Greater Minnesota Futures: Pilot Project
Southeast Minnesota
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**Community Members**
A special thank you to all the community and staff members from Grand Meadow, Spring Grove, and Wabasha that partnered on this project. We admire your knowledge and commitment to your communities. We value your insights and suggestions and all the time you committed to this project. It was a pleasure partnering with you.

**Sources**
Images sourced from the web are cited throughout this report. Images without citations are proprietary to MDC. GIS data sources are included on their respective maps.
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Greater Minnesota Futures: Pilot Project

Over the last biennium, the Greater Minnesota Futures initiative (GMNF) at the Minnesota Design Center (MDC), University of Minnesota, has engaged in a pilot project for the State of Minnesota’s Department of Employment and Economic Development to help communities under 5,000 in population in Greater Minnesota think and act more strategically about their economic future in this rapidly changing economy. In doing this work, the MDC has partnered with the regional non-profit community organizations Southeast Minnesota Together and Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, as well as with University of Minnesota Extension.
Goals

The Pilot’s goals include:

• Demonstrate a new economic development and redevelopment model informed by design thinking

• Work with three small towns in Southeast Minnesota to create three different place-based, 21st century community strategies for development and redevelopment activities that build on existing community assets, integrate efforts to strengthen community assets, and leverage more value from investments made

• Demonstrate how project funding requests to existing programs from small Greater Minnesota communities can be stronger, more competitive, and more effective
Objectives

The Pilot’s objective is to act as a catalyst to empower communities to:

• Identify a community development/redevelopment strategy based on the community’s assets and its place in the Southeast Minnesota region that goes beyond the focus of a single project
• Identify and map community assets
• Redefine challenges as opportunities
• Recognize opportunities tied to the community’s place in the Southeast region
• Explore connections between community assets, challenges, and opportunities
• Connect the community’s development/redevelopment strategy to its assets, challenges, and opportunities
• Connect University assets to the strategy
• Move forward with specific projects that advance the development/redevelopment strategy
Southeast Minnesota Together

- Mission: Southeast Minnesota (SE MN) Together is a regional collaborative network of organizations and individuals developing and pursuing strategies to address our workforce shortage. SE MN Together also seeks to strengthen regional connections and build local capacity in communities across the region, which can be leveraged to address other social and economic issues affecting Southeast Minnesota.

- Role in selection of the pilot region: Southeast Minnesota was selected as the region in which to pilot GMNF because of Southeastern Minnesota Together’s many talented members, members’ strong connections with Southeast Minnesota communities, knowledge of issues facing Southern Minnesota communities, the organization’s interest in innovative approaches to economic development, and its willingness to participate as a partner in the Pilot.

- SE MN Together played many roles in the project, including assistance with:
  - Drafting the RFP
  - Encouraging communities to answer the RFP
  - Participating in community selection discussions
  - Offering advice to the project leadership
  - Helping to set the community meeting agendas
  - Serving as facilitators and notetakers at community meetings
  - Providing feedback on the ongoing work

https://semntogether.wixsite.com/home
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
- Mission: Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) is a regional development and philanthropic organization that fosters economic and community vitality in 20 counties of southern Minnesota through a culture of collaboration and partnership.
- SMIF’s partnership role in the GMNF Pilot included:
  - Offering advice throughout the project
  - Encouraging grant submissions for consideration which align with the guidelines of our programs

Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED)
- Mission: To enhance the economic success of individuals, businesses and communities by improving opportunities for prosperity and independence.
- DEED’s role in the project included:
  - Setting up the contract with the University of Minnesota and convening the appropriated project funds to the University of Minnesota
  - Supervising the execution of the contract
  - Having regional staff advise the project leader and participate in community work

https://www.facebook.com/smifound/

https://mn.gov/deed/
Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, University of Minnesota Extension

- **Mission:** The Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (SRSDP) brings together community and University knowledge and resources to drive local sustainability in four focus areas: agriculture and food systems, clean energy, natural resources, and resilient communities.

- **SRSDP’s activities included:**
  - Helping to shape the initial form of the Pilot
  - Funding student work for project activities in Spring Grove and Wabasha
Regional Economic Development Professionals

- Economic development professionals practicing in the regional communities included:
  - Community and business development specialists
  - Staff from community and economic development associations
- Activities included:
  - Identifying community participants
  - Convening and participating in community meetings
  - Helping to shape the community development strategy
  - Partnering upon specific projects embedded in the community development strategy

State Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP): Wabasha County

- Mission: SHIP supports community-driven solutions to expand opportunities for active living, healthy eating and tobacco-free living, helping all people in Minnesota prevent chronic diseases.
- GMNF supported SHIP’s Wabasha’s efforts through its work with:
  - Website with trails connected to recreational amenities, employment centers, schools, and the business district
  - Help to seek funding to create a mobile app with the website information
  - Circulation Toolkit to empower the community to create a community circulation system

https://www.facebook.com/cedausa/

https://wabashacountyship.org/
USE OF DESIGN THINKING

https://stormz.me/en/designthinking
Design thinking’s role in GMNF

Design thinking has emerged over the last few decades as a primary innovation strategy in the private sector, and as a result, design-centric companies have performed substantially better in the marketplace than companies that have not used design thinking to improve their products and services. This pilot project sought to bring those same design thinking methods to the public sector. This seems especially relevant to economic development work, since the public sector will not attract or grow new businesses without using the same design methods and speaking the same language of innovation that have helped make so many companies successful. Minnesota needs a 21st century, design-centric approach to economic development, the value of which we have tried to demonstrate here.
Design thinking as an approach to economic development involves:

- Identifying and mapping a community’s human, natural, and cultural assets
- Engaging diverse community members in imagining new ways to leverage those assets to give it a competitive advantage in attracting talent
- Assessing the strategies most likely to produce the best results and prototyping those efforts in a rapid, low cost way
- Evaluating the success of those prototypes and the laying of a long-term strategy
- Building the capacity of the community to continue this work going forward
Design thinking differs from other economic development approaches in that it:

- Takes an asset-based approach to what a community already has rather than trying to attract new businesses through subsidies and other incentives
- Pursues an integrated, place-based strategy rather than a fragmented, program-based approach to economic development
- Leverages existing resources rather than waiting for new resources to arrive before actions can be taken
- Reinforces the unique strengths of each community rather than sounding like every other community in what it has to offer
TYING LOCAL EFFORTS TO REGIONAL STRATEGIES

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GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: SPRING GROVE

BUSINESSES TO BE SURVEYED (SPRING GROVE & SURROUNDING AREA)

Arts & Education

Spring Grove
Public Library
Spring Grove Cinema
Giants of the Earth
Heritage Center
Spring Grove Swim Center
Ye Olde Opera House
Bluff Country Artists
Gallery
Mainspring Arts Center
International Owl Center
Bar/Restaurant
Norski’s Saloon
Doc’s Blue Moose
Ivy Grove Cafe
Artisan Beverage
Winneshiek Wildberry Winery
Spring Grove Soda Pop
RockFilter Distillery
The Wired Rooster
Coffee Shop
Heart Rock Coffee
Union Valley Vineyard & Winery
Carlson Coffee Roasters

Farming/Agriculture

Humble Hands Harvest
Luna Valley Farm
Seed Savers Exchange
Stratford Farm
Shooting Star Native Seeds
Nettle Valley Farm
Hidden Springs Flower Farm
Farmers Win Co-Op (Spring Grove Loc.)
Espelien Farm
Farmers Win Co-Op (Caledonia Loc.)
Crispy Cream Dairy
Farmers Win Co-Op (Houston Loc.)

Lodging

Modern Country Cabin
Airbnb

Retail

The Sugar Shack
Mulqueen’s True Value/NAPA
Calluna
The Turquoise Tomato
Red’s IGA
Service
D&D Accounting
Spring Grove Fitness Center
Spring Grove Insurance Agency
Spring Grove Communications
Fillmore-Houston County Abstract & Title, LLC
Spring Grove Yoga
Edina Realty of Spring Grove
Trinity Lutheran Church
Kick Marketing, LLC
Becker & Stemper Electric
Thinking regionally identifies the community’s place in a larger geography, helps to recognize a wider range of potentials, and creates new local opportunities for growth and vibrancy. Small communities are often too focused upon their community and its immediate surroundings, a mindset that limits opportunities. To help communities tie these local efforts to regional strategies, we:

- Identified unique local physical and human assets, building on what communities already have. Communities are better served by leveraging underutilized resources and strengths to create development strategies that are easier, faster, and less costly to implement. Many older development models, aimed at luring businesses to town, are outmoded in this rapidly changing 21st century. For example, as their principal development strategy, many Greater Minnesota communities have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in industrial parks. While some parks have attracted the hoped-for developments, many others have not. In those communities that have attracted outside investment and a few new jobs, too often there has been a modest impact on the community's vitality and economic viability.

- Linked asset development efforts together in a community strategy for more impact. Existing community assets need to be seen and used more creatively. Adding to and linking existing assets together enhances them, increases their community impact, and adds to their individual community value. Small towns have many assets, but the impact of projects that improve these assets is often limited because they are defined as singularly focused projects instead of being seen as a part of a larger, overarching strategy.

- Assisted in identifying and pursuing existing resources that support implementing the development/redevelopment. Development and redevelopment need resources, so working with the community to explore funding opportunities, strengthen grant applications, and identify ways to leverage resources was an important part of the Pilot. Many grants are available for economic development, but often small communities have difficulty competing with larger communities that have staff to pursue grants.
Regional work

Studying the Southeast Minnesota region included:

• Surveying marketing messages on community websites
• Reviewing economic development literature
• Reviewing tourism materials
• Reviewing DEED’s studies, programs, and past projects
• Reviewing county and community profiles
• Reviewing the history of post office consolidations
• Studying school district consolidations
• Meeting with regional residents
• Conferring with project partners
• Touring the communities
• Creating regional maps (see pages 22-29) that were intended to:
  • Serve as a tool for community selection
  • Inform an understanding of the relationships among the individual communities and the region's natural and cultural landscapes
  • Create resources for future use by the region and its communities
GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: SOUTHEAST INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMUNITY POPULATIONS

GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: SOUTHEAST INFRASTRUCTURE

ECOLOGY

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry. Ecological Sections of Minnesota. 2014.

