



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION AGENDA

PUBLIC MEETING ROOM

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2022

6:00 PM

1. Call to Order
2. Oath of Office for Commissioners Anderegg and Brown
3. Introductions of New and Existing Commission Members
4. Approval of the Minutes
 - A. Approval of Minutes of January 24, 2022
5. Items for Discussion
 - A. Adopt 2022 Work Plan
 - B. Brief Review of City Climate Action Plans
 - C. Update on Home Energy Squad Visits
 - D. Elect Chair and Vice Chair for 2022
6. Routine Business
 - A. Announcements and Updates
7. Adjournment



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2022

6:00 PM

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

Chair Steinkamp called the meeting to order at 6:00.

Roll Call: Commissioner Diessner, Commissioner Huston, Commissioner Nesvold, Commissioner Behrens and Chair Steinkamp

Absent: Commissioner Garcia and Commissioner Wasilowski

Staff: Peter Waldock and Kari Casper.

2. Approve November 22, 2021 Minutes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Huston and seconded by Commissioner Nesvold to approve the November 22, 2021 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion unanimously passed.

3. Items for Discussion

A. Overview of the Environmental Commission's 2021 Accomplishments

There was quite a list of accomplishments. Behrens commented that he needs about two more years of work and then hopes to be back to the board and appreciated everyone's time.

Wasilowski's email was noted 6:05 p.m. and the interpreter was sent home.

B. Preliminary Discussion of 2022 Work Plan

Each year, the Environmental Commission must prepare a work plan to guide the efforts of the Environmental Commission over the coming year.

Wanberg presented a draft plan in the packet which included: 1) Urban Agriculture/Community Gardens; 2) Pollinators and Native Plantings; 3) Greening Downtown Faribault Master Plan; 4) Tree Inventory and Analysis on City Property; 5) Community-wide Energy Efficiency Action; 6) Transportation Efforts including Electric Vehicles; and 7) Awareness and Understanding of environmental Issues and Opportunities.

In going over this list, and, after much discussion, Commission Huston would like to see more community gardens around town. The Rotary currently has one but the property is currently in the process of being sold which they will need to find a new location. There was some talk about mass transit coming to Faribault and Nesvold mentioned Susie Nakasiar who has been instrumental in getting the rail to Northfield.

In addition to the above, Commissioner Diessner stated that she would like to see the City do something with Arbor Day and Earth Day. Commissioner Huston would like the City do work on invasive plants on city property. Behrens suggested the we allow citizens to do the natural plantings along North Alexander Park and allow them to care for rain gardens as well. The commission would also like to get the youth involved as well.

Commissioner Huston left at 6:45 p.m.

A. Routine Business

- A. Announcements and Updates
- B. Acknowledgment and Appreciation for the Service of Commissioners Behrens and Diessner

Passed out cups in honor of the Commissioner's service on the board. Special thank you's were exchanged to both the of parting Commissioners.

B. Adjourn

A motion was made by Commissioner Behrens and seconded by Commissioner Nesvold to adjourn at 7:03 pm.

Motion carried on a 4/0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: January 24, 2022

by: _____
Kari Casper, Recording Secretary



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: Deanna Kuennen, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: David Wanberg, City Planner and Staff Liaison to the Commission
MEETING DATE: February 28, 2022
SUBJECT: Adopt 2022 Work Plan

Background:

At its January meeting, the Environmental Commission reviewed its 2021 accomplishments and identified possible work items for 2022. Discussion of the Commission's anticipated work in 2022 centered on the following:

- promote community gardens,
- reduce noxious and invasive plants,
- encourage pollinators and natural landscapes – especially along Faribault Lake at North Alexander Park,
- explore opportunities to strengthen mass transit,
- address climate change, and
- celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day events.

The Commission should now develop a concise and implementable work plan for 2022. In 2021 the Commission had the following overarching tasks with various actions for each overarching task:

- promote an understanding of environmental issues and opportunities,
- recommend ordinance amendments related to the environment,
- review and recommend approval of environmental plans,
- review progress on GreenStep Cities and Xcel's Partners in Energy programs and implement actions as feasible.

Staff recommends that the 2022 work program include the following overarching tasks:

- promote an understanding of environmental issues and opportunities,
- promote pollinators and natural landscaping and reduce noxious and invasive plants,

- promote efforts to address climate change
- strengthen the City's actions in the GreenStep Cities program, and
- respond to ongoing environmental issues and opportunities affecting the City.

Refer to the attached draft work plan for additional information. We will discuss the work plan in detail at the Environmental Commission meeting.

Recommendation:

Subject to the Commission's review and revision, Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the attached 2022 work program.

Attachments:

1. 2022 Environmental Commission Work Plan

2022 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION WORK PLAN

Subject to the Commission's review and revision.

1. Promote an understanding of environmental issues and opportunities.

- A. Coordinate with GROWS, master gardeners, RBNC, and others to promote pollinators and natural landscaping.
- B. Coordinate with Partners in Energy and others to promote energy efficiency and other climate change efforts.
- C. Continue to strengthen ways to promote environmental efforts through various means, including enhancing the City's website, utility bill inserts, tabling at community events, radio interviews, articles in the Buckham Bulleeting and Faribault Daily News, webinars, and spots on the FCTV.
- D. Encourage broad participation in environmental efforts by coordinating with youth and others who traditionally underrepresented in the City's environmental efforts.
- E. Coordinate with others to help organize and/or promote community service events, such as control of noxious and invasive weeds, trash clean-up, tree inventories, installing and maintaining pollinator-friendly plants, and helping build community gardens.

2. Promote pollinators and natural landscaping and reduce noxious and invasive plants.

- A. Coordinate with others to organize and/or promote pollinator week events.
- B. Develop and implement an award and recognition program for excellence in promoting pollinators and native landscapes and reducing noxious and invasive plants.
- C. Work with City Staff to identify priority City sites to install pollinator-friendly plants and natural landscapes.

