added two human rights commissions from nonmetro counties, for a total of 12 targeted interviews with diversity coalition program staff.

We conducted an additional 14 interviews with African and Latino community members in the target communities to provide immigrant perspectives on the programs. These individuals were identified and interviewed by bicultural, bilingual interviewers who approached the leaders of local immigrant-serving organizations or businesses. Only one interview was refused, yielding a completion rate of 92.9%.²

Community Context

In Minnesota, as in the United States as a whole, White student enrollment in rural areas has declined, whereas enrollment of students of color has increased. According to an article by Martha McMurray in the April 2005 issue of the Minnesota State Demographic Center’s *Population Notes*, total enrollment in rural Minnesota districts fell 17% between 2001 and 2006. In the communities in our study, enrollment of students of color ranged from 5% in Cold Spring to 44% in Worthington during the 2005–2006 school year (Table 2). In five of the communities—Worthington, Tracy, St. Cloud, Pelican Rapids, and Faribault—students of color accounted for one-fifth or more of the K–12 enrollments in 2006–2007. Twenty years ago, these towns had almost no children of color in the schools. These increases parallel the changes in other Midwestern towns with meatpacking plants.³ With the

² In the fall of 2006 and spring of 2007, we completed 11 of the 12 targeted interviews with program staff (91.7%). A nonrandomly selected interview in Albert Lea was added to the sample, for a total of 12 completed interviews with diversity coalition staff.

³ The exceptions are Marshall and Tracy. The impact of the packing plants can be seen by the flat and declining school enrollments in these towns after the closing of the Jennie-O Heartland Foods in 2001, and the resulting loss of 1,800 jobs. See Cameron Macht. “Regional Spotlight: Southwest and South Central Minnesota—Changes in Local Economies.” *Minnesota Employment Review* (November 2003): 12–14.

establishment and expansion of meat- and food-processing plants, the children of immigrants have kept many of the schools from closing or consolidating—a significant economic boon for school districts that depend upon per-pupil enrollment dollars from the state.

Developing and fostering good cross-cultural relations is difficult to achieve in rural communities with large percentages of non-English-speaking residents and few interpreters or translators. A Somali community leader in one town estimated that only 2% of some 600 Somalis residing there were proficient in English. These percentages are much lower than in urban areas because immigrants and refugees who cannot get better paying jobs in the cities often migrate to rural towns where some firms will hire them without evidence of English proficiency.

Finally, because the U.S. government issues very few visas to low-skilled workers, and because the employment available to immigrants in rural communities is predominantly in low-wage meat-processing and manufacturing plants, a high percentage of Latinos in rural communities are undocumented. Their lack of legal status is a significant impediment to fair treatment and political organizing.

Interviews with African and Latino Community Leaders

This section summarizes our findings from interviews with African and Latino community leaders. These interviews provided illuminating commentary about the environment that new residents encounter and the challenges faced by organizations working to improve cross-cultural relations.

Immigrant/Nonimmigrant Relations. When we asked Latino and African community leaders to tell us about relations between immigrants and nonimmigrants in their towns, their responses varied, but a majority said either that there were limited interactions of any kind, or that relations were mixed. Some described serious tensions, exacerbated by Americans' ignorance about who immigrants are and why they have come to rural communities.

One Latino community leader commented,

They don't think about why our families are here, why we came, why we left some family members behind; they don't understand or don't think about why these

things happen. Maybe they think that people cross the desert and put their lives at risk just to be able to have a plasma television.

Another Latino community leader we interviewed described the effects of overt prejudice.

In my experience and from what I've heard from people I know, almost all immigrants in this town and in others have been victims of racism. When this happens to you it's very difficult to leave it behind you; it's very difficult to forget this humiliation and to try to be friends with Americans. I'm not saying that all are the same, but you become suspicious of all Americans, and you are waiting to see if the same thing is going to happen to you again. We all live with racism, it doesn't matter how old you are—it happens in the schools, in the stores, and at work.

One African community leader felt that Latinos face less discrimination than African immigrants. He attributed this to what he perceived as the longer history of Latino-Anglo interaction, and closer cultural and religious ties. Conversely, some Latinos resent what they perceive to be the "special treatment" of African Muslims, who are given time off at work to pray.

One African educator we interviewed described how immigrants

were blamed for poor school district outcomes. Another African community leader lamented the service provided by a local school.

Americans often hire unqualified immigrant people for important jobs that deal with immigrants. Recently, the school district hired a person with no high school degree to be the district liaison for Somalis. Schools are already our biggest problem, but when you place unqualified people to serve the immigrants, it's even worse.

On the other hand, some of the African and Latino leaders described cross-cultural relations in a positive light. One African community leader said, "I have visited many towns, and relationships between Somalis and Americans are the best here in this town." A Latino community leader in another town commented that "we have a good relationship with the school system; our kids go to public schools and the relations are good."

Relations with Employers. In rural communities with one major industry, the employer dominates the institutional context. Chambers of commerce and local elected officials may support programs for immigrants, but they do so only if those programs do not threaten the interests of the large employers. In such instances, the lack of legal status for undocumented workers may



Children of immigrants have kept many schools in rural Minnesota from closing or consolidating—a significant economic boon for school districts that depend upon per-pupil enrollment dollars from the state.

be viewed as an economic obstacle, rather than a human rights problem.

It is therefore not surprising that almost all of the community leaders interviewed in our study described serious tensions between local employers and their immigrant workers, with particular examples of exploitation faced by undocumented Latinos. Community members related stories of mistreatment, including threats, dangerous or damaging working conditions, poverty-level wages with no hope for raises or advancement, and no access to benefits or time off.

Some Somali interviewees were concerned about a lack of religious tolerance, leading to workplace discrimination and tension. One religious leader related that a local employer initially banned Muslim employees from praying—even on their breaks—and followed them to the bathroom to see if they were complying. Another noted that the lack of a common religion precluded some opportunities for social interaction.

We don't go to bars and night-clubs where native-born [people] usually socialize. . . . There are social relationships in limited capacities, not widely open relations.

It may also be true (as one individual suggested) that the Somalis who move to rural communities tend to be more conservative and self-segregating than their urban counterparts. However, in some locations workplace relations have improved over time. Some companies now employ Somali supervisors, provide prayer rooms, and allow women to wear the traditional hijab scarf that covers the head.

Tensions between workers and employers in rural communities have been exacerbated by the recent government raids on meatpacking plants in Worthington, Willmar, and Austin. An Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid on the Swift meat plant in Worthington occurred during the time that we were in the field interviewing diversity coalition staff and community leaders. In April 2007, after the fieldwork for this study was completed, there were additional ICE raids in Willmar. Not only have the raids made Latino residents extremely fearful, but they also have lent legitimacy to expressions of overt prejudice by some xenophobic members of the community.

Despite these tensions, there seems to be a trend toward improved

cross-cultural relations in some of the communities in our study. One example comes from the head of a Somali organization who compared contemporary and historical relations.

When you talked to some people in the old days, they looked surprised and uncomfortable. Somalis were seen as intruders and uninvited Black people in a small city that's overwhelmingly White. So there was a little bit of suspicion. That has changed since then. Native-born communities learned more about us now. They realized that we Somalis are not violent. They saw that there were no major crimes during the decade . . . just simple traffic violations or domestic issues—just like everyone else. I think there's a learning curve everywhere. I think there's a visible welcoming environment right now. You can see people smiling and welcoming us, not with suspicion. People, including officials, are opening to us.

His was not an isolated comment; a few other Latinos and Somalis we interviewed described relations in their communities in glowing terms. Their comments confirm the findings of social psychologists that familiarity reduces fear of "the Other" and can lead to decategorization—that is, seeing people as individuals, rather than as members of a denigrated group.

On the other hand, this kind of social contact is precluded in many rural communities because of language barriers and housing and employment segregation. As Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp explain in their 2005 book *A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory*, if social contact is to reduce prejudice, groups must have equal status sufficient to produce friendship potential, the interaction must be cooperative (rather than competitive), and the contact must be sanctioned by authorities. These conditions are difficult to achieve in rural communities where meatpacking and manufacturing jobs tend to employ low-wage workers without high levels of social status or English proficiency. Furthermore, local leaders vary greatly in the extent to which they are concerned about the welfare of immigrant residents. Reactions of local council members, mayors, and police chiefs vary from active support and advocacy for local immigrant groups

to outright hostility toward some (particularly undocumented Latinos). These attitudes are important factors that affect the success of prejudice-reduction efforts by diversity coalitions.

Diversity Coalition Program Characteristics

This section summarizes our findings with respect to the characteristics of the diversity coalition programs we contacted.

Program Origins. Although our focus was on cross-cultural relations, a majority of the diversity coalition founders mentioned the provision of basic services to new immigrant communities as a rationale for the establishment of their programs. About one-third mentioned the need for education to help immigrants and native-born residents learn to understand each other.

Several programs focused on the reactions of the community to new immigrants, as illustrated by one interviewee who commented that "some people in the community were against the newcomers." Other programs identified a need for educating their own employees about immigrants, such as one health program director who said, "Our staff knew very little about their culture, or how to communicate with them." In some cases, programs were begun because of the commitment or vision of one individual, such as a charismatic police chief, a religious leader, or a member of the local chamber of commerce who saw economic advantages to immigration.

We identified a mix of "founding organizations" (Table 3). Churches initiated close to one-quarter of the programs in rural Minnesota. This is not surprising because a number of new evangelical Latino churches have been established and Mexicans and other Latinos have reversed declines in membership in the Catholic Church, which has become very active in organizing immigrants in the United States. In addition, Lutheran and other Protestant churches have been engaged in refugee resettlement and coalitions advocating for immigrant rights. Often functioning as a first stop for new residents, churches have been well positioned to observe and address the basic necessities that many immigrants and refugees lack or the difficulties that they encounter when interacting with other community members.

Nearly one-quarter of the programs we studied were initiated by chambers

Table 3. Organizational Characteristics of Rural Diversity Coalitions in Minnesota, 2007

Question	Responded "Yes"	
	Number	Percentage
Does the organization have 501(c)(3) tax exempt status?	24	70.5%
Do you have a board of directors?	28	82.4%
Do you have paid staff? (<i>median number of staff = 3</i>)	30	88.2%
Do you know of any other organizations in town that are working to improve relations between immigrants and U.S.-born residents?	20	58.8%
What about organizations that used to do this kind of work, but that closed down?	5	14.7%
Did the founders of the organization represent particular groups or organizations?		
School	11	32.4%
Church group	8	23.5%
Chamber of commerce	8	23.5%
Existing nonprofit organization	9	26.5%
Government agency	15	44.1%

of commerce in response to new immigrants in rural communities who are opening new stores and restaurants and staffing local meat-processing and manufacturing plants. The expanding supply of foreign-born customers and employees has created opportunities for local businesses, and has introduced a need for new conversations and approaches to managing staff and serving the public. As a result, some chambers of commerce recognize the potential benefit of reaching out to new members of the community.

Many of the programs in our study arose because of desegregation legislation that provides funding from the State of Minnesota for racially isolated school districts and racially identifiable schools. The funding is administered by the state to qualifying school districts and schools, which are then charged with direct implementation of desegregation programming. Schools and school districts have introduced a wide variety of programs under this initiative.

Some of the nonprofit organizations that we interviewed were formed with the express purpose of serving the needs of underserved immigrant and refugee communities. Immigrants and refugees are frequently founding members of these organizations and, in many cases, are represented in staff or board leadership positions.

