



Sustainability Commission Agenda

May 16, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chambers – Minnetonka Community Center

Members of the public who desire to monitor the meeting remotely or to give input or testimony during the meeting can find instructions at <https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/government/participate-in-city-meetings>

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda

4. Approval of Minutes: March 21, 2023

5. Report from Staff:

- A. CAAP Update
- B. Everything Electric Event Update
- C. Sustainable Minnetonka Awards
- D. Open Sustainability Commission Member Position
- E. Minnesota GreenCorps Members
- F. Commission Event Sign Up
- G. Grant Applications
- H. Hennepin Energy Recovery Center Tour
- I. Minnetonka High School Envirothon Club

6. Report from Sustainability Commission Members

7. Agenda Items

A. Restaurant Outreach

- Recommendation: Review materials, recommend changes, and approve materials.
- Staff Members: Drew Ingvalson

B. Electric Yard Equipment Discussion

- Recommendation: Review information and discuss alternative methods that the city and

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- commission can use to encourage people to move from gas to electric yard equipment
- Staff Member: Drew Ingvalson

C. Work Plan Amendment and Event Materials

- Recommendation: Approve proposed work plan changes and event materials
- Staff Member: Drew Ingvalson

8. Other Business

9. Adjournment

If you have questions about any of the agenda items, please contact:

- Drew Ingvalson, Associate Planner/Sustainability Coordinator (952) 939-8293, dingvalson@minnetonkamn.gov
- Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner, (952) 939-8296, lgordon@minnetonkamn.gov
- Julie Wischnack, AICP, Community Development Director, (952) 939-8282, jwischnack@minnetonkamn.gov

**Unapproved
Minnetonka Sustainability Commission
Minutes**

March 21, 2023

1. Call to Order

Chair Golob called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Sustainability commissioners Justin Anderson, Molly Birr, Elizabeth Boor, Brian Golob, David Ingraham, and Ashley Pattain were present. Edwin Avalos, Matt Henry, and Harapanahalli Muralidhara were absent.

Staff present: City Planner Loren Gordon, Associate Planner and Sustainability Coordinator Drew Ingvalson, and Trails Manager Matt Kumka.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Pattain moved, second by Ingraham, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Anderson, Birr, Boor, Golob, Ingraham, and Pattain voted yes. Avalos, Henry and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Sustainability Commission Feb. 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Boor moved, second by Pattain, to approve the minutes as submitted with a change to reflect that Julie Wischnack did not attend the meeting.

Anderson, Birr, Boor, Golob, Ingraham, and Pattain voted yes. Avalos, Henry and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

5. Report from Staff

Ingvalson gave the staff report:

- A greenhouse gas inventory is being completed, and city plans are being reviewed to be used in the climate action and adaptation plan.
- Commissioners are invited to sign up to attend the farmer's markets scheduled to be held on June 6, 2023, June 27, 2023, July 25, 2023, Aug. 29, 2023 and Sept. 26, 2023.
- The Minnesota House introduced a bill to require all lawn and garden equipment sold in Minnesota to be fully electric by Jan. 1, 2025.
- The tour of the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center is scheduled to occur March 30, 2023 at 1 p.m.

- The city council is in concurrence with staff and the sustainability commission on not supporting "no mow May."

6. Report from Sustainability Commission Members

Anderson stated that Macalester College will be hosting two sustainability events. The Sustainaversary will celebrate the 15-year anniversary of the Macalester College Sustainability Department. There will be different stations, including an electronics repair station and craft stations. A Make Art Not Waste event will focus on art pieces made from up-cycled materials.

Pattain asked if city employees are able to work a hybrid schedule, with some days traveling to work at city hall and some days working remotely. Ingvalson answered in the affirmative. He is in the process of polling staff to learn their schedules.

Chair Golob stated that Hennepin County has a zero-waste report on its website with ideas on how one could reduce waste.

Chair Golob explained that any residential property owner may look up their property on the website riskfactor.com to find out the property's risk for being impacted by flooding, wildfire, extreme heat, and wind.

7. Agenda Items

A. Minnetonka Trails and POST Plan

Ingvalson and Kumka reported.

Boor asked if buckthorn remediation is part of every trail improvement project. Kumka answered that ecological restoration is part of every project that disturbs natural areas. Buckthorn is removed at every opportunity and replaced with a native species.

Ingraham encouraged native plantings to be utilized instead of grass for remediation areas. Ingvalson noted that public works staff work to implement native plantings when possible.

Chair Golob thanked Kumka for the presentation. He appreciated the city's effort to minimize the need to use a vehicle to travel.

