Minnesota GreenStep Cities

A voluntary challenge, assistance & recognition program for accelerating sustainability actions

www.MnGreenStep.org
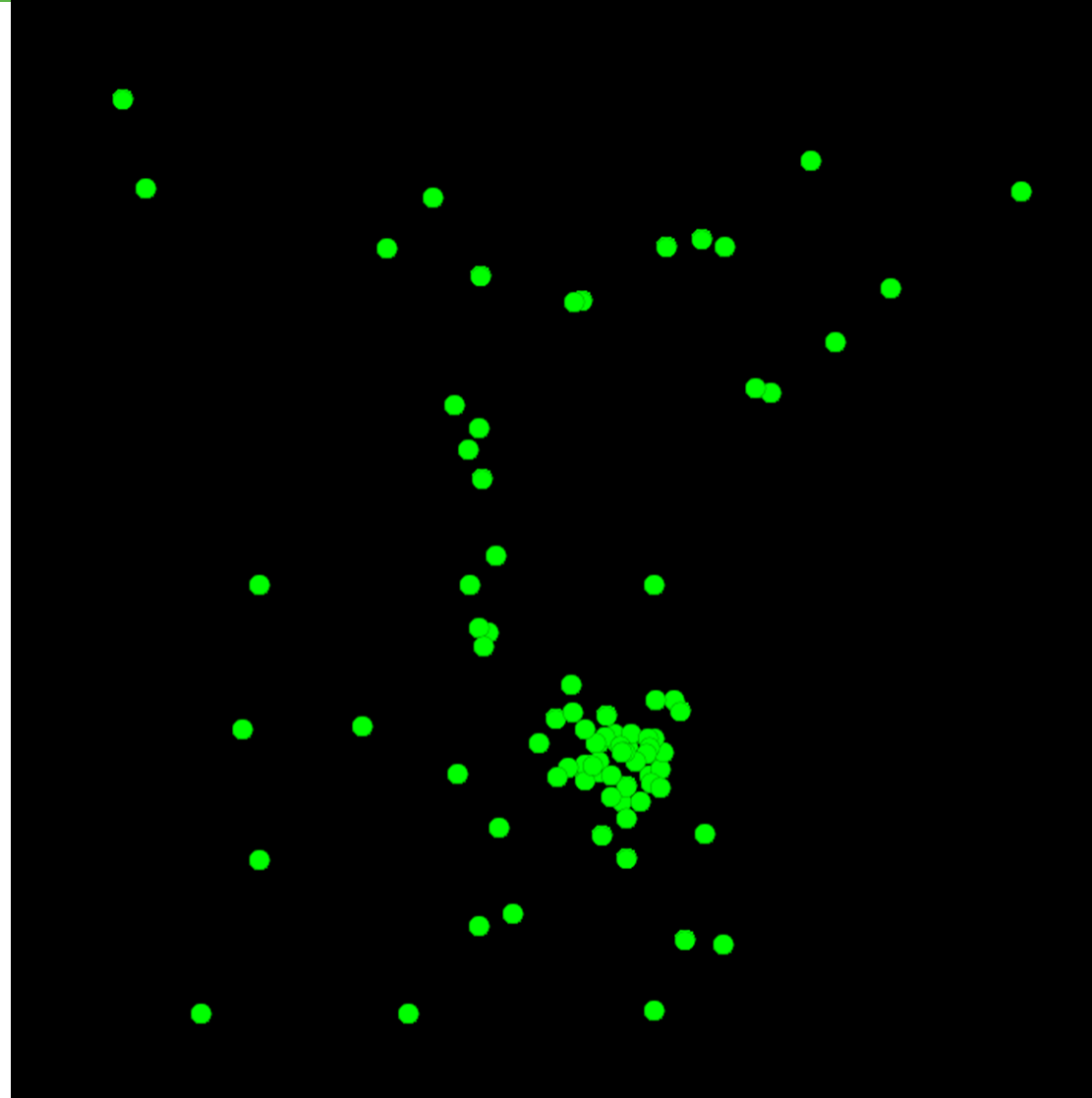
Key Program Elements

