



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION AGENDA

PUBLIC MEETING ROOM

MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2024

6:00 PM

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda
2. Introductions
3. Approval of the Minutes
4. Items for Discussion
 - A. Member shifting to advisory
 - B. CERTs grant -outreach planning
 - C. Update on Adopt A Drain initiative
 - D. Northfield Rotary Request - Energy Audits
5. Routine Business
 - A. Announcements and Updates
 - i DOE Charging Smart "EV Ready" Community
6. Adjournment



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

PUBLIC MEETING ROOM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2024

6:00 PM

Meeting Items

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

Chair DeMars called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. The Environmental Commission members present were Cynthia Diessner, Debie Graham, Dick Huston, Delia Denis, Sarah Middleton and Chair Teresa DeMars. Others present were Kari Casper, Recording Secretary, and David Wanberg, Director of Community and Economic Development. A motion was made by Dick Huston, seconded by Delia Denis. The vote passed on a 6/0 vote. Lee Nordmeyer arrived at 6:03 p.m. Wanberg then requested short introductions.

2. Oath of Office

Kari Casper administered the Oath of Office to Sarah Middleton at this time.

3. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Debie Graham, seconded by Lee Nordmeyer to approve the meeting minutes of February 26, 2024, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Items for Discussion

A. Finalize CERTs Grant Implementation Plan

After much discussion regarding the application and what needs to be accomplished to get this funding, the board approved moving forward with the grant request.

Part of this grant application is to prepare two kits that will be made available for checking out at our public library to promote energy savings in resident's homes. The grant requested that the group reach 75 households within one year of the grant award. Instruction fliers will need to be printed and passed out. Since school is out, there are other avenues that we can use to get the word out on the two kits that were requested, such as tabling at events such as Heritage Days, International Day and coordinating with Riverbend. Dick Huston suggested working with Sharing Our Roots out of Northfield. Dave Wanberg mentioned offering a prize or something to do the best video presentation on how to use the kits. Delia Denis stated that she would make a video to present. Another part of the grant is to reach 60 students in 3 classrooms. Delia Denis suggested partnering with STEAM which is a summer program. Wanberg suggested contacting HCI to maybe show up at the Thursdays in the Park. It was mentioned to maybe put an insert in the water bills which takes approximately 3 months to accomplish at a cost. We will need some sort of tracking sheet to report back on what interactions occur to fulfill the grant process.

B. Preliminary Discussion of Proposed Pollinator Garden in Virtues Park

Chair DeMars met with the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Faribault, Paul Peanasky about the potential for a natural landscape garden in Virtues Park. She reported that the City is fully behind their request for the garden in the park and is asking

the Environmental Commission to help support the proposed pollinator garden in Virtues Park as well. Chair DeMars mentioned that Pat Rice with the Partners for Pollinators, is receiving a grant from Thrivent to help plant the park. Rice County Soil and Water Conservation will use their native plants. A motion was made by Delia Denis, seconded by Debbie Graham to support the Partners for Pollinators' efforts to plant the nature landscape garden in Virtues Park.

C. Finalize Plans for Heritage Days Tabling Event

Chair DeMars turned the matter over to Kari Casper to discuss tabling Heritage Days. A signup sheet was passed around. Chair DeMars stated that she might try to be there the entire proposed time, which would be from 5 to 7 p.m. on Friday the 14th and then starting at noon on Saturday through 8:00 p.m., which is just after the parade will let out. We will have light bulbs to give out. Dave Wanberg mentioned that he has a spare rain barrel that he would donate. The idea would be to have information on the pollinators there as well. Chair DeMars will have the information she has collected from the RCSWC.

D. Summer Intern Update

Our summer intern will start on June 3rd and assist the Environmental Commission. This intern will be working remotely.

E. University of Minnesota Climate Policy Project

Dave Wanberg's students from the University of Minnesota prepared recommendations for climate-resilient landscaping for the City of Faribault. Wanberg asked the commission to review their recommendations and provide further feedback.

5. Routine Business

A. Announcements and Updates

6. Adjournment

Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Lee Nordmeyer to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

By: _____
Kari Casper, Recording Secretary



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Wanberg, CED Director
FROM: Robert Harris III, Economic Development Coordinator
MEETING DATE: August 26, 2024
SUBJECT: Member shifting to advisory

Background:

Debie Graham has moved to Northfield and would like to continue serving on the Environmental Commission. Due to the bylaws, Debie will not be able to serve as a voting member but may remain as an Advisory Member.

Recommendation:

No action.

Attachments:



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Wanberg, CED Director
FROM: Robert Harris III, Economic Development Coordinator
MEETING DATE: August 26, 2024
SUBJECT: CERTs grant -outreach planning

Background:

In January 2024, the Environmental Commission was awarded \$3,000 from CERTs to implement an Energy Assessment Tool Library. Staff is collaborating with Xcel Energy to develop print materials and other promotional materials. Energy efficient bulbs, an induction cooktop, and weather striping have also been purchased for inclusion in the Energy Assessment Toolkits. Staff would like to review and update the grant implementation timeline with the Commission and develop an outreach team.

Recommendation:

Assemble an outreach team made up of commission members and other volunteers.

Attachments:

1. Grant contract award letter
2. CERTs grant application
3. Faribault_Kit Promotional Flyer
4. Faribault Check Library Flyer
5. Faribault-Moisture Check Flyer
6. Faribault-Power Check Library Flyer
7. Faribault Energy Kit Survey Flyer

January 19, 2024

Mathias Hughey and Deirdre Coleman
City of Faribault
208 NW 1st Ave
Faribault, MN 55021

Organization: City of Faribault
Project: Energy Assessment Tool Library
Awarded Amount: \$3,000 (for materials)
CERT Region: SE CERT

Dear Mathias and Deirdre,

Congratulations! Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) is pleased to let you know that City of Faribault's "Energy Assessment Tool Library" project has been selected for a Southeast CERT Seed Grant in the amount of \$3,000 (for materials).

CERTs received 125 applications for this year's CERTs Seed Grant round, requesting a total of \$999,263. We are very excited about so many clean energy projects being pursued around the state and we thank you for being a part of making this happen.

This letter is your official notice of award. Below is a summary of the process and key deadlines.

I. Contract Timeline:

Date	Task
As soon as possible	Please read, sign, and email the Acknowledgement document to makozak@umn.edu (see email sent 1-16-2024)
Now	You may begin work on your project.
Ongoing	As you work on your project: - Save all receipts as you will need them to receive reimbursement for eligible nonlabor costs - Take photos of your project throughout, from start to finish, specifically: - o Get signed consent from people in the photo for permission to take and share their photo with CERTs - o before and after photos - o "action photos" showing the actual work in progress-- including before, during installation, and after completion - o people with technology, such as a group photo of the people involved in and/or benefitting from the project

	(for example, a group photo in front of a new solar panel on a sunny day). ○ In your final reporting, we will ask you for 3 photos - Save news articles, and other documentation of the project - Ask CERTs to promote events, if/as you like (optional) - Reach out to your CERTs Regional Coordinator for technical assistance
June 3, 2024 @4pm	- Interim report due; a link to an online form will be emailed to you - You may submit an interim invoice for up to 50% of the full project award - Projects that have not begun work will have funding revoked. Funds will be redirected to other project(s) in the region
Jan. 13, 2025 at 4 p.m	- Final invoice and final report due; a link to an online form will be emailed to you for your Final Report. - Project work must be completed. - You will be asked to share photos, news articles, and other documentation of the project.
Upon completion of the project – July 2025	CERTs will work with seed grant recipients to develop project case studies and stories.

