

CEURA REPORTER

Park-Use Behaviors and Promotion Program in Minneapolis

Also Inside:

- County Workforce Flow Patterns in Minnesota
- Advancing an Equity Agenda for the Twin Cities Region
- Hari Osofsky Named Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs
- Faculty Interactive Research Program Awards
- Resilient Communities Project Selects North St. Paul as 2013–2014 Community Partner
- School Performance in the Twin Cities



RECURA REPORTER

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University Printing Services

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The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) is an applied research and technical assistance center that connects the resources of the University of Minnesota with the interests and needs of urban communities and the region for the benefit of all.

The *CURA Reporter* is published three times annually to provide information about CURA's programs, projects, and publications. Subscriptions are free upon request at www.cura.umn.edu/publications/reporter/subscribe.

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This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

 Printed with agribased ink on recycled paper, including 20% post-consumer fiber.

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Photo on Cover: *Mother playing with her daughter in a park.*
Photo Credit: © iStockphoto.com/Paul Vasarhelyi, 2010

Errata

Regrettably, the Fall/Winter 2012 issue of the *CURA Reporter* contained a number of errors.

In “Hmong Families and Education: Partnership as Essential Link to Discovery” (pp. 3–9), the first bullet point on page 4 should read: “There were several K–8 Hmong classes with more than 35 students in one classroom, and one class with close to 50 students.” In the same article, the first full paragraph on page 5 should read: “MCNO’s work with the WTK Hmong moved from listening to organizing in the fall of 2005, when students reported that their Hmong teacher had been replaced by a series of other teachers who spoke neither Hmong nor Thai.”

In “Migration in Minnesota” (pp. 17–22), an error appears in Table 3 on page 19. For the 5–9 age cohort, the value in the Change column for Number of Persons in the Cohort should be (–16,381) not 16,381. Thanks to reader John Powers for pointing out this mathematical blunder.

Corrected versions of both articles are available on the CURA website at z.umn.edu/reporterfall2012. We apologize to our readers for these errors.

—The Editor

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Letter from the CURA Director

The trend in urban policy these days is to stress the regional character of problems that manifest themselves in any particular community. Many argue that the problems of neighborhoods of “concentrated poverty,” for example, are best addressed by re-engaging those communities into regional economic dynamics, and by connecting the residents of those neighborhoods to “high-opportunity” neighborhoods. Thus, for the better part of 20 years now, federal and local initiatives have been organized around the concept of the “geography of opportunity.” This policy paradigm conceptualizes core neighborhoods as deficient in opportunity and aims to improve the ability of low-income families of color to move out of those neighborhoods and into high-opportunity areas. An entire vocabulary has emerged to support this policy initiative. Programs that facilitate the movement of lower income people of color out of their disadvantaged neighborhoods are “mobility programs.” Programs that demolish low-cost public housing in core neighborhoods, forcing people out of their communities, are euphemistically called “transformation” initiatives. The intended destinations for families moved out of core neighborhoods are called “neighborhoods of opportunity.” Indeed, many regions around the nation are developing “opportunity indices” so that we can all tell which neighborhoods have the most opportunity and which have the least.

Of course, all efforts to give low-income people of color access to opportunity neighborhoods run straight into the stiff opposition of those already residing in such areas. Thus, the federal government’s Moving to Opportunity Program, which was enacted in 1992, ran less than two years before generating a buzz saw of resistance from suburban politicians and residents who wanted no part of having lower income people of color move into their neighborhoods. Efforts to build more affordable housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods have long been vehemently resisted in that way. This resistance has severely limited the effectiveness of these efforts. It has also forced a sizable contingent of fair-housing advocates across the country to work steadily and tirelessly to provide more housing options for lower income people in high-opportunity neighborhoods.

As for the core neighborhoods left behind by families moving to high-opportunity areas, the current policy prescription is to facilitate greater income diversity there as well. What this means in practice is fewer affordable-housing options and more upscale housing. This is often accomplished through the demolition of low-cost housing, the development of mixed-income communities, and sometimes through gentrification. In fact, the federal government’s program of public housing redevelopment and demolition gave preference to projects where just such greater neighborhood transformation was expected.

Finally, and importantly, there are those who argue that provision of subsidized, affordable housing in core neighborhoods should be sharply curtailed because it has the effect of reinforcing spatial patterns of inequality and segregation. Lawsuits in New Jersey and Texas, for example, have challenged what the plaintiff parties regard as the overconcentration of subsidized affordable housing in core neighborhoods and not directing enough affordable housing to high-opportunity areas. Fair-housing advocates are loudly warning that the federal government’s plan to coordinate subsidized housing and transit investment will result in too much affordable housing in core neighborhoods and not enough in high-opportunity areas.

These efforts, and indeed the entire “opportunity-neighborhood” paradigm, run the risk, however, of oversimplifying the reality of core neighborhoods in American cities. These areas, according to the logic of the opportunity paradigm, are filled with people desperate to move out if only they could, and are overrun with

affordable and subsidized housing that is anchoring low-income families of color in those communities.

As we progress along this path of facilitating/forcing greater income and racial integration, it is worth noting that both of those assumptions are faulty. First, not all low-income people of color are anxious to leave their communities. Some see value in their communities where others may not. They may value (and depend heavily upon) their social networks, they may value the historic connection of their community to the neighborhood, or they may value the range of services (including transit) available to them in those neighborhoods. For many who can easily identify the ways in which their neighborhoods are disadvantaged, they see the solution not in leaving but rather in seeking improvement of their neighborhoods. Rather than moving to opportunity, they would like to see opportunity move to them. Second, although these neighborhoods may have a great deal of low-cost housing, a severe shortage of decent, safe, and well-managed affordable housing nevertheless exists. In cities across the country, the long waiting lists for subsidized housing attest to the dire need for better and more affordable housing among people living in core neighborhoods.

We need a housing policy for those unable to move to opportunity neighborhoods and for those who choose to remain in the communities that they know and value. Everyone, even those who do not wish to move to predominantly white, suburban neighborhoods, deserves to live in opportunity-rich communities. Community-development corporations, faith-based nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations, and other organizations pursuing community development have been pursuing better conditions in central neighborhoods for decades. An important part of that effort is the provision of affordable, subsidized housing. We need to strike a balance in our urban policy that recognizes the legitimacy and importance of these efforts while simultaneously working to expand access to opportunity throughout regions. Forsaking or reducing efforts aimed at increasing affordable housing and community development in the core in the service of a regional-opportunity agenda is short-sighted at best and, at worst, little more than the publicly sponsored redlining of core neighborhoods.



Edward Goetz
Director, CURA

Park-Use Behaviors and a Pilot Park-Use Promotion Program in Minneapolis: Implications for Addressing Health Inequities

by Yingling Fan, Simone A. French, and Kirti V. Das

Abstract: Partnering with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, the authors implemented a pilot park-use promotion program in summer 2011 in three low-income, culturally diverse neighborhoods in Minneapolis. The program was designed to encourage park use through active information sharing and incentive mechanisms. Along with the program, the authors conducted baseline and follow-up resident surveys in the neighborhoods to examine demographic differences in park-use patterns and effectiveness of the program. They found significantly lower levels of park use, especially in cold weather, among Blacks, foreign-born residents, low-income residents, and working parents in single-parent families. They also found positive evidence that the pilot park-use promotion program effectively changed residents' perceived information barriers of park use and their park-use behavior. The research upon which this article is based was supported by a grant from CURA's Faculty Interactive Research Program.

The Minneapolis of 40 years ago was 94% White, 4% Black, 1% Hispanic, and 0.5% Asian.¹ Today, however, the picture is dramatically different. As a recent immigration gateway, arrivals from areas as varied as Laos, Mexico, Ecuador, and Somalia have made Minneapolis one of the most diverse cities in the United States. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the city is now 64% White, 19% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 6% Asian.² The city is also home to one of the country's largest American Indian urban communities.

¹ C. Gibson and K. Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States," U.S. Census Bureau, 2005, www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/twps0076.html.

² Racial percentages do not necessarily add to 100% as people may select multiple racial and ethnic categories.



Two children enjoy a day at the Peace Games, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board's family-friendly annual event, at Washburn Fair Oaks Park in Minneapolis.

The city's pride in its cultural diversity is overshadowed by health inequities between different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic status groups in the area. A recent report, commissioned by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation in 2010 revealed that age-adjusted mortality rates are three times higher for Blacks than Whites in the Twin Cities metropolitan region (including Minneapolis, St. Paul, and surrounding suburbs). The connection between wealth and health in the region is also strong. For every \$10,000 increase in median income in a neighborhood, the mean life expectancy of residents increased by one year.³

In an effort to address the region's health inequities, we began a partnership in spring 2010 with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The partnership, partly funded by CURA, led to a baseline resident survey in fall 2010, a pilot park-use promotion program implemented in early summer 2011, and a follow-up resident survey in fall 2011 in three culturally diverse neighborhoods in Minneapolis. The pilot program was designed to encourage park use through active information sharing and incentive mechanisms. The survey, titled Survey of Parks, Leisure-Time Activities and Self-Reported Health (SPLASH), was designed for dual purposes: to assess the effectiveness of the pilot promotion program; and to understand the distinct park-use patterns of residents in different demographic subgroups.

Our central purpose in examining park-related behavior was to inform the design of strategies for ameliorating health inequities. This concept is based on a significant body of evidence. First, park users are healthier than nonpark users on a number of measures. The health benefits of parks are multifaceted. Parks provide infrastructure for a wide range of physical activity, including formal sports, walking, running, cycling, and walking a pet. Parks offer restorative natural settings that reduce stress and promote a general sense of well-being. Parks also provide an opportunity for more frequent social interaction, which has direct health benefits through biological stress-reduction mechanisms and indirect health benefits through

the enhancement of social-support systems.⁴

It has been suggested that parks are underused in lower income minority-dominant communities.⁵ Nonetheless, local parks and recreation services, which provide free or low-cost recreational facilities and programs at the community level, could be an important environmental factor that can reduce health disadvantages among lower income population groups. Given the persistent residential segregation in Minneapolis, local parks may be especially useful for addressing health inequities: Segregation is part of the problem that has led to unevenly distributed resources and health outcomes, but it points to the particular importance of spatially targeted health-promoting strategies for eliminating disparities. Parks, often being considered a community's "living room," may be a promising place to effect community-wide behavior changes in poor, underresourced communities.

In this article, we present two analyses using SPLASH data that have implications for addressing health inequalities in Minneapolis neighborhoods. The first analysis uses data from the 2010 baseline SPLASH only. It describes differences in residents' park-use frequency based upon demographic attributes, including race/ethnicity, being foreign born, income, and family structure. We expect findings from this analysis to offer useful insights on whether population groups at higher health risks (minorities and low-income residents) are underutilizing park facilities. The second analysis uses data from both the 2010 and 2011 SPLASH. It assesses the influence of the pilot park-use promotion program in shaping residents' perceptions about local parks and trails and residents' park-use behavior. We expect findings from this analysis to illustrate the potential of park-related strategies to improve health outcomes in low-income minority communities.

Study Design and Methods

Jennifer Ringold, manager of public engagement and citywide planning for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation

⁴ Y. Fan, K.V. Das, and Q. Chen, "Neighborhood Green, Social Support, Physical Activity, and Stress: Assessing the Cumulative Impact," *Health Place* 17 (2011): 1202–1211; C.H. Ho, L. Payne, E. Orsega-Smith, and G. Godbey, "Parks, Recreation and Public Health," *Parks Recreation* 38 (2003): 18.

⁵ B. Giles-Corti and R.J. Donovan, "Socioeconomic Status Differences in Recreational Physical Activity Levels and Real and Perceived Access to a Supportive Physical Environment," *Preventive Medicine* 35,6 (2002): 601–611.

Board (MPRB), and Ginger Cannon, community outreach and research planner at the MPRB, led a team of MPRB planners and local program managers who were involved in all stages of the study, including the initial study design, development of the park-use promotion program, design of the survey, survey data collection, and postsurvey analysis. Our collaboration with the MPRB staff was critical to this study's success.

Study Neighborhoods. The Minneapolis neighborhoods used in this study were Harrison, Phillips, and Powderhorn Park. All three neighborhoods are racially and culturally diverse, and contain a substantially higher proportion of families below the poverty level, single-parent families, and minority families, as compared with the Minneapolis city average. In addition, the study neighborhoods had the following demographic attributes:

- ▶ All three neighborhoods have sizable African immigrant communities that are largely composed of Somali refugees who migrated directly from Kenyan refugee camps since Somalia's civil war erupted in 1991.
- ▶ Harrison has the largest Asian community among the neighborhoods. The Asian population is largely Hmong immigrants who were Lao Hmong war refugees in the late 1970s and their second generation.
- ▶ Phillips has one of the highest urban concentrations of American Indians not only in Minneapolis, but also in the nation. The neighborhood was the heart of the American Indian Movement—which began in Minneapolis and became a national force in the 1960s and 1970s.
- ▶ Powderhorn Park and Phillips both have large Hispanic communities composed predominantly of first-generation Mexican immigrants.

Sample Design and Survey Procedure. For the 2010 baseline SPLASH, we selected 50 census blocks per neighborhood based upon the number of low-income minority families with children in the block. Blocks with a higher number of these families had a higher chance of selection. In the second stage, we recruited as many households as possible from each block identified in the first stage. For recruitment, we dropped off postcards (Figure 1) at all residences in each identified block with information about the survey in four different languages (English, Spanish, Somali, and

³ M. Ferris and P. Mattesich, "Neighborhood Solutions to Addressing Health Inequities," *Active Living Research*, 2012, www.activelivingresearch.org/node/12592.

Figure 1. SPLASH Recruitment Postcard



Survey of Parks, Leisure-time Activity and Self-reported Health

What are the recreational needs of your community? How well does the existing park system meet these needs? How can the park system be improved to better serve your family?

Researchers from the **University of Minnesota** and the **Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board** hope to answer these questions by conducting a door to door survey in your community. Your block has been randomly selected to participate in the survey. In order to collect accurate information, it is important that we interview someone from each household on your block. Participation is voluntary, and all answers are completely confidential. Our researchers will be visiting over the next few weeks to conduct interviews with an adult in your household. Interviews should take twenty to thirty minutes. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions—we look forward to speaking with you!

Los investigadores de la **Universidad de Minnesota** (University of Minnesota) y la **Junta de Parques y Recreación de Minneapolis** (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board), estarán haciendo visitas en las próximas semanas para llevar a cabo entrevistas con una persona adulta de su hogar en relación al uso de los parques y las necesidades recreativas de su familia. Las entrevistas tendrán una duración de veinte a treinta minutos. La participación es voluntaria y todas las respuestas se mantendrán en confidencialidad. Si tiene preguntas, sírvase comunicar con nosotros—¡quedamos a la espera de hablar con usted!

Cilmí baarayaa! ka socda **Jaamacadda Minnesota** (University of Minnesota) iyo **Guddiga Minneapolis ee Beeraha Nasashada iyo Raaxada** (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board) ayaa asbuucyada soo socda ku soo booqan doonaa si ay waraysiyo ula yeeshaan qof weyn ee qoyskaaga ka tirsan taaso ku saabsan baahida uu reerkaaga u qabo isticmaalka beeraraha nasashada iyo raaxada. Waraysiyadu waxay qaadanayaa labaatan ilaa iyo soddon daqiiqo. Ka qayb galkuna xor baad u tahay jawaabahana oo dhan waa qarsoodi gabi ahaanba. Fadlan haddii wax su'aala ah aad qabtid xor baad u tahay inaad na la soo xiriirtid, waxaan raja fiican ka qabnaa (ama si weyn us oo dhowaynaynaa) inaan kula hadalno!

