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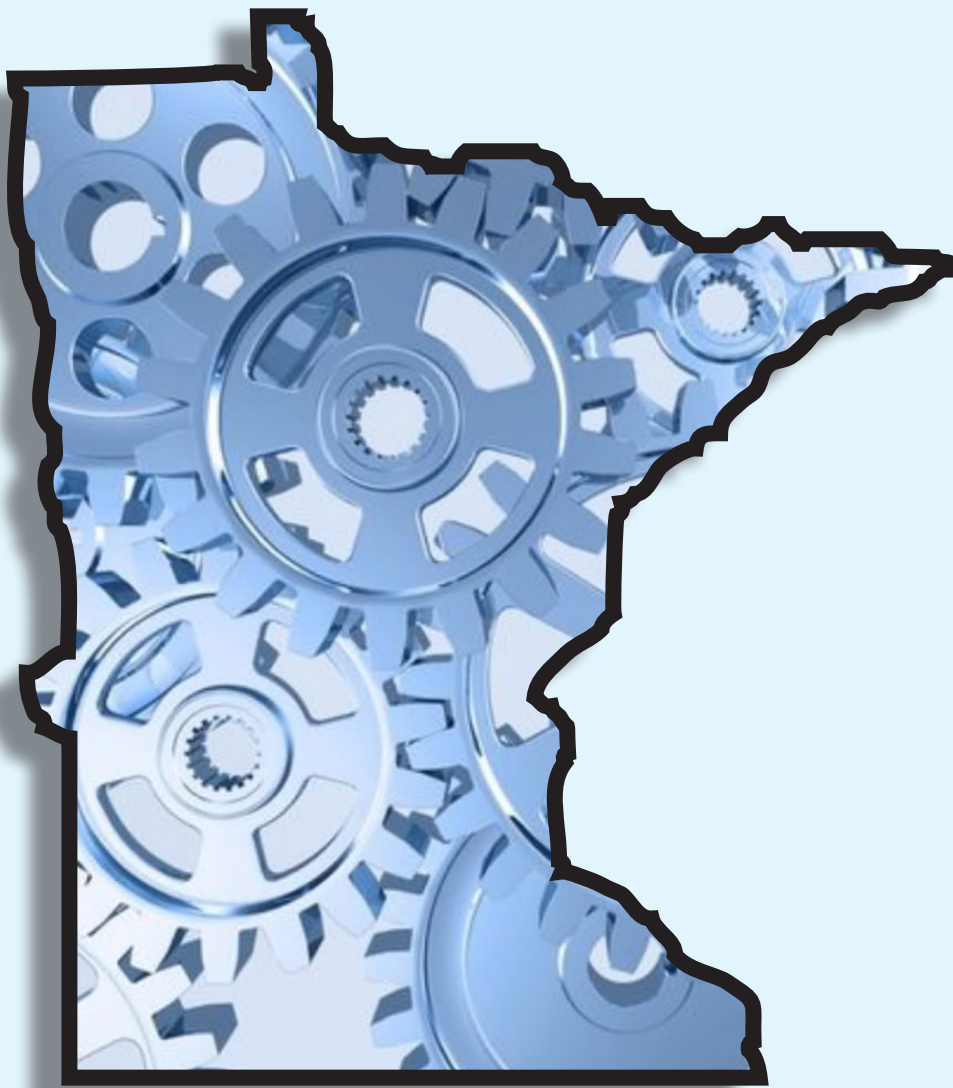
Resilient Region



The Central Minnesota
Sustainable Development Plan

get
resources

*Supporting a Resilient Region:
A Best Practices Toolkit for the Central
Minnesota Sustainable Development Plan*



July 2012

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Acknowledgements

“Supporting a Resilient Region: A Best Practices Toolkit for the Central Minnesota Sustainable Development Plan” is a capstone project from a team of Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs Master of Urban and Regional Planning students working collaboratively with Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP).



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Introduction

Communities that choose a more resilient future take a bold step toward integrating previously separate or opposing areas of community action. They step towards integrating land use decisions with transportation decisions. They step towards making housing policies that reinforce natural resource priorities. They step away from the traditional antagonism between the economy and the environment. The quality of life enjoyed in Central Minnesota is the most compelling reason people choose to live here, and it follows directly from the region's richness in natural resources. This greatly increases prospects for economic growth, but the only way that growth can be sustained is for development to happen in ways that preserve and enhance that quality of life.

In a region that is rich in natural resources, but has historically been dependent on harvesting those resources to drive economic growth, communities have typically been in a reactive position weighing one concern against the other. Neighbors with common interests in their community's economy and natural resources perceive the balance between the two differently, and the political arena becomes a site of conflict rather than strategy. Over time, this pattern can breed distrust, create entrenched interest groups, and stymie energy for collaboration.

For the constituent communities in the region to thrive, a more proactive approach is required. This toolkit is intended to be a useful resource for community leaders to translate into action the planning work of the Resilient Region project. After the intensive investment of time and energy that has gone into the project, it might be assumed that this toolkit is the marching orders we are being told to follow. That is not the case. For the vision that the community members of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena Counties developed through this project to be put into practice, leaders, policymakers, and citizens in individual communities need to develop solutions. This toolkit is designed to help us achieve that. It is a set of tools that have been useful to other communities that you may decide to use in your community in order to develop a more resilient future. Some of that work will take place within government or with government (collaborations, public-private partnerships), and some through other channels (chambers of commerce, lake associations, homeowners associations, local institutions, non-profits). The intention is that progress can be made towards a more resilient region anywhere and everywhere in Central Minnesota, by whatever channels are available to facilitate that change.

This toolkit is intended to be a living document. You are reading the first edition, which has been written by a team of graduate student consultants from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. In order to ground this resource in the real life circumstances of communities and residents in Central Minnesota, the team conducted extensive research on existing conditions: a site visit to all five counties, 20 interviews of regional experts in a variety of topics, and demographic and economic analyses. In addition, the team had access to the materials developed by the working groups of the Resilient Region project and the background research that has informed the larger project. As such, this document is intended to reflect the needs of communities

in Region Five, and the emerging vision of the region overall. With your help, this toolkit will evolve to become an increasingly useful resource over time. If you see tools missing that you have found useful, or you believe would be useful to other communities in the region, please share them [client to add contact details here].

The toolkit is organized into five topic areas: Economic Development, Housing, Land Use, Natural Resources and Transportation. These areas are not mutually exclusive. Many tools serve multiple purposes. As noted above, the idea is that our communities' strategies in each of these areas will reinforce and support strategies in other areas.

Each topic area has a set of relevant tools organized in this format:

Name of the tool

NEED: The problem this tool addresses.

TOOL: The format of the tool.

BENEFIT: The solution this tool offers.

AUDIENCE: Users likely to find this tool particularly useful.

USE: How to use the tool.

RESOURCES: Where to find the tool and supporting materials.

Economic Development (ED)



Like all communities, those in Region Five have unique sets of challenges, assets, and opportunities. In terms of challenges, the region is missing some traditional economic development advantages: connection to the interstate highway system, universities and other large research institutions, and close proximity to a metropolitan region. Tourism is an important component of the regional economy that brings an infusion of outside resources, but it provides a high proportion of seasonal, low-paying service jobs, and it is sensitive to economic downturns. The public sector is a major employer. Working landscapes of agriculture and forestry are the traditional basis of the economy, and sustainable harvesting of these resources is feasible, but competing in a global economy creates a vulnerability to changing commodity prices. The dispersion of residents and employers across the region means that residents spend a disproportionate amount of their income on transportation, leaving fewer resources for other investments, and creating greater vulnerability to rising fuel prices.

That combination of challenges is common in rural regions of the country. The communities that find a way to thrive in the midst of these challenges do so by focusing on assets and opportunities, and finding ways to meaningfully differentiate themselves. Fiercely independent people who pursue their own strategy are the status quo. The opportunity for a community and region to be uncommonly successful follows from working toward a common cause.

Staples, MN photo: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/puroticorico/5051952692/sizes/l/in/photostream/>

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ED 1. Define existing assets and opportunities

Many rural communities have found ways to thrive by reframing challenges as opportunities or hidden assets. In many communities in the region, the existing population is aging, or the town attracting retirees. Why not consider the professional and lived experience of older residents an asset, and create a mentorship resource for young entrepreneurs? Is there a prominent building in town that is vacant, and functionally obsolete? Consider it an opportunity for adaptive reuse to galvanize the community. Is there a unique skill that is common among residents? Name it and explore ways to leverage it. Uniqueness is a virtue in economic development.

Quality of life is often a general, undefined, unmeasured thing. In order to protect and enhance it, it is important to take stock of what a community's most important resources are. This may include cultural, social, and natural resources. A community's understanding of its values and resources informs its brand, and is critical in developing an appropriate economic strategy and attracting investment.

ED 1.A. First Impressions: A Tool for Community Assessment

NEED: Economic development needs to be grounded in existing conditions. Communities are so familiar with their surroundings and circumstances that it can be difficult to see them through the eyes of customers, visitors, potential residents, and potential businesses.

BENEFIT: Seeing your community through visitors' eyes allows you to address conditions that are deterring economic development and not currently being addressed.

TOOL: First Impressions is a "secret shopper" tool for peer learning between communities in a region.

AUDIENCE: Potential audience is very broad, but will be especially useful to local governments and chambers of commerce.

USE: Volunteers from similar communities agree to do unannounced exchange visits and then present their findings with a final report with pictures. Results are shared with the host community at a community meeting.

RESOURCES:

- Municipal Economic Development Toolkit http://www.municipaltoolkit.org/UserFiles/Lewis_EN.pdf

ED 1.B. Marketing the Uniqueness of Small Towns

NEED: Many communities in Central Minnesota are not on major highways, and even for the ones that are, the reasons why visitors would find those places compelling are not clear to passersby. If communities are not noticed, it is unlikely they will attract visitors, residents, and new investments.

BENEFIT: Finding ways to differentiate a community helps to create a unique identity and brand. This differentiation can create a marketing advantage.

TOOL: This guide provides resources to help identify and promote a town's differential advantage.

AUDIENCE: Small cities and chambers of commerce.

USE: The guide from the Western Rural Development Center provides a series of potential steps to develop and promote a community brand. The Small Towns, Big Ideas report features a large array of examples of communities across the country that have been successful doing this, including New York Mills, Pelican Rapids, and Houston, Minnesota.

RESOURCES:

- Western Rural Development Center: <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/catalog/detail/index.xml?id=69>
- Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development: <http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi/>

ED 2. Business retention and expansion

The existing businesses in a community are its existing economic development profile. Those businesses provide livelihoods for residents of our communities, and create economic activity that is critical to everyone in the region. Retaining those existing businesses and fostering conditions in which they can thrive is a critical economic development strategy.

ED 2.A. Formal Business Retention and Expansion Survey

NEED: Businesses have a natural incentive to present themselves to the public as viable and successful. They often keep their needs and challenges to themselves. Local governments and economic development groups have programs and assets that can be used to assist local businesses, but those resources can be well-kept secrets.

BENEFIT: A dedicated effort to take stock of how businesses are doing and what they need to be successful leads to better awareness of existing conditions and grounds economic development strategies in current, real-life conditions.

TOOL: A Formal Business Retention and Expansion Survey is an effective way to get current, accurate information from local business owners, and to develop economic development strategies that suit their needs.

AUDIENCE: Local government, business associations.

USE: This tool provides a step-by-step guide to set up a task force to implement a formal survey, design that survey, and carry it out. It also includes key issues to consider, complementary actions that can be done in conjunction with the survey, and sample resources.

RESOURCES:

- Municipal Economic Development Toolkit: http://www.municipaltoolkit.org/UserFiles/Civittolo&Davis_EN.pdf

ED 2.B. Business Retention and Expansion Toolkit

NEED: See above (Formal Business Retention and Expansion Survey Tool).

BENEFIT: See above (Formal Business Retention and Expansion Survey Tool).

TOOL: University of Minnesota Extension offers a Business Retention and Expansion Toolkit, which includes online resources, coaching sessions, and facilitation (paid tool).

AUDIENCE: Economic and community development professionals, local government, chambers of commerce, and volunteer leaders.

USE: Interested groups can contact the local Extension educator at the link below to enroll. The program includes a handbook, survey template, question bank, ready-to-use resources, and six coaching sessions for 24 months.

RESOURCES:

- University of Minnesota Extension, pay for membership model: <http://www1.extension.umn.edu/community/business-retention/toolkit/>

ED 2.C. Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities Workshop

NEED: Over half of the businesses in Minnesota are not online. Customers are using the Internet to make decisions about destinations at increasing rates, especially using mobile devices. If a community's businesses are not online, they are less likely to attract consumers. For example, Prairie Bay Grill in Baxter may be right on Highway 371, but it is hidden behind other buildings. Without an effective website and a presence on restaurant rating websites, it is far less likely that potential customers would be aware of it.

