
GreenStep Cities Log-On

Website: <https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/user/login>

Password:



Minnesota GreenStep Cities

Welcome Guide


Steps for starting the program – for new and transitioning staff

1/7/2023

Table of Contents

Welcome Guide	1
Table of Contents	2
Quick Resource Guide	3
Overview.....	3
What Now?.....	4
Training Materials.....	4
Where is Your City Currently at?	4
Why is your city participating?	4
The Steps	5
Step 1.....	5
Step 2.....	6
Step 3.....	6
Step 4.....	7
Step 5.....	7
Understanding the Website	7
Home Page.....	7
About Page	7
Best Practices.....	8
Steps 1-5	10
Recognition.....	10
All Cities	10
Ordinances.....	10
City Log-In.....	10
Contacts.....	10
Resources	10
Staff and Partners.....	11
Data Entry Assistance	12
Online	13
Social Media and Listserve	13
Communities – Who’s doing it?	13
Reporting and Recognition.....	14
Reporting	14
Recognition.....	14

Quick Resource Guide

Specific pages for Step 1 , Step 2 , Step 3 , and Steps 4 and 5	What category is my city in?	Step 2 and 3 requirements that each category must meet to receive recognition
Review the Step 4 and 5 metrics virtual tour	Step 4 and 5 metric guidance documents (click on each metric header)	Index for all Minnesota sustainability goals, plans, and efforts
Search actions related to specific topics	What are other cities doing?	 Contact GreenStep

Overview

GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance, and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals.

Originally conceived in 2007 by [Clean Energy Resource Teams](#) (CERTs), formalized in a 2008 state statute, and launched in 2010, GreenStep Cities was created to provide local governments a pathway to sustainability that is cost-effective, pragmatic, and achievable for all cities, no matter the size.

The program identifies 29 best practices that focus on cost savings, quality of life, and energy use reductions, encouraging a culture of progress in Minnesota cities and tribal nations. Over 140 communities, encompassing over 50% of the state population, have joined the GreenStep program. [Find your city's public GreenStep page](#) to see the city council resolution that made your community a Step 1 city.

Cities that implement at least the required number of best practices will be recognized as Step 2 and Step 3 GreenStep cities. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more specific actions from a list of four to eight actions. A city's accomplishments are recognized on the GreenStep website. Measuring city performance metrics will garner Step 4 recognition, and showing improvement in those metrics between one reporting year and the next will take a city to Step 5.

Visit www.MnGreenStep.org to learn more.

What Now?

Training Materials

Whether you are a new GreenStep City or you are transitioning to become a new coordinator for an existing GreenStep City, these training materials should help you get started.

- **GreenStep Cities [Overview](#)**
- **How do I enter information** (action reports, a new city GreenStep coordinator’s contact info) in the GreenStep Cities admin page? [Log in](#) to your city’s GreenStep administrative pages (using your cityname – no spaces – as your Username) and click on Instructions and Helpful Documents to find “Data Entry onto the GreenStep Web Site,” a PDF annotating screenshots from your city administrative pages.

Where is Your City Currently at?

For those of you transitioning into a GreenStep Cities Coordinator position, be sure to get to know what your city has already accomplished and where to go from here.

- **Locate your city on the [website](#)** and click on your city name, and then click on each best practice action report to see what has been accomplished to date.
- On your city’s page, also see the **City Assessment File** for a best practice action summary, which shows which best practices/actions your city needs to complete to move to the next step.
- GreenStep Cities Coordinators are asked to take an **annual survey** describing the work completed that year and what next steps the city may be interested in taking. [Email GreenStep](#) to request results of annual surveys from previous years.

Why is your city participating?