II. Invoicing:

- The CERT Seed Grant will be paid on a reimbursement basis.
- You may submit an Interim Invoice of up to 50% of the project's award amount, along with your Interim Report. Interim Reports are due June 3, 2024 @4pm. An online form will be emailed to you. Attached is a reference copy to give you a sense of the questions you will be asked.
- The remainder of the funding will be paid *after* work is completed on the project and after your Final Report and Final invoice have been approved by CERTs.
- Your project was approved to receive reimbursement for some minor non-labor expenses as noted in your seed grant application. Non-labor costs must be itemized on the invoice and **copies of receipts** for these items must be attached to the invoice. You cannot be reimbursed for non-labor expenses without a receipt. If you like, you may immediately send the receipts to grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org.
- Non-labor expenses may include minor materials and supplies (for example, printing, postage, office materials and supplies to conduct outreach and education, training and registration fees, mileage (at approved state rates), basic tools, wiring or fasteners less than \$200 for an educational display).
- You cannot be reimbursed for any capital costs, equipment, nor hardware (ex. solar panels, inverters, items which in total would cost over \$5,000).
- Invoices will not be processed for payment until the corresponding report has been received and approved. **Incomplete or missing data or receipts will prolong the approval process, thereby delaying your payment.**
- If you complete your project work and report early, you may submit the invoice at that time.
- Address the invoice to the University of Minnesota, as outlined below.



- The University has a “net 30” policy, meaning payment will be made 30 days from the date of the invoice, provided the corresponding report and invoice have been approved.

Your Invoice must include the following:

- The invoice must be from “City of Faribault” to “University of Minnesota”
- Note: we cannot pay invoices from your contractor.
- **Receipts** for non-labor materials and supplies, as noted above.
- The date the invoice is being submitted
- The invoice number (this could be the date again if you don’t have a formal invoice numbering system)
- The amount of hours, who worked them, and each person’s rate per hour
- A short phrase describing the work, making clear the nature of the labor as noted in your application
- Our contact information:
University of Minnesota
Joel Haskard and Melissa Birch, CERTs Co-Directors
411 Borlaug Hall
1991 Upper Buford Circle
Saint Paul, MN 55108

III. Keeping in Touch: Over the course of the year, CERT staff and your CERT Regional Coordinator will reach out to you to check in on the progress of your project. You are also welcome to contact us any time you have questions.

For reporting and payment questions, contact:
Maggie Kozak at makozak@umn.edu or 651-387-7581 (cell)

For technical assistance on your project, contact:
Jennifer Lindahl, Southeast CERT Regional Coordinator
jlindahl@umn.edu | 715-279-2339

We look forward to working with you and supporting your project as it moves forward.

Kind regards,
Joel Haskard and Melissa Birch, CERTs Co-Directors
Maggie Kozak, CERTs Seed Grants Manager
Jennifer Lindahl, Southeast CERT Regional Coordinator



2024 CERTS SEED GRANT APPLICATION

Email *

mhughey@ci.faribault.mn.us

Southeast ▼

GENERAL INFORMATION

Visit the [Request for Proposals](#) for more information. All links will open in a new tab or window.

Reminder: *This application is a Google Form. In order to save your progress, submit the application in Section 6 when you're ready to leave and you'll receive a link to your in-progress application at the email address you entered in Section 1. Resubmit your application each time you make revisions, up until the October 10 deadline.*

Project Name

Energy Assessment Tool Library

Project Location (city)

Faribault

Applicant Organization

City of Faribault

Organization's Street Address

208 NW 1st Ave

Organization's City

Faribault

Organization's Zip Code

55021

Organization's Website

<https://www.ci.faribault.mn.us/>

Name of Primary Project Contact at Organization

Mathias Hughey

Primary Contact Phone

507-209-0100

Primary Contact Email

mhughey@ci.faribault.mn.us

Name of Alternate Project Contact

Deirdre Coleman

Alternate Contact Phone

612-244-2457

Alternate Contact Email

dcoleman@mncee.org

Has your organization ever applied for a CERTs Seed Grant?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ I don't know

Has your organization ever received a CERTs Seed Grant?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ I don't know

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND WORK PLAN

Visit the [Request for Proposals](#) for more information. All links will open in a new tab or window.

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Project Summary and Primary Objective (up to 100 words)

Briefly summarize your project and the primary objective you hope to achieve. This is how your project will be shared and described to others.

The City of Faribault will compile a tool and resource library for conducting small-scale energy efficiency assessments. Two "kits" that include equipment, guides, and materials will be available for residents to check out from city facilities. The kits will include step-by-step instructions on how to conduct energy assessment tasks, including worksheets to calculate potential savings. They will also include next-steps guides with information about utility, state, and federal incentives. Residents will be empowered to pursue energy efficiency upgrades with contractors, appliance dealers, and others by building knowledge about energy use and efficiency, energy-saving actions, and available incentives.

Project Goals (up to 200 words)

Describe the key goals of your project, including the type(s) of clean energy focus, project size and scope, and how the project removes barriers or makes clean energy more accessible in your community.

The project seeks to create a culture of energy efficiency and cost-savings, and contribute to achieving the City's Energy Action Plan goal - "Faribault will avoid an additional 50% of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to business as usual while saving the community energy and money." Developing an energy efficiency tool library was identified in the City's 2023 Energy Action Plan process where residents repeatedly stressed the importance of cost savings coupled with sustainable use of resources.

The tool library project emphasizes energy efficiency by focusing on developing an understanding of energy use and assisting residents in identifying areas for cost and energy savings. Specific goals of the project include increased participation in utility, federal, and state incentive programs, reduced energy consumption and costs, and greater public awareness around energy efficiency and incentives.

As part of the program, we will track the number of check-outs from the tool library and compare this to participation in the Home Energy Squad program. Faribault's annual participation in Home Energy Squad is 37 visits per year, 23 of which are low-income. The tool library program will offer a complimentary alternative to Home Energy Squads that addresses language, cultural, and scheduling barriers.

Project Activities (up to 200 words)

Describe the activities and outcomes of your project. Describe how you will measure success.

To create the tool library, City and Xcel Energy Staff will purchase and organize materials and supplies, then draft easy-to-use guides that connect the results of the energy audit with actionable steps including accessing federal and state incentives. Materials will include information on the time to complete each task (estimated), instructions for use/installation, worksheets to do simple calculations, directions on next steps, and links to additional resources.

City and Xcel staff will develop promotional materials including posters, social media posts, flyers, mailer inserts and an email campaign. City staff will work with other city departments including the library, parks, building official, and fire department to promote awareness of the tool library in the community. Staff will also contact the local newspaper to expand awareness.

City staff will work with city staff to ensure they understand how to use the tools so that they can answer questions from the public and provide an initial overview of the process.

City staff will also conduct outreach to connections at the public schools, technical college, and local charter schools to raise awareness among the student population

Estimated Project Work Plan/Timeline

Describe your planned approach. Provide an estimated work plan with schedule for project implementation, including the names of those individuals responsible for each step.

Date(s), Action description, Individual(s) responsible

Add a row for each action line in the plan by using the Enter key.

Note: The seed grant funding timeline is December 1, 2023-January 13, 2025.

February-March 2024 - upon award Faribault's Community Development Coordinator, Mathias Hughey, will identify and complete purchases of the required core equipment shortly upon being awarded the grant. Then work with the Xcel Energy team to develop step-by-step guides for using the equipment, and identify online resources such as instructional videos, and materials about utility, federal, and state incentives. Some initial outreach will also be conducted, contacting local partners including schools, who may be interested in having lessons or activities around energy use incorporated into their curriculum.

March-April 2024 - the tool library will be announced, and active promotion of the availability will take place. The Xcel team will work with Mathias Hughey to develop social media posts and utility insert flyers. Mathias will work with other city staff and contractors to post to social media, hang posters, and have flyers printed and inserted into residents' water bills.

Summer 2024 - members of the City's Environmental Commission may bring the kits to different community events where they are promoting City initiatives. A second round of social media posts and awareness raising may be conducted in the spring/summer of 2024 once federal point-of-sale rebates become available to encourage residents to take advantage of these incentives.

Ongoing 2024 - 2025 - The kits will be checked periodically to make sure they are stocked with consumables including low-flow aerators, weather stripping, LED lightbulbs, and worksheets or reference materials by city staff.

After one year, City and Xcel staff will assess how well the program is working, and where, or how it can be improved. Mathias Hughey will compile the information on how often the kits have been checked out, and Xcel staff will provide Home Energy Squad information for comparison.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION

Visit the [Request for Proposals](#) for more information. All links will open in a new tab or window.