BENEFIT: Communities with businesses that are presented effectively on the Internet are more likely to attract consumers.

TOOL: University of Minnesota Extension offers Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities Workshops, which help businesses work together to use the Internet for marketing, sales, customer communication, and customer support.

AUDIENCE: Local businesses or economic development groups in rural Minnesota

USE: A pair of free workshops available to any business or community group willing to host them, scheduling information available at the link below.

RESOURCES:

- University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/mirc/>
- Additional free resources available through The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/learningcenter/>

ED 2.D. Retail Analysis and Development

NEED: Retail stores are the "face" of a community and they are a critical component in vibrant, interesting places. Modern retailers in traditional locations face a high level of competition from new big box stores and online retailers. Determining the viability of a new or existing business can entail complex calculations of market area and market capture. If new retailers fail, communities receive little if any net benefit and local entrepreneurs can suffer severe losses in wealth.

BENEFIT: Connecting retailers with resources that increase their chances to succeed benefits the broader community. Areas with many successful retailers can become destinations.

TOOL: University of Minnesota Extension offers a set of analytic services (paid tool). These services help ground retail and economic development strategies in the available data.

AUDIENCE: Chambers of commerce, economic development professionals, tourism organizations, local businesses, and elected officials.

USE: Interested parties can sign up for programs in: Programs Market Area Profiles, Retail Trade Analysis, and Roadside Advertising in a Digital World. A related tool – Downtown Market Analysis – is featured in the Placemaking theme below.

RESOURCES:

- University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/retail/>
- Sample Retail Trade Analysis Report: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/retail/analysis/samplereport.html>

ED 3. Tourism

Tourism can be an important sector in a diverse local economy. The presence of tourists does not guarantee that this will take place, however. A seasonal influx of tourists can create a strain on local communities' resources and a high proportion of low-paying service jobs. Communities interested in this form of economic development—or shaping how it happens to create more value for visitors and local businesses, or less impact on the environment—have several tools at their disposal.

ED 3.A. Tourism Business Development Toolbox – Industry Specific

NEED: Communities with an interest in developing their tourism industry depend on new business formation, and expansion of existing businesses. If tourism business decisions are made without sufficient research or forethought, they are more likely to fail, creating no net community benefit.

BENEFIT: Greater tourism entrepreneurship, when implemented with sound business planning, helps community take full advantage of this sector's potential to drive economic development.

TOOL: This toolkit from University of Wisconsin Extension provides industry-specific business planning resources.

AUDIENCE: Potential entrepreneurs, economic development professionals.

USE: Set of resources arranged by industry: Market Analysis Process, Business Operations/Trends, Industry Financial Ratios, Financial Planning Software, Industry Resources and Links.

RESOURCES:

- University of Wisconsin Center for Community and Economic Development: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/economies/tourism/index.cfm>

ED 3.B. Tourism Development Capacity Index: Community Self-Assessment

NEED: Tourists depend on a variety of goods and services. Independent action by businesses that cater to tourists can create a strain on other community resources: transportation networks, public spaces, community facilities, other businesses, etc. Those new ventures are more likely to fail if the other facilities necessary for tourists to enjoy their stay are not present. Alternately, the level of tourism can be lower than what a community could reasonably absorb, which results in a missed economic development opportunity.

BENEFIT: Understanding the tourism development infrastructure in a community helps to minimize community impact, maximize returns for tourism entrepreneurs, and improve the experience of visitors.

TOOL: This tool is a community self-assessment of Tourism Development Capacity. It entails a detailed, quantitative set of analyses that accounts for tourism offerings and community facilities, and provides an assessment of current capacity.

AUDIENCE: Economic development professionals.

USE: Survey tool, requires detailed quantitative data about local conditions.

RESOURCES:

- Laboratory for Community & Economic Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: http://www.communitydevelopment.uiuc.edu/tourism/tc_index.html

ED 3.C. Cost-Benefit Analysis of Local Tourism Development

NEED: Tourism development can have a net negative effect or unanticipated social or environmental consequences. It can benefit an individual business owner but create costs that outweigh that benefit to the broader community.

BENEFIT: Informed decisions on tourism development lead to better community outcomes.

TOOL: This very simple guide describes a technique for conducting a cost-benefit analysis of tourism development.

AUDIENCE: Local government, economic development professionals.

USE: Conduct the cost-benefit analysis following the structure in the guide.

RESOURCES:

- University of Alaska Fairbanks, Cooperative Extension Service: <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/catalog/detail/index.xml?id=84>

ED 3.D. Diversifying Your Farm Business Through Agritourism: A How-to Manual for Establishing a Farmstay in Minnesota

NEED: Farmers and their communities are vulnerable to shifts in commodity prices. At the same time, there is a growing interest outside of traditionally agricultural areas in food production and local foods.

BENEFIT: Diversifying agriculture-based economies with farm-based agritourism helps farmers and their communities, and creates a value-added tourism experience for visitors.

TOOL: This resource from the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture provides a detailed how-to guide to establishing a farmstay.

AUDIENCE: Farmers and economic development professionals in agricultural communities.

USE: Detailed guide includes information about marketing, creating a compelling experience for customers, logistics, insurance, licensing, and more. It includes a start-up checklist to manage the process. Economic development professionals can use this resource to encourage this activity.

RESOURCES:

- Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture: http://www.misa.umn.edu/prod/groups/cfans/@pub/@cfans/@misa/documents/asset/cfans_asset_336255.pdf
- Additional information available in Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism: <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=264>

ED 3.E. Cultural and Heritage Tourism

NEED: Many communities in Central Minnesota have a unique cultural heritage. This heritage is meaningful to residents and can be a draw for visitors. It is most common in the region for there to be one traditional, annual community event in small towns, but there can be a larger opportunity for communities that want to pursue it.

BENEFIT: Cultural and heritage tourism development that matches local needs and the local culture and creates value-added tourism experiences for visitors benefits all parties. This is an opportunity for meaningful, authentic differentiation.

TOOL: This tool describes the range of activities possible within cultural and heritage tourism, steps to develop it, factors in successful outcomes, and important issues to consider. Audience: Local communities interested in this form of tourism development.

USE: Develop the cultural and heritage tourism offerings in your community using this guide.

RESOURCES:

- Municipal Economic Development Toolkit: http://www.municipaltoolkit.org/UserFiles/Rosenfeld_EN.pdf

ED 3.F. Sustainable Tourism

NEED: Tourism can be a resource-intensive industry. At the same time, there is a market segment of tourists with a demonstrated preference for green, nature, or sustainable experiences.

BENEFIT: Like sustainable development generally, sustainable tourism meets the needs of current users and communities while protecting those opportunities for future users. This is especially critical for areas in which the natural beauty is the main draw for tourists, like Central Minnesota.

TOOL: There are a lot of resources available on sustainable tourism, also called ecotourism, nature-based tourism, and green tourism. The University of Minnesota Tourism Center is the most useful general resource, and others follow below.

AUDIENCE: Tourism industry, economic development professionals, local government in areas with considerable tourism activity.

USE: Certification options, detailed resource listings, detailed information about sustainable tourism in Minnesota.

RESOURCES:

- University of Minnesota Tourism Center, Sustainable Tourism Topic Area: <http://www.tourism.umn.edu/ResearchReports/MarketSegments/Sustainable/index.htm>
- Green Routes: <http://www.greenroutes.org/>.
- Creating water trails: <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/portals/rivers/projpg/watertrails.htm>.
- Nature Tourism: A Guidebook for Evaluating Enterprise Opportunities: https://agriflifebookstore.org/publications_details.cfm?whichpublication=1851&orderby=pubnumber&SIMPLESEARCH=nature%20tourism&criteriastring=SIMPLESEARCH%3Dnature%20tourism

ED 4. Location Efficiency, Existing Infrastructure, and Brownfield Redevelopment

Many communities in Central Minnesota grew outward over the past fifty years. As existing buildings became obsolete or polluted, it became simpler to effectively abandon that property and build a new facility on the edge of town. The net effect of this pattern was a hollowing out of many small cities. As a result, significant areas of cities served by existing infrastructure are underutilized. The roads, bridges, and utility systems currently in place are our communities' infrastructure investment portfolios. Promoting development and redevelopment that uses these existing investments makes them more productive by reducing the liability of long-term maintenance expenses. This reduces the tax burden and makes communities more competitive. In many places, this may take the form of brownfield redevelopment and other targeted investments to prepare and market specific sites within a community's existing footprint.

ED 4.A. Fiscal Impact Analysis

NEED: Some economic development projects sometimes do not create net positive results for the community. If a new development requires the construction of new infrastructure, the cost of maintaining that infrastructure can outweigh the increase in tax base. New development proposals require a cost-benefit assessment to compare initial returns to lifecycle costs.

BENEFIT: A standard tool to evaluate the fiscal impact of a development proposal can be incorporated into the project approval process.

TOOL: There are many tools available on this and related topics. The first listed below describes Development Impact Assessment. The second is a primer on Fiscal Impact Analysis. The third is a simpler analysis of how a project will affect a local government's budget.

AUDIENCE: Cities, Counties and Townships with planning authority.

USE: Varies by resource. All resources are useful in weighing the impact of a development proposal.

RESOURCES:

- Description of related concept, Development Impact Assessment: http://www.lic.wisc.edu/shapingdane/facilitation/all_resources/impacts/analysis_intro.htm
- An Introduction to Fiscal Impact Analysis, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, <http://extension.unh.edu/commdev/Pubs/FIA.pdf>
- Many additional supporting resources, including software, available online. Sample analysis: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/00016.pdf>.

ED 4.B. Location Efficiency

NEED: A disproportionate amount of income in the region goes to transportation expenses. The profit from these expenses largely flows outside the region, reflects a reliance on foreign oil, and reduces the income available for other local goods, services, and investments. As an expense paid incrementally, transportation is often a hidden cost of a given location.

BENEFIT: Fostering growth in “efficient locations”, where jobs, housing, and services are relatively proximate to one another, keeps transportation costs to a minimum. When transportation costs are taken into account, a competitive advantage of central locations becomes apparent.

TOOL: The United States Green Building Council has developed a standard for sustainable site development called LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND). This tool goes beyond the attributes of a structure or property to consider the location efficiency of a given site in relation to the surrounding community. It was originally designed for real estate developers, but community planners have learned that it can be useful in evaluating existing neighborhoods to better inform policy decisions.

AUDIENCE: Counties and large cities.

USE: This tool can be used to establish the location efficiency of a neighborhood, or compare the location efficiency of a variety of neighborhoods. This information can then be used to determine where economic development can take place to minimize transportation expenses in the community.

RESOURCES:

- LEED for Neighborhood Development: <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148>
- Context for using LEED ND as a planning tool: <http://netdensity.net/leed-nd-and-regional-planning/>

ED 4.C. The Brownfield Redevelopment Solutions Toolbox

NEED: There are vacant buildings in the region, and an untold number of them are vacant, at least in part, because the site is contaminated. These properties are called brownfields. The source below defines brownfields as, “Abandoned, idled, or underused industrial or commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.” The presence of brownfields creates less efficient places in terms of making use of existing infrastructure.

BENEFIT: Redevelopment of brownfields makes use of existing infrastructure, create efficient development patterns, and reduce blight.

TOOL: The resource below is a useful guide to the process of undertaking brownfield redevelopment.

AUDIENCE: Cities with brownfield sites, developers.

USE: Information on identifying sites, land uses, due diligence, environment management, approvals, and financing.

RESOURCES:

- Envision Utah: http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/eu_brownfield_toolbox.pdf

ED 4.D. Minnesota Brownfields: A Resource Guide

NEED: See above (The Brownfield Redevelopment Solutions Toolbox tool).

BENEFIT: See above (The Brownfield Redevelopment Solutions Toolbox tool).

TOOL: Current, local account of available resources to undertake brownfield redevelopment from DEED, MPCA, and Minnesota Brownfields.

AUDIENCE: Minnesota stakeholders in brownfield redevelopment.

Use: Describes available loans, grants, reimbursement, tax assistance, and technical assistance programs.

RESOURCES:

- MN Brownfields Resource Guide 2012: http://assets.mnbrownfields.org/Brownfields_Resource_Guide_2012.pdf

ED 4.E. Minnesota Brownfields Toolbox

NEED: See above (The Brownfield Redevelopment Solutions Toolbox tool)

BENEFIT: See above (The Brownfield Redevelopment Solutions Toolbox tool)

TOOL: The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture published a Minnesota Brownfields Toolbox, a guide to the process of brownfield redevelopment in the state, including the resources available.

AUDIENCE: Local government.

USE: Information on a five step redevelopment process: Site identification and project planning; determining if contamination is present on site; additional investigation and site clean-up; assistance programs available in Minnesota; redevelopment.