3. Promote efforts to address climate change.

- A. Promote Home Energy Squad visits.
- B. Assist in the City's efforts to transition to electric vehicles and equipment.
- C. Coordinate with businesses and industries on climate issues.

4. Strengthen the City's actions in the GreenStep Cities program.

- A. Continue to review the City's progress in the GreenStep Cities program and implement actions as feasible.

5. Respond to ongoing environmental issues and opportunities affecting the City.

- A. Continue to apply for grants.
- B. Review and recommend action on City ordinances and plans related to environmental efforts.

Ultimately, the Commission may further prioritize the action items, develop a general schedule, determine who will be involved, and identify anticipated costs



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: Deanna Kuennen, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: David Wanberg, City Planner and Staff Liaison to the Environmental Commission
MEETING DATE: February 28, 2022
SUBJECT: Brief Review of City Climate Action Plans

Background:

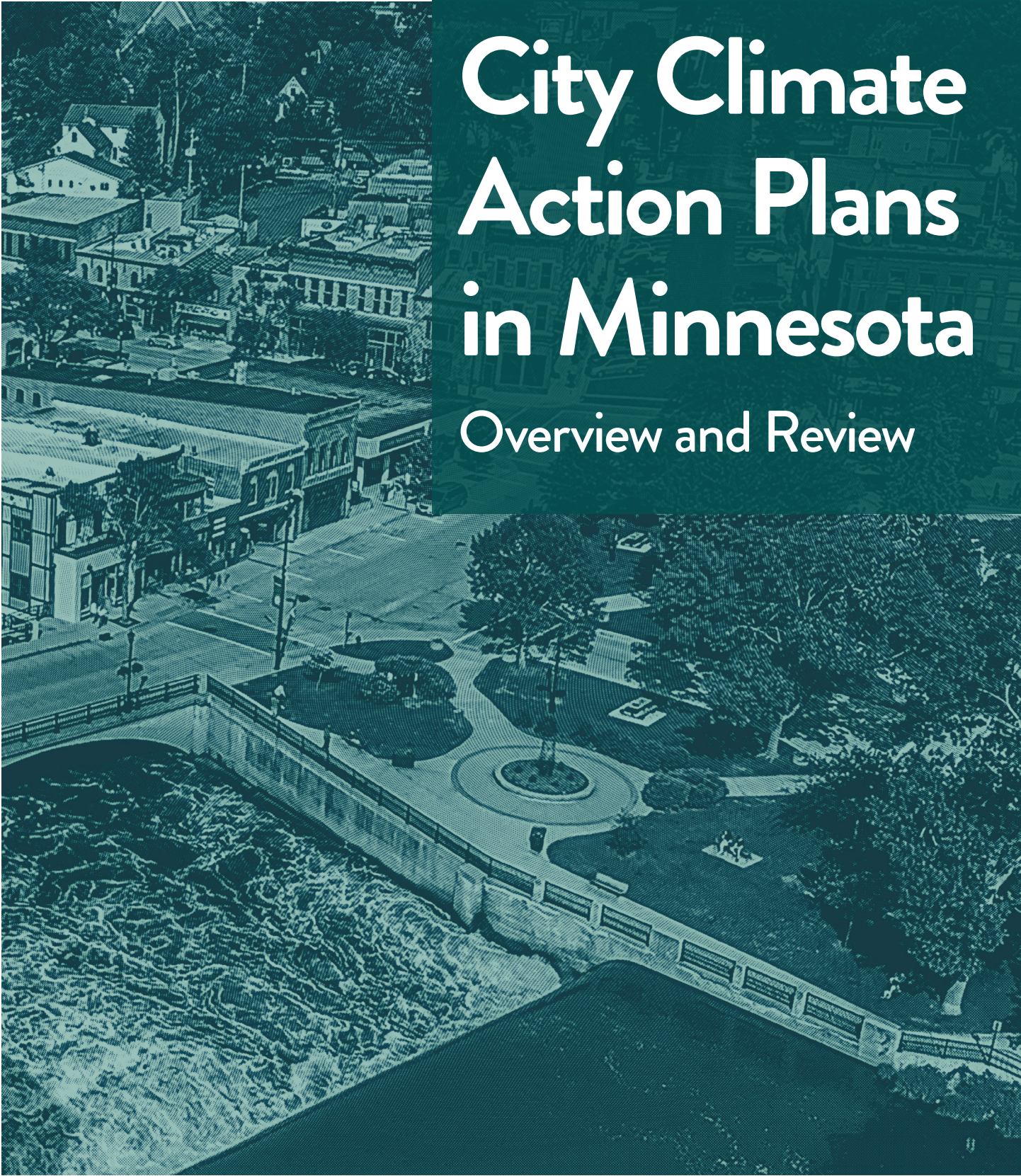
The 100% Campaign recently released an Overview of City Climate Action Plan in Minnesota (see attached). Chair Steinkamp and Planner Wanberg will provide a brief of the work. Wanberg will also briefly review the City's climate work.

Recommendation:

None

Attachments:

1. City Climate Action Plans in Minnesota Overview & Review

An aerial photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, a river flows rapidly, bordered by a concrete wall. To the right of the river is a park area with trees and a paved path. In the background, a row of buildings lines the street. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color.

City Climate Action Plans in Minnesota

Overview and Review

DR. KATE KNUTH

100%

Introduction

The 2020's are the critical decade for climate action.

Between now and 2030, policymakers, business leaders, and the public get to decide if we will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions sufficiently to avoid the most destructive impacts of a changing climate. Through innovation or inaction, constructive change or outright obstruction, we will make this collective decision together through many, smaller decisions. We will make choices in Washington D.C. and Saint Paul. We'll make decisions about what we buy, how we travel, and where we live. The scope and scale of the challenge before us, namely, decarbonizing our economy while making it more fair, means that we will need to act together and simultaneously.