The public-input portion was opened. No one chose to speak, and the public-input portion was closed.

B. Everything Electric Event

Ingvalson reported. Staff recommended commissioners provide comments and suggestions for the 2023 Everything Electric Event (EEE).

Pattain agreed with combining the EEE with another event like the farmer's market to attract more attendees. Ingvalson anticipates that the farmer's market will have a higher attendance at its new location at the park at Ridgedale but that the parking area may not be large enough to hold the EEE and the farmer's market at the same time. Staff may look into working with Ridgedale management to secure more parking space. The farmer's market attendance averaged 1,000 people in 2022.

Pattain enjoyed the event. She appreciated electric vehicle (EV) owners bringing in their vehicles and being able to ask them questions. She is excited about the next event.

Chair Golob thought the 2022 EEE was well attended, and attendees appreciated talking to EV owners in addition to sales representatives. He noted that combining the EEE with the farmer's market would generate more attendees, but a dedicated space would be needed. He hoped sufficient parking could be secured by working with Ridgedale management. He was not sure if Ridgedale management would like food trucks parked in the parking lot, but he would like the event to be as festive as possible. Ingvalson will contact Ridgedale management to discuss options.

Ingraham suggested providing promotional materials for the EEE at Williston Center and The Marsh.

Birr asked what other events the EEE could be combined with. Ingvalson noted that the city holds an annual open house which is well attended and already experiences a shortage of parking space. A safety concern could be created by drivers test driving an unfamiliar vehicle in an area congested with pedestrians.

In response to Pattain's question, Ingvalson explained that many EV dealers stated that it would be difficult to attend the EEE because they did not have enough inventory and fewer employees were available on a Sunday.

Anderson suggested promoting the free home-energy audits provided by Xcel Energy. Ingvalson invited anyone interested to email him for a link to sign up.

Chair Golob confirmed with Ingvalson that Minnetonka residents are able to receive a free home energy audit from Xcel due to the city partnering with Xcel on multiple energy-saving initiatives. He has received over 100 requests from the public for the code to schedule an audit.

Ingraham asked if Xcel attends the EEE. Three of his neighbors had different experiences with Xcel installing a charger in their garage. Ingvalson answered affirmatively.

Chair Golob confirmed with Ingvalson that city council members were invited, and many attended the EEE. He appreciated the excellent report.

The public-input portion was opened. No one chose to speak, and the public-input portion was closed.

C. Commissioner Educational Opportunities

Ingvalson reported. Staff recommended commissioners review the list of options, provide additional educational opportunities, and select their top two choices.

Anderson added touring the material recycling and recovery center to the list.

Boor added a presentation on site-specific-restoration plans for wetlands in Minnetonka and a tour of the stormwater feature in Arden Park located in Edina.

Chair Golob added touring an electronics/mercury recycling facility, visiting the projects completed by the sustainability contest award winners, and taking a pollinator walk with Heather Holm to the list.

Birr added touring a school's outdoor-learning center to the list.

Anderson selected:

- Tour a material recycling and recovery facility.
- Tour an electronics/mercury recycling facility.

Birr selected:

- Tour a community solar or wind farm.
- Tour a school's outdoor-learning center.

Boor selected:

- Tour a community solar or wind farm.
- Tour a school's outdoor-learning center.

Ingraham selected:

- Presentation on stormwater.
- Tour city facilities.

Pattain selected:

- Tour of the sustainable-award-winners' projects.
- Tour a school's outdoor-learning center.

Chair Golob:

- Tour a school's outdoor-learning center.

- Tour of the sustainable-award-winners' projects.

The public-input portion was opened. No one chose to speak, and the public-input portion was closed.

D. Approval of Bylaws

Ingvalson reported. Staff recommended commissioners adopt the sustainability commission bylaws as submitted.

Ingraham moved, second by Boor, to adopt the sustainability commission bylaws as submitted. Anderson, Birr, Boor, Golob, Ingraham, and Pattain voted yes. Avalos, Henry and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

E. Election of Officers

Ingvalson reported. Staff recommended commissioners elect a chair and vice chair to serve on the sustainability commission for the 2023 term.

Boor moved, second by Ingraham, to elect Golob to serve as chair of the sustainability commission for the 2023 term. Anderson, Birr, Boor, Golob, Ingraham, and Pattain voted yes. Avalos, Henry and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

Golob moved, second by Ingraham, to elect Pattain to serve as vice chair of the sustainability commission for the 2023 term. Anderson, Birr, Boor, Golob, Ingraham, and Pattain voted yes. Avalos, Henry and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

8. Other Business: None

9. Adjournment

Pattain moved, second by Birr, to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. Motion was carried unanimously.