Cov neeg tshawb fawb ntawm **Lub Tsev Kawm Ntawv Qib Siab Minnesota** (University of Minnesota) thiab **Cov Lub Rooj Tswjhwmm Saib Xyuas Chaw Ua Si Hauv Minneapolis** (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board) yuav tuaj ntsib nej ntawm li ob peb asthiv tom ntej no tuaj nug tej nqe lus nrog ib tug neeg laus hauv nej tsev neeg uas yog them txog nej tsev neeg txoj kev siv chaw ua si thiab saib nej xav tau dabtsi hais txog kev tawm rooj mus ua si. Cov kev nug nqe lus yuav siv li peb caug feeb. Kev koom tes yog nyob ntawm koj yeem saib xwb, thiab cov lus teb yuav tsis pub lwm tus paub hlo li. Thov tso saib hu tuaj rau peb yog tias koj muaj lus nug dabtsi—peb tos ntsoov yuav nrog koj tham!

Make your opinion count!!

Hmong). In the third stage, we randomly selected an individual over the age of 18 from each household by asking the adult with the most recent birthday to complete the survey. For each residence, up to three repeated visits were made to recruit the participant.

The 2011 follow-up SPLASH revisited addresses where we had conducted 2010 baseline surveys. As with the baseline survey, we asked individuals 18 years of age or older to participate. We made an effort at each address to recruit the same respondent who had participated in the baseline survey.

We conducted all baseline and follow-up surveys in-person in English during home visits. Although efforts were made to conduct home visits on different days of the week and at varied times during the day, the majority of the surveys were conducted on weekday evenings and on weekends. In addition to 10 University of Minnesota student researchers, MPRB provided additional interviewers by hiring four part-time staff members from Youthline, their local youth program that works closely with teens to develop leadership skills and

provide mentoring relationships through programs and activities at parks.

We assessed park-use behaviors using the following questions:

- ▶ “Last year, how often did you visit parks or trails in Minneapolis during warm weather? Never, less than once a month, 1–4 times a month, 2–4 times a week, or more than 4 times a week?”
- ▶ “Last year, how often did you visit parks or trails in Minneapolis during cold weather? Never, less than once a month, 1–4 times a month, 2–4 times a week, or more than 4 times a week?”
- ▶ “In the past three days, did you visit any park or trail in the city of Minneapolis? Yes or No?”

If the respondent answered “Yes” to the last question, then the interviewer either handed the respondent a three-day recall diary⁶ (shown in Figure 2) to complete or asked the questions on the

⁶ We developed the recall diary based upon existing, validated recall questionnaires on travel behavior and physical-activity behavior, because no recall questionnaire on park-use behavior was available.

diary verbally, as directed by the respondent. The recall diary helped to derive additional data on park-use patterns, including the total number of park visits made in the past three days.

We also asked questions on perceived roles of parks, perceived barriers to park use, and perceived importance of various park facilities and recreation programs. For example, the following question was used to ask about perceived barriers to park use: “To what extent has each of the following limited your use of parks and trails? Not at all, somewhat, a great deal, or completely?” For this question, the interviewer went through a list of 21 types of barriers, including personal health constraints, language barriers, lack of leisure time, lack of transportation, lack of interest in parks and trails, concerns about personal safety, and lack of information about programs and facilities, to name a few.

The Pilot Park-Use Promotion Program. This program consisted of randomly selecting half of the respondents who participated in the baseline survey, providing them better

Figure 2. The Past-three-days Park-Use Recall Diary: Day 2 Sheet

Day 2: Park Use

For questions marked with a ●, check all categories that apply.

On this day my use of parks and trails was same as DAY _____

Day 2

3-Day Park Use Recall

Trip No.	Park or trail name	How did you get there? ●	What time did you get there?	How long did you stay?	What were the purposes of the visit? ●	Who was with you during this visit? ●	What were your reasons for choosing this park or trail? ●	How satisfying was this visit?
1	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Car <input type="checkbox"/> Bus/Rail <input type="checkbox"/> Walk <input type="checkbox"/> Run <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle <input type="checkbox"/> Wheel-chair <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	_____ AM _____ PM	_____ : _____ Hrs: Mins	<input type="checkbox"/> Take children <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise pet <input type="checkbox"/> Relax and enjoy nature <input type="checkbox"/> Be outside <input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise (e.g., run, sports) <input type="checkbox"/> Meet people <input type="checkbox"/> Attend programs/events <input type="checkbox"/> Get somewhere (e.g., use as shortcut, commute to work & other places) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No one <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/ Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Kids under 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Kids aged 3-12 <input type="checkbox"/> Kids aged 13-18 <input type="checkbox"/> Other family members <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Organized group <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Convenient location <input type="checkbox"/> Kids' play area <input type="checkbox"/> Social gathering area <input type="checkbox"/> Fields and courts <input type="checkbox"/> Water recreation <input type="checkbox"/> Walking & bicycling trails <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor recreation center <input type="checkbox"/> Programs/events <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping/greenery <input type="checkbox"/> Other reasons _____	1 (Not at all) 2 (Slightly) 3 (Moderately) 4 (Very)
2	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Car <input type="checkbox"/> Bus/Rail <input type="checkbox"/> Walk <input type="checkbox"/> Run <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle <input type="checkbox"/> Wheel-chair <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	_____ AM _____ PM	_____ : _____ Hrs: Mins	<input type="checkbox"/> Take children <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise pet <input type="checkbox"/> Relax and enjoy nature <input type="checkbox"/> Be outside <input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise (e.g., run, sports) <input type="checkbox"/> Meet people <input type="checkbox"/> Attend programs/events <input type="checkbox"/> Get somewhere (e.g., use as shortcut, commute to work & other places) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No one <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/ Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Kids under 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Kids aged 3-12 <input type="checkbox"/> Kids aged 13-18 <input type="checkbox"/> Other family members <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Organized group <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Convenient location <input type="checkbox"/> Kids' play area <input type="checkbox"/> Social gathering area <input type="checkbox"/> Fields and courts <input type="checkbox"/> Water recreation <input type="checkbox"/> Walking & bicycling trails <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor recreation center <input type="checkbox"/> Programs/events <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping/greenery <input type="checkbox"/> Other reasons _____	1 (Not at all) 2 (Slightly) 3 (Moderately) 4 (Very)

information about outdoor-recreation opportunities in their neighborhoods through newsletters, and employing incentive programs to encourage them to visit parks between the baseline and the follow-up surveys. The program lasted for four months, between May and August 2011, and was implemented through hand delivery of monthly information packets to the selected homes. For the delivery of the first information packet, a University of Minnesota student researcher was required to have a face-to-face conversation (which in many cases required multiple visits to the selected homes) with the respondents to be able to explain the contents of the packets in detail and inform them about the three packets that would follow. The remaining three packets were either delivered to the respondent in person or left at his or her home depending on the respondent's availability at the time

of delivery. Each information packet had a number of components, including a newsletter, coupons for two different incentive programs, and additional information materials.

All four monthly newsletters were available in three versions that were tailored to each of the three study neighborhoods. Contents of newsletters included locations of parks and trails in each neighborhood, lists of amenities available, programs offered at parks, special events, links to helpful pages on the MPRB website, and fun facts about the Minneapolis park system (Figure 3).

Each information packet contained a prepaid return "Add to Your Health and Wealth" postcard with questions related to the participant's use of parks and trails. To participate in the \$100 drawing, the participant needed to answer all questions on the postcard, fill out his or her contact information (to contact the participant if he or she won), and

drop the postcard in a mailbox. Questions on the postcards asked about how often participants visited parks and trails, which parks they visited, and which park programs they participated in during the past month. Information on the returned postcards was not collected or used in any analysis. Participants were also offered an opportunity to win an additional \$50 for each of the four packets they received. To be eligible to win, participants had to make two separate trips to a recreation center in their neighborhood and place coupons provided in the packets into a drop-off box.

In addition to the newsletters and incentive-program materials, the May 2011 information packet included a detailed map of parks and trails in Minneapolis. The June and July 2011 information packets included the MPRB system-wide summer program/event guide and neighborhood-specific summer program/event guide, respectively.

Figure 3. Sample of SPLASH Newsletter, June 2011

**Issue 2
June 2011**

Survey of Parks, Leisure-time Activity, and Self-reported Health (SPLASH)

Lets work together to create more active and healthier communities!

Add to your health and wealth
2 easy ways to make money while having fun

\$100 postcard drawing program

Directions:
- Fill out the postcard included in the packet
- Answer all questions*
- Fill out your address, phone number and email so we can contact you if you win
- Drop into a mailbox

*Incomplete postcards will not be eligible to win \$100

Drop n Win \$50 drawing Program

Directions:
- Make two separate visits to the Stewart or East Phillips recreation center in the next three weeks
- Find the SPLASH drop-off box at the front desk
- Fill out a Drop n Win coupon included in the packet
- Drop the filled coupon into the drop-off box*

*To be eligible for the drawing both coupons need to be dropped into the drop-off box

IT'S that simple!
Makes sure to complete the programs before the follow dates

Drawing 1: Friday, 17th June 2
Drawing 2: Friday, 24th June 2
Drawing 3: Friday, 22nd July 20
Drawing 4: Friday, 19th Aug 20

For more information contact us at splash@umn.edu ph:612-626-9861

Don't forget to get out and have fun at parks and trails in your neighborhood

- Play baseball, football, basketball, soccer or softball
- Take a walk, run or bike on trails
- Take children to the playgrounds and wading pools
- Attend programs at Recreation Centers
- Have a picnic and relax in natural areas

Places to access the Greenway in your neighborhood

- ⇒ Nicollet Avenue
- ⇒ 5th Avenue
- ⇒ Park Avenue
- ⇒ Midtown Exchange
- ⇒ 13th Avenue
- ⇒ Bloomington Avenue
- ⇒ 18th Avenue
- ⇒ 28th Street
- ⇒ Hiawatha Avenue

Midtown Greenway

DID YOU KNOW?
The 5.6-mile Midtown Greenway connects the Mississippi River to the Chain of the Lakes giving you a chance to bike, run or walk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

HELPFUL MPRB LINKS

MPRB Program Guide
http://www.minneapolisparke.org/documents/parks/2011_Summer_Guide.pdf
Minneapolis Park System Map
http://www.minneapolisparke.org/documents/parks/system_map.pdf
Grand Rounds Scenic Byway Districts Map
<http://www.minneapolisparke.org/grandrounds/home.htm>

Where can you have fun in your community?

East Phillips Park Cultural/Comm. Cen 2507 17th Ave. S Ph: 612-370-4888 Summer Hours (Memorial-Labor Day) Mon-Thur 12-9 pm Fri 12-6 pm Sat 11 am-6 pm Sun 12-4 pm	Stewart Recreation Center 2700 12th Ave. S Ph: 612-370-4932 Summer Hours (Memorial-Labor Day) Mon-Thur 12-9 pm Fri 12-6 pm
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DID YOU KNOW?
The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has:
• 22 Seasonal programming sites
• 8,000+ programs annually
• 1.8 million annual program participants
• 32,000 Adult Sports League participants
• 10,000 Citywide Youth Sports League participants

Programs you can enjoy at the East Phillips Cultural and Community Center

For Adults (Over 18)
• Adult Yoga: Each Tuesday from 6:30 to 7:30pm
June 28 to August 16
Activity Fee - Resident: \$35, Non-Resident: \$52.50

Youth (Under 18)
• Fundamental Baseball: Each Thursday and Saturday from 6 to 7:30pm
June 23 to August 20
Activity Fee - \$5

Youth 9 - 17
• Track and Field: Each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from 5:30 to 8pm
May 19 to July 14
Activity Fee - \$10

Children 8 - 12
• Kids Game Day: Each Tuesday and Thursday from 3 to 5pm
June 21 to August 18
Activity Fee - Free

Free community events at Stewart Park this month

Outdoor Movie Night
6/15 Stewart Park (At sundown)
Despicable Me

Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

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up 51% of the sample; minority groups in the sample included 18% Black, 15% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 5% American Indian, and 7% other race. Among our respondents, 22% reported being foreign born. Of the respondents who provided their household income in 2009, 34% reported incomes lower than \$25,000, 49% reported incomes between \$25,000 and \$74,999, and 17% reported incomes above \$75,000. In terms of family structure, 308 of the 609 households (51%) were families with children, including 88 single-parent families and 220 two-parent families.

The follow-up SPLASH collected 450 surveys and had a response rate of 74%. Among the 450 surveys, 371 were from the same household that participated in the baseline SPLASH (79 were new residents who had recently moved into the neighborhoods). Among the 371 participants, 222 were the same person who had participated in the baseline SPLASH (149 were a different person from the same household). The 222 participants who participated in both the baseline and follow-up surveys comprised the final sample for the before-after comparison analyses we report in this article. Among these participants, 120 (54%) were enrolled in the park-use promotion program and 102 (46%) received no intervention. The 222 participants included 63% White (non-Hispanic), 14% Black, 13% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 3% American Indian, and 5% other race.

We first used data from the 2010 baseline SPLASH (number of respondents = 609) to analyze differences in residents' park-use frequency based upon four demographic attributes: race/ethnicity, being foreign born, income level, and family structure. The variables we used to measure park-use frequency in this analysis were: recalled past-year park use in warm weather, recalled past-year park use in cold weather, and recalled past-three-days park-use frequency. We compared park-use variables across different demographic groups and estimated regression models of park-use variables and demographic attributes while controlling for confounding factors, such as distance from home to the nearest park and individual interest levels in parks.⁷

⁷ We used additional controls, including weekend days, temperature, and precipitation, when estimating past-three-days park-use frequency. In addition, all regression models were adjusted for clustering and spatial autocorrelation within neighborhoods by adding neighborhood dummy variables to each model.

Data and Analysis. The response rate for the 2010 baseline SPLASH, calculated based upon nonavailability

after three repeated visits and refusals, was 43% (609 completed interviews). White (non-Hispanic) respondents made

We used the baseline and follow-up data (number of respondents = 222) to compare before–after changes in park-use frequency and park perceptions between those who enrolled in the promotion program and those who did not. The perception variable we used in this analysis was perceived lack of information about park programs and facilities. The park-use frequency variable used in this analysis was recalled past-three-days park-use frequency. We did not use recalled past-year park-use variables in this analysis because the recalled values in the follow-up survey represent patterns in year 2010, which was prior to the promotion program.

Results

This section summarizes our findings from the survey data.

Influence of Race/Ethnicity. Based upon survey responses, all minority groups (i.e., Black, Asian, American Indian) reported using parks less often in warm and cold weather compared with non-Hispanic Whites (Figure 4).

After adjusting for neighborhood-clustering effects and other demographic and neighborhood factors, Blacks were the only minority group that had statistically significantly lower levels of warm- and cold-weather park use in the past year ($p < 0.01^8$). The model of past-three-days park-use frequency showed consistent results: Blacks were the only minority group that reported statistically significantly fewer trips than non-Hispanic Whites (51% fewer, $p < 0.01$).