Without a doubt, our cities and towns in Minnesota are already playing a critical role in addressing the problem of climate change. They're a bright spot. The work that Minnesota's cities are doing is nation-leading. Many are taking responsibility and taking action with the tools they have: comprehensive planning, cleaner city operations, improved water systems, and, more lately, climate action planning.

Cities are where many people experience climate change. Like the rest of Minnesota, our cities are changing, becoming hotter and experiencing more extreme weather events. In order to reduce these impacts, cities are changing how they're powered and

designed. The design of cities makes people more or less vulnerable to climate change impacts. For example, city investments in growing the urban tree canopy keep neighborhoods cooler during more frequent and hotter heat waves. Stormwater system improvements lessen the impacts of summer downpours by getting water off streets faster. Emergency response systems that use both technology and community preparedness make everyone safer when natural disasters hit.

Many cities are leading on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and on better preparing neighborhoods and communities for climate change

impacts. City-level climate planning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate change impacts is a field in formation. City leaders are building tools, practices, and plans to move forward and learning from each other along the way.

This paper is an effort to create a snapshot of the state of city climate action planning in Minnesota.

This paper focuses specifically on city climate action plans. It does the following:

- Provides an overview of how Minnesota cities are using climate action planning (along with other planning tools) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change impacts
- Provides a side-by-side comparison of plans to help cities learn from each other about how climate action plans are developed, possibilities for what to include, and what contributes to a strong plan
- Compares current city climate action plans in Minnesota with what is necessary for a more just, climate resilient future in Minnesota.

This paper has four parts.

The first part is a high-level overview of what cities do in climate change planning and action.

The second part is a description of a side-by-side comparison of twelve city climate action plans and one county climate action plan in Minnesota.

The third section is a discussion of these climate action plans and what can be learned from them.

Finally, the report has two appendices: a detailed City Climate Action Plan side-by-side and a list of city plans that were reviewed to prepare this report.

**Click here or go to
bit.ly/cityclimateplans
to see the data and
comprehensive view of
the Climate Action Plan
Side-By-Side.**

Cities Are Essential for Climate Change Planning and Action

According to the League of Minnesota Cities, our state has 834 cities and eighty-three percent of Minnesotans live in a city despite cities covering less than 5% of the land in Minnesota. Cities in Minnesota range in population from 10 people all the way up to over 400,000.

Cities are essential for effective climate action. They are the level of government closest to the ground and most closely in relationship with Minnesotans. Cities are also a spot where people feel both the impacts of reducing carbon emissions (like cleaner, healthier air) and the impacts of climate change itself (like flooding).

In Minnesota, our state government creates cities in order to provide the services people need to live their everyday lives. From land use planning to stormwater management, from cleaner fleets to more efficient buildings – cities can do a lot to both slow and prepare for climate change. Minneapolis, for example, has done so through changes in zoning. Minneapolis led not just in Minnesota, but nationally, when it eliminated parking minimums for new development. In doing so, Minneapolis is enabling the building of less expensive, more dense housing that does not rely on cars for daily life.

In 2012, Duluth experienced major flooding of the kind that will be more common as climate change unfolds. More recently, Duluth saw the destruction of its iconic lakewalk by strong storms over multiple years.

Duluth has led on climate resilience by intentionally reimagining and rebuilding its lakewalk with a more climate-resilient design that also improves quality of life. With such a close connection to residents and major authority over land use, development, and energy, cities have major opportunities to be climate leaders.

A big example of Minnesota cities leading on climate action is the GreenStep Cities program. Founded in 2010, GreenStep Cities is a nation-leading program that helps Minnesota cities take action to improve sustainability. Since its founding over a decade ago, GreenStep Cities has worked with 140 cities in which nearly half of the state's population lives. While GreenStep Cities is not only climate-focused, many actions taken by member cities focus on climate



change. And the results are significant. For example, every year GreenStep member cities are saving over \$8 million in energy costs while also reducing emissions.

At the same time, cities depend on other levels of government to do what's necessary on climate. In Minnesota, our state government establishes building codes, and cities have to work within their constraints. Likewise, cities depend on counties for transit systems and state and federal governments for disaster relief. State and federal government can also help cities prepare. In Duluth, for example, the lakewalk rebuild got state bonding investment and federal agencies helped support the project.

Cities can't address climate change on their own, but they can lead when our

state and federal governments don't.

Cities choose to do climate planning and take action in multiple ways. While this paper focuses specifically on climate action plans, other kinds of climate action planning are also important for cities leading on climate. These are some of the other ways cities in Minnesota are planning for and taking action on climate change.

Comprehensive planning: In Minnesota, cities are granted the authority to regulate land use. Comprehensive planning is a big part of land use planning and regulation. It's required for cities in the seven-county metro area and a good practice for other cities. According to the League of Minnesota Cities, "a comprehensive plan is an expression of the community's vision for the future and a strategic

map to reach that vision.” Many cities are including climate action planning in their comprehensive plans, whether it is through a focus on sustainability, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and/or resilience. Because land use and transportation have such significant climate impacts, comprehensive plans have climate impacts whether or not climate change is addressed explicitly.

Within the Metro counties, comprehensive plans are the primary planning and zoning tool. Outside the Metro, cities and townships may create comprehensive plans, though they are not required to do so. More often, they use the zoning ordinance authorities they are granted in Minnesota Statutes Sections 462.351 to 462.365.

Partners in Energy facilitated through Xcel Energy: Xcel Energy is the electric utility for about half of Minnesotans. They run the Partners in Energy Program, which “supports the communities we [Xcel] serve by helping them develop and implement these energy plans.” Many cities in Minnesota have taken advantage of Partners in Energy to create Energy Action Plans to reduce emissions in the city. In some cases, these Partners in Energy planning processes lead to more holistic climate action plans.