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary



**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 7A
Meeting of May 16, 2023**

Title: Restaurant Outreach

Report From: Drew Ingvalson, Associate Planner/Sustainability Coordinator

Submitted through: Julie Wischnack, AICP, Community Development Director
Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

Action Requested: Motion Informational Public Comment Vote
Form of Action: Resolution Ordinance Other: Comments N/A
Votes needed 5 votes Other N/A

Summary Statement

The city's [Energy Action Plan Addendum](#) (Strategy 6) states that the city shall "launch a targeted outreach campaign to advise action to local businesses." In addition, one of the sustainability commission's duties and responsibilities outlined in the city code is "serving as an ambassador to the community" about programs that relate to sustainability.

Two programs that can help businesses reduce their energy use and waste are Energy Smart and MNimize. Staff and Center for Energy and the Environment, working on behalf of the Xcel Energy Partners in Energy program, have prepared materials to help the sustainability commission share these opportunities with Minnetonka restaurants.

Recommended Action

Review materials, recommend changes and approve materials.

Strategic Profile Relatability

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Strength & Operational Excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe & Healthy Community |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability & Natural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Livable & Well-Planned Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure & Asset Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Inclusiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |

Statement: See [Strategic Profile](#).

Background

At the Feb. 28, 2023 sustainability commission meeting, the commission expressed interest in participating in a restaurant outreach to encourage restaurants to sign up for the Energy Smart and MNimize programs.

About the Programs

The two programs, Energy Smart and MNimize, were selected for the restaurant outreach for three reasons.

1. **Free On-Site Visits:** Both programs offer free on-site visits to the businesses. At these visits, businesses are provided information on their facilities, upgrade opportunities, and business operation recommendations.
2. **Low/No commitment Requirements:** The Energy Smart program has no commitment requirements for their program and one of the few requirements is that it must be a small business. The MNimize program only requires businesses to commit to hosting a site visit and offering single-use plastic accessories (utensils, straws, etc.) by request only.
3. **Connection to Additional Funding:** Both of these programs help connect businesses with rebates, grants, and/or funding for various upgrade opportunities (funding sources include Hennepin County, Xcel Energy, and/or CenterPoint Energy). The MNimize program offers a \$500 rebate for participants in the program that can be used towards the reduction of single use plastics. Funding research from these programs assist businesses by reducing their research time when considering upgrades and financial costs to commit to more sustainable practices.

Below are brief descriptions about each program.

Energy Smart:

- Energy Smart business energy assessments are free to the customer and funded by Xcel Energy. The mission of the program is to help businesses reduce their energy consumption through efficiency.
- An energy assessment helps building owners determine where and when to invest in new, energy efficient equipment.
- After signing up:
 - Businesses respond to a brief survey about their facility and business operation followed by a site visit to take notes on major energy users and behavioral routines – HVAC, lighting systems, kitchens, manufacturing, etc.
 - Businesses can learn more about their energy use by signing a form that releases bill history review up to 36 months. This allows the Energy Smart team to look for energy use patterns and prioritize recommendations.
 - Following the assessment – referrals are made to the next step of free programs to dig deeper into opportunities and start saving right away.
 - A custom report of recommendations to reduce energy bills is included, as is access to your energy expert for ongoing assistance

MNimize:

- The MNimize program's mission is to help food service businesses reduce their waste.
- The program is funded by between Hennepin County and the MN Chamber of Commerce's Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation.
- Businesses sign up for the program and commit to hosting a site visit and offering single-use plastic accessories (utensils, straws, etc.) by request only.
- After signing up:
 - A business can decide on items they would like to swap and MNimize will send their \$500 rebate application and walk them through the application process.

MNimize can also help do the research on reusable or certified compostable alternatives, offering several options at various price points.

- The MNimize team will even do a follow up visit after the new items have been delivered to set them up so they're ready for use!
- After the items have been in use for some time, MNimize will follow up to check in on how things are going, estimate the impact of your swap, and promote the business' achievement.

City Outreach

Staff has worked with Xcel Energy and CEE to put together outreach methods to promote these programs. Specifically, there will be an article in the Minnetonka Thrive, a newsletter that goes out physical and electronically to all subscribed businesses in Minnetonka. Also, staff has mailed a postcard to the 79 restaurants that are eligible for the Energy Smart and MNimize programs

Commission's Role

The commission's role in this outreach plan will be to connect with the 79 restaurants to inform them about the two programs.

