



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	NEW BUSINESS
MEETING DATE	4/08/2025

ITEM:	2025 Sustainability Commission Goal Setting: Part II	
DEPARTMENT:	Community Development	BY/DATE: Andrew Boucher, City Planner 04/08/2025

BACKGROUND:

In preparation for the Council’s 2025 goal setting process, staff are providing the Sustainability Commission with the opportunity to define its 2025-2026 priorities. Other commissions utilize the City Council’s goals to guide their priorities. For 2025, however, staff aim to establish the Commission’s goals prior to the Council’s meeting so that the Commission may directly inform some of the City’s broader strategies. The goal setting process will take place over two sessions.

As staff work with the Commission to set goals and establish priorities for 2025, we wanted to provide an overview of what the City has already implemented for context purposes. Some examples of how the City has incorporated sustainability into city processes include:

1. Participating in Xcel Energy’s Partners in Energy program with an Energy Action Plan adopted in the next month or two.
2. Updating the City’s Solid Waste Operating Policy and increasing further participation in the curbside organics recycling program to increase the amount of waste diverted from the waste stream.
3. Starting the SolSmart designation process with the desire to achieve Bronze, Silver, Gold, and potentially Platinum. SolSmart’s technical review recommendations were adopted as language in the zoning code.
4. Adopted a Complete Streets Policy to assess and document opportunities to make traffic safety improvements based on recommendations from Safe Streets for All and other transportation related plans.
5. Establishing a Time-of-Sale inspection program where residential properties are inspected and compliance items identified for the buyer/seller to negotiate prior to the transfer of the property.
6. Mixed-use redevelopment project containing the new city hall, 266 residential apartment units, and a commercial space for a local financial institution; this project also contains public and private EV chargers, improved the stormwater capacity, and features a heated sidewalk that reduces the amount of salt or deicing necessary under certain temperatures.
7. Passed a Smoking in Parks ordinance to help address litter and air quality issues at public parks.
8. Adopted a tree preservation and replanting standards ordinance establishing a security or letter of credit for tree plantings, replacement standards based on diameter of trees and set soil volume minimums to ensure that trees planted are capable of reaching maturity.
9. Other zoning reforms include: allowing accessory dwelling units and shared family living arrangements; setting a review process for artificial turf and establishing impervious surface maximums in the front yard setback as well as for residential properties as a whole; twinhomes and duplexes in the R-2A and R-2B districts are allowed as permitted uses as well as residential greenhouses.

At the Sustainability Commission's March meeting, staff led the Commission in the first of a two-part interactive goal setting exercise. During the first part of the activity, commissioners and a staff representative each suggested three or four ideas – initiatives, strategies, or topics – they would like the Commission to focus on in 2025. In preparation for the second part of the exercise, staff compiled the full list of ideas and tallied the votes (see attachment 1).

Note: GreenStep Cities Communication and GIS Storymapping (outreach, engagement, and Partners in Energy resources) and Plans/Policy (Bike and Pedestrian Plan/Improvements) tied in the number of votes received; with Parks (Master Planning, identifying invasive species, encouraging native plantings) and Stewardship (trees, utility use, gardens and yards) being the next prominent items.

Based on the focus areas defined by the Commission and on the specific strategy and program suggestions Commissioners made during the activity, staff have prepared a list of draft 2025-2026 goals for consideration. The goals listed below will inform the creation and execution of the work plan for Community Development staff. In doing so, they will help match priorities with available resources. Certain goals are specific, while others are more so general; while developing this list, staff worked to capture the ideas put forth by the Commission while leaving space for additional opportunities.

Through this activity, the Commission defined and prioritized four focus areas for 2025-2026:

1. Parks and Public Spaces

- a. In alignment with City Council, update the Parks Master Plan in collaboration with city departments such as Parks and Recreation, Engineering and Public Works and commissions like Parks and Rec. and Planning Commission.
 - i. Organize park walks to identify invasive species, native plantings, and whether individual parks meet community needs.
- b. Implement the Complete Streets Policy and include current bike/pedestrian facilities on GIS map and identify opportunities to close connectivity gaps with a focus on accessing public facilities.

2. GreenStep Cities Communications and GIS Storymapping

- a. Updated business retention and expansion welcome packet updated six months/year and include updates to laws, grants, and other resources available.
 - i. Develop Partners in Energy landing page for developing programs and outreach on how citizens can save money.
 - ii. Encourage investment into existing housing stock.
- b. Expand the City's use of GIS/ESRI Storymapping for City Initiatives:
 - i. Monitor initiatives such as reuse/recycling champions, new tree plantings, complete street connections, racial covenants removed
 - ii. GreenStep City Step 4/5 metrics tracking for inclusion in the Annual Report.
- c. Establish a Sustainability Forum; i.e. themed series/lectures/classes on sustainability topics, topics chosen by public, open to the public, and expert speakers.
 - i. Develop a working list of intern/project needs across the city to easily address city needs and advocate for intern or develop opportunities as they arise.

3. Stewardship

- a. Create "FAQ" page/info for residential and businesses to access:
 - i. Adopt-a-tree program
 - ii. Water quality, conservation, and uses

- iii. Gardens and yards; support for residents and businesses to educate and engage on issues such as water and pollinator support.
- iv. Stormwater management.
- v. How to properly dispose of items; sources for sustainable purchasing (bulk); reducing waste.

4. Plans and Policy

- a. Green-to-Go; black plastic ordinance
- b. Sustainable purchasing policy
 - i. City has existing purchasing policy; option of addition sustainable purchasing as an addendum
- c. Residential green roof/space initiatives
- d. Increase housing density in single-family zoning
 - i. ADUs allowed as accessory uses to single-family dwelling units.

It is important to note that staff will address work plan items in order of the Commission's chosen priorities as much as possible, but some initiatives may be shifted due to external timelines (for example, funding distribution dates). Staff will also take advantage of opportunities to build momentum by competing projects that rely solely on internal processes, and that can have an immediate impact on the community (for example, revisions to existing grant programs).

There appears to be some overlap between the priorities of the Economic Development Authority, Planning Commission, and Community Development staff based the workplan developed by the EDA for 2025 identifying some priorities such as:

- Tackling simple Central placemaking items including ramp/lot landscaping, lighting, and public art in the alleyways.
- Research NOAH (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) program/allocation plan for housing stock reinvestment.
- Revamp/expand on current façade grant program.
- Signs and pollinator gardens on unused parcels.

In addition to guiding staff and the Commission in their daily work, this shared framework will provide a way of looking back at the end of the year, assessing progress, and evaluating priorities for the future.

ATTACHMENTS:

Ideas List of Vote Tallies (Sustainability Commission)

Vote Tallies

Ideas List of Vote Tallies (Economic Development Authority)