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EDUCATIONAL SITES

![Map of Southeast Infrastructure Educational Sites]


Legend:
- Regional Center
- Public K-12
- Public Post-Secondary
- Private K-12
- Private Post-Secondary
- Other School

- Hydrology
- School District Boundary
- County Road
- State Hway
- Interstate Highway

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CLOSER TO DESIGN // MINNESOTA
GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: SOUTHEAST INFRASTRUCTURE

ROADS & RAILROADS

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION: ROADS AND RAILROADS 2013
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - LAND MANAGEMENT: ABANDONED RAILROADS 2015
GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: SOUTHEAST INFRASTRUCTURE

SOIL CONDITIONS

Community selection process

We worked with SE MN Together to identify the three communities for this pilot. We focused on communities of 5,000 or less in Blue Earth, Brown, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Le Sueur, Martin, Mower, Nicollet, Olmsted, Rice, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, and Watonwan Counties. We:

- Developed a request for proposals and sent it to all communities of 5,000 or less in the 20 county region
- Received applications from 14 communities
- Shared applications with SE MN Together and asked for feedback
- Reviewed community descriptions, histories, and current situations
- Visited all the communities
- Consulted SE MN Together members on the community selection
- Selected three different cities representing three types of challenges facing small Greater Minnesota communities

Pilot communities selected

14 communities applied. After reviewing the applications, we selected three communities representing three different situations and economic development opportunities. The communities selected are:

- **Grand Meadow** (1,164 population, 2010): A former agricultural center with a strong school, now a growing suburb of Rochester and Austin, surrounded by large farms.
- **Spring Grove** (1,330 population, 2010): An isolated former agricultural center with strong social capital and a 3.5% projected population decline.
- **Wabasha** (2,521 population, 2010): A county seat possessing many environmental and recreational amenities and located on the Minnesota/Wisconsin border within commuting distance to three regional centers.

Community meetings

In partnership with SE MN Together, we led a series of initial meetings with all three communities, involving their leadership as well as members of the public. At these meetings, MDC staff:

- Presented an overview of the Greater Minnesota Futures Pilot
- Described the design thinking approach to development and redevelopment
- Showed the regional and city maps that we had developed
- Solicited small group discussants to volunteer for the community working groups
- Worked with SE MN Together to:
  - Facilitate small group discussions led by volunteers from SE MN Together
  - Ask group members to answer questions drafted by MDC and SE MN Together
  - Ask community participants to identify their community assets

Community working groups

Volunteers and officials participated in these working groups in each community.

The work of the first meeting included:

- Reviewing the Design Thinking approach to community development and redevelopment
- Reviewing maps of the community developed by MDC
- Discussing previously-identified assets and adding to the list of assets
- Listening to input on a number of the challenges facing the community

Subsequent meetings included:

- Presentation and discussion of materials summarizing previous group work
- Presentation and discussion of asset-based opportunities that integrated several assets while addressing community challenges
- Presentation and discussion of a potential economic development strategy based on community assets, challenges, and the opportunities identified
- Affirmation of the suggested strategy
- Discussion of a number of specific directions to pursue and the community leadership and potential resources needed to move them forward
- Identification of the priorities to be addressed
APPLYING DESIGN THINKING TO IDENTIFIED ISSUES

GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: GRAND MEADOW (WIP_1/17/19)
CIRCULATION

[Diagram of Grand Meadow, focusing on circulation patterns with various labeled elements such as schools, parks, and streets.]

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Lack of pedestrian/cyclist system:  
*Making a toolkit for an effective, safe circulation system (Grand Meadow, Spring Grove, Wabasha)*

**Background:** Each of the communities identified a safe pedestrian/bicycle circulation system as a community need. Although sidewalks were often a part of each of their community’s infrastructure as they developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, sidewalks today were seen as a community problem. Often sidewalks were deteriorating and in need of replacement or expensive repair, and many older homeowners found the need for snow shoveling to be burdensome. Existing sidewalk systems were fragmented and did not connect to important community destinations such as schools and employment centers, nor did they provide for carpool pickups. Sidewalks did not exist along many streets in neighborhoods beyond the city’s historic core. Newer neighborhoods have been developed with a suburban model, using cul-de-sacs and other development patterns that could not accommodate the insertion of a sidewalk system. The solution some communities were pursuing was to rip up sidewalks, but this did not address the need for a circulation system.

**Response:** The Pilot developed a Circulation System Toolkit for use by each community. Community streets were mapped for their widths and right of ways. The community would identify which streets would be part of a street-based circulation system that would accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians on the street. The kit consists of a number of road sections, a map marking road widths, and suggestions for gathering places for carpools or school bus pickups. See page 102 for the toolkit.

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Circulation Toolkit, p. 102

**3. On-Street Trails**
Changing agriculture:
Supporting regional artisanal farmers (Spring Grove)

**Background:** Young people are moving into the area to raise families and become farmers that produce artisan agricultural products. Spring Grove and the broader Houston County area also have several beverage producers. At the community and Driftless Grown meetings, young, energetic families expressed enthusiasm for their new artisan farming efforts and asked for assistance in support of the growing number of artisan farming operations being created in Houston County.

**Response:** Support for the Driftless Grown group. Work included a survey (see page 108) of artisanal food producers in Houston County, in order to identify them and their needs, and forming a connection to the University of Minnesota Extension Service for further assistance.

Child care shortage:
Increasing child care opportunities (Grand Meadow)

**Background:** Lack of childcare facilities and options for families were identified as concerns in Grand Meadow and Wabasha.

**Response:** As part of Professor Fisher’s grand challenge course “Global Venture Design,” a group of students at the University of Minnesota developed a strategy and business model to address the child care needs of small, rural communities. Called “Care Share,” their proposal, which they hope to pilot in Grand Meadow, involves engaging the community’s elderly population to provide child care for the children of the communities’ working families. This project is in the process of being reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at the University as well as the regulators of child care services at the state level, but once that process is complete, Care Share plans to initiate the program and evaluate its results as a possible model that other rural communities in Minnesota might adopt. See page 100 for the Care Share initiative.
Concern for highway safety:
*Modifying hazardous conditions on highways running through rural communities (Wabasha, Grand Meadow)*

**Background:** Grand Meadow’s K-12 school is located on State Highway 16. When the school was being built, the speed limit was lowered in order to accommodate truck access to the construction site. When the construction was complete and the new building was occupied by students and staff, the speed limit was again increased. The school is developing a technical program with a local business, also located on Highway 16, that will require students to cross the highway. Highway 16’s intersection with County Road 8 is the busiest in town. County Road 8 is the commuting route to Rochester, and it is a popular crossing for young people walking to the nearby pizza shop. The city’s many attempts to lower Highway 16’s speed limit and reconfigure the intersection have not been successful.

In Wabasha, Highway 60’s 90-degree turn at the bridgehead provides conditions for a tragedy waiting to happen. A truck could easily slide into the spectators watching the game in the playing field at the foot of the bridgehead.

**Responses:** Grand Meadow officials and GMNF have been advocating for lowered speed limits with MnDOT. GMNF has also redesigned the intersection of State Highway 16 and County Road 8 to make crossing the highway to the popular pizza place safer for the many young people that cross the highway frequently. See pages 50-51 for potential highway redesign options.

In Wabasha, the city, the county, and MnDOT are working to move the ballfield and reroute the highway to make it safer, avoid frequent closings during high water, and improve the entry into town. See pages 75-77 for potential highway redesign options.

https://iowahighwayends.net/ends/ia60.html
Lack of lodging for visitors:  
*Creating a 21st century lodging strategy (Spring Grove)*

**Background:** The closing of the one small motel in Spring Grove has left the city without a hotel or motel. A campground and one Airbnb are currently available to visitors seeking lodging in the community.

**Response:** Encouraging short term rentals. Since short term rentals are growing in popularity in communities of all sizes worldwide, GMNF suggested that the city encourage more residents to consider running a short term rental unit in their homes.

Decline of small town friendliness due to lack of connections:  
*Strengthening and increasing connections among residents (Grand Meadow)*

**Background:** Most small towns market themselves as friendly places to live. However, new residents often do not feel welcome or accepted by residents that have known each other and lived in the community all their lives. Declining church participation and families without school-aged children have weakened the roles that churches and schools have played in integrating newcomers into the community, eroding the friendliness that has historically been a hallmark of small town life.

**Response:** Game and pizza night. Grand Meadow is currently pursuing creating monthly pizza and game nights, which will bring young and old, new and long residents to play board games and eat pizza together as a welcoming community to strengthen its small town friendliness. See page 106 for the game night plan.
Future of healthcare facility, the workforce, and the high school:
Building on existing assets to create opportunity and strengthen these assets (Wabasha)

Background: Wabasha identified three major concerns that the Pilot combined to address. Those concerns included:

- The future of its healthcare facility. Prior to the start of the Pilot, Mayo announced it would be leaving its partnership with St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center in Wabasha. This was a great blow to the city, since St. Elizabeth’s is its largest employer and is perceived as vital to the city’s future growth and development. It is also important as a statewide issue, as many other rural hospitals and medical facilities are facing closure and/or transfer of medical services to larger regional centers impacting access to healthcare in rural Minnesota.
- Maintaining the quality of their high school. As the population ages, the city wants to make sure that the Wabasha/Kellogg High School remains an asset important to both communities’ futures.
- Workforce availability. Because the population is aging, there is concern about the availability of workers, particularly skilled workers.