The following Minnesota cities have enrolled in this program: Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, Faribault, Fridley,

Golden Valley, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, La Crescent, Mahtomedi, Maplewood, Minnetonka, Northfield, Red Wing, Rosemount, Saint Cloud, Saint Louis Park, Saint Paul, Shorewood, Wayzata, and Winona. Ramsey County Parks & Recreation and Saint Paul Public Schools are also enrolled in the program. Links to their plans are included in the appendix.

Climate vulnerability assessments and adaptation plans: Over 20 Minnesota cities have completed climate vulnerability assessments and adaptation plans with paleBluedot LLC as a consultant. Many of these assessments and plans were funded by a 2017 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency environmental assistance grant.

Sustainability plans: Some cities in Minnesota have developed sustainability action plans that include climate action combined with a broader focus on sustainability. A sustainability effort, for example, might also include plans for reducing waste, protecting drinking water, or improving access to local foods. All of these actions have meaningful climate impacts. And though these plans take different forms, all of them have significant climate planning and action included. For standout examples, see the plans created by Oakdale and Saint Anthony Village. The “Morris Model” in the City of Morris is a standout model of how a city and whole community is

leading on sustainability. The Morris Model is a collaborative effort among the University of Minnesota Morris, the City of Morris, Stevens County, and other community groups. Together, this collaboration has come together to set and make progress on ambitious sustainability goals.

GreenStep Cities: As described above, GreenStep Cities is an award-winning program that encourages Minnesota cities to take voluntary actions on sustainability. GreenStep Cities has 29 best practices for becoming a more sustainable city, many of which involve climate planning and action.

Climate-Smart Municipalities: The University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment's International Energy Partnerships Project hosts a program called Climate-Smart Municipalities. This program is a partnership between six cities in Minnesota and six cities

in Germany. The program "connects diverse international stakeholders and leaders in local and state government, politics, business, the nonprofit sector, academia, and the public to learn from each other and to accelerate the transition to a more efficient and climate-friendly energy future at the local level." The six participating cities in Minnesota are: Duluth, Elk River, Morris, Rochester, White Bear Lake, and Warren.

Each of these are ways that cities are leading on climate bring benefits. A subset of 12 Minnesota cities have taken climate action through development and implementation of a city climate action plan. This paper compares these plans, plus Hennepin County's plan, in order to explore what makes strong climate action plans. It's an additional resource for local residents and government leaders who want to lead on climate.

Cities can't address climate change on their own, but they can lead when our state and federal governments don't.

Introduction to the City Climate Action Plan Side-by-side

We developed a side-by-side of Minnesota city climate action plans to help city residents and leaders who want to understand more about what they can do to lead on climate action. This side-by-side compares city climate action plans as a way to highlight best practices and to underline the different approaches that work. The side-by-side is available online and as an appendix to this report.

The side-by-side covers every city in Minnesota that we are aware of with a stand-alone city climate action plan. Hennepin County is also included. It is the only county in Minnesota with a stand-alone climate action plan. It's included in order to distinguish how a county can approach climate action planning compared to cities. In order of plan adoption, the cities include:

- Minneapolis, MN, adopted June 28, 2013
- Saint Louis Park, MN, adopted February 5, 2018
- Grand Marais, MN, adopted June 26, 2019
- Northfield, MN, adopted November 5, 2019
- Saint Paul, MN, adopted December 18, 2019
- Eden Prairie, MN, adopted March 7, 2020
- Red Wing, MN, adopted August 10, 2020
- Richfield, MN, adopted October 13, 2020
- Burnsville, MN, adopted November 2, 2020
- Hennepin County, adopted May 4, 2020
- Albert Lea, MN, adopted June 29, 2021
- Rochester, MN, rolled out Autumn, 2021
- Edina, MN, adopted December 7, 2021

Taken together, these climate action plans mean that 32% of Minnesotans live in a county or a city with a stand-alone climate action plan. Plus, many Minnesotans live in cities leading on climate action in other ways – from Morris to Duluth and beyond.

Categories of Analysis

The side-by-side is organized into three broad categories of analysis – overall plan design, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and adaptation and resilience. Within each of these categories are a number of specific questions to organize deeper analysis of the plans. The categories of analysis are: • Overall plan design • Greenhouse gas emissions • Adaptation and resilience	OVERALL PLAN DESIGN This category covers what climate plans a city has, processes used to develop the climate action plan, and other questions broadly applicable to the whole plan. The questions in this category are: • Where is the plan publicly available? • What is the city's population in the 2020 U.S. Census? • What is the city's geography? • What climate plan(s) does the city have? When were they adopted? • What are the plan's strengths? • What other plans relevant to climate change does the city have? • What processes were used to develop the climate plan(s)? How were community members engaged in these processes? • Does the plan address equity - including racial, economic, and gender equity - as a part of climate action and resilience? If so, how? • Does the plan outline near-term or high-impact actions? How? • Does the plan include mechanisms for ongoing oversight, reporting of progress, and/or reworking the plan in an iterative process? If so, how? • Does the plan describe resources for implementation? If so, what are they? • What are the key committees, commissions, boards and/or staff responsible for climate action planning and implementation? • Is the city a member of GreenStep Cities? What step have they completed?
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GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

This category covers how the plan addresses greenhouse gas emissions including goals for reductions, emissions inventories, and approaches to reducing emissions.

The questions in this category are:

- What are the overall emissions reduction commitments the city has made?
- Has the city completed a GHG emissions inventory? If so, what is the makeup of emissions sources in the city?
- What are the key sectors targeted for emissions reductions in the plan?
- What are the key emissions reduction strategies?
- Does the plan quantify emissions reductions from the strategies described in the plan? How?



ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

This category covers how the city's climate action plan addresses adapting to a changing climate and building climate resilience.