1. Commissioners will be able to select businesses that they want to connect with via a SignUp Genius, on online sign-up portal. Staff recommends that each commission sign up for at least seven restaurants.
2. Commissioners will need to look up email and/or phone number contacts for each restaurant.
3. Commissioners will then reach out to businesses by email, phone call or in-person. This will include following up with businesses a week later if they do not received a response. Attached to this report is an email template and script that commissioners can use to connect with restaurants.

Attached Materials

Various materials have been created to assist commissioners with making contact with Minnetonka restaurants. Below is a list of these materials.

- Introduction of Programs
- Email Content
- Phone Script
- Business Postcard (mailed in mid-May)
- Outreach Background
- Energy Smart Assessment FAQ (attachment for emails)
- Energy Smart Success Stores (attachment for emails)
- MNimize Flyer (attachment for emails)

Proposed Timeline

- **May 16-22:** Staff will email materials to all commissioners with a link to the SignUp Genius sign up. Commissioners should review materials and sign up for restaurants they want to connect with by email, phone, or in-person. Each commissioner should sign up for at least seven businesses.
- **May 22:** Commissioners start outreach to restaurants.
- **July 11:** Commission receives update on businesses outreach.

- **August 31:** Commission restaurant outreach is completed.
- **Sept. 26:** Commission receives restaurant outreach campaign results.



FREE BUSINESS ENERGY AND WASTE ASSESSMENTS FOR RESTAURANTS

MINNETONKA OUTREACH KIT

Hello!

This kit is designed to help you connect Minnetonka restaurants with free energy and waste assessments. We hope this kit provides useful guidance and materials to help you work with your networks to spread the word about this opportunity to Minnetonka restaurants. Thank you for your work and support!

General instructions

What you'll be doing: You'll be reaching out to restaurant owners to ask them to sign up for a free energy assessment from Energy Smart and waste assessment from MNimize.

- Whether you prefer to reach out by email, social media, phone, or in-person, the materials in this kit should provide you with the information and language you need to get the word out.
- Our goal is to move quickly and encourage as many restaurants as possible to sign up for either assessment.

Key Messages

- Energy Smart:
 - Energy Smart business energy assessments are FREE to the customer and funded by Xcel Energy.
 - An energy assessment helps building owners determine where and when to invest in new, energy efficient equipment.
 - Helping businesses improve energy efficiency contributes to Minnetonka's carbon emission reduction goals and saves businesses money.
- MNimize
 - MNimize site assessments are FREE to the customer and include a \$500 single-use plastic reduction rebate. The program is funded by between Hennepin County and the MN Chamber of Commerce's Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation.
 - Participation in the program will help businesses learn how to reduce their waste and connect them with funding to reduce their upfront costs of transitioning from plasticware.

What's in the Kit?

- **Background Information:** Refer to this sheet to understand your role in helping the City of Minnetonka engage restaurants on energy action, as part of their Energy Action Plan with Partners in Energy, and city initiative to have restaurants reduce their waste.



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- **Email Content:** You can use this sample email text to send an email directly to business owners to encourage them to sign up for an assessment. Be sure to attach the following documents:
 - FAQ sheet
 - Energy Smart Restaurant Case Studies
 - MNimize Flyer
- **Phone Call Script:** Talking points are included for communicating with restaurant owners over the phone. Use these talking points to explain the energy assessments, waste program, and encourage sign-ups.
- **Postcard:** A postcard has been mailed to Minnetonka businesses in May promoting energy assessments, rebates, and waste reduction. Review it to know what information business owners may have already received.

Questions on the materials in this kit?

If you have questions about the materials in this kit, please contact:

Drew Ingvalson, Associate Planner/Sustainability Coordinator at:

dingvalson@minnetonkamn.gov

or

Megan Weck, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator at:

mweck@mncee.org

Thank you for your help in supporting this outreach!



SAMPLE EMAIL COPY

Emailing is an efficient method of outreach, but does not always elicit an immediate response. Be very clear with the ask and include information to contact you with questions. Consider following up within a week to ask if they read your email and would consider signing up or consider following up with a phone call during a non-busy restaurant time. Include attachments:

- Energy Smart FAQ Doc
- Restaurant Success Stories PDF
- MNimize Flyer

Subject: Don't Miss Out: Free Business Energy Assessments

Hello,

My name is [redacted] and I am a Sustainability Commissioner with the City of Minnetonka. *[Add in some personal information about being a patron at their restaurant or calling them out with a personal touch.]*

I am writing to tell you about two city partnership programs that can lower your restaurant energy costs (Energy Smart) and reduce your waste (MNimize).