RESOURCES:

- Contaminated Sites Cleanup and Redevelopment Toolbox: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=14046>

ED 5. Placemaking

Placemaking is an emerging strategy for unlocking the potential of existing community spaces to be active and engaging places. Quite often, some combination of competing priorities, little dedicated funding, and a general lack of attention leads to unappealing public spaces. The idea behind placemaking is to focus attention on making these public areas more inviting and interesting. This can be a low-cost, high-leverage strategy to create economic activity in traditional downtowns.

ED 5.A. Downtown Market Analysis Toolbox

NEED: Town centers were traditionally the most active areas in the region, but auto-oriented development along highway corridors has led to a lack of resources dedicated to traditional “Main Street” areas. The difficulty of competing with areas that cater more directly to highway traffic can be a challenge for more historic areas of town. At the same time, those traditional business districts offer a unique opportunity to revitalize spaces that have traditionally served their communities well.

BENEFIT: Vibrant business districts are appealing to residents and visitors alike, and offer a unique environment that supports community development and less dependence on automobiles.

TOOL: The Downtown Market Analysis Toolbox from University of Minnesota Extension is intended to help develop research-based strategies to guide downtown economic development.

AUDIENCE: Small cities.

USE: How-to guide offers tools to create economically vibrant commercial districts in small towns.

RESOURCES:

- University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/retail/downtown/>
- Revitalizing the Small Town Main Street, University of Alaska Fairbanks: <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/catalog/detail/index.xml?id=77>.
- Directory of Innovative Downtown Businesses: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/downtowns/innovative/about.cfm>

ED 5.B. Business Improvement Districts

NEED: Town centers are especially significant for communities in Central Minnesota that are working towards a more resilient future. Accordingly, a special level of attention and investment needs to be paid to town centers to match the significance of that space in sustainable economic development.

BENEFIT: Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) create a mechanism for a higher level of maintenance and investment.

TOOL: This tool from University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension offers details on creating a Business Improvement District, which provides for financial contributions for property owners and the public to support higher standards for public spaces in high priority areas. Some details are specific to Wisconsin, but the general function of BIDs is the same.

AUDIENCE: Cities.

USE: Tool creates materials on creating a BID.

RESOURCES:

- University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension: <http://lgc.uwex.edu/cpd/bidpage/bid.html>
- Interactive calculator on creating BIDs in Minnesota: <http://donjek.com/blog/2007/10/an-interactive.html>

ED 5.C. Creative Placemaking: Integrating community, cultural and economic development

NEED: Community members have creative abilities, but they are not often encouraged to apply those abilities in public spaces. In many cases, no one feels a sense of ownership for public space. As a result, public spaces are often neglected or not compelling for residents and visitors.

BENEFIT: Creative applications in public spaces create more compelling experiences for residents and visitors, which leads to more desirable and engaging public spaces and business districts.

TOOL: This white paper describes the value and potential of creative placemaking.

AUDIENCE: Community leaders and practitioners.

USE: Describes the practice and role of creative placemaking, its value, characteristics of placemakers, and elements in the process.

RESOURCES:

- Rutgers University, Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy: http://policy.rutgers.edu/abc/abc/knowledge/creative_placemaking_cced_definition.pdf
- Creative Placemaking, Markusen Economic Research Services and Metris Arts Consulting, 2010. <http://www.nea.gov/pub/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>.
- The Creative Community Builder's Handbook: <http://www.amazon.com/Creative-Community-Builders-Handbook-Communities/dp/0940069474>.

ED 6. Strategic Infrastructure Investments

There is a great deal that can be done to leverage existing infrastructure to create economic development. There are also opportunities to create sustainable growth through strategic, targeted investments in new or expanded infrastructure.

ED 6.A. Broadband Toolkit

NEED: Data connection speeds that lag more connected areas create a less competitive business environment and lower quality of life for residents.

BENEFIT: Robust telecommunications infrastructure fosters a more competitive business environment and improved quality of life.

TOOL: The Blandin Foundation has developed a comprehensive toolkit for developing broadband infrastructure in rural Minnesota.

AUDIENCE: All communities.

USE: Provides communications tools for advocacy, showcases market development activities, highlights local assistance providers, and shares sample RFPs, feasibility reports, community technology assessments, and decision making tools.

RESOURCES:

- Blandin Foundation Broadband Toolkit: <http://broadband.blandinfoundation.org/toolkit/>
- Planning for Community Connectivity, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension's Center for Community and Economic Development: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/economies/broadband/index.cfm>
- Rural Policy Research Institute, Policy Brief, Rural Broadband: <http://www.rupri.org/Forms/RuralBroadbandFinal.pdf>

ED 6.B. Greater Minnesota Public Infrastructure Program

NEED: In some instances, economic development requires paving new roads, and laying new pipes. If a new or expanding business cannot be accommodated with existing infrastructure, it is important that infrastructure that supports economic development be built.

BENEFIT: If economic development requires new investments in infrastructure, it is important that communities in Central Minnesota approach those investments in a cost-effective way.

TOOL: An existing economic development program in Minnesota provides grants of up to 50 percent of capital costs of the public infrastructure necessary to expand or retain jobs in the area, increase the tax base, or expand or create new economic development.

AUDIENCE: Cities.

USE: This program can be used to fund wastewater collection and treatment, drinking water, storm sewers, utility extensions, streets, or economic development projects

RESOURCES:

- Grant program for statutory or home rule cities outside of the metropolitan area: http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/Government/Financial_Assistance/Business_Development_Funding/Greater_Minnesota_Public_Infrastructure_Program.aspxRural
- General resource on Development Strategies: Infrastructure, United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/RuralDevelopment/Infrastructure.htm>

ED 7. Low impact, knowledge-based and high-technology economic development

Diversifying local economies is an important economic development objective. Optimally, in order to balance economic development needs with other quality of life considerations, the sectors of the economy that are growing will be driven by knowledge within Central Minnesota, and low in environmental impact.

ED 7.A. A Practitioner's Guide: To Economic Development Tools for Regional Competitiveness in a Knowledge-Based Economy

NEED: The global economy is both subject to rapid changes and increasingly regional in scope. Economic development in a globalized economy depends on strategic action taken at a regional scale. Knowledge-based economic sectors leverage ingenuity to drive economic development, which requires very little environmental impact.

BENEFIT: Knowledge-based economic development has the potential to create high economic value with low environmental impacts.

TOOL: This tool provides a practitioner's guide to competing as a region in a knowledge-based economy.

AUDIENCE: Regional planners.

USE: Four tools: Industry Cluster Analysis (regionally), Regional Innovation Index, Occupational Cluster Analysis, Guidelines for Regional Organization and Investment Decisions.

RESOURCES:

- Center for Regional Development, Purdue University, http://www.statsamerica.org/innovation/guide/practitioners_guide.pdf

ED 7.B. Bioscience Business Development Public Infrastructure program

NEED: The bioscience sector is an emerging, high value-added, low-impact economic development sector.

BENEFIT: Bioscience business development can happen in Central Minnesota.

TOOL: The State of Minnesota has an existing funding stream to provide infrastructure that supports bioscience business development.

AUDIENCE: Local governmental units (city, county, townships, special district, or other political subdivision or public corporation)

USE: Apply to a competitive grant program to fund public infrastructure necessary to create or retain bioscience jobs.

RESOURCES:

- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development: http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/Government/Financial_Assistance/Business_Development_Funding/Bioscience_Business_Development_Program.aspx

ED 7. C. Economic Development in a Global Knowledge Economy: A Guide for Local Practice

NEED: Communities competing across the globe need adaptive strategies in a globalized, knowledge-based economy.

BENEFIT: Local communities will benefit by understanding the implications of the knowledge economy for local planning and economic development practice.

TOOL: This resource provides best practice examples of communities that are competitive in the global economy.

AUDIENCE: Communities with planning and zoning departments, regional planners, economic development professionals, and owners of knowledge-based businesses.

USE: Refer to the 100 best practice examples and additional resources.

RESOURCES:

- Michigan State University, Center for Community and Economic Development: <http://www.cedp.msu.edu/upload/handbooks/EconDevKEGuideFinal.pdf>

ED 7.D. Capacity in the Global Knowledge Economy: Assessment and Steps to Take

NEED: See above (Economic Development in a Global Knowledge Economy: A Guide for Local Practice Tool)

BENEFIT: It is an important first step to establish a baseline understanding of the current “knowledge economy” conditions to develop an economic development strategy in this sector.

TOOL: This resource includes background information and a set of key indicators to assess a community’s capacity in the global knowledge economy.

AUDIENCE: Local community leaders and economic development professionals.

USE: Use the indicator system to assess community capacity.

RESOURCES:

- Municipal Economic Development Toolkit: http://www.municipaltoolkit.org/UserFiles/LaMore&Supanich-Goldner_EN.pdf

ED 8. Promote public health

Health outcomes are worsening across the country and health care expenses are increasing. Health care is an important sector of many local economies, but treating preventable, chronic health conditions is not a feasible or desirable economic development strategy. Healthy communities are more productive and energetic, and marginal improvements in wellness lead directly to making more resources available for more productive investments. Examples of related strategies include fostering active transportation and nutrition. Wellness is also a viable tourism strategy.

ED 8.A. Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

NEED: Many preventable chronic diseases lead to high health care spending, lower productivity, and lower quality of life.

BENEFIT: Healthy communities are successful communities. Incremental improvements in public health lead to lower expenditures on health care, which frees up more resources available for economic development. More directly, residents of Central Minnesota who avoid preventable, chronic diseases are more energetic and productive and enjoy a higher quality of life.

TOOL: The State of Minnesota is administering the Statewide Health Improvement Program to promote the broader benefits to society of promoting public health.

AUDIENCE: Local government.

USE: This tool is a prevention program administered through community health boards. Beyond the specific program, there are opportunities for cross-promotion and creating a shared agenda between public health initiatives and economic development.

RESOURCES:

- Minnesota Department of Health: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/ship/index.html>
- Toolkit: Economic Development and Redevelopment, Planning for Healthy Places, designed for public health professionals: http://www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/econ_dev_redev_toolkit

ED 9. Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the original tool for sustainable development. There are many local economic development resources, centers, and groups in the region, and these are invaluable assets for aspiring entrepreneurs. These resources can be leveraged further by identifying gaps in the business development system and using additional sources of expertise within the community (or elsewhere) to form more robust networks of support.

ED 9.A. The Entrepreneur Test

NEED: The presence of community members with ideas for new business ventures does not equate to action. Consequently, it does not lead to actual economic development.

BENEFIT: Identifying potential entrepreneurs is a key step towards fostering conditions for them to succeed.

TOOL: This assessment tool provides a simple instrument to evaluate the capacity of individuals in the community to become entrepreneurs.

AUDIENCE: Potential entrepreneurs and economic development professionals.

USE: This assessment test can be used by individual entrepreneurs, or used to assess the conditions for entrepreneurship in a community.

RESOURCES:

- RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, Energizing Entrepreneurship, http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/content/chapter_3/tools/1_000030.pdf
- More resources from the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship available at: www.energizingentrepreneurs.org

ED 9.B. Small Business Incubators

NEED: New, small businesses are the engine that drives economic growth, but they are vulnerable to small shocks that could cause their failure. Regions that create conditions in which new businesses can succeed are going to be much more resilient.

BENEFIT: More new small businesses that succeed equate to economic development.

TOOL: This guide contains background on small business incubators, implementation recommendations, issues to consider, and complementary tools.

AUDIENCE: Economic development professionals.

USE: Use this guide to create a small business incubator.

RESOURCES:

- Small Business Incubators: http://www.municipaltoolkit.org/UserFiles/Reese_EN.pdf

ED 9.C. Energizing Young Entrepreneurs in Rural Communities

NEED: Economic development that creates a more resilient region reflects homegrown resources. One important homegrown resource is the young people in Central Minnesota. The youth have ideas and skills, and the communities in the region stand to benefit by giving these young people the sense that there is opportunity here.

BENEFIT: Engaging young entrepreneurs is likely to pay dividends in greater youth retention and future economic development.

TOOL: This report provides insights on young entrepreneurs and how to create an environment for them to grow in small towns.

AUDIENCE: Educators, community members, business leaders, and economic development professionals.

USE: Follow this guide to create an environment that supports school-age, future entrepreneurs.

RESOURCES:

- RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship: http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/content/cr_7/2_000240.pdf
- Related concept: creating a Community Interns or Community Fellows program: <http://ruralfutureslab.blogspot.com/2012/01/investing-in-next-generation-of-rural.html>

ED 9.D. Open Toolkit for Social Entrepreneurship

NEED: While entrepreneurship is generally a benefit in creating a resilient region, there is a more direct connection available between entrepreneurship and progress on social and environmental challenges. That connection is entrepreneurship with business models that directly address those challenges.

BENEFIT: Social entrepreneurs create viable business models to creatively meet societal challenges.