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Why does this project matter to your community? (up to 200 words)

What are the benefits of this project to your community? What community need does it meet?
How will the project be visible in your community?

Our community originally participated in the Partners in Energy program in 2017, and recently completed an update of the Energy Action Plan, adopted on October 10, 2023. Both plans involved extensive community engagement efforts and residents consistently identified cost as a major concern about the energy transition. State and federal incentives are available in more significant amounts than at any time in the past, but connecting residents to those resources and raising awareness of the individual impacts remains a challenge.

Home Energy Audits are available to residents through the Home Energy Squad program, but scheduling, limited availability, cost, and cultural differences can limit the accessibility of this program. Some people are also uncomfortable with bringing someone into their home. Having a clear guide and low or no-cost access to the tools used in conducting an energy audit can boost participation in incentive programs, reducing both the long-term costs of energy and the short-term costs of upgrades.

Once residents have begun accessing incentives and realizing cost savings, they may share their success with neighbors, friends, and other community members. The newspaper may also be interested in running success stories in the community.

Serving Underserved Populations (up to 200 words)

As described in the [Request for Proposals](#), preference will be given to projects that are “from, led by, and/or include meaningful participation by historically underserved populations.” If your project fits this preference, please describe how it does so.

The City of Faribault population is diverse and includes a significant proportion of traditionally underserved communities, especially immigrant, low-income, and people with disabilities. Three of the four census tracts incorporating Faribault qualify as J40 census tracts, and the public schools are majority-minority. Providing access to energy-efficiency materials, tools, and instructions to residents free of charge and in multiple languages, the program seeks to increase access to energy-efficiency knowledge and participation in funding programs that can have significant quality-of-life impacts for residents.

The ability for the community to conduct energy assessments on their own time and schedule addresses several of the barriers to accessing Home Energy Squads including the need for translators, scheduling, and cultural differences and comfort with bringing outsiders into one’s home. As awareness and success of the program grows within the community, word will spread beyond what traditional channels of official communication are able to access.

Project Partners

How does your project involve and/or include the community?

List schools, organizations, and other institutions involved in the project. (*List funders in Section 5: Project Funding.*)

Name of organization: Description of project role

Add a row for each partner by using the Enter key.

- Note: We request documentation from partners about their involvement (may be in the form of an email or brief letter).

Partners in Energy/Xcel Energy – staff at Partners in Energy and Xcel Energy will provide the design and development of instructional materials and reference guides. They will also provide translation services to translate those materials into Somali and Spanish language guides so that members of those communities can access the information. The team will be led by Deidre Coleman and Sofia Troutman and will include additional staff as necessary for design and translation.

The City of Faribault's Environmental Commission consists of seven members who often volunteer to promote initiatives within the city by tabling at community events. Promoting the availability of the tool library could include a number of these commissioners as they area available.

Estimated number of people involved in this project:

- Include people actively engaged in the project (not including core project team members).
- Examples include: volunteers, advisory boards, consultants, elected officials, outreach helpers, partner organization members.

Adults (18 years and older) involved:

75 total households over 1 year

Youth (less than 18 years old) involved:

60 youth in 3 classrooms

Regional Criteria and Preferences (up to 100 words)

Speak to how your project fits with the regional criteria and preferences explained in the [Request for Proposals](#).

SE CERT criteria identify accessing state and federal incentives and funding as a focus of the program. By combining access to energy assessment tools with information on financial incentives for energy efficiency upgrades, residents will develop an understanding of actions they take to improve energy efficiency and how to access funding for applicable upgrades. The development of an energy-efficiency tool library pairs well with CERTs IRA Ambassador program, empowering residents to effectively access federal and state incentives and reduce their energy consumption. Promoting the tool library in tandem with funding information makes both more actionable.

PROJECT FUNDING

Visit the [Request for Proposals](#) for more information. All links will open in a new tab or window.

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How will you use CERTs funds?

List the items below to show the estimated breakdown of anticipated CERTs-eligible expenses.

- **Type of Labor or Materials and Supplies** (for example: consulting, student internship, printing)
- **Type of Activity** (for example: construction, research, outreach)
- **Anticipated Cost** (Note: Should add up to Funding Request)

Labor/Materials/Supplies, Activity Type, Cost

Add a row for each labor/material/supply item by using the Enter key.

Supplies to include in two kits: thermal imaging cameras (x2), Kilowatt hour meters (x2), moisture meters (x2), low-flow aerators, weather stripping, caulking tape, ruler/tape measure (to check depth of insulation), one-burner induction stove top for trial period, LED lightbulbs. Anticipated cost \$2,500

Printed materials to include: how-to-guide for thermal imaging cameras, kilowatt hour meters, moisture meters, and installation of consumables like weather stripping. Work-sheets and next step guide including incentive availability and access. Estimated printing costs \$750

Promotional Materials to include: utility bill flyers, event flyers/handouts, posters, social media paid promotion. Estimated costs \$1750

Total Funding Requested from CERTs:

\$5,000

Other Funding Support

List other funding sources identified for completing the project.

Amount, Secured or pending, Funding source, Purpose

Add a row for each amount by using the Enter key.

In-kind labor from city staff, secured, \$3,200 - 80 hours at \$40/hour

In-kind labor from Xcel & partners in Energy, secured, \$3,200 - 80 hours at \$40/hour

Additional Information

If there is anything else you'd like us to know about you, your organization, or your project, please include it here.

File Uploads

Complete proposals include a submitted complete application form and the following documents (if applicable) by the October 10 deadline.

If you have documentation from your project partner(s), from your secured funding source(s), or if you are applying for multiple regions, please upload those documents in the sections below.

If you have questions or need assistance, please email us grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org.

Documentation from any project partner (email, letter of support), if applicable.

 XE - Faribault CE...

Documentation of secured funding from other source (award letter, email), if applicable.

Multiple-Region Application Addendum, if applying to more than one region.

Please email grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org to request the form.

October 9, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Xcel Energy is pleased to collaborate with the City of Faribault through our Partners in Energy program to support the work to achieve Faribault's clean energy goals. The Partners in Energy team is aware of the city's application for a CERTs SEED Grant to develop an energy library of tools for residents and businesses to assess their energy use and make informed energy efficiency decisions. We are excited to be able to offer additional support to make this potential project a success.

Xcel Energy will provide guides for the tools and promotional materials. The Partners in Energy program will also support Faribault with co-branded outreach collateral as needed, including social media and flyers.

These tools can help residents or businesses who may not want, or cannot have, energy assessors in their homes or businesses, or just make it convenient for people to do on their own.

The City of Faribault is a Partners in Energy community, creating its Energy Action Plan update in 2023 and setting a goal to reduce an additional 50% of Greenhouse Gas emissions by 2030. We have worked with the City since the first energy action planning effort in 2017, and the City has continued to meet and exceed those original goals.

Faribault's proposed CERTs SEED Grant project to develop this energy tool library will contribute to Faribault meeting its energy goals.

Sincerely,



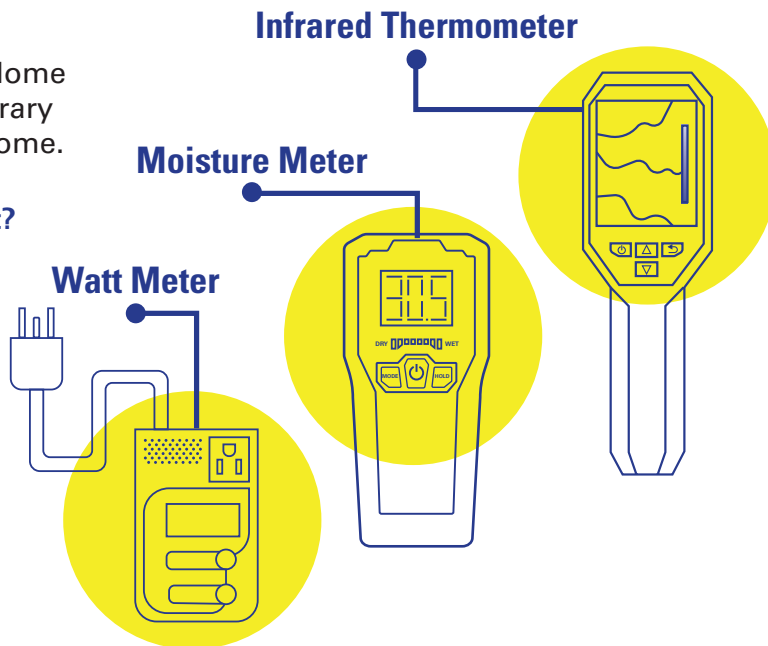
Sofia Troutman
Program Manager
Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy

CHECK OUT A HOME ENERGY EVALUATION KIT

The right tools can help you see if your home has common energy hogs or water leaks. Check out a Home Energy Equipment Kit from Buckham Memorial Library and find ways to save energy and money in your home.