Energy Smart: To help you identify the simplest ways to save, we are encouraging restaurants to get a FREE energy assessment from Energy Smart, a program from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce funded by Xcel Energy. They will provide a whole-building audit to help you identify energy-saving opportunities and determine when and where to invest in new, efficient equipment. After you have completed your assessment, be sure to take advantage of [Xcel Energy rebates for upgrading food service equipment](#) to be more energy-efficient.

If you are ready to schedule your free assessment now, you can sign up at MNEnergySmart.com or call 651-292-3902.

MNimize: We are also promoting restaurants to sign up for the MNimize program. This program will provide a free site visit for food businesses that are interested in reducing their waste. Businesses will also receive:

- A \$500 MNimize rebate toward expenses to reduce single-use plastics;
- Waste reduction funding information and assistance with applications;
- Operational recommendations; and
- Recognition for participating in the program.

Learn more about MNimize and sign up at mnimize.org or call 612-428-1480.

I would be happy to jump on a phone call to discuss this more and answer any questions you may have. Please let me know if you are interested and we can find a time!



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Sincerely,

 Name



PHONE CALL SCRIPT

Introduction

“Hello—My name is [name] and I am a Sustainability Commissioner for the City of Minnetonka. I was calling to talk about energy efficiency. Are you the property manager or owner at [restaurant]_ _?”

[Yes] “Great!” *Move to next square.*

[No] “Who should I contact about a free energy efficiency and waste reduction assessment?”
Ask for their contact info if they are not there, so you can call or email materials.

Energy Smart Background

“I wanted to share two programs. First, Energy Smart is a program that will provide a free assessment of your building to help you take a holistic look at how your restaurant uses energy and identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency, like HVAC recommendations, the installation of LED lighting, or upgrades to commercial foodservice equipment.

The City of Minnetonka has created an Energy Action Plan that aims to bring energy and dollar savings to our businesses and community, so I am calling today to help restaurants like yours by connecting them to resources.

Does this sound like something that could benefit your restaurant?”

[Yes] “Wonderful!” *Move to MNimize Background*

[No] *Move to MNimize Background*

Provide Background

Second, we are also promoting restaurants to sign up for the MNimize program. This program will provide a free site visit for food businesses that are interested in reducing their waste. Businesses will also receive:

- A \$500 MNimize rebate toward expenses to reduce single-use plastics;
- Waste reduction funding information and assistance with applications;
- Operational recommendations; and
- Recognition for participating in the program.

Does this sound like something that could benefit your restaurant?”

[Yes] “Wonderful!” *Move to Confirm Info and Next Steps.*

[No] *Move to Handle Objections.*

Handle Objections

“Could you help me understand? What’s the biggest reason you’re not interested?”

Listen carefully.

“I understand there may be benefits to programs like this, but you’re concerned that [REPEAT OBJECTION (e.g., they can be a lot of extra work.)]”

[YES] *Move to Rephrase. Isolate. Get a yes.*

[If yes and another objection(s)] *circle back to rephrase “I understand” and summarize objection(s).* “I get it, even though it’s an interesting program, you’re concerned about [REPEAT OBJECTION (e.g., extra work and annoying your wait staff)]”

[YES] *Move to Rephrase. Isolate. Get a yes.*

[No, or if there’s a negative change in tone] *Express gratitude and terminate call.*

Rephrase. Isolate. Get a yes.

“Great. If I could make sure that you could take advantage of the program without [OBJECTION(S)], would there be any reason not to move ahead?”

[If no] “That’s good news! Energy Smart staff will be able to address your concerns, while you still take advantage of all the benefits of this free program.”

Move to Confirm Info and Next Steps.

[If yes] “Could you tell me more about your situation? We would like to help, and I bet we could find something just right for you.”

If no, or if there’s a negative tone, express gratitude and terminate call.

If yes, go back to Handle Objections.

Confirm Info and Next Steps (3 options)

1. "I'll be happy to pass along your information to the right people so that they can answer any questions you may have and get you scheduled for an assessment. Is this the best number to reach you?"

Get their name, phone number and email to have Energy Smart and/or MNimize call them.

Thank the customer and reassure them that they'll be hearing from someone in one week to get started. Offer your contact info in return so that the customer can contact you with follow up questions.

Share contact information with

- Energy Smart: Patrick Deal, pdeal@mnchamber.com
- MNimize: Hannah Bohn, hbohn@mnchamber.com

2. "I can email you the link to the sign-up form and additional materials, and you can schedule the assessment online. What is the best email?"