Response: The Pilot combined three assets to address these concerns:
In order to strengthen the high school’s curriculum, the school district is pursuing the creation of a nurse’s assistant post-secondary technical program. A partnership between St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center, Wabasha/Kellogg High School, and Minnesota State College (Red Wing) is being formed to support the effort. It seeks to use the State’s post-secondary education option as a vehicle for this program offered by the high school.

The creation of the high school nurse’s assistant program with its training connected to St Elizabeth’s will strengthen both the high school and the medical facility, while addressing workforce concerns by providing future workers to the medical facility.
Lack of knowledge of community amenities: Providing a tool to promote living in the community and to more effectively benefit from its many visitors (Wabasha)

Background: Wabasha has many visitors, with over 80,000 people visiting the National Eagle Center annually and many others visiting its recreational amenities, yet the community has not reaped the full benefits of its visitors to market it as a good place to live and to support its local businesses. National Eagle Center visitors often ask what else there is to do in Wabasha. Because of the dispersed amenities, visitors do not have easy access to Wabasha’s many assets.

Response: Created web app. Citizens, city officeholders, business owners, and University students supported by the Southeast Regional Sustainable Partnerships collaborated to create a web-based information tool that maps and interprets Wabasha’s many dispersed assets and encourages biking, walking, and driving to them.

The web app can be viewed at: https://bit.ly/2LzKz1P
Issues raised but not addressed

Support for civic volunteer activities (All): Small communities are run by volunteers. As women have entered the workforce, volunteerism has diminished; and there is a great need for a community support system to maintain volunteer activity and the social capital generated by volunteer work.

Workforce housing need (All): Although the need for workforce housing was raised, this issue was not addressed directly by the Pilot because it is a statewide issue impacting both rural and urban communities that needs to be addressed on a statewide level with substantial investments and incentives. Workforce housing was addressed indirectly in discussions about the need for housing development patterns that support pedestrians, bicyclists, and future transit users.

Other issues raised and currently being pursued

Rural community transit system need (All): Most of the transit available in Southeastern Minnesota serves elderly and low income clients and is funded by social service funding sources. Many other needs are not being met, such as workforce needs for commuting to jobs. Minnesota has a program to fund transit in rural communities. The transit model is based upon a 20th century urban model, not a model that has widely dispersed riders and destinations. This program is underutilized by rural communities because it does not serve its communities’ needs, and MnDOT’s transit program requires a 20% local match. Many communities do not have the resources and/or the will to invest in transit that does not meet their needs. MDC is currently working with MnDOT to develop a 21st century rural community transit pilot project in Southeastern Minnesota.

Mobile app (Wabasha): To fully take advantage of the web material developed for Wabasha’s residents and visitors, a mobile app needs to be developed to facilitate its use on cell phones so that it can be used while moving around the community. Currently funding for the creation of the mobile app by an MDC-supervised University of Minnesota graduate student is being pursued by Wabasha.
SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES
Grand Meadow: A Family-Friendly Community
Builds on its identity as a “suburb” surrounded by agricultural fields and the importance of the school

- Game and pizza nights (see page 106): Connecting new and long-time residents as an intergenerational strategy for strengthening social capital
  - Board games at Community Center
  - Pizza dinner for $5
  - Pizza before game on basketball and football game nights, with school buses provided for out of town games
- Circulation Toolkit (see page 102): Addressing need for a safe walking and biking system
  - Road sections
  - Gathering places for commuting carpools and school bus stops
  - Routes determined through community process
- Improving safety on Highway 16
  - Seeking to reduce the speed limit from the school to west of County Road 8
  - Seeking support and funding from MnDOT for the redesign of State Highway 60/County Road 8 intersection to make crossing safer (see pages 50-51 for the draft designs)
- Addressing child care needs
  - Care Share Initiative (see page 100)

GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: GRAND MEADOW

REQUEST FOR CHANGES TO HIGHWAY 16

- Proposed pedestrian-operated traffic signal
- Current reduced-speed zone (45 mph)
- *Due to be increased to 60 mph
- Proposed reduced-speed zone (45 mph)

- Sidewalk
- Crosswalk
- City Boundary
- Parcel
- Local Street
- Building

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GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES

GRAND MEADOW & REGION: COMMUNITY ASSETS

COMMUNITY ASSET

1. Target
2. Apache Mall
3. Walmart
4. Fleet Farm
5. Dollar General
6. Valley Farm & Home Service
7. Childcare 1
8. Childcare 2
9. Le Roy Lines Bus Stop
10. Bank
11. USPS
12. GM Vet Clinic
13. SV Public Library
14. Fire Station
15. Salon & Spa
16. Community Center
17. Skenke Bom Lounge
18. Dinner
19. Costco
20. Aldi
21. Trader Joe’s
22. Engvold’s Fresh Foods
23. Main St. Market Place
24. Mayo, St. Mary’s Campus
25. SV Dental
26. SV Optic
27. St. Olaf Pharmacy
28. GM Senior Living
29. Meadows Assisted Living

BOUNDARY

- County
- City
- Other
- State Park
- Hydrology

ROAD

- Interstate
- County/State
- Local

GROCERY

- Main St. Market Place
- SV Area Ambulance
- St. Olaf Pharmacy
- GM Vet Clinic
- SV Dental
- SV Optic
- Mayo, St. Mary’s Campus
- SV Optic
- St. Olaf Pharmacy
- GM Senior Living
- Meadows Assisted Living

MINNESOTA DESIGN CENTER

31-30-26-1-18

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES // GRAND MEADOW
SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES // GRAND MEADOW

GRAND MEADOW COMMUNITY INTERSECTION
existing conditions

- right of way
- existing curbs
- road widths
- 2-way stop
- overhead power lines
- existing pavement markings
- undefined entries
- existing sidewalk

community asset

HIGHWAY 16

HIGHWAY 16

STOP

STOP

80'

80'

100'
GRAND MEADOW COMMUNITY INTERSECTION
opportunity a: maintain existing road widths

- defined entries near intersection make traffic safer
- crosswalks and connection to community hub provide safe car-free transit opportunities
- 2-way stop sign, 4 way pedestrian marking for safer crossings
- low gateway plantings define intersection
- planted multi-use trail to highschool
- 2 sided community gateway sign
- sidewalk extended to connect community assets
- existing road width allows for on-street buffer separated bike lanes
- sidewalk connects to multi-use trail
- street tree plantings provide shade and indicate main connection to downtown
GRAND MEADOW COMMUNITY INTERSECTION

opportunity b: altering road widths

defined entries near intersection make traffic safer

crosswalks and connection to community hub provide safe car-free transit opportunities

2-way stop sign, 4 way pedestrian marking for safer crossings

low gateway plantings define intersection

planted multi-use trail to highschool

2 sided community gateway sign can extend across highway

bump out cubes narrow street crossings and provide more space for community planting and gateway identity markers

off-street multi-use trail

alternate on-street protected bikeway

street tree plantings provide shade and indicate main connection to downtown
Spring Grove: Embracing Regional Artisanal Beverages, Food and Agriculture

*Broadens the scope of Spring Grove’s focus, recognizing the city as part of a network of artisan assets*

- The Pilot worked to strengthen the Driftless Grown Network of young artisanal farmers by:
  - Creating a survey distributed to local businesses, designed to determine current efforts and needs of the artisanal economy in Houston County (see page 108)
  - Providing groundwork for future Minnesota’s Extension support of regional small-scale agriculture
- Circulation Toolkit (see page 102): Addressing need for a safe walking and biking system
  - Road sections
  - Community to determine route

https://www.facebook.com/sgsoda/photos/a.321982634516583/1499781110070057/?type=1&theater
ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Assets - Buildings**
1. Spring Grove Public School
2. Trinity Lutheran Church
3. Spring Grove Swim Center
4. Soda Pop Company

**Assets - District**
- Main Street (Downtown)

**Assets - Open Spaces**
7. Trollskogen Park
8. Blue Water-Eagles Memorial Field
9. Roverud Park
10. New Building Park
11. Viking Memorial Park
12. Spring Grove Swim Center

**Opportunities - Lodging**
7. Trollskogen Park
9. Roverud Park
10. Village House Hotel
11. Lynx Inn

**Opportunities - Arts and Culture**
2. Trinity Center
3. Trollskogen Park
8. Blue Water-Eagles Memorial Park
9. Roverud Park
11. Viking Memorial Park
12. Spring Grove Swim Center
13. Spring Grove Swim Center Heritage Center
14. Ye Olde Opera House
15. Mud Country Artists Gallery

**Hydrology**
- Flood Plain
- City Boundary
- Parcel
- Street
- Building
- Incredible Railroad
- Topography
- Barrier
- Sidewalk
- Crosswalk

MINNESOTA DESIGN CENTER
CO.LAB 3-1954 Mistletoe Street

GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: SPRING GROVE (WIP_11/19/18)
ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES + PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

**Assets - Buildings**
1. Spring Grove Public School
2. Trinity Center
3. Trinity Lutheran Church
4. Spring Grove Swim Center
5. Soda Pop Company

**Assets - District**
6. Main Street (Downtown)

**Assets - Open Spaces**
7. Trollskogen Park
8. Blayne Onsgaard Memorial Field
9. Roverud Park
10. Viking Memorial Park
11. Spring Grove Swim Center

**Opportunities - Lodging**
12. Trollskogen Park
13. Roverud Park
14. Village House Motel
15. Lyng Holand (Old Hospital)

**Opportunities - Arts and Culture**
16. Trinity Center
17. Trollskogen Park
18. Blayne Onsgaard Memorial Park
19. Roverud Park
20. Viking Memorial Park
21. Spring Grove Cinema
22. Giants of the Earth Heritage Center
23. Ye Bluff Opera House
24. Bluff Country Arts Gallery