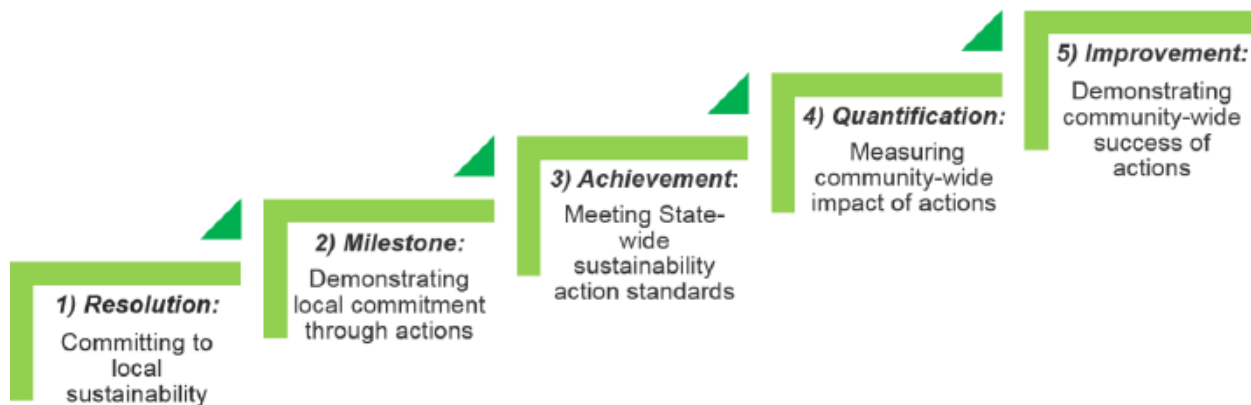
Becoming a GreenStep City has many benefits. Every city has different mix of reasons for being an active GreenStep City.

Consider the reasons why your city is a GreenStep City and share these with city staff, elected officials, and community volunteers and civic groups.

<p>___ Is a continuous improvement pathway for cities to "go green," becoming more sustainable and resilient.</p>	<p>___ Will save city staff time in researching proven, cost-effective actions for cutting energy use, decreasing the city's carbon footprint, and accomplishing other sustainability goals that exceed regulatory requirements.</p>	<p>___ Will save cities money and deliver a stream of multiple environmental, social, and financial benefits; will help cities explore how to spend the same amount of money smarter.</p>
--	---	--

___ Is a home-grown, independent program tailored to Minnesota cities and provides maximum flexibility and choice in how to implement a proven best practice.	___ Provides over 4,000 reports on how Minnesota cities are taking action, making it easy to learn from and contact peer cities so as to jump-start actions in your own city.	___ Opens up special opportunities for funding and technical assistance, available mostly to GreenStep cities because the GreenStep program focuses on existing GreenStep cities.
___ Maps out how to follow-through on the various commitments cities may have made, such as the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, Race to Zero, and on the Minnesota Legislature's aggressive Next Generation Energy Act.	___ Provides leadership and action roles for community members, businesses, and institutions so as to stretch limited city funds and strengthen a civic culture of engagement and innovation.	___ Continuously prompts program participants – like an exercise coach would! – to maximize opportunities to accelerate sustainability actions.
___ Provides public recognition of the good work being done by Minnesota cities.	___ Positions a city to more easily apply for competitive grant and assistance programs.	___ (add your own)

The Recognition Steps



Step 1 Recognition

Build Community Knowledge and Interest

Approve a city council resolution to work toward GreenStep Cities recognition

Post Initial background information on the GreenStep Cities website

Getting Started – click on the [Step 1 page](#) to see:

- **How to build community interest:** Advice, guidance, and materials to engage, educate, and motivate your elected officials, city staff, and community members
- **Resources:** What information potential GreenStep communities will need to know

Adopt a Resolution

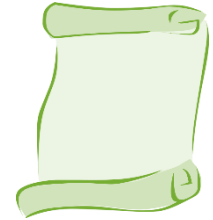
- Use the **sample resolution** and introduce it to your city council.
- Specify a GreenStep coordinator and a few best practices to implement.
- **E-mail** your city GreenStep coordinator information to the MPCA.

Visit your [Log-in Page](#)

- Enter simple background information about your city.

Education and Planning

- As needed, educate city staff and officials about sustainability.
- Convene a small working group.
- Specify implementation action(s) and a few lead people.
- Prepare a simple work plan for implementing selected best practices.



Step 2 Recognition

Document the previous implementation of, and/or newly implemented 4, 6, or 8 [best practices](#), depending on a city's GreenStep Category designation.

- **Refer** back to your city's category.
 - Category C cities need to implement ANY 4 BP's.
 - Category B cities need to implement ANY 6 BP's.
 - Category A cities need to implement ANY 8 BP's.
- **Implementing** a particular [best practice action](#) may take a day or years.
- **Be alert** to opportunities to complete multiple best practice actions at once.
- **Check back** with the city council as needed.
- **Report yearly** to community members.
- As your work proceeds, give us [feedback](#) on the program.
- Visit the [Step 2 page](#) for more details.

Step 3 Recognition

Implement 8, 12, or 16 [best practices](#) and complete a handful of specific high-impact actions, depending on a city's GreenStep Category designation.