Program Goals and Activities. We asked staff from each program to describe their goals and what kind of activities

they offer to improve cross-cultural relations. Responses are summarized in Table 4. The goals ranged from the very general (building understanding and trust) to the specific (offer language learning opportunities). Some programs were primarily focused on immigrant groups (e.g., helping East Africans access services and succeed in school, or helping immigrants find health resources); others targeted the majority community with festivals, public speakers, educational programs, or meetings with legislators.

Many of the programs try to encourage community members to interact with each other in nonthreatening settings. One example comes from Casa Guadalupe's partnership with the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University, where students learn firsthand about new immigrants while volunteering as English tutors in Cold Spring. In Faribault, more than 25 families cultivate plots at a new multicultural community garden, with plants donated by local businesses.

Education occurs in various settings. African youth in Mankato give dance and drumming performances in local schools, the Emerging Leadership Investment Program in Marshall trains immigrant adults for leadership roles and involvement in city programs, and healthcare professionals in Tracy receive training to address the needs of diverse patients.

Two of the programs in our study had goals and activities explicitly related to civic engagement. Centro Campesino conducts political organizing

in Owatonna to "empower the Latino community" and Casa Guadalupe in Cold Spring offers a presentation to community members about immigration and encourages them to write letters to their representatives supporting comprehensive immigration reform.

Funding. Diversity programs in rural Minnesota are fairly structured (Table 3). More than two-thirds of the organizations we identified had 501(c)(3) status and boards of directors, and 88% had some paid staff, with a median of three staff members. A number of the coalitions had regular sources of funding, particularly from foundations (Table 5). The Otto Bremer Foundation is an especially important source of support for this work, funding 10 of the 34 coalitions where we conducted interviews. Next in significance were the McKnight-sponsored Initiative Funds and the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation.

Another important category of funding for diversity work in rural Minnesota comes from the aforementioned legislation mandating funding to promote integration in racially isolated public school districts. The decision was implemented statewide and in 2005, 80 school districts received almost \$79 million in integration revenue. According to the Program Evaluation Division of the Office of the Legislative Auditor of Minnesota:

School districts are eligible to receive integration revenue if they have a

Table 4. Locations, Goals, and Activities of Selected Rural Diversity Coalitions in Minnesota, 2007

Organization	City	Program Goals	Activities
Chamber of Commerce Diversity Education Committee (defunct)	Albert Lea	Bridge gaps between immigrants starting businesses and local establishments; provide opportunities for larger companies and employers to expand products and services	Hold yearly festival for immigrant community members to bring food, art, "and other good things"
Casa Guadalupe	Cold Spring	Educate general public on the rights of immigrants; connect Latino and White communities	Arrange for educational speakers; encourage public to contact legislators
Faribault Diversity Coalition	Faribault	Build understanding and trust between community and immigrants coming into the community	Help people connect with resources (dentist, doctor); sponsor forums to educate White community; built a bus shelter at the mobile home park; sponsor learning circles; hold monthly meetings
Community Assistance for Refugees	Mankato	Create a better and more open environment to improve the communication and understanding between the different cultures with the hopes of enriching the community, strengthening the workforce, and improving services to the new members of society	Provide drumming lessons and performances; produce a CD demo recording and a video; sponsor music exchange with nonimmigrant groups; train music instructors to instill positive developmental assets in children
Marshall Community Services	Marshall	Advocate and create a diverse leadership for the community	Recruit minority members with knowledge of English and work to develop small-group skills; discuss Northern European cultural nuances; educate about agencies and organizations in town
Iftiin	Marshall	Increase self-sufficiency in the community; nurture East African culture; integrate East Africans into local community	Help East Africans access employment training, job retention, and housing services; work with schools and families to support school success; work with health-related issues (e.g., women's exercise program); initiate Somali TV program to educate community
Centro Campesino	Owatonna	Empower the Latino community in southern Minnesota	Support activities that teach children about their cultures (artist series, Aztec dance classes); support youth organizations that work with legislators to combat injustices
West Central Minnesota Multi-District Cultural Collaborative	Pelican Rapids	Increase cultural awareness and appreciation in local and surrounding schools; offer language learning opportunities; provide student support	Take students on field trips (Mixed Blood Theater, Science Museum "Race" Exhibit, retreats); provide tutoring; offer scholarships for ACT prep classes
Sioux Valley Tracy Medical Center	Tracy	Educate staff to work with culturally diverse patients; educate immigrant patients about the U.S. healthcare system	Conduct staff education workshops; engage Center for Cross Cultural Health to examine policies, procedures, charts, and handouts for cultural sensitivity
Nobles County Integration Collaborative	Worthington	Increase cultural integration and student achievement	Create opportunities to learn Spanish and increase cultural awareness; work with employers and employees to address cultural concerns in the workplace; provide family support; provide staff development in schools; develop a student achievement program

Table 5. Sources of Financial Support for Rural Diversity Coalitions in Minnesota, 2007

Question	Responded "Yes"	
	Number	Percentage
Does your organization receive outside funding for any of your work on improving cross-cultural relations?	32	94.1%
Foundation grants	25	73.5%
Government funding	21	61.8%
Membership or fund drives	9	26.5%
Other (church, business group, endowment)	16	47.1%
Foundation support from:		
Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation	4	—
Minneapolis/St. Paul Foundation	1	—
Southwest Initiative Fund	4	—
West Central Initiative Fund	2	—
Southern Minnesota Initiative Fund	1	—
Otto Bremer Foundation	10	—
Winona Community Foundation	1	—
Grotto Foundation	1	—
Excel Energy Foundation	1	—
United Way	1	—
Duff Foundation	1	—
Jones Family Foundation	1	—
Red Wing Foundation	1	—
Bush Foundation	1	—
Hormel Foundation	1	—
Do you have any long-term funding that helps keep the organization going?	15	44.1%

“racially identifiable school”—that is, a school with a significantly greater minority concentration than the school district as a whole for the grade levels served by that school. Districts are also eligible for integration revenue if they are a “racially isolated school district”—a district that has a significantly higher concentration of minority, or “protected,” students than surrounding districts. Districts that meet this requirement must, in cooperation with adjoining districts, establish a multidistrict collaboration council to identify ways to offer cross-district opportunities to improve integration. These

multidistrict councils must develop an “integration plan” that identifies the councils’ integration issues, the goals of the integration effort, and how the districts intend to achieve their goals.

Ten communities in our screening sample receive school integration funding from the state: Pelican Rapids, Tracy, Worthington, St. Cloud, Duluth,⁴ Austin, Blackduck, Rochester, Walnut Grove, and Willmar. This government funding promotes collective action

⁴ Duluth is not a racially isolated school district, but it includes two “racially identifiable” elementary schools.

and planning. Programs with desegregation funds have more resources than many other similar programs, although their continuation beyond a given funding period is not guaranteed. Furthermore, the school integration program is coming under increased scrutiny from the Minnesota legislature.

In spite of these varied sources of funding, a majority of diversity programs have difficulty paying staff and maintaining a programmatic focus. Two-thirds of the coalition staff we interviewed said that they had experienced budget cuts in the past few years that had posed either moderately serious or very serious problems for the organization. When asked about the biggest unmet need for cross-cultural work, one founding member responded, “Up to now, it’s been money.”

Organizational Diversity. Representation of diverse groups in diversity coalition leadership positions is a means of achieving some legitimacy in the community, as well as a type of accountability. Diversity coalitions in rural Minnesota are remarkably successful at including immigrants in leadership positions within their organizations. More than two-thirds of those with boards had immigrant members, and half of the programs with paid staff had immigrants in these roles (Table 6). In addition, 41% said that immigrants held other leadership positions in the coalitions and 59% had collaborated with immigrant-led organizations in their towns. This is particularly notable given the fact that rural communities often attract immigrants who have lower skills, education, and English proficiency and higher rates of undocumented status than do urban areas—characteristics that can make it challenging to find or recruit diverse members for leadership positions. Yet, precisely because of the disenfranchisement of rural immigrants, such representation is critically important.

Challenges. We asked diversity coalition staff, “What is the biggest problem that your program has faced in trying to bring different groups together?” Staff responded with a diverse and difficult set of challenges. Cultural differences, historical conflicts, and lack of understanding and ownership of the issues are consistent problems. Misinformation, negativity, and fear are perpetuated in historically White communities through the media and local letters to the editor. Additionally, time available for diversity work is limited for staff and community members because of

Table 6. Reported Diversity within the Organizational Leadership of Rural Diversity Coalitions in Minnesota, 2007

Question	Responded "Yes"	
	Number	Percentage
<i>(Of those with boards)</i> Are any of the board/committee members foreign-born immigrants?	22	78.5%
Does the board or committee have other members who are people of color but who are not immigrants?	13	46.4%
<i>(Of those with paid staff)</i> Do you have staff who are immigrants?	15	50.0%
Do you have any paid staff who are people of color, but who are not immigrants?	8	26.7%
Do immigrants or people of color currently hold any leadership positions or roles that we haven't talked about?	14	41.2%
Have you collaborated with any (immigrant-led) organizations in town on particular projects?	20	58.8%

demanding work and school schedules and family commitments.

Several program staff complained of a lack of awareness in the White community that any problem exists; others bemoaned the difficulty of making connections with foreign-born residents and cultivating community leadership. One program director commented that once immigrants receive their Certificate of General Educational Development or become proficient in English, they no longer wish to be identified with the program.

The diversity coalitions employ a variety of strategies to address their challenges. Some organizations deal with time constraints by organizing small groups of people or working with people individually. Some network with local schools and organizations and build upon preexisting events and activities to be cost- and time-effective.

Given the lack of political capital among immigrants and the organizations that serve them, as well as the hostile political climate in which they operate, diversity organizations face an uphill battle in achieving full cooperation. The staff of diversity coalitions identified a variety of changes needed in their communities to improve cross-cultural relations. When asked what advice they would give to someone starting an organization to improve cross-cultural relations, at least half suggested the need to promote quality interaction between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Others cited the importance of patience,

sensitivity, listening, developing trust, and creating forums for discussion.

Program Evaluation. Given the breadth of program goals and limitations of time, funding and staffing, it is not surprising that only four of the diversity coalition staff we interviewed said that they conduct evaluations of their programs. Nevertheless, several had clear opinions about the success of their work based on attendance and personal feedback from program participants. The only concrete evaluations came from a leadership program in which immigrants had been placed on local advisory boards and commissions and an advocacy organization that tracked the outcomes of discrimination cases.

There is scant evidence of the effectiveness of most programs, or even signs that they are following strategies that would logically lead to desired outcomes. Given the depth of the need for improved relations between immigrants and native-born Americans and the threats to program funding, it is imperative for diversity coalitions to clarify their goals, review the alignment between programming and desired outcomes, and gather evaluation information that will allow staff to assess and revise program strategies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Meaningful integration requires a true commitment to multiculturalism. The split in American attitudes toward immigrants and the anti-immigrant

sentiments among rural native-born residents pose significant challenges to communities and to organizations trying to improve cross-cultural relations. The immigrants who settle in rural communities tend to have lower levels of education and English proficiency than their compatriots who reside in metropolitan areas. Many have tenuous legal status. These factors lead to serious power imbalances, which impede efforts to achieve meaningful cross-cultural communication.

The rural communities described in this article have made some notable advancements. A number of African and Latino community leaders commented on their greater acceptance by native-born residents over time, and comments from program staff and volunteers demonstrate an impressive level of commitment and passion. Nevertheless, diversity programs operate within highly politicized climates in which undocumented immigrants are vilified as "illegals" and criminals—adjectives that some residents broaden to stereotype all immigrants.

