



Minnesota GreenStep Cities

Taking action with proven best practices

www.MNGreenSteps.org



Interested in taking steps to make your city greener, save energy, address other sustainability concerns? Need a roadmap?

Take a look at GreenStep Cities.

GreenStep Cities is an action-oriented voluntary program offering a cost-effective, simple pathway to implementation of sustainable development best practices that focus on greenhouse gas reduction. Technical assistance will be available from State agencies, utilities, nonprofits, and others. Cities will be recognized for past steps and new actions.



GreenStep Cities is currently working with a handful of cities to test and get feedback on our best practices and will officially launch in June 2010. The program will evolve based on the feedback of cities large and small across Minnesota, but the purpose and intent will remain the same.

GreenStep Cities will:

- Provide a “Pathway to Sustainability” that is cost-effective, pragmatic, and achievable for all cities
- Achieve meaningful reductions in greenhouse gases and other positive environmental outcomes
- Provide assistance for local governments to achieve best practices in energy use reduction and sustainable development
- Identify specific existing state agency staff, non-profit organizations, and others who are committed to and technically able to help cities decide how to implement each best practice
- Recognize local governments for their past accomplishments and their new efforts spurred by the program
- Create a website for Cities to document their accomplishments and share them for others to replicate
- Promote innovation by recognizing actions that go beyond best practices to achieve sustainability goals
- Inspire and assist residents, businesses, and community institutions to take action



Best Practices

These are straightforward and draw on actions that other cities have already taken. Best practices are constructed to allow cities the flexibility to meet sustainability goals in a variety of ways, recognizing that cities of different sizes and locales have differing access to both staff support and resources. Requirements for a small city in Greater Minnesota are different than requirements for a larger city near a major metro area.



A full set of 27 Best Practices, organized into the following categories, is now available for final review on our website:

- **Buildings & Facilities:** focuses on energy- and cost-saving strategies addressing public and private buildings, existing and planned buildings, and other city facilities such as street lighting and traffic signals.
- **Land Use Planning:** urges best practices to reduce vehicle miles traveled, promote green infrastructure and carbon sequestration, and promote economically viable compact, walk-able and bike-able neighborhoods.
- **Transportation:** encourages city vehicle fleet transformation and incorporation of street improvements that reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Environmental Management:** tackles actions ranging from environmentally preferable purchasing and urban forests to water quality and solid waste.
- **Economic & Community Development:** targets best practices that promote sustainable economic development and engages local community members with their city to improve local quality of life.



Technical assistance to take action

Multiple technical assistance options are planned and will include agency staff, Clean Energy Resource Teams, other non-profit groups, Americorps, utilities, businesses, retired engineers, and student interns. Each best practice will list a resource person—with specific contact information—to help guide a City through implementing that best practice.



Recognition for past actions and new successes

Cities that accomplish an initial set of best practices—a few required and a few from a list of best practice options—will be recognized as a Minnesota GreenStep City by the League of Minnesota Cities. As a continuous improvement program, GreenStep will also develop opportunities for cities to take further steps and be recognized for these additional efforts. Specific recognition tools will be unveiled in June of 2010.



Stay in the loop

Sign up now for the NextStep newsletter at www.NextStep.state.mn.us to get program updates and be one of the first cities to work on GreenStep best practices.



Contact

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About GreenStep Cities

GreenStep Cities is a public-private partnership administered by Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Prevention and Assistance Division. Other partners are the Clean Energy Resource Teams, the League of Minnesota Cities, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security, Center for Energy and the Environment, Great Plains Institute, Green Institute, The Minnesota Project, Urban Land Institute MN, Izaak Walton League-MN Division, and University of MN Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships.

