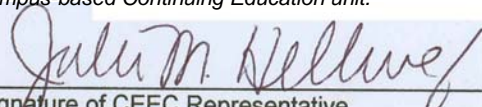


Program Innovation Fund
Cover Page 2007 -08

PROJECT TITLE: Creating Livable Communities as an Economic Development Strategy	
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FUNDING REQUESTED: \$23,850	
PROJECT ABSTRACT (50 words or less): Project partners will create a replicable model to assist Wisconsin communities in improving their quality of life as an innovative approach to economic development. This model will enable the three primary collaborators to improve local capacity building and transformational education for state-wide economic development.	
PROJECT GOALS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES (100 words or less): The goals of this project are: to utilize the unique strengths of Cooperative Extension, UW-Continuing Education and UW-Colleges to provide transformational education to Wisconsin communities; to create new and innovative strategies to strengthen the local and state economy and quality of life for all Wisconsin residents; and to provide UW College students with hands-on learning experiences in their communities. The anticipated outcome will be improved knowledge and resources that will assist community leaders to create more livable communities in Wisconsin which will result in retaining our young people, creating new jobs and encouraging increased public and private investment.	

This section to be completed only if project involves staff from a campus-based Continuing Education unit.

This section to be completed only if project involves staff from the UW Colleges.


Signature of CEEC Representative
April 24, 2007
Date

Signature of UW Colleges Vice Chancellor/Provost

Date

Ranking (if applicable)

Creating Livable Communities as an Economic Development Strategy

SITUATION

Economic development is a key issue for Wisconsin and many of its communities: Our young people are moving away, we are losing jobs to other states and public and private investment need to be strengthened. These and a number of related issues demand new solutions. Traditional economic development approaches such as building industrial parks, constructing speculative buildings and recruiting businesses through various incentive packages are not working. A new approach, one that understands and responds to today's market forces, is needed.

In the new economy, more and more of the workforce select where they would like to live and then find a job that enables them to live there. This is especially true for new college graduates and the baby boom generation – two highly critical market segments. Therefore, the new, most effective economic development strategy is to create communities that are desirable places for people to live. The focus then shifts from traditional economic development strategies to a more comprehensive community development process.

Research shows that the workforce is looking for livable and walkable communities, where people can feel safe as they enjoy attractive neighborhoods, vibrant downtowns and popular gathering places. For Wisconsin to grow and prosper in this new era of choice, we must find ways to help communities understand these forces and to help them create communities, neighborhoods and places where people can flourish.

The value of this project, then, is to create a replicable approach that communities throughout Wisconsin can utilize to help them achieve economic development success through the creation of livable communities with the high quality of life that today's workforce demands.

PRIORITIES

What is Innovative About the Project

The innovative project defines a new economic development approach. The project will identify the types of community amenities that are attractive to today's workforce and will create a process to determine how well the community is offering those amenities, including specific recommendations on how to enhance community amenities. This will be conducted through an innovative combination of secondary research, local public participation and a community inventory and mapping strategy conducted by a partnership of Cooperative Extension, UW- Continuing Education, UW Colleges and local community groups. No such model currently exists. Therefore, attention will be given to ensure that this innovative community development process will be replicable by other Wisconsin communities.

How it Relates to the Fund's Purpose

This innovative project involves a collaborative programming effort between Cooperative Extension, UW- Continuing Education and two UW Colleges. The impact of this project will be felt throughout the state as communities learn the most effective way to achieve lasting and sustainable economic and community development. As such, the project will also highlight the great benefits derived from innovative programming that utilizes the unique resources and talents of each project partner. Specifically, Cooperative Extension will utilize its vast research, capacity building and transformational education abilities while UW Barron County and UW Marshfield/Wood County will employ their technology, facilities, teaching staff and student population. In addition, because both UW

Marshfield/Wood County and UW Barron County are primarily transfer institutions, this project will help increase the competitive edge of their participating students by affording them research experience. Not only will this help them in the workplace, it will improve their chances of success at their transfer institutions. UW – Continuing Education will add its research capabilities and knowledge of community needs to the project and will incorporate the research results and the assessment tool into its educational programs and outreach efforts.