What's included in the Home Energy Evaluation Kit?

- **Infrared thermometer** to find areas where heated and cooled air is escaping your home.
- **Moisture Meter** to identify possible hidden water leaks.
- **Watt meter** to measure how much electricity appliances use, even those that are turned off.
- **Upon request:** One of the kits comes with a single-burner induction cooktop and pot. See for yourself how fast and clean it is to cook with induction.



Check out a kit for **FREE** at Buckham Memorial Library.

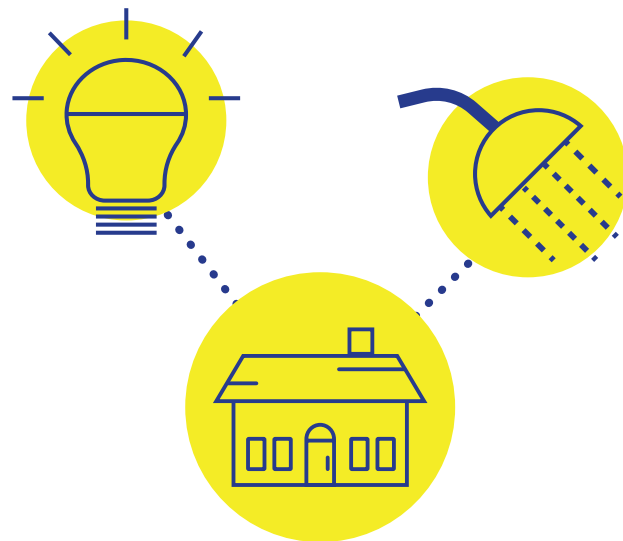
FREE ENERGY SAVING KITS

You can make your home more comfortable and energy efficient all by yourself. In this energy saving kit you'll find the materials you need to seal up air leaks in your home, save water and the energy to heat the water, install efficient lighting, and more:

- **LED Lightbulbs**
- **High efficiency shower head** (and plumbers tape for installation)
- **High efficiency faucet aerators** (for bathroom sink)
- **Weather stripping** (for doors)
- **Rope caulk** (for windows)
- **Measuring stick** (to check for attic insulation depth of at least 16 inches)
- **Outlet gaskets** (to put behind outlets and light switches)

Not sure where in your home to use these materials?

Check out a Home Energy Evaluation Kit from the library for tools to help find the air leaks and energy hogs in your home.



To learn about more ways to save energy in your home, visit [xcelenergy.com/residential](https://www.xcelenergy.com/residential)



DRAFT CHECK

Your home may be losing comfort and money by letting energy out the doors (and windows, attics, and other less insulated areas).

You might notice a drafty spot in your home, or may not see any signs of energy loss, but this tool can help identify your problem areas.

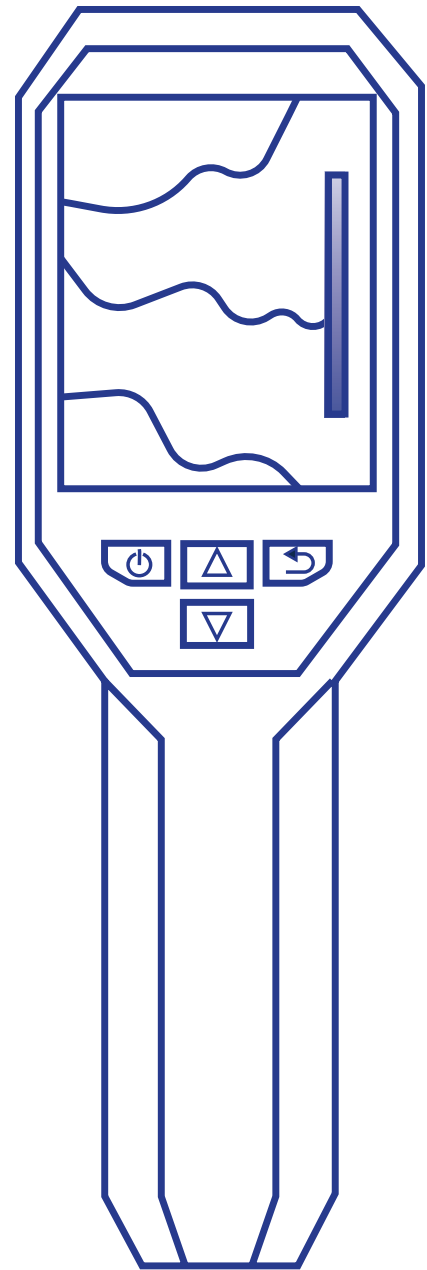
Follow these easy steps to activate and use the Draft Check tool:

Step 1: Turn on the tool using the red trigger which is the **On/Off** button. Aim the device at an interior wall until you see a temperature reading appear on the screen and a green light appear on top. This will set your baseline temperature.

Step 2: Adjust the switch on the right side of the tool to set the temperature threshold. If the threshold is set to 10° F, the device will beep when the object you are pointing at is warmer or colder than the baseline by 10 degrees. Turn the switch to “off” if you want to turn off the beeping sound.

Step 3: Move your device slowly around your home, checking places like windows, doors, baseboards, wall seams, electrical outlets, etc. and note your findings. It's easiest to detect leaks when there is at least a 20 degree temperature difference between inside and outside your home, like when it is below 50 degrees or above 90 degrees outside. Be sure to compare like materials. For example, compare one window frame to another. Even new windows will usually be colder than a wall in the winter due to differences in materials and insulating values.

Step 4: For professional help finding and fixing air leaks in your home, schedule a visit with the Home Energy Squad at xcelenergy.com/HomeEnergySquad.* Some ideas for DIY energy solutions such as weather-stripping windows and doors, and using your blinds and curtains to control heating and cooling losses, can be found here: XcelEnergy.com/EnergySavingTips.



Infrared Thermometer

Learn more about this tool at
XcelEnergy.com/DraftCheck

*Home Energy Squad® is provided by Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy.

MOISTURE CHECK

Water leaks can lead to high water bills and moisture damage to your home, but are hard to identify. This tool can help find wet spots behind your walls to narrow down the source of a water leak.

Follow these easy steps with a Moisture Check tool:

Step 1: Turn on the device using the **On/Off** button, and press the **Mode** button until the material type of the surface you are testing appears (drywall, masonry (concrete or brick), hardwood, or soft wood).

Step 2: Scan the surface by pressing the sensor on the back of the device against the surface. Start on a part of the wall that you know is dry to get a baseline. Move the device slowly over the surface to find the wet spots.

Step 3: When high moisture content is detected, the device will beep and the reading will increase. A moisture level above 20% typically means there is a leak, especially if other parts of the same surface have lower readings.



Moisture Meter

Learn more about this tool at:
[thisoldhouse.com/smart-homes/
94988/how-to-use-a-moisture-meter](https://thisoldhouse.com/smart-homes/94988/how-to-use-a-moisture-meter)



POWER CHECK

Check the amount of power your electronics are using with this meter and learn how you might save energy and waste less money on your utility bills.

Once you know the rate and amount of electricity your entertainment system, refrigerator, or your lamp uses, you can manage that energy better by making small changes.