Diversity coalitions are dynamic and difficult to categorize as successful or unsuccessful. Much depends upon changing leadership goals and the political, social, and economic climate, as well as the ability of leaders to be inclusive and strategic. The marginalization of immigrants and recent setbacks due to recurring ICE raids make a focus on empowerment an essential component of plans to promote their integration.

The comments of the coalition staff we interviewed confirm academic research regarding the importance of more intentional and focused attention to the education of White, U.S.-born residents. In most communities, cross-cultural work is focused on services for immigrants, without recognition of the ways in which the attitudes of U.S.-born residents facilitate or impede these efforts. Indeed, for all the conversation about the need for immigrants to assimilate, very little attention is paid to the lack of policies that actually promote integration. To be successful, educational efforts need to have clearly articulated objectives targeted for particular audiences.

The question of how to engage native-born residents in discussions of privilege and discrimination is a challenging one. Evaluating program outcomes is also challenging, but crucial to ensuring success and to demonstrating



Some diversity coalition programs target the majority community with festivals, speakers, or educational programs. The 2007 International Market celebrated the diversity of cultures in Faribault with a variety of foods, crafts, and entertainment.

that diversity programming is effective and should be continued. The need for additional funding described by the respondents in this study is confirmed by a recent report by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees titled *Immigrant and Refugee Funding Trends in Minnesota*. Based on surveys of Minnesota foundations that make grants to programs serving foreign-born residents, the report concluded that funding for programs in nonmetro areas of Minnesota is “sparse” and it noted that foundations are asking for more measurable outcomes.

Finally, efforts to improve cross-cultural relations in rural communities can be lonely work. Similar programs in urban areas have the advantage of greater diversity and awareness of need, greater public tolerance of diversity, and closer proximity to institutional and financial resources. For this reason,

the creation and sustenance of strong networks with like-minded organizations need to be a high priority for rural diversity coalitions. Nationally, proponents of comprehensive immigration reform include representatives of varied groups, including business, labor unions, church groups, nonprofits, and immigrant advocacy organizations. Rural coalitions need to consider this same strategy. Given the demographic trends of an aging population and greater diversity in Minnesota—and indeed, across the United States—the success of efforts to improve cross-cultural relations has profound implications for us all.

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Cities and southern Minnesota. Tamara served as a research assistant on the Diversity Coalition Research Project and completed her master of public policy degree at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs in May 2007. She holds a bachelor of arts in communication and Spanish from the College of St. Benedict. **Katherine Fennelly** is a professor at the Humphrey Institute. Her research and outreach interests include the human rights of immigrants and refugees in the United States and the preparedness of communities and public institutions to adapt to demographic changes. She holds a certificate of studies from the University of Madrid, a master’s of philosophy, a master’s of health education, and a doctorate in adult education from Columbia University.

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Project Funding Available from CURA

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs supports community-based research projects through several different programs. If you represent a community organization or agency and are unsure which program listed below is most suitable for your project proposal, simply complete a general Community-Based Research Program Application Form at www.cura.umn.edu/Programs/curaappform.html and we will route your request to the appropriate program.

■ **The Communiversity Program** funds quarter-time graduate student assistantships for one semester to help community-based nonprofit organizations or government agencies with a specific project. The application deadline for summer semester 2008 assistantships is March 30, 2008. For more information, contact community program assistant Jeff Corn at 612-625-0744 or curacbr@umn.edu, or visit www.cura.umn.edu/communiversity.php.

■ **The Community Assistantship Program (CAP)** matches community-based nonprofit organizations, citizen groups, and government agencies in Greater Minnesota with students who can provide research assistance. Eligible organizations define a research project, submit an application, and if accepted, are matched with a qualified student to carry out the research. The deadline for applications for summer semester 2008 support (early June through August) is March 30, 2008. For more information, to discuss potential projects, or for assistance with applications, contact CAP coordinator Will Craig at 612-625-3321 or wrcraig@umn.edu, or visit www.cura.umn.edu/cap.php.

■ **Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR)** provides student research assistance to community organizations in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and metro area suburbs that are involved in community-based revitalization. Projects may include any issue relevant to a neighborhood's or community's needs and interests, including planning, program

development, or program evaluation. Priority is given to projects that support and involve residents of color. Applications from organizations collaborating on a project are encouraged. Applications for summer 2008 support (early June through August) are due March 30, 2008. For more information, visit www.cura.umn.edu/npcr.php or contact NPCR program director Kris Nelson at 612-625-1020 or ksn@umn.edu.

■ **Northside Seed Grants** support community organizations that operate programs serving residents of Minneapolis' Northside community by providing student research assistants and faculty researchers to carry out neighborhood-initiated and neighborhood-guided projects. Applications for summer 2008 support (early June through August) are due March 15, 2008. For more information, visit www.cura.umn.edu/NSG.php or contact program director Kris Nelson at 612-625-1020 or ksn@umn.edu.

■ **The University-Neighborhood Network (UNN)** links community organizations to course-based neighborhood projects that students carry out as part of course requirements at a Twin Cities college or university. Organizations that participate in the program identify projects with which they need assistance. UNN then locates faculty who teach courses that meet the organization's needs, and students who have an interest in the proposed project. Participation in UNN is coordinated through a web database system. For more information, visit www.cura.umn.edu/unn.php, or contact UNN coordinator Jeff Corn at 612-625-0744 or unn@umn.edu.

■ **The New Initiative Program** accepts project proposals from community organizations, government agencies, and University of Minnesota faculty and students for projects that are inappropriate for or unrelated to other CURA programs. CURA is always looking for a good new idea, and supports many new projects outside of our existing program areas. The best approach is to call us to discuss the

idea; if it looks worthwhile, we will encourage you to write a brief proposal. For projects supporting government agencies, we usually seek matching funds. Maximum support for a project is generally a half-time graduate student research assistant for one academic year; support for one semester is more typical. For more information or to discuss a project idea, contact CURA associate director Will Craig at 612-625-3321 or wrcraig@umn.edu.

■ **The Faculty Interactive Research Program** is designed to encourage University of Minnesota faculty to carry out research projects that involve a significant issue of public policy for the state or its communities, and that include interaction with groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota involved with the issue. Ideal projects will have an applied orientation, as well as serve the research interests of the faculty member. Awards cover the faculty member's salary for one month during the summer, and support a half-time graduate research assistant for one year. Application materials for the 2008–2009 academic year competition will be mailed to eligible faculty in early spring semester. For more information, visit www.cura.umn.edu/FIRP.php or contact CURA director Tom Scott at 612-625-7340 or scott001@umn.edu.

■ **The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs** is an endowed position that supports, for one year, the research activities of a University of Minnesota faculty member for work on a project related to urban and regional affairs in Minnesota. The award is made possible through the generosity and vision of David and Elizabeth Fesler. Funds may be used to obtain release time or other support for the project, and may be used for either new or current projects. Application materials for the 2008–2009 academic year competition will be mailed to eligible faculty in early spring semester. For more information, visit www.cura.umn.edu/fesler-lampert.php or contact CURA director Tom Scott at 612-625-7340 or scott001@umn.edu.

Oromo Community Engagement in the Cedar-Riverside Neighborhood

by Jennifer Blevins



Photo © Steve Schneider, 2007

The Cedar-Riverside neighborhood in Minneapolis, located adjacent to the University of Minnesota on the West Bank of the Mississippi River (Figure 1), has served as a settlement for new immigrants for more than two centuries, starting with the influx of families from Eastern European countries during the 1800s. More recently, significant numbers of immigrants from Africa, and to a lesser degree Asia and Latin America, have chosen this neighborhood as their new home. One of the newer immigrant groups to arrive in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood is the Oromo, the largest cultural group within the Horn of Africa, centered in Ethiopia. The Oromo Community of Minnesota (OCM), a nonprofit organization created in 1985 to provide assistance to new

arrivals, estimates that 12,000 Oromo now live in Minnesota, with the largest concentration living in Cedar-Riverside.

The Oromo have increased their presence in Cedar-Riverside during a time of growing dissent in the neighborhood regarding community development prospects—a situation that was exacerbated when historic Dania Hall, a 113-year-old landmark on Cedar Avenue that was in the process of being redeveloped as a community center, was destroyed by fire in 2000. Cedar-Riverside has lacked a unified community voice for many years. The lack of unity is ultimately disempowering and makes the neighborhood vulnerable to future development without input from or regard for the community. In response, the West Bank Community

Development Corporation (CDC) has made it a priority to unite new immigrants and longer term residents in efforts to revitalize the neighborhood.

Within this context, the West Bank CDC initiated the Oromo Community Engagement project in response to a sense of disconnection with their new Oromo neighbors and colleagues. Prior to this project, the Oromo have focused on their own community development efforts but have been less engaged in collaborative planning processes and, for the most part, underrepresented in the creation of a common vision for neighborhood revitalization. The West Bank CDC intends to ensure the interests of the Oromo are not overlooked during planning for future community development projects.

In spring of 2007, I was hired through CURA's Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) program to work as a graduate research assistant for the Oromo Community Engagement project. The purpose of my internship was to help the West Bank CDC gain a better understanding of the Oromo and identify how the organization could increase engagement with Oromo residents living and working in the neighborhood. This article summarizes the findings of my internship project.

Research Purpose and Methodology

I used a qualitative research design to assess the potential for engaging the Oromo community in planning for the redevelopment of the Dania Hall site and the portion of Cedar Avenue that runs through the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Research included interviews with key stakeholders, participation in community events, initiation of community organizing, and personal observations. Interviews focused on topics such as the history of the Oromo and Oromo immigration to Minnesota, understanding the interests and priorities of Oromo stakeholders regarding community development, issues of concern to Oromo residents, significant roles or relationships in the Oromo community that should be respected, core cultural values of the Oromo, and existing relationships between Oromo residents and other cultural/ethnic groups in Cedar-Riverside.

I supplemented the qualitative data with relevant literature on Oromo social, cultural, and political history, as well as recent literature on best practices in multicultural community engagement. Rather than maximizing the number of stakeholder interviews conducted, I spent a significant amount of time building relationships with and learning from a core group of community leaders. Through this process, I was able to identify the strengths, interests, priorities, and values of the Oromo community, and assist in the bridging of relationships between the Oromo and other neighborhood stakeholders.

My research culminated in a series of recommendations to the West Bank CDC's board, staff, and neighborhood stakeholders that identified specific action steps they can take to work in partnership with Oromo residents, as well as other new immigrants, on community development initiatives. Key concepts

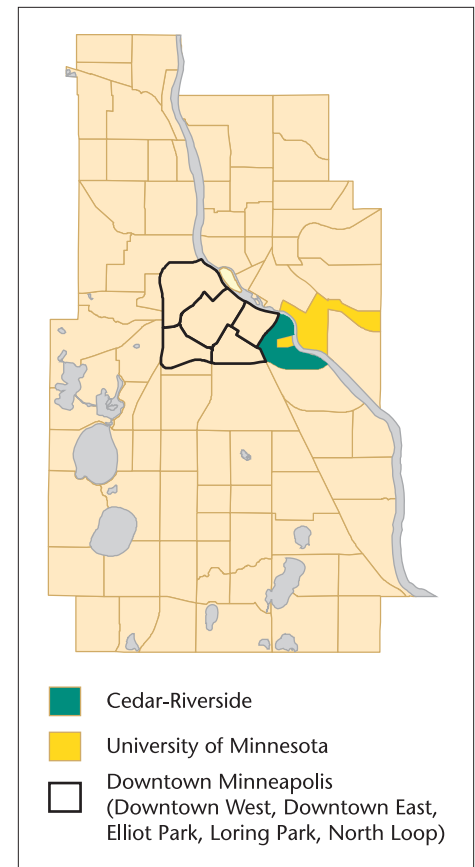
that emerged as the foundation for action steps included creating cultural competence, bridging social capital, building a multicultural coalition for community action, and expanding the capacity of new immigrants to enter the community development field.