**Hydrology**
- Flood Plain

**City Boundaries**
- Parcel

**Building**
- Inactive Railroad

**Topography**

**Barrier**

**Sidewalk**

**Crosswalk**

**Main Street Crossing**

**Pedestrian Circulation**

**Norwegian Ridge Birding and Nature Trail**

**Viking Ridge Rider Unimproved Trail**

**SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES // SPRING GROVE**

**MINNESOTA DESIGN CENTER**

**54 // UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA—MINNESOTA DESIGN CENTER**
SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES // SPRING GROVE

BUSINESSES TO BE SURVEYED (SPRING GROVE & SURROUNDING AREA)

Arts & Education
1. Spring Grove Public Library
2. Spring Grove Cinema
3. Giants of the Earth Heritage Center
4. Spring Grove Swim Center
5. Ye Olde Opera House
6. Bluff Country Arts Gallery
7. Mainspring Arts Center

Arts & Education Center

Arts & Restaurant
10. Doc’s Blue Moose
11. Ivy Grove Cafe

Arts & Beverages
12. Winneshiek Wildberry Winery
13. Spring Grove Soda Pop
14. RockFilter Distillery
15. The Blind Rooster Coffee Shop
16. Heart Rock Coffee
17. Union Valley Vineyard & Winery
18. Carlson Coffee Roasters

Farming & Agriculture
19. Humble Hands Harvest
20. Seed Savers Exchange
21. Shooting Star Native Seeds
22. Hidden Valley Farm
23. Farmers Win Co-op (Spring Grove Loc.)
24. Esperia Farm
25. Farmers Win Co-op (Caledonia Loc.)
26. Grumpy Cream Dairy
27. Farmers Win Co-op (Houston Loc.)

Lodging
31. Modern Country Cabin

Retail
32. The Sugar Shack
33. Mulqueen’s True Value
34. Collana
35. The Tangerine Tomato
36. Red’s IGA

Service
37. D&D Accounting
38. Spring Grove Fitness Center
39. Spring Grove Insurance Agency
40. Spring Grove Communications
41. Fillmore-Houston County Abstract & Title, LLC
42. Spring Grove Yoga
43. Edina Realty of Spring Grove
44. Trinity Lutheran Church
45. Kick Marketing, LLC
46. Becker & Stemper Electric
Wabasha: An Active Living River Town
Promotes living in Wabasha through its proximity to recreational and environmental amenities, its closeness to regional job centers, and its many visitors

- The Pilot worked to strengthen Wabasha’s identity as a river town through design by:
  - Creating a city drawing that affirms its identity as a river town (see page 66)
  - Creating a design for rerouting Highway 60 (see pages 75-77) to:
    - Eliminate bridgehead safety hazard
    - Relocate active ballfields on higher, non-flooding land to offer other recreational amenities
    - Eliminate seasonal closure of Highway 60 due to flooding at the railroad viaduct
  - Creating a design that increases public waterfront access and reclaims the Zumbro Slough (see pages 78-79), including:
    - Dredge slough to improve water quality, improve and increase bird and fish habitat, and increase value of developable and recreational lands contiguous to the slough
    - Create public paths that connect existing parks to improve and increase public access and increase the slough’s value as a recreational amenity

Zumbro Slough opportunities, p. 78
Wabasha: An Active Living River Town (continued)

- Expanding historic focus
  - Broaden the current focus on the historic downtown
  - Include the historic landscape in a wider historic focus to create many opportunities to partner with the US Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Natural Resources to interpret and celebrate the landscape changes that the engineering of the Mississippi and Zumbro Rivers offers

- Using a Circulation Toolkit (see page 102): Addresses need for a safe walking and biking system that connects dispersed residential neighborhoods, schools, employment centers and recreational assets, including:
  - Road sections
  - Gathering places
  - Routes to be determined by the community

- Addressing child care need through the Care Share Initiative (see page 100)
Wabasha: An Active Living River Town (continued)

- Potential Bird City designation (see page 72) leverages the presence of the National Eagle Center by:
  - Participating in Audubon program
  - Expanding birding opportunities for residents and National Eagle Center visitors
- Pursuing a pilot for rural transit in partnership with MnDOT. Currently MDC and MnDOT are discussing a rural community transit pilot project in Wabasha, which would use 21st technology and existing transportation to provide a comprehensive transit service for Wabasha/Kellogg
- Strengthening the high school, the medical center, and the available workforce through the creation of:
  - Nurse’s assistant program at Wabasha/Kellogg High School
  - Partnerships: St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center, Wabasha/Kellogg High School, Minnesota State College Southeast (Red Wing)
SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES // WABASHA

GREATER MINNESOTA'S FUTURES: WABASHA (wip_1)

CIRCULATION

National Park Service - U.S. Department of Interior. Wabasha Walks: A Historic Tour. 2018

MINNESOTA DESIGN CENTER
COLLEGE of DESIGN - UMN
GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: WABASHA (wip_1)

DREDGED SITES

Historic Sites
1. Reads Landing
2. Craz Island
3. Teepeesota
4. Grand Encampment

Existing Sites
5. Wabasha Gravel Pit
6. Wabasha Sand and Gravel 2
7. Carrel’s East
8. Carrel’s West
9. Southside Fitzgerald
10. Alma Marina
11. Drysdale
12. Drysdale Farms
13. Weisenbeck West
14. Flury East (Off Map)

Proposed Sites
15. Wabasha Sand and Gravel 1
16. Wabasha Sand and Gravel ARC Pit
17. Wabasha Ball Fields
18. Mosquito Field
19. Wabasha Sand and Gravel Residential
20. Stegemann and Dondlinger
21. Burrichter
22. Lock and Dam 4

W.W. Hixson & Co., Plat Book of the State of Minnesota, Wabasha County and City of Wabasha (Published in Rockford, IL). 1916.
Wabasha: An Active Living River Town
James Pettinari, Pettinari Design
1. TRAIL NETWORK SECTION STRATEGIES

DEVELOP A TOOL KIT OF STRATEGIES THAT ACCOMMODATE WALKING, BIKING, HIKING, PARKING, AND DRIVING THROUGHOUT THE NETWORK

2. OLD ZUMBRO RIVER CORRIDOR DESIGN

DEVELOP RIVER CORRIDOR DESIGN CONCEPTS BASED ON THE ECOLOGICAL RIVER, COMMERCIAL RIVER, AND RECREATIONAL RIVER THEMES

- BIRD FOCUSED HABITAT RESTORATION
- RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONNECTIONS
- WATER QUALITY RESTORATION
- ZUMBRO RIVER TRAILHEAD
- RE-DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY
- STATE HIGHWAY RE-ALIGNMENT
- FLOOD MITIGATION STRATEGIES

CONNECTIONS TO REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK

CONNECTION TO HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

DREDGE PLACEMENT STRATEGIES
INTERPRETIVE RIVER THEME:
ecological river
INTERPRETIVE RIVER THEME:
commercial river
INTERPRETIVE RIVER THEME:
recreational river
INTERPRETIVE RIVER THEME:
interpreted river

POTENTIAL CONNECTIVE, GATHERING, AND INTERPRETIVE SITES

1. NATIONAL EAGLE CENTER SITE
2. OLD ZUMBRO RIVER TRAILHEAD
3. WING DAMS AND WATER SITE
4. RIVER BOTTOM MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK
5. FARMS AND PRAIRIE HABITAT SITE
6. OLD RIVERBED WETLAND WALK
7. WINDROW HOLLOW EDUCATIONAL AMPITHEATER
8. WABASHA OVERLOOK
9. WILCOX LANDING SITE
10. ZUMBRO RIVER BOTTOM SITE
11. SAINT ELIZABETH’S HISTORICAL SITE
12. OLD PONTOON BRIDGE AT REED’S LANDING SITE
WABASHA:
possible bird city designation initiative
SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES // WABASHA

ZUMBRO SLOUGH/HIGHWAY 60 REALIGNMENT
existing conditions
ZUMBRO SLOUGH/HIGHWAY 60 REALIGNMENT

Diagram study a1

WABASHA: AN ACTIVE LIVING RIVER TOWN

Project Planning Committee: Emily Durand, Brian Fries, Craig Falkum, Tom Smith, Nancy Fulkum, Tom Fisher & Mary Vogel
ZUMBRO SLOUGH
opportunities for development & redevelopment

WABASHA: AN ACTIVE LIVING RIVER TOWN

- enhanced streetscape connections to adjacent businesses and services
- placed dredge fill elevates development above floodplain banks - create private residential settings
- multi-family housing with internal circulation limits traffic issues
- mixed-use spaces located above floodplain - additional off street parking, stormwater treatment, and street front visibility
- rain gardens treat stormwater and protect Zumbro Slough water quality

- extending highway 60 through the site increases traffic safety and simplifies connections to downtown
- dredge-made hill mimics nearby bluffs and provide overlook experiences while storing additional dredge material
- a combination of riparian edge restoration and water aeration cleans the slough and increases habitat quality
- trailhead orients users to city recreational opportunities, accessible path connects to Zumbro Slough
- large, flexible gathering space provides opportunities for programming like sledding, festivals, and events
ZUMBRO SLOUGH

greenspace connections

WABASHA: AN ACTIVE LIVING RIVER TOWN

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES // WABASHA
Recommendations based on lessons learned, opportunities & challenges identified

Strengthen the link between high school and technical education
Quality local schools draw and retain community residents and provide a focal point of community activity while preparing young people for the next chapter in their lives. Linking education offered by local high schools by partnering with technical programs offered at many locations of the Minnesota State College System throughout Greater Minnesota could both improve educational opportunities and help meet workforce needs.

