
**LEVANDER,
GILLEN &
MILLER, P.A.**

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

TIMOTHY J. KUNTZ
DANIEL J. BEESON
*KENNETH J. ROHLF
◦STEPHEN H. FOCHLER
◊JAY P. KARLOVICH
ANGELA M. LUTZ AMANN
*KORINE L. LAND
◻*DONALD L. HOEFT
DARCY M. ERICKSON
DAVID S. KENDALL
BRIDGET McCAULEY NASON
TONA T. DOVE
BRADLEY R. HUTTER
•
HAROLD LEVANDER
1910-1992
•
ARTHUR GILLEN
1919-2005
•
• ROGER C. MILLER
1924-2009

MEMO

*ALSO ADMITTED IN WISCONSIN
◊ALSO ADMITTED IN NORTH DAKOTA
◻ALSO ADMITTED IN MASSACHUSETTS
◻ALSO ADMITTED IN OKLAHOMA

TO: Sunfish Lake Mayor and Councilmembers
FROM: Timothy J. Kuntz, City Attorney
DATE: March 30, 2016
**RE: Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program – April 5, 2016 Council Meeting;
Agenda Item 8(b)**

Section 1. Background. Because of the City's efforts to protect the environment through reducing energy use and reducing waste (through its recycling program) while promoting environmental sustainability and conservation, the Mayor has expressed interest in having the City participate in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program to recognize the efforts already made by the City and to further commit to meeting future sustainability goals.

Section 2. Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program. Attached are background materials related to the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program. The attached materials consist of two packets of information containing the following:

1. Information from the Minnesota Greenstep Cities website which includes handouts relating to the steps to becoming recognized as a GreenStep city and information relating to the 29 best practices criteria.
2. Information from the City of Inver Grove Heights recent passage of a resolution authorizing the city to participate in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program which includes two Council memos (and attachments) and a portion of a powerpoint presentation which identifies the benefits to participating in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program.

Section 3. Council Action. There is no formal action for the Council to take at the April 5, 2016 Council meeting. The Council is asked to review the attached materials in advance of the May 3, 2016 Council meeting. At the May 3, 2016 Council meeting the Council will consider a resolution authorizing the city to participate in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program. At the

May 3, 2016 Council meeting there will be a representative from the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program available to answer questions and provide more information.

The resolution by which the City would enter the GreenStep program will be available for the May 3, 2016 meeting. The form of that resolution calls for the City to designate someone to be responsible to implement the various reports that have to be filed as part of the program. One item of discussion at the April 5th meeting could be for the Council to consider which staff or consultant will be designated in the resolution.

Attachments

Search

Home | About | The 29 best practices | Become a GreenStep City | Recognition | Ordinances | City log-in | Contact | Stay Connected  

Steps to becoming recognized as a GreenStep city

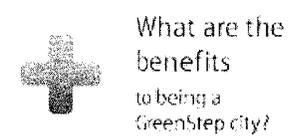
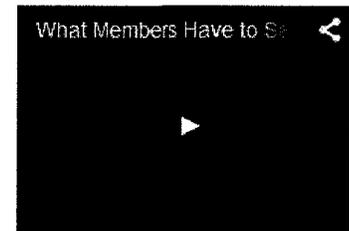
Of Minnesota's 855 cities, approximately 500 are under 1,000 in population, 83% are under 5,000 in population, and 35 have a population over 25,000. With such a diversity of cities, no one set of process steps will fit all cities in organizing work to become a GreenStep City. Depending on your city, work may start mostly at the city staff, citizen commission or city council level and fit well into existing plans and efforts, moving later to incorporate and leverage work efforts by civic organizations. Or the impetus for implementing GreenStep best practices may start with a civic group and be mostly done by community members and community organizations, with the city council in a supportive and active role as needed.

Thus the abbreviated list of organizing steps below must be seen as a rough guide, to be adapted by each city. For more details under each step, download the full Organizing Steps Guide.

Build community knowledge and interest.



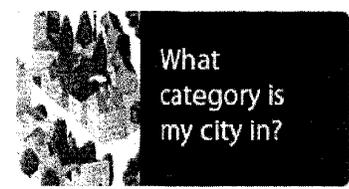
- Anyone can start this.
 - Testimonials: Cities share their experiences in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program
 - Notable Accomplishments: GreenStep Cities 2010 – present
 - Fact sheet
- Determine into which category your city fits.
- Become familiar with GreenStep best practices.
- Talk with key people and organizations in your city.
- Invite, as needed, a GreenStep program representative to your city.
- Conduct an inventory of completed, planned and desired best practices.
- Discuss with an official city body.



Approve a city council resolution to work toward GreenStep Cities recognition.



- Use the sample resolution.
- Introduce a resolution to the city council.
- Specify a GreenStep coordinator and a few best practices to implement.
- E-mail your city resolution and GreenStep contact information to the MPCA.

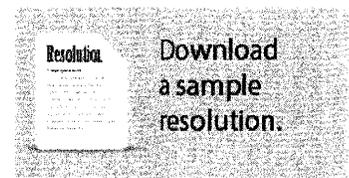


Congratulations! You are now a *Step One GreenStep City!* Use Step One recognition artwork/materials (found on your city log-in page) to let others know of your accomplishment. Formal recognition of Step One cities takes place each June at the annual League of Minnesota Cities conference.

Post initial information on the GreenStep Cities web site via your log-in page



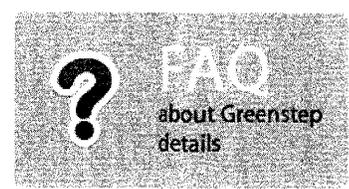
- Enter simple information about your city.
- Provide brief detail on best practices previously implemented.



Get organized to begin work on implementing best practices.



- As needed, educate city staff and officials about sustainability.
- Convene a small working group.
- Specify implementation action(s) and a few lead people.



- Prepare a simple work plan for implementing selected best practices.
- Present the best practice plans to a city body or to the city council as appropriate.

Implement best practices.



- Keep everyone moving and celebrate success.
- Clarify, as needed, what constitutes completing an action with the MPCA GreenStep program coordinator.
- Briefly describe implemented best practices on the GreenStep web site.

Congratulations! When you have implemented any 4, 6 or 8 best practices (depending on your city category) you are now a *Step Two GreenStep City!* Use Step Two recognition artwork/materials (found on your city log-in page) to let others know of your accomplishment. Formal recognition of Step Two cities takes place each June at the annual League of Minnesota Cities conference.



Keep working on best practices.

- Implementing a particular best practice action may take months or one to two years.
- Be alert to opportunities to complete multiple best practice actions at once.
- Check back with the city council as needed.
- Report yearly to community members.
- As your work proceeds, give us feedback on the program.

Congratulations! When you have implemented 8, 12 or 16 best practices (depending on your city category) distributed across the five topical areas and including a few specified high-value best practices, you are now a *Step Three GreenStep City!* Use recognition artwork/materials (found on your city log-in page) to let others know of your accomplishment. Formal recognition of Step Three cities takes place each June at the annual League of Minnesota Cities conference.