Project Findings: Understanding the Oromo

For many centuries, the Oromo functioned with their own rich cultural, political, and religious systems as an independent nation within Africa. Their independence was lost through the systematic invasion of their territory in the 1880s as part of the military effort to build what is now Ethiopia. In an attempt to regain sovereignty, the Oromo have been organizing a political movement, which is gaining momentum. Political tensions have concurrently escalated in Ethiopia, forcing a growing number of Oromo, including government employees, professionals, activists, and academics to flee the country as refugees or political asylees. Consequently, the Oromo community has a significant number of highly educated and skilled people who have chosen Minnesota as their new home. The Oromo are very passionate about their vision for peace and equality in their homeland, and maintain this as a high priority even as they establish new roots in the United States. The social capital of the Oromo community clearly extends beyond the local level. Cedar-Riverside has become a hub for Oromo networking on a national and international scale. Each year, the neighborhood and surrounding area are the host locations for many significant Oromo events, including the national conferences of the Oromo Studies Association, Oromo Liberation Front, Oromo Youth Association, and Oromo International Lutheran Church. Each event draws hundreds of people to Minneapolis.

A large number of Oromo refugees lived in extreme poverty in Ethiopia. Given these circumstances, Oromo leaders reported that it is a challenge to provide services and link people with resources sufficient to build the capacity for all refugees to fare well in their new home. These challenges are multiplied when the cultural oppression the Oromo experienced is taken into account. A study conducted in Minnesota and reported in the April 2004 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* revealed that 69% of all

Figure 1. Location of the Cedar-Riverside Neighborhood in Minneapolis



male and 37% of all female Oromo refugees surveyed had been victims of torture before leaving Africa.

Of great concern to the Oromo is the well-being of elders and youth in the community. Elders are the least likely to become fluent in a new language or successfully gain employment in their new home. Youth, on the other hand, are challenged to catch up with their U.S.-born peers and define their future within the current political, social, and economic climate. The OCM, in order to address the needs and interests of their people while preserving a strong cultural identity, have placed a very high priority on establishing their own community center.

Barriers to Oromo participation in community development efforts are similar to those experienced by other new immigrants. At the neighborhood level, relationships and networks created around community development tend to become entrenched, with little change in leadership roles and structures. This makes it difficult for newcomers to meaningfully participate in the development process. At the same time, long-term neighborhood leaders see the population of the neighborhood

changing and want to engage new immigrants, but are unsure about the best way to include them in initiatives. Even the most well-intentioned attempts by community development organizations to involve new immigrants often result in a narrow role for newcomers as either token participants or followers of the existing neighborhood leadership, rather than as equal partners. Finally, new immigrants often are not aware of the potential benefits of participation in established community development organizations at the neighborhood level or how to access this particular social capital network. However, as new immigrants build their own organizations, such as the OCM, the opportunity for community development partnerships based on equity and mutual interests will grow.

Project Recommendations

The recommendations that emerged from this project are focused on how to increase engagement with the Oromo community in neighborhood planning and to bridge the relationships among the Oromo community and other neighborhood stakeholders. Most of these recommendations are not limited to engaging the Oromo community, but rather suggest ways the West Bank CDC and other organizations can pursue multicultural coalition building with many underrepresented groups for community development purposes.

Creating cultural competence.

Cultural competence has supplanted notions of cultural sensitivity and cultural awareness, with the aim of placing a higher value on the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and skills necessary to respectfully and effectively work with others in a multicultural society. The process of understanding one's self in relation to others, especially in the context of multicultural community development, must parallel an analysis of race dynamics and a commitment to undoing racism in our society. Second, it requires a deep sense of curiosity and interest in the life stories of others, which moves us into the process of mutual discovery and partnership building. To accomplish these tasks, the West Bank CDC and others interested in multicultural coalition building can take a number of steps to increase cultural competence. For example, the West Bank CDC can intentionally create safe spaces for informal dialogue, cross-cultural learning, reflection on self-identity, and discussion of privilege and oppression.



Oromo youth are actively engaged in developing their own leadership through such organizations as the Oromo Youth Association, a youth-run group that provides community-building, cultural preservation, and political opportunities for its members.



Bridging social capital. In a 1995 article published in the *Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, Robert Putnam describes social capital as the value individuals and communities gain from reciprocal relationships and networking. Each of the ethnic populations in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood has its own social capital, which has been strengthened through the development of their own organizations, creating an environment where the entire neighborhood can

be strengthened through the *bridging* of social capital among subgroups.

One method the West Bank CDC can use to bridge social capital is to initiate an outreach strategy. Each board and staff member could conduct at least five one-on-one conversations with community leaders from cultures other than their own within a designated period of time. At the completion of the interview process, all who participated would be invited to an event to celebrate and summarize the

potential areas of mutual interest for working together in the future. The West Bank CDC also recently launched an information-sharing website about current Cedar-Riverside community-development initiatives that has the potential to bridge social capital among various groups in the neighborhood if it is expanded for this purpose.

Strengthening a multicultural coalition for community action. The West Bank CDC has already initiated multicultural coalition building through its efforts to redevelop the Dania Hall site. However, because of the long timeframe of the redevelopment process and the inherent limitations of the site itself, a narrow focus on this project could potentially diminish the ability of the West Bank CDC to foster multicultural community development and ultimately weaken the impact of the organization.

These challenges call for an approach to multicultural community development that also incorporates organizing around short-term neighborhood issues. The West Bank CDC and the OCM are aware of the pressing issues in the neighborhood related to light-rail transit, youth, land use, access to public spaces, future housing development, public safety, and expansion and rehabilitation of the Brian Coyle Center, a neighborhood community center. Although the West Bank CDC is in the initial stages of bringing people together around these issues, a more disciplined strategy must be pursued. Successful collective action in a multicultural context requires ensuring that the goals meet the interests of all involved, that stakeholders are coming to the table with a sense of equity and shared responsibility, and that public action on issues in the short-term produces measurable results that reinforce the value of collective action. As a benchmark, the West Bank CDC and coalition partners should incorporate public action into strategic

planning efforts, with specific goals and outcomes, on at least a quarterly basis.

During this internship project, the West Bank CDC and other organization partners started building momentum in this direction by implementing a multicultural organizing strategy, gaining neighborhood consensus around the future light-rail stop being planned for the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. At a large public meeting attended by approximately 200 people in April 2007, the coalition known as Dania Partners, which includes the OCM, received a commitment from the Metropolitan Council to include the neighborhood's preferred light-rail stop on Cedar Avenue in an engineering study and to meet with the Dania Partners throughout the planning process. This was a substantial show of unity, as all sectors and neighborhood subgroups joined together for a common purpose, using their collective power to create positive changes. Of particular significance was that 90% of the attendees at the public meeting were new immigrants and that interpretation was provided in Somali and Oromo.

Expanding capacity for new immigrants to enter the community development field. In a 2003 report titled *Community Development in Dynamic Neighborhoods*, Catherine Fernandez observed that the community organizations that are most successful in partnering with new immigrants for community development are those that engage in continual self-assessment of their technical and organizational capacity to meet the interests of an ever-changing constituency. The West Bank CDC could incorporate such self-assessment into its strategic planning processes by broadening its assessment to include not only internal stakeholders, but also the Oromo community and others in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Strategic planning and capacity building should overtly include succession planning

to create a more diverse workforce as aging community development leaders approach retirement from the field.

The West Bank CDC and other neighborhood organizations sincerely want to ensure all subgroups of the community are represented in decision making. As the Oromo and other new immigrants to Cedar-Riverside realize their full potential and expand their work beyond providing assistance to new arrivals, involvement in community development will become more appealing. However, without an intentional effort to create equity and develop capacity, obstacles such as structural racism and tokenism will be difficult to overcome. Another strategy to expand capacity is designing internship and work-study opportunities in partnership with postsecondary educational institutions. These partnerships would provide an opportunity to mentor and pass on knowledge about community development to the next generation, which is an important value in the Oromo community. Another option is for the West Bank CDC to invest in and provide technical assistance to leaders in new immigrant communities through a leadership training program focused on community-development techniques.

Jennifer Blevins was a graduate student in the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota at the time this research project was conducted. She is currently the Director of Community and Systems Change with Family & Children's Service in the Twin Cities.

This project was supported by CURA's Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) program, which provides student research assistance to community organizations in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and metropolitan-area suburbs that are involved in community revitalization. A full-length report about this project can be found at www.cura.umn.edu/publications/NPCR-reports/npcr1259.pdf.

Minnesota 3-D: Bringing Planning and Community Data Together Online

by Jeff Matson, Kris Nelson, and Elissa Mahlik



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

One of the primary goals of Minnesota 3-D is to provide easy access to community development data to avoid the spatial mismatch between housing and employment opportunities, such as the isolated residential development pictured here.

Communities interested in planning and community development have always looked to data as key pieces of the decision-making process. However, these data often come from a multitude of sources, vary greatly in geographic scale (coverage area) and resolution (level of detail), and cover disparate periods of time. Furthermore, community development and planning decision making tend to focus on only one dimension of the issue, such as housing, employment, business activity, or transportation. This approach may lead to development patterns that cannot be sustained over time.

The problem of unsustainable development patterns is evident in the Twin Cities, where low-income households

are frequently isolated in the central cities and unable to affordably commute to more distant, growing job centers, and new businesses choose to locate in prosperous suburban areas but are increasingly unable to find workers who can afford to live in the community. A 2005 report by the Center for Neighborhood Technology and the Surface Transportation Policy Project titled *Drive to Spend* found that the Twin Cities had the sixth highest transportation costs among major metropolitan centers and that spending on transportation represents, on average, almost half of household income. The implications of these high costs were underscored by a 2002 Metropolitan Council report from the Second Mayors' Regional Housing Task

Force titled *Affordable Housing: Making It a Reality*, which concluded that, "In order for the Twin Cities metropolitan region to grow economically, businesses need access to workers, and workers need housing they can afford."

The growing "spatial mismatch" in the Twin Cities between housing and jobs was the driving force for creating Minnesota 3-D (M3D). Publicly launched in September 2006, the M3D online application (<http://map.deed.state.mn.us/M3D/>) provides an easy-to-use interface for mapping a variety of community and economic development indicators across the seven-county metropolitan region. The project was funded by a competitively awarded three-year Technology Opportunity Program grant from the U.S.

Department of Commerce. The grant was awarded to CURA in partnership with the Labor Market Information Office (LMI) at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Matching funds were provided by CURA, DEED, and several other agencies that contributed data for the application.

As the M3D grant concludes at the end of 2007, it is an appropriate time to evaluate the program's impacts. This article describes what M3D is, how the M3D system was built, the functionality of the system, the benefits for M3D users, and lessons learned from the program.

What Is M3D?

Minnesota 3-D is a dynamic, geographic information systems (GIS)-based Internet application that brings together labor market, housing, and development information and analysis for the Twin Cities metro area into one easy-to-use application. The primary goals in building M3D were (1) to create a dynamic, one-stop assessment tool that provides a complete picture of the region's economy and labor market, commuting patterns and transportation options, and affordable housing and development opportunities; and (2) to make this tool easily available to transportation and housing planners, economic and community developers, and the businesses that drive regional job growth through an intuitive Internet-based GIS application that offers data, mapping, and design tools.

