

Executive Summary

The HIA will guide the City of Marshall and the GreenStep Committee in prioritizing its involvement in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program to advance best practices that leverage improving community health. The main goal is to outline the benefits and costs, so the decision makers can allocate their scarce resources to the highest valued best practice.

The HIA will focus on eleven best practices related to land use, transportation, economic and community development, active living, and healthy eating. The health impact of land use decisions is often overlooked. Recognizing that health extends beyond indicators such as death, diseases and disability, this project will address factors such as mental and social well-being, quality of life, isolation, and other factors.

The HIA will help illustrate the positive impact of compact efficient developments. These types of developments encourage walkability, which in turn will help reduce obesity and the chronic diseases related to obesity. These positive changes to the built environment will help to facilitate growth in Marshall by improving quality of life and making it a desirable place to live and work.

Table #37 Progress Table – GreenStep HIA Best Practices

GreenStep Best Practice	Number of Actions to Achieve Best Practice	# of Outlined Strategies
BP #7 – Efficient City Growth	Implement one action	1
BP #9 – Efficient Highway and Auto Oriented Development	Implement one action	1
BP #11 – Living Streets (Complete Green Streets)	Implement one action	5
BP #17 – Innovative Stormwater Management	Implement one action	1
BP #18 – Parks and Trails	Implement 3 actions	3
BP #27 – Local Foods	Documented (Completed)	2

Table #37 Progress Table – GreenStep HIA Best Practices

GreenStep Best Practice	Progress	Objective & Strategy
BP #6 – Comprehensive Plan and Implementation	Three one star actions	No
BP #7 – Efficient City Growth	No documented actions	Yes
BP #8 – Mixed Use	Two one star actions	No
BP #9 – Efficient Highway and Auto Oriented Development	No documented actions	Yes
BP #10 – Conservation Design	No documented actions	No
BP #11 – Living Streets (Complete Green Streets)	No documented actions	Yes
BP #12 – Mobility Options	Two one star actions	No
BP #17 – Innovative Stormwater Management	No documented actions	Yes
BP #18 – Parks and Trails	No documented actions	Yes
BP #27 – Local Foods	A one star and two star action	Yes

BP #7 – Efficient City Growth

Objective:

Complete the GreenStep Cities best practice: Efficient City Growth

Strategy:

Provide incentives for infill projects, or for life-cycle housing at or near job or retail centers, or for achieving an average net residential density of seven units per acre.

BP #9 – Efficient Highway and Auto Oriented Development

Objective:

Complete the GreenStep Cities best practice: Efficient Highway and Auto Oriented Development

Strategy:

Adopt infrastructure design standards that protect the economic and ecologic functions of the corridor through clustering of development and incorporating access management standards.

BP# 11 – Living Streets (Complete Green Streets)

Objective:

Complete the GreenStep Cities best practice: Living Streets

Strategy:

Pass a Complete Streets Policy.

Implement the proposed Complete Streets Policy by implementing a Pedestrian Functional Classification System.

When constructing a new street or resurfacing an existing street, consider and discuss the function of that street and the pedestrian amenities needed to make that street safe for pedestrians.

Identify, prioritize, and remedy complete street gaps and lack of connectivity within your road network.

Identify, prioritize, and remedy street-trail gaps between city streets and off-road trails/bike trails to better facilitate walking and biking.

BP #17 Innovative Stormwater Management

Objective:

Complete the GreenStep Cities best practice: Innovative Stormwater Management

Strategy:

Adopt and implement guidelines or design standards / incentives for stormwater infiltration / reuse practices.

BP #18 – Parks and Trails

Objective:

Complete the GreenStep Cities best practice: Parks and Trails

Strategy:

Identify and remedy gaps within your city’s system of parks, off-road trails, and open spaces.

Achieve minimum levels of city greenspace.

Develop a program to involve community members in hands-on land restoration and stewardship projects.

BP #27 – Local Foods

Objective:

Complete additional actions under the GreenStep Cities best practice: Local Foods

Strategy:

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

Create, assist with and promote local food production/distribution within the city, such as a farmer’s market, an urban agriculture business, or a community or school garden, orchard, or forest.

Conclusion

When making a land use decision and investing in the future, it is critical to consider all the costs, not just the construction costs. There are costs associated with sprawl, inactivity and negative health outcomes, and the loss of community. Decision makers need to consider the function of every street, and plot of land. Is the function of this place to create wealth or is the function of this particular street to move cars quickly. If it is to create health, decision makers need to think about walkability, bikeability, and connectivity to the development.

When you are rebuilding a street, ask yourself if this street can be improved in regards to walkability, bikeability, and connectivity to the community. The cost savings of narrowing a street could be used to install sidewalks and create a more livable neighborhood. On existing streets consider other higher return improvements, like painting crosswalks or striping travel lanes.

*“When you narrow up the street lanes, cars drive slower, people feel more comfortable there. They walk across the streets, to a store across the street. And in a real subtle and cheap way you get a lot more pedestrian traffic, a lot more retail, a lot more people. And people spend money, and that's what makes a place wealthier. **When people are there, people invest more.**”¹*

Table #55 Decision Makers Checklist: Built Environment

Ask Yourself and the Decision Making Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will my decision impact health?• How will my decision impact connectivity?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Compact efficient development vs. sprawl (which decreases connectivity)• Will my decision make the community more inviting (more walkable and bikeable)?• Were all users considered when making the decision?

¹ Econ Talk. Charles Marohn on Strong Towns, Urban Development, and the Future of American Cities. Accessed: 5/13/15. Available: http://www.econtalk.org/archives/2014/05/charles_marohn.html

