

**GreenStep Cities Best Practices**  
**Economic and Community Development Actions**  
- final draft for comment through May 2010 –  
[www.MnGreenSteps.org](http://www.MnGreenSteps.org)

- ❖ **Benchmarks & Community Engagement:** Adopt outcome measures for GreenStep and other city sustainability efforts, and engage community members in ongoing education, discussion and campaigns.

**Best Practice Actions**

- All cities must complete Action (1).
  - Category B cities must complete one Action in addition to Action (1).
  - Category C cities must complete at least Actions (1) and (2).
  - Completing an additional Action (beyond those required) allows this best practice to be counted as implementation of two best practices.
- (1) REQUIRED FOR ALL CITIES: Report progress annually to community members on implementation of GreenStep City best practices, including energy/carbon benchmarking data if gathered.
  - (2) REQUIRED FOR CATEGORY C CITIES: Organize goals/outcome measures from all city plans – comprehensive, parks, library, housing, stormwater, drinking water, transportation, economic development, energy, sustainability, etc. – and annually report to community members data that show progress toward meeting these goals.
  - (3) Engage community members in a public process involving a city council committee or community task force that results in city council adoption of and commitment to measure and report on progress toward sustainability indicators.
  - (4) Conduct or support an energy efficiency or sustainability education and action campaign for:
    - 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. Transition initiatives
    - b. Eco-municipalities/The Natural Step
    - c. Post Carbon Cities
    - d. Permaculture
    - e. Natural Capitalism
    - f. Genuine Progress
    - g. Healthy communities
    - h. Multi-generation learning
- ❖ **Green Business Development:** Document the use of assistance programs for green business and job development.

**Best Practice Actions**

- Category A cities: complete at least one Action if you choose to implement this best practice.
- Category B and C cities must implement this best practice by completing at least one Action.

- (1) Identify new and emerging local businesses in the green economy and support these businesses and green jobs through one or more of the following:
  - a. Coordinated marketing and business assistance.
  - b. Incubator space.
  - c. Streamlined grants, loans and permitting processes.
  - d. Workforce training opportunities with community colleges and job training centers.
- (2) Invite assistance providers, including utilities, to conduct personalized energy, environmental sustainability, and waste audits with at least 5 businesses.
- (3) Distribute green tourism resources to all tourism and hospitality businesses in the city and facilitate follow-up with at least five businesses to assist them in greening their business.
- (4) Support the creation of a value-added business utilizing local waste products such as wood from trees felled by storms, disease, insects and development.
- (5) Document steps taken to lower the environmental footprint of a brownfield remediation/redevelopment project.
- (6) Use a green business certification program to publicly promote that a targeted number or percentage of businesses have improved the environmental performance of their company.
- (7) Conduct or participate in a buy local campaign, working with local organizations and assistance providers.
- (8) Work with the state Small Business Environmental Assistance Program to accomplish one or both of the following:
  - a. Help at least 5 businesses to use SBEAP services.
  - b. Assist at least 3 regulated businesses in earning the Green Star Award.

- ❖ **Renewable Energy:** Remove barriers to and encourage installation of renewable energy generation capacity.

#### **Best Practice Actions**

- Category A cities must complete at least one Action if they choose to implement this best practice.
- Category B and C cities must complete two or more Actions if they choose to implement this best practice.

- (1) Adopt, with modifications as necessary, at least one of the following from Minnesota's 2009 *Model Ordinances for Sustainable Development*:
  - a. Solar energy standards.
  - b. Model wind energy ordinance.
- (2) Consistently promote at least one of the following:
  - a. A local utility's green power purchasing program for homes and businesses.
  - b. Local, state and federal financial incentives for property owners to install renewable energy systems.
- (3) Create a renewable energy financing program for property owners to install generation capacity.
- (4) Promote firms that contract with property owners (in groups or individually) to install/finance renewable installations, some at little or no upfront cost.
- (5) Install a public sector renewable energy technology, such as solar electric (PV), solar hot water or hot air, micro-hydro or wind.

- (6) Work with private/public partners to create renewable energy generation capacity with one or more of the following attributes:
- a. Fueled by flowing water, wind, or biogas.
  - b. Fueled in part or whole by woody biomass, optimized for minimal air and other environmental impacts and for energy efficiency and water conservation.
  - c. Distributing heating/cooling services in a district energy system.
  - d. Producing combined heat and power.

❖ **Local Food:** Strengthen local food and fiber production and access.

**Best Practice Actions**

- For all cities: complete at least one Action if you choose to implement this best practice.
- (1) Incorporate working landscapes - agriculture and forestry - into the city by adopting, with modifications as necessary, one or more of the 2009 Minnesota *Model Ordinances for Sustainable Development*:
    - a. Agriculture and Forest Protection District
    - b. Local Food Production District
    - c. Performance Standards for Minor and Major Agricultural Retail.
  - (2) Permit the incorporation of food growing areas/local food access into a residential development.
  - (3) Expand/strengthen or create at least one of the following:
    - a. A farmer's market.
    - b. A community-supported agriculture (CSA) - arrangement between farmers and community members/employees.
    - c. A community or school garden or forest.
    - d. A rural grocery store.
  - (4) Conduct at least one of the following campaigns to measurably increase:
    - a. Purchase of local and Minnesota-grown food.
    - b. Backyard gardening.
    - c. Institutional buying of local foods by schools, hospitals/nursing homes, restaurants and hotels, or grocery stores
    - d. Sale of local food in markets and restaurants.

❖ **Business Synergies:** Network/cluster businesses to achieve better energy, economic and environmental outcomes.

**Best Practice Actions**

- For category A cities: complete at least one of the following Actions if you choose to implement this best practice.
- For category B and C cities: complete at least Action (2), (3) or (4) if you choose to implement this best practice.
- (1) Help at least three businesses register as users of the Minnesota Materials Exchange and document their exchanges/sales of byproducts with other local/regional businesses.

- (2) Assist at least one business, through a voluntary coordination or incentive program, to use waste heat or water discharge from another business or city facility.
- (3) Require, build or facilitate at least four of the following in a business/industrial project:
- a. Shared parking/access.
  - b. Shared recreation /childcare facilities.
  - c. A green job training program.
  - d. Green product development, manufacturing or sales.
  - e. Buildings located within walking distance of transit and/or residential zoning.
  - f. Renovated buildings.
  - g. Buildings designed for reuse.
  - h. Green buildings built to exceed the Minnesota energy code.
  - i. Combined heat and power (CHP) generation capacity.
  - j. Shared geothermal heating/cooling.
  - k. Low-impact site development.
- (4) Use eco-industrial park tools to identify industrial facilities that could achieve economic and environmental benefit by co-locating in the city's industrial park or industrial zone.