



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	NEW BUSINESS
MEETING DATE	DECEMBER 12, 2023

ITEM:	Introduction to Minnesota GreenCorps.	
DEPARTMENT:	Community Development	BY/DATE: Andrew Boucher, City Planner 10/5/2023
CORE CITY STRATEGIES: <i>(please indicate areas that apply by adding an "X" in front of the selected text below)</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy and Safe Community	<input type="checkbox"/> Thriving and Vibrant Destination Community	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive, and Friendly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong Infrastructure and Public Services	
<input type="checkbox"/> Trusted and Engaged Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable	

BACKGROUND

The Minnesota GreenCorps is a program coordinated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency with a mission of preserving and protecting Minnesota’ environment while training a new generation of environmental professionals. Each year, the program places AmeriCorps members with host site organizations around the state to help communities increase resilience to climate change by:

- Reducing solid waste and increasing recycling
- Reducing greenhouse gases and other pollutants
- Reducing water runoff and improving water quality
- Encouraging eco-friendly behavior
- Reducing disproportionate negative impacts from pollutants

Members serve full-time at their host sites for 11 months, from mid-September through mid-August. MN GreenCorps members educate and engage community members and youth, coordinate multi-modal transportation events, remove invasive species, plant trees, install rain gardens, benchmark energy, conduct waste sorts, inventory trees, and more. Members address critical environmental issues through projects such as retrofitting public buildings to save energy, improving public lands, educating community members, preventing waste, and recycling or composting. In addition, members engage volunteers in hands-on projects to help communities build their capacity for environmental stewardship and resilience to climate change. Each member serves on a project in one of four focus areas:

- air pollutant reduction, including energy conservation and green transportation
- community readiness and outreach, including public engagement and education
- green infrastructure improvements, including stormwater and community forestry
- waste reduction, recycling, and organics management

Members earn a living allowance, health insurance, mental health services with counseling, student loan forbearance on eligible loans, and an education award for education expenses or qualified student loans.

Members receive training from the MPCA, develop green job skills, gain professional experience, network with environmental professionals, and are paired with a mentor who provides ongoing guidance. Organizations eligible to host Minnesota GreenCorps members include government entities (local, regional, state, and tribal), school districts, public education institutions, and 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

As a host site, your organization can harness a member's energy and enthusiasm to move your environmental projects forward. Host sites do not pay a fee to participate in the program but are expected to provide supervision, office space, internet and phone service, training, and any resources necessary for members to accomplish their projects. The MPCA manages the recruitment, application, and selection process for Minnesota GreenCorps members. Applications for host sites are anticipated to be accepted from February through mid-March each year with the program starting in mid-September.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Sustainability Commission through the Council Liaison give the City Council a positive recommendation to direct staff to develop a workplan for the intent and purpose of applying to be a MN GreenCorps host site.

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):
MOTION: Move to recommend that the City Council review the attached MN GreenCorps report and example workplan and provide direction to prepare the work plan by identifying priorities.

ATTACHMENT: Example Work Plan