Influence of Being Foreign Born. Foreign-born respondents reported using parks less frequently in both the past year’s warm and cold weather compared with U.S.-born respondents (Figure 5). The difference was more profound in the cold weather, with only 12% of foreign-born respondents reporting park use of at least two times a week compared with 37% of U.S.-born respondents. This difference in cold-weather park use between U.S.-born and foreign-born residents remained statistically significant after adjusting for neighborhood-clustering effects and other demographic and neighborhood factors ($p < 0.01$). However, the difference in warm-weather park use was not statistically significant after controlling for other factors. The model

Figure 4. Differences in Warm- and Cold-weather Park Use by Race/Ethnicity of Respondents

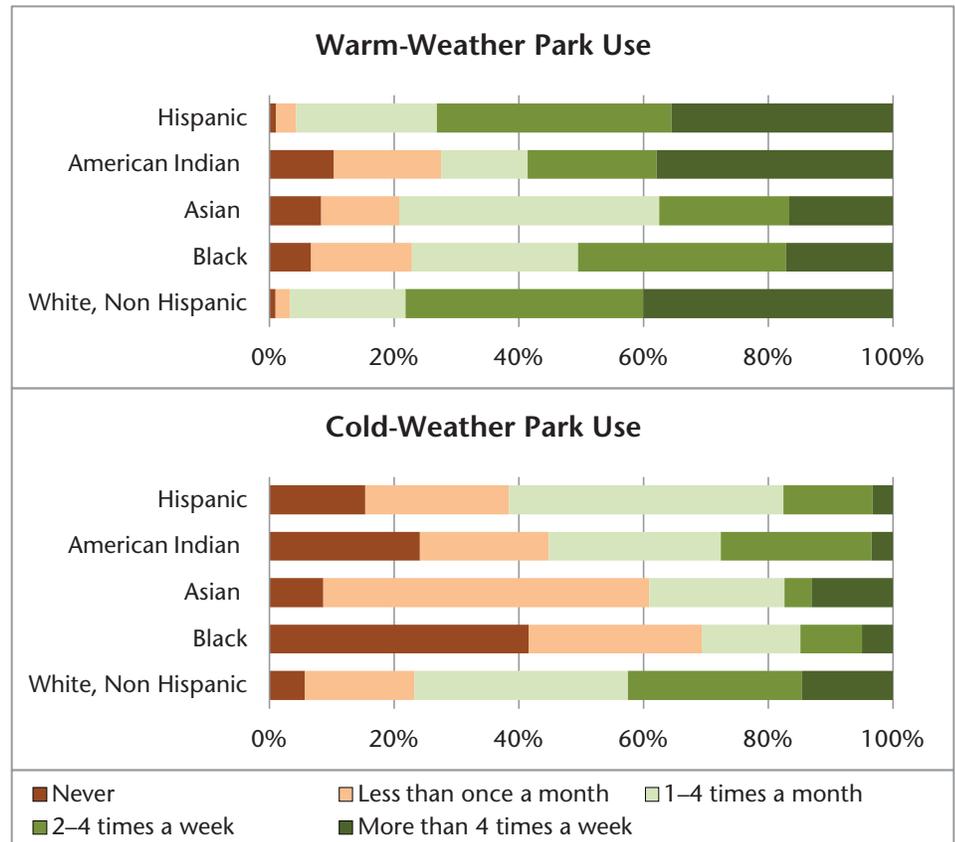
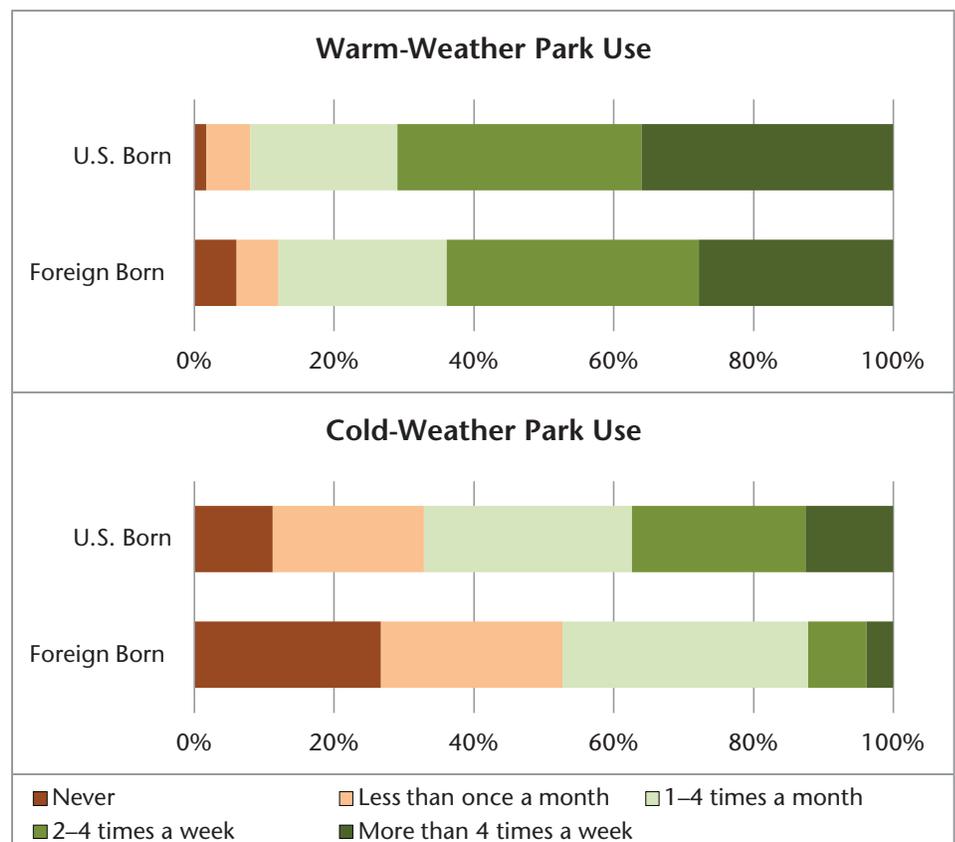


Figure 5. Differences in Warm- and Cold-weather Park Use between U.S.-Born and Foreign-Born Respondents



⁸ Statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level, which means there is a less than 1% probability that the difference is a result of chance.

of past-three-days park-use frequency suggested that foreign-born respondents made statistically significantly fewer trips in the past three days than U.S.-born respondents (32% fewer, $p < 0.05$).

Influence of Household Income.

Recalled park-use frequency in both the past year's warm and cold weather among low-income households is lower than that of high-income households (Figure 6). Figure 6 also shows a larger gap in park-use frequency between low-income and high-income households in cold weather than in warm weather. After adjusting for neighborhood-clustering effects and other demographic and neighborhood factors, the positive relationship between income and park use remained statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). In addition, the model of past-three-days park-use frequency showed that low-income respondents reported statistically significantly fewer trips (31% fewer, $p < 0.05$) in the past three days compared with high-income respondents.

Influence of Family Structure.

Survey responses showed that respondents in "two-parent, one working" and "two-parent, both working" families both reported using parks more frequently than respondents from "single-parent, working" families in the past year's warm and cold weather (Figure 7). Single-parent (16 respondents) and two-parent (31 respondents) nonworking households were excluded from the analysis because of the small numbers. After adjusting for neighborhood-clustering effects and other demographic and neighborhood factors, the differences in recalled past year warm- and cold-weather park use appeared to be statistically insignificant. However, the model of recalled past-three-days park use showed that working single parents on average reported statistically significantly fewer trips than two-parent, single-worker families (33% fewer, $p < 0.10$).

Influence of Pilot Park-Use Promotion Program. Our before-after analysis showed that the pilot park-use promotion program (featuring both information sharing and incentive mechanisms) was effective in shaping participants' perceptions about local parks and trails, as well as their park-use behavior. As shown in Table 1, participants in the intervention group (people enrolled in the park-use promotion program) reported greater reduction in perceived lack of information about park facilities and programs than the control

Figure 6. Differences in Warm- and Cold-Weather Park Use by Annual Household Income Level of Respondents

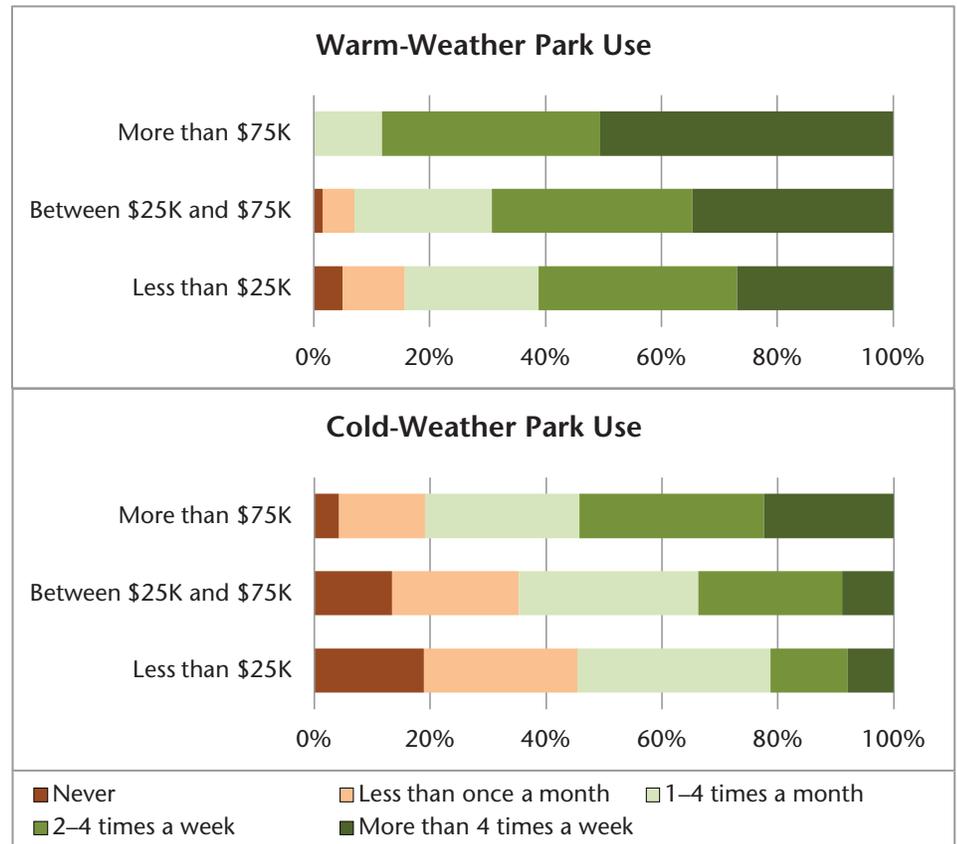
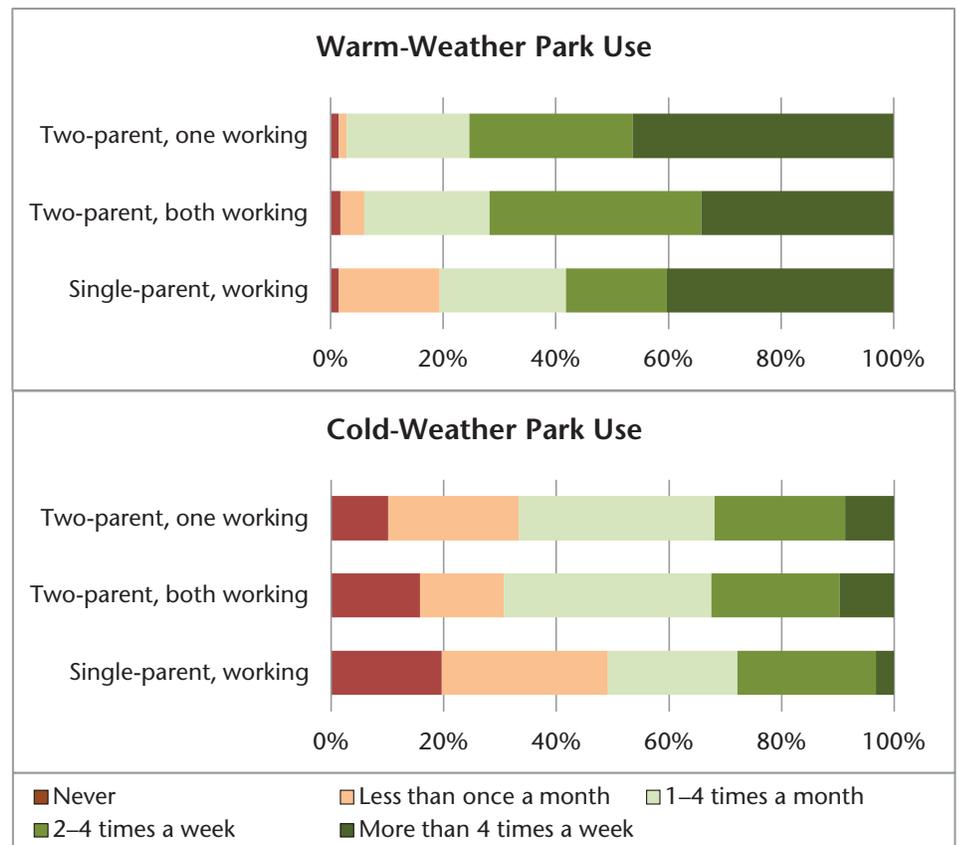


Figure 7. Differences in Warm- and Cold-Weather Park Use by Family Structure of Respondents



group. Participants in the intervention group also reported higher three-day park-use frequency in 2011 than 2010, whereas those in the control group reported lower three-day park-use frequency in 2011 than 2010. As shown in Table 1, the differences in the before–after changes between the intervention and control groups are statistically significant ($p < 0.10$ for the difference in perceived information barriers and $p < 0.01$ for the difference in three-day park-use frequency).

Conclusion

Using a local sample of Minneapolis residents, this study investigated demographic differences in park use and the influence of a pilot park-use promotion program in shaping perceptions about local parks and trails and park-use behavior. Our evidence shows that Blacks, foreign-born residents, low-income residents, and working single parents are underutilizing parks. Our evidence also suggests that the intervention program was successful in shaping participants' perceptions of local parks and trails, and their park-use behavior. These initial findings have important implications for using park-related strategies to mitigate health inequities in Minneapolis.

First, by identifying who underutilizes parks, this research points to population groups that likely receive fewer health benefits from public park resources. It is worth noting that those who underutilize parks are primarily members of population groups with existing health disadvantages. This indicates that promoting park use among these population groups could play a significant role in mitigating health inequalities. We recommend more targeted research to investigate why these particular groups have lower levels of park use. Knowing the unique factors underlying these groups' park-use behavior is critical to the development of effective policies and strategies for promoting their park use and improving their health. SPLASH included questions on perceived roles of parks, perceived barriers to park use, and perceived importance of various park facilities and recreation programs. In a future analysis, we plan to analyze the demographic differences in these park-related attitudes and perceptions. We expect this new analysis will help to develop tailored, culturally sensitive strategies for promoting park use among population groups that underutilize parks and are at greater health risk.

Second, it is worth noting that, for Blacks, foreign-born residents, and

Table 1. Before–After Mean Changes in Perceived Lack of Information and Park-Use Frequency among Control and Intervention Groups for the Pilot Park-Use Promotion Program

	Control group (102 respondents)	Intervention group (120 respondents)	Statistical significance
Mean (average) changes in perceived lack of information about park facilities and programs (ordinal scale, 1–4)	–0.020	–0.227	$p = 0.084$
Mean (average) changes in three-day park-use frequency (unit of measure: # of trips)	–0.343	0.283	$p = 0.008$

low-income residents, underutilization of parks is much more pronounced in cold weather. Winter recreation often requires expensive equipment and some level of skill training, either of which could pose barriers for low-income minority groups. For foreign-born respondents, additional comfort and familiarity issues may be involved, as many of them moved to Minneapolis from countries with warmer weather (e.g., Somalia, Mexico, and Vietnam). In a place like Minneapolis with four to five months of winter each year, the greater underutilization of parks in the cold weather among low-income minority groups deserves careful investigation. Park planners and policy makers might focus more attention on strategies that make winter activities more accessible to Blacks, foreign-born residents, and low-income residents—for example, expanding indoor activity options in parks, and establishing training and mentoring programs for outdoor winter sports.

Third, this research found family structure–based differences in levels of park use. American society has become increasingly diversified in family structure. In 2010, of the 34.7 million families with children in the United States, approximately 30% were single-parent families and approximately 42% were dual-worker families, both replacing the traditional two-parent, male-worker model.⁹ This significant transformation in the American family structure is poised to impact public demand for parks and recreation services, and underscores the importance of research in the

area of park-use behavior and family structure. New facilities and programs in parks should reflect the needs of nontraditional families. For example, dual-worker families may appreciate more evening-hour programs in parks. Single-parent families may prefer activities that allow group participation and offer socializing opportunities.

Finally, this research provides empirical evidence that information sharing and incentive mechanisms can change people's perceptions about parks and increase park-use frequency. Isolating the impact of information sharing from the impact of financial incentives in this study is difficult. Future research may involve separate park-use promotion programs—each focusing on a specific intervention mechanism—to identify the most effective strategies for park-use promotion among high-risk populations in racially diverse communities. Nonetheless, the success of the pilot park-use promotion program in the selected low-income, minority communities demonstrates the strong potential of park-related interventions to address the issue of health inequalities.