This Power Check meter can also help identify “vampire” usage, or electronics that might draw power even when they are off.

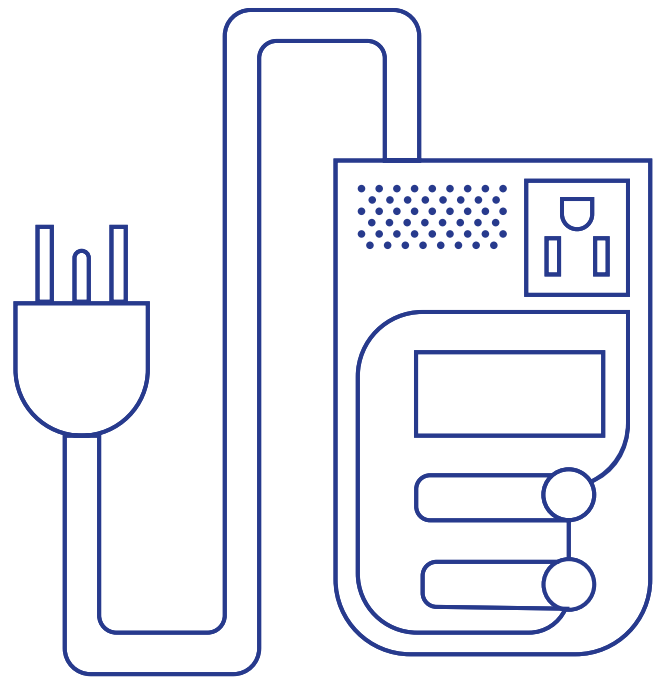
Follow these easy steps upon checkout of the Power Check meter:

Step 1: Plug the Power Check meter into a standard grounded 120 volt outlet first. Then plug your electronic device into the Power Check meter.

Step 2: Press the **WATT** button on the Power Check meter. The number on the screen is the real time energy demand of your device in WATTS.

Step 3: Press the **KWH** button on the Power Check meter. The number on the screen is the cumulative energy consumed over time. Press the **KWH** button a second time to see how much time has elapsed. To see how much energy an appliance like a refrigerator uses in a day, leave the appliance plugged into the Power Check Meter for 24 hours. After 24 hours, write down the KWH amount and time displayed on the Power Check meter before unplugging. To calculate energy cost, multiply the KWH amount by \$0.09 (or your electric rate).

Step 4: Go to [XcelEnergy.com/EnergySolutions](https://www.xcelenergy.com/energy-solutions) to learn how you can reduce your devices’ impact on your electric bills.



Watt Meter

Technical Information and Precautions

- ⚡ This tool is rated for 120 Volt, 60 Hz or 16 amps
- ⚡ Do not use this tool outdoors, when wet, or when water is present
- ⚡ Use on outlets and devices that are in good working order and cords are intact

WAS THIS HOME ENERGY KIT HELPFUL?
TAKE THIS 5 MINUTE SURVEY



SCAN ME





Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Waberg, CED
FROM: Robert Harris III, Economic Development Coordinator
MEETING DATE: August 26, 2024
SUBJECT: Update on Adopt A Drain initiative

Background:

The U of MN intern conducted some initial background research on implementing an Adopt-A-Drain initiative. The initiative has not been implemented, and the program is likely to be unfeasible. The Public Works department has attempted to implement a similar program in the past.

Recommendation:

No action.

Attachments:

1. Adopt A Drain Background research

Adopt-a-Drain & Pollinator Program Setup Guide

Background

Storm drains are important for many reasons. In urban environments, working drains are needed so that streets don't flood. These are managed through a city's various street cleaning and/or stormwater management services. The Adopt-a-Drain program aims to keep streets and the connecting waterways clean from pollutants. The following image shows some of the most common pollutants that end up in waterways.



<https://nc-cleanwater.com/stormwater-pollution/why-is-stormwater-a-problem/>

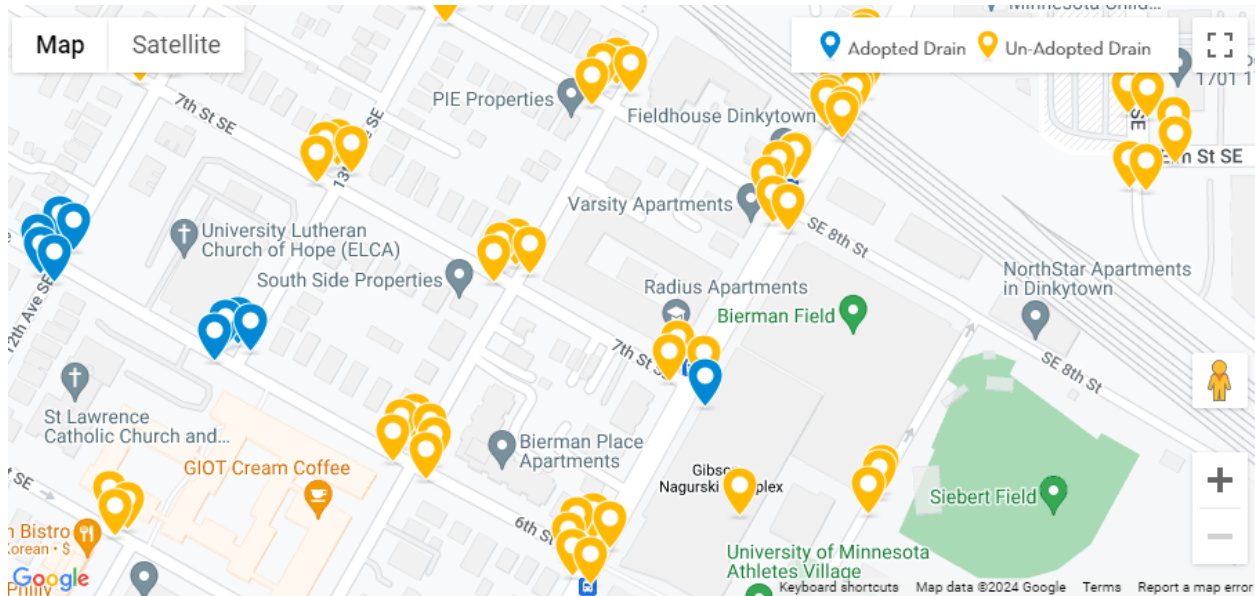
Pollinators are a crucial component for the ecological health of the native landscape. Many native pollinator species in Minnesota and across the nation have experienced significant population decline from historic population. Much of this comes from a variety of sources illustrated by the following image. The goal of such a program aims to restore pollinator habitats.