The questions in this category are:

- Does the city's climate action planning address climate adaptation and/or resilience?
- Has the city completed a climate vulnerability and/or adaptive capacity analysis? If so, what is included?
- Does the plan's climate vulnerability analysis or adaptation/resilience recommendations address environmental justice or the cumulative impacts of pollution?
- What aspects of climate adaptation/resilience does the plan highlight as important?
- Does the city's climate action planning address emergency preparedness, response, and recovery in the face of a changing climate? How?
- Does the plan point to building adaptive capacity broadly as a key part of climate resilience (e.g. economic inclusion, housing access)? If so, how?
- Does the plan address natural infrastructure and resilience? How?
- Does the plan address the resilience of built infrastructure? How?
- Does the plan address the importance of cross-jurisdictional relationships and functions? How?

Review and Reflections on Climate Action Planning in Minnesota

Cities are taking real leadership on pushing their communities and Minnesota overall in the direction we need to go on addressing the climate crisis.

In this section, we make overall observations about city climate action plans including highlighting overall emissions reduction commitments. We then outline the consulting landscape for city climate action plans as a way to make sense of the different approaches to climate action planning. The section wraps up with a table highlighting best practices and the plans that use them.

Overall, city climate action planning is a developing field in Minnesota, with the vast majority of cities in the state not yet having a stand-alone climate action plan. The cities that do have climate action plans take varied approaches. While all include a focus on GHG emissions reductions, only some address adaptation and resilience directly. A smaller number – like Red Wing – use a shorter time horizon developing a climate “work plan” rather than a more comprehensive, longer-range plan like in Edina or Saint Paul.

These city climate action plans are, almost universally, strong on inventorying greenhouse gas emissions.

All of the plans reviewed, except Richfield, include a comprehensive inventory of total emissions by economic sector. Richfield does, however, address current emissions through the use of descriptive data from the Regional Indicators Initiative. The Regional Indicators Initiative, managed by LHB Inc. on behalf of the Urban Land Institute of Minnesota, is a valuable resource for tracking progress on GHG emissions and other environmental indicators.

Emissions Reductions Commitments

In general, newer plans are more ambitious in their emissions reduction goals. For example, Minneapolis has less ambitious goals, and it is also the oldest plan, having been released in 2013. Minneapolis will update its plan in 2022. Its emissions reductions commitments will likely increase in ambition then. All plans, other than the Minneapolis, Richfield, and Rochester plans, commit to more ambitious reductions than the State of Minnesota. The emissions reduction commitments in these cities are more ambitious than that state of Minnesota, which set its goals in 2007. Cities are more closely aligned in their goals with the emissions reductions recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). They recommend reducing emissions by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 and reaching 'net zero' around 2050, in order to avoid atmospheric warming above 1.5°C.

Below is a table with the greenhouse gas emission reductions commitments, organized by long term ambition.

Emissions reductions commitments <i>(most long-term ambition at the top)</i>	City and their midterm commitments
Carbon neutral by 2040	• Saint Louis Park - midterm goal of 55% reduction by 2030 • Grand Marais - midterm goal 55% reduction by 2030 • Northfield - midterm goal of 100% carbon-free electricity by 2030
Carbon neutral by 2050	• Edina - midterm goal of 45% reduction from 2019 by 2030 • Saint Paul - midterm goal of 50% reduction from BAU by 2030 • Hennepin County - midterm goal of 45% from 2010 baseline
80% reduction by 2040	• Albert Lea - with midterm goal of 25% reduction by 2030 • Red Wing - no midterm goal
80% reduction by 2050	• Burnsville - with midterm goal of 40% below by 2030 from a 2005 baseline • Minneapolis - with midterm goals of 15% by 2015 and 30% by 2025 from 2005 baseline • Rochester - with midterm goals of 15% by 2015 and 30% by 2025 with 2005 baseline and on a per capita
No quantified commitment	• Richfield

Climate Action Planning Consultants

An overall review of climate actions plans make it possible to see the role of consultants in shaping the development and focus of plans. Cities engaging with the same consultant have similarities in their plans, and some consultants work across many of the plans helping on specific parts. An example of a consultant working on a specific part of a plan is LHB Inc.'s work inventorying city emissions.

Seeing how different consultants engage in the work is helpful for city leaders who are starting to develop their own local plans. The following is a table of consultants and which plans in which their work is credited.

Plan <i>(Plans are ordered to highlight how consultants are shared)</i>	Consultant(s)
Northfield	Great Plains Institute, Orange Environmental, LHB
Saint Louis Park	Great Plains Institute, Orange Environmental, LHB
St. Paul	Great Plains Institute
Red Wing	Great Plains Institute
Eden Prairie	LHB
Albert Lea	paleBLUEdotLLC
Burnsville	paleBLUEdotLLC
Edina	paleBLUEdotLLC
Grand Marais	No principle consultant, lists entities serving as resources
Richfield	Led by city staff, used Regional Indicators Initiative information
Rochester	Led by city staff, also based on previous Energy Action Plan for which Wenck served as a consultant
Minneapolis	Led by city staff
Hennepin County	Led by county staff with some technical consulting

Learning from Best Practices

Minnesota’s climate action plans are varied. This variety is a strength as cities forge paths to fully taking on the climate challenge. By looking at these plans together, a lot can be learned. These plans provide models and ideas for how best to focus on specific parts of climate action planning. In the table below, best practices from the plans are highlighted.