TOOL: Ashoka is a global leader in social entrepreneurship. Their website features an open toolkit, with useful resources for anyone looking to build the business case for address social challenges.

AUDIENCE: Aspiring social entrepreneur and economic development professionals.

USE: Example resources and a how-to guide.

RESOURCES:

- Ashoka Open Toolkit for Social Entrepreneurship: <http://www.ashoka.org/content/open-toolkit-social-entrepreneurship>
- Advancing Social Entrepreneurship: Recommendations for Policy Makers and Government Agencies, The Aspen Institute: http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/feature-story-archive-2008/nspp_AdvSocEntrp.pdf.
- Resource on emerging strategies in social enterprise across the globe: http://www.charlesleadbeater.net/cms/xstandard/social_enterprise_innovation.pdf

ED 10. Recruit and value talented new residents

The mobility of the workforce is a fact of modern life. Virtually all regions in the country with an economic development agenda are actively working to recruit talented, highly-trained workers. Likewise, most are working to get more than their share of the low-emission, high-tech industries of the future. Serious efforts to develop these industries need to include strategies for attracting and retaining a talented workforce. In rural communities, attracting and retaining talented workers can often entail finding fulfilling opportunities for a recruited worker's spouse, and helping integrate newcomers in social fabric of communities.

ED 10.A. Brain Gain in rural Minnesota

NEED: High school graduates often leave rural areas for college, many do not return.

BENEFIT: However, there is a counter trend of reverse migration of 30-49 year olds. These new residents have skills and life experiences that can contribute to the vitality of small communities.

TOOL: This report from University of Minnesota Extension describes the phenomenon of reverse migration in this age group, its economic impact, and strategies to attract and retain newcomers.

AUDIENCE: Small communities, new residents, potential residents.

USE: This site includes a variety of resources on the topic. Use it to evaluate how receptive a community is to newcomers, and to develop strategies to make it more receptive.

RESOURCES:

- University of Minnesota Extension, Brain Gain: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/brain-gain/>
- Case study in resident recruitment in northwestern Minnesota, <http://www.extension.umn.edu/PublicFinance/components/00020.html>

Housing (H)



Within cities and throughout rural areas, Region Five is faced with a range of housing challenges. At the forefront is planning for and providing housing for a changing population: life cycle housing for senior residents, short and long term housing solutions for the homeless population and affordable housing options for singles and young families. These priorities need to be integrated into the range of housing options that are provided. However, providing a supply of affordable, safe, healthy, and energy efficient housing is an ongoing process that impacts everyone in the region, not just specific groups of people. With limited funding and resources, housing stock that has fallen into foreclosure, needs investment, rehabilitation, and energy upgrades is the current focus of funding programs. More stringent green building and energy efficient requirements are needed to make rehabs and new construction a sustainable and long lasting asset for the region. Maintained and healthy housing stock will support Region Five and will be attractive to new residents looking to move in. There are an incredible number of organizations and groups working in Region Five, forming innovative partnerships to complete projects. Although some of these projects are represented in the tool resources, this should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Crosby photo: <http://s1184.photobucket.com/albums/z329/mnregionfive/Region%20Five%20Housing/Single%20Family%20Homes/?action=view¤t=SingleFamilyHomeCrosbyCrowWingCounty.jpg>

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H 1. Encourage Green Building Standards

There is movement in Region Five and across the state to provide and support opportunities for all sectors to realize the economic and environmental benefits of green building standards. Individual property owners, renters and property managers (such as owners of affordable housing units) receive the benefits of green building standards. This benefits the region as a whole, as safe, healthy and efficient homes result in less of a demand on utilities. There are multiple opportunities to utilize existing capacity to provide a range of housing types in all five counties. As an example, the transformative power of adaptive reuse of buildings is a significant option for cities and towns in Region Five. Another example are the innovative partnerships that abound in Region Five, as the public, private and non-profit sectors work together to preserve and provide affordable housing for a changing demographic.

H 1.A. Green Rehab Incentives

NEED: Green rehabilitation can alleviate cost burdens on residents and owners of buildings with inefficient energy systems and alleviate health burdens on residents exposed to toxins in carpets, paints and conventional construction materials.

BENEFIT: This incentive will publicize green rehab options and can benefit not only residential buildings, but commercial and industrial buildings as well. Cost savings realized from energy retrofits or upgrades will benefit property owners and managers (cost savings can also be passed onto renters).

TOOL: Incentives for green rehab projects at the permitting stage of a project.

AUDIENCE: Local government, property owners.

USE: Provide incentive to builders (streamline review process and/or waive or reduce permit fees), property owners or managers. Customize a model building sustainable renovation policy and adopt language governing commercial renovation projects that receive city financial support or require city regulatory approval (conditional use permit CUP, rezoning, or planned unit development PUD). Publicize and educate contractors on green building code requirements.

RESOURCES:

- “Green Specifications for Single Family Housing Rehabilitation in Minnesota” for developers, www.housingpolicy.org
- Central Minnesota Housing Partnership financing options for rehab: http://www.cmhp.net/rehabilitation_opportunities.html
- Learn what it means to be a Green building from the Generation Green Program in Oakdale, MN: http://www.ci.oakdale.mn.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={BC958B45-63E5-49CF-BD77-F28ED29CA7BC}

H 1.B. Energy Efficiency Incentives and Upgrades

NEED: More renewable energy options and more energy and cost efficient products are imperative.

BENEFIT: This tool encourages awareness of renewable energy alternatives and options, diversification of energy sources and cost-savings for owners of energy-efficient products (property owners, homeowners, renters and even business owners).

TOOL: Renewable Incentives Program and Energy Efficient Rebate Programs, Model Ordinance for Energy Efficiency

AUDIENCE: Property managers and owners, homeowners, renters

USE: Utility companies provide incentives to purchase energy from renewable sources; programs at the state level provide rebates for the purchase of energy efficient (EnergyStar) appliances.

RESOURCES:

- Rural Renewable Energy Alliance (RREAL) in Pine River, MN has compiled solar incentives and rebates available for Minnesota residents at [http://www.rreal.org/solar-design-build/rebates/ and general information about RREAL is available at http://www.rreal.org/](http://www.rreal.org/solar-design-build/rebates/and-general-information-about-RREAL-is-available-at-http://www.rreal.org/)
- Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTS) are involved in education and partnerships around renewable energy in Central Minnesota and across the state. Learn more about recent projects and CERTS resources here: <http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/learn>
- Crow Wing Power Residential Energy Efficiency Rebate Program <http://www.cwpower.com/heatingcoolingoptions.shtml>
- Minnesota GreenStep Cities Energy Efficiency Model Ordinance <http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/modelOrdinances.cfm>

H 1.C. Energy Efficiency Assistance

NEED: Region Five needs cost-efficient energy systems for residential properties.

BENEFIT: Homeowners, rental property owners and residents can realize cost savings of alternative forms of energy, such as residential solar installations.

TOOL: Solar and Weatherization Assistance Programs, administered by regional and state agencies.

AUDIENCE: Property owners (private citizens, affordable housing property managers, cities and towns.)

USE: Property owners can take advantage of energy efficiency rebates and/or assistance with installation of solar thermal systems or weatherization of buildings.

RESOURCES:

- Visit Minnesota Department of Commerce Division of Energy Resources website to find out more about the Weatherization Assistance Program for low-income families: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energy/consumers/Weatherization-Assistance/>
- See Energy Efficiency Incentives and Upgrades tool for resources linking to Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTS), RREAL, Solar and weatherization programs.

H 1.D. Greener Building Standards

NEED: New construction should have more comprehensive “green” standards. Minnesota Housing (formerly Minnesota Housing Finance Agency or MHFA) requires green building standards for new construction single and multi-family projects that receive financing from Minnesota Housing.

BENEFIT: Renters and owners of new construction single-family homes can experience the cost savings and health benefits of green buildings.

TOOL: More stringent green building requirements for single and multifamily new construction projects that receive public financing. Adopting a sustainable landscaping ordinance at the local government will expand the scope of “green buildings.”

AUDIENCE: Private developers, local governments, property owners.

USE: Local governments should adopt more expansive and stringent green building and sustainable site standards to cover projects that do not receive Minnesota Housing financing. To require or incentivize green building standards in construction, a streamlined permit review process will

(Resources listed on the following page)

RESOURCES:

- Information about Minnesota Housing green building standards: http://www.mnhousing.gov/housing/architects/MHFA_007963.aspx
- A successful example of a green building is River Rock Townhomes in Little Falls, MN. More information about this project can be found here: www.mngreencommunities.org/projects/profiles/RiverRock.pdf More information about Minnesota Green Communities projects can be found here: <http://www.mngreencommunities.org/projects/index.htm>
- Minnesota GreenStep Communities provides model ordinances for green building that extends to landscaping, available on their website under Buildings and Landscaping: <http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/modelOrdinances.cfm>
- Greater Minnesota Housing Partnership works to preserve affordable housing units in Region Five. A specific program of foreclosure recovery, addresses the need for rehabilitation of these housing units. more information about GMHF and their programs can be found here: <http://www.gmhf.com/programs-foreclosure-recovery.html> and more information about GMHF's involvement in green building through Minnesota Green Communities can be found here: <http://www.gmhf.com/programs-minnesota-green-communities.html>

H 2. Capitalizing on Existing Capacity

There is a shifting demographic in Region Five: an aging population, changing needs of an increasingly diverse population and households that continue to be impacted by foreclosure. There is a multitude of existing resources and a great capacity in Region Five to provide resources to meet housing needs. There are many ways that this can be accomplished...Existing infrastructure, human capital and currently underutilized community spaces can accommodate some of the region's housing needs. All these spaces need is some creative thinking; in some cases leveraging of public and private investment and in all cases the hard work and leadership that are characteristic of Region Five.

H 2.A. Dual Purpose/Repurposing Community Spaces

NEED: Region Five has a need for short term housing options for the homeless population.

BENEFIT: The homeless population will benefit from accessible and flexible temporary housing options as more permanent housing is sought and services are provided.

TOOL: Reuse of community spaces as a partnership between interfaith organizations, advocacy groups and non-profits.

AUDIENCE: Large and small cities, towns, social advocacy groups, interfaith organizations, individual community members.

USE: Work with interfaith organizations, area non-profits and school districts to identify underutilized space in a centralized location in each county and repurpose these spaces. Identify underutilized spaces in each county that are viable options for temporary housing and service centers for homeless community members.

RESOURCES:

To learn more about the populations and services that can benefit from this type short-term housing solution:

- Central Minnesota Council on Aging <http://www.cmcoa.org/help.shtml>
- L.I.F.E. in Recovery <http://www.lifeinrecovery.net/>
- Central Minnesota Housing Partnership Continuum of Care http://www.cmhp.net/continuum_of_care.html
- Heading Home Central Minnesota: A Regional Initiative to End Homelessness <http://headinghomeminnesota.org/central-mn/>

H 2.B. Adaptive Reuse

NEED: Underutilized or vacant buildings may have value as a different use.

BENEFIT: This tool provides housing for seniors, affordable housing for artists, and brings activities back to empty buildings.

TOOL: Adaptive Reuse policy or ordinance.

AUDIENCE: Local governments, housing non-profits

USE: An adaptive Reuse policy or ordinance allows for the reuse of buildings, such as closed schools, for residential uses.

(Resources listed on following page)

RESOURCES:

- Central Minnesota Council on Aging. A Blueprint for 2010: Preparing Minnesota for the Age Wave; Report on Transform 2010 (Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Board on Aging) <http://www.cmcoa.org/planning.shtml>
- In Brainerd, Artspace converted Franklin Junior High into affordable live/work spaces for artists: <http://www.artspace.org/properties/franklinlofts/>
- In Kansas City, a former public school was converted into housing for seniors, with a community clinic on the first floor: http://www.swdarchitects.com/portfolio_daholmes.html

H 2.C. Cottage Housing Development

NEED: Cities and towns need more options for smaller lots and infill development.

BENEFIT: Providing affordable alternatives to larger lot development and greenfield development will help focus growth in established areas with existing infrastructure, services and resources.

TOOL: A Cottage Development Ordinance allowing for smaller lots and clustered development.

AUDIENCE: Local governments in small and large cities.

USE: A city or town can adopt a Cottage Housing Development Ordinance. The ordinance language can be tailored to each community as appropriate.

RESOURCES:

- Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington provides a definition, articles and samples codes from across the U.S. <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/planning/cottagehousing.aspx>
- An architecture firm provides information about their project, Third Street Cottages in Langley, Washington. <http://www.rosschapin.com/Projects/PocketNeighborhoods/ThirdStreetCottages/ThirdStreet.html>
- HUD User “Cutting Costs with Cottage Housing” <http://www.huduser.org/rbc/newsletter/vol7iss1more.html>
- Community Housing Choices Program in Michigan provides a downloadable fact sheet on Cottage Development. <http://www.communityhousingchoices.org/housingtools.asp>

H 2.D. Accessory Dwelling Units

NEED: The region needs more viable, affordable options for seniors or singles or community members that want or need smaller units.

