



Memorandum

To: Mayor Nelson and Members of the City Council

From: Daniel R. Buchholtz, MMC, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer

Date: July 6, 2023

Subject: GreenStep Cities participation discussion

Councilmembers Goodboe-Bisschoff and Moran asked that the City Council discuss potential participation in the Minnesota GreenStep City program.

Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program that provides a framework to help cities achieve their economic, environmental and quality of life goals. This free continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership, is based on 29 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more actions at a 1, 2 or 3-star level, from a list of four to eight actions. These actions are tailored to all Minnesota cities, focus on cost savings and energy use reduction, and encourage civic innovation.

There are a variety of benefits in becoming a GreenStep City.

- Is a continuous improvement pathway for cities to "go green," becoming more sustainable and resilient.
- Will save city staff time in researching proven, cost-effective actions for cutting energy use, decreasing the city's carbon footprint, and accomplishing other sustainability goals that exceed regulatory requirements
- Will save cities money and deliver a stream of multiple environmental, social and financial benefits; will help cities explore how to spend the same amount of money smarter.
- Provides over 4,000 reports on how Minnesota cities are taking action, making it easy to learn from and contact peer cities so as to jump-start actions in your own city.
- Opens up special opportunities for funding and technical assistance, available mostly to GreenStep cities because the GreenStep program focuses on existing GreenStep cities.
- Positions a city to more easily apply for competitive grant and assistance programs.
- Provides leadership and action roles for community members, businesses and institutions so as to stretch limited city funds and strengthen a civic culture of engagement and innovation. Continuously prompts program participants - like an exercise coach would! - to maximize opportunities to accelerate sustainability actions.
- Provides public recognition of the good work being done by Minnesota cities.

Staff has included further information on the program with this memorandum.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 763-784-6491.