How it Relates to One or More of the 2007-08 Themes

This project very closely addresses two of the 2007-08 program themes. First, the project is highly innovative in how it addresses a complex economic development issue. It is also innovative in its partnership between Cooperative Extension, UW Colleges, UW–Continuing Education and community economic development organizations as a means to advance local economic development.

Second, the project directly addresses the issue of economic development. The project outcomes are intended to strengthen local economic health, business development, employment and quality of life through a community development effort that fully recognizes the demand for livable communities by today’s work force.

INPUTS

Roles of Project Leaders

Cooperative Extension’s Center for Land Use Education (CLUE) and UW-Barron County and UW Marshfield/Wood County will lead this project. CLUE staff has experience in economic development and land use issues. The UW College staff and students will have direct contact with the individual communities both during and after the assessment tool is developed. Specifically, the following individuals will implement the program.

- Anna Haines, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Director, Cooperative Extension’s CLUE will act as project leader and will be ultimately responsible for the project. She will oversee all project management.
- Tracey Mofle, UW-Barron County, Special Projects Coordinator, Adjunct Instructor, has extensive experience in engaging students in community research projects using geographic information systems (GIS) and other transportation and community development/planning tools. Tracey will coordinate UW-Barron County students’ and staff participation and use of the GIS assessment tool for its applicability to the City of Rice Lake.
- Laura Lee, UW-Marshfield/Wood County, Associate Professor, teaches Human Environmental Science. She works closely with campus Natural Resource majors and is involved in community design activities. Laura will coordinate UW- Marshfield/Wood County students’ participation and use of the GIS assessment tool for its applicability to the City of Marshfield.

Roles of Collaborators

- Linda Stoll, AICP, Outreach Specialist, Cooperative Extension’s CLUE, will gather and analyze national, state and local data to identify needs as they relate to community design criteria across all identified issues. Working with the two UW Campuses, she will collect community information including identifying local conditions and destinations and conduct focus groups to test the design assumptions derived from the research as well as present findings to community leaders at the conclusion of the project.
- Julie Hellweg, Program Manager, UWSP – Continuing Education, will provide additional research material from Continuing Education resources, evaluate the findings and incorporate the

research results and assessment tool into other Continuing Education programs and outreach activities.

- Will Andresen, Community Resource Development Educator, Cooperative Extension, has worked with many communities in community, economic development and land use. Will leads Cooperative Extension's Community and Economic Development Preparedness Team and is also an active member of the Downtown Vitality and Community Placemaking Team, the Tourism Research and Development Team and the Sustainability Team. His role will be to coordinate this project with other Cooperative Extension programming and educational outreach efforts.
- Doug Miskowiak, Outreach Specialist, Cooperative Extension's CLUE, will develop the GIS assessment tool in cooperation with Linda Stoll, CLUE and Tracey Mofle and Laura Lee of the UW Colleges. He will evaluate the findings and assessment tool for their applicability to other small communities.

In addition, project leaders and collaborators will partner with Marshfield and Rice Lake planning and economic development organizations and chambers of commerce as well as Cooperative Extension educators from Barron and Wood counties.

Resources that will be Invested in the Project

The funding provided by this Program Innovation Fund grant would fund three individuals: Tracey Mofle (UW Barron County), Linda Stoll (Cooperative Extension), Doug Miskowiak (Cooperative Extension) as well as student hourly work. Others involved in this project will provide in-kind services: Anna Haines (Cooperative Extension), Laura Lee (UW Marshfield/Wood County), Will Andresen (Cooperative Extension) and both UW Colleges (additional staff and other related programs). In-kind services will total \$14,580.

OUTPUTS

1. Activities

Project Implementation Plan - The project will entail three primary activities: 1) Secondary research; 2) Community inventory and mapping; and 3) Public education and participation. Secondary research will be conducted to identify the existing literature related to location decision making factors for today's work force. Considerable research has already been conducted in this field. The project will collect and analyze this existing data to better understand the community and quality of life factors that influence where people choose to live.

Interviews with human resource personnel from the local hospital, school system and at least one other major employer as well as citizen focus groups will then be conducted to "test" the applicability of the research results with pilot Wisconsin communities. Students from both colleges will research additional rural communities in Wisconsin of similar size to their respective cities in an attempt to identify other communities that might excel in providing a high quality of life environment.