A secondary goal of M3D is to provide ready access to a wide range of current community development data from a variety of sources that can be scaled to varying geographies. For planners, community developers, or employment and economic development staff, this accessible source of data and analysis has great benefit. Currently M3D includes more than 90 data layers drawn from federal, state, regional, and municipal sources. These data can be organized in reports or displayed on maps generated by M3D for geographies ranging from neighborhoods and municipal areas to counties or even the entire Twin Cities metropolitan region. Users can also customize the geographic area they want to analyze.

Building on the success of the Minneapolis Neighborhood Information System (MNIS) project¹ and CURA's long-standing interest and involvement in community GIS, M3D is an important component of expanded access

¹ For information on MNIS, see the Spring, Summer, and Fall 2004 issues of the *CURA Reporter*.

M3D Case Study: City of Chaska

The City of Chaska, located on the Minnesota River in Carver County, embraces both its small town character and its ongoing expansion. As a community around which the Twin Cities metropolitan area has grown, Chaska's development activities encompass a mix of preserving historical structures, luring high technology industries, and ensuring housing opportunities for an economically diverse workforce.

According to Kevin Ringwald, Chaska's Director of Planning and Development, geographic information system (GIS) technology is essential for local level governance and service delivery. Its value is heightened when a city embarks on strategic planning to guide decisions, as Chaska has done. The City of Chaska has added M3D to its GIS portfolio, using it to assess planning and development options and to more confidently make decisions that align with its strategic goals.

Concerned that traffic congestion and long commute times could erode residents' quality of life, Chaska has examined commuted and laborshed maps in combination with other data sources to improve commuting experiences. Noticing that their laborshed was strong relative to inbound bus ridership, the city has begun working with SouthWest Transit to increase return ridership after buses drop off morning commuters in Minneapolis. Additionally, Chaska has begun partnering with neighboring communities to press for improvements to the transportation infrastructure in those cities, whereas in the past, city leaders may not have felt a stake in the infrastructure beyond their own borders.

City planning has also been carried out with assistance from the M3D website. The City of Chaska uses M3D to catalog housing and industrial strategies in other communities and to decide if any of those approaches are worthy of emulation. In particular, Chaska seeks out evidence of developments that enable citizens to live and work locally, and conversely, it avoids development that might degrade local sustainability. Chaska also uses M3D to assess whether its housing stock is sufficient to meet the needs and preferences of all income earners, using other communities as criteria for gauging its own success in this area.

The development of the Chaska Biotech Center, a cornerstone of the city's efforts to ensure local economic vitality, is a noteworthy example of Chaska's city planning with M3D. The Chaska Biotech Center is a planned 800-acre site that is expected to host over 5,000 biotech and medical device workers, mostly in manufacturing roles. Recognizing that the city would find it hard to lure employers and workers to Chaska without adequate and attractive housing options for workers, the Chaska Biotech Center development encompasses not just the manufacturing site but also a plan to develop new housing in the community. M3D has been used by the City of Chaska to forecast housing needs and move forward with new developments. Additionally, M3D has been used to entice biotech employers by communicating, visually and in reports, how the labor pool will meet their needs.

Reprinted with permission from Christopher Moore, Richard Chase, and Rasheeda Curry. Minnesota 3-D: Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) Grant Evaluation Report. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research, 2007.

to GIS tools in communities outside the core cities, particularly in smaller and older inner-ring suburbs and the fast-growing communities at the edge of the metropolitan area. Many cities in the region do not fully utilize GIS within their planning or community development departments, and are thus missing a vital tool of modern planning. By allowing users to easily conduct spatial analyses and display

these data as customizable maps, M3D enables policy makers and community members to understand the interrelationships between housing, economic development, and transportation.

Planners and community developers throughout the Twin Cities metro area can use the system for a variety of applications. For example, suburban communities with fast-growing employment opportunities can use M3D to determine

Table 1. Sample of Minnesota 3-D Data Layers

Data Layer	Source*	Description	Resolution	Current	Planned Update Frequency
Administrative and Political					
Neighborhoods	Compiled by MN DEED; retrieved from City of St. Paul, City of Minneapolis, and City of Roseville	Planning district boundaries in St. Paul and Roseville; neighborhood boundaries in Minneapolis	True to boundary	2006	Minneapolis due for update; otherwise, annually
School district	MetroGIS	School district boundaries	True to boundary	2006	Unknown
Parcel boundaries	MetroGIS	Parcel boundaries (no detailed attribute information)	True to boundary	2006	Twice yearly
Census block groups	MetroGIS	Boundaries of Census block groups	True to boundary	2000	As updated by U.S. Census Bureau
County, city, and township boundaries	MetroGIS	Boundaries of counties, cities, and townships	True to boundary	2006	Dynamic update (MetroGIS)
Transportation analysis zones	MetroGIS	Boundaries of transportation analysis zones	True to boundary	2000	Unknown
Water features	MetroGIS	Water features, lakes, and rivers	Based on land use	2005	—
Transportation					
Highways	MetroGIS	Major highways	True to boundary	2006	Dynamic update (MetroGIS)
Bus routes	MetroGIS	Metro Transit bus routes	True to boundary	2006	Twice yearly
Hiawatha LRT route	MetroGIS	Route 55—Hiawatha Corridor Light-Rail Transit route	True to boundary	2006	As updated by MetroGIS
Park-and-ride lots	MetroGIS	Park-and-ride locations for Twin Cities metropolitan area	True to boundary	2005	As updated by MetroGIS
Roadways	MetroGIS (major roads); TIGER Census (streets)	Major roads and streets	True to boundary	2006	Dynamic update (MetroGIS)
Metro airports	MetroGIS	Regional airports in the Twin Cities metropolitan area	True to boundary	2006	As updated by MetroGIS
Minneapolis Airport day-night noise level	MAC	2007 Minneapolis Airport draft day-night noise level contour lines	True to boundary	2006	As updated by MAC
Minneapolis Airport height limits	MAC	2006 Minneapolis Airport height limit contours	True to boundary	2006	As updated by MAC
Services and Resources					
Workforce centers	MN DEED	Location of Minnesota Workforce Centers	Location (address)	2006	Annually
Childcare centers	MN Dept. of Human Services	Location of Twin Cities childcare centers	Location (address)	2005	Annually
Family childcare providers	MN Childcare and Resource	Location of Twin Cities family childcare providers	Location (address)	2007	Twice yearly
Libraries	Metropolitan Library Service Agency	Location of Twin Cities public libraries	Location (address)	2006	Annually
Hospitals	MN Dept. of Health (LMIC)	Location of Minnesota hospitals	Location (address)	2003	As updated by LMIC
Schools	LMIC	Location of public elementary/middle/high schools and colleges (public and private colleges)	Location (address)	2006	Annually
Affordable housing	HousingLink	Location of affordable housing properties in HousingLink database	Location (address)	2006	Twice yearly
Demographics					
Race-ethnicity (non-White)	U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of population that is non-White or Hispanic	Census block group	2000	Next Census
No high school diploma	U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of adults over age 25 with no high school diploma	Census block group	2000	Next Census
Population with bachelor's degree	U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of adults over age 25 with a four-year college degree or more	Census block group	2000	Next Census
Population in poverty	U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of population below poverty line	Census block group	2000	Next Census
Median income	U.S. Census 2000	Median income of households	Census block group	2000	Next Census
Planning and Development					
Residential building permits	U.S. Census 2000; Dept. of HUD	Total new residential building permits	City (jurisdiction)	2005	Annually

Table 1. Sample of Minnesota 3-D Data Layers (continued)

Data Layer	Source*	Description	Resolution	Current	Planned Update Frequency
Housing density	U.S. Census 2000	Number of housing units per square mile	Census block group	2000	Next Census
Median rent	U.S. Census 2000	Median cost of rent	Census block group	2000	Next Census
Planned land use	MetroGIS	Planned land use according to city plans	To parcel	2006	Dynamic update (MetroGIS)
Land use, 2000	MetroGIS	Land use in 2000	To parcel	2000	None
Land use, 2005	MetroGIS	Land use in 2005	To parcel	2005	None
Ortho photos	MetroGIS	Orthographic photos	Image/photo	2000	Dynamic update (MetroGIS)
Aerial imagery	MN Dept. of Natural Resources	Color aerial imagery	Image/photo	2004	When updated by DNR
Employment: Total Employment					
Employment change, 2000 to 2005	MN DEED	Pct. change in total employment between 2000 and 2005	Partial MCD	2005	Annually
Employment change, 2004 to 2005	MN DEED	Pct. change in total employment between 2004 and 2005	Partial MCD	2005	Annually
Employment density	MN DEED	Total employment for 2005, in jobs per square mile	Partial MCD	2005	Annually
Employment: Residential Workforce					
Income	LED; U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of workers in a residential location who earn more than \$3440, between \$1200 and \$3400, or less than \$1200 monthly	Census block group	2004	Annually
Age	LED; U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of workers in a residential location who are over the age of 55, between the ages of 30 and 54, or under the age of 30	Census block group	2004	Annually
Work industry, by two-digit NAICS code	LED; U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of workers in a residential location who work in this NAICS classification	Census block group	2004	Annually
Employment: Workplace Characteristics					
Earnings	LED; U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of jobs in a workplace paying more than \$3440, between \$1200 and \$3400, or less than \$1200 monthly	Census block group	2004	Annually
Worker age	LED; U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of jobs in a workplace with job holders over the age of 55, between the ages of 30 and 54, or under the age of 30	Census block group	2004	Annually
Job industry, by two-digit NAICS code	LED; U.S. Census 2000	Pct. of jobs in a workplace in this NAICS classification	Census block group	2004	Annually
Financial					
High-cost loan originations	HMDA	Pct. of originations that have a loan with a high-cost interest rate (above market rate)	Census tract	2004	Annually
Mortgage originations by loan applications	HMDA	Pct. of all loan applications originated	Census tract	2004	Annually
Mortgage originations by housing units	HMDA	Pct. of housing units in an area with a mortgage origination	Census tract	2004	Annually
Sales tax revenue by business, 2005	MN Dept. of Revenue	Average sales tax revenue by business in an area	City/township	2005	Unknown
Sales tax revenue, 2005	MN Dept. of Revenue	Total sales tax revenue in an area	City/township	2005	Unknown
Dynamic Travelsheds					
Commutedsheds (by city, dot, or neighborhoods)	LED; U.S. Census 2000	Origin-destination data connects the block group of a workplace with the block group of a residence	Census block group or city	2004	Annually
Laborsheds (by city, dot, and neighborhoods)	LED; U.S. Census 2000	Origin-destination data connects the block group of a workplace with the block group of a residence	Census block group or city	2004	Annually

Note: DEED stands for Department of Employment and Economic Development; HMDA stands for Home Mortgage Disclosure Act; HUD stands for Housing and Urban Development; LED stands for Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics; LMIC stands for Land Management Information Center; MAC stands for Metropolitan Airports Commission; MCD stands for minor civil division; NAICS stands for North American Industry Classification System.

* Source refers to the agency or organization that provided the GIS layer, not to the original creator of the data set.

demand for affordable housing for the workers needed to fill these jobs or evaluate the adequacy of transit service to help workers access these employment opportunities. Central-city neighborhoods tend to be near dense employment centers, but employers may overlook the opportunity of employing their “neighbors.” These communities can use M3D to provide marketing information about the available labor force to prospective employers. Redeveloping inner-ring suburbs can use M3D to identify denser housing development opportunities located near job centers. Employment counselors can use M3D to identify places of employment and available transit and childcare services in the area.