Best practice	Plan(s) with strong use of this best practice
Include strategies for emissions reductions and building climate adaptation/resilience in the plan.	• Albert Lea, Burnsville, and Edina: These plans cover multiple sectors and move between mitigation and adaptation in them. paleBLUEdotLLC served as consultant on these plans. • Rochester: In addition to focusing on emissions reductions, Rochester has a significant adaptation and resilience focus. This focus on resilience stands out, in particular, because it includes a broader focus on adaptive capacity issues like housing access and economic equity and opportunity. • Northfield and Saint Paul: These two plans focus on mitigation and adaptation in different sections. Great Plains Institute served as consultant for these plans. Saint Paul also stands out because it created a resiliency framework ahead of and as a foundation for its climate action plan.
Center environmental justice and racial equity.	• Minneapolis stands out with its clear and explicit focus on environmental justice as a key part of climate action. • Hennepin County centers impacts on people in a stand-out way, while also centering racial justice. • The Saint Paul plan includes an assessment that uses age, race and language, income and housing, ability, access to a vehicle, and respiratory illness to measure residents’ vulnerabilities to certain climate hazards, then maps those hazards across the city.
Set ambitious decarbonization goals aligned with science.	• The Grand Marais, Saint Louis Park, and Northfield plans make the most ambitious emissions reductions commitments with reducing net-zero emissions by 2040.

Best practice	Plan(s) with strong use of this best practice
Connect the climate action plan with other city planning processes and plans.	• Red Wing includes a useful table describing connections among the climate plan and other city plans. • Richfield's plan includes an appendix outlining relationships between the climate action plan and comprehensive plan policies. • Rochester's plan includes a list of city and other relevant plans that helped serve as a foundation for the city's plan.
Build the plan with robust public engagement that's intentional about reaching out to most impacted communities, less-likely-to-be-engaged residents, and institutional stakeholders.	• Northfield had strong public engagement through a resident-driven process and a strong committee. • Hennepin County's engagement stands out in their focus on intentionally considering racial equity. • Edina had several rounds of engagement and were intentional about strategies to connect with historically underrepresented groups. • Grand Marais and Saint Louis Park stand out for their plan development engagement being driven in significant ways by young people. • Hennepin County started with significant internal engagement, gaining buy-in and ideas from key departments to strengthen both plan development and ongoing implementation. • While Morris does not have a city-initiated climate action plan, the Morris model is a great example of how a collaborative community effort can help move climate action.
Focus on near-term, high-impact actions. Reducing emissions in the near-term has a more positive effect on reducing climate impacts and so should be prioritized.	• The Red Wing plan is a climate action work plan, with the emphasis on the work needed to be done in the near-term (five years). It does not strive to be totally comprehensive, so is less resource-intensive to develop while also being useful for focusing action. • The Edina plan stands out in how it rates the actions in the plan, with scales covering emissions impact. • The Albert Lea plan sorts its recommended actions into three phases over nine years, identifying "quick start" and "high-impact" actions for the first 1-3 years. • Saint Louis Park includes three "kick-start projects" to help launch effective implementation of the plan.
Provide clear justifications for the plan's recommended actions.	• Rochester's plan includes a justification under each action included. This justification gives more clarifying information and explains why the action is important and/or useful. • Eden Prairie assumptions for its emissions inventory and quantifying actions are very explicit for those who are interested in going deeper on this part of the plan.

Importance of Implementation

Moving Forward

The key measure of success for all of these climate action plans is whether and how effectively they get implemented.

The side-by-side describes how cities intend to implement the plans. Likewise, the resources needed for implementation are described with varying levels of detail.

Actual implementation will depend on buy-in from elected officials, city staff, and community leaders, as well as the resources the city and other entities make available for implementation.

An important part of implementation is tracking progress of emissions reductions. For example, Minneapolis has created a strong record of annual emissions tracking since its plan adoption in 2013. This kind of emissions tracking combined with other metrics helps to ensure real progress is made.

Conclusion

Cities are forging ahead in Minnesota, helping our state navigate the climate change era. With city leadership, our state is lowering GHG emissions, lessening potential impacts, and building resilience in the face of the changing climate.

At the same time, cities in Minnesota need help in taking on climate leadership. While city climate action plans aren't expensive, they do need time and resources. Fortunately, these small investments can pay huge dividends by preventing costly future impacts. State government can help by funding grants and providing technical support for cities that are eager to complete a city climate action plan. And in some cases, state government has already done so. For example, Albert Lea's plan was funded, in part, by our state government. And GreenStep Cities staff can help with parts of climate action planning. Making sure Minnesota continues to have strong emissions tracking through the Regional Indicators Initiative is another area where our state government needs to step up and be an active partner in supporting local climate action planning.

As the climate change era continues to unfold, cities are essential for lessening our collective impact on the climate. Even more cities need to actively prepare people for future climate impacts. Residents, elected officials and staff are already leading through the dynamic interactions of climate action planning. This report organizes, highlights, and celebrates part of this work, in order to inspire and support more action. We are grateful for city leaders who are accelerating Minnesota's climate progress.

Acknowledgements

This report was developed with the support of the 100% Campaign with significant input from Campaign Director Chris Conry. Anna Johnson, Kathleen Doran-Norton, and Larry Kraft provided comments that helped to improve the report. The report also relies on the significant leadership happening across Minnesota at the local level. The climate action plans reviewed in this report are the result of leadership from community members, staff, and elected officials. These are the people who are helping to bring about a safer, more climate-resilient future across Minnesota.

Plan Appendix

The following plans were reviewed in preparation for or referenced within this report.