BENEFIT: By allowing accessory dwelling units on the rear of a lot (also commonly referred to as “mother-in-law apartments”), this provides an affordable option for rental within cities and towns. This allowance increases housing options and units without expanding the developed area beyond the established city or town, providing an affordable alternative to new greenfield developments.

TOOL: Ordinance language at the local government level to allow for accessory dwelling units on the rear of lots within large and small cities.

AUDIENCE: Local Governments, property owners

USE: Allowing for accessory dwelling units within cities and towns will allow for the remodel or construction of smaller residential units by utilizing the rear portion of lots.

RESOURCES:

- HousingPolicy.Org provides a definition of Accessory Dwelling Units (also referred to as ADUs) <http://www.housingpolicy.org/glossary.html>
- Community Housing Choices Program, Michigan, provides a downloadable fact sheet on the housing option of ADUs <http://www.communityhousingchoices.org/housingtools.asp>
- Municipal Research Services of Washington provide a report on ADUs, specifically regulatory and zoning issues and options for local jurisdictions. <http://www.mrsc.org/publications/textadu.aspx>

H 2.E. Mixed-Use Districts

NEED: Smaller households and singles need more affordable housing options in proximity to services, jobs, transportation.

BENEFIT: Mixed-use districts provide a range of affordable housing options, bring activity back to traditional commercial areas, and reinvigorate downtowns by introducing a demand for commercial services.

TOOL: Updated zoning codes to allow for residences above commercial

USE: Allow for residential above commercial by revising the zoning code to ensure that this is a conforming use.

AUDIENCE: Local Governments

RESOURCES:

- Minnesota GreenStep Cities provides a model ordinance for “Village Mixed Use” which is tailored to small towns in rural areas. <http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/modelOrdinances.cfm>

H 2.F. Affordable-Eco Demonstration

NEED: Region Five lacks affordable, energy-efficient, and green new construction housing (single or multifamily).

BENEFIT: This tool will provide healthy, safe housing at a price-point that is achievable for more individuals or families.

TOOL: Demonstration project as a partnership between renewable energy providers and affordable housing groups

AUDIENCE: Local Governments, Private developers, Individual community members

USE: Provide leaders in the area with a living example of affordable-eco and will provide residents or developers a model for how this type of development can be achieved. This can be a model for other regions.

RESOURCES:

- Sustainable Morris project, more information available here: <http://www.dovetailinc.org/content/sustainable-morris-mn-project> and here: http://treeline.biz/project.php?content_id=219
- Hunt Utility Group's research campus in Pine River is a great demonstration example in Region Five. Find out more here: <http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/community-projects/case-study/hunt-utilities-group-campus>

H 3. Gain Perspective with Useful Data

There is a need for comprehensive and up-to-date data for Region Five. Due to the geographic extent and multi-jurisdictional landscape, housing data for the region needs to be comprehensive, up-to-date and utilized to inform decision-making.

H 3.A. Regional Housing Assessment

NEED: Preservation and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock has been identified as a priority. An updated Housing Needs Assessment and Condition Survey are necessary to guide future housing planning and policy decisions.

BENEFIT: A survey of the condition of the housing stock can help target properties for resources and identify properties that have the potential for rehab or repair, and possibly catch some before they reach the point of removal or demolition. The supply, demand and gaps in the housing that is available can guide resources to areas that need it the most. The availability of this information will provide the region (residents, business owners,

educational institutions, decision makers) with a better picture of where help is needed and where there is room to grow. A needs assessment can determine what affordable units should be preserved in the region.

TOOL: Conduct a housing needs assessment and housing stock condition survey.

USE: A housing stock condition survey and an updated Housing Needs Assessment are the foundation for a Regional Housing Plan. The report will be public information and used by local governments and decision-makers to guide where housing investments should occur.

AUDIENCE: Local Government, housing non-profits

RESOURCES:

- The APA Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook is a source for A Regional Housing Plan format. It is available through HUD User at: www.huduser.org/portal/publications/pdf/growingsmart_user.pdf

H 3.B. Regional Market Analysis

NEED: A study of the region's available housing stock, the supply, demand and gaps in the housing as well as where and how the region can or should grow can help guide future development.

BENEFIT: A Market Analysis that is similar to the GMHF sponsored study in the Iron Range, completed in 2009, will help to guide development, particularly with a no-growth scenario.

TOOL: A Market Analysis for the region

AUDIENCE: Local Government, Private developers, lenders

USE: In partnership with an organization such as Greater Minnesota Housing Fund (GMHF), a Market Analysis can be used to guide local or regional governments and agencies in deciding whether and where growth should occur.

RESOURCES:

- In 2009, Greater Minnesota Housing Fund sponsored and study completed by Jay Demma at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, the "Iron Range Housing Market Analysis." The report can be found here: <http://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/48903> Further information can be found through the GMHF website: www.gmhf.com/programs-iron-range-housing.html

H 3.C. Energy ScoreCards

NEED: ScoreCards will provide proof of energy-efficient or green technology and upgrades, measure energy usage and savings as well as cost benefit to inform future projects, and provide environmental and economic data to residents, business owners and leaders.

BENEFIT: This can demonstrate and leverage the installation of energy efficient systems with other funding sources, future projects and buy-in from local leaders and residents.

TOOL: Energy Scorecards provided by utility companies for green building projects to measure energy usage and savings

AUDIENCE: Property owners (property management companies, housing non-profits, HRAs, individual homeowners), business owners

USE: Energy ScoreCards will make information available to developers, property managers, residents, and non-profits working in energy and housing to showcase examples of retrofits and new construction that are saving energy and money and that can continue to be models for more green buildings.

RESOURCES:

- Learn about the EnergyScorecards Minnesota pilot project: <http://www.energyscorecardsmn.com/>
- Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) <https://myimeter.bpu.org/default.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f>

H 4. Support Regional Solutions

H 4.A. Community Land Trust

NEED: More options to provide land at a lower cost to homeowners opens the door for more affordable housing.

BENEFIT: A Community Land Trust creates the ability to provide land at a low cost for affordable housing units by leasing the land to the homeowner rather than a homeowner purchasing the land outright.

TOOL: Central Minnesota Community Land Trust (CMCLT)

AUDIENCE: Non-profits, Housing and Redevelopment Authorities (HRAs)

USE: A Community Land Trust purchases land and leases the land to a homeowner rather than selling the land, thus reducing the price the homeowner has to pay.

RESOURCES:

- Central Minnesota Housing Partnership's Central Minnesota Community Land Trust
http://www.cmhp.net/community_land_trust.html
- Federal Reserve of Richmond provides resources from past conferences, in this case a downloadable fact sheet comparing a Community Land Trust to a Municipal Land Bank
http://www.richmondfed.org/conferences_and_events/community_development/2011/scclt_forum20110420.cfm

Land Use (LU)



Land is a valuable natural, social, and economic resource within the region. Both the patterns created by land use decisions across large areas and the outcomes of land use practices on specific parcels can shape the long-term health of multiple components of systems within the region and its communities. Being proactive, rather than reactive, regarding land use practices and patterns will help achieve Region Five’s vision and goals.

While many critical land use issues are regional in scale, land use outcomes are typically influenced most strongly by actions taken either at the county-scale or within individual communities, such as townships or cities. Within Region Five’s local governments, comprehensive plans and land use ordinances (zoning) are already heavily relied on as useful tools for affecting land use and creating sustainable outcomes. Further refining comprehensive plans and land use ordinances (where necessary) and complementing them with other tools will create even greater benefits for communities. Expressions of land use range from individual decisions to regional goals, and the need for specific land use strategies also varies according to the priorities and needs of each community within the region. However, region-wide, a few common themes emerge regarding the need to protect or cultivate community assets that either influence land use or are affected by land use in one way or another. Working at the level of local governments, to create communities that are successful within these land use themes will help create a resilient region.

Little Falls photo: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jstephenconn/5341088691/in/set-72157625788616916>

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LU 1. Public engagement and best-practices education

Educate community members about sustainable land use practices and increase access to information about the planning process and alternative land use patterns.

LU 1.A. Identifying Issue Champions

NEED: County, municipal, and township planning staff and planning commissions are over-taxed when under-taking sustainability planning efforts or when dealing with new development pressures.

BENEFIT: Communities and counties who identify and work with the individuals, NGOs, local businesses, trade organizations, youth clubs, or others within their own communities who are especially tapped into land use issues will strengthen their capacity to make informed, sustainable decisions. Relevant issues could include local food, preservation of open space, utilization of vacant or contaminated land, healthy downtowns, senior-friendly public spaces, or water quality.

TOOL: There are multiple possibilities for this tool. Huron County in Ontario, Canada has identified a framework for how community engagement in sustainability planning and implementation efforts. The Huron County sustainability implementation plan also highlights the role that a funded staff position for local sustainability coordinators might play in connecting community-based “issue champions” to the larger framework of sustainability within a particular community and the well-established Resilient Regions network.

Public Health Law and Policy (PHLP) created a Roadmap for Healthier General Plans, which illustrates some of the roles that community-based advocates can have in community land use planning.

AUDIENCE: Any local level of government can work with their stakeholders to identify the most appropriate “issue champions” or community-based advocates for a particular topic or task.

USE: Individuals can serve on advisory committees, assist in the development of community events, report back to neighborhood or community groups, or work directly with planners and policy-makers to identify community needs.

(Resources listed on the following page)

**RESOURCES:**

- Take Action for Sustainable Huron: Community Sustainability Plan, pages 45-46 <http://www.huroncounty.ca/sustainablehuron/downloads/SustainabilityPlan-complete.pdf>
- Public Health Law and Policy (PHLP), Roadmap for Healthier General Plans: http://www.phlpnet.org/sites/phlpnet.org/files/GP-Roadmap_FINAL_20111025.pdf.
- PHLP, Toolkit: General Plans and Zoning: <http://www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/general-plans-and-zoning>
- Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, Citizen's Guide: [http://www.newdesignsforgrowth.com/manager/ext/FCKeditor/editor/filemanager/connectors/php/get_file.php?filename=file/NWMCOG%20Citizen's%20Guide%20to%20Planning%20%20Zoning\(1\).pdf](http://www.newdesignsforgrowth.com/manager/ext/FCKeditor/editor/filemanager/connectors/php/get_file.php?filename=file/NWMCOG%20Citizen's%20Guide%20to%20Planning%20%20Zoning(1).pdf)

LU 1.B. Public Input Survey

NEED: Community priorities within these land use areas vary from county-to-county and city-to-city. Community support is needed to inform land use decision-making in communities of all sizes. It is useful to assess the knowledge or interest related to particular land use issues and to develop sustainable strategies.

BENEFIT: Better knowledge of public opinion can help set priorities, inform decision-making, identify gaps in community engagement, and measure the political viability of potential plans. Consulting the wider community may help a planning proposal in its initial stages transition from an idea that has been nurtured by a core group of champions to a more-fully developed vision supported with community-wide buy-in.

TOOL: Maine's Beginning with Habitat Toolbox contains a simple public opinion survey that communities can utilize to identify local open space plan priorities. Similar surveys could be used for other topics related to land use. Such surveys complement public engagement carried out by the Resilient Region project, and could be used with quantitative data to inform a wide range of land use planning and policy actions.

AUDIENCE: Counties, cities of any size, and even organizations without planning authority (such as non-profits, townships without planning authority, or lake associations).

USE: Local governments with planning authority can use survey results to inform comprehensive plans or land use ordinances. Non-profits, townships without planning authority, or other unincorporated communities can use similar surveys to build awareness or to assess the best ways to connect individuals to related activities (such as open space visioning events hosted by those who are responsible for planning at the county levels). This tool could be re-created to apply to a variety of situations in a variety of contexts. Community engagement in open space planning, would be of particular interest to LGUs with significant acreage of publicly owned land, the ability/desire to acquire such properties over time, or the potential to partner with other public or private entities who own land in or near the jurisdiction's boundaries.

RESOURCES:

- Maine's Beginning with Habitat Toolbox: <http://www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/osp4.html>
- Community Ventures: The Community Survey: A Tool for Participation and Fact-Finding on how to design and conduct a community survey Washington State University Extension: <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/wrep0132/wrep0132.html>.
- Our Community: Assessing Social Capital specifically for conducting community surveys in rural areas, University of Minnesota Extension Service: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/00009.html>.
- Theme 2. Grow smart and support existing communities

LU 2. Grow smart and support existing communities

Be strategic, and plan for accommodation of growth or changing populations. Plan for staged expansion of existing developed areas. See the "Brownfields / land recycling" theme for additional tools that strategically promote development in locations that are already served by public infrastructure. See the "Green infrastructure" theme for tools that help communities determine whether certain areas that may be better candidates for conservation or open space than for intensified development. Green infrastructure tools can also support modified forms of development that are more sensitive to the region's natural assets.