GreenStep Cities Step Four

- see guidance documents and a reporting form at <http://www.betterenergy.org/step4>
Step 2 and Step 3 recognition levels reflect completed city actions, generally described in words. Beginning in 2016 the GreenStep program challenges cities to measure and report – with numbers – the aggregate, quantitative results of taking multiple actions. Called city performance metrics (or sustainability indicators), these Step 4 measures attempt to present to community members the 'state of sustainability' achieved by a city. **Step Four recognition will be awarded to cities each June who report a minimum number of optional (and a few high-priority / core) metrics for the previous calendar year.** The final recognition level for the GreenStep Cities Program - Step 5 - will challenge cities to show improvement in the Step 4 metrics.

Organizing steps to becoming recognized as a GreenStep City

Of Minnesota's 855 cities, approximately 500 are under 1,000 in population, 83% are under 5,000 in population, and 35 have a population over 25,000. With such a diversity of cities, no one set of process steps will fit all cities in organizing work to become a GreenStep City. Depending on your city, work may start mostly at the city staff, city council or citizen commission level and fit well into existing plans and efforts, moving later to incorporate and leverage work efforts by civic organizations. Or the impetus for implementing GreenStep best practices may start with a civic group and be mostly done by community members and community organizations, with the city council in a supportive and active role as needed.

Adapt this guide as best fits your city and the individuals who are working to make your city a GreenStep City.

1. Build community knowledge and interest.

- Anyone can start this: a city staff person, an interested citizen, a city commission or task force member, a mayor, city council member, business association member, civic association member, environmental or public health group, renewable energy advocate, etc.
- Determine into which category your city fits. Cities with greater capacity for making civic improvements are able and challenged to implement more best practices and "harder" actions. Answer 11 simple questions to determine whether your city is in category A, B or C.
- Become familiar with GreenStep best practices and which of them other cities in Minnesota have implemented. Determine your city category so you know the minimum number of best practices your city must have implemented to be recognized as a GreenStep City, Step Two and Step Three.
- Talk with key people and organizations in your city, discuss at existing meetings, and convene special meetings to discuss as appropriate.
- Invite, as needed, a GreenStep program representative to come visit your city and talk about GreenStep. Contact the MPCA's GreenStep Cities program coordinator to find out who might be available to visit your citizen's group, or city staff, city commission, or city council.
- Inventory completed, planned and desired best practices. Some cities find it important to prepare this inventory, at a very simple summary level or at a detailed level, before seeking a city council resolution. Consider using a student intern or community volunteer to do this, or, for a more detailed inventory, contact the MPCA's GreenStep Cities program coordinator to see if a RETAP member can help you.
- Discuss with an official city body. This could be a city council, a council committee, a city commission or task force, or some other group charged by city government to work on civic improvement.

2. Approve a city council resolution to work toward GreenStep Cities recognition.

- Use the sample resolution and modify it as needed in discussion with city council members or in a city council committee meeting.
- Introduce a resolution to the city council. Depending on the practice in your city, more or less detail will have to be spelled out in the proposed resolution.
- Specify in the resolution – or direct city staff to determine later – (1) a GreenStep coordinator for your city (the coordinator could be an existing city staff person or entity, or task force, or an appointed community member), and (2) a short list of which GreenStep best practices the city initially plans to implement (to help the GreenStep program better understand city interests).

- E-mail your resolution/contact information. This will allow the MPCA to set up a web account on the GreenStep Cities web site for your city. If your resolution names a city entity, please include a contact person's name, phone, e-mail and postal address, which will appear on the public web site.
- *Congratulations! You are now recognized as a **Step One GreenStep City!** Use Step One recognition artwork/materials located on your city log-in page to let others know of your accomplishment.*

3. Post initial information on the GreenStep Cities web site.

- Enter simple information: city population, approximate number of city staff, city category, city web site address, names of any participating township(s) / school district(s), and contact information for one person who will serve as your city's GreenStep contact.
- Provide brief detail on best practices previously implemented. For example, if you check off the action *Promote biking, walking and transit* under the *Mobility Options* best practice, tell us:
 - How many, for example, bike racks the city/the city and its partners installed
 - A web address on your city web site (if any) that talks about your efforts (or upload a planning document you may have used, such as an area bike plan)
 - Any success measures (such as: bike path use increased 20% during 2005)
 - Any key partner(s) you may have worked with (for example, a local bike rack company)
 - The name and e-mail of the person most knowledgeable about this accomplishment so that other cities seeking to replicate your success can learn from it.

Some cities may find it easier/cheaper to use a student intern to gather and post this information. Contact the MPCA's GreenStep Cities program coordinator to see if a RETAP member can help you with the inventory and posting.

4. Get organized to begin work on implementing best practices.

- As needed, educate city staff and officials about sustainability. Sustainability may not be the term used by your city, but current actions the city may be taking to increase city resiliency to financial pressures, to increase livability and to prevent future environmental costs certainly fall under the sustainability focus of GreenStep Cities and should be understood by elected and appointed officials and staff.
- Convene a small working group. The GreenStep contact/coordinator for the city should call together key people within city government (and outside of city government as appropriate at this stage) to make decisions such as the following. This group might be an existing or new city staff green team or an existing or new citizen commission or task force:
 - How to work with existing city/civic groups and initiatives to implement best practices
 - Who should be on a GreenStep steering committee (which could be an existing group), what this committee needs to do (e.g., review progress on implementing best practices), and how often it needs to meet
 - How often the GreenStep steering committee should report back what to the city council
- Specify implementation action(s) and a few lead people. A GreenStep steering committee – which could be the initial small working group or a city commission – should take the short list of best practices the city identified in its resolution for implementation, and identify:
 - Which specific action(s) under each best practice will be investigated/worked on
 - Which people - “best practice leads” - should prepare a simple work plan for how to implement the action(s)
- Prepare a simple work plan for implementing selected best practice. Have best practice leads – these could be non-paid community members, or members of a city environmental commission -

draft a simple work plan. The work plan should specify exactly (1) *who* would do (2) *what* and (3) *when* using (4) *what* types of resources (money, volunteers, county help, utility funds, etc.). Be alert to how *proposing slight changes in what a city is already planning to do can accomplish a best practice action*. GreenSteps is mostly about doing things smarter and spending money that returns multiple benefits, not about spending more money or finding grant money. The following should make preparing the work plan easier:

- Review implementation tools on the GreenStep web site for each selected best practice action, which often include case studies, to refine how you will implement the best practice action in your city
 - Talk with city staff/officials
 - Talk with others from the community
 - Talk with trusted resource organizations, including consultants and utilities
 - Contact the MN GreenStep Cities best practice advisor for the relevant best practice as needed
 - Read on the GreenStep web site how other cities have implemented a selected best practice action, and contact the people listed there to learn more information
- Present the best practice plans to your GreenStep steering committee and to a city body or to the city council as appropriate.

5. Begin working to implement best practices.

- Keep everyone moving and celebrate success. At periodic meetings of your GreenStep steering committee, have best practice leads report on accomplishments, barriers, and next steps. Work together to overcome barriers, change plans as needed, and find ways to accomplish multiple actions through a common strategy.
 - Clarify, as needed, what constitutes completing an action with the MPCA GreenStep program coordinator. For example, an administrative directive is probably substantially equivalent to a city council-adopted policy, but feel free to make a phone call to clarify an issue such as this.
 - Briefly describe completed best practice actions on the GreenStep web site as you did in step 3 above when first entering information onto the GreenStep Cities web site.
- *Congratulations! When you have implemented any 4, 6 or 8 best practices (depending on your city category) you are now recognized as a **Step Two GreenStep City!***

6. Keep on working and be recognized for higher steps.

- Implementing a particular best practice action may take months or years. The GreenStep Cities program requirements have been set with the expectation that any city can implement 8, 12 or 16 best practices (depending on city category) and become a Step Three GreenStep City within three years. But implementing the required best practices and the minimum number of optional best practices might take some cities longer or shorter than three years, depending on the different assets and capabilities of each city. Program requirements will be reviewed and adjusted carefully each year to keep the implementation actions for best practices challenging yet doable.
- Be alert to rare opportunities. Projects like street repaving, waste water plant breakdowns, or receiving a grant for housing loans each afford a city the chance to complete multiple best practice actions at once. Be ready with plans for making the most of these opportunities.
- Check back with the city council as needed. Ongoing or planned best practice implementation may fit in with new city efforts and can be shaped in discussion with the council.