Yingling Fan is McKnight Land-Grant Assistant Professor at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. She studies the health and social impacts of urban land use, growth management, and transit improvement. Her recent work has addressed employment accessibility and social mobility, regional economic competitiveness, and transit development, along with access to green space and opportunities for healthy physical activity, all informed by a strong social-equity perspective. **Simone A. French** is a professor in the Division of Epidemiology and Community Health in the School of Public

⁹ M. King, S. Ruggles, T. Alexander, D. Leicach, and M. Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 2.0 [Machine-readable database] (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota–Minnesota Population Center, 2011).

Health at the University of Minnesota. Her research focuses on the development and evaluation of community-based obesity prevention interventions with parents and children, especially parents and children in low-income and minority families. **Kirti V. Das** is a research fellow in the State and Local Policy Center at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. He has worked on a wide range of health-related research projects, including the SPLASH project described in this article, and projects

examining the health impact of neighborhood greenness and the health disparities between urban and suburban residents.

The authors thank Ginger Cannon and Jennifer Ringold at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for their gracious support throughout the park-use survey project.

The research upon which this article is based was supported by a grant from CURA's Faculty Interactive Research Program. The program was created to

encourage University faculty to conduct research with community organizations and collaborators on issues of public policy importance for the state and community. These grants are available to regular faculty at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis. Additional funding was provided by the Children, Youth and Family Consortium and the Obesity Prevention Center, both at the University of Minnesota.

Faculty Interactive Research Program Awards

CURA is pleased to announce the recipients of faculty research awards for 2013–2014 provided through the Faculty Interactive Research Program (FIRP). FIRP was created to encourage University faculty members to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. Grants are available to regular faculty members at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis.

■ **Structural and Individualistic Determinants of Access to Healthcare Services: A Case Study of Somali and Sudanese Immigrants and Refugees in Duluth, Minnesota.** According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Somali and Sudanese immigrants and refugees who initially settle in the Twin Cities continue to engage in secondary migration by moving their families to northern Minnesota. The region experienced a 27% increase in new settlements of immigrant refugee families from the Twin Cities between 2000 and 2010. In this study, **John A. Arthur** (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Minnesota at Duluth) will analyze the healthcare sector in the Duluth area to: investigate the normative, cultural, religious, and economic factors that impede access to healthcare services among Somalis and Sudanese; identify the organizational and institutional/structural context within which these impediments are found; and develop social policies and conduct reviews in conjunction with Duluth-area hospitals, clinics, and stakeholders about how to ameliorate these impediments. The project will develop policy

outcomes and protocols to streamline access to healthcare services for Somali and Sudanese residents.

■ **Identifying and Mitigating Impacts from Expanding Urbanization to Duluth-Area Streams.** Urbanization has steadily replaced native vegetation with impervious surfaces, affecting watershed-scale hydrology. In coordination with the City of Duluth, **Karen Gran** (Department of Geological Sciences, University of Minnesota at Duluth) will develop a model relating urbanization to hydrograph behavior (the rate of flow past a specific point in a channel over a period of time) for basins within Duluth. Her research team will hydrologically condition light detection and ranging (LiDAR) topographic data and generate up-to-date land-cover data for Duluth. These data will be used to generate synthetic hydrographs that combine topographic and land-cover effects on runoff. Stream gauging on subbasins with different land-use assemblages will help calibrate the model. Study basins will be chosen in consultation with the City of Duluth to include areas where urban expansion is likely, so future scenarios may be run to test the effect such growth may have on peak flows. As city managers rebuild from the June 2012 flood and plan for future growth, these data will help them proactively manage growth in local watersheds.

■ **Fringe Banking and Low-Income Communities in the Twin Cities.** Fringe banking—using financial services such as check-cashing outlets, pawnshops, and payday lenders instead of conventional banks—has grown rapidly in recent years. These services are costly, with fees and higher interest

rates costing customers several hundred to more than a thousand dollars a year in excess of conventional banking. Despite the higher fees and interest, the industry tends to thrive in poorer urban and ethnic-minority communities. However, very little is known about the industry and why residents use it. **David Karjanen** (Department of American Studies, University of Minnesota at Twin Cities) will estimate the extent and location of fringe banking in the Twin Cities, interview consumers of these services to gather data, conduct analyses on why they choose fringe banking over conventional banking, and distribute the results to community-based organizations to inform future policy development.

■ **Minnesota Boomers at Work/in Transition.** Demographic and economic forces are upending conventional career paths, constraining the employment and retirement options of Twin Cities metropolitan-area baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964). Because of age discrimination and the absence of flexible, part-time, project-based, and meaningful jobs for this age group, many more baby boomers want to work than actually do so. Joining forces with SHiFT, a grassroots nonprofit that supports people at midlife who are reframing and transitioning their work and life, **Phyllis Moen** (McKnight Presidential Endowed Chair, Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota at Twin Cities) will investigate local innovations that offer new ways of working for Twin Cities baby boomers as they move from (or lose) career jobs. The goal of the project is to identify policies and practices that better fit the demographics and preferences of the 21st-century Twin Cities workforce.

Hari Osofsky Named 2013–2014 Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs

Hari Osofsky, associate professor at the University of Minnesota Law School and interim director of the Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment, and the Life Sciences, has been named the 2013–2014 Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs.

For the past two years, Osofsky's research has focused on voluntary strategies among Twin Cities metropolitan-area suburbs to address climate change. Specifically, Osofsky has examined 12 suburban communities and how they have learned from other localities to find cost-effective approaches to reducing carbon emissions, as well as how these initiatives have influenced national and international efforts to address climate change. According to Osofsky, multilevel climate-change networks could be more effective in encouraging suburban participation in mitigation efforts by tailoring their strategies to different types of suburbs and by interlinking their initiatives and outreach.

Osofsky plans to use the resources provided by her appointment as Fesler-Lampert Chair to expand her analysis

to all Twin Cities metro-area suburbs, collecting data and developing a framework for comparatively analyzing what



Hari Osofsky

each type of suburb within the region is doing to address climate change. In addition, Osofsky will compare the Twin

Cities context to other metropolitan regions, allowing the Twin Cities to learn from what other regions are doing, and for those regions to learn from the Twin Cities. Both efforts can inform local, state, national, and international climate-change mitigation strategies.

The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs is one of four endowed chairs made possible through the generosity and vision of David and Elizabeth Fesler. The endowment is intended to stimulate interdisciplinary research and teaching through the appointment of distinguished, broadly learned scholars to endowed faculty positions at the University of Minnesota. The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs is appointed for a one-year period and receives approximately \$40,000 for research, salary, and logistical support. The funds are jointly administered by the University of Minnesota Foundation and the University of Minnesota. For more information about the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs, including profiles of previous chairs, visit www.cura.umn.edu/Fesler-Lampert.

Photo courtesy of Hari Osofsky

Daniel Nidzgorski Awarded CURA Dissertation Research Grant

Daniel Nidzgorski, a Ph.D. candidate in the Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Graduate Program, has been awarded the 2013 CURA Dissertation Research Grant. The grant provides one year of support to a Ph.D. candidate in good academic standing at the University of Minnesota for the purpose of completing dissertation research on a significant issue or topic related to urban areas in the upper Midwest region.

Nidzgorski's dissertation research will provide the first comprehensive assessment of how urban trees affect nitrogen and phosphorus movement from land to water, and will contribute to creating more sustainable urban

landscapes. Many urban and suburban waterways, especially in the upper Midwest, suffer from excess nitrogen and phosphorus. These excess nutrients cause lower water clarity and oxygen levels, bad odor and taste, and loss of desirable species. However, very little is currently understood about how to prevent these nutrients from moving from land into local lakes and streams.

Nidzgorski's research focuses on elucidating the influence of different urban tree species on nutrient cycling in soils and nutrient flows in groundwater by characterizing tree species in terms of how they affect nutrient levels in storm water and groundwater, which both contribute substantial

amounts of nutrients to local waterways. This research will fill a major gap in understanding how trees influence the flows of nutrients through urban landscapes at the watershed scale, with consequences for local water pollution. Ultimately, this research can inform urban land managers and homeowners in selecting tree species for planting on public and private lands that reduce nutrient pollution and improve the water quality in local waterways.

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

Commentary: Advancing an Equity Agenda for the Twin Cities Region

by Neeraj Mehta and Tracy Babler

President John F. Kennedy famously made use of the phrase “a rising tide lifts all boats” to paint a picture of policy making for shared prosperity in America. The phrase has come back into common use during the recent economic crisis, as policy makers discuss proposals for moving our country back toward growth and prosperity. For example, the phrase is often used in discussions about our state’s unemployment crisis. Although unemployment has been a concern for all people in Minnesota, it is significantly higher for people of color.¹ The implication of “a rising tide lifts all boats” is that universal policies put into place to reduce overall unemployment will also reduce unemployment for individual races.

Does this metaphor hold up? Does adopting unemployment policies targeted to everyone really benefit everyone? Do such policies both raise the tide and lift all the boats? History shows that the answer to this question is “no.” Strategies intended to improve conditions for everyone too often leave entire communities behind or pushed to the margins, unable to access new opportunities, resources, and benefits.

Unemployment rates in the Twin Cities region demonstrate this outcome clearly. Hundreds of millions of dollars were poured into this region, like others across the nation, as part of the economic-stimulus bill passed in 2008 to jump-start the flagging economy. By 2009, the region had a lower than average unemployment rate, measured at 7.8% compared with a national average of 9.3%. However, people of every race did not have the same chance of being employed. White people faced a 6.6% unemployment rate that year, while black people in the Twin Cities had an unemployment rate well above 20%, meaning they were more than

¹ Minnesota Compass, “Proportion of Adults (Age 16–64) Working, by Race,” www.mncompass.org/disparities/key-measures.php?km=race#1-6025-g.



Photo courtesy of Jeff Corn, CURA

Since the fall of 2011, equity leaders from throughout the Twin Cities have been gathering as a part of the emerging EquityNow Twin Cities regional equity network.

three times as likely to be unemployed as whites.²

That statistic reinforces what communities of color in the Twin Cities region have known for decades. Although the region benefits from a number of social and economic assets, it continues to be unable to translate these benefits to everyone, specifically to communities of color.³ The *Mind the Gap* report, released by the Itasca Project, a collaboration of 40 Twin Cities area CEOs, mayors, and university and philanthropic leaders, comments on these realities in the Twin Cities by noting, “In a region where household income is often ranked among the highest in the nation, black household income is often

² A. Austin, “Uneven Pain—Unemployment by Metropolitan Area and Race,” 8 June 2010, www.epi.org/publication/ib278/.

³ See www.mncompass.org for more information and regional statistics on aging, housing, education, workforce, immigration, public safety, transportation, and other indicators of regional health. The Disparities section of the site (www.mncompass.org/disparities/index.php) highlights data that show differences based on race, income, gender, and/or place of residence.

among the lowest. In a region with the highest share of adults with a high-school diploma, our racial disparities in education continue to lead the nation.”⁴

Despite significant accomplishments, the Twin Cities region struggles with social and economic disparities that threaten the well-being not just of people of color, but of the region as a whole.

Everyone deserves to live in communities rich with opportunity. However, too often in the Twin Cities, where you live determines whether or not you have access to the resources you need to thrive, such as quality schools, banks you can trust, and access to healthy foods, good jobs, affordable housing, and transportation. Regional leaders cannot effectively develop communities of opportunity without first tackling the barriers to success and well-being that

⁴ See R. Sohmer and D. Jackson, *Mind the Gap: Reducing Disparities to Improve Regional Competitiveness in the Twin Cities* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2005), available at www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2005/10/cities-sohmer.

are built upon structures and institutions that perpetuate racial, social, and economic inequities in our cities and regions.

Minnesota, like many other states, has a history of implementing universal programs with the expectation that everyone will benefit. However, previous attempts that used a one-size-fits-all approach have proven unsuccessful at addressing the needs of marginalized racial and ethnic groups.⁵ In fact, universal policies, if not well designed, can intensify rather than reduce racial disparities.⁶

If the goal is to close the gap on racial disparities, then it is imperative to take the time to understand why the gap exists. Low-income communities of color are often situated very differently when it comes to access to interconnected opportunities such as housing, jobs, and education. By studying the historical, geographical, cultural, and institutional forces that contribute to racial disparities, policy makers can work with communities to create and implement more targeted strategies to end them. In other words, rather than using an equality framework, which assumes all people need the same things to get to the same place, leaders should employ an equity framework, which acknowledges differences and proposes solutions that meet different people's needs. An equity framework acknowledges the unique circumstances of individuals and crafts appropriate solutions that create more targeted benefits.

Given this paradigm, then, what is equity? In her 2011 book *The Just City*, urban planner and Harvard professor Susan Fainstein defines it as "a distribution of both material and nonmaterial benefits derived from public policy that does not favor those who are already better off at the beginning. Further, it does not require that each person be treated the same but rather that treatment be appropriate" (p. 35). Within

⁵ For an in-depth discussion of how universalism fails in the goal of creating benefit for all, see j.a. powell, "Post-Racialism or Targeted Universalism," *Denver University Law Review* 785 (2008): 786-806 (available at scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/facpubs/1633).

⁶ See I. Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005). Katznelson contends that the universal programs of the 1930s and 1940s not only discriminated against blacks, but actually contributed to widening the gap between white and black Americans—judged in terms of educational achievement, quality of jobs and housing, and attainment of higher income.

an equity framework, the questions of "who benefits?" and "to what extent?" become central to measuring the positive benefit of any policy or strategy.

EquityNow Twin Cities Demographic Roundtable: Identifying Equity Strategies for the Twin Cities

This discussion is timely because of rapidly changing demographics in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau recently announced that more than 50% of babies born in this country are now of color. The implications of this trend, should it remain unchanged, are clear: At some point, people of color will make up the majority of the population. These demographic changes are frequently discussed in terms of challenges, citing statistics about racial disparities and stories of inequity that demonstrate the significant barriers facing people of color. The challenges facing people of color in the Twin Cities are real, but our changing demographics are not cause for alarm. According to EquityNow Twin Cities—an emerging network of nonprofit, public sector, and philanthropic partners working together to achieve racial, social, and economic equity in our region (see sidebar)—these changes offer the opportunity to bring together diverse experiences that could reinvigorate our economy and drive growth for our future.

In August 2012, EquityNow Twin Cities brought together regional and

national equity leaders to discuss the largely untapped potential living within our region's communities of color, and how it can be used as a catalyst to fuel our region's economic growth. "Population drives economic growth," said roundtable participant and state demographer Sarah Brower. "That's why every last one of our residents becomes important to our well-being."

At the meeting, which was convened with the national organizations PolicyLink (www.policylink.org) and the Center for American Progress (www.americanprogress.org), partners outlined the steps it will take to ensure that Minnesotans can all prosper into the future. The discussion produced rich ideas for ensuring all Minnesota communities offer opportunity to their residents.

- ▶ **Investing in the potential of young people is critical to Minnesota's success.** Minnesota's labor-force growth is slowing because of the state's aging white population. Because the younger generations are significantly more diverse, new economic growth will be driven by people of color.
- ▶ **Equitable investment requires leaders to bridge geographic divides.** Where people live plays a role in how public investments are made. Perceived divides between urban, suburban, exurban, and rural

EquityNow Twin Cities

EquityNow Twin Cities emerged after a delegation of 150 Minnesotans attended the 2011 PolicyLink Equity Summit in Detroit, and the network continues to convene around a shared belief that by working together across a variety of cultures, geographies, and issue areas, the Twin Cities region can achieve greater levels of racial, social, and economic equity. Partners on the EquityNow Twin Cities leadership team include:

- ▶ Joo Hee Pomplun, Asian Economic Development Association
- ▶ Chaka Mkali, Hope Community
- ▶ Deanna Foster, Dayton's Bluff Community Council
- ▶ Malik Shabazz, Holt Harrison Neighborhood Organization
- ▶ Daniel Yang, Native American Community Development Institute
- ▶ Owen Duckworth, Maura Brown and Ebony Adedayo, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
- ▶ Danielle Mkali and Repa Mekha, Nexus Community Partners
- ▶ Ned Moore, Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing
- ▶ Neeraj Mehta, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)

Visit equitynowtc.org for more information.

communities must be bridged to encourage more equitable policy making and public investment.