The second activity will be to apply the research results to a case study approach in Wisconsin communities. The project will develop mapping protocol and then inventory and map the community features that today's work force find desirable in both Marshfield and Rice Lake. Students in both communities will help verify local information. For example, the project will inventory and map items such as public places, social gathering places, shopping opportunities and amenities such as parks, trails and natural resources. This information will be entered into a geographic information system (GIS) to map areas of the community that are within walking distance of popular community features. The project will also review how livable the community is through an analysis of its non-motorized transportation system.

As a further test of the mapping tool, the project will map a select group of features in two additional communities comparable in size to Marshfield and Rice Lake. The results will be compared to the secondary research findings to further refine and evaluate the mapping tool.

The end product will be a detailed map of Marshfield and Rice Lake that will highlight specific recommendations to improve the community's overall livability as a strategy to improve economic development. This is important, as community leaders and residents can better understand and appreciate proposed changes when they can visualize them through maps and graphics.

The third activity will have two parts. First will be a presentation of the research findings to community decision-makers and economic development organizations in both Marshfield and Rice Lake. Project members will work in both communities to identify ways the information can be incorporated into existing plans as well as help shape new initiatives for economic development. Second will be the development of materials that can be used by both Cooperative Extension and UW-Continuing Education in future programs on economic development.

Timeline – The anticipated timeline for the project will be as follows:

Phase 1 – Review literature to determine mapping criteria – months 1-2

Phase 2 – Human resource personnel will be interviewed and citizens from each community will be invited to participate in focus groups to review the mapping criteria. Comparison communities will be identified – months 3-4

Phase 3 – Creation of GIS mapping tools to understand a community from a spatial/land use perspective – month 5

Phase 4 – Test the mapping tool – month 6-7

Phase 5 – Summary community report and public presentations in each community – months 8-9

Phase 6 – Prepare final report of tool. Begin team presentations and education – months 10-11

Phase 7 – Continue education for replication to other communities; final grant reporting – month 12

Likelihood of Sustainability – Because of the relevance of this effort, local economic development organizations, chambers of commerce and planning commissions have already agreed to collaborate with their UW partners throughout the project. These key community stakeholders have also committed to sustaining this effort by utilizing the resulting recommendations as they work toward enhancing the livability of their communities.

Project information will also be shared with Cooperative Extension Teams and UW – Continuing Education for inclusion in their on-going community capacity building and transformational education and outreach efforts. CLUE will include research results and assessment tool information on its website and in a future on-line education courses.

2. Participants

Approximately 40 students at the UW Colleges will be involved in research activities. Fifty community leaders and residents will participate in the process through the focus group discussions and the public information sessions. However, all existing and future residents of Marshfield (pop 19,000) and Rice Lake (pop 8,370) will benefit from the educational process and the creation of a more attractive and livable community. The project will create a new community design model that can be used by all communities in Wisconsin, therefore ultimately benefiting all state residents.

OUTCOMES-IMPACTS

Project Goals

Project goals are:

- To utilize the unique strengths of Cooperative Extension, Continuing Education and UW-Colleges to provide transformational education to Wisconsin communities.
- To create new and innovative strategies to strengthen the local and state economy and quality of life for all Wisconsin residents.
- To provide UW College students with hands-on learning experiences in their communities.

Outcomes

Short-term outcomes will include:

- Increased appreciation of the factors that influence the location decision-making of today's work force.
- Heightened awareness of how the design of local communities can be used as an economic development tool.
- Greater understanding of specific actions that communities can take to make their communities more livable and attractive.
- Increased learning for 40 students from UW Barron County and UW Marshfield/Wood County in new technologies and how to apply them in a real world setting.
- Improved ability for Cooperative Extension and UW – Continuing Education to conduct transformational education through a new approach to community and economic development.

Medium-term outcomes will include:

- A complete inventory and mapping assessment for each case study community, detailing specific recommendations for improving the quality of life and livability of the community.
- A replicable model that will enable Cooperative Extension and UW – Continuing Education to improve local capacity building and transformational education.
- Specific actions that can be implemented in each case study community and other communities within the state to create more livable communities.

Ultimate Impacts

The long-term impact will be the creation of more livable communities in Wisconsin which will result in retaining our young people, creating new jobs and encouraging increased public and private investment.