- Report yearly to community members on GreenStep accomplishments. This is a required action for all cities under Best Practice #24. Use various media, sample reporting forms on your city's log-in page, and existing communication vehicles and venues.
- As your work proceeds, give us feedback on the program. Let us know how we can make the program materials aid you better in implementing actions.

- *Congratulations! When you have implemented 8, 12 or 16 best practices (depending on your city category, and including a few required best practices) you are now recognized as a **Step Three GreenStep City!***

7. GreenStep Cities Step Four.

- Program requirements will be developed during 2012, as we learn from cities during 2010 and 2011, to challenge recognized GreenStep Cities to implement more actions and be recognized for these accomplishments. We think GreenStep best practices will result in multiple benefits for your city and that you'll want to continuously work on best practices that make your city more sustainable.

Home | About | The 29 best practices | Become a GreenStep City | Recognition | Ordinances | City log-in | Contact | Stay Connected  

Show me all actions related to

The GreenStep 29 best practices

- **Make planning and tracking easier: download this spreadsheet that lists all unique actions – approximately 175 – for all 29 best practices.**
- Cities that implement a minimum number of best practices organized into these five topical areas will be recognized as Step Two and Step Three GreenStep Cities. See What are Step Two and Three Recognition Minimums?
- Cities should claim credit for best practices already implemented. Adding best practices over time will garner additional recognition.
- For each best practice, and depending on city category (A, B or C), a city needs to complete one or more actions from a list associated with the best practice. See What category is my city in?

Buildings and Lighting

- 1. Efficient Existing Public Buildings:** Benchmark energy usage, identify savings opportunities in consultation with state programs, utilities and others to implement cost-effective energy and sustainability improvements. 
- 2. Efficient Existing Private Buildings:** Provide incentives for energy, water and sustainability improvements in existing structures.
- 3. New Green Buildings:** Construct new buildings to meet or qualify under a green building framework.
- 4. Efficient Outdoor Lighting and Signals:** Improve the efficiency and quality of street lighting, traffic signals and outdoor public lighting.
- 5. Building Redevelopment:** Create economic and regulatory incentives for redeveloping and repurposing existing buildings before building new.

Land Use

- 6. Comprehensive Plans:** Build public support and legal validity to long-term infrastructural and regulatory strategy. 
- 7. Efficient City Growth:** Promote financial and environmental sustainability by enabling and encouraging walkable housing and commercial land use.
- 8. Mixed Uses:** Develop efficient and healthy land patterns that generate community wealth.
- 9. Efficient Highway- and Auto-Oriented Development:** Adopt commercial development and design standards for auto-oriented development corridors and clusters.
- 10. Design for Natural Resource Conservation:** Adopt development ordinances or processes that protect natural systems and valued community assets.

Transportation

- 11. Living Streets:** Create a network of green complete streets that improves city quality of life and adds value to surrounding properties. 
- 12. Mobility Options:** Promote active transportation and alternatives to single-occupancy car travel.
- 13. Efficient City Fleets:** Implement a city fleet investment, operations and maintenance plan.
- 14. Demand-Side Travel Planning:** Implement Travel Demand Management and Transit-Oriented Design in service of a more walkable city.

Environmental Management

- 15. Sustainable Purchasing:** Adopt environmentally preferable purchasing policies and practices. 
- 16. Urban Forests:** Add city tree and plant cover that increases community health, wealth and quality of life.
- 17. Stormwater Management:** Minimize the volume of and pollutants in stormwater runoff.
- 18. Parks and Trails:** Support active lifestyles and property values by enhancing the city's green infrastructure.
- 19. Surface Water Quality:** Improve local water bodies.
- 20. Efficient Water and Wastewater Facilities:** Assess and improve city drinking water and wastewater facilities.
- 21. Septic Systems:** Implement an effective management program for decentralized wastewater treatment systems.
- 22. Solid Waste Reduction:** Increase waste reduction, reuse and recycling.
- 23. Local Air Quality:** Prevent generation of local air contaminants.

Economic and Community Development

- 24. Benchmarks & Community Engagement:** Adopt outcome measures for GreenStep and other city sustainability efforts, and engage community members in ongoing education, dialogue, and campaigns. 
- 25. Green Business Development:** Support expansion of the city's green business sector.
- 26. Renewable Energy:** Remove barriers to and encourage installation of renewable energy generation capacity.
- 27. Local Food:** Strengthen local food and fiber production and access.
- 28. Business Synergies:** Network/cluster businesses to achieve better energy, economic and environmental outcomes.
- 29. Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience:** Plan and prepare for extreme weather, adapt to changing climatic conditions, and foster stronger community connectedness and social and economic vitality.

Home | About | The 29 best practices | Become a GreenStep City | Recognition | Ordinances | City log-in | Contact Stay Connected  

GreenStep City Best Practices **Environmental Management**

Urban Forests

no. 16



Add city tree and plant cover that increases community health, wealth and quality of life.



Best Practice Actions [See action tools, guidance, city reports]

1. Certify as a **Tree City USA**.
2. Adopt **best practices for urban tree planting/quality**; use them in at least one development project.
3. Budget for and achieve **urban canopy/tree planting goals**.
4. **Maximize tree planting along your main downtown street or throughout the city.**
5. Adopt a **tree preservation or native landscaping** ordinance.
6. Build community capacity to **protect existing trees/plant resilient species** by certifying at least one or more local staff/volunteers.

BENEFITS 

- The national Arbor Day Foundation's [tree benefits](#) page calculates how much the trees in a residential yard are worth. Also see this [simple estimator of the benefits individual street-side trees provide](#) and the MN Dept. of Natural Resources page on [energy conservation through trees](#).
- [i-Tree tools](#) are state-of-the-art, peer-reviewed software from the USDA Forest Service that help communities measure tree canopy cover and the value of community trees for energy savings, stormwater management, carbon sequestration, air pollution reductions, and property value enhancement.
- Among 2005 [U.S. Forest Service studies](#) are data showing that single trees in southern or central Minnesota can generate a net benefit (total benefits minus initial and annual maintenance costs) of \$160 - \$3,040 during a 40-year period. The nearly 200,000 public trees in Minneapolis alone provide a total gross annual benefit of \$24.9 million. Benefits analyzed are:
 - Energy savings and reduced CO2 emissions. Shading/wind breaks reduce residential energy used in air conditioning and heating (25% in summer and 20% in winter).
 - Increased property values and rents. Humans are hard-wired to value the natural world and will pay 9% more for a house with a tree within 50 feet. Properly placed trees can increase property values from 7-21% and buildings in wooded areas rent more quickly and tenants stay longer.
 - Beauty and all the resulting intangible and financially significant [personal/mental health and social benefits](#).