Email them the link to sign up. MNEnergySmart.com and/or mnimize.org/contact

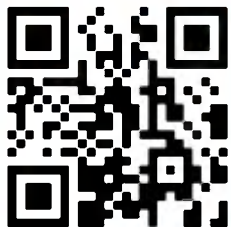
3. "I can fill out the scheduling form with you right now." MNEnergySmart.com or mnimize.org/contact

Fill out the online form for them at that moment.

NO-COST ENERGY ASSESSMENTS FOR RESTAURANTS IN MINNETONKA

Save Energy, Save Money & Boost Your Bottom Line

The City of Minnetonka is teaming up with Energy Smart to perform free on-site energy assessments to evaluate your business' potential to save energy, reduce operating costs, and earn Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy rebates.



Sign up today at MNEnergySmart.com
or call **651-292-3902**.



Minnetonka Sustainability Commissioners are coming to your business to talk about energy and waste reductions.

City of Minnetonka
14600 Minnetonka Blvd
Minnetonka, MN 55345



Equipment Rebates

When purchasing food service equipment, take advantage of the opportunity to make your business more energy-efficient and receive a rebate to help with the upfront cost. For electrical equipment, visit [xcelenergy.com/Business](https://www.xcelenergy.com/Business). For natural gas equipment, visit [centerpointenergy.com/foodservice](https://www.centerpointenergy.com/foodservice).



Waste Reduction

MNimize is a free program provided by the MN Chamber of Commerce and Hennepin County. Sign up to receive a \$500 rebate for reducing single-use plastic with the help of a sustainability specialist. To learn more, visit [mnimize.org/contact](https://www.mnimize.org/contact) or call **612-428-1480**.



Questions?

Contact Drew Ingvalson, City of Minnetonka, at **952-939-8293** or dingvalson@minnetonkamn.gov.



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Background Information for Restaurant Outreach

May 2023

City of Minnetonka Sustainability Commissioners are performing outreach to restaurants during May 2023-August 2023 to share about free energy assessments from Energy Smart and waste reduction program from MNimize. The goal is to get the business to sign up for an energy assessment and the waste reduction program.

Businesses can sign up for an energy assessment at *MNEnergySmart.com* and the waste reduction program at *minimize.org*.

Why are we doing outreach?

The City of Minnetonka has created an Energy Action Plan that aims to bring energy and dollar savings to our businesses and community. We have partnered with Energy Smart, a free energy assessment program for businesses from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

To increase impact, we are also promoting the Mimize program. This program aims to get businesses to reduce their waste through committing to waste reduction strategies.

What are we asking of Minnetonka restaurants?

Sign-up for a free energy assessment from Energy Smart. They provide whole building audits to help you identify opportunities for energy and cost savings, whether it involves HVAC recommendations, the installation of LED lighting, or upgrades to commercial foodservice equipment.

Sign up for the Mimize program, which is also free. They provide expert advice on reducing business waste, provide a \$500 rebate, and assistance to access additional funding.

How does Energy Smart program work?

- The consultation consists of a brief survey about the facility and business operation followed by a tour to take notes on major energy users and behavioral routines – HVAC, lighting systems, kitchens, manufacturing, etc...
- If the business has a copy of a recent Xcel Energy bill on hand, they can sign a release form and perform a bill history review up to 36 months to look for patterns and prioritize recommendations.
- Following the assessment – referrals are made to the next step of free programs to dig deeper into opportunities and start saving right away.

-Things to remember:

- Introduce yourself.
- Share information concisely. It should be about a 5 minute interaction.
- Goal is to get them signed up.
- If they are not interested or say no, be sure to ask if you can send them information.
- Thank them for their time! They are busy people!



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- A custom report of recommendations to reduce energy bills is included, as is access to your energy expert for ongoing assistance.

Why would restaurants want to do an energy assessment?

With an energy assessment, you get support with:

- Assessing your energy waste and potential for savings.
- Handling your rebate paperwork.
- Finding cost sharing programs, grants and lending programs for upgrades.
- Greening your business's energy use.
- Understanding your energy bill

How does the MNimize program work?

- There are two program requirements:
 - The program starts with a site visit from the MNimize team to establish baseline of single-use plastic usage, verify tier achievement, and identify opportunities for further reduction.
 - Businesses must commit to the MNimize Pledge: Offer single-use plastic accessories (utensils, straws, etc.) by request only.
- After a businesses decides on items they would like to swap, they will send you their rebate application and walk you through the application process. MNimize can also help do the research on reusable or certified compostable alternatives, offering several options at various price points.
- The MNimize team will even do a follow up visit after the new items have been delivered to set them up so they're ready for use!
- After the items have been in use for some time, MNimize will follow up to check in on how things are going, estimate the impact of your swap, and promote the business' achievement.