- ▶ **Academic achievement of students of all races is critical for our region to be economically competitive.** As early as elementary school, a sizable achievement gap exists between white students and students of color. Large numbers of students of color are dropping out of high school, and few are seeking the postsecondary education that the jobs of the future will require. Students of all races must be prepared for the workforce.
- ▶ **Employers must play a role in ending racial disparities.** People of color are facing significantly higher rates of unemployment than whites. This employment gap means the Twin Cities will already be starting from a deficit when creating the workforce of the future. Employers can change this trend by putting their own proequity policies in place.
- ▶ **Pathways to Criminal Justice Reform.** Our state has the worst black–white imprisonment ratio in the nation, with more than 25 black Minnesotans imprisoned for each white resident, despite the fact that significantly more white people live in the state. State Demographer Sarah Brower illustrated this point more clearly by stating that young black males are greater than six times more likely to be incarcerated in Minnesota than to live in college housing. These shocking data merit significant attention to criminal justice reform in our state.
- ▶ **A holistic approach is needed to solve these complex problems.** The problems facing communities of color are interrelated and must be approached with holistic solutions. A well-rounded approach to these problems must recognize that environmental, educational, and employment disparities are interdependent.

Minnesota offers many resources and is known as the best in the nation at many things—except racial equity. So how can the state solve these problems? Leaders present at the roundtable



“We can’t just be invited to respond to plans, we have to be at the table and on committees where decisions are being made,” says Repa Mekha of Nexus Community Partners, pictured here. “We need to be planning for equitable outcomes, not just hoping they happen.”

said that institutions need to find ways to build space for a cultural shift that will simultaneously open the doors to economic opportunity for people of color, as well as benefit all people by reinvigorating the state’s economy. Part of that shift includes ensuring that the rooms where big decisions are made are not just filled with white people, said Chris Stewart of the African American Leadership Forum. “Decisions are being made every day, and the rooms don’t look like this one,” he said, referring to the diversity around the table at the August meeting. “The social intelligence is missing. How can you lead the nation in everything except the inclusion of your own people?”

Several participants said that the Twin Cities region can only be successful if leaders flip the prevailing narrative about race. Rather than talking about communities of color as deficits or liabilities, leaders should focus on highlighting the assets these communities contribute to the region’s culture, its quality of life, and its economy. “We can’t just be invited to respond to plans, we have to be at the table and on committees where decisions are

being made,” said Repa Mekha of Nexus Community Partners. “We need to be planning for equitable outcomes, not just hoping they happen.”

For many people, equity is a moral imperative. However, it is increasingly obvious in our country that as communities of color grow, equity is also an economic imperative. As former Minnesota senator Paul Wellstone famously said, “We all do better, when we all do better.” From infrastructure investments to education, health, and employment, targeted investments that advance the well-being of communities of color also advance the well-being of the greater region. An equity framework truly could be the rising tide that lifts all boats.

Neeraj Mehta is director of community-based research at CURA and a 2011–2013 Bush Foundation Leadership Fellow. He is a graduate of the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs. **Tracy Babler** is the development and communications director for the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability. She is a graduate of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

Spring 2013 Project Awards

Each issue of the *CURA Reporter* features a few capsule descriptions of new projects under way at CURA. The projects highlighted in this issue were made possible through one of CURA's community-based research programs, which provide graduate-student assistance for community-based applied research projects, program planning and development, and other short-term projects. These projects represent only a portion of those that will receive support from CURA and its partners during the coming year.

■ **Corridors to Freedom, Action Research for Emancipation.** La Asamblea de Derechos Civiles (La Asamblea) is a faith-based organization based in Twin Cities- and St. Cloud-area churches that organizes to build leadership in the community. La Asamblea is organizing the Latino community to have a voice in decision making around transit-corridor development. Through this project, La Asamblea wants to create community-driven research tools that build power by enabling the community to act. Members of the Latino community who live in close proximity to transit corridors will be a primary source of information and expertise, and will provide their thoughts about opportunities, threats, and issues regarding transit. **Lizeth Marroquin**, a Master of Systems Engineering student in the College of Science and Engineering, is gathering information from Latino residents living in Twin Cities transportation corridors. The results will be used to organize around shared interests, to educate community members about what is at stake for them in the planning process, and to inform a document that captures the community vision for the project, which will be subsequently delivered to decision makers.
Program: Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program

■ **Women in Cedar Riverside, Asset and Gap Analysis.** Founded in 2008, the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program (CRNRP) represents the constituents of the Cedar Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis. CRNRP plans to support and/or build programs for East African women that promote

economic self-sufficiency, financial literacy, and wealth accumulation. More than half of all families in the neighborhood live in poverty, and a large segment of the households in the neighborhood are led by single, female parents. Adding language barriers, religious and cultural differences, and the responsibility of providing income to extended family members overseas to the mix, East African women are facing an uphill battle as it relates to moving out of poverty and into career paths that can sustain their families. **Ubah Hirsi**, an undergraduate in psychology, and **Kubra Dire**, an undergraduate in family social science, are facilitating three to five focus groups with East African women, as well as researching existing programs. The results of the research will be used to inform the allocation of neighborhood funds, build a case statement for future fundraising, and, if applicable, be used as a basis for further program development work within the organization.

Program: Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program

■ **Minneapolis American Indian Center Business Plan for Cultural, Arts, and Economic Growth.** The Minneapolis American Indian Center (MAIC or the Center) is a nonprofit organization primarily providing social services in the Twin Cities through programs that serve court-related advocacy, and substance-abuse prevention and treatment, as well as programs aimed at the urban community of American Indian elders and youth. Located in the heart of the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis, MAIC is one of the last and longest running American Indian centers in the country. Over time, the Center has evolved away from its original role as a cultural and community center. An organizational assessment and an annual survey both indicated that the community is in support of revitalizing the Center through activities that create an atmosphere for self-determination and regaining a strong cultural identity for individuals and families. **Gauri Kelkar**, a Master of Sustainable Design student in the School of Architecture, is working with the Center for Sustainable Building

Research at the University of Minnesota to develop a vision, including design possibilities, for MAIC that incorporates culture, arts, and retail. The results of this research project will be used to turn the vision of the Center's future into reality.

Program: Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program

■ **West Side Initiative.** In 1975, West Side Community Organization (WSCO) became the first neighborhood association in St. Paul to be recognized as an official district planning council, representing the residents of District 3 in St. Paul's Citizen Participation Program. The West Side Initiative is a collaborative effort by residents and institutional partners to leverage and align resources to bring to life the work of the West Side Plan, a 10-year plan for District 3. In the past, these types of neighborhood and small-area plans have not been fully realized, as implementation systems, including ways to track and measure progress made toward the realization of the goals/strategies outlined in the plan, have been lacking. **Dean Porter**, a Master of Urban and Regional Planning student at the Humphrey School, is developing a set of indicators and measures relating to the community plan and projects/initiatives undertaken by WSCO and its community partners. The results will be used to track the impact of the plan over time and to support fundraising activities.

Program: Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program

■ **Study of the Champion Communities Primary Prevention Model for Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence.** The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA) is a voice for victims/survivors, sexual-assault programs, and allies committed to ending sexual violence. In the Champion Communities Primary Prevention model (currently being piloted in Winona and Bemidji), crime-prevention strategies, specifically around sexual violence, are generated, carried out, and studied at the local level by teams of community residents. MNCASA offers training and technical assistance to teams in identifying community needs,

strategizing around context-specific culture and policy change, community organizing, and research/evaluation. By studying both the process and preliminary impacts of this supported team-based model at the two pilot sites, MNCASA hopes to provide evidence that this model can make a difference in communities statewide. **Susan Lange**, a Master of Public Affairs student at the Humphrey School, is studying the impact of training/technical assistance on the pilot teams' capacity, as well as developing evaluation tools. The results of this research will be used to inform the structure of future primary-prevention efforts in the pilot communities and statewide, develop tools to assist communities statewide in initiating their own primary-prevention

efforts, improve MNCASA's training and technical support activities, and advocate for primary-prevention support with state policy makers and potential funders.

Program: Community Assistantship Program (CAP)

■ **Mapping the Root River Watershed for Increased Implementation of Stormwater Management Strategies.** The mission of the Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote natural-resource stewardship by providing educational, technical, and financial assistance. Effective stormwater management in the district requires a complete understanding of stormwater drainage in the area. **Mary Hammes**, a Master of Natural Resource Science and

Management student at the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, is aggregating existing data and developing a series of maps showing stormwater drainage areas in cities in the Root River watershed. The Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District and the cities in the Root River watershed will use the results of this work to develop education and outreach materials for watershed residents to better understand water issues. Interpretive sites can also use the results to show where stormwater is coming from and how the land use in the area affects water quality and quantity.

Program: Community Assistantship Program (CAP)

Project Assistance Available from CURA

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs supports research and technical assistance through a number of individual programs, each with their own deadlines and application procedures.

■ **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 application deadline for fall semester 2013 assistantships (September through early January 2014) is June 30, 2013. 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.

■ **The Community Geographic Information Systems (CGIS)** program provides technical assistance in

mapping, data analysis, and GIS to community-based organizations and nonprofits in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Staff at the CGIS program specialize in parcel-level mapping, demographic analysis, and Internet-based GIS technologies. The CGIS program has no formal application process or deadline to apply. Project requests can be made by phone, e-mail, or online at z.umn.edu/cgishelp, and generally can be turned around within two weeks. For more information, to discuss potential projects, or for assistance with data needs, contact CGIS program coordinator Jeff Matson at 612-625-0081 or jmatson@umn.edu, or visit www.cura.umn.edu/cgis.

■ **The Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program** (the Nelson Program) provides student research assistance to community and neighborhood-based organizations and suburban government agencies in the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area. Priority is given to groups serving diverse communities. Projects may include any issue relevant to a

neighborhood or community's needs and interests, including planning, program development, or program evaluation. Applications from organizations collaborating on a project are encouraged. The application deadline for fall semester 2013 assistantships (September through early January 2014) is June 30, 2013. For more information, contact CURA community programs assistant Jeff Corn at 612-625-0744 or curacbr@umn.edu, or visit www.cura.umn.edu/nelson-program.

■ **The Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing (MCNO)** trains people to work effectively in organizing and staffing neighborhood organizations. It trains new organizers and increases the skills of existing neighborhood staff, leaders, and volunteers through internships, workshops, and other programs. For more information about MCNO and the training opportunities available, contact Jay Clark at 612-625-2513 or clark037@umn.edu, or Ned Moore at 612-625-5805 or nedmoore@umn.edu, or visit www.cura.umn.edu/mcno.

County Workforce Flow Patterns in Minnesota: Where Do Workers Go to Work?

by Elizabeth E. Davis and Melissa K. Whittler

Abstract: Understanding the spatial linkages between home and work is critical for economic-development policy and transportation planning, as well as for other local and state government decisions. This research project explored where people live and work in Minnesota to determine whether workers in different earnings groups exhibit similar patterns in “workforce flows” across county lines. We examined the size of workforce flows from each Minnesota county, as well as determined whether workers in different earnings groups went to the same or different destination counties to work. Across the state, workers in the high-earnings category were more likely to work in a different county from where they live than workers with lower earnings. In addition, workers who lived outside of major metropolitan areas relied on a more varied set of county locations outside their home county for employment than did metropolitan residents. In some but not all counties, the work destinations of nonmetropolitan commuters differed for low- and high-earners. This study demonstrates that specific information on the work destinations of Minnesotans in different earnings groups can assist planners and policy makers in making investment decisions regarding transportation, housing, and economic-development programs. The research upon which this article is based was supported by a grant from CURA’s Faculty Interactive Research Program.

Changes in transportation costs and technology, along with population growth, have led to ever-widening geographic areas that can be considered local labor markets (that is, the spaces encompassing where workers live and where they work). Although the word “commuting” typically leads people to think of drivers in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, many Minnesota workers outside of the Twin Cities also are employed in a different county from where they live.

In this article, we describe our work to understand the linkages across counties in Minnesota based



Across the state, high-earning workers are more likely to work in a different county from where they live than workers with lower earnings.

on workflows—that is, the number of workers who live in one county and work in another. The data on workflows come from a relatively new U.S. Census data product that identifies the home and work location of nearly all workers in the state.¹ The Census data also categorize workers by earnings category, which allows us to examine the workflows of different types of workers. We were primarily interested in whether workers with lower earnings follow similar commuting patterns to those with higher earnings. For example, workers with lower earnings may be less likely to cross county lines to work because of the costs of commuting;

¹ According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, “workers and jobs excluded from these statistics include proprietors and the self-employed, railroad workers, family farm workers, full-time students working for their school, elected government officials, insurance and real estate salespeople, and others who work only on a commission basis” (www.positivelyminnesota.com/Data_Publications/Data/All_Data_Tools/Quarterly_Census_of_Employment_Wages_%28QCEW%29_2.aspx, accessed April 1, 2011).

on the other hand, they may seek less expensive housing outside of core metropolitan areas and drive farther to work. Understanding the spatial linkages between home and work is critical for economic-development policy and transportation planning, as well as for other local and state government decisions.

Research Methodology

The delineation of metropolitan areas is based both on population size and on counties with “close social and economic ties.” In practice, these ties are determined by commuting flows and primarily defined based on the single largest commuting destination. One of our goals was to identify more complex commuting patterns. We used a method that identifies up to five important worker outflows from each county to other counties or to bordering states. Our previous research showed that these complex commuting patterns exist in nonmetropolitan counties in Minnesota and demonstrated the importance of a broader view of regional labor markets.

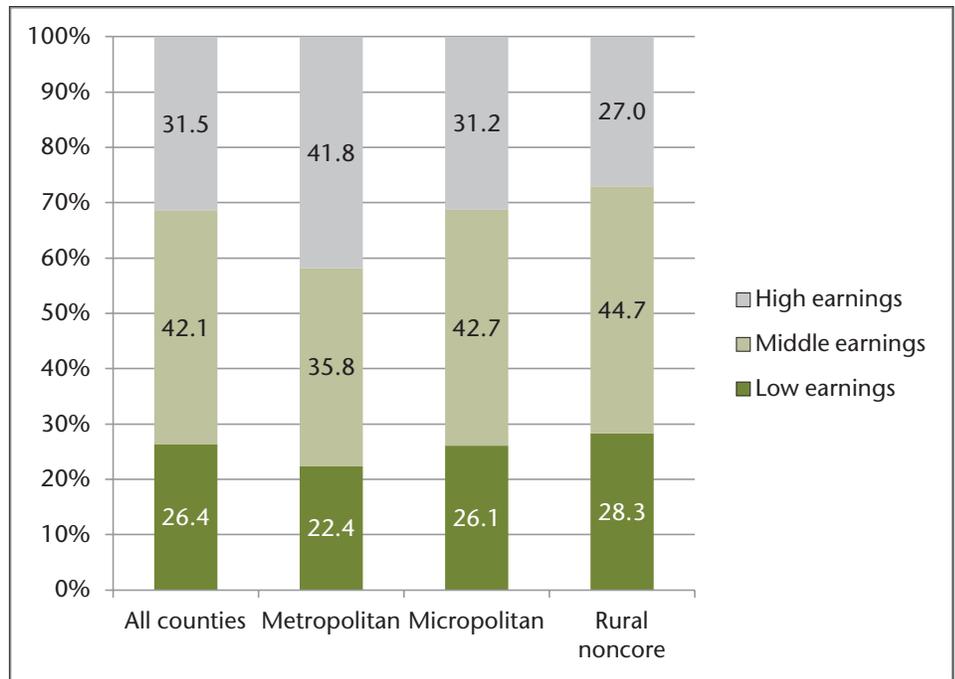
Photo © Steve Schneider, 2006.