Building the M3D Application

The contributions of the project partners who collaborated to develop the M3D system fall into three broad categories: application development, user support, and data provision. The application development has been spearheaded by the LMI at Minnesota DEED, with additional assistance from CURA.

Minnesota DEED was responsible for developing the M3D application and hosting the server on which the system resides. The system was developed using open-source software, including MapServer² and PostGIS. Community partners representing a cross section of central city neighborhoods, inner-ring suburbs, and outer-ring communities helped to identify data important to include in the application and provided feedback on the application as it was being developed.

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs has been primarily responsible for providing user support for the M3D system. This has included a combination of user workshops, hands-on training sessions, and one-on-one project assistance for individual communities using the system.

A variety of partners has organized and contributed source data for use with the M3D system (Table 1, p. 30). For example, data-sharing agreements with diverse agencies such as HousingLink (a local nonprofit affordable housing tracking service) and the Minnesota Department of Revenue have now made available to the public data that cannot be readily aggregated or mapped through other online sources. In addition to these unique data layers, a majority of the data

² MapServer is a widely used Internet GIS package that was developed at the University of Minnesota.



Large employers may overlook the opportunity of employing their “neighbors” in the community, and local communities may not recognize the housing demand created by employment centers. For example, Less than 4% of the workforce at Children’s Health Care and United Hospital (above) lives in the local community. With 6,000 employees, the hospital represents a potentially significant market for new housing.

layers accessible through M3D come from public sources such as MetroGIS (political, administrative, and transportation layers), the Federal Reserve (Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data), the Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Childcare Resource and Referral Network (childcare locations), and the U.S. Census Bureau.

The U.S. Census Bureau’s Local Employment Dynamics (LED) office created the origin-destination data set that is the hallmark of the M3D system. This data set allows users to create maps showing a community’s *commuted* (where residents of a given area travel to work) and *laborshed* (where workers in a given area travel from). These maps are helpful in identifying connections between employment and residential opportunities in the region, and they highlight distances and areas that a community’s residents and workers are traveling to and from to reach their place of employment.

A related data set provides information about a community’s residential and workplace characteristics in the form of easily understandable reports (Table 2). Workplace and Residential Area Characteristics Reports can help communities to quickly identify such things as age of workforce, earnings, and employment industry for workers and residents in their community. Workplace and residential area characteristics

data can be used to identify spatial mismatches in the region. For example, if community data show a large discrepancy in earnings, job skills, or employment industries among a community’s residents and workers, this may signal a disconnect between residential and job opportunities within the community.

Along with workplace and residential area reports, the M3D website offers a Housing Report that combines data from HousingLink, the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) database, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other sources to provide an understanding of an area’s housing composition. This report further allows users to connect affordable housing and homeownership opportunities to a community’s employment opportunities. Other layers and data sources available through the M3D website allow a community to identify the need for services, transportation, and other amenities in their area.

Functionality of the M3D Application

As noted earlier, the M3D website incorporates more than 90 data layers in the areas of employment, housing, transportation, land use, and demographics. Through the use of M3D, local planners, community developers, and others have ready access to a range of data and information to examine various relationships and assess implications of alternative development scenarios in the

Table 2. Sample Minnesota 3-D Residential Area Characteristics Report*

	Pct.	Number	Metro Pct.	Metro Number
Annual Average Earnings by Worker				
< \$14,400	27.5%	2,610	19.0%	238,543
\$14,400–\$40,800	54.4%	5,171	36.7%	461,514
> \$40,800	18.1%	1,718	44.3%	556,458
Total	100.0%	9,499	100.0%	1,256,515
Age of Worker				
30 and under	31.0%	2,945	25.0%	314,581
31–54	58.5%	5,560	60.8%	764,054
55 and over	10.5%	994	14.2%	177,880
Total	100.0%	9,499	100.0%	1,256,515
Workers by Industry of Primary Job				
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.1%	8	0.1%	1,827
Mining	0.0%	1	0.0%	406
Utilities	0.3%	30	0.4%	4,933
Construction	2.7%	256	4.3%	54,466
Manufacturing	11.0%	1,041	11.5%	144,944
Wholesale Trade	4.7%	450	6.5%	81,430
Retail Trade	8.2%	783	10.3%	128,880
Transportation and Warehousing	3.7%	356	3.5%	44,579
Information	2.6%	246	3.1%	39,033
Finance and Insurance	5.4%	509	7.2%	90,435
Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	2.5%	238	2.6%	32,358
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3.8%	357	6.5%	82,115
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2.6%	249	4.3%	53,657
Admin, Support, Waste Management, Remediation	9.5%	902	4.7%	58,920
Educational Services	7.7%	727	8.4%	105,079
Health Care and Social Assistance	18.0%	1,709	11.8%	147,981
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.4%	130	1.5%	18,561
Accommodation and Food Services	8.3%	786	6.2%	78,476
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	4.0%	378	3.2%	40,731
Public Administration	3.6%	343	3.8%	47,704
All Primary Jobs (including Private and Public)	100.1%	9,499	99.9%	1,256,515
Commuted (Cities where workers are employed who live in the selected area)				
City	All Jobs	All Primary Jobs	All Private Jobs	All Private Primary Jobs
Minneapolis	4,471	3,993	3,532	3,115
St. Paul	906	751	788	642
Plymouth	362	343	350	331
Bloomington	405	329	393	320
Edina	380	327	379	327
Golden Valley	372	317	364	312
St. Louis Park	348	288	339	280
Brooklyn Center	233	198	212	178
Minnnetonka	206	188	198	183
Eden Prairie	189	174	187	172

* Sample report is for Sumner-Glenwood, Harrison, Near North, Willard-Hay, Hawthorne, and Jordan neighborhoods in north Minneapolis.

context of the region. The integration of data layers and sophisticated analysis tools available in M3D helps to give communities a better understanding of the places they live and their connections to the region surrounding them.

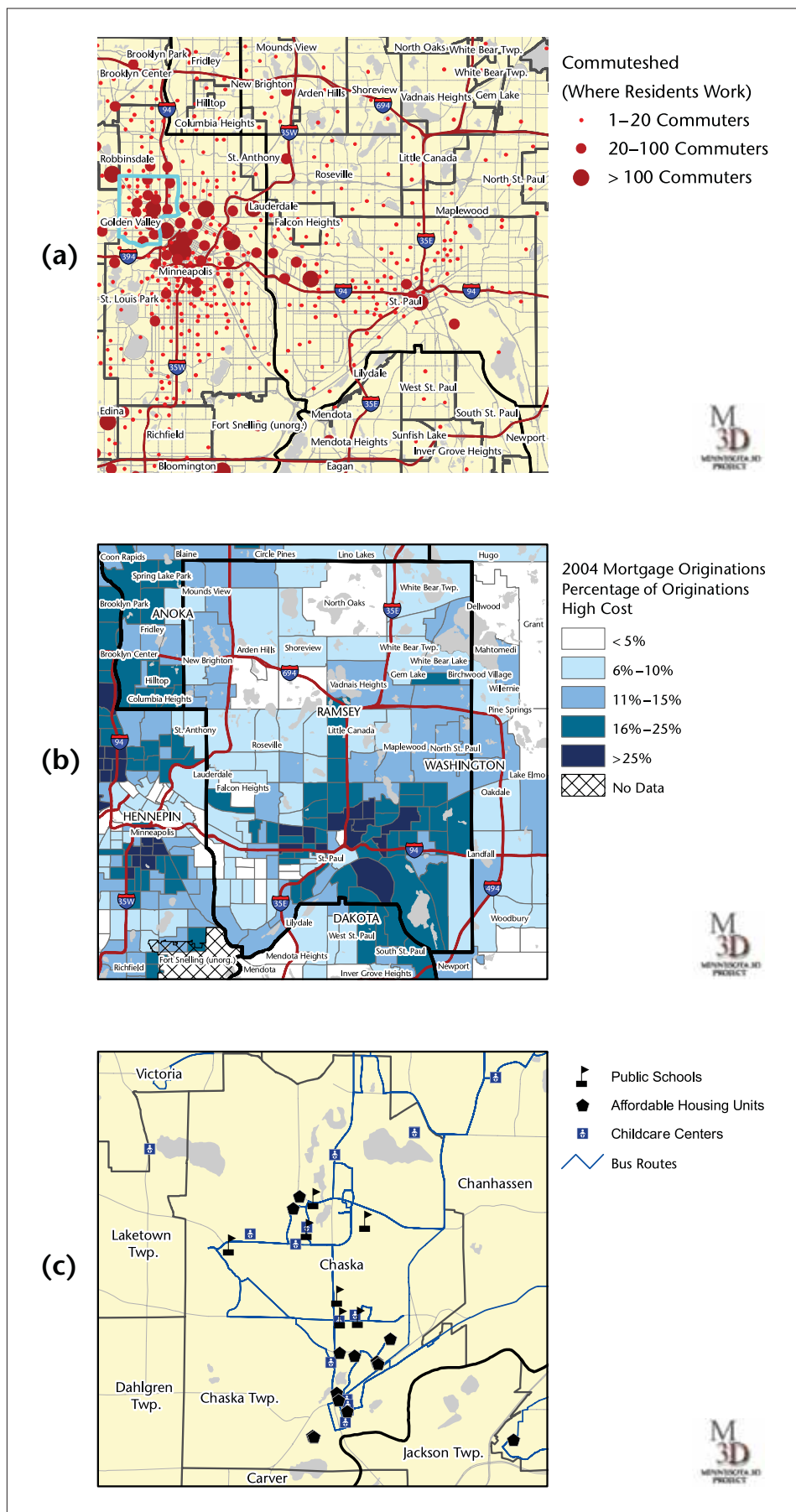
The M3D application has three primary functional components: *services and resources* (overlays), *thematic maps* (background layers), and *dynamic maps and reports* (commuteshed, laborshed, and other reports) (Figure 1). Services and resources data range from political and administrative boundaries (school districts, neighborhoods) to transportation layers (bus routes, park-and-ride stations, freeways). The application also includes point layers, which show the specific location of such things as workforce centers, childcare facilities, libraries, hospitals, schools, and affordable housing. Many of these layers link to external information sources, allowing users to click on specific points (e.g., housing) and bus routes to pull up detailed information about these resources.

Thematic maps give the user the ability to quickly create regionwide maps displaying area demographics, land use and development, employment information, and financial and housing characteristics. These data layers come mainly from public agencies such as the U.S. Census Bureau, DEED, the Minnesota Department of Revenue, and the HMDA database.

The dynamic mapping and reporting capabilities of M3D give users the ability to create a laborshed or commuteshed map at any level of geography that suits their needs. Users can create these maps by one or more city or neighborhood, or by drawing a rectangle on the screen to identify a specific geographic location. The commuteshed/laborshed maps and various reports are then dynamically generated based on the user's selected area. The almost infinite number of combinations of geographic areas that can be mapped makes this perhaps the most powerful feature of the M3D application.

The power of GIS gives the M3D user the ability to view each of these layers of information separately or in combination with one another. For example, a planner in Richfield could create a simple map showing where workers in the community are traveling from, or build a more complex view by layering bus routes and childcare center locations on top of this simple map, with employment growth displayed in the background.

Figure 1. The Functional Components of M3D: (a) dynamic maps and reports, (b) thematic map layers, and (c) services and resources overlays.