- See the [Step 3 page](#) to see details on the requirements for Step 3 recognition.
 - Category C cities need to implement an additional 4 BP's.
 - Category B cities need to implement an additional 6 BP's.
 - Category A cities need to implement an additional 8 BP's.
- **IMPORTANT:** Step 3 has certain [requirements that cities in each category must meet](#) to receive recognition. Cities however are welcome to continue in the GreenStep program even if they choose not to pursue recognition at Step 3.

Step 4 Recognition

Measure and report a minimum number of core and optional metrics for the previous calendar year.

- **Download** the [Step 4/5 Metrics worksheet](#).
- **Use** the [metric guidance documents](#) by clicking on each metric.
- **View** the [Step 4/5 Virtual Tour](#) for in-depth explanation of metrics.
- **For official submission of metrics**, use the [Snap Survey link](#) by April 1 to enter metrics required for Building & Lighting, Transportation, Land Use, Environmental Management, and Economic & Community Development.
- **Contact** the [GreenStep program coordinator](#) with any metrics questions.




Step 5 Recognition

Improve three eligible city performance metrics measured in Step 4.

- **Submit sufficient metrics to be recognized at Step 4.**
- **The green boxes** indicate metrics that are eligible for Step 5 recognition if a city shows improvement between the submittal year and a previous year.
- **For official submission of metrics**, use the [Snap Survey link](#) by April 1 to enter metrics.
- **Contact** the [GreenStep program coordinator](#) with any metrics questions.

Understanding the Website

[Home Page](#)

-  **News Box** – See what events/opportunities are coming up
-  **Benefits** – What are the benefits of joining GSC and implementing BPs?
-  **Twitter** – Follow posts @GreenStepCities

[About Page](#)

- History and development
- GreenStep Program Partners and program funders

Best Practices Page

- Make planning and tracking easier: [download this spreadsheet](#) that lists all unique actions – approximately 175 – for all 29 best practices
- What are Step 2 and 3 [Recognition Minimums](#)?
- Search actions related to specific topics

water conservation ▼

Filter

1. Efficient Existing Public Buildings: Benchmark energy usage; identify savings opportunities in consultation with state programs, utilities and others to implement cost-effective energy and sustainability improvements.



2. Efficient Existing Private Buildings: Provide incentives for energy, water and sustainability improvements in existing buildings/building sites.

3. New Green Buildings: Construct new buildings to meet or qualify under a green building framework.

4. Efficient Outdoor Lighting and Signals: Improve the efficiency and quality of street lighting, traffic signals and outdoor public lighting.

5. Building Redevelopment: Create economic and regulatory incentives for redeveloping and repurposing existing buildings before building new.

6. Comprehensive Plans: Build public support and legal validity to long-term infrastructural and regulatory strategy.



7. Efficient City Growth: Promote financial and environmental sustainability by enabling and encouraging walkable housing and commercial land use.

8. Mixed Uses: Develop efficient and healthy land patterns that generate community wealth.

9. Efficient Highway- and Auto-Oriented Development: Adopt commercial development and design standards for auto-oriented development corridors and clusters.

10. Design for Natural Resource Conservation: Adopt development ordinances or processes that protect natural systems and valued community assets.

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

12. Mobility Options: Promote active transportation and alternatives to single-occupancy car travel.

13. Efficient City Fleets: Implement a city fleet investment, operations and maintenance plan.

14. Demand-Side Travel Planning: Implement Travel Demand Management and Transit-Oriented Design in service of a more walkable city.



15. Sustainable Purchasing: Adopt environmentally preferable purchasing policies and practices.

16. Urban Forests: Add city tree and plant cover that increases community health, wealth and quality of life.

17. Stormwater Management: Minimize the volume of and pollutants in stormwater runoff.

18. Parks and Trails: Support active lifestyles and property values by enhancing the city's green infrastructure.

19. Surface Water Quality: Improve local water bodies.

20. Efficient Water and Wastewater Systems: Assess and improve city drinking water and wastewater systems and related 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.



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



25. Green Business Development: Support expansion of the city's green business sector.

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.

29. Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience: Plan and prepare for extreme weather, adapt to changing climatic conditions, and foster stronger community connectedness and social and economic vitality.