LU 2.A. Fiscal Impact Analysis

NEED: Some developments create a greater burden on communities than others. Promoting developments that strain existing infrastructure or service systems negatively influences the long term success of the proposed land uses, and it also means degradation of the services needed by both the existing and potential residents/employees within the community.

BENEFIT: Adopting policies that provide for measurement and monitoring long-term fiscal impacts as developments occur, even if developers are not required to fit within set thresholds or mitigate excessive impacts, can help communities understand the costs and infrastructure demands that changes in land use might bring.

TOOL: The Community Guide to Development Impact Analysis, provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, is a sample nine-step process (including worksheets for each step). The process outlined in the Guide can be customized according to community context and the community's intended use of the output from the fiscal impact analysis. The Municipal Fiscal Impacts Model (MFIM) is an alternative to the checklist. Audience: Counties, municipalities, or townships with planning authority.

USE: Local government units can adopt requirements to carry out full fiscal analysis on all major projects and communities could choose to set fiscal impact thresholds in the ordinances that the community is not willing to exceed (ex: maximum increases in bonding indebtedness, amount of water or sewer capacity allocated to a new development). Under the ordinance, applicants might be required to fund staff time or support the locality's consultant as necessary to conduct the fiscal impact assessment. Based on the results of the required fiscal impact assessment, developers could be required to adopt mitigation measures to lessen their impact, or ordinances may require payment of development fees related to each development's specific impacts. Even when not required, a fiscal impact analysis checklist can be used to help a local government--and the communities it serves--measure and monitor individual and cumulative impacts of potential policy changes or recent and proposed developments.

(Resources listed on the following page)

RESOURCES:

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Mary Edward, Community Guide to Development Impact Analysis: http://www.lic.wisc.edu/shapingdane/facilitation/all_resources/impacts/analysis_fiscal.htm
- Local capital improvement plans and development projections will be key data sources.
- EPA, Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning and Development Codes, (2012), p. 9-12, http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/rural_essential_fixes_508_030612.pdf.
- Overall guidebook, Community Guide to Development Impact Analysis by Mary Edward:
 - http://www.lic.wisc.edu/shapingdane/facilitation/all_resources/impacts/analysis_intro.htm, developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
 - Specific fiscal impact analysis steps: http://www.lic.wisc.edu/shapingdane/facilitation/all_resources/impacts/analysis_fiscal.htm.
- CURA, Municipal Fiscal Impacts Model (MFIM) is an Excel-based model for site-scale developments currently under development by CURA/City of Saint Paul/Hennepin County for use in Minnesota.
- “Adaptation of a Fiscal Impact Model for the City of St. Paul”: <http://www.cura.umn.edu/projects/adaptation-fiscal-impact-model-city-st-paul>
- Minnesota Land Economics website: <http://landeconomics.umn.edu/>

Tool 2.B. Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

NEED: See Tool 2A.

BENEFIT: The model ordinances for an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance complement or provide an alternative to the fiscal impact analysis.

TOOL: Model ordinances for an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance are available from CR Planning.

AUDIENCE: Counties, municipalities, or townships with planning authority.

USE: Update ordinances.

RESOURCES:

- CR Planning, Updated Model Ordinances for Sustainable Development, “Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance”: http://www.crplanning.com/pdfs/susdo6_09/adpubfac.pdf

LU 3. Food security / local food

Within the region, there is an interest in promoting local food, bolstering regional food security, and increasing access to healthy food. See the “Economic Development” section of this report for additional tools related to local food systems.

LU 3.A. Feasibility Checklist for Food Ventures

NEED: Commercial and industrial services and facilities are needed to support agricultural activities in the region. Inefficient distribution and processing networks create strain within transportation and land use systems, and consumers in individual communities feel disconnected from the sources of their food. There is a need to identify the specific opportunities with the most potential in given communities—this is true both for individuals or organizations wishing to start ventures and for local governments deciding what types of ventures they will need to create vibrant food hubs.

BENEFITS: A feasibility checklist contains a comprehensive set of questions that are useful considerations prior to investing significant resources on any new business venture. Local governments who choose to promote this tool to individuals considering food ventures, can help these potential new businesses be as successful as possible from the start—creating more stable, long-term, and attractive land uses throughout the community. Feasibility studies can help identify strategic locations for the nodes and links needed to create networks, and help interested parties steer clear of undertakings that are not likely to be viable.

TOOL: The Starting Your Business in Illinois Handbook includes a feasibility checklist. The questions are not state-specific and would easily apply in any Minnesota context.

Audience: Counties, cities, individuals, non-profits, businesses, and potential businesses.

USE: Counties and cities can provide the tool to potential business owners or use it to evaluate the potential of any food-processing centers or assistance/support ventures that will require local public investment. Individual residents, non-profits, businesses, and potential businesses would use the checklist to evaluate potential for-profit or non-profit ventures. Local governments could provide technical assistance with the process.

(Resources listed on following page)

RESOURCES:

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Starting Your Business in Illinois Handbook, <http://www.commerce.state.il.us/NR/rdonlyres/568413EB-8E07-414C-BFB9-ED0678C6F32A/0/StartingYourBusinessinIllinois0611.pdf>, page 27
- USDA (Ag Marketing Service, NASS as data source, and the Regional Food Hub Resource Guide <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5097957>). The Regional Food Hub Resource Guide provides information about funding sources, economic viability, and potential structure of food hubs along with descriptions of 20 example regional food hubs from throughout the nation.
- US Small Business Administration – provides general support and guidance for business ventures and their website contains content that will help individuals or organizations answer the feasibility checklist <http://www.sba.gov/>.
- Southern Wisconsin Food Hub: Feasibility Study provides an example of the format, methodology, data sources, and findings for public investment in a local food venture: <http://www.ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-database/knowledge/SoWisFoodHubStudy-HR.pdf>

LU 3.B. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

NEED: Agriculture is an important part of the region’s land use, economy, and history. Agriculture and associated land uses are key aspects of the region’s cultural heritage. Development patterns and subdivision practices may fragment agricultural landscapes and make them less economically viable.

BENEFIT: This tool helps the region and its communities reduce the amount of agricultural land lost to development. TDR helps protect the resource value of prime farmland or it can protect other valuable resources, including forests, open space, and cultural heritage. Keeping prime farmland in agricultural production provides raw materials for a growing local food economy. This tool encourages efficient growth in already developed areas while also preserving working landscapes and open space.

TOOL: The case of Scott County, Minnesota provides example options for TDR implementation. TDR has also been implemented in Rice County, Minnesota.

AUDIENCE: Counties, municipalities, or groups of local governments.

USE: Local units of government develop TDR programs including designation of sending and receiving areas for development. It is a voluntary, incentive-based process.

(Resources listed on following page)

RESOURCES:

- Scott County, Transfer of Development Rights Program—Options to Consider: <http://www.co.scott.mn.us/PropertyGISLand/2030CompPlan/NaturalAreaFarmland/Documents/TDROptionGraphics.pdf>
- Rice County Land Use Ordinances, Chapter 520: <http://www.co.rice.mn.us/planning/documents/Ch520TDR.pdf>
- Envision Minnesota, “Transfer of Development Rights, Fact Sheet #5”: <http://www.envisionmn.org/fact-sheet-info/2011/4/19/transfer-of-development-rights.html>
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Ag Land Preservation Program, “Minnesota’s Agricultural Land Preservation Statutes”: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/conservation/preservation/statutes.aspx>

LU 4. Brownfields / land recycling

Reuse/recycle land when appropriate by assisting or promoting brownfield remediation and redevelopment, and identification of possible uses for other challenging, yet high-potential, properties. Related strategies might encourage infill development, intensification of use on certain types of parcels, or co-location of complementary land uses. See the “Economic Development” section of this report for more tools related to brownfields and infill development.

LU 4.A. Toolkit for Greener Practices: Decision Tree

NEED: Decisions made throughout the development process affect the future potential of a site to generate pollution. This is especially true for brownfield sites. There are many options for clean-up, construction, and property-management that can influence the potential environmental and economic health of a project. This uncertainty is part of what creates the difficulties associated with developing brownfield sites.

BENEFITS: This step-by-step process—designed to identify the options available to prepare a given site for development—can reduce uncertainty and assist communities and developers in creating vision for a site and a workable plan of action to reach that vision. Communities that understand both the constraints of site and the options available to help them overcome such constraints can more easily work to develop a site or group of sites to its full potential. Success stories such as the Northland Arboretum’s transformation of the closed Brainerd Landfill into a grassland area demonstrate the untapped potential that brownfield sites might hold for the region.

TOOL: The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)'s Toolkit for Greener Practices includes a decision tree. The decision tree walks users through a step by step process, which begins by determining whether or not a site requires cleanup. The decision tree has multiple options in each step, and each option is hyperlinked to PDFs that are available online from MPCA.

AUDIENCE: Counties, cities, individuals, and developers.

USE: This tool would be used by county or municipal governments interested in streamlining their brownfield evaluation process. It could also be individuals or developers who are proposing action on brownfield properties could also use this tool. County or municipal governments who would like to determine the next steps for a given site would have staff or consultants work through the checklist. It could also be incorporated into policy as a required step early in the development process when individuals or developers are proposing action related to local sites that are considered brownfields. The MPCA recommends applying the decision tree as early in the process as possible. MPCA also offers a table for recording the results of the decision tree process.

RESOURCES:

- MPCA, "Toolkit for Greener Practices: Decision Tree": <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/topics/preventing-waste-and-pollution/sustainability/greener-practices-toolkit/toolkit-for-greener-practices-decision-tree.html#tree>
- Northland Arboretum, Brainerd, Minnesota: <http://northlandarb.com/>
- MPCA, "Record of Decision Tree Results": <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=11746>
- MPCA General Resources for Brownfields, <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/waste/waste-and-cleanup/cleanup-programs-and-topics/cleanup-programs/brownfields.html?menuid=&redirect=1>
- Minnesota Targeted Brownfield Assessment Program (MNTBAP) <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/about-mpca/assistance/financial-assistance/financial-assistance-grants-and-loans.html#brownfields>
- "What's in My Neighborhood?" online tool from MPCA <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/data/wimn-whats-in-my-neighborhood/whats-in-my-neighborhood.html?menuid=&redirect=1>
- The MPCA has links to many resources outside of their agency: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/waste/waste-and-cleanup/cleanup-programs-and-topics/cleanup-programs/brownfields.html#resources>
- City of Council Bluffs, Iowa, Case study: Developed distressed areas into community gardens, http://www.revitalizecb.com/index.php?cmd=proj_hist
- <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/index.html>
- <http://www.mnbrownfields.org/>
- http://assets.mnbrownfields.org/Brownfields_Resource_Guide_2012.pdf

LU 5. Green infrastructure

Green infrastructure means that communities decide what to natural features and functions to protect or enhance in their locality, and appropriately value services provided by natural systems. See the Natural Resources topic area for more tools related to green infrastructure.

LU 5.A. Natural Resource Inventory/Analysis Checklist

NEED: Many communities would like to link valuable natural resources though land use planning and decisions. There can be gaps in information about where the priority areas are located or about what roles these areas should play from a land use perspective (open space, forestry, recreation, agriculture, ecological reserves, and so on).

BENEFITS: A systematic approach to assessment and analysis of natural resources can inform multiple planning efforts. Identifying and protecting natural resources helps communities understand the benefits provided by these systems and helps identify what areas should be the focus of land use designations, incentive programs, or management plans that are designed to protect or enhance natural resources. This also allows communities which are less valuable from a resource standpoint and more suited to intensive development.

TOOL: The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) provides a comprehensive checklist to assist local governments with compilation of a natural resource inventory.

AUDIENCE: Counties, watersheds, municipalities of any size, or groups of adjacent cities/townships.

USE: Apply the inventory to a large land area such as a county, area(s) within a county, or a whole city. MnDNR suggests conducting an inventory at least once every 10 years (sooner if significant changes have occurred). Work through the questions and list of inventory items, documenting answers and gathering information throughout the process.

Typically, the inventory will be used to compile a database of natural resource information and GIS map layers. This inventory can serve as an input to other processes related to green infrastructure planning.

RESOURCES:

- MnDNR, Natural Resource Inventory Checklist: <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/nrplanning/community/nrchecklists/inventory.pdf>
- Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) provides input data for the inventory: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mlccs/index.html>
- MnDNR, DNR Data Deli also provides input data: <http://deli.dnr.state.mn.us>
- Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC), Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) fact sheet provides information regarding the inventory process and format: <http://www.anjec.org/pdfs/EnvironmentalResource04.pdf>

Natural Resources (NR)



Natural resources are central to the Region’s economy, quality of life, and public health. Natural resources drive the Region’s forestry, agriculture, and tourism industries. Access to natural areas and recreation opportunities improves quality of life for residents. Clean air, soil, and water sustain the health of residents. Given the significance of natural resources in the Region, environmental protection is key to future resiliency and sustainability. Environmental challenges in the region include: protecting and improving surface water quality, protecting groundwater quality and quantity, and adapting to a changing climate. These environmental challenges require strategies that go above and beyond meeting current environmental regulations.