Finally, printing and custom map output functionality are built into the application. The user can create a printer-friendly map with a title and legend in a single step, or can custom design and export maps as JPEG image files, PDF documents, or other image formats. These output options make it simple to share M3D data as e-mail attachments or to include a map in a PowerPoint presentation or other document.

By creating an Internet-based application, the M3D developers were able to provide a common platform and distribution network for a full range of data. This approach overcomes the problem of different technology being used by different data providers. Wherever possible, M3D uses web mapping services and live hyperlinks to ensure “freshness” of data and to reduce time spent on updates and maintenance; because the data providers handle

updates, M3D provides the most recent data available from these sources.

The use of web mapping services also allows the M3D application to display GIS layers from other Internet-based servers that will appear to the user just like any other local data source in the M3D system. Hyperlinks in the service and resource layers (such as bus routes and affordable housing points) let users access detailed information from the data providers (e.g., Metro Transit or the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority in the case of bus schedules) directly from within the M3D application.

The Benefits of M3D

Minnesota 3-D is designed to serve both the planning and development community and individual citizens in the Twin Cities metropolitan area (Table 3). By organizing in one website a wide range of data that can be analyzed spatially

from a simple desktop computer, M3D makes it possible for both professionals and citizens to better understand their community and the relationships and interactions that affect it. M3D overcomes the challenge of locating and comparing data on a community level and makes spatial analysis possible without specialized software or training.

Users can easily generate reports summarizing housing, employment, and economic activity for their community. This same information can be mapped to demonstrate the relationships among these phenomena in a metropolitan context. For example, users can see where workers in their community travel to work, what transit and transportation routes are available, and what childcare resources exist for these workers. Conversely, a user can determine where workers employed in their community are coming from

Table 3. Minnesota 3-D Users, Data Layers Used, and Benefits Derived from the System

M3D Users	M3D Data Layers Used	M3D Benefits
City planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commuteshed ▶ Laborshed ▶ Land Use ▶ Affordable Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Providing database for updating comprehensive land-use plans ▶ Identifying opportunities to match jobs with new and existing housing ▶ Evaluating existing and future needs for transit services ▶ Planning transportation infrastructure for proposed industrial and commercial locations ▶ Presenting readily understandable maps (from metro to census block group scales) for public meetings
Community development corporation staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Housing Report ▶ Mortgage Report ▶ Demographics ▶ Services and Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifying markets for infill projects ▶ Evaluating economic development opportunities for low- and moderate-income households ▶ Documenting need and opportunities to support funding applications ▶ Creating maps for data display
Regional planners and policy analysts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commuteshed ▶ Laborshed ▶ Land Use ▶ Bus Routes ▶ Economic (sales tax data) ▶ Residential Area Characteristics ▶ Workplace Area Characteristics ▶ Housing Report ▶ HMDA Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Providing integrated data sets for analyzing spatial relationships among employment, housing, transportation, and economic development ▶ Tracking geographic expansion of subregional commuting patterns by place of work and place of residence ▶ Analyzing relative strength of subregional retail concentrations within the metro area ▶ Analyzing accessibility to jobs on a small area basis ▶ Expanding resources for outreach to local communities
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Range of data layers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Providing readily accessible databases for student projects ▶ Creating maps for data display
Business owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commuteshed ▶ Bus Routes ▶ Retail Sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Evaluating subregional site options to serve distribution of current employees ▶ Developing policies for supporting transit services for employees
Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Range of data layers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Providing access to quality data ▶ Delivering time-efficient, easily available information over the web ▶ Offering a user-friendly/low knowledge base tool for complex mapping programs

and what housing options are available to them within the community.

In a recent user survey that was part of a formal evaluation of the M3D project, the Wilder Research Foundation found that 65% of respondents reported that M3D had benefited planning and development decisions in their community. Nearly all (92%) used the mapping features available from M3D. Wilder tracked “visits” to the M3D website and reported an average of 16 visits a day in M3D’s first year (September 2006 to July 2007). Almost two-thirds of the visitors have visited the site more than once.

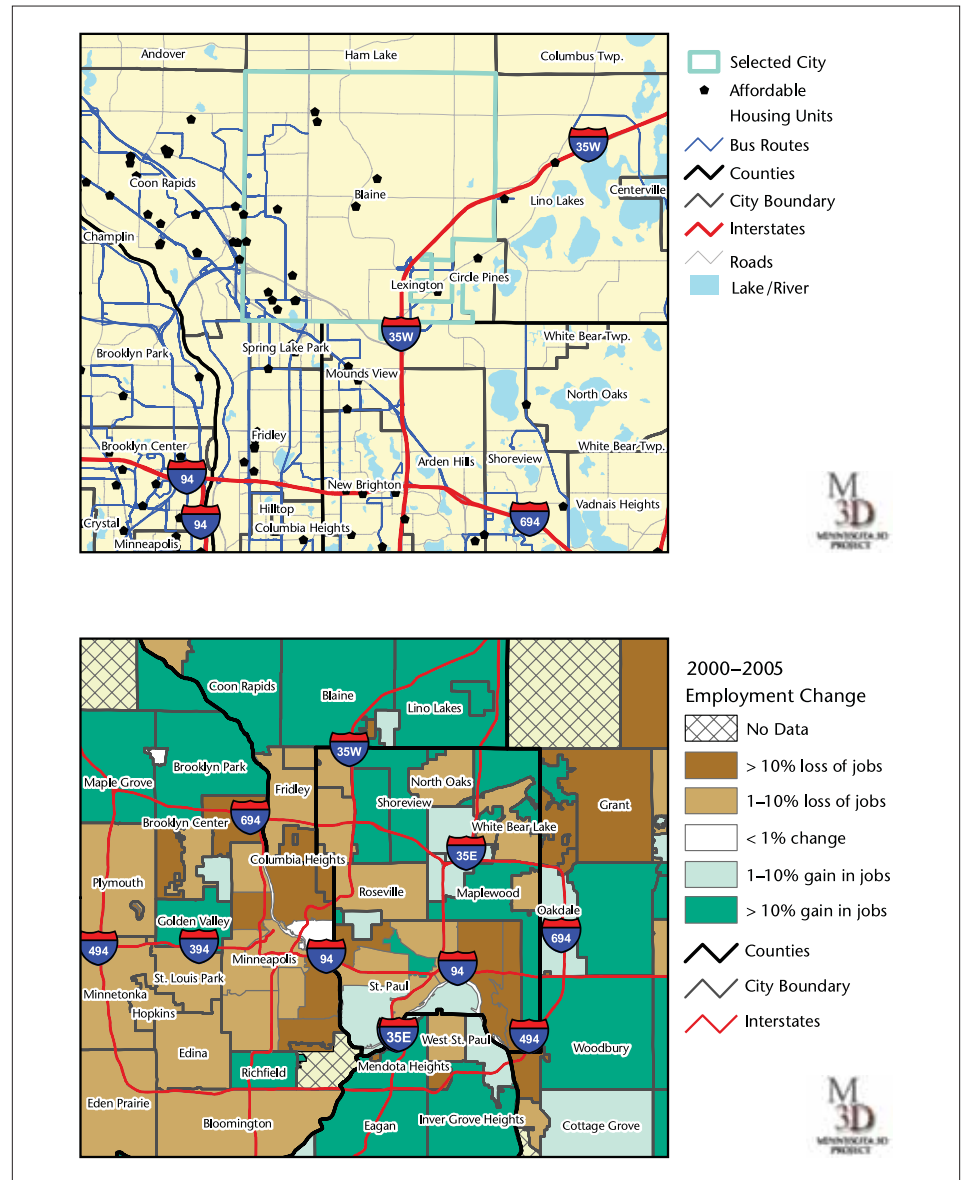
To illustrate how M3D can be used to inform possible responses to spatial mismatch, we will consider a concrete example, such as analyzing how affordable housing connects with jobs and transportation. This issue raises three questions:

1. What Twin Cities communities are experiencing high job growth and have a high proportion of low-paying jobs?
2. What affordable housing opportunities exist in these communities?
3. What public transportation is available to workers and residents in these communities?

Using M3D, we can draw on employment information collected by DEED to identify communities experiencing 10% or greater job growth from 2000 to 2005. In this example, M3D identified 30 communities, mostly in developing suburban locations, with high job growth. We can then analyze these communities to determine the proportion of jobs in the lowest wage category by generating a Workplace Area Characteristics Report, which displays 2004 LED job data.

Blaine is one city that meets our criteria for high job growth with low wages (40.8% of jobs in the city were in the lowest wage category) (Figure 2). Next, M3D can generate a Housing Report that organizes a range of housing information in one report for Blaine, including properties with publicly subsidized affordable housing units. The affordable housing information is maintained by HousingLink, a nonprofit organization that collects and maintains an inventory of affordable housing properties in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The report for Blaine identifies 13 properties with 282 affordable housing units (less than 2% of all housing units in the city). By going deeper and looking at detailed information on these properties maintained by

Figure 2. Affordable Housing Locations and Employment Change Data in Proximity to the City of Blaine



HousingLink and connected to M3D, we find that most of the units are reserved for the elderly and therefore are not available for low-income workers.

Blaine is served by three Metro Transit bus lines that provide frequent bus service during the week from areas with more workforce housing, and one of the bus lines provides good Saturday service, although none operate on Sunday. Therefore, this analysis indicated that workers living in affordable housing units beyond Blaine can use public transportation to access available jobs in Blaine.

The reports and maps described earlier can be useful to engage citizens or policy makers in discussions around issues such as housing and employment connections. They also can be used as documentation for marketing or for funding

applications. For example, detailed geographic data provided by M3D can be helpful in applying for housing financing programs such as the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency Tax Credit and Multi-family Financing Program. It is easy to generate maps and reports that summarize the demographic, employment, and affordable housing data necessary to support such funding applications.

We are just beginning to see how community development and planning agencies use M3D to address issues of spatial mismatch, but some user partners have already begun to find value in the M3D application for their work. For example, the City of Columbia Heights, located north of Minneapolis, is planning to expand housing market opportunities in their community. To see what

the potential market is for new housing, city community development staff used M3D to identify areas where workers lived north of the city but traveled south to work in Minneapolis. They found that 9,000 commuters travel from northern suburbs through Columbia Heights on their way to work. By identifying the ZIP codes where these workers currently live, they can target their marketing for new housing to residents in neighboring communities who may want to live in Columbia Heights, closer to work.

Other communities have used M3D to assess their housing market by looking at large nearby employers. For instance, in Chaska, the application was used to forecast new housing needs to support the planned Chaska Biotech Center. The city's Community Development Director credits M3D with "[helping] us to plan new housing development to support expanding employment in our community" (see sidebar on page 29).

In addition, M3D can be useful for informing strategies to assess housing demand from existing employers. Using M3D, neighborhood organizations in the communities surrounding the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus discovered that less than 5% of University employees live in the surrounding neighborhoods. Attracting a larger percentage of University employees as home buyers could reverse the decreasing homeownership rates in these communities. Similarly, in the West Seventh community in St. Paul, the Fort Road Federation, a community development corporation, examined both the potential housing market demand from hospital employees and how many local residents were employed by the Children's Health Care and United Hospital. This analysis showed that less than 4% of the hospital workforce live in the community. With more than 6,000 employees, the hospital represents a significant market for new housing development planned by the Fort Road Federation (see sidebar on page 38).

Workforce counselors can use the services layers to assess job opportunities for employment seekers. M3D allows them to identify transit connections to employee opportunities, childcare services, and affordable housing opportunities near places of employment. This information enables prospective workers to better assess the implications of job opportunities in different locations.