[Steps 1-5 Page](#)

- **A summary** of the actions needed to progress steps
- **Background information** on the program to share with others in your city

[Recognition Page](#)

- **Annual summaries** of city recognition, BPAs completed, notable accomplishments by cities
- **Individual city photos** from the annual June League of Minnesota Cities GreenStep recognition event
- **GreenStep Award Sponsors**

[All Cities Page](#)

- **Click on** a city name to see city contact and background information and detail on completed actions
- **View** total number of completed actions for each city

[Ordinances Page](#)

- **Model ordinances** organized under the 5 Best Practices

[Contact Page](#)

- **Ask questions** to better understand the GreenStep Cities program
- **Clarify** where to find different types of resources on the web site
- **Request** a personal visit to your city
- **Ask for help** in connecting volunteers to needed work in GreenStep cities
- **Send in** your GreenStep City contact information via e-mail
- **Get help** with online documenting of your accomplishments
- **Make suggestions** for improving the GreenStep program
- **Report errors** on the web site and identify broken web links
- **Contact information** (phone and email) for the GreenStep Cities co-directors and best practice advisors

[News Page](#)

- **Read** current and past news items
- **Register for** upcoming workshops/webinars and view past workshops
- **Sign up** for the GreenStep Quarterly Newsletter
- **View/sign-up** for MyLMC MemberLink listserv for GreenStep city coordinators
- **Read recent media** coverage about GreenStep and GreenStep cities

[City Log-In Page](#)

- **Your Username** is you CityName with no spaces
- **Enter the Password** you previously chose
- **Reset your password** as needed
- **Click on Instructions and Helpful Documents** to find "Data Entry onto the GreenStep Web Site," a PDF that shows how to enter information (action reports, a new city GreenStep coordinator's name/contact info) onto your GreenStep Cities admin pages.

Resources

Staff and Partners

The GreenStep Cities program is a partnership of many state agencies, organizations, and volunteers. Get to know them all, below.

<p>Minneapolis Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Director (Kristin Mroz) • Best Practice Advisors • Approves Best Practice Actions entered on website 	<p>Great Plains Institute (GPI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Director (Lola Schoenrich) • Energy and climate technical assistance 	<p>Environmental Quality Board (EQB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting state agency and organizations to community needs
<p>League of Minnesota Cities (LMC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Awards Ceremony at LMC Conference • Provide model ordinances, policies, and other resources • Provide networking between cities and local government organizations • Monthly workshop coordinator 	<p>Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide assistance with energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy technologies and practices for homes, businesses, and local institutions • Regional Coordinators provide 1-on-1 assistance to communities 	<p>Department Of Commerce (COMM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division of Energy provides information and assistance related to energy technology • Provide financial and technical assistance • Assistance in energy efficiency and weatherization
<p>Izaak Walton League (IWLA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance in outdoor conservation of natural resources • 1-on-1 assistance with Greater MN communities 	<p>Rethos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote connection between people and historic places, promoting community vitality • Downtown revitalization 	<p>Urban Land Institute MN (ULI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with community land use and real estate development

<https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/page/minnesota-greenstep-cities-program>



Data Entry Resources

Who can help your city enter GreenStep Cities reporting data? GreenStep Cities use a number of resources to enter in information for the GreenStep Cities program. We find that this may be the most time consuming and tedious part of being a GreenStep City.

1. Dedicate a city staff person to update data for GreenStep Cities.

This may be the GreenStep Cities Coordinator, a communications staff, administrative staff, or any other position that can take the time to get to the know the GreenStep Cities best practice actions and is also familiar with the environmental and sustainable work the city is doing. It is recommended to include this duty in the staff member's annual job duties and/or workplan.

2. Hire a part-time staff person or coordinate a shared staff person.

Cities like Grand Marais have hired staff to coordinate GreenStep Cities and other sustainability/climate work for as little as 4 hours/week, a very minimal cost to the city. Another possibility it to coordinate with a local city, county, or organization to co-hire a staff person to work on GreenStep Cities and other environmental efforts.

3. Hire an Intern.

A GreenStep City intern can serve as the city's champion to complete the initial online recordkeeping, kick start a plan for future activities, and familiarize city staff with the program. See the [GreenStep Cities Intern Manual](#) for assistance on how to find an intern, how to set up their work plan, etc.

4. Apply for a MN GreenCorps Member.

[Minnesota GreenCorps](#) members are coordinated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as part of the AmeriCorps program. Members work in host communities full time for 11 months on environmental projects. Members can assist GreenStep Cities with specific Best Practices and reporting. Cities need to provide a workspace for the member; AmeriCorps covers salary and benefits. Applications are typically due early spring with members starting in early fall of each year.