[MAJOR BENEFIT]

Community quality



STEP 3 RECOGNITION MINIMUM FOR CATEGORY A AND B CITIES

Category A cities are recognized upon completion of at least two actions.

Category B cities are recognized upon completion of at least one action.

Category C cities that choose to implement this best practice are recognized upon completion of at least one action.

SUMMARY

Investments that protect and enhance a city's green infrastructure, which includes trees, living snow fences and other plant cover, deliver many financial, energy, quality of life and carbon sequestration benefits, just as do investments in a city's traditional grey infrastructure of roads and utilities (sewer, gas, electric and telecommunication lines). People love and gravitate toward tree-lined streets. Given a limited city budget, which always includes money for streets, the most effective expenditure of funds to improve a street would probably be on trees.



GREENSTEP ADVISOR

Ken Holman, Community Forestry Coordinator, MN Department of Natural Resources: 651/259-5269, ken.holman@dnr.state.mn.us, <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/urban>

CONNECTION TO STATE POLICY

Use of trees is an optional measure in the Minnesota Green Communities criteria, used by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency in awarding funding for building affordable green multi-family housing.



- Improved retail sales in tree-rich commercial districts. People have been found to spend up to 12% more on products if they are shopping in a district with mature trees.
- Increased life of asphalt. Shading reduces degradation of paved road surfaces.
- Reduced stormwater runoff and improved water quality. Old growth trees can decrease runoff by 59%.
- Improved air quality. Trees filter pollutants: 90 lbs. of CO₂, 3 lbs. of particulates and 4 lbs. of ozone per large tree per year.
- Improved wildlife habitat. Trees provide nesting places and food for birds and other animals that make up a well-functioning ecosystem.
- Reduced crime. One study demonstrated that apartment buildings with high levels of greenery had 52% fewer crimes than those without greenery.
- Noise reduction. Trees absorb sound.

Home | About | The 29 best practices | Become a GreenStep City | Recognition | Ordinances | City log-in | Contact Stay Connected  

GreenStep City Best Practices **Environmental Management**

Septic Systems

no. 21



Implement an effective management program for decentralized wastewater treatment systems.

OPTIONAL FOR CATEGORY A, B AND C CITIES

All Category A, B and C cities that choose to implement this best practice are recognized upon completion of at least one action.



Best Practice Actions [See action tools, guidance, city reports]

1. Report to landowners suspected noncompliant or failing septic systems as part of an educational, informational and financial **assistance and outreach program** designed to trigger voluntary landowner action to improve septic systems.
2. Use a **community process** to address failing septic systems.
3. Clarify/establish one or more **responsible management entities** for the proper design, siting, installation, operation, monitoring and maintenance of septic systems.
4. **Adopt a subsurface sewage treatment system ordinance based on the Association of Minnesota Counties' model ordinance.**
5. Create a program to **finance septic system upgrades.**
6. Work with homeowners and businesses in environmentally sensitive areas and areas where standard septic systems are not the least-cost option to promote **innovative waste water systems**, including central sewer extensions.
7. Arrange for **assistance to commercial, retail and industrial businesses** with water use reduction, pollution prevention and pretreatment prior to discharge to septic.

SUMMARY

Throughout Minnesota, failing septic systems in smaller towns and rural areas have relatively direct connections to surface and ground waters. These connections can cause detrimental impacts on the environment and can create an imminent threat to public health and safety. Standard septic systems with drainfields can also hinder cost-effective tax-base growth in small towns by preventing denser development. Cities can help structure assistance to septic owners, allowing them to implement best practices around septic systems and to access financial programs for upgrades.



GREENSTEP ADVISOR

Staff from University Extension's Onsite Sewage Treatment Program: 800/322-8642, septic@umn.edu, <http://septic.umn.edu/communities>

CONNECTION TO STATE POLICY

Minnesota Rules chapters 7080 - 7083 (linked to from the MPCA septic web site) provide the framework for regulation of onsite wastewater treatment. Counties are in the process of updating their ordinances to meet this rule, which was passed in 2008. Cities that choose to regulate onsite wastewater treatment must be as stringent as their county's ordinance.



BENEFITS 

- Data from a well-managed set of 1545 septic systems in the Otter Tail Water Management District, formed in 1984, shows very little impact on groundwater and improved water quality in the lakes. Total system failure rates have been less than 2%.
- Benefits of well-managed septic systems include:
 - Protection of public health and local water and groundwater resources.
 - Lower costs to taxpayers by keeping water potable for human consumption rather than treating contaminated water.
 - Longer system life, improved system performance and increased reliability.
 - Reduced costs for repairs, maintenance and replacement.
 - Improved property values.
 - A barrier to resale of property removed.

[MAJOR BENEFIT]

Community health



Search

Home | About | The 29 best practices | Become a GreenStep City | Recognition | Ordinances | City log-in | Contact | Stay Connected  

GreenStep City Best Practices **Environmental Management**

Solid Waste Reduction

no. 22



Increase waste reduction, reuse and recycling.



Best Practice Actions [See action tools, guidance, city reports]

1. Adopt and meet **reduction goals for waste/toxics generated** from internal city operations, including schools, libraries, parks, municipal health care facilities.
2. Adopt and meet **recycling/composting goals for waste/toxics** generated from internal city operations.
3. Document significant waste reduction/recycling, through a **resource management contract** (covering recycling and garbage) or other means, for one or more of:
 - a. City government operations.
 - b. Schools, libraries, parks, or municipal health care facilities.
 - c. A commercial or industrial business.
4. Publicize, promote and use the varied businesses/services collecting and marketing **used, repaired and rental consumer goods** in the city/county.
5. Arrange for a residential or business/institutional source separated **organics collection/management** program.
6. Implement one or more **city-wide solid waste collection/recycling systems**:
 - a. Require collection of recyclables from multi-unit residential buildings.
 - b. Require collection of 3 or more recyclable materials from commercial entities.
 - c. Organize regular, ongoing residential solid waste collection by private and/or public operations to link one (or more) geographic district(s) to only one hauler.
7. Offer significant **volume-based pricing** on residential garbage and/or incentives for recycling.
8. Adopt a **construction and demolition ordinance** governing demolition permits that requires a level of recycling and reuse for building materials and soil/land-clearing debris.

OPTIONAL FOR CATEGORY A, B AND C CITIES

Category C cities that choose to implement this best practice are recognized upon completion of at least one action.

Category B cities that choose to implement this best practice are recognized upon completion of at least one of actions 1 through 3, and at least one of actions 4 through 8.

Category A cities that choose to implement this best practice are recognized upon completion of at least action 1 or 2 and at least one of actions 4 through 8.

SUMMARY

The dominant model for our society's use of materials is a linear "take, make, waste" one made possible by a half-century of plentiful, inexpensive energy and the assumption that throwing stuff "away" would have no ecological or financial consequences. The "waste" part, however, is larger than we think. As a rule of thumb, every ton of garbage at the consumer end of the materials management stream has also required the production of 5 tons of waste at the manufacturing stage and 20 tons of waste at the site of initial resource extraction (mining, pumping, logging, farming). During the 20th century the "taking and making" part (including food) increasingly happened outside city boundaries, but when accounted for in a city consumption-based inventory, city greenhouse gases can grow up to 40% larger.