Finally, M3D provides transit and transportation planners with information to plan services, systems, and facilities. For instance, a city planner



Grand Central Lofts in Columbia Heights is a new, private development of condominium-styled lofts and townhomes located close to Medtronic, Unity Hospital, and downtown Minneapolis, and in proximity to mass transit. This type of development may be attractive to commuters from north of Columbia Heights who currently travel through the city on their way to jobs in Minneapolis.

from Bloomington who used M3D reported that, "Knowing where workers are coming from for a new office park helped us plan new transportation infrastructure for the proposed office park expansion." Similarly, a community developer in an outer-ring suburb can assess the implications of transportation infrastructure changes on the employment commutes of local residents. If a community developer in Chaska notes that several workers commute from a low-income neighborhood in St. Paul, for example, he or she could request that the SouthWest Metro Transit system (which provides transit service to Chaska) extend a St. Paul route to serve those workers.

Another useful feature of M3D is the ability of users from a particular local community to better understand the relationship of their community in the regional context. For example, a planner meeting with residents in a suburban area in northwest Hennepin County found that M3D commuted maps provided a useful way to present data in a readily understandable way and helped engage participants in the planning and policy-making process. Citizens could relate their own experience—that is, commuting to other communities for work—with what they were seeing on the M3D commuted maps, and see the implications of these patterns when multiplied by

all of the other community members commuting to work. In this way, M3D can build public support for development that reduces the spatial mismatch.

In addition, M3D gives policy makers a tool to consider the relationship among housing, economic development, and transportation decisions. Ideally, this type of analysis would lead to greater coordination of planning and development to reduce the mismatch between employment and housing locations. Public funding agencies can also increase consideration of the spatial implications of development projects by requiring applicants to identify the relationship of proposed projects and plans to existing uses. Such an analysis would be too costly without the data access and ease of analysis M3D provides. In fact, "free access" and availability of many types of data, particularly on a small-scale basis, were some of the most important aspects of M3D cited by users in the Wilder Research Foundation survey.

Many of the layers available through M3D are updated frequently, and the intention is to keep the most current version of data available and provide change-over-time data for temporal analysis of commute patterns, job growth, and housing characteristics. The origin-destination data is updated annually as are the HMDA, affordable housing, and revenue data sets. Using the time series

M3D Case Study: Fort Road Federation

Fort Road Federation serves the West End community of St. Paul, which consists of neighborhoods along the West Seventh Street corridor parallel to the Mississippi River. Since 1973, Fort Road Federation has organized residents and businesses to influence decisions that affect their community and to collectively implement community improvements.

According to Ed Johnson, Executive Director of the Fort Road Federation, timely and accurate information about community development on the West End is central to their success. Good information can mobilize residents around issues and help them make credible arguments to decision makers. Moreover, community development is inherently focused on making continual improvements by tracking trends in the community. In this manner, Fort Road Federation seeks long-term sustainability for the West End in terms of social, physical, and economic development.

Consistent with one of the original intentions of M3D, Fort Road Federation has been able to see where West End residents work using commuted mapping. They noticed that very few residents work in downtown St. Paul and that many work in one of the over 500 businesses on the West End. Approximately 300 of those businesses are limited liability companies (LLCs) in residential neighborhoods, which indicates a strong entrepreneurial presence within the community. The M3D survey revealed that several communities would like to be in the West End's position—maintaining and growing the number of local jobs instead of struggling to build a base of economic opportunities in proximity to its residents.

Building on the West End's confirmed identity as a mixed residential/small-business community, Fort Road Federation has promoted several mixed-use and mixed-income property developments on the West End. Mixed-use development is believed to enhance livability (e.g., reduced time in traffic) and local spending, and mixed-income development helps ensure an economically diverse labor supply to fill a variety of jobs. M3D has enabled Fort Road Federation to forecast the potential net benefits of such developments by examining the outcomes of similar projects in other communities in the Twin Cities. In particular, data on changes in sales tax revenue over time enables forecasting with M3D.

Related to mixed-income development, Fort Road Federation consulted with a major healthcare employer regarding their plans for expansion in the context of available housing. M3D-generated housing reports and maps showing characteristics of the West End residential workforce, including the percentage employed in the healthcare industry, helped frame the discussion and illuminated development options.

Lobbying is yet another way in which M3D has been used by Fort Road Federation. The federation has shared maps and demographic information with public officials to build support of a proposed development. In some cases, they need to make credible arguments against a decision that could adversely impact West End residents and businesses.

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data, planners can use M3D to study whether over time, light-rail transit influences workers and employers to relocate closer to the rail corridor to facilitate employment commutes. As another example, comparisons of sales tax data for a specific area over time can provide an indicator of changes in retail activity. Finally, communities will have the ability to monitor job growth by industry, wage, and age of workers, as well as the ability

to monitor changes in housing and mortgage activity over time.

Lessons Learned

The M3D application has been successful in many respects, but the project partners have learned some important lessons that will guide future work to improve and expand use of the system.

First, although M3D provides an incredible range of data, analytical, and

reporting functions, realizing its full utility requires users to form specific questions to focus their inquiry. In other words, data alone is insufficient to provide an answer if the question being asked has not been identified. Project partners have found that sharing examples of how various communities have used M3D to address specific issues related to community development is one of the best ways to help other communities understand how the system can be used.

A second lesson learned is that although M3D can help to raise awareness of issues of affordable housing, local hiring, spatial mismatches between housing and jobs, and public transportation, it cannot substitute for leadership and action on these issues. As we have discussed in this article, M3D provides a broad understanding of the issue of the spatial mismatch between affordable housing and employment opportunities and the many other public policy issues implicated by this growing mismatch. In addition, M3D enables information about these issues to be presented in transparent and understandable ways that can challenge local decision makers and citizens to transcend parochial considerations. However, unless these issues become an active concern of policy makers, planners, developers, or private citizens who use the M3D system, its value will be limited. It is our hope that, as more users examine development patterns in the Twin Cities metropolitan area through the lens of M3D, awareness of these issues will continue to grow and begin to shape a regional paradigm for community development built around more efficient investments in land use, housing development, and transportation.

Finally, the creation of M3D has made us aware that the true benefit and success of the system is not simply the creation of the online application itself and the technological “wizardry” that made it possible; rather, it is the realization among the regional, state, federal, and nonprofit organizations and agencies that provide data for the system that there is added value in making these data available to the public through M3D. We were fortunate in the Twin Cities to have established data sets to use as a foundation to build the M3D application. A number of the data layers were developed and are maintained by MetroGIS, an established collaboration of data providers committed to promoting and facilitating widespread sharing of geospatial data. The core M3D application—which integrated parcel, land



Minnesota 3-D provides transit and transportation planners with information to plan services, systems, and facilities, including extending public transit service to workers living in outlying suburbs.

use, and road data from MetroGIS with employment origin and destination data created by LED—demonstrated the added value of M3D and induced other data providers to share their data through the system. Ultimately they recognized that

integrating their data with other data sets made the collective data more useful and that making these data available through a single portal means that people are more likely to find and use them. In addition, many recognized that the value

and usefulness of data are enhanced by online analytical and reporting tools accessible to people without technical skills. As more data providers participate in M3D, it is becoming “the” site to distribute data. We are hopeful that this synergy will continue to promote the participation of data providers and the contribution of updated data to M3D.

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Community Assistantship Program Receives Blandin and McKnight Foundation Grants

The Community Assistantship Program (CAP) provides student research assistance to communities in Greater Minnesota. Like CURA’s other community-based research programs, CAP responds to community requests with roughly 200 hours of support for a University graduate or undergraduate student during a single semester (260 hours in the summer). Projects typically have a clear product that will be used to achieve an organizational goal or a greater good in the community. Unlike other CURA programs, CAP focuses on communities outside the seven-county metropolitan area, supports local government as well as nonprofit requests for assistance, and employs students from the University of Minnesota coordinate campuses in Crookston, Duluth, and Morris in addition to those from the Twin Cities campuses. In a typical year, CAP supports 20 or more such projects.

Recent grants from the Blandin Foundation and the McKnight Foundation will provide much-needed financial support

for the program, as well as several new opportunities. The most recent Blandin Foundation grant was awarded earlier this year in June. The \$15,000 grant is targeted for use in rural communities, so funds cannot be used for projects in any of the state’s larger cities. The focus of the grant is on projects that build stronger local economies. This includes projects that

- ▶ improve individual skills and thereby increase earning power;
- ▶ grow markets for local products and services sold outside the region, thereby bringing new dollars into the region;
- ▶ enhance or preserve natural and cultural amenities that attract outsiders to visit the region and spend money here; or
- ▶ reduce expenditures on goods and services, especially those that are purchased from outside the region.

A recent McKnight Foundation grant for \$60,000 adds two new aspects to

CAP. First, funded projects must support the interests of one or more Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs). Six MIFs cover Greater Minnesota. They were created by the McKnight Foundation in 1986, but are independent, nonprofit, philanthropic organizations aimed at strengthening their part of the state (for descriptions of the MIFs, visit www.mcknight.org/greatermn/). Second, McKnight funding allows CAP to expand the student resource pool to include students from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system. The primary connections will be with MnSCU’s four-year and graduate campuses in Bemidji, Mankato, Marshall, Moorhead, St. Cloud, and Winona.

To learn more about CAP, or for application deadlines and procedures, visit www.cura.umn.edu/cap.php or contact program coordinator Will Craig at 612-625-3321 or capcura@umn.edu.

CURA and Humphrey Institute Establish Krusell Community Development Fellowship

Charles R. Krusell was a pioneer in urban renewal and city development. Throughout his career, he led organizations to lift up and redefine neighborhoods, and his leadership helped create programs that have been replicated around the country. As the executive director of the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority, he pioneered the employment of African America residents in Minneapolis city government and developed the city's first affirmative action program. His efforts to engage the Minneapolis community in the restoration of local neighborhoods led to the creation of the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMHC) where he served as president from 1970 to 1991.

When Mr. Krusell passed away in 2006, his family, friends and colleagues partnered with the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs to honor his lasting contributions to the Twin Cities

community. Their support created the Charles R. Krusell Fellowship in Community Development, which provides scholarship funds for University of Minnesota graduate students enrolled in urban and regional planning and public policy programs at the Humphrey Institute.

The Krusell Fellowship is the most comprehensive scholarship program for students interested in community development. Krusell Fellows are recruited from diverse backgrounds. During the two years of their academic program, students receive a full scholarship plus three paid field placements with community agencies. The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs is responsible for arranging the placements with local community development agencies, providing the opportunity for students to work side-by-side on real projects with professionals in the field prior to graduation. Fellows also participate in an integrative seminar to reflect on all aspects of their academic and work experiences.

The Charles Krusell endowment has been established by the University to fund the program in perpetuity. The McKnight Foundation recently made a \$500,000 contribution to the endowment. In addition, significant contributions have been made by the Family Housing Fund, the Richard M. and Mary Jo Kovacevich Family Foundation, and family, friends, and colleagues of Mr. Krusell. The University is seeking additional contributions to fully establish the endowment. The McKnight Foundation has provided a \$110,000 grant to fund the fellowship for the next two years while the endowment is being established.

For information about contributing to the Krusell Fellowship endowment, contact Julie C. Lund at the Humphrey Institute at Julie@umn.edu or 612-624-1190. Prospective students interested in more information about the Krusell Fellowship can contact the Humphrey Institute Admissions Office at 612-626-7229 or HHHAdmit@umn.edu.



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