

Minnesota GreenStep Cities

Draft Best Practices

March 2010

GreenStep Cities is a new assistance program for all Minnesota cities that will support and recognize implementation of 28 sustainable development best practices, listed below. This program grew out of a report to the 2009 Legislature, and is being developed by the MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Office of Energy Security, the League of MN Cities, the Clean Energy Resource Teams, the Great Plains Institute, the Izzak Walton League-MN and the Urban Land Institute-MN. The best practices focus on cost savings and greenhouse gas reductions that lead cities beyond compliance and encourage a culture of innovation.

A city that implements a set number of the best practices organized into the five categories below will be recognized as a GreenStep City for three years. Implementation of additional best practices over time will garner additional recognition. For each best practice, and depending on city size, cities will choose from among several implementation actions. An explanation of the actions, a contact person to advise on implementing the actions, and web resources and the benefits of each action will be available in draft for comment during spring 2010 at www.MnGreenSteps.org Currently rough drafts of all the actions, organized into the five categories below, are posted on the GreenStep web site.

Buildings & Lighting

1. ***Efficient Existing Public Buildings:*** Work with utilities and others to assess and finance energy and sustainability improvements for existing structures.
2. ***Efficient Existing Private Buildings:*** Work with utilities and others to assess and finance energy and sustainability improvements for existing structures.
3. ***New Green Buildings:*** Construct new buildings to meet or qualify for a green building standard.
4. ***Efficient Building & Street Lighting and Signals:*** Improve the efficiency of public lighting and signals.
5. ***Building Reuse:*** Create economic and regulatory incentives for redeveloping and repurposing existing buildings before building new.

Land Use

6. ***Comprehensive Plan and Implementation:*** Adopt a Comprehensive Plan and tie regulatory ordinances to it.
7. ***Higher Density:*** Enable and encourage a higher density of housing or commercial land use.
8. ***Efficient and Healthy Development Patterns:*** Mix land uses.
9. ***Efficient Highway-Oriented Development:*** Adopt commercial development and design standards for highway road corridors.
10. ***Conservation Design:*** Adopt development ordinances or processes that protect natural systems.

Transportation

11. ***Complete Green Streets:*** Create a network of multimodal green streets.
12. ***Mobility Options:*** Promote active living and options to single-occupancy car travel.
13. ***Efficient City Fleets:*** Implement a city fleet investment, operations and maintenance plan.
14. ***Demand-Side Travel Planning:*** Use Travel Demand Management and Transit-Oriented Design.

Environmental Management

15. ***Purchasing:*** Adopt an environmentally preferable purchasing policy.
16. ***Urban Forests:*** Increase city tree and plant cover.
17. ***Efficient Stormwater Management:*** Prevent stormwater generation.
18. ***Green Infrastructure:*** Enhance city parks and trails.
19. ***Surface Water Quality:*** Improve local water bodies.
20. ***Efficient Water and Wastewater Facilities:*** Assess and improve 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, engaging community members in ongoing education and discussion.
25. ***Green Business Development:*** Document the use of assistance programs for green business and job development.
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.