



GreenStep Cities

Taking action with proven best practices

www.MNGreenSteps.org



Interested in taking steps to make your city greener, save energy, and help address global warming? Could you use an AmeriCorps worker to help? Take a look at GreenStep Cities.

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



GreenStep Cities is under construction and will be launched in the fall of 2009. It will evolve based on the feedback of cities large and small across Minnesota.

GreenStep Cities will:



- Achieve meaningful reductions in greenhouse gases and other positive environmental outcomes
- Provide assistance and peer learning for local governments to achieve best practices in energy use reduction and sustainable development
- Provide a “Pathway to Sustainability” that is cost-effective, pragmatic, and achievable for all cities
- Identify specific existing state agency staff and others who are committed to and technically able to help cities implement each specific best practice
- Promote innovation
- Inspire and assist residents, businesses, and community institutions to take action
- Recognize local governments for their past accomplishments and their new efforts spurred by the program



Best Practices are straightforward, selected using simple criteria, and organized in tiers, focusing first on cost-effective options for greenhouse gas reductions. Now in development, a full draft of nearly 75 best practices, organized into the following categories, will be available early summer 2009. The beta-version will be available winter 2009-2010.



- Buildings & Facilities: Energy- and cost-saving strategies addressing city buildings, public housing, other city facilities like drinking water plants, street and building lighting, private buildings (residential, commercial, industrial), green building programs (LEED, MN GreenStar Homes, B3, MN Sustainable Buildings 2030 Standard), permit incentives, city financial assistance, building codes
- Transportation: City vehicle fleet transformation, incorporating street improvements that reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions



(roundabouts, pedestrian-friendly design, improved street connectivity, signage changes), a “no idling” policy, and others

- Land Use Planning: A list of best practices to reduce vehicle miles traveled, promote green infrastructure and carbon sequestration, and promote sustainable construction
- Environmental Management, Green Jobs, and Economic & Community Development: Water, waste, purchasing, urban forestry, renewable energy, sustainable tourism, local food, green job development, and a host of other green options



Technical assistance to take action: Multiple technical assistance options are planned and will include agency staff, Clean Energy Resource Teams, other nonprofit groups, Americorps, utilities, businesses, and student interns. Will be finalized summer 2009.

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 for a period of three years by the State of Minnesota. As a continuous improvement program, GreenStep also offers more challenging best practices, and those cities implementing a suite of these will be recognized for an additional 3-year period. Specific recognition tools will be developed summer 2009.



What's Next

- Refine program design (spring, summer 2009)
- Conduct additional analytic work to assess the economic, energy, greenhouse gas, and other environmental benefits of implementing each best practice (summer 2009 through spring 2010)
- Develop a suite of technical assistance options (summer, fall 2009)
- Launch a beta version of program (fall 2009)



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 Philipp Muessig, Sustainable Communities Coordinator, at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Prevention and Assistance Division: philipp.muessig@state.mn.us or 651-757-2594.



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, the University of MN Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, Center for Energy and the Environment, Great Plains Institute, Green Institute, The Minnesota Project, and the Urban Land Institute MN.



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