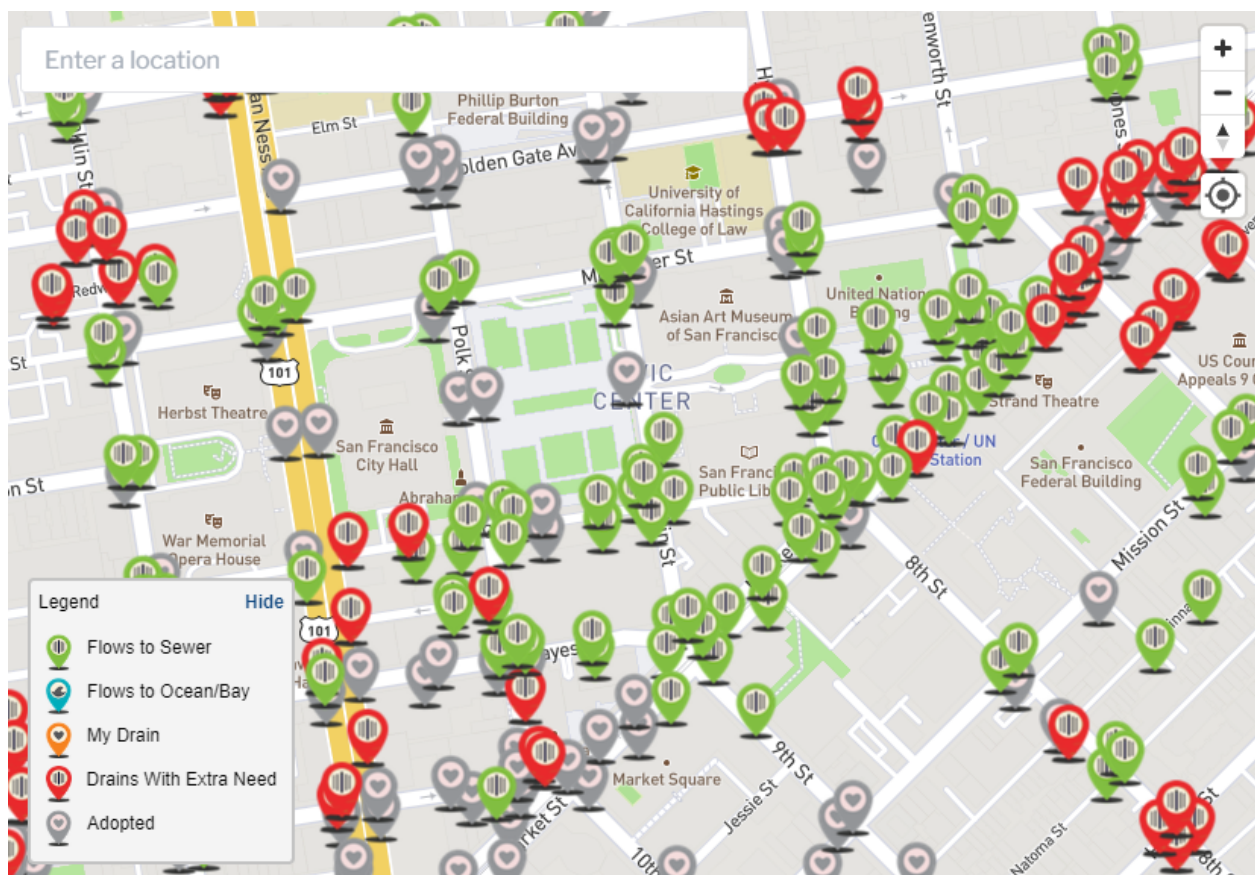
https://indiana.clearchoicescleanwater.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/12/123punch_16x22_72dpi-712x1024.jpg

Adopt-a-Drain recommendations:

1. Place all of the drains online on a regularly updated (at least monthly) website with names of whoever adopted it. The Minnesota Adopt-a-Drain website map is a good example and shows which drains are adopted. The map for San Francisco, CA includes various color coded symbols communicating additional information.



<https://mn.adopt-a-drain.org/>



<https://adoptadrain.sfwater.org/>

2. Establish a stormwater utility. Follow the Minnesota GreenStep Cities guidelines on stormwater management. Since Faribault is a part of the GreenStep program, the score can be improved. One specific action includes establishing a stormwater utility with rates assigned based upon the amount of impervious surfaces present on each property. This approximately to amount of runoff that each property produces.
 - a. <https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/bp-detail/81727> - GreenStep Cities best practices for stormwater management
 - b. <https://www3.epa.gov/region1/npdes/stormwater/assets/pdfs/FundingStormwater.pdf> - Case study and guide to funding stormwater management programs
3. Have a public location for volunteers to drop off waste from drains and record weight. If bags have labels, then the location can be noted. The Rice County Solid Waste Facility in Dundas would be a the appropriate location for such a drop off.
4. Have regular (at least once a month during spring/summer/fall) giveaways of garden equipment, gift cards, etc. Regular giveaways provide an opportunity for greater participant engagement.
5. Mark as many drains as possible with paint or adhesive stickers. Markings help raise awareness of importance of keeping stormdrains clean. Decorative drains give incentive to keep clean with a sense of ownership. These decorative drains would have the best impact in the historic downtown district of the city. Drains should inform to call 311 when a drain is not functional.



<https://doee.dc.gov/fr/service/storm-drain-marking>



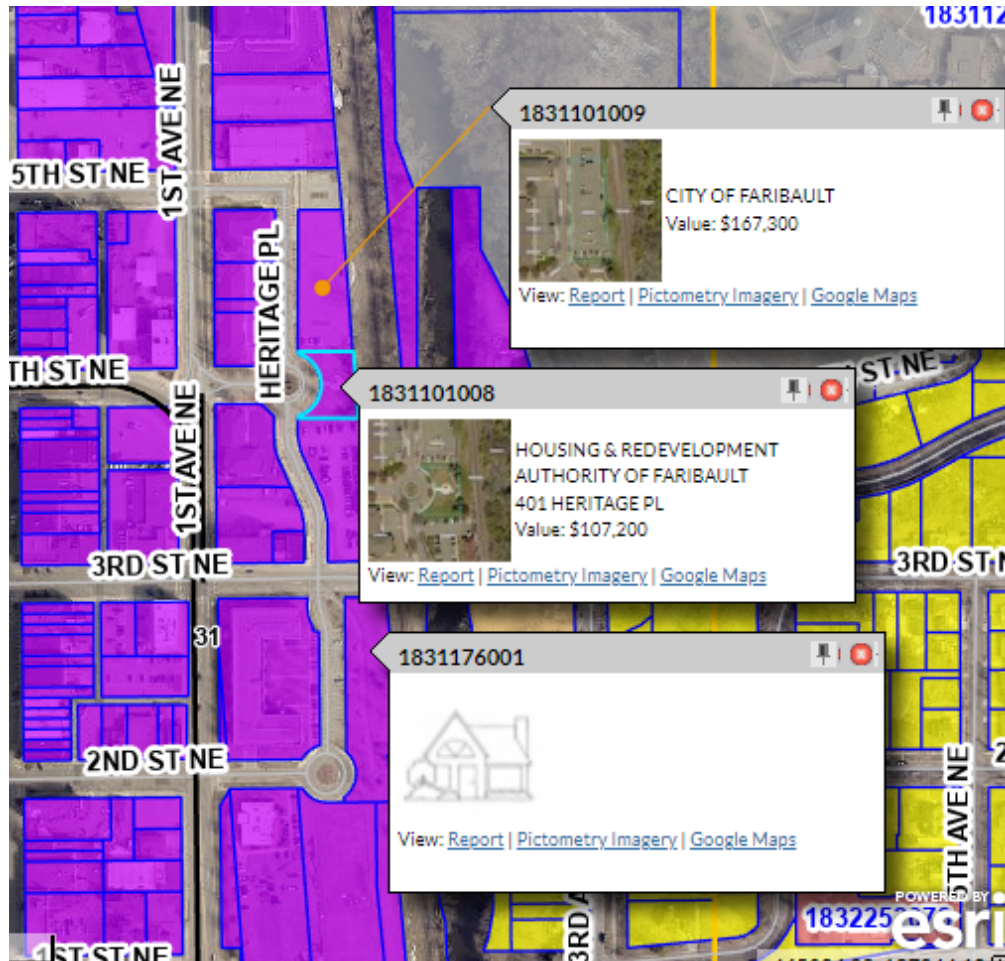
<https://www.charlescountymd.gov/government/planning-and-growth-management/stormwater-management/storm-drain-marking-stenciling-program>