A more energy- and resource-efficient, pollution-reducing urban metabolism model resulting in lower GHG emissions seeks first to prevent the generation of waste and then moves to a cyclical, biological approach whereby product and waste reuse and recycling is maximized and landfill disposal is minimized. In this emerging model, products and wastes are designed to be reused, and either composted or recycled. The State of Minnesota's legislatively adopted waste management hierarchy mirrors this emerging model.

BENEFITS

- Composting of organics avoids the 17% state tax, and the county fee (which can be as high as 53%), on garbage, incurs a smaller tipping fee, and prevents anaerobic digestion of organics from producing the potent greenhouse gas methane from slowly escaping landfills. There are also no taxes/fees on recyclables such as fibers and containers.
- A systems-based, life-cycle accounting of greenhouse gas emissions in, for example, a city reveals that 42% of emissions result from materials management (which includes the extraction of natural resources, and production, transport and disposal of food and goods). This perspective shows the significant potential to cut energy use and emissions through reducing consumption, reusing materials, and recycling residues. See [Opportunities to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)

[MAJOR BENEFIT]

Community self-reliance



GREENSTEP ADVISOR

Tim Farnan, Waste Prevention Specialist,
MN Pollution Control Agency: 651/757-2348,
timothy.farnan@state.mn.us,
<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/ktqh87d>

CONNECTION TO STATE POLICY

- State laws govern many aspects of solid waste disposal and vest



through Materials and Land Management Practices (U.S. EPA: 2009), *Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions through Recycling and Composting* (U.S. EPA: 2011), and EPA's WARM (Waste Reduction Model) measurement tool.

- The EPA's Food Waste Management Calculator estimates the cost competitiveness of alternatives to food waste disposal, including source reduction, donation, composting, and recycling of yellow grease.
- The Recycle More Minnesota website summarizes the economic and environmental benefits of recycling, as well as provides links to where to recycle what across the state. For example, the economic activity associated with Minnesota's value-added recycling manufacturers comprises:
 - 37,000 total direct & indirect jobs in 2011 (a 69% direct job increase from 2004).
 - \$8.5 billion in gross economic activity, \$1.96 billion in wages, \$272 million in state and local tax revenue.
 - \$690 million: the worth of 'waste' material collected by Minnesota recycling programs.
- See background information and data on the economic and environmental/climate benefits of waste reduction in the 2015 US Conference of Mayors' resolution in support of municipal zero waste principles and a hierarchy of materials management, and in the 2008 recommendations to the state legislature from the Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group.

responsibility at various governmental levels, especially at the county level. Public entities are required by statute to use the waste management hierarchy (reduce waste first, then attempt to reuse, then recycle and compost, and finally manage remaining materials through a waste-to-energy facility, and then landfill) and to recycle at least three materials. As with all GreenStep best practices, the action options in this best practice build on those seen implemented in Minnesota cities and go beyond state requirements.

- The 2014 Legislature set 2030 recycling goals as follows: (1) 35% (by weight of total solid waste generation) for a county outside of the Twin Cities metro area, and (2) 75% (60% recycling and 15% organics) for a metropolitan county. Each county will develop and implement or require political subdivisions within the county to develop and implement programs, practices, or methods designed to meet its recycling goal.
- By January 1, 2016, owners of commercial property in the seven-county metro area will need to make sure their buildings have recycling services along with garbage collection. The 2014 law (Minn. Stat. 115A.151) applies to most commercial buildings that have service for 4 cubic yards (or more) of trash per week, and requires that a minimum of three material types be collected for recycling.

Home | About | The 29 best practices | Become a GreenStep City | Recognition | Ordinances | City log-in | Contact Stay Connected  

GreenStep City Best Practices **Land Use**

Design for Natural Resource Conservation

◀ no. 10 ▶



Adopt development ordinances or processes that protect natural systems and valued community assets.

OPTIONAL FOR CATEGORY A, B AND C CITIES

All **Category A, B and C** cities that choose to implement this best practice are recognized upon completion of at least one action.



Best Practice Actions [See action tools, guidance, city reports]

1. Conduct a Natural Resource Inventory or Assessment (**NRI or NRA**); incorporate protection of priority natural systems or resources through the subdivision or development process.
2. For cities outside or on the fringe of metropolitan areas, conduct a **build-out analysis, fiscal impact study, or adopt an urban growth boundary** and a consistent capital improvement plan that provides long-term protection of natural resources and natural systems, and agricultural practices outside the boundary.
3. For cities within metropolitan areas, incorporate **woodland best management practices** addressing protection of wooded areas into zoning or development review.
4. Adopt a **conservation design policy** and use a conservation design tool in negotiating development agreements in cities with undeveloped natural resource areas.
5. **Develop/fund a conservation easement program, such as a purchase of development rights program, in collaboration with a land trust.**
6. Conserve natural resources by adopting or amending **city codes and ordinances to support sustainable sites** and environmentally protective land use development.
7. . (Action deleted on 01/11/2016)

SUMMARY

The primary goal of conservation design is to conserve natural or economic resources or community character through low-impact development techniques, coupling development and restoration efforts. Rural conservation design protects agricultural practices, working forests, or open space for rural community character. Transitional conservation design creates a permanent urban-to-rural transition (transect) that maintains rural character and buffers rural economic uses from urban development. Natural resource conservation design protects or restores valuable natural systems - habitat and local biodiversity - viewsheds, and a community's natural resource heritage where these resources are in potential conflict with development. Conservation design actions retain or expand ecologically healthy woodlands, wetlands and open lands that infiltrate rainwater and sequester carbon. These actions also aim to lower development costs, decrease maintenance costs, preserve more usable natural areas, and protect surface and ground water when compared to the traditional models of development.

BENEFITS 

- Maintaining or restoring native vegetation and protecting natural systems sequesters carbon and limits the release of stored carbon.
- Well-managed open lands and rural development, whether fields, forests, agriculture lands, parks or wetlands, help sustain the community in a variety of ways, including:
 - Reduced volume of stormwater runoff, surface water pollutants and sediment
 - Enhanced groundwater recharge
 - Reduced erosion
 - Improved air quality
 - Additional wildlife habitat and recreational space
 - Preservation of rural community character and viewsheds
- Improved retention of housing values over time for properties near open space and functioning natural systems.



GREENSTEP ADVISOR

Paul Radomski, Conservation Ecologist, MN Dept. of Natural Resources: 218/833-8643, paul.radomski@dnr.state.mn.us

CONNECTION TO STATE POLICY

This best practice is consistent with the goals of the MN DNR's [shoreland management rules](#) being updated, which encourage shoreland conservation that reflects the latest stormwater management practices, values open space, buffers and provides standards for shoreland conservation subdivisions.



- Linking housing to green space results in increased bicycle and pedestrian travel, helping meet active living goals and encouraging non-motorized modes of travel.
- See a case study of [Fairview Office Park in Baxter, MN.](#)

Search

Home | About | The 29 best practices | Become a GreenStep City | Recognition | Ordinances | City log-in | Contact Stay Connected  

GreenStep City Best Practices **Economic and Community Development**

Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience

no. 29



Plan and prepare for extreme weather, adapt to changing climatic conditions, and foster stronger community connectedness and social and economic vitality.



