

## **GreenStep Cities Best Practice # 25** **- final draft for comment through May 2010 -**

- ❖ **Green Business Development:** Document the use of assistance programs for green business and job development.

**Required** for Category B & C cities

**Category:** Economic and Community Development

### **Summary**

Cities typically assist businesses within their borders to become more financially stable and positive community assets. Increasingly, businesses that adopt more sustainable practices and produce more sustainable products and services report cost savings, lowered compliance costs, improved risk management, new/more loyal customers, and motivated employees. This best practice calls on cities, working with local business associations and support organizations, to shift some of their existing assistance efforts to support businesses in meeting the market need for a more energy-efficient, more localized, lower-carbon, clean energy economy.

### **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.

See related *Business Synergies*, *Local Food* and *Purchasing* best practices for buy local campaigns.

## GreenStep Advisor

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## Implementation Resources

- (1) Five key green economy sectors: green products (especially biobased products), used products, renewable energy/energy efficiency, green services, and environmental conservation.
- (1) The BioBusiness Alliance of Minnesota: <http://www.biobusinessalliance.org>
- (1) Minnesota Green Jobs Task Force: <http://www.mngreenjobs.com>
- (1) *Making It Green in Minneapolis Saint Paul* (Mayor's Initiative on Green Manufacturing, Blue Green Alliance: 2008):  
[http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/press\\_room/publications?id=0003](http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/press_room/publications?id=0003)
- (1) HIRE Minnesota, a coalition of more than 70 organizations seeking to leverage public investments in healthcare, infrastructure and renewable energy to fight pollution and poverty at the same time: <http://www.hiremn.org>
- (1) Background on green collar jobs: [http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res\\_detail.cfm?id=4059](http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=4059)
- (1) USDA Rural Development Rural Business & Cooperative Programs:  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mn/rbs.htm>
- (2) Minnesota Waste Wise / Minnesota Energy Smart: <http://www.mnwastewise.org>
- (2) Minnesota Technical Assistance Program: <http://www.mntap.umn.edu>
- (2) Minnesota Retired Engineers Technical Assistance Program (RETAP):  
<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/p2/retap.cfm>
- (3) Travel Green Minnesota and its Green Tourism Self-assessment Tool:  
<http://www.travelgreen.umn.edu> Contact Cynthia Messer, [cmesser@umn.edu](mailto:cmesser@umn.edu), 612/624-6236.
- (3) Green Routes, a triple bottom line tourism initiative of Renewing the Countryside:  
<http://www.greenroutes.org>
- (4) See, for example, Minneapolis-based Wood from the Hood:  
<http://www.woodfromthehood.com>
- (5) MN Pollution Control Agency resources on sustainable brownfields: Stacey VanPatten ([Stacey.vanpatten@state.mn.us](mailto:Stacey.vanpatten@state.mn.us)); Sandeep Burman ([Sandeep.burman@state.mn.us](mailto:Sandeep.burman@state.mn.us));  
<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/cleanup/brownfields.html>
- (5) Minnesota Brownfields: <http://www.mnbrownfields.org>
- (5) U.S. EPA resources on sustainable brownfields:  
[http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/overview/brownfields\\_benefits\\_postcard.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/overview/brownfields_benefits_postcard.pdf)  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/sustain.htm>  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/publications/sph.htm>

- (5) Other sustainable brownfield resources: from the Northeast-Midwest Institute - <http://www.nemw.org/index.php/current-initiatives/current-initiatives-brownfields> - and case studies from Redevelopment Economics: <http://tinyurl.com/32azf4c>
- (6) See, for example, UPonGREEN (based in Excelsior, MN): <http://www.upongreen.com>
- (6) The Petal Project is a regional green business certification program of Prosperity Eastern Iowa and could serve as a model for a program in Minnesota cities: <http://www.petal-project.com/>
- (6) The national B Rating System of B Corporation certifies business adoption of comprehensive and transparent social and environmental standards. See details and St. Paul business Sunrise Community Banks: <http://www.bcorporation.net>
- (7) Buy local campaign resources from the Minneapolis-based Institute for Local Self-Reliance, Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, American Independent Business Alliance, and the Twin Cities Metro Independent Business Alliance: <http://www.newrules.org/retail/tools-growing-local-businesses>, <http://www.metroiba.org/> and <http://www.10percentshift.org/design/localshift.php>
- (8) *Checklist for Greening your Business* (SBEAP: 2010) highlights basic steps a business can take to be more environmentally responsible in the areas of water conservation, indoor air quality, purchasing, waste reduction and recycling, and energy efficiency: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/programs/sbeap-p2.html>
- (8a) The MN Pollution Control Agency's Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) helps Minnesota businesses and local governments access free technical staff to assist in reducing or eliminating the amounts of emissions, wastes and stormwater generated, helps business maintain compliance with new and existing environmental requirements, and helps reduce regulatory burden: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/SBEAP>
- (8b) The Green Star Award from the Environmental Audit Program of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: contact Joann Henry, 651/757-2429, [joann.henry@state.mn.us](mailto:joann.henry@state.mn.us), [http://www.pca.state.mn.us/programs/audit\\_p.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/programs/audit_p.html)

## **Benefits**

- On-Line Calculators, Tools, and Resources that Measure, Track, and Evaluate Pollution Prevention Activities: <http://www.p2.org/wp-content/on-line-calculators-tools-and-resources-that-measure-track-and-evaluate-pollution-prevention-activities.pdf>
- Minnesota Governor's Awards for Pollution Prevention: case studies in sustainable business practices from almost 20 years of winners, who are saving money by reducing waste, conserving natural resources and saving energy: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/p2/govaward.cfm>
- Contact Minnesota Waste Wise / Minnesota Energy Smart for case studies of businesses saving money by reducing waste, conserving natural resources and saving energy: <http://www.mnwastewise.org>
- There is a state tax (over 10%) placed on fees businesses pay to refuse haulers, creating a tax incentive to separate materials for recycling and composting.
- Green tourism actions aim to deliver a number of benefits:
  - Increased recycling of dollars in the local economy

- Employment of more local residents at living wages
- More business for local producers and other locally owned businesses
- Minimized energy and water use and environmental impacts
- Increased use of sustainably produced or organically grown products
- Engagement of customers in local culture

### **Connection to State Policy**

- In 1999, the Minnesota Legislature passed legislation that ensured the continuation of the Environmental Audit Program, or Green Star award, to encourage industries, businesses, and governments to examine how well a facility's operations are complying with local, state, and federal environmental regulations, and to correct any problems that are identified.

[www.MnGreenSteps.org](http://www.MnGreenSteps.org)

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