



Fully implement the City's sustainable work plan

What's working

Our sustainability reports help keep us on track and moving forward.

- The birthing process of the 25 indicators and targets was difficult, but the end product is good. We adopted a broad notion of sustainability, and we have a better idea of what's needed to sustain an urban community.
- The report enabled us to be more sophisticated in our approach to urban design and make connections between living well and sustainability indicators such as air quality.
- We're developing data for trend analysis. We can track progress and know where to focus our efforts.
- We're honest about our shortcomings. Minneapolis is one of the few cities that reports bad news. You can't solve a problem if you won't talk about it.

Sustainability has become part of the City's organizational culture.

- City staff and elected officials are committed to the sustainability plan. We have achieved critical mass:

sustainability is a shared goal, not one person's pet project. Sustainability is connecting disparate elements of the City.

- Sustainability has worked its way into the Regulatory Services culture. Employees think about sustainability and work it into business plans.
- At the upper levels of Public Works, there's an awareness of sustainability's importance.
- We've also begun involving the Park and Recreation Board so we can begin integrating its efforts into the process.

The City adopted an environmental purchasing policy.

The concept of sustainability is more accepted by the public.

- People understand and appreciate what we're trying to accomplish.
- Most people now acknowledge climate change and the importance of energy issues.

What isn't working

We aren't meeting some targets.

- We're still not planting as many trees as we're losing.
- We need to do more regarding climate change and renewable energy.
- Health and wealth disparities remain.

The City sticks to its plan too much.

- A lot of cross-department work has occurred, but we're too guided by each page of the plan. We need to go beyond the plan. We should be saying, "Here's what I'd like to do," instead of, "Here's what I have to do."

Is our effort sustainable if elections bring in new City leaders?

- Mayor Rybak took sustainability to a whole new level. Will sustainability remain a high priority if new leaders are elected?

Schools, neighborhoods and businesses could be doing more.

- Schools are still using Styrofoam. Sustainability needs to be part of the educational culture.
- Schools need to involve kids to ensure we make long-term change.
- Sustainability is not happening at the neighborhood association level.
- Business associations are not as involved as they could be.
- Sustainability isn't just government's role. The tree canopy target is an example. There are more trees

and places for trees on private property than on public property. It's not just about parks and public property.

Partnerships are lacking or could be stronger.

- Public schools, charter schools and private schools aren't at the table.
- The University of Minnesota and Hennepin County could be more involved.
- The Park and Recreation Board is not as far along with sustainability as the City of Minneapolis.

We're stymied when sustainability isn't a priority for the region or State.

- We don't hear about the State's sustainability plan.
- Cities can't be stricter than the State in enacting building codes.
- When it's a regional issue, we're limited in what we can do. Transit, land use and air quality are regional issues.
- Whatever happened to "smart growth"?

Budget problems and product availability hinder our efforts.

- Investment exceeding the standard makes economic sense in the long run, but it's hard for people to look beyond the current payout to the economics of the big picture.
- Homeowners want to do the right thing, but contractors don't always have the product or they're unwilling to use it. It's not like HGTV where the product is always in the truck.

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What should be done next

Increase collaboration among agencies.

- Share the upfront work on renewable energy with the school district, Park and Recreation Board and other entities. If we set aside egos and collaborate, we could do more. The effort to improve water quality in the Chain of Lakes is a good example of a successful collaboration.
- Contact the suburbs now rather than waiting for other leaders to step in.
- Find ways to spur friendly competition with neighboring cities.

Improve existing buildings and grow industry capacity.

- Use grants, mandates and incentives to encourage improvements to old buildings.
- The City should play a role in building business capacity (green roofs, for example).
- Encourage jobs for new arrivals in retrofitting housing.
- Because green jobs have excellent potential, leverage green benefits to business development.
- Encourage urban farming.

Develop an agenda for the Minnesota State Legislature and the Minneapolis City Council.

- Encourage the State to increase standards for new construction.
- Bring back some form of the vehicle inspection program to protect air quality.
- Develop a local game plan for saving trees. Make it possible to get a variance for a new garage if that would mean a tree could be saved rather than cut down.

Involve neighborhood organizations and the public.

- Use the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department to get neighborhood associations to make sustainability a priority and align their efforts with the City's sustainability plan.
- Change the perception that sustainability is a white, middle-class issue. Help residents in lower income neighborhoods understand that environmental issues can enhance health and public safety.
- Communicate that what's cheapest and fastest now isn't always the best choice. Emphasize long-term energy savings and return on investment.

"As a resident, I can say that the City is walking the talk."

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency employee
