



<http://www.aia-mn.org/get-involved/committees/minnesota-design-team/>

Minnesota Design Team Mission

To use design and community development principles to help Minnesota communities - particularly those in rural areas - develop and act upon a shared vision of their future.

Minnesota Design Team (MDT), a committee of the American Institute of Architects - Minnesota, has three main objectives:

- To create an awareness of the role of design in the development of communities.
- To help with the preservation of a community's identity by constructing a sustainable vision using existing assets.
- To demonstrate a commitment to community participation and grassroots initiatives.

Since its inception in 1983, MDT has assisted more than 100 communities to establish a community vision. MDT is led by a MDT Executive Committee and is comprised of more than 300 volunteers, from a broad range of specialties, including architects, landscape architects, planners, and other related professions.

Communities might request a MDT visit for many reasons, such as if the community is: updating its comprehensive plan; anticipating a major change (*such as a highway realignment*); or suffering from stagnated growth and desires outside expertise to help recognize the community's strengths and opportunities.

Application deadlines: August 15 for a spring visit and Jan 15 for a fall visit.

This is a summary of the Minnesota Design Team workbook. The entire MDT workbook should be reviewed thoroughly by the community prior to submitting an application seeking a MDT visit.

Download the MDT workbook at <http://www.aia-mn.org/get-involved/committees/minnesota-design-team/>.

Helping Minnesota communities plan their futures with grassroots involvement, volunteerism, and quality design.

Minnesota Design Team—Step by Step Process

STEP 1 A community's first step is download and review the MDT Workbook, found online at <http://www.aia-mn.org/get-involved/committees/minnesota-design-team/>. Communities may contact Mary Larkin at larkin@aia-mn.org to ask questions or if desired, a MDT representative could speak with or visit the community to explain in-depth about MDT, the application process, preparation for the visit, a sample weekend visit itinerary, and suggestions on how to implement plans after the visit is over.

STEP 2 The community must submit a complete application. (*The application form, along with instructions, is included in the workbook—see website link above.*) A completed application will include the application form, letters of support, and photographs and maps of the community.

STEP 3 The MDT committee will review the application to: (1) accept the application; (2) accept the application with conditions; or (3) decline the application. An application accepted with conditions may mean that portions of the application are incomplete or that more support is needed representing the larger community. Within 60 days after the date the application is received, MDT will contact the community regarding the acceptance of the application.

STEP 4 After the application is approved, MDT will schedule and conduct a screening call and/or visit with community leaders. This provides an opportunity for MDT to discuss how a weekend visit works and for the community to ask questions.

STEP 5 After the screening call and/or visit is completed and the community is found to be a good candidate, MDT will send a contract to the community outlining MDT's and the community's obligations. The community signs the contract and submits it along with a check for \$2,500 (1/2 of the total \$5,000 payment). Once the signed agreement and the first check is received at AIA Minnesota, the visit dates are confirmed and the planning process may begin.

STEP 6 At this time, MDT team leaders are recruited and they begin to plan the make-up of professions needed for the team (*based on community needs*). Team leaders will serve as the community's primary contact in preparation for the weekend visit and will communicate with community leaders throughout the process as frequently as necessary.

STEP 7 It typically takes a community six months to prepare for a weekend visit. During this time the community organizes into workgroups to: (1) recruit host families to house MDT volunteers; (2) publicize the visit; (3) fundraise for needed expenses; (4) organize community background information, surveys, and presentations; (5) organize a community tour; and (6) reserve facilities to be used during the weekend visit. At the same time, MDT team leaders recruit team members, create base maps of the community, and assist the community with preparation.

STEP 8 Minnesota Design team weekend visit is conducted (*see next page*).

STEP 9 After the MDT weekend visit, MDT will conduct a follow-up conversation with the community that may be a visit, call, or an online discussion. The purpose of this follow up is for MDT to review the community's progress and provide guidance and advice. The follow-up will include the community's coordinating committee, MDT team leaders, and a small number of MDT team members.

A Typical MDT Weekend Visit Itinerary:

Thursday

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm MDT team arrives at the reception to meet their host families

Friday

8:00 am - 8:30 am Light breakfast provided to the MDT team

8:30 am - 11:30 am Community presentations to the MDT team meant to further orientate team members with the community. Topics might include city governance and relationship with surrounding communities, schools, community and religious organizations, housing types, local businesses, economic development, environmental issues, transportation issues, etc.

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm MDT team members are pre-assigned in pairs to have lunch with a community member at different local establishments

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm MDT team is led on tour of the community. May include walking, bus, and/or boat

4:00 pm - 5:30 pm MDT team meeting

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm Community potluck dinner

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm Community Town Meeting facilitated by MDT. Purpose is to help community members to itemize and prioritize the community's needs

8:00 pm - 9:00 pm MDT team debriefing

Saturday

8:00 am - 8:30 am Light breakfast provided to MDT

8:30 am - 6:00 pm MDT team work session. Lunch and dinner provided to team members as they find time

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm MDT team makes presentation to the community (100 - 200 community members expected)

8:00 pm - 8:30 pm Community Q & A with MDT team members

8:30 pm - 9:00 pm MDT team debriefing

Sunday

8:30 am - 9:30 am Optional breakfast with Coordinating Committee and MDT team members.



About the Minnesota Design Team

Minnesota Design Team was originally established in 1983 as “The Governor’s Design Team” as part of the Minnesota Planning Agency, later called the Department of Trade and Economic Development. In 1992, the organization’s name was changed to the Minnesota Design Team (MDT) and it became a committee within American Institute of Architects - Minnesota (AIA Minnesota).

The MDT Team:

MDT teams are volunteers who take time from their busy work and personal lives to assist communities. They offer their time and expertise for several reasons: feeling an obligation to improve rural communities, enjoying an opportunity to work in a team atmosphere with other like-minded professionals, or possibly they, or their family members, are from the community itself or a similar rural community.

A typical MDT team consists of two experienced team leaders and 12-15 volunteer team members. The team will have a balance of members with both MDT visit experience and professional experience. Larger teams may include student participants. Team members are recruited to match the specific needs of the community.

What the Community may expect:

MDT will provide an oral and visual presentation on the Saturday of the visit. The visual presentation typically consists of a PowerPoint slide show of about 20 poster sized drawings and diagrams produced by the MDT team during the visit. MDT team leaders will bring the presentation posters back to be scanned and saved to thumb drives and photocopied into 8.5” X 11” handouts. The original boards, thumb drive, and 10 sets of handouts will be sent to the community for their use.