Improve internet access
As access to technology becomes more and more important to a thriving 21st century life, Minnesota has made many investments in the internet, so many communities have robust internet service. However, others lack internet service and some do not have the modest resources to fund connections to the existing internet. A program that expands internet service and provides the modest funding needed for connections to existing internet networks would help sustain activity in small town centers.

Use internet-based communication strategies for lodging
Small towns desire and need places for visitors to stay, yet often they do not generate the business needed to sustain a motel or hotel. Create a community-based Airbnb-like lodging strategy that accommodates visitors and provides extra income for residents.

https://www.shareable.net/how-to-improve-your-communitys-internet-connectivity/
Use internet-based communication strategies to create small community transit

Greater Minnesota is underserved by transit; few communities have transit services. The prevalent transit model is urban: it is based on concentrations of riders and destinations. Although MnDOT has a funding program that promotes transit in Greater Minnesota communities, the program is underutilized because it doesn’t serve disbursed riders and destinations. Some communities that could afford to invest in transit do not feel that the required 20% match is worth the investment. Other hard-pressed communities do not have the funding required. Greater Minnesota communities have another kind of transit system: the school bus system. School buses sit idle for hours during the day, week-ends, and the summer months. Using Uber-like technology and transforming the school transit system into a community transit system that uses school buses and cars could meet intergenerational transit needs. Increasing the hours that bus drivers work may increase the attractiveness of the job. Funds set aside for school buses could be used for the required 20% match for state transit funding.

Encourage housing patterns that promote walking/cycling and accommodate transit

Since World War II, neighborhood development patterns have favored cars and have slighted walking, biking, and transit. These patterns have isolated neighborhoods, added to the cost of providing school bus routes, made creating community transit routes more difficult, and discouraged healthy exercise. Creating walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly residential neighborhoods strengthens communities as desirable places to live.

Promote safe walking and cycling

Many Greater Minnesota communities need better circulation systems for pedestrians and bicyclists. Very few communities have bicycle systems, and sidewalks are crumbling or non-existent. There are issues with snow removal on sidewalks by older residents’ homes, and the state highways that go through the communities are dangerous to cross. Many have state highways running through their downtowns and past their schools. Retrofitting selected streets for pedestrian and bicycle use and partnering with MnDOT to create strategic pedestrian crossings on state highways can create a usable and safe community circulation system.

Encourage development patterns that make use of underutilized land

20th century land use patterns encouraged car-dependent sprawling residential, commercial, and industrial developments that required expensive investments in large sewer, water, and road systems and created underutilized lands. Developing underutilized lands with compact development strategies utilizes existing infrastructure and lowers the cost of any needed new infrastructure and facilitates transit, pedestrian, and bicycle systems.

Encourage community friendliness

Small towns see themselves as friendly, but the flip side of a close-knit community is that often newcomers do not feel welcome. Newcomers are important to community life. Aside from consuming goods and services and helping school enrollment, they also add new energy and ideas to the community. Cross-generational and newcomer/old timer efforts to engage community members strengthen the community.
Support civic volunteer efforts
Most small towns are rich in social capital because they are run by volunteers. The volunteer civic work previously done by women, which has been so important to small town community life, is currently under pressure with many more women entering the workforce. Currently fathers and mothers are also stretched by work and family, so the vitality of civic clubs and other efforts that contributed so much to community life are threatened. To support community efforts and keep the civic social capital vibrant, a new community position is needed: a part-time local resident providing administrative support to service clubs, scouting programs, civic events, etc.

Engage seniors in paid and volunteer civic work
Many small towns have aging populations with many seniors. Too often seniors are seen as consumers of services, particularly medical services, and not as community assets. Often small towns have no or very limited staff to pursue development strategies, but they have residents with social capital to contribute if engaged. Many seniors can bring commitment to the community, insights, expertise, energy, and know-how to economic development strategies. Seniors and the skills and knowledge they possess are vital to small communities’ futures. Communities are enhanced when they develop strategies to engage the talents and energies of seniors in community work.

https://medium.com/galaxy-digital/why-senior-volunteers-are-vital-to-your-organization-b7168da8d36d
Project recommendations

The Pilot demonstrated the effectiveness of using the design thinking approach in small Greater Minnesota communities.

Suggested changes to the work include:
- Incorporating interviews with finalist communities into the community selection process
- Scheduling the work to last for three years, to make working with a community and a number of other state, regional, and local programs easier because local decision-making, connections between and among entities, and resource identification all take time

Suggested needs identified by the work include:
- Small changes in highways that pass through small communities could make a big difference in the community’s livability. Having a MnDOT program that cities could access for help in making needed changes would be very helpful.
- The volunteer nature of civic work needs to be recognized for the contributions volunteers make to small town community life; volunteers are a vital part of community infrastructure. Currently volunteer activities are under stress that threatens their future. Exhaustion with civic work was expressed by many long-time and new volunteers. Support in the form of a part-time employee who assists community groups in scheduling meetings and events, locating resources, etc. is needed for volunteer activities to continue to thrive.
Next steps

The Greater Minnesota Futures pilot project did not receive the state appropriation needed to continue this work and to expand it to other communities across the state. MDC is seeking other sources of funding from the state, philanthropies, and local government, because we believe that this is what 21st century economic development looks like and what small communities across Minnesota need in order to thrive.

We are also bringing this work into the classroom, with the principal investigator co-teaching a “grand challenge” course with Greater Minnesota as its focus. The class will look at community and economic development strategies for smaller cities in the state, as the Care Share group did in last year’s class, and we hope that other entrepreneurial ideas and business plans will emerge from the class this year.

We continue to stay involved with the partnerships we have developed as part of this pilot. For example, we will keep working with Wabasha around the transportation issues that arose from this process and around the educational and workforce training ideas that came from conversations between the city’s superintendent and medical community.

As an anchor institution in the state, the University of Minnesota is committed to the economic success of the entire state, including small towns as well as big cities. While the MDC no longer has the money to fund this work at a level that we and our partners would like, we will continue to look for ways to help Greater Minnesota pursue the diverse futures that will enable it to thrive.
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Southeast Minnesota Futures Pilot Project: Application for Participation

Project Partners
- Southeast Minnesota Together
- Minnesota Design Center, College of Design, University of Minnesota
- Selected Southeastern Minnesota Communities

A Pilot Project
Supported with seed funding from the Minnesota Legislature, the pilot will work with selected Southeastern Minnesota communities to demonstrate the value of Greater Minnesota Futures work in creating efforts to strengthen small, rural communities and position them for a 21st century future. The work will document the value added by this work and develop a replicable model that can be developed into a program that can annually serve two to four Greater Minnesota communities.

Project Description
Greater Minnesota has a tremendous number of assets – human capabilities, economic strengths, and environmental resources – upon which to build its future. This effort focuses on how small town communities can creatively leverage their relatively untapped social, economic, and physical capital to envision a path forward that supports and enhances its vitality and identity while responding to 21st century technological and demographic changes.

The project goal is to partner with local communities within the Southeastern Minnesota region to identify 21st century strategic efforts that narrow the gap between the planning and grant obtaining resources of large metro areas and the resources available to small communities in Greater Minnesota to create efforts that increase their community and regional impact, get more value from public investments, encourage private investments, and reflect 21st century opportunities and challenges.

As the state’s land-grant university, the University of Minnesota is dedicated to supporting the prosperity and well-being of Minnesota’s citizens and communities. The capabilities to assist Greater Minnesota communities in Design Thinking that includes:
- Community capacity building with a focus on social, economic, and physical assets and resource management.
- Asset and challenge identification.
- Creation of strategies that leverage existing assets and address the challenges within a local and regional context.
- Design expertise to assist communities build upon their existing strengths and minimize their challenges to promote:
  - Community responses to 21st century demographic and technological changes;
  - Sustainable landscapes, building reuse, and building design within communities;
  - Housing development that supports current and future needs;
  - Natural resource enhancement;
  - Healthy lifestyles that address public health issues such as obesity; and
  - Strengthened community identity.
- Identification of potential funding sources for implementation of the strategies.
- Grant-writing support to assist communities compete for the available project funding.
Project Selection Timetable:
• Applications accepted until May 20, 2018
• Community selection: June 1, 2018.
• Community work started June 2, 2108

Eligibility
• Community eligibility includes Southeastern Minnesota communities that:
  • Are being affected by 21st century job creation patterns, development efforts, settlement patterns, and population concentrations;
  • Are motivated to identify and embrace their existing assets;
  • Are willing to respond to potential development/redevelopment trends to proactively create their 21st century futures;
  • Are cities that have a population of 5,000 or less (U.S. 2010 Census);
  • Are located within the twenty county Southeastern Minnesota Region: Blue Earth, Brown, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue Houston, Le Sueur, Martin, Mower, Nicollet, Olmsted, Rice, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, Winona.

Note: a single city or a group of cities under 5,000 that wish to work together are eligible. The total population of the group of cities may exceed 5,000.

Community Selection
The pilot community or communities will be selected based upon the community’s:
• Willingness to participate in a citizen-driven, community driven community/University/ Southeast Minnesota Together partnership that addresses their future;
• Needs;
• Assets, potentials, and challenges;
• Community support for the project; and
• Ability to start in June.

Exclusions
Ineligible communities include:
• Communities outside the twenty-county area, and
• Communities larger than 5,000 (2010 census).

For further information or questions regarding the application contact:
Mary Vogel, Minnesota Design Center
vogel001@umn.edu
(651) 433-5952 or (651) 341-7971
Community Application

City/Cities Names:
Street or post office box:
County, zip code:
Email:
Phone:
Fax:
Website (if applicable):
Contact person:

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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Willingness to participate in a citizen-driven, community driven community/University/Southeast Minnesota Together partnership that addresses their future

Sample of community needs

Assets, potentials, and challenges.