Energy Smart Assessment FAQ's

What is an Energy Smart Assessment?

Energy Smart consultants offer on-site assessments to evaluate your business' potential to save energy, reduce operating costs, and earn Xcel Energy rebates.

It's free?

Yes, there is no cost to the assessment or review to understand energy use in the building and identify areas for improvement & cost savings.

How long does an assessment take?

Assessments usually last about 30 minutes. Typical assessment time varies depending on level of engagement – some have ranged from 10 minutes for small facilities to 2 hours for engaged medium sized facilities.

Where do they need to go in my building?

Energy Smart will tour as much of the building as is allowed – from basement mechanical rooms to rooftops.

Is the assessment loud?

It is not loud. They will discreetly complete the initial survey and take notes on a tablet during the tour.

What do I get after the assessment?

- Follow up report with opportunities and incentive programs
- Review of recent purchases for rebate eligibility up to 24 months after purchase date
- Access to matching grant funds up to \$3,000 for rebate eligible equipment purchases

How much money do I save by doing an assessment and completing a project?

Businesses that complete a project with Energy Smart save \$1,600 annually on average.

Are there any strings attached?

Businesses are not out anything by participating – if they are doing everything right, they can pat themselves on the back and carry on.



Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
ENERGY SMART

For more information visit: mnchamber.com/energy-smart

Sign up today at: MNEnergySmart.com

Questions?

Contact Patrick Deal, Program Manager, Energy Smart:

P: 651.292.3902

C: 507.995.3269

pdeal@mnchamber.com



PARTNERS IN ENERGY
An Xcel Energy Community Collaboration

Success Story

Park Tavern

St. Louis Park bowling alley and restaurant pursues two high-level energy audits in preparation for equipment investments.

In the summer of 2021, Park Tavern was referred to Energy Smart by the City of St. Louis Park. With inevitable equipment replacements on the horizon, Park Tavern owner, Phil Weber, was eager to investigate potential rebate and grant opportunities before collecting project estimates.

Per Energy Smart's recommendation, Phil started this process by pursuing two high-level energy audits: Xcel Energy's Commercial Streamlined Assessment and CenterPoint Energy's Natural Gas Energy Analysis. By completing these audits, Park Tavern now has access to higher utility rebates, capturable within one year of the audit.

Additionally, the high efficiency equipment Park Tavern invests in qualifies for St. Louis Park's Climate Champions grant and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program. Lastly, Phil is planning to participate in the Saint Paul Port Authorities Trillion BTU financing program. This program will establish a positive cash flow payment schedule with energy savings exceeding the payment obligation. With these financial incentives in mind, Phil can invest with more confidence in new bowling equipment and rooftop units.



Highlights:

44,943 kWh saved annually

\$5,023 in first year cost savings

\$17,480 in grants and rebates

31.9 metric tons in avoided CO₂ emissions

"Energy Smart is helping me make necessary efficiency investments that otherwise would be financially unattainable. Updating my AC units and bowling equipment will benefit the environment and allow me to cut long-term operating costs."

Phil Weber

Success Story

Sooki & Mimi

Cooking up efficiency!

Energy Smart was introduced by Lake Street Council to the asset managing company, Vestalia Hospitality in 2020, where upon energy assessments were completed across their portfolio of facilities. While operations and maintenance were the primary focus at existing buildings, the new construction for Sooki & Mimi provided an opportunity to influence efficiency decisions during the design phase.

A holistic approach was taken to review efficiency measures for mechanical equipment. Energy Smart assisted in navigating a custom rebate process for the variable refrigerant flow (VRF) technology installed to optimize efficiency and comfort. VRF technology is a heat pump system, designed to exchange heat from one zone to another, which can be particularly valuable in a restaurant setting with such unique temperature requirements.

Ultimately, rebate and grant incentives were leveraged to supplement the capital expense of projects for the commercial water heaters, demand controlled kitchen ventilation and convection oven. Moving forward, Energy Smart looks forward to providing continued assistance to Vestalia Hospitality as they pursue deeper energy savings solutions.