5. Coordinate with local youth.

This may be a partnership with a local high school class, environmental club, or honors association. Connecting with students or staff may foster assistance with implementing Best Practice Actions, reviewing and analyzing data and reports, or entering GreenStep Cities data and reporting metrics.

6. Coordinate with local citizen volunteers.

Your city may already have an organized environmental or sustainability commission which can assist the GreenStep Cities advancement and members may offer to assist with data and metric entry. Your city may also have a non-government citizen group that would be interested in assisting the GreenStep Cities Coordinator. If your city does not have an environmental-related group in place, think about starting one or finding one or two champion citizens in your community that would be interested in participating with the GreenStep Cities program.

Online Resources

- Start on the [homepage](#) of the GreenStep Cities website
- Note that every 8 months all Implementation Tools and their web links to help cities complete best practice actions are reviewed for relevance and accuracy.

Social Media and Listserv Resources

Track the latest GreenStep news and add your own at:



[Facebook](#) @mngreenstep



[Twitter](#) @GreenStepCities



Email listserv – a resource for GreenStep Cities Coordinators to connect. If you are not receiving a listserv message roughly once per month let [GreenStep Cities](#) know.

Communities – Who’s doing it?

One of the best ways to plan implementation of a new Best Practice Action is to see how other cities have implemented that action.

- **Click on one of the 29 [Best Practices](#)** – think of a Best Practice as a subject area - **and click on one of the Best Practice Actions** that you are interested in.
- **The “Who’s doing it” list will display**, at the bottom of the action page, the GreenStep Cities that have implemented the action and a rating of whether the action was completed at a 1-star rating (good), a 2-star rating (better), or a 3-star rating (best). Click on the name of the city to read their best practice action report.
- **Click on the Star-level Examples tab** to read what sorts of city accomplishments constitute completion of the action at a 1, 2, and 3-star level.
- **GreenStep Cities are always willing to help** other GreenStep Cities! Use the contact information listed to reach out to the city staff who can assist you with questions, planning, implementation, and other questions.

The screenshot shows a web interface for a 'Living Streets' best practice action. At the top, it says 'Living Streets' with a green arrow icon and a description: 'Create a network of green complete streets that improves city quality of life and adds value to surrounding properties.' To the right, it indicates 'no. 11'. Below this, there's a section for 'Best Practice Action 1' with a link to '[1 2 3 4 5 6] [all actions]'. The main heading is 'Adopt a complete streets policy that also addresses street trees and stormwater.' There are three tabs: 'Implementation Tools', 'Star-level Examples', and 'Who's doing it', with the last one selected. An 'Expand All' button is visible. A list of cities follows, each with a star rating: Arlington (3 stars), Edina (3 stars), Maplewood (3 stars), Northfield (3 stars), and Saint Paul (3 stars).

- **Alternatively, use the GreenStep Cities email listserv.** Occasionally, GreenStep staff and partners will send out important information like upcoming events, deadlines for funding, or other resources. This listserv can also be used as a communication tool between GreenStep cities!
 - Note: If you reply-all, your email will be sent to everyone on the list. If you need to contact the sender, email them directly.
- **Click on the Implementation Tools tab** for each best practice action to see resources for taking the action

Reporting and Recognition

Reporting

Once a Best Practice Action or Metric is ready to report, use the following tools. Direct any questions to the contacts below.

- **Step 1:** E-mail the [GreenStep co-director](#) the name and e-mail of your city's GreenStep coordinator.
- **Steps 2-3:** Add Best Practice Actions by [logging in](#) to your city's account and using the online forms
- **Steps 4-5:** Submit metrics via the Snap Survey link and direct questions to the GreenStep co-director.

Recognition

Your hard work has paid off! Get recognized for any achievements in the following ways:

- **Attend the annual GreenStep Cities Awards Ceremony** at the [League of Minnesota Cities](#) Conference (each June).
- **Let GreenStep Cities write a story** about your project success! Contact [Shaylyn Bernhardt](#) with any suggestions.
- **Write a newsletter story** for your city's newsletter. See [recent media coverage](#) for ideas.
- **Write a press release** to your local paper to let your community know about it. See a template under Instructions and Helpful Documents on your city's GreenStep admin page.
- **Follow GreenStep Cities** on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). We will happily share your story!
- **Create a GreenStep Cities webpage** on your city website.