Best Practice Actions [See action tools, guidance, city reports]

1. Integrate climate resilience into **planning and budgetary** processes.
2. Prepare to **maintain public health and safety** during extreme weather and climate-change related events, while also taking a **preventive approach to reduce risk** for community members.
3. Provide **opportunities for economically vulnerable residents** to improve their economic prosperity.
4. Increase **social connectedness** through consistent and direct citizen engagement and capacity building of communities or **populations that are generally underrepresented** in community discussions or participation.
5. **Protect public and critical facilities and infrastructure** with practical mitigation measures to reduce physical damage and sustain functions during extreme weather events.
6. Increase the capacity of buildings and infrastructure to **reduce the urban heat island effect**, better manage stormwater, use locally available energy resources, and **decrease GHG emissions** while increasing resilience.
7. Make **long-term investments** through sustainable best practice actions to prepare for anticipated climate impacts and increase resiliency over time.

BENEFITS

For an introduction to Best Practice 29, **watch the video recording** of the February GreenStep Workshop/Webinar [Risk, Resilience & Adaptation](#).

Sustainability and Resilience are different lenses with many overlapping benefits. Sustainability looks at the world and sees that our future is at risk. This requires taking mitigating actions now, such as using safe sources of energy like low-cost wind and solar that will protect future generations. Resilience looks at the world and sees that the future of a changing climate has arrived. It focuses on **adapting to protect our health and strengthen our communities, while choosing safe sources of energy to safeguard future generations from more damage to the climate**. Many sustainability best practices are also resilience best practices, providing co-benefits to **reduce risk, develop public amenities, decrease GHG emissions, improve air and water quality, and more**.

FEMA describes the [social and economic benefits of resilience](#) as including:

- Preventing loss of life and injury.
- Reducing property damage to homes and businesses.
- Helping to lower emergency response and disaster recovery times.
- Attracting new businesses and residents.

[MAJOR BENEFIT]

**Economic
resilience**



STEP 3 RECOGNITION MINIMUM FOR CATEGORY A, B AND C CITIES

All Category A, B and C cities are recognized upon completion of [action 1](#).

SUMMARY

Resilient communities have the **strength to withstand, respond to, and adapt** more readily to acute shocks (such as flooding from extreme precipitation) and chronic stresses (such as ongoing effects of the changing climate on the local tourist economy). The urban heat island effect may worsen chronic stresses.

Minnesota already is experiencing changes to its highly variable climate with more frequent and intense extreme rainfall events, a rapid decline in the severity and frequency of extreme cold, higher humidity and average nighttime temperatures, repeated freeze-thaw cycles, a longer growing season, and new invasive species. Based on climate modeling, for the future it is expected that **additionally Minnesota will face increases in the severity, coverage and duration of heat waves and drought** and diminished air quality from increased wildfire smoke, higher levels of ozone, more pollen, etc. Implementing best practice actions to plan and prepare for such events will strengthen cities for greater resilience to the changing climate.

This best practice is organized according to the **four essential dimensions of urban resilience** from [The City Resilience Framework](#) as follows:

- **Leadership & Strategy** - implement effective leadership, inclusive decision-making, empowerment of stakeholders, and integrated planning. (Action 1)
- **Health & Wellbeing** - provide access to resources to help everyone survive extreme weather and the changing climate. (Action 2)
- **Economy & Society** - promote cohesive and engaged communities and foster economic prosperity. (Actions 3 and 4)
- **Infrastructure & Environment** - protect, enhance, and ensure continuity of the constructed and natural systems that provide critical services and connect urban assets. (Actions 5 and 6)

GREENSTEP ADVISOR

Laura Millberg, MBA, LEED AP BD+C,

- Protecting cultural and historical assets.
- Reducing environmental damage.
- Building a sense of place and peace of mind.

The [100 Resilient Cities](#) program concludes that resilient communities benefit from the following qualities:

- Integrated - bring together a range of distinct systems and institutions to solve problems.
- Reflective - learn from past experiences to better understand vulnerabilities and strengths.
- Flexible - adopt alternative strategies in response to changing situations.
- Resourceful - identify alternative ways to use resources at times of crisis.
- Inclusive - develop social connectivity and a sense of shared ownership.
- Redundant - create spare capacity purposely so can better accommodate disruption.
- Robust - implement systems that are well-conceived, constructed and managed.

Learn from MPCA how community assets provide many co-benefits while increasing [community resilience to climate change](#).

[A report of the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development](#) after Hurricane Sandy demonstrated that communities with stronger pre-existing social networks recovered more quickly.



Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience Principal Planner, MN Pollution Control Agency: 651/757-2568, Laura.Millberg@state.mn.us

CONNECTION TO STATE POLICY

On October 16, 2015, [Governor Dayton](#) signed the [Under 2 MOU](#), a global compact among cities, states and regions worldwide to limit the increase in global average temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). [This Global Climate Leadership Memorandum of Understanding](#) recommits Minnesota to limit the impact of climate change and to collaborate on actions that promote adaptation and resilience, with an eye toward maximizing benefits for both GHG emissions reduction and climate adaptation. Parties to the agreement will share best practices integrating projected climate impacts into planning and investment. They will look to green infrastructure solutions that maximize ecologic benefits while providing protection, and share best practices in designing and deploying these solutions. They will share innovative practices for financing and supporting climate adaptation.



Search

Home | About | The 29 best practices | Become a GreenStep City | Recognition | Ordinances | City log-in | Contact Stay Connected  

GreenStep City Best Practices **Economic and Community Development**

Benchmarks & Community Engagement

no. 24



Adopt outcome measures for GreenStep and other city sustainability efforts, and engage community members in ongoing education, dialogue, and campaigns.



Best Practice Actions [See action tools, guidance, city reports]

1. Use a committee to **lead, coordinate and report to community members** on implementation of GreenStep best practices.
2. Organize goals/outcome **measures from all city plans** and report to community members data that show progress toward meeting these goals.
3. Engage community members in a public process that results in city council adoption of and commitment to measure and report progress on **sustainability indicators**.
4. Conduct or support a broad sustainability **education and action campaign** involving:
 - a. The entire community.
 - b. Homeowners.
 - c. Block clubs/neighborhood associations.
 - d. Congregations.
 - e. Schools and youth.
5. Conduct or support a community **education, visioning and planning** initiative using a sustainability framework such as:
 - a. Strong Towns, Natural Capitalism.
 - b. Transition initiatives, resiliency, Post-Carbon Cities.
 - c. Eco-municipalities/The Natural Step, ecological footprinting, urban metabolism, permaculture.
 - d. ISO 14001, Genuine Progress.
 - e. Healthy communities, multi-generation learning.

BENEFITS

- In themselves, none of these planning, measuring and reporting actions produce direct sustainability benefits. However, the experience of cities that engage community members and publicly report on progress is very powerful: this accountability drives more action faster than if city plans and activities are mostly developed and discussed by only city staff and elected officials.
- For those conducting education and action campaigns to effect specific behavior changes, the MN Pollution Control Agency has calculated climate change benefits of about 3 dozen actions. The thorough explanation, assumptions and documentation of these actions was done as part of a [climate change exhibit](#) for the 2009 [Eco Experience](#) at the MN State Fair. The actions are specific - for example, "Eat local and organic food 20%, or 50%, or 80% of the time" - and cover specific actions under these additional topic categories:

[MAJOR BENEFIT]

Community
self-reliance



STEP 3 RECOGNITION MINIMUM FOR CATEGORY A, B AND C CITIES

All **Category A, B and C cities** are recognized upon completion of [action 1](#).