The data used in this study were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau Local Employment Dynamics program (formerly called Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, or LEHD), “On-the-Map” (OTM) Version 4 data series. To capture information on everyone who works in Minnesota, we included data on those who reside in bordering states and work in Minnesota, as well as those who both live and work in Minnesota. The OTM data, available annually, include counts of the number of jobs held by residents of each location who work in another location (so that each observation is the number of jobs in a residence/work location pair). In addition to total jobs, these counts are broken down based on three earnings groups.² Although detailed local geographic information is available, in this study we aggregated to the county level to focus on workforce flows across counties. In order to protect confidentiality, the data available for public use are synthetic, meaning that they have been drawn from a statistical model that adds some error to reduce the chances that any individual or firm can be precisely identified. We first looked at the data for each year from 2002 through 2008, but we found little change in overall patterns across those years; therefore, we restricted our analysis to 2008 only. When more recent data become available, analysis of workflow patterns during the economic downturn starting in 2009 may reveal differences over time related to changing economic conditions.

The key measure we used in the study is the outflow of workers from a county, defined as the proportion of workers residing in a county who work in a different county. We examined the overall outflow (defined as the proportion of all workers who work outside the home county) and the specific outflows to different counties (the proportion of outflows to different destinations). We ranked these destination outflows in order from largest percentage to smallest to compare whether low- and high-earnings workers have similar outflow patterns and destinations. We focused the analysis on the five largest outflows,

² In the OTM data, the three earnings categories are defined as less than \$1,200 per month, \$1,200–\$3,400 per month, and more than \$3,400 per month. The earnings categories are not adjusted for inflation or for local variations in costs of living. The measures are based on a worker’s earnings in his or her primary job. Unfortunately, one cannot determine overall family income or poverty status from these data.

Figure 1. Mean Percentage of Minnesota Workers in Each Earnings Category, by County Type, 2008



which represented roughly two-thirds of all workers who worked outside their home county.

According to U.S. Census data, residents of every county in Minnesota travel to many different counties to work. To summarize the data, we developed a set of rules to determine how many worker outflows from each county should be considered significant.³ We do not use “significance” in the statistical sense, but rather consider an outflow significant if it is large enough to be of importance to economic-development planning and policy makers in understanding the local economy. Our rules for determining the number of significant outflows incorporated both the absolute size of the outflow (e.g., is it more than 40% of all workers?) and the relative size compared with other destination outflows (e.g., are there two outflows of 25% each?). As an example, by using this method we would categorize a county that has more than 60% of workers going to a neighboring county as having one significant outflow, but we would categorize a county that has two worker outflows of more than 30% each as having two. We then computed

³ We describe the statistical methods underlying the rules in detail in a working paper: E.E. Davis and M.K. Whitley, “Workflow Linkages in Less Densely Populated Areas: Determining the Number of Significant Flows in Rural Minnesota,” University of Minnesota Department of Applied Economics, May 2011 (available from the authors).

the number of significant worker outflows for each county by earnings group to compare the patterns for workers with high versus low earnings.

Findings

This section summarizes the results of our analysis.

High- Versus Low-wage Workers: Where Do They Live, and Where Do They Work? In 2008, almost one-third of workers in Minnesota held jobs in the highest earnings category (Figure 1). Not surprisingly, the fraction of the workforce in the high-earnings category was greater in counties that are part of metropolitan areas than in less urbanized areas (micropolitan and rural noncore counties; see sidebar and Figure 2). About two in five workers in metropolitan counties in Minnesota were in the high-earnings category in 2008, but only about one-quarter of workers in rural noncore counties were high earners. More workers in rural noncore counties were in the lowest earnings category compared with those in metropolitan and micropolitan counties. The fact that metropolitan workers earn more, on average, than workers in nonmetropolitan areas is not surprising, given that higher housing costs and higher wages are common features of metropolitan areas. The “wage premium” in metropolitan counties is likely a key factor in influencing workers’ decisions about where to live

and where to work. However, when interpreting the results we present here on workflows by earnings group, it is important to keep in mind that the proportion of workers in each earnings group varies by level of urbanization of the county.

We described individuals who worked in a different county than where they lived as “outcommuters,” or as outflows from the home county to another county. In many cases, these workers regularly travel from home to work location; however, in some cases they may telecommute or work from home for a company based elsewhere. Even if not all of the workers commute daily, the existence of a significant workflow indicates an important economic linkage between the home and work counties.

Although half of all Minnesota workers worked outside their home county in 2008, workers in the

high-earnings category were more likely to be outcommuters than lower earnings workers (54.3% of high earners outcommuted compared with 45.1% of low earners) (Table 1). It is not surprising that workers with higher earnings were more likely to outcommute. Jobs that pay more draw workers from a broader labor market. However, although some variation in outflows by earnings category occurred, these variations were swamped by the differences across types of counties, with metropolitan counties exhibiting higher rates of outcommuting than nonmetropolitan counties. Figure 3 shows the percentage of outcommuting by county for the range of earners. The higher frequency of outcommuting in metropolitan counties is clearly seen in the map.

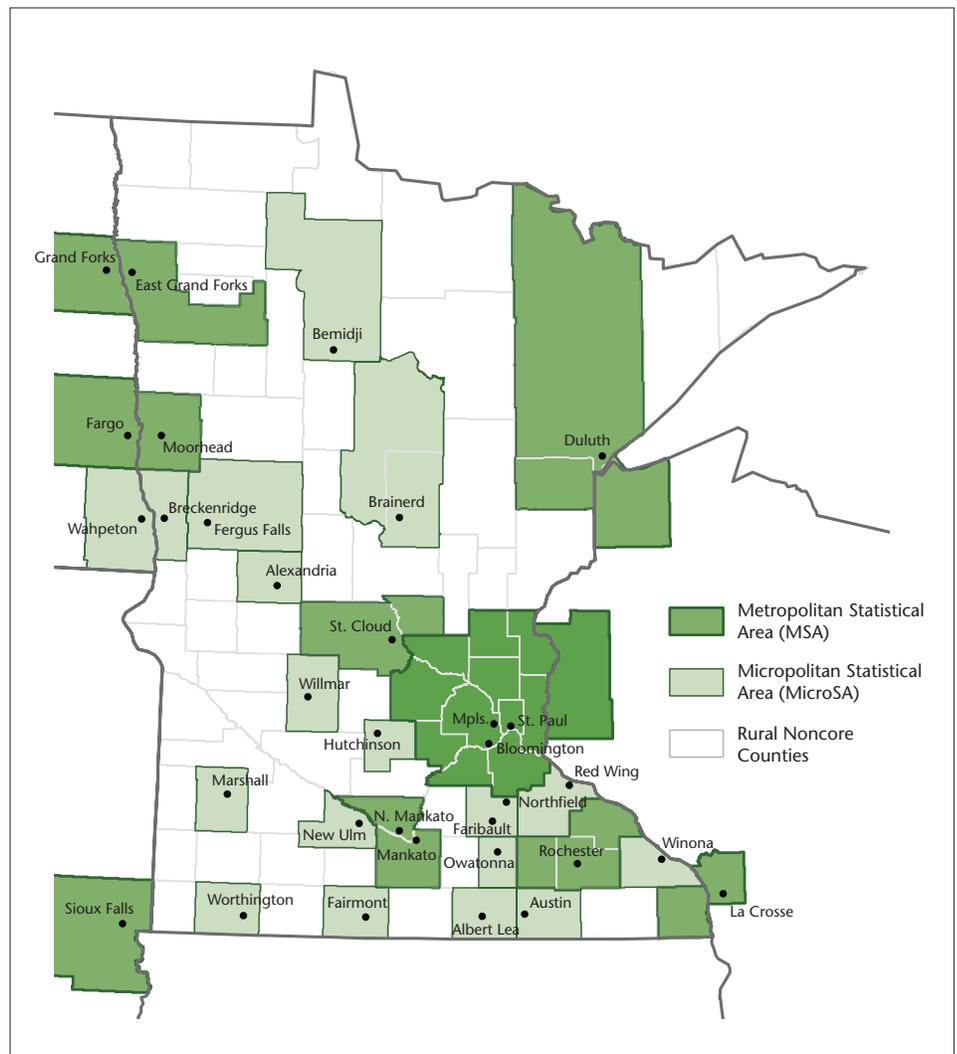
The definition of metropolitan areas is based, in part, on commuting linkages, so we expected to see differences in commuting patterns in metropolitan

counties compared with others. Even in nonmetropolitan counties, however, many workers worked in different counties from those where they resided. Outcommuting was more common in rural noncore counties than in micropolitan counties, with 45.2% of low earners and 54.7% of high earners working outside their home rural noncore county (compared with 37.5% and 42.8%, respectively, in micropolitan counties). Most of the micropolitan areas defined in Minnesota are single counties with a sizeable urban area. Our findings suggest that worker outflows from these micropolitan counties are important even though these other counties are not officially designated as part of the micropolitan area. Understanding the spatial linkages among nonmetropolitan counties requires information on more than the largest commuting flow, as workers likely travel to a number of destination counties for work.

Sidebar: Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Rural Noncore Counties

Metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas are geographic entities defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. A **metropolitan area** contains a core urban area of 50,000 or more population, and a **micropolitan area** contains an urban core of at least 10,000 (but less than 50,000) population. Metropolitan and micropolitan definitions are both county based, and each metropolitan or micropolitan area includes the counties containing the core urban area as well as any adjacent counties that have a high degree of commuting for work into the urban core. Remaining counties are designated as **rural noncore counties** (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Micropolitan Statistical Areas, and Rural Noncore Counties in Minnesota



An interesting example is the micropolitan area of Mankato–North Mankato, which is located in Blue Earth, Nicollet, and Le Sueur Counties. From Blue Earth County, the largest destination for both low- and high-earning workers is Nicollet County (about 33% of each group), yet a sizeable percentage of each group (about 15%) is employed in Hennepin County. From Nicollet County, nearly half of the workers who outcommute go to Blue Earth County, and the second largest outflow (which is much smaller, about 10% for each earnings group) goes to Brown County. After 2008, Mankato–North Mankato was reclassified as a metropolitan area on the strength of the commuting ties between Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties and the size of the county populations. Our work shows that focusing only on the largest commuting flows may obscure some of the complexity of actual patterns, particularly in nonmetropolitan areas. For example, we found that other destinations (outside the newly defined metropolitan area) were also important sources of employment for the residents of Blue Earth, Nicollet, and Le Sueur Counties.

High- Versus Low-Wage Workers: Do They Have Similar Outflow Patterns? The number of significant worker outflows varied across earnings categories, and high earners tended to have fewer significant outflows than low earners; that is, their commuting was concentrated on fewer counties (Table 2). Close to 60% of counties had only one or two significant outflows of middle and high earners, while 50% did so for low-earners. Nonetheless, 20 counties had five or more significant outflows for both low and high earners. Thus we see that while outflows in some counties are more concentrated for middle- and high-earning workers compared to low earners, there are counties whose workers have similar outflow patterns for all three earnings groups.

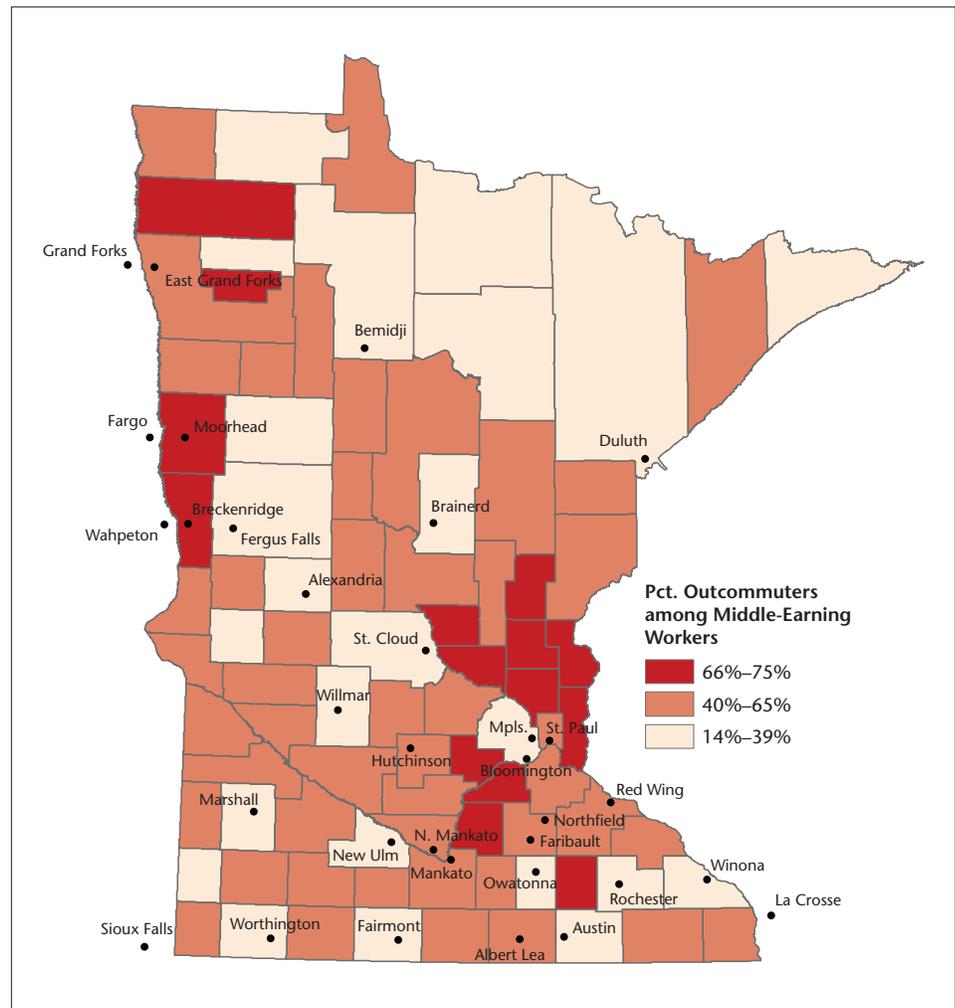
One might expect that the number of significant outflows would be related to the proportion of workers in a county who outcommute; that is, if more county residents work outside the county, they would go to more places. However, we did not observe a relationship at the county level between the number of significant outflows and the overall proportion of workers who outcommute. In fact, the proportion of workers who outcommute from a county showed substantial

Table 1. Mean Percentage of Minnesota Workers Who Work Outside Their Home County, by Earnings Category and County Type, 2008

	Metropolitan Counties	Micropolitan Counties	Rural Noncore Counties	All Counties
Low earnings	51.7%	37.5%	45.2%	45.1%
Middle earnings	57.9%	37.7%	50.6%	49.5%
High earnings	64.0%	42.8%	54.7%	54.3%
All categories	59.3%	39.3%	50.1%	50.0%

Data Source: Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Local Employment Dynamics, On-the-Map Version 4 data series.

Figure 3. Percentage of Outcommuters among Middle-Earning Workers, by County



variation across counties regardless of the number of significant outflows. For example, in the low-earnings group, the proportion of workers who outcommute ranged from 26% to 69% in counties with only one significant outflow. For counties with four significant outflows, outcommuting rates varied between 28% and 68%, a nearly identical range.

Not surprisingly, we see very different patterns in the number of significant outflows by the type of county—metropolitan, micropolitan, or rural noncore. In general, counties that were part of metropolitan areas had fewer significant outflows than either micropolitan or rural noncore counties. The pattern of significant outflows was similar across earnings groups when

Table 2. Number of Significant Worker Outflows by Earnings Category, 2008

Number of Significant Outflows	Number of Counties			Percentage of Counties		
	Low earnings	Middle earnings	High earnings	Low earnings	Middle earnings	High earnings
1	20	30	27	23.0%	34.5%	31.0%
2	23	23	25	26.4%	26.4%	28.7%
3	13	11	11	14.9%	12.6%	12.6%
4	11	8	4	12.6%	9.2%	4.6%
5 or more	20	15	20	23.0%	17.2%	23.0%
All counties	87	87	87	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%

Data Source: Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Local Employment Dynamics, On-the-Map Version 4 data series.