List samples of community assets, potentials and challenges

We will meet with the project partners team June. Yes___ No____

Attach any letters of community support

List potential members of a working committee from your community:
Name, interest, background
RFP Response: Amboy

Applicant Contact Information:
Name: Lisa Lindberg
Title: Business Owner
Organization: Amboy Area Community Club
Email Address: amboyareacc@gmail.com
Phone: 507-380-0288

Needs and challenges of the community:
Amboy and the surrounding communities face a series of challenges because of recent changes in agriculture and ensuing business decline. Lower population numbers caused the closure of the Amboy Middle School in 2010. Loss of teaching positions and support staff in addition to fewer opportunities and activities for young families are a significant problem. An aging business and farming community faces succession issues. To overcome this, a group of community leaders, members of the Amboy Area Community Club, artists and entrepreneurs are working together to make the historically rich towns on the Daniel Boone Motor Trail welcoming as a tourist destinations, promote retail services, provide jobs, enhance the local economy, and encourage recreational activities.

Community assets and potential opportunities:
Amboy continues to retain an active and historic down town, (restored with guidance from MVAC and SHPO) that house several art studios and retail businesses. Amboy’s location on The Historic Daniel Boone Motor Trail links it to other small communities along Highway 169 in Southern Minnesota. Amboy Area Community Club has worked in the community to help accomplish several historic renovations including: The Ridge School, the old train Depot, The Amboy Cottage Café, the hundred year old grain elevator, The Creamery, and The Dodd Ford Bridge. Here is a link to the Off 90 Program shown on PBS television station that highlighted Amboy https://youtu.be/sDrvQXnIdY
RFP Response: Grand Meadow

Applicant Contact Information:
Name: Marty Walsh
Title: Director
Organization: Grand Meadow Economic Development Authority
Email Address: marty.walsh@cedausa.com
Phone: 773-450-2771

Needs and challenges of the community:
Grand Meadow struggles to build new workforce housing, as well as attract new residents for any jobs that do grow in the community. Very few people both live and work in the community, eroding community pride and civic life. Most people either live here or work in Rochester/Austin or live elsewhere and only work in Grand Meadow. In addition, the downtown struggles to attract businesses and has fallen into disrepair.

Community assets and potential opportunities:
While downtown has seen better days, the “bones” of a historic district with independent businesses are there. Additionally, Grand Meadow has a popular, high quality school and several medium size employers based in the community. There are opportunities for taking advantage of the location along Highway 16 between Austin and Rochester, as well as the opportunity to build out more outdoor recreation in the communities’ parks.
RFP Response: Hokah

Applicant Contact Information:
Name: Rebecca Albrecht
Title: Hokah City Council Member, Hokah
Public Library Board of Trustees
Organization: City of Hokah
Email Address: beckyalbrecht@centurytel.net
Phone: 608-396-1116

Needs and challenges of the community:
Some Challenges include:
• Struggling with no updated comprehensive plan to look to as a guide.
• No access to a grocery store in this community.
• Struggles with succession planning throughout the community businesses and even at the City.
• Small town with smaller city budget.
• Lack of school and employer partnerships.
• A lot to offer visitors but no advertising to bring them here.
• No lodging for visitors.
• A community that struggles with changes—even small changes create tension for residents.

• Lack of support or inclusion for those not born into the community.
• Public nuisance properties.
• Lack of affordable housing for middle income ranges.
• Increasing chemical dependency issues with some residents.
• Not a lot of jobs in town.
• Lack of accessibility for elderly or handicapped individuals.
• Struggles to keep businesses or recruit businesses in town.
• A lot of rental properties some of which are empty a lot of the time.
• Lack of childcare.
• Lack of Public Transportation

Community assets and potential opportunities:
The City of Hokah boasts:
• Como Falls Park
• Naturally fed swimming pool (celebrating 50 years this year)
• Legion Baseball diamond
• Historic City Hall building
• Public Library Many active worship facilities located in town Veteran’s Memorial Park
• Explore Historic Hokah walking tour.

• Market for farmers/vendors (seasonal) Café and restaurant options
• Great location with rural living for commuters
• Low income housing Supportive community members
• Active volunteer network
• A lot of entrepreneurial spirit in the community.
• Twin Creeks Golf boasts driving range
• Disc golf and mini golf with child-centered focus
• Walking paths for hikers
• Recreational shooting ranges a short drive away
• Focus on art and heritage in the community
• Root River Canoe Landing Union Valley Vineyard nearby
• Valley High Golf nearby
RFP Response: Kiester

Applicant Contact Information:
Name: Doug Trytten
Title: Mayor
Organization: City of Kiester
Email Address: dougtrytten@gmail.com
Phone: 507-402-5625

Needs and challenges of the community:
The cities of Bricelyn, Frost, Kiester and Walters share similar challenges. All four communities at this time do not have a current long-term community or economic development plan. The communities struggle with large scale issues such as a lack of housing availability and aging infrastructure. There are also buildings in each city in need of repurposing or demolition. There is also a need to focus on business development, from having store front space available to retaining existing businesses. Each of the four communities also has a desire to create a place that is vibrant and livable and for this part of the region to attract tourists.

Community assets and potential opportunities:
The City of Kiester is the largest of the four communities at a population of 473. Kiester is a small town nestled among some of the highest hills, known as glacial moraines. The community has many businesses tied to agriculture, a movie theatre, and active main street businesses. The city has an old school building that could be redeveloped as well as a vacant athletic field owned by the city. A park plan was recently completed to identify potential uses for the athletic field. The City of Bricelyn, population 342, is home to Bud’s Café which was awarded the Best Pancakes in Minnesota by WCCO in 2013. The City of Frost, population 191, has a vacant school building that could be repurposed for a variety of uses. The City of Walters, population 71, has a historic one-cell jail that was built in 1909 that if restored could be a tourist attraction. Each of these welcoming communities have potential to provide a great place to live, work and play. These four cities have already began having conversations about how they can begin to work collaboratively to address their similar issues. Having this partnership mentality already in place is a great asset for this project. As you will see by the included letters of support, decision-makers in each of the communities are supportive of this project which will help in the implementation of what comes out of this design process.
RFP Response: Spring Grove

Applicant Contact Information:
Name: Courtney Bergey
Title: Director
Organization: Spring Grove Economic Development Authority
Email Address: Courtney.bergey@cedausa.com
Phone: 507-251-9272

Needs and challenges of the community:
Spring Grove has found itself at a crossroads, and there is a sense of momentum towards the future. Ongoing community conversations have cultivated a shared vision to push forward, grow strategically, and create new initiatives and opportunities that set the town apart. Several community needs and challenges have been identified:

• Housing. Like many rural (and urban) communities, Spring Grove has a housing shortage that is prohibiting growth. There is land available for development on the outskirts of town, as well as parcels in the center of town ripe for redevelopment, but the City lacks the strategic planning and capital investment needed for projects of this scope. There is an appetite for creative solutions, such as tiny house communities and multi-family housing complexes.

• Planning. As mentioned above, the City does not have a planner, and there are several areas of town that have been the victim of reactive—not proactive—development. These decisions have created several unattractive and unsafe streetscapes, oddly-shaped parcels difficult for in-fill, and missed opportunities for new housing and public space developments.

• Recreational trails and wayfinding signage. Spring Grove is fortunate to have several large, beautiful public parks as well as an aquatic center and nature trail—however, there are no handicapped-accessible or family-friendly trails in town. There is a major opportunity to create a new trail system that connects these assets to each other, the school, and downtown. There is also no cohesive wayfinding signage system in the community.

• Gateways. Reactive sprawl has created pockets of industrial, agricultural, and residential properties on the borders of town, which does not create a positive first impression of the community as newcomers enter via state highway. There is an opportunity to develop creative solutions for more unique gateways.

• Transportation. Senior citizens could benefit from more public transportation options, as there is currently no system in place for helping elders get to the grocery store, clinic, pharmacy, post office, etc. Spring Grove is committed to creating a community that is welcoming and livable for people of all ages, and would love to be a leader for rural communities looking to help people age in place.
RFP Response: Spring Grove (continued)

Community assets and potential opportunities:
Spring Grove is a community both deeply-rooted in its history and constantly working towards its future. Spring Grove’s designation as the first Norwegian settlement in Minnesota has shaped the town’s cultural identity and created an authentic sense of pride shared among generations. While many small towns are losing their historic downtowns, the stories of their elders, and their unique sense of place, Spring Grove has worked hard to sustain these assets and is dedicated to creating active support structures for new projects and ideas. Spring Grove has a spirit of abundance, not scarcity. Community assets and opportunities include:

• Size: With a population of ~1,300 and a strong sense of community, Spring Grove is large enough to sustain many essential businesses and services yet small enough to be nimble and experiment with new public policy ideas. There are opportunities and support for implementing bold ideas.

• Vibrant public spaces. Spring Grove boasts several large municipal parks, playgrounds, and outdoor exercise equipment, as well as a historic downtown and adjacent “town square” public green space. Despite the beauty and function of these places, there is an opportunity to better connect and create awareness for them.

• Culture and learning. The Spring Grove School District is the heart of the community, and they are taking innovative steps to implement a new individualized learning curriculum that would create a personalized education plan and pace for every student—as well as open doors for using the entire community as a classroom and laboratory. There are also several arts and culture organizations in Spring Grove that are doing excellent work, but lack the capacity and expertise to reach their full potential.