Akeley, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Albert Lea, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Solar Ready Albert Lea: The Solar Potential in the City of Albert Lea (2019)

Climate Action Plan (2021)

Bloomington, MN:

Energy Action Plan (2018)

Brainerd, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Brooklyn Park, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Burnsville, MN:

Sustainability Guide Plan (2008)

Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Sustainability Plan 2020 (2020)

Chisholm, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Crookston, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Duluth, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Eden Prairie, MN:

Energy Action Plan (2017)

Aspire Eden Prairie 2040 (2019)

Climate Action Plan (2020)

Edina, MN:

Vision Edina (2015)

Electricity Action Plan (2016)

Edina Comprehensive Plan (2020)

Edina Flood Risk Reduction Strategy (2020)

Climate Action Plan (2021)

Elk River, MN:

Energy City 2024 Action Plan (2017)

Fairfax, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Faribault, MN:[Energy Action Plan \(2016\)](#)[Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework \(2018\)](#)**Fridley, MN:**[Energy Action Plan \(2018\)](#)**Golden Valley, MN:**[Resilience and Sustainability Chapter of 2040 Comprehensive Plan \(2017\)](#)[Energy Action Plan \(2021\)](#)**Grand Marais, MN:**[Community Vision Plan \(2018\)](#)[Grand Marais Pedestrian Plan \(2018\)](#)[Grand Marais Stormwater Management Plan \(2018\)](#)[Grand Marais Housing Plan \(2019\)](#)[Sawtooth Bluff Master Plan \(2019\)](#)[Climate Action Plan \(2019\)](#)**Granite Falls, MN:**[Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework \(2018\)](#)**Hastings, MN:**[Energy Action Plan \(2019\)](#)**Hennepin County:**[2018 Hennepin County All-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan \(2018\)](#)[Solid Waste Management Master Plan \(2018\)](#)[Hennepin County 2040](#)[Comprehensive Plan \(2019\)](#)[Climate Action Plan \(2021\)](#)**Inver Grove Heights, MN:**[Energy Action Plan \(2021\)](#)**Kelliher, MN:**[Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework \(2018\)](#)**La Crescent, MN:**[Energy Action Plan \(2021\)](#)**Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe:**[Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework \(2018\)](#)**Mahtomedi, MN:**[Energy Action Plan \(2017\)](#)**Maplewood, MN:**[Energize Maplewood \(2015\)](#)[Maplewood Climate Adaptation Plan \(2021\)](#)**Minnetonka, MN:**[Energy Action Plan \(2020\)](#)**Minneapolis, MN:**[Climate Action Plan \(2013\)](#)[Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership Work Plan \(2018\)](#)

Plan Appendix Continued

Achieving Climate and Environmental Justice in the Southside Green Zone: Recommendations for City of Minneapolis Work Plan Action (2020-2025) (2019)
Northside Green Zone Work Plan (2020)
Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan (2020)
Minneapolis 2040: Policy 67 – Climate Resilient Communities (2019)

Morris, MN:
Morris Model - Community Resilience Plan (2016)
Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)
Morris Model Strategic Plan (2018)

Mountain Iron, MN:
Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Northfield, MN:
Comprehensive Plan (2008)
Strategic Plan 2018-2020 (2017)
Climate Action Plan (2019)
Northfield: Sustainable Energy for All Energy Subcommittee Report (2019)

Oakdale, MN:
Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Ramsey County Parks & Recreation:
Energy Action Plan (2016)

Ranier, MN:
Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)

Red Wing, MN:
Green Wing Energy Action Plan (2014)
Red Wing 2020 Community Plan (2019)
Climate Action Plan (2020)
Strategic Racial Equity Plan (2021)

Richfield, MN:
Richfield 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2018)
Climate Action Plan (2020)

Rochester, MN:
Energy Action Plan (2019)
Sustainability and Resiliency Community Work Plan (2021)

Rosemount, MN:
Energy Action Plan (2018)

Roseville, MN:
Population Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Framework (2018)
Energy Action Plan (2021)

Saint Charles, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment
and Climate Adaptation Framework
(2018)

Saint Cloud, MN:

Energy Action Plan (2017)

Saint Louis Park, MN:

Energy Action Plan (2015)
Population Vulnerability Assessment
and Climate Adaptation Framework
(2018)
Climate Action Plan (2018)
Saint Louis Park Comprehensive Plan
(2018)

Saint Paul, MN:

Strategic Framework for Community
Resilience (2016)
Energy Action Plan (2018)
Saint Paul 2040 Comprehensive Plan
(2018)
Climate Action and Resilience Plan
(2019)

Saint Paul Public Schools:

Energy Action Plan (2020)

Shorewood, MN:

Energy Action Plan (2017)

Warren, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment
and Climate Adaptation Framework
(2018)

Wayzata, MN:

Energy Action Plan (2020)

Winnebago, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment
and Climate Adaptation Framework
(2018)

Winona, MN:

Energy Action Plan (2017)

Winthrop, MN:

Population Vulnerability Assessment
and Climate Adaptation Framework
(2018)

What is the 100% Campaign?

The 100% Campaign is bringing Minnesotans together – people just like you – who believe we need an equitable clean energy future for everyone in our state.

With both organizational partners and individual endorsees, the 100% Campaign is grounded in the idea that “to change everything, we need everyone”. We are organizing a cross-sector, statewide, multi-racial, intersectional campaign to build an equitable clean energy economy that works for everyone in Minnesota.

We believe that Minnesotans must act now to ensure our well-being for generations to come. To do that, we must:

- Transition to safe, clean, locally-made energy solutions at scale and as quickly as we can.
- Create solutions that work for all Minnesotans across race, gender, class, and place
- Encourage public and private investments, expand worker training, and create new energy solutions that save us money
- Strengthen all communities that are impacted by pollution or the transition away from fossil fuels

About Dr. Kate Knuth

Kate Knuth, Ph.D., is the Founder of Democracy and Climate LLC, which provides policy, strategy, and research consulting at the intersections of democracy and climate change. She is a sustainability scholar who researches transformation and climate citizenship. Dr. Knuth was the first Chief Resilience Officer for the City of Minneapolis and led a leadership program at the University of Minnesota.

She previously served as a Minnesota State Representative and as a Citizen Member of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board. Dr. Knuth holds a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, a M.Sc. from Oxford University, and a B.A. from the University of Chicago and was a Fulbright Fellow in Norway. She serves on the neighborhood association board of the Minneapolis neighborhood where she lives with her family.