Note: Column totals do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

considered by type of county⁴ (Table 3). Of the 21 metropolitan counties in Minnesota, most had only one or two significant outflows for each earnings group. Given that counties are determined to be part of a metropolitan area based primarily on strong commuting ties to one or two counties, these results were not surprising.

In 2008 Minnesota had 19 counties that were part of a micropolitan area either because they had an urban core of between 10,000 and 50,000 population, or they had strong commuting ties to a county that did.⁵ In contrast to metropolitan counties, micropolitan counties were much more likely to have more than two significant outflows. Of the 19 micropolitan counties, 12 had three or more significant outflows for low-earnings workers, and 13 of the 19 counties showed this pattern for high earners. Although the definition of a micropolitan county is based on a sizeable urban core, the destination counties for workers in Minnesota demonstrate that commuting patterns are complex in these areas.

The 47 rural noncore counties in Minnesota exhibited a different pattern of significant outflows than either metropolitan or micropolitan counties.

Although 30 of the 47 rural noncore counties had three or more significant outflows for low-earnings workers, these counties had fewer significant outflows for those with higher earnings (22 for middle-earnings workers and 18 for high-earnings workers). Together, these results show that workers outside of metropolitan counties relied on a more varied set of destination counties outside their home county for employment. This pattern was especially true for low-earnings workers in rural noncore counties.

High- Versus Low-Wage Workers: Do They Go to the Same Counties to Work Outside the Home County? After demonstrating that the number of significant outflows varied by county type, we were also interested in whether the destination counties for outcommuting workers were similar across earnings categories. In brief, we found that the top five destinations for outflows typically were not in the identical order of importance across earnings groups, although the same counties were often somewhere in the top five locations.

The top five outflow destinations may not match exactly in part because not all of these outflows were equally large, so we decided to compare the destinations only for significant outflows (Table 4). For counties with just one significant outflow for at least one earnings category, we found that the largest outflow was the same in all earnings categories for nearly all counties (90%). As the number of significant outflows increased, it became less common for the destination counties

of the outflows to be the same locations. However, the same counties were often the destinations of workers from different earnings levels even if they were ranked in different order. For counties with no more than two significant outflows for at least one of the earnings categories, the two most important employment destinations were the same in each earnings category for 46% of the counties, although the order of importance may have differed by earnings group. When counties had three significant outflows, the results were similar, with 44% of the counties having the same three most important employment destinations in varying order.

For counties with at least four significant outflows for each earnings group, none of the counties had a perfect match of all destinations across the three earnings groups (Table 4). However, the outflows from the different earnings groups mostly went to the same set of counties, although they may have ranked in a different order. For example, as shown in Table 5 for Sibley County, the largest outflow of low-earning workers went to McLeod, whereas middle-earning workers went to Carver, and high-earning workers to Hennepin. These three counties were also the destination for the second largest outflow for each of the earnings groups. The ranking (in terms of outflow size) of the destination counties differs across the earnings groups in Sibley County, but for the most part the outflows went to those three counties, along with Scott and Ramsey. The two destinations that did not match across

⁴ The type of county (metropolitan, micropolitan or rural noncore) was based on the 2006 classifications for this study. The accompanying map shows the current classification for Minnesota counties.

⁵ Most of the micropolitan counties in Minnesota are single-county statistical areas. Since 2008, two counties, Nicollet and Blue Earth, were reclassified as a metropolitan statistical area.

Table 3. Number of Significant Worker Outflows from Minnesota Counties by Type of County, by Earnings Group, 2008

Low-Earnings Workers

Number of Significant Outflows	Number of Counties			Percentage of Counties		
	Metropolitan	Micropolitan	Rural noncore	Metropolitan	Micropolitan	Rural noncore
1	12	2	6	57.1%	10.5%	12.8%
2	7	5	11	33.3%	26.3%	23.4%
3	0	4	9	0%	21.1%	19.1%
4	2	1	8	9.5%	5.3%	17.0%
5 or more	0	7	13	0%	36.8%	27.7%
All counties	21	19	47	24.1%	21.8%	54.0%

Middle-Earnings Workers

Number of Significant Outflows	Number of Counties			Percentage of Counties		
	Metropolitan	Micropolitan	Rural noncore	Metropolitan	Micropolitan	Rural noncore
1	11	5	14	52.4%	26.3%	29.8%
2	7	5	11	33.3%	26.3%	23.4%
3	0	3	8	0%	15.8%	17.0%
4	2	2	4	9.5%	10.5%	8.5%
5 or more	1	4	10	4.8%	21.1%	21.3%
All counties	21	19	47	24.1%	21.8%	54.0%

High-Earnings Workers

Number of Significant Outflows	Number of Counties			Percentage of Counties		
	Metropolitan	Micropolitan	Rural noncore	Metropolitan	Micropolitan	Rural noncore
1	12	3	12	57.1%	15.8%	25.5%
2	5	3	17	23.8%	15.8%	36.2%
3	2	4	5	9.5%	21.1%	10.6%
4	1	3	0	4.8%	15.8%	0%
5 or more	1	6	13	4.8%	31.6%	27.7%
All counties	21	19	47	24.1%	21.8%	54.0%

Data Source: Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Local Employment Dynamics, On-the-Map Version 4 data series.

Note: Percentages for All Counties do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

earnings groups were Nicollet, which was a significant outflow destination for low-earnings workers, and Le Sueur, for middle-earnings workers.

Although counties with more than two significant outflows were likely to have some differences in work locations across earnings categories, we found cases where the work locations were identical. One example of this was Grant County (Table 6). Grant County had at least three significant outflows in each earnings category, and the five largest work outflows were to the same counties, in the same rank order, in all three earnings categories. Not surprisingly, workers in Grant County were most likely to work in neighboring Douglas County, which is a micropolitan county. The next four most important destinations were Otter Tail County, Stevens County, North Dakota,⁶ and Hennepin County. However, Grant County did not have the same number of significant outflows across earnings groups, meaning that although the destinations were identical, not all of these outflows were of the same importance in terms of absolute and relative size within each earnings category.

The findings suggest that for some counties, a single destination was an important source of employment, regardless of earnings. However, for counties with multiple significant outflows, especially four or more, the ranking of the work destinations typically varied by earnings category.

Conclusions

Half of all Minnesota workers work in a different county from where they reside. Although the proportion varies by county type and worker earnings, cross-county outflows are important for every combination of characteristics we examined. Economic-development policies are often focused on a specific city or county. However, our research shows that local labor markets in Minnesota cover a broader geographic area than these location-specific policies. Policy makers need to consider these broader regional connections and their influence on policy outcomes. For example, if a policy change brings new jobs to a county, those jobs are likely to be filled by employees living in several different counties.

⁶ We considered each state bordering Minnesota to be a single location, rather than tracking outflows to individual counties in those states.

Table 4. Similarity of Five Largest Worker Outflow Locations, by Number of Significant Outflows for Each County

Number of Significant Outflows*	Number of Counties	Pct. of Counties with the Same Significant Outflow Locations Regardless of Order
1	40	90.0%
2	28	46.4%
3	9	44.4%
4	4	0.0%
5 or more	6	0.0%

* Each county is classified by the lowest number of significant flows found across the three earnings groups.

Data Source: Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Local Employment Dynamics, On-the-Map Version 4 data series.

Table 5. Sibley County: An Example Where Work Locations Differed Across Earnings Categories

No. of Significant Outflows	Low-Earnings Workers	Middle-Earnings Workers	High-Earnings Workers
	5	5	5
Outflow 1	McLeod (14%)	Carver (16%)	Hennepin (19%)
Outflow 2	Hennepin (11%)	McLeod (16%)	Carver (16%)
Outflow 3	Scott (9%)	Hennepin (15%)	Ramsey (12%)
Outflow 4	Nicollet (9%)	Le Sueur (11%)	Scott (12%)
Outflow 5	Carver (8%)	Scott (8%)	McLeod (11%)

Data Source: Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Local Employment Dynamics, On-the-Map Version 4 data series.

Note: Table includes only those destinations considered to be significant outflows for each earnings group. Outflows to each destination as a percentage of all outflows for each earnings group shown in parentheses.

Functional economic regions are defined based on spatial patterns of economic interaction and are important for economic-development policy. Transportation planners may set priorities for infrastructure development based on connections between employment locations, although the availability of that infrastructure will also profoundly influence the strength of those linkages. Using commuting data or outflows is one approach to measuring these spatial interactions. Rarely, however, have the linkages been compared for different types of workers.

In this study we found that important outflows, based on worker outflow data between counties, differed across earnings groups. However, the pattern of outflows varied even more by the type of county (metropolitan, micropolitan, and rural noncore). The approach we used in this study highlights the important and extensive linkages among nonmetropolitan counties, and between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties, in Minnesota. These results show that metropolitan labor markets are an important source of employment for workers residing outside

Table 6. Grant County: An Example Where Work Locations Were the Same Across Earnings Categories

No. of Significant Outflows	Low-Earnings Workers	Middle-Earnings Workers	High-Earnings Workers
	4	3	5
Outflow 1	Douglas (24%)	Douglas (26%)	Douglas (19%)
Outflow 2	Otter Tail (13%)	Otter Tail (17%)	Otter Tail (19%)
Outflow 3	Stevens (13%)	Stevens (14%)	Stevens (12%)
Outflow 4	North Dakota (9%)		North Dakota (11%)
Outflow 5	Hennepin (9%)		

Data Source: Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Local Employment Dynamics, On-the-Map Version 4 data series.

Note: Table includes only those destinations considered to be significant outflows for each earnings group. We considered each state outside of Minnesota to be a single location, rather than tracking outflows to individual counties in those states. Outflows to each destination as a percentage of all outflows for each earnings group shown in parentheses.

of metropolitan areas. If this trend continues, more workers may find employment opportunities far from home, and employers may consider wider geographic areas to search for workers with the skills they need.

Although this study focused on the general patterns observed across the state, individual counties or cities may

find specific information on the work destinations of Minnesotans in different earnings groups useful in making investment decisions regarding transportation, housing, and economic-development programs. Data on workforce flows also provide indicators of the economic vitality and potential for future economic growth of different areas. The

study highlights the complex nature of economic linkages in Minnesota and the need for economic-development policies that reflect that interdependence of rural and urban areas.

Elizabeth E. Davis is an associate professor in the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota. Her research focuses primarily on public policy related to low-income families, childcare and early education, and low-wage and rural labor market issues in the United States. **Melissa K. Whitley** is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota. Her dissertation research focuses on the influence of neighborhood and family characteristics during childhood on individual economic outcomes in adulthood.

The research upon which this article is based was supported by a grant from CURA's Faculty Interactive Research Program. The program was created to encourage University faculty to conduct research with community organizations and collaborators on issues of public policy importance for the state and community. These grants are available to regular faculty at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis.

Data for size and location of the five largest employment linkages by earnings group are available at www.cura.umn.edu/reporter/Davis&Whitley.

Program and Staff Updates

The Community GIS (CGIS) program is hosting “Visualizing Neighborhoods: A Hackathon for Good” on May 25. The day-long event will bring together neighborhood leaders, technologists, data visualizers, designers, artists, scientists, civil servants, and anyone else interested to explore how data can be used for research, analyzing, mapping, outreach, engagement, and communication in our neighborhoods. The goals are to start conversations, build community, experiment, and prototype projects for neighborhoods. The event is currently full, but a waitlist has been created. For more information or to be added to the waitlist, visit www.cura.umn.edu/visualizingneighborhoods. CGIS has hired two new research assistants for spring semester. **Tony Damiano** is a graduate student in the Urban and Regional Planning program at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and **Nick Shauer** is an undergraduate in the Department of Geography majoring in geographic information systems. CGIS Director **Jeff Matson** and Cecilia Martinez from the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy presented the Twin Cities Environmental Justice Atlas at a meeting of the City of Minneapolis’s Citizens Environmental Advocacy Committee on March 6. In January, Matson was selected to serve on the steering committee for a newly formed American Community Survey (ACS) Data Users Group organized by the Population Reference Bureau in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the users group is to improve understanding of the value and utility of ACS data, as well as to facilitate ongoing discussion and exchange about ACS data issues through an external website, webinars, workshops, conference presentations, and several ACS data users conferences.

The **Hennepin-University Partnership** (HUP) is working with two Hennepin County departments—the Human Services and Public Health Department and the Hennepin County Library—to relay the latest research findings to Hennepin County practitioners about infant brain development and how external influences impact brain development. An event is being planned

for May that will include practitioners from several County departments and speakers from the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Child Development. The University’s Center for Early Education and Development is participating in the design of the event. In addition, HUP is working with the County’s Human Resources Department to provide stronger support to departments who are considering hiring students. Human resources staff contact Mai Xiong will help County staff shape a job description, decide what type of student would best meet their needs, determine whether funding is required, and recruit students from the University.

The **Resilient Communities Project (RCP)** hosted an end-of-year celebration on May 10 at the McNamara Alumni Center on the University’s East Bank campus to showcase student work and recognize the many accomplishments resulting from its year-long partnership with the City of Minnetonka. The partnership has matched 14 city-identified sustainability projects with 22 courses and hundreds of students at the University of Minnesota. Last month, RCP selected North St. Paul as its partner community for the 2013–2014 academic year (see announcement on page 19). In April, RCP Director **Carissa Schively Slotterback** and Program Manager **Mike Greco** attended the Sustainable City Year Conference in Portland and Eugene, OR, sponsored by the University of Oregon’s Sustainable City Year Program on which RCP is modeled. In addition to RCP, the conference included several other “pioneer” programs that are now underway at the University of Iowa, Pennsylvania State University, and the Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities. Each program highlighted its work during its pilot year, and shared insights and best practices with representatives from 20 other colleges and universities who attended to learn how to launch their own programs. Learn more about the conference at z.umn.edu/scypconference.

The **CURA Housing Forum** sponsored three programs this spring. In January, Jeff Washburne, executive director of the City of Lakes Community Land Trust, and Bill W. Ziegler, president and CEO of the Little Earth of United Tribes Little

Earth Management, described the Little Earth Homeownership Initiative, which has a vision to create homeownership opportunities for American Indians living in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. In February, Tom Streit, director of housing development and policy for the City of Minneapolis, talked about the record and impact of the Minneapolis Affordable Housing Trust Fund Program, which provides gap financing for affordable and mixed-income rental housing, housing production, and preservation projects. In April, the executive directors of Urban Homeworks (Chad Schwitters) and Project for Pride in Living (Steve Cramer) described their organizations’ new joint venture, Northside Home, an innovative initiative working to address the vacant single-family housing stock in North Minneapolis. To view summaries and materials from these and other past CURA Housing Forums, to learn about upcoming forums, or to sign up to receive announcements of future forums, visit www.cura.umn.edu/housing-forum.

CURA Director **Ed Goetz** has written a new book, *New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice, and Public Housing Policy*, published by Cornell University Press. The book examines recent changes in public-housing policy in the United States and offers an evidence-based argument for renewed investment in public housing to accompany housing-choice initiatives as a model for innovative and equitable housing policy.

CURA Associate Director **Will Craig** will serve on a panel of the Transportation Research Board examining integrating airport GIS data into county GIS. The panel will investigate how airports share airport data with public-agency GIS, and will provide information on what types of data sets are currently being used, and could potentially be used in the future, for maximum benefit and security of all agencies. Craig currently cochairs the Address Work Group for the National States Geographic Information Council. The work group’s primary goal is for every state to have wall-to-wall addresses, complete with x-y coordinates so that localities can better respond to 911 calls and other issues. Craig is also a member of the program planning committee

for the 29th Annual Conference on Policy Analysis to be held in October 2013. CURA is once again cosponsoring this event and will be providing partial scholarships for attendees from Minnesota-based nonprofit organizations.