- Voluntary; self-paced

- Free to join

- Technical assistance

- Recognition by peers (LMC)

- Continuous improvement
    framework

- 175 possible actions grouped
  into 29 best practices

Key Program Outcomes

- 128 cities, 3 tribes: > 50% of MN cities over 5,000 are a GS city

- 47% of MN's population; 15% of MN's cities

- Big (300,000) & small (260)

- Non-partisan acceptance

- Urban and rural

- 4,100 best practice actions recorded

- $6.5M/yr. savings (20 cities)

❖ **2007: "Green" Star City** concept emerges @ CERTs, GPI, Hunt Utilities Group

  ▪ **2008: Legislature** asks for a report
  ▪ **2009: Advisory & technical** committees convened

❖ **2010: Program launch** @ League of MN cities conference

  ▪ **2012, 2016: Awards** from Environmental Initiative, U of M (State Gov. Innovation)

❖ **2016/17: City metrics**

Minnesota GreenStep Cities

A report to the Minnesota legislature regarding Green Star award expansion and a program proposal to assist local governments in taking the next step to implement carbon reductions and other environmental actions

Message from cities: 'deal with more than climate / energy'

GreenStep Partners:
provide 4 full-time staff

Main Partners:
- **League of Minnesota Cities**
- **3 State Agencies: MPCA, EQB, Commerce**
- **Great Plains Institute**
- **Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs @ UofM)**
- 3 other non-profits:
  - Izaak Walton League – MN Division
  - Urban Land Institute – MN, & Regional Council of Mayors
  - Preservation Alliance of Minnesota (now Rethos)

GreenStep: like a weight loss program, like Tree City U.S.A.

✓ **We join 'programs' so that we can:**

➤ **pay more attention**, be intentional, accelerate action, get assistance

➤ **document** progress

➤ **share** progress with community

➤ **learn** from peers

➤ **be recognized** by peers

➤ **choose** our own path

➤ **proceed** at our own pace

Pine River Green Steps

A local initiative, built around the statewide GreenStep Cities program, to improve quality of life and promote sustainability in Pine River

11 Efficient Highway-Oriented Development

Adopt design standards for the Hwy 371 corridor

Efficient Building and Street Lighting & Signals

9

Make traffic signals and street lights more energy-efficient

10 Surface Water Quality

Protect and improve water quality in Norway Lake

12 Mobility Options

DONE

Promote local transit options on a city website

7 Local Food

DONE

Establish a farmers' market and a community garden

8 Renewable Energy

DONE

Install public and private sector renewable energy systems

Pine River can become one of Minnesota's first GreenStep Cities by taking twelve low- or no-cost steps.

Steps 1 through 6 are required for Pine River and all other cities seeking GreenStep designation.

Steps 7 through 12 were chosen by community members from a list of possibilities.

Shading in a footstep indicates current progress toward completing that step.

6 Green Business Development

DONE

Launch a "buy local" campaign; support green business practices

4 Purchasing

DONE

Adopt a policy that the city will purchase environmentally preferable products and services

2 Efficient Existing Public Buildings

Track and reduce energy use of city buildings

5 Urban Forests

Protect and improve the city's tree canopy

3 Comprehensive

1 Benchmarks & Community Engagement

DONE

Minnesota

Why Cities Join: survey results

- ✓ **Cost Savings**: spend same $ better
- ✓ **Peer Recognition**
- ✓ **Framework** built around more than environment
- ✓ **Support for staff** – save time on research
- ✓ **Structure for civic** groups, commissions

City Perspective

*"We are being rewarded for a bunch of **common sense steps** and they are **saving us money**, they are **saving us effort**, and yeah, they are having a **positive effect on the environment**.*