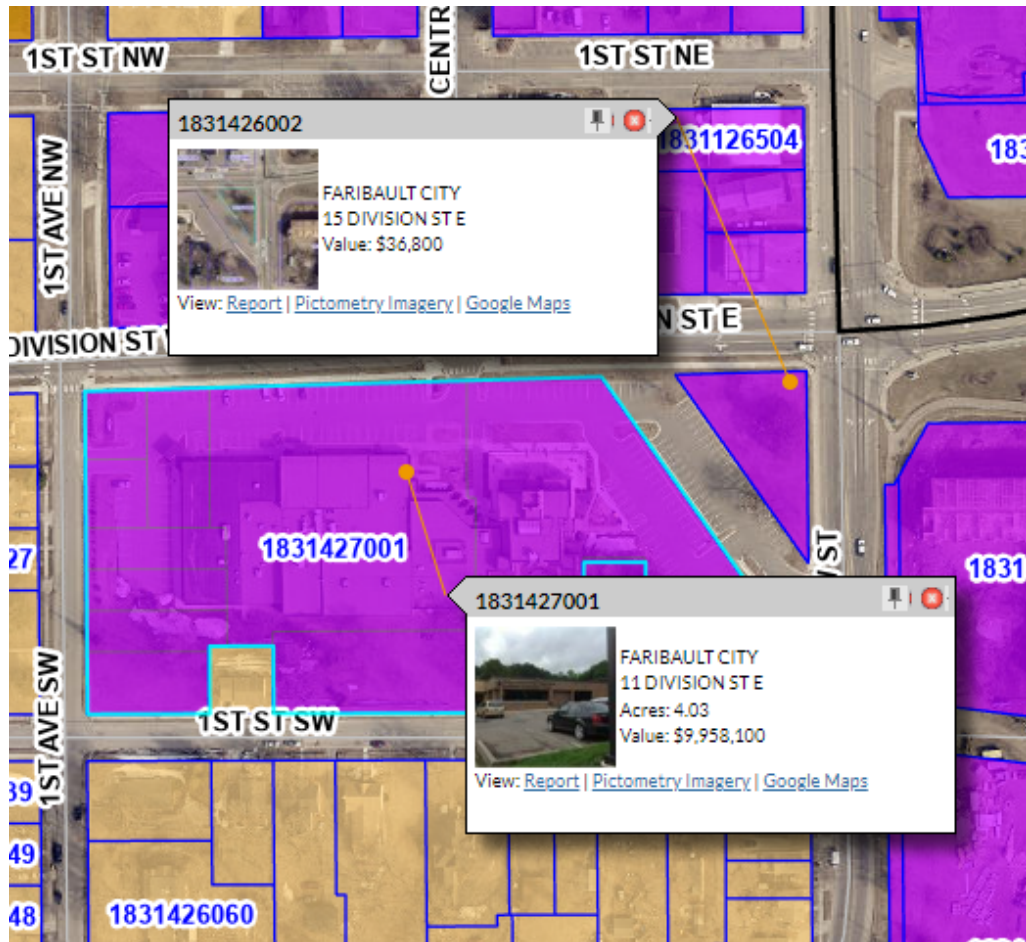
<https://www.apexhomeloans.com/blog/local-spotlight-rockville-storm-drain-project>

Pollinator Program Recommendations:

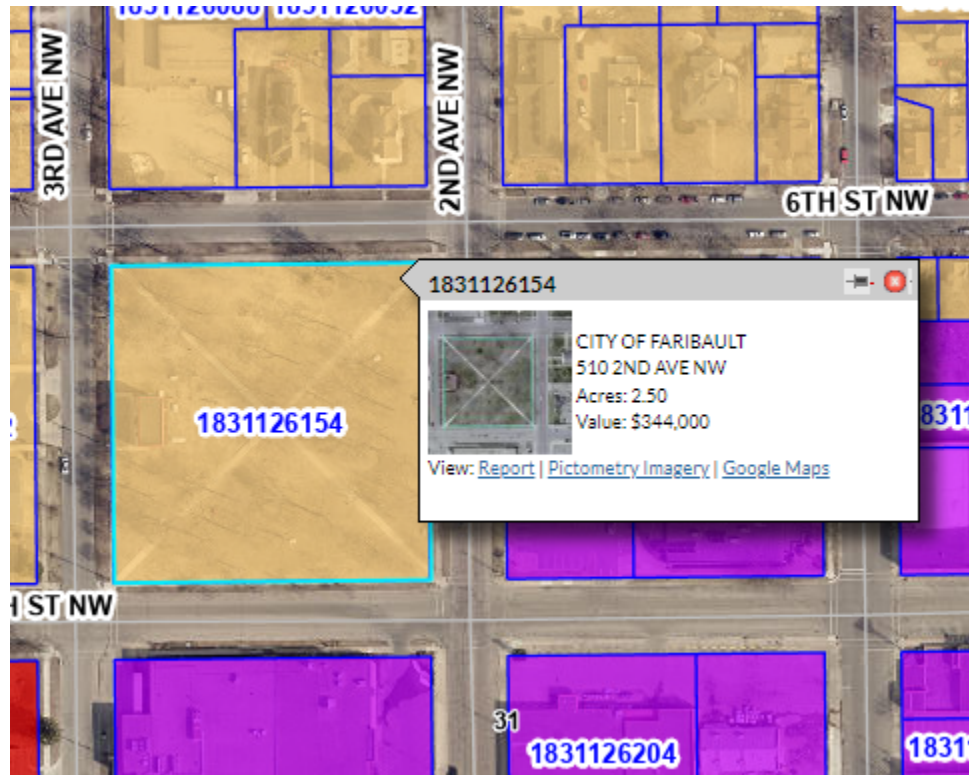
1. Potential locations. Using the Rice County Beacon, the following city owned plots of land were selected for being open plots of grass and are near the historic downtown.
 - a. Heritage Park/Place



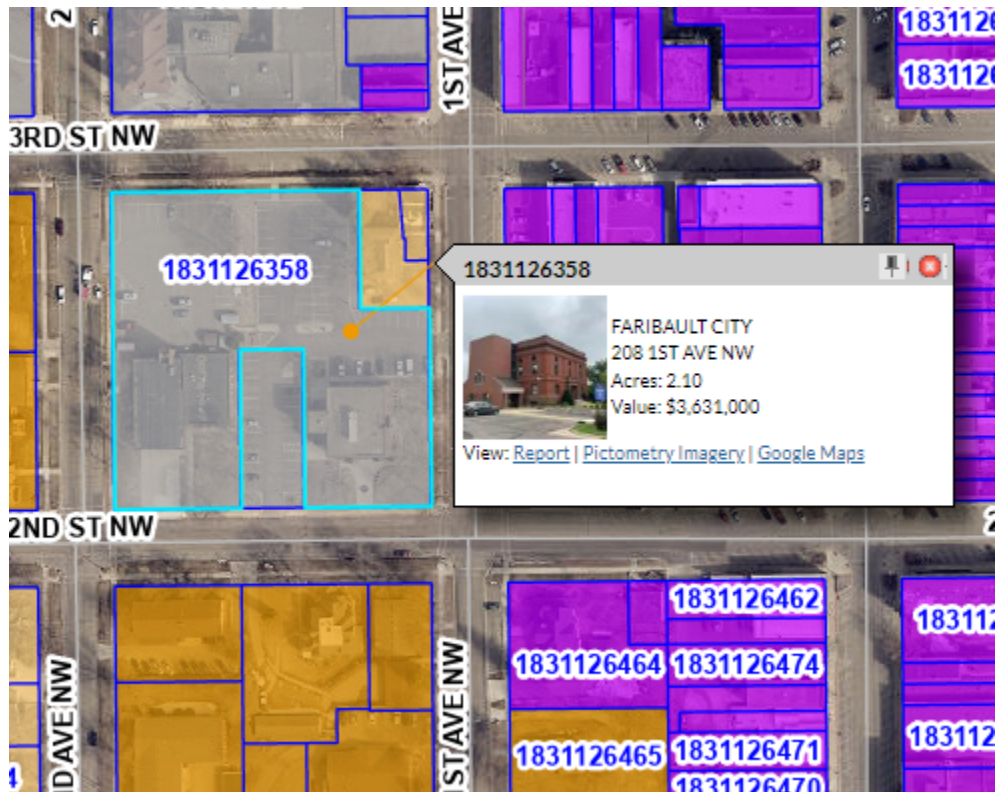
b. Buckham Memorial Library and Faribault Community Center



c. Central Park



d. City Hall/Fire station



2. Set up a seedbank in a library stocked with a variety of native flowers, grasses, vines, shrubs, and ferns. This will give an opportunity to share and promote the planting of native flora across the city.