Category A cities also complete [action 2](#) for recognition.

Category B cities also complete any [one additional](#) action for recognition.

SUMMARY

What's measured matters. Or put another way: if it matters, measure and report it. Adoption of a comprehensive set of sustainability indicators (that may have been developed as part of a sustainability plan) provides one vehicle for a city to report on accomplishment of multiple (and often interlinked) city goals, programs and projects, including GreenStep best practices and comprehensive plan goals. This transparency and accountability to community members about city sustainability work fits well with educating and engaging community members as partners in envisioning and building a more sustainable city. The point of public participation in city affairs is that by adding the value-rich perspectives of citizens to the information-rich perspectives of city staff, we can create wiser public policy.* In total, actions to implement this best practice result in:

- A commitment to achieve specific outcome measures based upon a vision for the city, developed through community engagement.
- Educating community members about the city vision and desired outcomes so that these become a shared vision and outcomes.
- Engaging residents, businesses and institutions to change their practices to help meet city goals.
- Reporting on accomplishments each year.

* from Daniel Yankelovich: The Magic of Dialogue (2001)



GREENSTEP ADVISOR

Philipp Muessig, GreenStep Cities Program Coordinator, MN Pollution Control Agency: 651/757-2594, philipp.muessig@state.mn.us

Sean Gosiewski, Alliance for Sustainability, for work with citizen & student groups, city commissions & faith

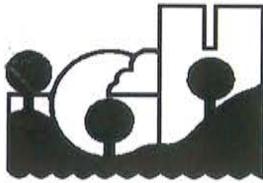
- Reusing consumer products.
 - Preventing junk mail, recycling, composting.
 - Decreasing use of fossil fuels and using more renewably generated energy.
 - Using less natural gas, electricity and water.
 - Decreasing car use and increasing car efficiency.
 - Buying durable goods and maintaining them.
 - Planting trees and native vegetation.
- Education and action campaigns to effect the adoption and use of available technologies in U.S. homes and for non-business travel has the potential to cut 20% of household direct carbon emissions (7.4% of U.S. national emissions) per year by the tenth year of a program, with little or no reduction in household well-being. See *Household Actions Can Provide A Behavioral Wedge To Rapidly Reduce U.S. Carbon Emissions* (National Academy of Sciences: 2009).

organizations: 612/331-1099,
sean@AforS.org, <http://www.AforS.org>

CONNECTION TO STATE POLICY

The state of Minnesota requires various specific reports from cities, which typically contain data of interest/use to community members. Extracting the most relevant data from these submittals and presenting it in a useful way is a service to community members.





CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council Members
 FROM: Michelle Calvert, City Government Intern
 SUBJECT: GreenSteps Cities
 DATE: March 7, 2016

SUMMARY:

Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary assistance, recognition, and challenge program designed to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. GreenSteps is a free, continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership. The program is based upon 29 Best Practices (which includes 175 possible opportunities to meet those Best Practices) centered on **five categories of significance**, and address financial, environmental and social matters. Those five categories are:

<p><u>Buildings and Lighting Best Practices</u> <u>1 – 5</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Buildings – Existing* 2. Private Buildings - Existing 3. New Green Buildings 4. Outdoor Lighting and Signals 5. Building Reuse 	<p><u>Environmental Management Best Practices</u> <u>15 - 23</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Purchasing* 16. Urban Forests* 17. Stormwater Management* 18. Parks & Trails 19. Surface Water Quality 20. Wastewater and Water Facilities 21. Septic Systems 22. Solid Waste Reduction 23. Local Air Quality 
<p><u>Land Use Best Practices</u> <u>6 – 10</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Comprehensive Plan* 7. Efficient City Growth 8. Mixed Uses 9. Efficient Highway-Oriented Development 10. Conservation Design 	<p><u>Economic & Community Development Best Practices</u> <u>24 – 29</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 24. Benchmarks/Community Engagement* 25. Green Business Development* 26. Renewable Energy 27. Local Food 28. Business Synergies 29. Climate Adaptation/Community Resilience 
<p><u>Transportation Best Practices</u> <u>11 – 14</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Living Streets* 12. Mobility Options* 13. Efficient City Fleets 14. Demand Side Travel Planning 	<p>Best Practices are met by completing one or more of the 175 possible actions (opportunities) that pertain to each category; the Best Practices marked with an asterisk <i>must</i> be met to reach the Step 3 Level. (Inver Grove Heights easily meets the Step 2 Level - Staff has identified the minimum of at least 8 Best Practices in which the City already engages.) They are highlighted above in yellow. Staff is recommending that Council pass the resolution to become a GreenStep City to claim recognition for work already completed. A sample resolution follows this page.</p>

RESOLUTION _____
CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS
COUNTY OF DAKOTA
STATE OF MINNESOTA

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MINNESOTA GREENSTEP CITIES PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary assistance, recognition, and challenge program designed to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. GreenSteps is a free, continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership, and based upon 29 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more action opportunities, from a list of four to eight action opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program provides cost-effective sustainable development best practices in the following five categories: (1) Buildings and Lighting; (2) Transportation; (3) Land Use; (4) Environmental Management; and (5) Economic and Community Development;

WHEREAS, uncertainty in energy prices and the transition away from fossil fuel energy sources present new challenges and opportunities to both the City of Inver Grove Heights and to the economic health of its citizens and businesses; and

WHEREAS, local governments have the unique opportunity to achieve both energy use and climate change gas reductions and cost savings through building and facilities management; land use and transportation planning; environmental management; and through economic and community development; and

WHEREAS, steps taken toward sustainable solutions aim to improve community quality of life, building community capital and increasing government efficiency, accountability and transparency; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program assists in facilitating technical assistance for the implementation of these sustainable development best practices; and

WHEREAS, a broad coalition of public and private stakeholders including the League of Minnesota Cities, the MPCA, Office of Energy Security and CERTs responded to the 2008 legislation by establishing the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program to provide a series of sustainable development best practices focusing on local government opportunities to reduce energy use and greenhouse gases;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the City Council of the City of Inver Grove Heights does hereby authorize the City of Inver Grove Heights to participate in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program that offers a free, voluntary continuous improvement framework. Passage of this participation resolution allows the City to be recognized as a Step One GreenStep City. Be it further resolved that the City:

- 1. Appoints the City Administrator or designee to serve as the City's GreenStep coordinator for best practice documentation/implementation; and**
- 2. Will facilitate the involvement of community members and other units of government as appropriate in the planning, promoting and/or implementing of GreenStep Cities best practices; and**
- 3. Grants to the GreenStep program's buildings advisor read-only access to the City's B3 Benchmarking Database so as to facilitate analysis and cost-savings advice to the City regarding its buildings' energy use; and**
- 4. Will claim credit for having implemented and will work at its own pace toward implementing any 8 GreenStep best practices that will result in energy use reduction, economic savings, quality of life improvement, reduction in the City's greenhouse gas footprint, and recognition by the League of Minnesota Cities as a Step Two GreenStep City. An on-going summary of the City's implementation of best practices will be posted by the City on the Minnesota GreenStep Cities web site.**

By: _____
Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Date: _____

CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

CONSIDER PASSING RESOLUTION TO BECOME A GREENSTEPS CITY

Meeting Date: March 14, 2016
 Item Type: Consent
 Contact: Joe Lynch, City Administrator
 Prepared by: Michelle Calvert, City Government Intern
 Reviewed by: N/A

Fiscal/FTE Impact:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amount included in current budget
<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget amendment requested
<input type="checkbox"/>	FTE included in current complement
<input type="checkbox"/>	New FTE requested – N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED:

Consider the request to pass the resolution to become a GreenSteps City.