Cass County photo: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gtrtanj/3561777476/sizes/l/in/photostream/>

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NR 1. Protect and improve surface water quality

Lakes and streams provide opportunities for recreation and drive the regional tourism industry. Approximately 10 percent of the 896+ lakes in the Region are currently impaired due to high mercury levels in fish and/or high nutrient (eutrophication) levels (2011 DNR Lakefinder data). The following are tools to protect and/or improve surface water quality.

NR 1.A. Shoreline buffer ordinances

NEED: Shoreline erosion is a significant source of lake water quality degradation. Development along shorelines has replaced natural vegetated shorelines with “lawn-to-lake” type shorelines that increase erosion and stormwater runoff contamination (e.g., soil, debris, fertilizers, petrochemicals).

BENEFIT: Shoreline buffer ordinances protect lake water quality by increasing native vegetation in sensitive shoreland areas, thus decreasing erosion and stormwater runoff into lakes, and increasing habitat for native wildlife.

TOOL: This tool is ordinance language that requires progressive shoreline management standards (that is, shoreline management standards higher than current State standards) as a condition of permit, conditional use, or variance approval. This ordinance language can set higher shoreline buffer (or setback) distances, increase standards for vegetation and landscaping in shoreline areas, and/or limit construction and recreation activities in the shoreline buffer zone. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resource’s “Minnesota’s Alternative Shoreland Management Standards” provides model ordinance language for shoreline buffers (Section: Zoning Provisions, Subsection 4: Shoreline Buffer Standards). As an example, Cass County’s Proposed Land Use Ordinance (Sections 1123 and 1128) includes shoreline buffer requirements.

AUDIENCE: Local governments with planning and zoning offices.

USE: Update shoreline buffer ordinances.

RESOURCES:

- Cass County Proposed Land Use Ordinance (Sections 1123 and 1128): <http://www.co.cass.mn.us/ordinances.html>
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Minnesota’s Alternative Shoreline Management Standards. December 2005. (Section: Zoning Provisions, Subsection 4: Shoreline Buffer Standards): http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/shoreland/Alt6120_12_12_2005.pdf

NR 1.B. Shoreline management incentives

NEED: See Tool 1A.

BENEFIT: See Tool 1A.

TOOL: The tool is a voluntary program that provides incentives to shoreline property owners to adopt progressive shoreline management practices (e.g., increasing shoreline buffer setbacks, restoring native vegetation). As an example, the Burnett County (Wisconsin) Shoreline Incentive Program provides landscaping education, 70% of planting costs, and property tax rebates to homeowners who enroll in the voluntary shoreline protection program funded by a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lake Protection grant.

AUDIENCE: Local governments. Owners of shoreline property.

USE: Administer voluntary program.

RESOURCES:

- Burnett County, Wisconsin's Shoreline Incentive Program (SIP): <http://www.burnettcounty.com/index.aspx?NID=526>
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources "Restore Your Shore" Guide for residents: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/restoreyourshore/index.html>

NR 1.C. Shoreline permanent conservation easements

NEED: See Tool 1A.

BENEFIT: See Tool 1A. Additionally, landowners who agree to conservation easements ensure that their land will be conserved in perpetuity. Thus, there is a benefit in protecting landowners' legacies.

TOOL: The tool is a voluntary program that enrolls ecologically sensitive shoreland in a permanent conservation easement. Permanent conservation easements are legal agreements that limit uses of private lands to protect ecologically sensitive areas. Under a conservation easement, the land remains in private use: the landowner retains all property rights (e.g., the rights to sell the land, farm the land, restrict access to the land) that do not conflict with the conservation of that land. The conservation agreement continues with all future owners of the land, in perpetuity. As an example in the Region, the Shallow Lake Shoreland Protection program in the Wild Rice Lakes area is a public-private partnership sponsored by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to enroll 700 acres of sensitive wetland and shoreland in permanent conservation easements. As a second example in the Region, Cass County and the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation, with funding from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, are currently coordinating a conservation easement program for sensitive shoreland that will provide financial assistance for landowner's costs associated with the conservation easement (e.g., land surveying, legal fees).



AUDIENCE: Local governments. Owners of shoreline property.

USE: Administer conservation easement program.

RESOURCES:

- Shallow Lake Shoreland Protection: Wild Rice Lakes: <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/cleanwaterfund/stories/factsheets/rim/Shallow-Lake-WildRice-2012.pdf>
- Cass County and Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation Conservation Easement Program (2010-2013): <http://www.legacy.leg.mn/projects/conserving-sensitive-and-priority-shorelands-cass-county>

NR 2. Protect and improve groundwater quality

Groundwater is the main source of drinking water and irrigation in the region. Many areas of region are highly susceptible to groundwater contamination based on soil and bedrock characteristics. Potential sources of potential groundwater contamination include failing septic systems, agricultural pesticides, and fertilizers. The following are tools to protect and/or improve groundwater quality.

NR 2.A. Progressive wellhead protection plans

NEED: Areas surrounding public and private wells are particularly at-risk for groundwater contamination. Local governments can develop progressive wellhead protection plans to ensure continued safety of drinking water.

BENEFIT: Wellhead protection plans can protect drinking water sources from contamination by nitrates, fecal coliforms, pesticides, and petrochemicals.

TOOL: The tool is a progressive wellhead protection plan implemented by local governments or institutions. When local governments and institutions develop or update their required wellhead protection plans, there is an opportunity to take action to protect drinking water quality, that goes beyond meeting regulatory requirements. Wellhead protection plans can protect source water quality by prohibiting potential hazardous land uses (e.g., gas stations, feedlots), monitoring existing hazardous land uses (e.g., buried fuel tanks) and water quality (in both public and private wells), and educating residents (e.g., on lawn care and waste disposal practices to protect groundwater). As an example, the City of Northfield, MN sets strict zoning controls on potentially hazardous land uses within the wellhead protection area. The City of Blaine, MN identified strategies for resident education on groundwater protection in its Wellhead Protection Plan.

AUDIENCE: Local governments with community wells. Institutions (e.g., colleges, hospitals, resorts) with private wells.

USE: Well Head Protection planning involves the following steps: (1) Identify wellhead protection area; (2) Identify potential sources of pollution in the area, (3) Implement steps to prevent contamination from the identified pollution sources.

RESOURCES:

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture Drinking Water Protection, including case studies: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/waterprotection/drinkingwater.aspx>
- Minnesota Rural Water Association Source Water Protection: <http://www.mrwa.com/sourcewater.htm>
- City of Northfield, Minnesota Well Head Protection Area Plan: <http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/cityservices/insideyourhome/water/wellheadprotectionarea>
- City of Blaine, Minnesota Well Head Protection Plan: <http://www.ci.blaine.mn.us/index.cfm?id=900430>

NR 2.B. Progressive septic system standards and inspection policies

NEED: Private septic systems are widely used in the Region. When septic systems fail, they can contaminate groundwater used for drinking water.

BENEFIT: Higher performance standards and more frequent inspection of residential septic systems can prevent system failures.

TOOL: The tool is ordinance language that sets high septic system performance standards and provides septic system inspections to homeowners. As an example of ordinance language, see the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Model Ordinance (Section 3) Performance Standards. Counties typically require inspection of residential septic systems as part of permitting process, when requesting a variance (e.g., to add a bedroom), or when property is sold. Counties that wish to go above and beyond State regulatory requirements can provide inspections to residents on a voluntary basis or require periodic inspections of existing systems. For an example of a septic system inspection program in the Region, see Todd County.

AUDIENCE: County governments.

USE: Update ordinance language. Administer residential inspection programs.

RESOURCES:

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Model Ordinance Language (Section 3): <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/wastewater/subsurface-sewage-treatment-system-ssts/ssts-local-units-of-government.html>
- Todd County Planning and Zoning: http://www.co.todd.mn.us/departments/env_land_resources/env_land_resources_frontpage_panel
- List of county-by-county contacts for wastewater treatment assistance: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/OnsiteSewage/wastewater-contacts.html>

NR 3. Protect groundwater quantity

Future water demands and development may threaten the groundwater supply, as the rate of water use increases, and the rate of groundwater recharge decreases. The following policies protect groundwater quantity.

NR 3.A. Stormwater infiltration policies

NEED: Development (e.g., roads, buildings, crops) can increase stormwater runoff and reduce the amount of water that infiltrates through soil to recharge groundwater aquifers.

BENEFIT: Stormwater infiltration policies can increase the rate of aquifer recharge.

TOOL: The tool is ordinance language to increase stormwater infiltration standards in new developments. Thus, new developments are required to handle greater volumes of stormwater on-site, thereby increasing potential for groundwater recharge, and reducing the volume of water (and runoff pollution) carried through stormwater systems (e.g., storm sewers, channels, etc.) to streams and lakes. For examples of stormwater infiltration development guides and practices, see Envision Minnesota's Conservation Score Card (Part 7) and Low Impact Development Guides. Within the Region, Crow Wing County includes stormwater infiltration management standards and conservation design elements in its zoning ordinances.

AUDIENCE: Local governments. Developers.

USE: Update ordinance language in comprehensive plan.

RESOURCES:

- Envision Minnesota, Conservation Score Card Part 7: Stormwater Management: <http://www.envisionmn.org/storage/pdf/ConservationDesignScorecard1000FOM.pdf>
- Low Impact Development Guides: <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/green/>
- Crow Wing County Zoning Ordinances: <http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us/index.aspx?nid=214>
- Model stormwater and erosion and sediment control ordinances: http://www.crplanning.com/pdfs/susdo6_09/stormwater.pdf
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Stormwater Management Resources: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/stormwater/stormwater-management/low-impact-development-stormwater-management.html>

NR 3.B. Water conservation policies

NEED: The groundwater supply supports residential, agricultural and industrial uses. Future water demands may threaten the sustainability of groundwater supplies.

BENEFIT: Water conservation policies reduce pressure on groundwater supplies, and can also save financial costs for residences and businesses.

TOOL: The tool is water conservation policies adopted as part of ordinance language. Examples include: landscaping requirements (e.g., native species; low-water requirement species), plant watering restrictions, water efficient plumbing requirements in new construction. The Metropolitan Council Water Conservation Toolbox includes water conservation policy case studies.

AUDIENCE: Local government. Residences, businesses, institutions.

USE: Adopt water conservation ordinances (e.g., native or low-irrigation landscaping requirements in new developments).

RESOURCES:

- Metropolitan Council Water Conservation Toolbox: http://www.metrocouncil.org/environment/WaterSupply/conservationtoolbox_programs.htm

NR 4. Protect sensitive habitat and unique landscapes

The Region contains ecologically sensitive habitat and unique landscapes and scenic sites. The Mississippi River Valley is just one example of a regionally significant ecological, cultural, and recreational resource.

NR 4.A. Natural Resource Inventory

NEED: Communities that wish to protect natural resources need accurate and detailed inventories of their natural resources to guide decision-making.

BENEFIT: Natural resource inventories provide communities with necessary information for making local decisions about conservation.

TOOL: The tool is a natural resource inventory to identify ecologically sensitive areas, specific habitat, or scenic views. Minnesota local governments with natural resource inventories include: City of Northfield and Goodhue County.

AUDIENCE: Local government.

USE: Conduct natural resource inventory and distribute information to community stakeholders and decision-makers.

RESOURCES:

- Natural Resource Inventory checklist: <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/nrplanning/community/nrchecklists/inventory.pdf>
- City of Northfield, Minnesota Natural Resource Inventory: <http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/government/cityplans/naturalresourcesinventory2005>
- Goodhue County, Minnesota Natural Resource Inventory: <http://www.co.goodhue.mn.us/misc/natresinventory.aspx>

NR 5. Adapt to a changing climate

The trend of changing climate in Central Minnesota (e.g., shorter winters, higher annual precipitation) observed over the past several decades is expected to continue in the future. Climate change will likely impact the region's natural resources, including forestry and locations of sensitive habitat and wetlands.

NR 5.A. Include adaptation to climate change in long-term natural resource plans

NEED: Climate change presents a significant challenge to natural resources in the Region. Climate change may impact forestry, agriculture, and sensitive habitat. Communities may wish to prepare for future climate impacts on natural resources.

BENEFIT: Adaptation planning can help communities build resiliency in the face of uncertain future climate conditions.

TOOL: The tool is a study of potential climate change impacts, and a preparedness plan on how to adapt to those potential impacts. This tool may be included in comprehensive plan updates.