• Volunteerism. Spring Grove is a community run on volunteers—from serving on nonprofit and government boards to creating committees for new projects (such as a new aquatic center, cinema, music festival, bird trail, etc.), volunteers have accomplished a lot in Spring Grove. This is also an opportunity for improvement and long-term sustainability, as many organizations could use increased staff capacity to stabilize financially and avoid volunteer burnout.
RFP Response: Wabasha

Applicant Contact Information:
Name: Emily Durand
Title: Vice Chair
Organization: Wabasha Heritage Preservation Commission
Email Address: Emily.c.durand@gmail.com
Phone: 651-262-8736

Needs and challenges of the community:
The City of Wabasha, like all small rural Minnesota communities, is experiencing a critical moment as it addresses 21st century challenges and responds to and plans for shifts in demographics and economic forces that threaten historically successful models for rural sustainability. Prior related work of SEMN TOGETHER in partnership with SE RSDP addressed the entire SE region of the state. The scan of Wabasha County identified the following needs: --Asset Mapping --Local currency --Adopting STEAM curriculum --Enhanced DEED/Workforce centers --Increased access to high quality childcare --Resources and tools to promote entrepreneurship development Letters of support for this application from community stakeholders also highlight a need for Wabasha to engage in collaborative, community-based approaches to design thinking, visioning, and strategic planning.

Community assets and potential opportunities:
Wabasha is rich with assets that enhance the community’s potential to harness 21st century opportunities for improved health, social connectivity, and economic growth. Many are outlined in the City’s Comprehensive Plan (2016) available at: http://www.wabasha.org/wp-content/uploads/FinalPlan-2016.pdf The Comp Plan will help direct future land use development for the next 20 years (2035). Additionally there is considerable momentum within the community broadly and amongst citizen-led initiatives that are either newly organized or reactivated in response to recent developments outlined in the attached letters of support. Also supportive of this process, a 40-person cohort of community leaders were privileged to participate in a week-long, residential Blandin Community Leadership Program in 2016. These leaders are situated in a variety of positions in local business, local government, non-profit, and volunteer-based organizations. Armed with new skills in community-based leadership, they are highly motivated to help the community capitalize on the investment of the Blandin program and eager to help plan our collective future as a healthy and vibrant rural community. The City and community of Wabasha thank you for your consideration of our application. We would be pleased to work with you to actualize the intent of the Minnesota Futures Pilot Project.
RFP Response: West Concord

Applicant Contact Information:
Name: Jeff McCool
Title: Mayor
Organization: City of West Concord
Email Address: wcmayor@yahoo.com
Phone: 507-951-2581

Needs and challenges of the community:
West Concord is a rural community with a population of 586. Like many small communities we struggle as a bedroom community with many of our residents working outside of the city. We offer the same services as large cities but with a much smaller tax base. It can be difficult to attract and maintain businesses within our community. Our school district is also combined, with no school in the community, so a sense of identity has been lost.

Community assets and potential opportunities:
West Concord is a very tight knit and proud community. We are centrally located from the cities of Rochester (with the DMC project and people seeking a cheaper cost of living), Faribault, and Owatonna all approximately 20-30 miles away. We are one hour from the Twin Cities. We are an agricultural community and had been mostly comprised of an aging population; our demographics have since changed to a much younger age group with families. We have a current housing development with buildable lots available; our few empty houses move very quickly and are currently hard to come by with people seeking a cheaper cost of living from the larger cities. We pride ourselves with our amenities:
• Fire/Ambulance Department
• Police Department
• Public Library
• Swimming Pool
• Municipal Liquor Store (on/off sale)
• Parks
• Community involvement.
Our major employer is Ellingson Drainage a farm tiling company. We are a great place to raise a family.
Global Venture Design: What Impact Will You Make?
Semester-long

1. Affordable Housing
2. Homelessness
3. Affordable Childcare
4. MPLS

Problem
Low-income families lack access to affordable and flexible childcare.

- Low-Income Parents
  Struggle to care & provide for families - furthers poverty cycle

- Children
  Raised in stressful environments, can cause them to fall behind in development

Our Solution:
Informal & Intergenerational Care

- Low-Income Parents
  Provides more time and ability to work & access resources

- Children
  Access to a stable, safe & engaging environment

- Elders
  Develop lasting & meaningful relationships that slow mental decline
1) Establish Needs of Parents & Abilities of Caregivers
2) Connect Those Parties w/ Compatible Needs & Abilities
3) Facilitate Relationships & Exchange of Services Between Parties

Business Model
Care Seeker: Families
Sliding Scale-Income Based
$14/month
Care Provider: "Grandfriends"
Receive Standard Hourly Rate

GREATER MINNESOTA FUTURES // 101
APPENDIX // CIRCULATION TOOLKIT

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Car System Tool Kit

Introduction
The need to create a circulation system that can accommodate pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular traffic, connect key community shopping areas, employment centers, schools, recreational areas, and cultural and natural resources is an issue in many Greater Minnesota communities. All three of the Greater Minnesota Futures pilot communities had residents of all ages that walked and bicycled to school, work, recreational destinations, etc. Community meetings identified the need for a safe and effective bicycle and pedestrian system, recognizing that circulation networks that are pedestrian, bicycle, and car friendly are essential to making rural communities healthy, attractive, and walkable. For 21st century places.

All three cities shared the similar challenges in creating a system:
- Although many of the streets in the original town grid had sidewalks, many were crumbling, some sidewalks had been removed, others were being considered for removal.
- Neighborhood streets just beyond the original grid often have a few sidewalk segments or lock sidewalks.
- The communities’ downtown neighborhoods usually lack sidewalks altogether and have street patterns such as cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets that are barriers to creating a connected community-wide system.
- All identified snow removal as a community problem as some older people or seasonal residents could not be relied upon to remove snow on the sidewalk in front of their homes that is needed to keep the system usable in the winter.
- Each city said that funding for repairing, replacing, and/or making new sidewalks where there were none was not available.

Greater Minnesota Futures

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Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Car System Tool Kit

The Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Car System Tool Kit is intended as a tool for communities with a need to develop a connected circulation system. It is set of alternative strategies for creating a street-based circulation network that connects neighborhoods and communities by foot and bicycle. It is a strategy for creating new streets that can accommodate pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular traffic. The strategies include a number of strategies for a variety of existing streets with a variety of street widths and a variety of existing conditions. It is assumed that no one design configuration will work across the whole system. Because community streets vary, different design configurations will need to be used to create a system.

How to Use the Tool Kit:
1. Identify potential destinations.
2. Identify street segments as potential parts of the overall system.
3. Apply the different designs to each of the street segments.
4. Select the design configuration that is most appropriate for the street conditions and projected use, and
5. Repeat with different street segments.

There are two approaches to developing circulation networks: 1) retrofitting existing streets and 2) creating new streets within the right-of-way. The appropriate approach is determined by existing conditions, network need, and available funding.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Car System Tool Kit Components

- Mixed Traffic Spaces
  1. Mainstreets
  2. Yield Streets
  3. On-Street Trails
  4. Paved Shoulders
  5. Advisory Shoulders
  6. Protected Cycle Tracks
  7. Side Paths
  8. Connecting Paths

Tool Kit Intent:
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System Organization

- Desired Circulation Network
- Community Hubs
- Typical Strategy Study Locations

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In communities that lack funding to maintain aging sidewalks, add new sidewalks where none exist or have residents that have challenges shoveling snow. Alternative on-street options like multi-use trails or cycle tracks allow for streamlined maintenance by existing city resources. Plastic bollards that can be removed in winter support pedestrian and cyclist safety with a strong visual separation while allowing for continued seasonal street maintenance.

### 3. On-Street Trails

**Recommended Road Widths:**
- 30’ for 2 way
- None

**Recommended Road Speeds:**
- NA

**Corridor Type:**
- Any

**Surrounding Context:**
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Natural

**Diagram Key:**
- existing elements
- new elements
- removed elements
- green space opportunities

### 4. Paved Shoulders

**Recommended Road Widths:**
- 38’
- None

**Recommended Road Speeds:**
- 10-55

**Corridor Type:**
- Highways
- Key Connections
- High Speeds

**Surrounding Context:**
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Natural

**Diagram Key:**
- existing elements
- new elements
- removed elements
- green space opportunities

### 5. Advisory Shoulder

**Recommended Road Widths:**
- 34’
- 48’

**Recommended Road Speeds:**
- 10-30

**Corridor Type:**
- Few Intersections
- Narrow Parking Required

**Surrounding Context:**
- Residential
- Parks

**Diagram Key:**
- existing elements
- new elements
- removed elements
- green space opportunities

### 6. Protected Cycle Tracks

**Recommended Road Widths:**
- 44’
- 58’

**Recommended Road Speeds:**
- 20-45

**Corridor Type:**
- Key Connections
- High Volume Parking Required

**Surrounding Context:**
- Residential
- Commercial

**Diagram Key:**
- existing elements
- new elements
- removed elements
- green space opportunities
7. Side Paths

Off-streets trails provide the best experience for pedestrian and bicycle transit. Paved 10-12’ multi-use trails take advantage of rural opportunities, support healthy lifestyles, and create recreational resources for residents and visitors alike.

Maximizing the distance from the road creates the largest buffer from traffic.

Incorporating landscape elements like trees and border plants increases shade, creates habitat corridors and improves the outdoor experience.

Finding new trail routes outside of street right-of-way can create direct connections between community hubs and scenic natural resources.

Typical Existing Conditions

Including plantings increases sense of separation, and provides shade and visual interest.

Variable Easements

8. Connecting Paths

Paved 10-12’ multi-use trails can be used for commuting, getting to school, and recreating by a variety of users.

Incorporating landscape elements like trees and border plants increases shade, creates habitat corridors and improves the outdoor experience.

Finding new trail routes outside of street right-of-way can create direct connections between community hubs and scenic natural resources.