*They work all together, none of this is mandatory, none of this is being driven by any kind of state mandate — this is just looking at where we waste as a city and where we can be more efficient and take steps to do that. **This is a really great program**."*

-- City council member Mike Franklin

Program Elements

- **Best practices:** 29

- **BP actions:** 175

- **Action rating**: at 1,2,3 Stars [good, better, best]

- **Recognition levels**:
  - Step 1: join
  - Step 2: complete any 8 BPs [8 for A cities]
  - Step 3: complete 16 BPs with a few high priority ones
  - Step 4 : report city performance metrics
  - Step 5: show metric improvement

City categories [capacities]: A, B, C

Best Practices

Buildings and Lighting

- Public Buildings
- Private Buildings
- New Buildings
- Lighting & Signals
- Building Redevelopment

Land Use

- Comp Plans
- City Growth
- Mixed Uses
- Auto-oriented Development
- Design for Natural Resource Conservation

Transportation

- Living Streets
- Mobility Options
- City Fleets
- Demand-Side Travel Planning

Best Practices (con't)

Environmental Management

- Sustainable Purchasing
- Urban Forests
- Stormwater
- Parks & Trails
- Water & Wastewater Facilities
- Septic Systems
- Solid Waste Reduction
- Local Air Quality

Economic and Community Development

- Benchmarks & Community Engagement
- Green Business Development
- Renewable Energy
- Local Food
- Business Synergies
- Climate Adaptation & Community Resilience

[MAJOR BENEFIT]
Cost savings

[MAJOR BENEFIT]
Long-term cost savings

[MAJOR BENEFIT]
Economic resilience

[MAJOR BENEFIT]
Community self-reliance

Each best practice is identified with a 'major benefit' accruing to cities that complete actions under that best practice

[MAJOR BENEFIT]
Community quality

[MAJOR BENEFIT]
Community health

[MAJOR BENEFIT]
Ecosystem health

Local Food

Strengthen local food and fiber production and access.

◀ no. 27 ▶

> Best Practice goal

> 4 optional actions

> Step 3 completion / recognition guidance

> The argument for taking action

⭐ **Best Practice Actions** [See action tools, guidance, city repor...

1. Incorporate **working landscapes** - agriculture and forestry - into th... ordinance for one or more of the following:
   a. An agriculture and forest protection district.
   b. A local food production district.
   c. Performance standards for minor and major agricultural retail.

2. Facilitate creation of **home/community gardens, chicken & bee keeping,** and incorporation of food growing areas/access in multifamily residential developments.

3. Create, assist with and promote **local food production/distribution** within the city:
   a. A farmer's market or co-op buying club.
   b. An urban agriculture business or a community-supported agriculture (CSA) arrangement between farmers and community members/employees.
   c. A community or school garden, orchard or forest.

4. Measurably increase **institutional buying, and sales** throu...
   a. Purchasing of local/organic/humane/equitable foods by schoo... event centers.
   b. Sales of local/organic/humane/equitable food in markets... urban convenience stores, hotels and restaurants...

> Documented benefits from taking action

SUMMARY

The goals of this best practice are to:

- Prote... producin...
- Increase t... produced... businesse...

Depending on the specific action(s) taken, benefits of implementing this best practice include increased food security, more healthful food and improved human health, enhanced soil and water quality, reductions in energy use and CO_2 emissions, improved wildlife habitat, enhanced community livability and vitality, creation of green jobs, and stronger local economies. For farmers markets alone, of each $100 spent, $62 stays in the local economy and $99 stays in Minnesota's economy.

GREENSTEP ADVISOR

Paul Hugunin, Minnesota Grown, MN Department of Agri... for an overview of this best prac... and for farmers... paul.hugunin@... http://www.min...

Kirsten Saylo... community ga... Kirsten@gardeningmatters.org; http://www.gardeningmatters.org

> First call for help, ideas, perspective, funding

BENEFITS ➕

- Providing city residents with regular access to fresh fruits and vegetables (stores with an NAICS code of 445110 or 455220)...