SUMMARY:

Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary assistance, recognition, and challenge program designed to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. GreenSteps is a free, continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership. The program is based upon 29 Best Practices (which includes 175 possible opportunities to meet those Best Practices) centered on five categories: Buildings and Lighting, Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Management, and Economic and Community Development. They are outlined in more detail on the next page.

The program addresses, social, environmental and financial matters – all things that residents care about. Having a safe place to live with opportunities for engagement in community events, shopping, dining out, good schools, clean water and air, and an equitable rate of taxation are all examples of how residents measure the services provided by the City. The Best Practices are designed to help cities like ours to provide services in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

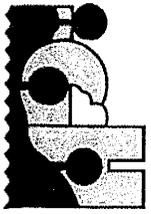
Many of the Best Practices have already been met (enough of them to position Inver Grove Heights at Step 2) due to the work of the staff and council, and the implementation of meeting those Best Practices have not caused additional staff time – they are simply part of the day-to-day operations that are considered part of providing services for residents. In addition, the city can choose the level of further commitment without increasing costs; indeed the expectation of further work would be to reduce costs as more Best Practices are met.

Additionally, members of the Environmental Commission as well as other citizens have expressed an interest in learning more about the possibilities that can be achieved once the resolution has passed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends Council pass the resolution to be recognized for their work in ensuring a sustainable future for the residents of Inver Grove Heights.

<u>Buildings and Lighting Best Practices</u> <u>1 – 5</u>	<u>Environmental Management Best Practices</u> <u>15 - 23</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Buildings – Existing* 2. Private Buildings - Existing 3. New Green Buildings 4. Outdoor Lighting and Signals 5. Building Reuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Purchasing* 16. Urban Forests* 17. Stormwater Management* 18. Parks & Trails 19. Surface Water Quality 20. Wastewater and Water Facilities 21. Septic Systems 22. Solid Waste Reduction 23. Local Air Quality 
<u>Land Use Best Practices</u> <u>6 – 10</u>	<u>Economic & Community Development Best Practices</u> <u>24 – 29</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Comprehensive Plan* 7. Efficient City Growth 8. Mixed Uses 9. Efficient Highway-Oriented Development 10. Conservation Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24. Benchmarks/Community Engagement* 25. Green Business Development* 26. Renewable Energy 27. Local Food 28. Business Synergies 29. Climate Adaptation/Community Resilience 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Living Streets* 12. Mobility Options* 13. Efficient City Fleets 14. Demand Side Travel Planning 	<p>Best Practices are met by completing one or more of the 175 possible actions (opportunities) that pertain to each category; the Best Practices marked with an asterisk <i>must</i> be met to reach the Step 3 Level. (Inver Grove Heights easily meets the Step 2 Level - Staff has identified the minimum of at least 8 Best Practices in which the City already engages.) They are highlighted above in yellow. Staff is recommending that Council pass the resolution to become a GreenStep City to claim recognition for work already completed. The resolution follows this page.</p>



What does it mean...



Minnesota

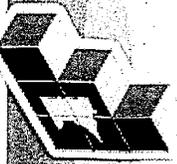
GreenStep Cities

To be a GreenStep City?



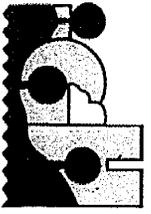
GreenStep Cities – What It Does:

- **The Voluntary GreenSteps Cities Program...**
 - *Provides Cities with 175 Opportunities*
 - *29 Best Practices centered on five specific areas:*
 - *Buildings and Lighting*
 - *Land Use*
 - *Transportation*
 - *Environmental Management*
 - *Economic and Community Development*



Minnesota

GreenStep Cities



GreenStep Cities – What It Is:

The Program Addresses:

Quality of Life/Social

*Good Schools, Community Events, Safe Place,
Convenient Shopping, Parks, etc.*

Environment

Good Clean Water, Clean Air, No Litter

Financial/Budgetary

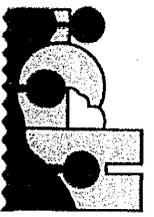
Efficient Use of Taxes to Support Services



Minnesota

GreenStep Cities





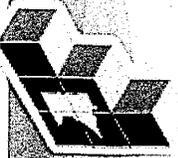
GreenStep Cities – The Costs

- What are the costs?

It doesn't cost anything to sign up or register

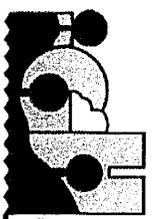
There are no fees or penalties for noncompliance

There are no deadlines - work at your own pace to achieve best practices.



Minnesota

GreenStep Cities



GreenStep Cities – The Requirements

- **What are the requirements?**

Pass a resolution (City Council)

Confirm the Best Practices we already meet (Staff)

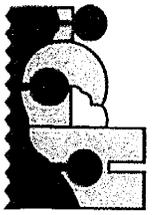
Log in to the GreenStep City webpage and register (Staff)

Complete the application by recording the Best Practices we already meet (Staff)



Minnesota

GreenStep Cities



What Other Cities?

- In Dakota County....

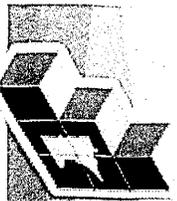
Burnsville

Rosemount

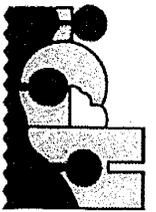
Farmington

Eagan

Apple Valley



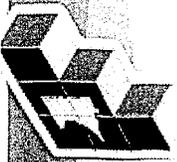
Minnesota **GreenStep Cities**



What Other Cities?

In the Twin Cities Metro Area....

Brooklyn Center	Minnnetonka
Columbia Heights	New Hope
Coon Rapids	Newport
Cottage Grove	Northfield
Crystal	North Saint Paul
Eden Prairie	Oakdale
Edina	Richfield
Elk River	Roseville
Falcon Heights	Saint Anthony
Forest Lake	Saint Louis Park
Fridley	Saint Paul
Lake Elmo	Saint Paul Park
Lauderdale	Shoreview
Maple Grove	White Bear Lake
Maplewood	Woodbury



Minnesota **GreenStep Cities**





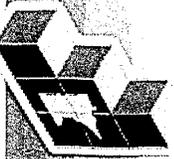
What Other Cities?

In the rest of the state....

Arlington
Austin
Bemidji
Blackduck
Brainerd
Chisholm
Cologne
Crookston
Delano
Duluth
Elko New Market
Ely
Fergus Falls
Gilbert
Grand Marais
Grand Rapids
Hermantown
Hoffman
Hutchinson

Isanti
Kasson
La Prairie
Lake Crystal
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Lexington
Luverne
Mahtomedi
Mankato
Marine on Saint Croix
Marshall
Mayer
Milan
Mountain Iron
Nisswa
Pierz
Pine City

Pine River
Red Lake Band of Chippewa
Red Wing
Rochester
Rogers
Royalton
Saint Cloud
Sartell
Sauk Rapids
Scandia
Sherburn
Shorewood
Silver Bay
Two Harbors
Victoria
Warren
Willmar
Winthrop



Minnesota **GreenStep Cities**