Typical Existing Conditions

Variable Easements

Diagram Key:
- existing elements
- new elements
- removed elements
- green space opportunities

Recommended Road Widths:
- NA
- NA

Recommended Road Speeds:
- 45-65

Corridor Type:
- Highway
- Wide Right-of-Way

Key Connections:
- Agricultural Areas
- Natural Areas
- Industrial
- Residential Sprawl

Community Circulation Kit
Physically Separated Trails

Greater Minnesota Futures

Diagram Key:
- existing elements
- new elements
- removed elements
- green space opportunities

Recommended Road Widths:
- NA
- NA

Recommended Road Speeds:
- NA

Corridor Type:
- Old Rail Beds
- Open Spaces
- River Corridor

Key Connections:
- Natural Environments
- Undeveloped Land

Community Circulation Kit
Physically Separated Trails
Game Nights in Grand Meadow

Goal:
Game night’s goal is to strengthen Grand Meadow as a family-friendly place to live by having fun together and creating connections among Grand Meadow community members.

Description:
• A monthly intergenerational game night is held in downtown Grand Meadow.
• Families and young and old residents gather to play board games and eat together.
• Library volunteers may want to host reading a story to the younger children that are too young to play a board game.
• On evenings when high school varsity games are played, residents could eat together and then go to the game.
• Families will be charged a modest fee ($5 or so) for pizza, a beverage, and salad or fruit.

Tasks to Create a Game Night:
Assemble an intergenerational working committee of 4 to 6 people representative of the community that includes:
• Long-time residents and new-comers,
• Young families
• Older, middle aged and young residents, and
• High school students.

Solicit partnerships with local organizations such as
• Scout troops,
• Service organizations, and
• Public library.

Select a site that is
• Centrally located and easily accessed,
• Available on a regular basis,
• Is suitable for informal family eating and playing board games,
• Has chairs, tables, and bathrooms, and
• Is public space; some may feel uncomfortable going to a private space such as a church.
Negotiate the terms of site use that includes:
• Set up times,
• Permitted and not permitted uses,
• Equipment potentially available for use such as coffee pot, refrigerator, etc.
• Rental fee if any, and
• A clean-up strategy that may include a fee.

Select a reoccurring date and time that:
• Does not conflict with other community activities such as city council meetings, choir practice, etc.
• Accommodates commuters’ arrivals back in town, and
• Is not too late for young children.

Select local food vendor(s). If more than one local vendor is desired:
• One vendor could provide the pizzas
• Another vendor could provide a salad or some fruit

Solicit a variety of board games from the community.
• The games should accommodate different skill levels
• Time needed to play should be considered
• Examples include checkers, monopoly, etc.

Create a publication strategy
Announcements and stories could be placed in the:
• Local web page,
• Local paper,
• Organizations’ newsletters,
• School paper, and
• Church bulletins.
Spring Grove & Houston County Business Survey

Project: The community of Spring Grove would like to explore how the local foods movement and regional artisan cultural assets can be activated as a tool for growth, youth retention, and economic development. In order to create a robust marketing strategy and identify new opportunities for programming, we’d like to begin with thoughtful research and asset mapping of Houston County farmers, makers, producers, artisans, and the businesses that support them.

Process: This part of the process was focused on research, much of which was conducted through a survey. Therefore, a large portion of the time was spent crafting a survey which was detailed enough to provide a sufficient amount of information without being so long that it overwhelmed respondents. We started with a survey that had been crafted by another group focused on regional development, Driftless Grown. We then worked with local EDA organizers and the local University of Minnesota Extensions Office to expand what questions we asked, narrowed down and condensed some of those questions, and worked to find the desired wording for those questions. After all that was accomplished, the survey was put into an online format using Qualtrics, as we hoped that would be the best way to distribute it.

Survey
Introduction: Thank you for sharing your valuable time and knowledge to identify Houston County’s assets, opportunities, and challenges. This survey aims to gather data to help local economic development agencies better serve the region, specifically within the sectors of agriculture, arts, culture, and tourism. The information collected through this survey will be used to identify program needs, create new collaborations, seek grant funding, and promote Houston County. Your answers will be confidential; we greatly appreciate you sharing information with us, and will ensure the anonymous nature of your answers is respected. As a thank you, everyone who responds to this survey will be entered into a drawing to win a $20 gift card. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete and will be available through May 3, 2019. This survey is being administered by the University of Minnesota in partnership with local economic development agencies.

Questions
About you:
1. Your name:
2. Your age:
3. Home address (please include city and ZIP code):
4. Email:
5. Phone:
6. How long have you lived in Houston County?
7. Why do you choose to live in Houston County?

About your business:
8. What is your business name?
9. Business address (if different from home address):
10. Business website (if applicable):
11. What year did you start your business?
12. What made you choose to start your business in Houston County?

13. Please select your type of business. If more than one applies, please select all applicable options.
   - Farm/value-added production (you raise the materials used to produce your product)
   - Food or beverage maker (you purchase the materials used to produce your product)
   - Artist/Maker
   - Retail: Food (grocery, farmer’s market vendor, etc)
   - Other retail (gifts, art, plants/flowers, etc)
   - Restaurant
   - Lodging/camping/hospitality
   - Nonprofit cultural amenity (arts, theater, museum, humanities, etc.)
   - Recreational amenity (outdoors, camping, hiking, fishing, biking, etc.)
   - Other:

14. If you selected “other” above, please note your type of business here:

15. What products and services does your business/organization offer? (ie: baked goods, soda pop, groceries, etc.)

16. Where do you sell your product? (ie: onsite, local grocery stores, La Crosse Farmer’s Market, Minneapolis art fairs) Leave blank if this does not apply to you.

17. On a scale from 1-10 with 10 being the best, how would you rate the overall health of your business?

18. Where do your customers/patrons live? (Please assign an approximate percentage to each; for example 80% Houston County, 10% La Crosse, 10% Rochester)
   - Houston County: 
   - La Crosse: 
   - Decorah: 
   - Rochester: 
   - Twin Cities: 
   - Throughout Wisconsin besides La Crosse (Madison, Milwaukee, Viroqua, etc.): 
   - Throughout Minnesota besides Rochester and Twin Cities (Austin, Duluth, St. Cloud, etc.): 
   - Throughout Iowa besides Decorah (Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Dubuque, etc.): 
   - National: 
   - I don’t know:

19. How many employees do you have?
   - Just myself
   - Myself and family
   - Less than 5
   - 5-10
   - 11-15
   - 15+

20. What is your business’s net annual revenue? (Remember this is optional! All information will be confidential and used to benchmark business health and future growth.)
   - Less than $1,000
   - $1,000-$4,999
   - $5,000-$9,999
   - $10,000-$24,999
   - $25,000-$49,999
   - $50,000-$99,999
   - $100,000-$249,999
   - $250,000-$499,999
   - $500,000+
What help do you need?
21. What services would be most beneficial for your business/organization? Please rank the following 1-4.
   Business management/development such as: financial and tax services, individual marketing/branding assistance, farm or business management courses, etc.
   Events and social opportunities such as: farm-to-table restaurant collaborations, hosting workshops, food and drink tours, etc.
   Regional branding such as: promoting Houston County as a destination, collective marketing for businesses, establishing a local food hub, creating a regional branding campaign, etc.
   Access to services such as: transportation, accounting/legal, metro delivery service, commercial kitchen, finding employees, farm-sitters, etc.
22. What challenges are you currently facing in your business/organization?
23. Would you be interested in sharing your skills/services/mentorship with other businesses/organizations?
24. Regarding that last question, what skills/services/mentorship could you offer?
25. What skills/services may you be seeking from others that would benefit your business/organization?

Working together
26. What kinds of personal or professional goods/services/events/businesses/organizations are lacking in Houston County? What do you wish was here? (Don’t be afraid to think big!)
27. Do you currently collaborate with other businesses/organizations? (ie: pop up shops, special events, collaborative marketing, etc.)
28. How do you collaborate with other businesses/organizations? (ie: pop up shops, special events, collaborative marketing, etc.)
29. Would you like to collaborate with other businesses/organizations? (ie: pop up shops, special events, collaborative marketing, etc.)
30. What sort of collaborations would you be seeking? (ie: pop up shops, special events, collaborative marketing, etc.)

Looking ahead
31. What are your hopes and dreams for your business/organization? How would you like to see your business/organization grow in the next 5 years?
32. Would you be interested in your business/organization being included in a Houston County business-to-business directory to make contacts, learn more about other businesses, and encourage collaboration?

Just a few quick things
33. Have you visited the new Houston County Economic Development website houstoncountymn.com?
34. What are your thoughts on the Houston County Economic Development website?
35. What else should we know about Houston County and its potential?
36. Would you be willing to participate in a 10 minute phone call if we want to learn more or follow up on any questions?
37. Is there anyone else we should send this survey to? If yes, please list their name and e-mail in this field.
Spring Grove & Houston County Business Survey Results

This chart breaks the age of respondents down by decade, with the largest chunk of respondents being in their 30s or 50s.

Respondents were asked what type of business they had. The second most common type was “Farm/value-added production,” but “other” was the most common with 15 responses. Some of the responses that we received when we asked for clarification for what “other” entailed include electrical, accounting, marketing, real estate, insurance, and library services.

Respondents were asked about the overall health of their business on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the best. The majority of the responses we received fell within the 6-8 range.
Spring Grove & Houston County Business Survey Results (continued)

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of the following services: business/management development, events and social opportunities, regional branding, and access to services. Respondents ranked regional branding as most important, with people ranking it first, followed closely by business management/development, which 8 people ranking it first.

Final Remarks

Many respondents seemed concerned about the availability of amenities, whether they were for business services or drawing in new people to the area. Other concerns centered on retaining the amenities and services that Spring Grove already has—such as the school. A survey format seems to be the best way to accumulate the information which this project needs, but in small communities, especially tight-knit ones like Spring Grove, the effectiveness of the survey may be helped by hosting events focused on connecting with local business owners and helping them fill out the survey. A paper format could also be useful in event situations like that.
GREATER MINNESOTA’S FUTURES: WABASHA

PROTOTYPE FOR ACTIVE LIVING APP — 6/18/19

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