100PercentMN.org



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: Deanna Kuennen, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: David Wanberg, City Planner and Staff Liaison to the Environmental Commission
MEETING DATE: February 28, 2022
SUBJECT: Update on Home Energy Squad Visits

Background:

Faribault and 21 other Minnesota cities participated in a challenge to promote Home Energy Squad visits and energy efficiency rebates. When we joined the challenge, we did not have staff or a Minnesota GreenCorps member to help us promote the Home Energy Squad visits. As a result, Faribault had very few visits compared to other communities (see attached). With the help of our GreenCorps member and two grants, the City is making a concerted effort to promote visits and rebates in 2022. Hopefully, we will see a much greater increase in visits this year. We will have a brief discussions about the lesson learned from this program.

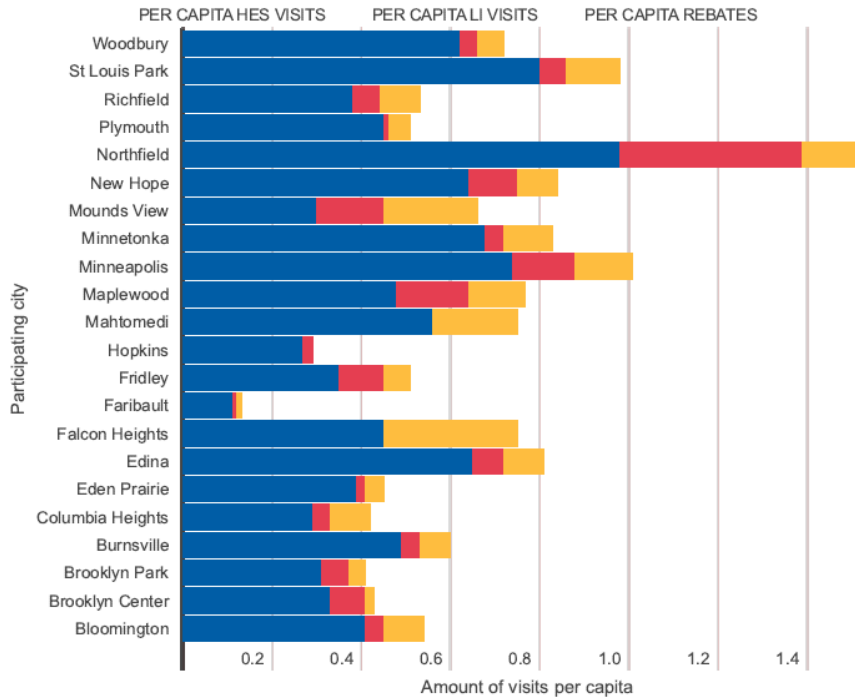
Recommendation:

None

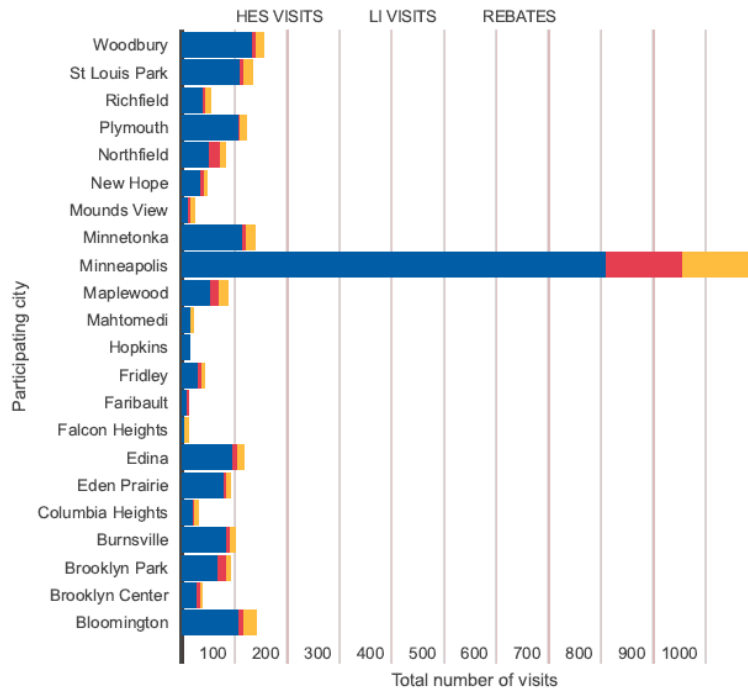
Attachments:

1. HES Visits

2021 Intercity Challenge Standings (Per Capita)



2021 Intercity Challenge Standings (Total)





Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: Deanna Kuennen, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: David Wanberg, City Planner and Staff Liaison to the Environmental Commission
MEETING DATE: February 28, 2022
SUBJECT: Elect Chair and Vice Chair for 2022

Background:

The Commission must elect a chair and vice chair for 2022. Roger Steinkamp is the current chair and is eligible to continue as chair if he and the Commission desire it. Dan Behrens served as the vice chair in 2021, but his term expired and he chose not to continue on the Commission. Therefore, the Commission must elect a new vice chair.

Recommendation:

Elect a chair and a vice chair of the Environmental Commission to serve in 2022.

Attachments:

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: Deanna Kuennen, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: David Wanberg, City Planner and Staff Liaison to the Environmental Commission
MEETING DATE: February 28, 2022
SUBJECT: Announcements and Updates

Background:

The Commission should be aware of the following:

- The annual conference of Minnesota environmental commissions is scheduled for Saturday, April 30, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Ridgedale Public Library in Minnetonka. All commissioners are encouraged to attend this conference. At a minimum, it would be good to have at least one commissioner in attendance.
- GreenStep Cities will conduct two meetings in March to help communities address climate change. If you are interested in learning more, contact David Wanberg.
- GreenStep Cities will conduct a Compost and Yard Waste program from 9:00 a.m to noon on April 20.
- Earth Day is Friday, April 22.
- Arbor Day is Friday, April 29.
- Pollinator Week is June 20-26.
- Minnesota GreenCorps applications are due March 22.

Recommendation:

None

Attachments: