



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	WORK SESSION ITEM
MEETING DATE	03/11/2025

ITEM:	2025 GreenStep Cities Assessment	
DEPARTMENT:	Community Development	BY/DATE: Andrew Boucher – City Planner/March, 11, 2025
CORE CITY STRATEGIES:		
_Healthy and Safe Community		_Thriving and Vibrant Destination Community
_Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive, and Friendly		_Strong Infrastructure and Public Services
_Trusted and Engaged Leadership		<u>X</u> Sustainable

BACKGROUND:

The Minnesota GreenStep Cities program staff provides a yearly assessment for every city participating in the program. The City of Columbia Heights is presently at Step 2 with additional actions required before Step 3 can be achieved. Attached is a copy of the assessment which can be found along with all the actions the City has completed at: [City Detail | GreenStep Cities](#).

In order to receive Step 3 recognition, there are general and specific actions that need to be completed. Currently, the City has implemented 11 Best Practice Actions and is required to submit at least five more for review before meeting the minimums for Step 3. The specific actions that are required are described as follows:

- Any one additional action from the Building and Lighting Best Practices (2-5); some examples are:
 - Creating/participating in a marketing/outreach/incentive program to promote/achieve residential energy/water use reduction and energy efficiency (2.1);
 - Integrating green building and EV charging best practice information and assistance into the building permit process (2.2);
 - Adopt a sustainable building policy governing new development projects that receive city financial support or require city regulatory approval (3.3);
 - Provide a financial or other incentive to private parties who build new buildings that utilize the SB 2030 energy standard and/or a green building framework (3.4).
 - Require energy efficient, Dark-Sky compliant new or replacement outdoor lighting fixtures on city-owned/private buildings and facilities (4.1).
 - Purchase LEDs for all future street lighting and traffic signals (4.2)
 - Create/modify a green residential remodeling assistance/financing program to assist homeowners in adding space or features such as EV charging, renewables to their existing homes (5.4).
- Any one additional action from the Living and Complete Streets Best Practices from 11.1 – 11.6:
 - Modify a street in compliance with the city's complete streets policy (11.3)

- Identify, prioritize and remedy complete streets gaps and lack of connectivity/safety within your road network by, for example, bike/pedestrian plan, adding a bike route/lane, truck route, sidewalk or mid-block alley (11.4).
- Implement traffic calming policy/measures, including lane conversions (road diets), roundabouts, low-speed streets, shared space and depaving, in at least one street redevelopment project (11.6).
- Any two actions from Mobility Options 12.1-12.6; some examples are:
 - Increase walking, biking and transit use by one or more of the following means (12.1):
 1. Document increased infrastructure for pedestrians, bikers, and public transit users.
 2. Increase the number of employers promoting multiple commuting options.
 3. Be recognized as a Walk Friendly, Bicycle Friendly, or Age Friendly Community.
 - Conduct an Active Living campaign such as a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program (12.2)
 - Add/expand public transit service (12.6).
- Adopt a sustainable purchasing policy or administrative guidelines/practices directing that the city purchase at least EnergyStar and EPEAT certified equipment and appliances as well as paper containing post-consumer recycled content (15.1) and one additional action from 15.2-15.8;
 - Purchase energy used by city government - via the municipal utility, green tags, community solar garden, 3rd party - with a higher renewable percentage than required by Minnesota law. (15.2).
 - Establish purchasing preferences that support local, Minority, Disability, and Women-Owned businesses and, working with a local business association, develop a list of locally-produced products and suppliers for common purchases (15.3)
 - Require purchase of U.S. EPA WaterSense-certified products (15.4).
 - Lower the environmental footprint of meetings and events in the city (15.7).
- Any one action from Stormwater Management (17.1-17.6);
 - Adopt and use Minnesota's Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS) (17.1)
 - Complete the GreenStep Municipal Stormwater Management Assessment (17.2)
 - Improve smart-salting by reducing chloride use in winter maintenance and dust suppressants to prevent permanent surfacewater and groundwater pollution (17.6).
- Adopt 24.2 Best Practice Action on annual reporting on goals/outcomes from plans such as comprehensive, parks, library, housing stormwater, etc. through a Performance Management Report., which is attached.
- Adopt 29.1 at a 2 or 3 star rating; plan and prepare for extreme weather, adapt to changing climatic conditions, and foster stronger community connectedness and social/economic vitality through Hazard Mitigation Planning.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- 1. 2025 GreenStep City Assessment**
- 2. Performance Management Report Template**