<https://gaston.ces.ncsu.edu/2023/03/community-seed-banks-available-at-gaston-libraries/>

3. On city maintained roads, update mowing ordinances to allow for grasses to grow taller and require less frequent mowing. The mowing height should be greater than 3in to allow for taller growing grasses and flowers to grow.
 - a. <https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/>- Digital field guide of native plants
 - b. <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2020-03/Planting%20for%20Pollinators%20Design%20Guide%20with%20logos.pdf> - Guide for residential habitats
4. Plan outreach activities involving youth and the community. Educating citizen while they are young about the importance of pollinators and the impact they can make is invaluable for future impact.
 - a. River Bend Nature Center - <https://rbnc.org/programs>
 - b. Nerstrand Big Woods - <https://www.exploreminnesota.com/profile/nerstrand-big-woods-state-park/8289>
5. Pursue various certifications and awards related to pollinator habitat promotion. By taking action to achieve
 - a. <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/pollinator-toolbox> - Informational 'toolbox' for the promotion of pollinator habitats, including a guide to programs and funding
 - b. <https://www.nwf.org/CERTIFY> - Natl. Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat.



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Wanberg, CED Director
FROM: Robert Harris III, Economic Development Coordinator
MEETING DATE: August 26, 2024
SUBJECT: Northfield Rotary Request - Energy Audits

Background:

The Northfield Rotary has submitted a request for \$1500 to assist with their energy audit and weatherization program. The program is targeted at low and moderate income households in Rice County. Most energy audits are free for this group, but weatherization costs will be incurred by the project. The total project budget is \$12,000, including \$3,000 from Northfield Rotary and \$3,000 from the City of Northfield.

Recommendation:

Provide direction regarding Rotary's funding request.

Attachments:

1. Letter from Northfield Rotary

Northfield Rotary
Celebrating a Century of Service (est 1925)
RCAT project for 2024-25

District Grant Project: Assist 50 low- and moderate-income homeowners in Rice County to have Energy Audits and perform weatherization recommended by the audit findings.

These efforts will improve the energy efficiency of the homes and lower the cost of heating and cooling the homes. The ultimate goal (for 2025-26) is to assist a subset of the candidate homeowners in replacing aging heating systems with electric heat pumps for heating and cooling. Most or all of the cost of the heat pumps and home electrification will be paid by funds from the Federal IRA act, Minnesota state programs and utility rebates. Energy Audits and home weatherization are prerequisites for receiving funds from the federal and state rebate programs. Most energy audits are free to this group, but weatherization costs will be incurred by the project.

Need: ~20% of families earning less than \$75k struggle to pay utility costs. This demographic is most in need of weatherization and efficient heating systems for their homes but are least able to afford the improvements.

Opportunity: Leverage the significant funds available through the Federal IRA act and MN state programs aimed at assisting these homeowners. The application process for the grants and rebates is not simple. The Northfield RCAT and Rotary club are acting to assist homeowners through the application process and support their efforts through education, advice, encouragement and funding for some of the work.

Our Ask: Seeking \$1,500 to secure a full \$4,500 match from district.

Budget: \$12,000 including \$3,000 from Northfield Rotary (to be matched) and \$3,000 from the city of Northfield.

Partners: Rice County Habitat for Humanity is assisting in identifying homeowners, City of Northfield.

Thank you!

Mark Abbott & Alan Anderson

Northfield Rotary board members

Mark: markabbott7591@gmail.com / 507-301-8210

Alan: luckyduck49@gmail.com / 507-301-4673



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Wanberg, CED Director
FROM: Robert Harris III, Economic Development Coordinator
MEETING DATE: August 26, 2024
SUBJECT: DOE Charging Smart "EV Ready" Community

Background:

On Wednesday, April 17, a group of Minnesota local governments became the first communities to achieve [Charging Smart](#) designation, a public recognition of their status as electric vehicle-friendly communities. Charging Smart is a national program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy that works to accelerate the deployment of electric vehicles (EVs) across the country. Faribault has been awarded the Bronze designation.

Recommendation:

No action.

Attachments:

1. Charging Smart article



April 24, 2024

• IREC News & Press Releases

Nine Minnesota Communities Earn Nation's First "EV-Ready" Designation From U.S. Department of Energy-Funded Charging Smart Program

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On Wednesday, April 17, a group of Minnesota local governments became the first communities to achieve [Charging Smart](#) designation, a public recognition of their status as electric vehicle-friendly communities. Charging Smart is a national program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy that works to accelerate the deployment of electric vehicles (EVs) across the country. Nine local governments from across Minnesota—from rural communities to metropolitan Minneapolis—earned Bronze and Silver designations in recognition of their work to accelerate



the equitable expansion of EVs and EV charging infrastructure.

“We are so proud that Minnesota cities are the first in the nation to earn this much-deserved recognition. We worked closely with the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) to develop Charging Smart, and designation through the program means a community has taken critically important steps to accelerate EV readiness,” said Lola Schoenrich, Vice President, Communities at the Great Plains Institute (GPI).

On Wednesday, two communities—Hopkins and La Crescent, Minnesota—received Charging Smart Silver designations. An additional seven communities received Charging Smart Bronze designation: Eden Prairie, Falcon Heights, Faribault, Inver Grove Heights, Oakdale, Roseville, and St. James, Minnesota.

Charging Smart offers free technical assistance to help municipalities set and achieve policies that align with nationally recognized best practices to advance EV adoption. By helping local governments streamline and improve their policies, Charging Smart aims to reduce EV charger costs and increase the number of EVs in the community. In addition, the program emphasizes the importance of equity, leading to concrete benefits in EV access for all jurisdiction residents. Learn more and join the program at ChargingSmart.org.

The program launched earlier this year in a pilot phase. It currently operates in Colorado, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, and Virginia, along with the regions of North Texas, Northern Illinois, and Southern California. Charging Smart plans to expand the program’s geographic reach beginning this summer.

Charging Smart is led by IREC, with GPI serving as lead partner on the project. GPI worked closely with the seven Minnesota



communities to earn designation on Wednesday.

“We are thrilled to welcome our first group of Charging Smart designees just a few months after the program’s launch,” said Ed Gilliland, Senior Director, Strategic Initiatives at IREC. “This group of communities demonstrates both the significant impact that local governments can have on EV adoption, and underscores the potential of this program as we prepare to expand it nationally.”

Full details on the Charging Smart program, along with information on how eligible communities can participate, are available at ChargingSmart.org.

Media Contact: Zack Loehle, Communications Manager, Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC), zackl@irecusa.org, (470) 615-9817.

Media Contact: Drew Henry, Communications Director, Great Plains Institute (GPI), dhenry@gpisd.net, (612) 429-1222

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About IREC: The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) builds the foundation for rapid adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency to benefit people, the economy, and our planet. Its vision is a 100% clean energy future that is reliable, resilient, and equitable. IREC develops and advances the regulatory reforms, technical standards, and workforce solutions needed to enable the streamlined integration of clean, distributed energy resources. IREC has been trusted for its independent clean energy expertise for over 40 years, since its founding in 1982. For more information, visit www.irecusa.org or follow IREC on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Facebook](#).



About GPI: A nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, the Great Plains Institute (GPI) accelerates the transition to net-zero carbon emissions for the benefit of people, the economy, and the environment. Working across the US, we combine a unique consensus-building approach, expert knowledge, research and analysis, and local action to find and implement lasting solutions. Learn more at www.betterenergy.org.



Zack Loehle
Communications Manager

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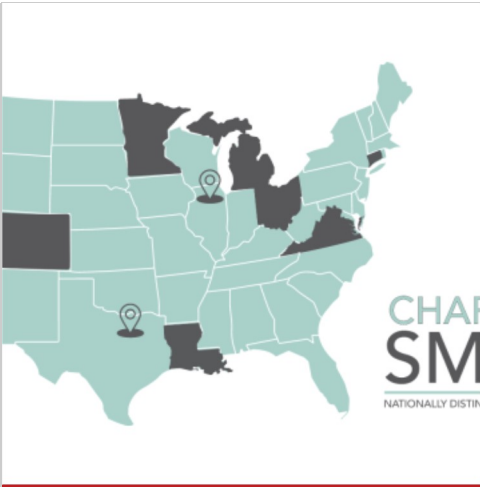
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