AUDIENCE: Local government units.

USE: Conduct study, develop adaptation plan, implement plan.

RESOURCES:

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Climate Change Adaptation: <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/conservationagenda/crest-ccref.pdf>
- Climate Change Adaptation Guidebook (King County, Washington State): <http://www.cses.washington.edu/db/pdf/snoveretalgb574.pdf>

Transportation



Transportation in Region Five is economically, environmentally, and socially unsustainable as gas prices fluctuate, weather and climate patterns vary, and the population grows, changes, and ages. Many places in the region are easiest to access by automobile, but cars are expensive to obtain and maintain as well as air quality detractors and only appropriate for use at certain ages. Without a transportation system that not just accommodates, but promotes the use of a variety of transportation modes and methods, Region Five transportation network will continue to decline instead of functioning at a sustainable level.

It is important to note all of the tools in this section offer benefits applicable to multiple themes. The future of rural transportation depends on targeted investment, continued maintenance for improved safety, and inclusion of all relevant modes in systems.

Photo of Little Falls: <http://s1184.photobucket.com/albums/z329/mnregionfive/Region%20Five%20Transportation/Bike%20Lanes/?action=view¤t=BikeLaneonCityStreetLittleFallsMorrisonCOunty.jpg>

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T 1. Better connectivity between communities

Accessible and efficient transportation options between settlements in Region 5 are critical to the region's economy and general livelihood. The system should be improved with the health and safety of passengers and the planet as a top priority along with finances.

T 1.A. Access management

NEED: Region Five has an extensive roadway network that, with access management strategies, can perform with increased economic efficiency but decreased emissions.

BENEFIT: The implementation of proper access management reduces bypass and other access-related crashes involving all modes of transportation. Access management also preserves existing corridors, investments, and mobility and supports local economic development through improved accessibility.

TOOL: The Minnesota Department of Transportation defines access management as the planning, design and implementation of land use and transportation strategies in an effort to maintain a safe flow of traffic while accommodating the access needs of adjacent development. For instance, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has a planning and preservation tool that addresses access management by allowing for certain highways to have special freeway designation and not committing the department to freeway improvement construction or right of way purchasing. For more information on this, see Fortney's presentation under Resources.

AUDIENCE: Minnesota Department of Transportation, local governments, corridor coalitions

USE: Manage access of developments via roadways.

RESOURCES:

- Access Management (Mn/DOT): <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/accessmanagement>
- Planning for Transportation in Rural Areas, Appendix B, Section C: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/rural_areas_planning/page07.cfm
- Rural Access Management: Innovative Approaches to Expressway to Freeway Conversions: http://www.accessmanagement.info/AM06pdf/AM0619a_Fortney.pdf

T 1.B. Intelligent Transportation Systems

NEED: Transportation safety for all modes can increase with the implementation of appropriate technological advances.

BENEFIT: Rural-specific ITS can improve efficiency of operations and management along roadways for automobiles and public transit alike. ITS can also reduce crashes and provide travelers with crucial information regarding upcoming hazards, like weather.

TOOL: ITS encompasses a range of strategies dependent on the context of the communities and systems they serve; please visit ruralits.org for example goals and technologies.

AUDIENCE: Minnesota Department of Transportation, local governments

USE: Improve travel safety and efficiency through technology.

RESOURCES:

- High Tech Transit Emerging in the Woods: <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2012/05/01/ground-level-getting-there-efficiency>
- Planning for Transportation in Rural Areas, Appendix B, Section A: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/rural_areas_planning/page07.cfm

T 1.C. Transit system restructuring/improvements

NEED: Transit systems in Region 5 currently function with limited to no connectivity to one another, making regional travel via transit difficult.

BENEFIT: Improving and/or restructuring transit systems offers better options for populations without access to private automobiles.

TOOL: The concepts of transit system restructuring/improvements include a range of tools, from infrastructure investments (e.g. multi-modal/intermodal facilities) to updated information distribution to consolidation of transit providers. Tool selection is limited by funding sources, geography, demand and other contextual constraints.

AUDIENCE: Minnesota Department of Transportation, local governments, providers

USE: Improve transit services across the region for all populations using a variety of context specific strategies.

(Resources listed on the following page)

RESOURCES:

- Connecting Communities in Greater Minnesota: http://www.growthandjustice.org/sites/2d9abd3a-10a9-47bf-ba1a-fe315d55be04/uploads/09-13-2011_Greater_MN_Final.pdf
- HopStop (example journey planner): hopstop.com
- Mn/DOT's 2010 Transit Report: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/reports/transitreports/10/docs/2010%20Transit%20Report.pdf>
- More people are getting there in Montevideo: <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/collections/special/columns/ground-level/archive/2012/04/more-people-are-getting-there-in-montevideo.shtml?refid=0>
- Planning for Transportation in Rural Areas, Appendix B, Section B: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/rural_areas_planning/page07.cfm

T 2. Better connectivity within communities

With rising gas prices, public health concerns, and natural resource challenges, now is an excellent time to ensure Region 5's communities accommodate non-motorized modes of transportation in a smart, safe and efficient manner.

T 2.A. Active living programs

NEED: Car-centric design of roadways and lifestyles make passive transportation modes much easier to use than active ones, which is detrimental to public health in the region.

BENEFIT: Active living programs cost little to implement, maintain and utilize. The activities they offer are emissions-free and accessible to all wishing to participate.

TOOL: Active living programs are implemented to encourage the general public to bicycle, walk, and use other active forms to transportation for commuting, recreation, and other trips to increase public health. For instance, Get Fit Itasca is an organization that partners with other organizations from all sectors to promote and organize active living programs in Itasca County.

AUDIENCE: Local governments, advocacy organizations

USE: Improve public and environmental health through non-motorized transportation.

RESOURCES:

- Get Fit Itasca: Active Living Resource Guide: <http://getfititasca.org/resourceguide.html>

T 2.B. Complete Streets

NEED: Contemporary roadways in Region 5 overwhelmingly support car travel over alternative modes of transportation.

BENEFIT: Complete Streets design strategies improve roadway safety for all modes, increase accessibility to alternative transportation modes, and beautify existing infrastructure.

TOOL: Also known as livable streets, Complete Streets are roadways designed and operated to enable attractive, comfortable, and safe access and travel for all users regardless of their abilities, ages, and choices of mode. Many communities in the state of Minnesota have already joined the Complete Streets movement. For instance, Falcon Heights and Northfield approved a policy and resolution respectively in March 2012. For more details, visit Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition's website.

AUDIENCE: Local governments, advocacy organizations

USE: Design multi-modal systems along existing roadways.

RESOURCES:

- Complete Streets (Mn/DOT): <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/index.html>
- Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition: <http://www.mncompletestreets.org/>
Local toolkit: <http://www.mncompletestreets.org/gfx/MnCSLocalGovtToolkit.pdf>
Resources and Links: <http://www.mncompletestreets.org/resources.html>
- National Complete Streets Coalition: <http://www.completestreets.org/>
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/>

T 2.C. Safe Routes to School

NEED: Schoolchildren are commonly driven to school (either by car or bus) despite physical proximity due to a lack of safety.

BENEFIT: Safe Routes to School programs cost less than running school bus service, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and incorporate exercise and social time into the routine of children.

TOOL: See Resources below.

AUDIENCE: Local governments, school districts

USE: Offer schoolchildren non-motorized, safe ways of traveling between home and school.

RESOURCES:

- Mn/DOT's Safe Routes to School Program: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/saferoutes/>
- National Center for Safe Routes to School: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/>

T 3. More transportation options

Despite the car's popularity in the United States, many populations – including youth, seniors, and those living with disabilities – face challenges in automobile-dependent places. With more modes in motion, Region 5 will better connect its people with housing and job opportunities.

T 3.A. Bike rental/sharing

NEED: Bicycling is an accessible and healthy form of transportation, but not all can afford to purchase a personal bike or know bike maintenance.

BENEFIT: Sharing or renting from a pool of bicycles costs less for users than continued maintenance of a personal car or bike. Bikes are an emissions-free mode of transportation and provide cyclists with a healthy, fast alternative.

TOOL: Bike sharing programs take on a variety of structures depending on the communities they serve. A bike rental/sharing program in a rural area may be more focused on cycling for recreation: located along a trail system, offering both mountain and road-style bicycles, and so on. Bike rental/sharing can be as informal as a small business run out of a garage yet still effective.

AUDIENCE: Local governments, advocacy organizations

USE: Offer easier access to bicycles for general public use.

RESOURCES:

- Basic Facts About Bicycling in Minnesota and the United States: http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/slp/transportation/bicycling_nonmotor/basic_facts_bicycling.html
- Nice Ride Minnesota: niceridemn.org
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/>

T 3.B. Carpooling/Carsharing

NEED: The main cause of congestion during peak hours on roadways is the plethora of private automobiles being driven by a lone passenger.

BENEFIT: Carpooling and carsharing programs are cheaper than commuting or traveling solo in a private vehicle because all transportation costs are split amongst participants. Carpooling and carsharing reduce the carbon footprints of all participants as well as add a social component to the journey to work.

TOOL: Carpooling is the sharing of one private vehicle for the commute of at least two riders. Carsharing is short-term rental of a car, often as an alternative to car ownership.

Minnesotan examples include:

HOURLCAR: hourcar.org (carsharing)

Metro Vanpool: metrotransit.org/vanpool.aspx

Zimride Carpool and Rideshare Community: zimride.com

Zipcar: zipcar.com (carsharing)

AUDIENCE: Local governments, advocacy organizations

USE: Combine single riders in one vehicle by sharing either a single organization's or owner's vehicle.

RESOURCES:

- How To Guide: Vanpooling: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/commuter/pdf/Vanpool.pdf>
- How To Ride: Rideshare/Carpool: <http://metrotransit.org/rideshare-carpool.aspx>
- What is Car Sharing and How Does it Work?: <http://www.treehugger.com/cars/what-is-car-sharing-and-how-does-it-work.html>

T 3.C. Walkability

NEED: Influenced by lacking pedestrian-friendly design, trips within walking distance are often made by motorized modes, especially cars.

BENEFIT: Walking is the world's oldest, lowest impact in terms of the natural environment, and cheapest form of transportation. Today, high walkability also positively and directly affects land value (see Walk Score for details).

TOOL: Walkability is a measurement of how friendly a place is to pedestrians.

AUDIENCE: Local governments, advocacy organizations

USE: Improve pedestrian safety, infrastructure and experience.

(Resources listed on the following page)

RESOURCES:

- Twelve Steps Toward Walkable Communities: <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/sustran/12steps.pdf>
- Walk Score: <http://www.walkscore.com/>
- Walkability Checklist: http://katana.hsrb.unc.edu/cms/downloads/walkability_checklist.pdf
- Walkability survey example: <http://dcc-stpaul-mpls.org/special-projects/walk>

General Resources

Minnesota GreenStep Cities: greenstep.pca.state.mn.us

“Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability goals through implementation of 28 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more specific actions from a list of four to eight actions. These actions are tailored to all Minnesota cities, focus on cost savings and energy use reduction, and encourage innovation.”

Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network: nextstep.state.mn.us

“This site has been designed to provide Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network members and others with information, access to resources, opportunities for networking, and inspiration on the topic of sustainable communities. NextStep site users have the ability to post information and resources on the site as well as to access the resources and information posted on the site.”

The Natural Step: naturalstep.org

“The Natural Step is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to education, advisory work and research in sustainable development. Since 1989, we have worked with thousands of corporations, municipalities, academic institutions and not-for-profit organizations that have proven that moving strategically toward sustainability leads to new opportunities, reduced costs, and dramatically reduced ecological and social impacts.”

Partnership for Sustainable Communities: sustainablecommunities.gov

“The Partnership for Sustainable Communities works to coordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to make neighborhoods more prosperous, allow people to live closer to jobs, save households time and money, and reduce pollution. The partnership agencies incorporate six principles of livability into federal funding programs, policies, and future legislative proposals.”

Sustainable Communities Online: sustainable.org

“Sustainable Communities Online is the newly revised, updated, and redesigned website formerly known as the Sustainable Communities Network (SCN) website which was developed by a broad coalition of organizations around the United States in the mid-1990s. The intent of the SCN was to pool information on sustainability to make it more readily accessible to the public. CONCERN, Inc. and the Community Sustainability Resource Institute managed the SCN from 1993–2001 and CONCERN has managed it since then.”

Transition Network: transitionnetwork.org

“Transition Network’s role is to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organize around the transition model, creating initiatives that rebuild resilience and reduce CO2 emissions.”

Public Health Law and Policy: <http://www.phlpnet.org/>

“Provides planning and policy resources related to community health issues. The website includes fact sheets, toolkits, legal memos, and model policies. This set of resources has an especially strong emphasis on topics related to food access (including healthy and local food) and active transportation/recreation.”