



Hopkins: a Minnesota GreenStep City



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What is Minnesota GreenStep Cities?

Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a challenge, assistance, and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability goals through implementation of 28 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more specific actions 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 innovation.

How did Hopkins become a GreenStep City?

To be recognized as a GreenStep City, Hopkins implemented 17 of the 28 best practices, outlined to the right. Green Intern Alyssa Burnham of the University of MN helped to track and document this implementation for Hopkins.

Implemented {Best Practices} as of December 2010

Building & Lighting

{BP01} Efficient Existing Public Buildings: Work with utilities and others to assess and finance energy and sustainability improvements of existing structures.

Actions taken: Hopkins uses the Minnesota B3 database to assess energy efficiency in City-owned buildings. Hopkins had two buildings fall into the bottom third of the B3 energy performance ranking: City Hall and the municipal parking ramp. In November 2010, City Hall received new boilers. The parking ramp is scheduled for new lighting by the Spring 2011. Both projects are eligible for rebates.



{BP04} Efficient Building & Street Lighting and Signals Improve the efficiency of public and private lighting and signals.

Actions taken: The City has installed and will continue to install LED lights, Dark-Sky compliant outdoor lighting, and solar-powered signs whenever possible. Stoplights are designed to minimize the wait time for cars, cutting down their idling time.

Land Use

{BP06} Comprehensive Plan and Implementation: Adopt a Comprehensive Plan and tie regulatory ordinances to it.

Actions taken: Hopkins updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2009; it will guide the City's land use regulations and policies for the next 10 to 20 years.

{BP08} Efficient and Healthy Development Patterns: Mix land uses.

Actions taken: Hopkins' Comprehensive Plan plans for a variety of land uses in its downtown district and specifically addresses vertical mixed-use development.

Transportation

{BP11} Complete Green Streets: Create a network of multimodal green streets.

Actions taken: Every year as part of street reconstruction projects, Hopkins documents the installation of trees, green stormwater infrastructure, and any utility renovations as needed.

{BP12} Mobility Options: Promote active living and alternatives to single-occupancy car travel.

Actions taken: The City has long realized the need to improve the connection between Excelsior Blvd and Mainstreet for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The plan for a Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) station at 8th Avenue South and Excelsior Blvd has underlined that need and identified an important goal of attracting transit riders to Downtown Hopkins. A developer will be selected for this project in December of 2010. Hopkins also participates in various Active Living campaigns such as the Step to It Challenge and the Hopkins Citizens Academy.



{BP13} Efficient City Fleets: Implement a city fleet investment, operations and maintenance plan.

Actions taken: Hopkins currently monitors the fuel usage and costs of the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments. Monthly maintenance is scheduled on all city vehicles. Hopkins has bike police patrols, and bicycles are made available for City inspectors. There are two designated electric car permit stalls with electrical outlets located in the public downtown parking ramp.



{BP14} Demand-Side Travel Planning: Use Travel Demand Management and Transit-Oriented Design.

Actions taken: The City requires higher-density housing around transit zones. It also uses Travel Demand Management (TDM) to increase the number and proportion of people who share rides and who travel outside of rush hours.

Environmental Management

{BP15} Purchasing: Adopt an environmentally preferable purchasing policy.

Actions taken: Hopkins currently follows Minnesota's state statutes on purchasing EnergyStar certified equipment as well purchasing 30% post-consumer recycled paper. There is no specific policy in place which Hopkins will be looking into.



{BP16} Urban Forests: Increase city tree and plant cover.

Actions taken: In 2009, Hopkins was named a Tree City USA for the 30th time. Hopkins meets the four standards to become a Tree City USA by having a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program, and an Arbor Day observance.



{BP17} Efficient Stormwater Management: Minimize the volume of and pollutants in water runoff.

Actions taken: All the water from rain and snow that fall in Hopkins and is not absorbed or evaporated runs into the City's storm sewer system. In 2010, Hopkins became one of only four cities in Minnesota to be awarded a Blue Star Award, given to communities that are taking a leadership role in protecting Minnesota's water resources and public health through excellence in stormwater management.



{BP18} Green Infrastructure: Enhance city parks and trails.

Actions taken: The City initiated an Earth Day event during which several community volunteers cleaned up parks and trails in Hopkins. The Meadowbrook Golf course has been a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for over two years. Hopkins uses a standard of seven acres of municipal park land per 1000 people as a benchmark for planning purposes.

{BP22} Solid Waste Reduction: Increase waste reduction, reuse and recycling.

Actions taken: The City's solid waste collection system encourages residents to reduce waste through our mandatory recycling ordinance, volume-based pricing structure, and added fees for extra refuse and bulk. Additionally the City regularly provides promotional materials and activities to educate residents on waste reduction, reuse, recycling and purchasing recycled products. Our current in-house purchasing policy advocates the purchase of products made with recycled content. There is also an organics recycling program in place.



{BP23} Local Air Quality: Prevent generation of local air contaminants.

Actions taken: Hopkins has two designated electric car permit stalls with electrical outlets located in the public parking ramp.

Economic and Community Development

{BP24} Benchmarks & Community Engagement: Adopt outcome measures for GreenStep and other city sustainability efforts, and engage community members in ongoing education, discussion, and campaigns.

Actions taken: Hopkins currently compiles this information every 10 years in its Comprehensive Plan. The City will be looking into a system to report annual progress to community members.

{BP25} Green Business Development: Document the use of assistance programs for green business and job development.

Actions taken: The City of Hopkins' Housing and Redevelopment Authority has awarded multiple sites (such as Cargill/Excelsior Crossing, LA Fitness, Hopkins Business Center, Hopkins Honda) clean up money for development.

{BP27} Local Food: Strengthen local food and fiber production and access.

Actions taken: The Hopkins Farmers' Market features Minnesota grown vegetables, fruits, herbs, meat, poultry, honey, flowers, annual plants, handmade soaps, crafts, jewelry, kettle corn, pet toys, herb cookbooks, jams and jellies, bakery items, bread, and snacks. Hopkins high school and elementary schools also have gardens.



{Best Practices} Not Yet Implemented

{BP02} Efficient Existing Private Buildings: Work with utilities and others to assess and finance energy and sustainability improvements of existing structures.

{BP03} New Green Buildings: Construct new buildings to meet or qualify for a green building standard.

{BP05} Building Reuse: Create economic and regulatory incentives for redeveloping and repurposing existing buildings before building new.

{BP07} Higher Density: Enable and encourage a higher density of housing or commercial land use.

{BP08} Efficient Highway-Oriented Development: Adopt commercial development and design standards for highway road corridors.

{BP10} Conservation Design: Adopt development ordinances or processes that protect natural systems.

{BP19} Surface Water Quality: Improve local water bodies.

{BP20} Efficient Water and Wastewater Facilities: Assess and improve drinking water and wastewater facilities.

{BP26} Renewable Energy: Remove barriers to and encourage installation of renewable energy generation capacity.

{BP28} Business Synergies: Network/cluster businesses to achieve better energy, economic and environmental outcomes.

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