[MAJOR BENEFIT]

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Minnesota **GreenStep Cities**

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GreenStep City Best Practices **Transportation**

Living Streets
◀ no. 11 ▶

Create a network of green complete streets that improves city quality of life and adds value to surrounding properties.

GREENSTEP ADVISOR
David Larson, Landscape Architect, Office of Environmental Stewardship, MN Dept. of Transportation: 651/366-4637, state.mn.us, state.mn.us/planning/completestreet

Reports from cities

Best Practice Action 6   [1 2 3 4

1,2,3-star completion guidance

Implement traffic calming measures, s, r abouts, shared space and depaving, in at leas lo ent project.

| Implementation Tools | Star Rating | Who's doing it |

- See Traffic Calming 101 from the Project for Public Spaces, the Institute of Transportation Engineer's traffic calming database and the MN Dept. of Transportation's resources on roundabouts.

- The Federal Highway Authority strongly encourages the use of road diets (driving lane reconfiguration) where appropriate. The classic road diet involves converting an undivided 4-lane roadway with average daily traffic of 20,000 vehicles or fewer into 3 lanes made up of 2 through lanes and a

Actions are of 5 types:

- **City policy**, ordinances, regulations, incentives
- **Investments** of $
- **Staffing** of city assistance programs
- **Information/education**
- **Collaboration**

Best Practice Action 2   [1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8]   [all actions]

Purchase energy used by city government with a higher renewa **percentage than required by Minnesota law.**

Reports from cities: peer learning

| Implementation Tools | Star-level Examples | Who's doing it |

Expand All

▾ Jordan ★ ★ ★

Date action report first entered: 08/25/2016
Date of last report update: 04/26/2017
Year action initially completed: 2017
Action completed after joining GreenStep? Yes

Implementation details:
On April 17, 2017, the City of Jordan's City Council approved the city to move forward and finalize a contract with ReneSola – a community solar company. After that, the city will offset 120% of its electricity usage from a community solar garden, saving about $3,000,000 over the 25 year contract.

Outcome measures/metrics:
The cost savings associated with going solar, and the amount of carbon emissions eliminated, will ultimately be used to judge this action.

    view file

For more information contact:
Laura Holey (City staff) | lholey@ci.jordan.mn.us | 952-

Attributes of actions:

- **Action vs. planning**

- **Actions big & small**

- **Actions to engage 'top management:'** electeds, commissions, staff, civic groups

≡ Notes   💬 Comments

Measuring Impact:
Regional Indicators Initiative

METRICS

ENERGY (IN BTUS): electricity, natural gas, and district energy consumed citywide (subdivided into residential and commercial/industrial)

WATER (IN GALLONS): potable water consumed citywide (subdivided into residential and commercial/industrial)

TRAVEL (IN VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED): on-road distance traveled within city limits

WASTE (IN POUNDS): citywide municipal solid waste managed via recycling, composting, combustion, and landfilling (prorated from countywide data)

COMMON METRICS

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (IN TONNES CO_2E): citywide greenhouse gas emissions associated with each of the four indicators

COST (IN DOLLARS): cost estimates associated with each of the four indicators

ADDITIONAL DATA

DEMOGRAPHICS
All data is reported both as a total as well as in units/capita. Residential data is reported in units/household, and Commercial/Industrial data is reported in units/job

AREA
City Area (sf)

WEATHER
Heating Degree Days
Cooling Degree Days
Precipitation (in)

Example: Infrastructure for Walking/Biking

☐ *% of housing within 1 mile of a bike route*

☐ *WalkScore for your city or downtown*

☐ *Miles of new or reconstructed sidewalks & trails last year*

Questions, Comments

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GreenStep Cities Program Coordinator

At the MPCA

➢ **Click "Contact" on GreenStep home page**