Neeraj Mehta, director of community-based research at CURA, was invited to be a member of the Project for Public Spaces' new Placemaking Leadership Council, and attended their inaugural meeting in Detroit in April. The goal of the council is to build a culture of mutual support among the doers and deep thinkers at the forefront of the placemaking movement, creating a community of practice around this important work. After almost four decades of working in this field, Project for Public Spaces is reaching out to peers new and old to form the council to consolidate and strengthen placemaking as an international movement. Mehta also participated in a conversation about the importance of creating and protecting "third places" (social spaces outside the home and workplace) in low-income communities. An article summarizing this conversation was published in

a recent issue of *Shelterforce* and can be found at www.shelterforce.org/article/3057/where_community_is_at_work_making_itself/.

Resilient Communities Project Program Manager **Mike Greco** was recently appointed to the Vermillion River Watershed's Wetland Engagement Team, a steering committee that will guide civic engagement and outreach activities for the Vermillion River Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan. The Vermillion River is a DNR-designated trout stream, and the only world-class trout stream in the United States within a major metropolitan area. Greco was also reappointed to a third term on the Dakota County Planning Commission, representing the cities of Farmington and Hastings, as well as the rural townships in southern Dakota County.

Community Programs Assistant **Jeff Corn** will present a session on "Merging Community and Academic Knowledge: Neighborhoods and Community-Based Research" at the National Neighborhoods USA Conference, which is being held May 22–25 in Minneapolis. The session will discuss community-based

research (CBR), showcase the work of three CBR partnerships with community organizations, and provide best practices for how to approach CBR in communities.

Esther Wattenberg, policy and program coordinator in family and child welfare at CURA, hosted a reflective seminar titled "Codes of Silence, Confidentiality, and Family Privacy: Implications for the Child Welfare System," in December at the Humphrey School. The seminar underscored the importance of understanding the ways in which "codes of silence" play out in gang life, church organizations, university athletic departments, and family life. The seminar was offered under the auspices of the University's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, School of Social Work, College of Education and Human Development, and CURA. The agenda, presentations, handouts, and further material from the event are posted on the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare website at z.umn.edu/codesofsilence. The next reflective seminar, provisionally titled "Toward a Shared Vision: Exploring School-Linked Services," will be held early this summer.

Resilient Communities Project Selects North St. Paul as 2013–2014 Community Partner

The Resilient Communities Project (RCP) is pleased to announce that it has selected the City of North St. Paul as its partner community for the 2013–2014 academic year. The partnership will bring the expertise of hundreds of graduate students and the University of Minnesota to sustainability-related projects identified by North St. Paul.

RCP organizes year-long partnerships between the University of Minnesota and Minnesota communities. Each academic year, RCP chooses a city partner through a competitive request-for-proposal process, helps identify potential projects based on community-identified sustainability issues and needs, and then matches the city's project needs with University of Minnesota courses. The partnership provides the community with access to students from a wide range of programs and

disciplines—from architecture, planning, and engineering to business, environmental sciences, and the humanities. Through work with RCP, the community is able to enhance its own capacity to advance sustainability. Students who participate in RCP projects benefit from real-world opportunities to apply their knowledge and training and bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to address local issues.

RCP selected North St. Paul's winning proposal from among seven submitted. The proposal identified 18 projects for which the City would like assistance, including developing live/work housing, revitalizing the city's downtown, investigating green energy alternatives, creating "living streets," planning community gardens, identifying economic-development strategies, designing civic-engagement initiatives,

crafting an environmental-education program, and creating a public-art plan. Staff from RCP and North St. Paul will begin working this spring to define the scope of the projects and match them with courses offered at the University in fall 2013 and spring 2014. RCP Program Manager Mike Greco will administer the partnership on behalf of the University, and North St. Paul Community Development Director Nate Ehalt will coordinate the City's participation in the program.

RCP is an initiative of the Sustainability Faculty Network at the University of Minnesota, with funding and administrative support provided by CURA and the Institute on the Environment. To learn more about North St. Paul's selection, visit rcp.umn.edu/2013/03/18/nsp-2013-partner/.

School Performance in the Twin Cities, 2010–2011

Editor’s Note: The Summer 2012 issue of the CURA Reporter launched our Neighborhood Map series with maps showing 2011 housing values in Minneapolis and St. Paul neighborhoods. In this issue, we look at school performance, and shift our focus from individual neighborhoods to the schools themselves and their attendance areas. Because these data are available statewide, we also present school performance across the entire seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan region. The Neighborhood Map series will appear in future issues as space allows.

Educational opportunities are one of the most important reasons for choosing a place to live, at least for families with children. In this article, we present maps of school performance in the third and eighth grades in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. The measures we use are third-grade reading scores and eighth-grade math scores.¹

In every case, we map the data by school attendance area. Typically, these areas represent “neighborhood” schools, but it is worth noting that many children attend school elsewhere. Statewide, some 30% of Minnesota’s K–12 public-school students take advantage of some form of school choice, including open enrollment, charter schools, and magnet schools.² In addition, 10% of all school-age children in Minnesota are in nonpublic schools, including both home schools and private schools.

We map each school-performance measure across four or five data classifications, with class boundaries

¹ These data are available from the Minnesota Department of Education’s online Data Center (education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data). We thank the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, which provided us with a mapping-ready version of the data.

² This percentage is even higher in some districts. For example, 50% of the school-age children in St. Paul do not attend their neighborhood schools.

Figure 1. Percentage of Third-Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding MCA Reading Standards in the Twin Cities Metro Area, by Attendance Boundary, 2010–2011

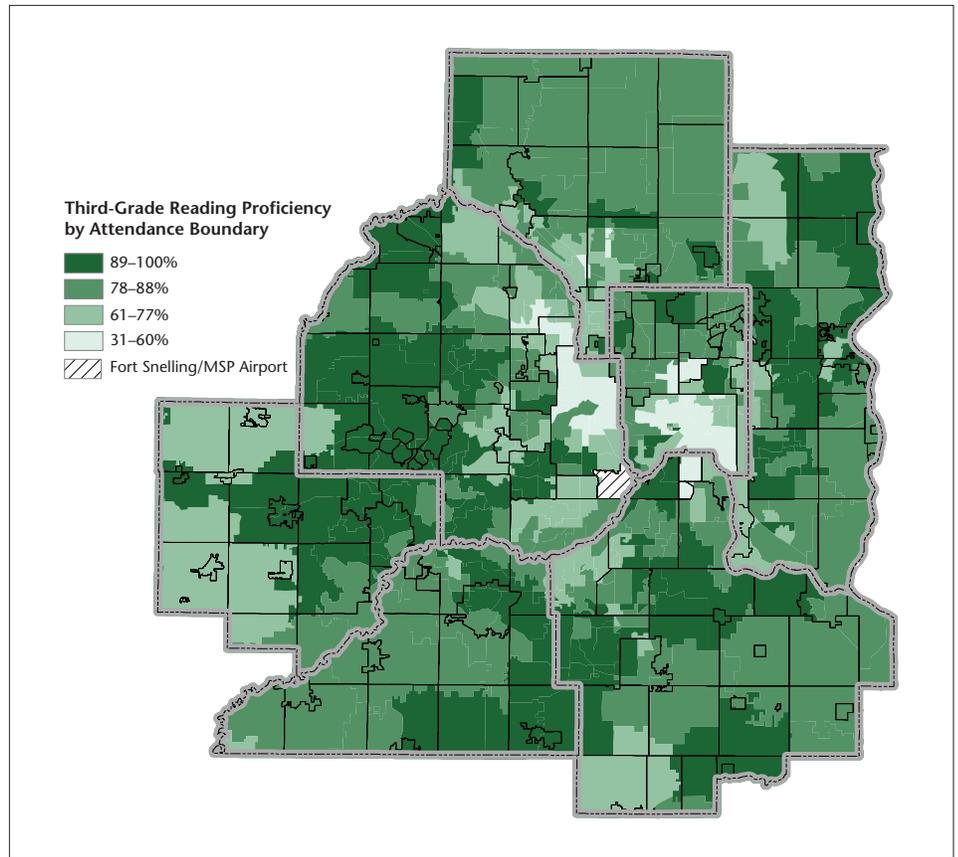
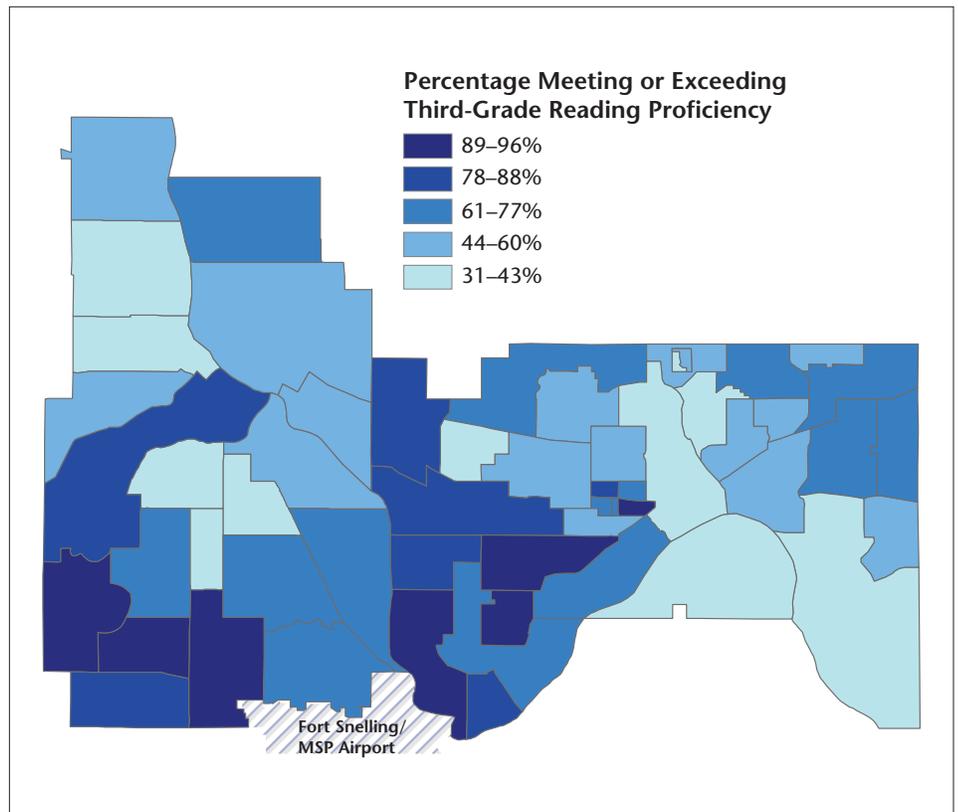


Figure 2. Percentage of Third-Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding MCA Reading Standards, Minneapolis and St. Paul, 2010–2011



defined by natural breaks in the data. One of those classes always spans the state average; schools in that class are performing at the level typical for the state. Other classes show schools that are well above or well below that average.

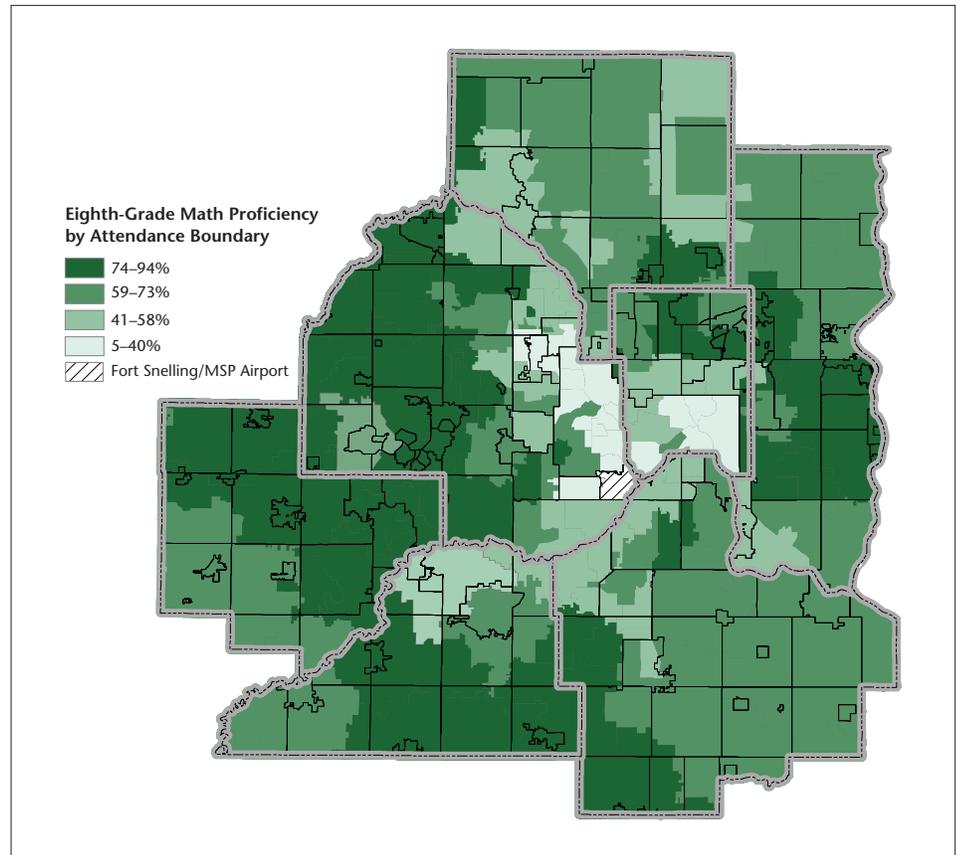
For both measures, school performance tends to be worse in low-income areas of the Twin Cities metro region.³ Many factors may contribute to this association, including that low-income parents may not have had a good school history themselves, and therefore are less able to help their children succeed. Efforts are under way in Minnesota and elsewhere to compensate for these shortcomings with early-childhood intervention programs that assist parents in supporting their children's learning and that enroll children in high-quality daycare programs. In addition to being coincident with high rates of poverty, lower scores are often located in areas with large immigrant populations, some of whom are struggling with English as a second language, which may adversely affect students' performance.

Third-Grade Reading Proficiency

Statewide, 78.5% of third-grade students met or exceeded the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) standards for reading in 2010–2011.⁴ In elementary schools across the seven-county metro area, third-grade reading proficiency falls into four classifications, with the 78–88% class straddling the state average (Figure 1). The darkest areas (89%+) show schools that are well above that average; they are found both in a ring of suburbs and in the southwest corners of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The low-performing schools (31–60%) are all in the central cities or spurs that extend from there.

By examining the central cities more closely, we can add a fifth class, dividing the lowest class into two subgroups: low-low (31–43%) and low-high (44–60%) (Figure 2). Five

Figure 3. Percentage of Eighth-Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding MCA Math Standards in the Twin Cities Metro Area, by Attendance Boundary, 2010–2011



schools in north and south Minneapolis are in the low-low class. In St. Paul, the pattern is more complicated, in part because the St. Paul schools have extended attendance areas for some of their more successful schools, providing educational opportunities to remote enclaves in other parts of the city.⁵ Much of the pattern of lowest third-grade reading performance in both cities mimics the distribution of high-poverty rates in the central cities.

Eighth-Grade Math Proficiency

Statewide, 53.2% of eighth-grade students met or exceeded the MCA standards for math in 2010–2011. In eighth-grade schools (typically middle schools) across the seven-county metro area, the 41–58% class straddles the state average (Figure 3). The highest performing schools (74–94%) are more scattered, with small pockets appearing west, east, and south of the central cities. As with third-grade reading performance, large portions

of the central cities have the smallest percentage of students meeting the MCA math standards, with some spillover into Richfield and the northwest suburbs of Minneapolis.

³ For maps of income, poverty, and other demographic data, see MetroStats: Mapping the Demographics of Twin Cities Neighborhoods, 2005–2009, Metropolitan Council, December 2010, stats.metc.state.mn.us/stats/pdf/MetroStat_Neighborhood_Demographics.pdf.

⁴ Individual students do not pass or fail the reading and mathematics tests given in grades 3–8. Each student receives a score that falls into one of four achievement levels: Does Not Meet the Standards, Partially Meets the Standards, Meets the Standards, or Exceeds the Standards.

⁵ For example, French and Spanish language-immersion schools and the Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented Magnet School are open to families across the city, and attract some of its brightest students.



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