Highlights:

\$10,711.36 in utility rebates

\$6,333 Business Energy Efficiency Grant +
Minneapolis Green Business Cost Share

828 dekatherms saved annually

79,344 kWh saved annually

\$13,695 in first year cost savings

110 metric tons of CO₂ emissions avoided

"The whole process, from start to finish, was very simple due in no small part to Energy Smart's guidance, knowledge, diligence, responsiveness and support."

*Vestalia
Director of Operations*

ENERGY SMART SUCCESS STORY

CITY OF BALATON



Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
ENERGY SMART

Small town finds big energy savings, grants, and rebates in Southwest Minnesota.

In Summer of 2020, Executive Director of the Balaton Economic Authority Lisa Graphenteen, reached out to Energy Smart interested in energy assessments for two of the City's buildings. One of the buildings was converted from a nursing home to a multi-tenant commercial space and with the City planning to lease more building space to businesses, Lisa needed assistance with energy efficiency upgrades that would help curb utility costs.

Working with Energy Smart, Lisa prioritized the building's lighting first and made future plans to update the aging boiler system. With the help of Xcel Energy rebates administered by Center for Energy and Environment's One-Stop Efficiency Shop and grant dollars from Energy Smart's Business Energy Efficiency Grant program, the City was able to replace the old fluorescent lighting. The City is now focused on finding deeper savings through HVAC upgrades in the new calendar year.

"Staff at Energy Smart and the Center for Energy and Environment were extremely helpful in walking us through the entire process and creating a valuable, easy-to-read energy report," said Graphenteen. "The report provided information that guided our decision making on energy improvements both in the short term and long term."

In total, the City of Balaton utilized \$5,050.33 in Xcel Energy rebates, \$992.83 in grant dollars from Energy Smart, \$3,750 in Clean Energy Resource Team (CERT) funding, and EDA funding of \$362.02. The City expects to save 40,701 kWh and \$4,800 annually with the new lighting upgrade.



HIGHLIGHTS

- **40,701 kWh** saved annually
- **\$4,800** in first year cost savings
- **\$10,155.18** in grants and rebates
- **28 metric tons** in avoided CO₂ emissions*

*Estimates of avoided CO₂ emissions are calculated using the [EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator](#)

ENERGY SMART SUCCESS STORY

GROUND ROUND



Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
ENERGY SMART

Winona Ground Round reveals deep fryer savings.

Tim Beier of Ground Round in Winona connected with Energy Smart in 2018 through Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy program. With many energy efficiency projects to consider, Ground Round looked to Energy Smart for guidance on which projects to prioritize.

Energy Smart, with the help of Xcel, determined cost savings would be significant if the restaurant replaced four inefficient fryers with ENERGY STAR®-rated models. Efficient fryers use a convenient oil-filtration system, allowing oil to last longer as well as making the disposal process easier for staff. "I was very happy to have an energy consultation and given the opportunity to see the savings on our fryers," said Beier. "Upgrading the fryers alone would save over \$4,000 per year, and we are saving fuel and using less cooking oil."

Xcel offered a rebate of \$1,000 for the four fryers, but to bring the project to fruition, Ground Round was able to secure an additional \$2,500 from Energy Smart's Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program. The grant motivates businesses to complete projects that would not otherwise be implemented without additional incentives.

"We were able to purchase a two door cooler with the rebate money we received. Overall, we have been extremely satisfied working with Energy Smart."



HIGHLIGHTS

- **672** dekatherms of natural gas saved annually
- **\$4,334.40** in first year cost savings
- **\$3,500** in grants and rebates

SUCCESS STORY

ROYAL GOLF CLUB



Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
ENERGY SMART

Lake Elmo company adds demand control ventilation and LED lighting to maximize savings

Being a premier golf club in today's competitive market means being innovative and operating efficiently. That's why [Royal Golf Club](#) (RGC) of Lake Elmo pursued energy-saving upgrades when renovating their clubhouse. In the kitchen, an inefficient exhaust system was replaced with demand control ventilation (DCV) which automatically senses when cooking is taking place and adjusts the speed of the exhaust fans—saving the club thousands of dollars each year. New LED lighting was also installed throughout the clubhouse.

Energy Smart worked with Mike Yates at Xcel Energy to assist RGC in maximizing their utility rebates. John Parsons, RGC Facilities Director, said, "When I met with members of the Energy Smart team, they found an additional \$22,000 in rebates for which we qualified." With the upgrades in place, RGC is now enjoying an estimated annual cost savings of \$15,565, and an annual energy savings of 125,045 kilowatt hours and 1,398 decatherms.

"Overall, it was a great experience," remarked Parsons. "I highly recommend Energy Smart!"

HIGHLIGHTS

UTILITY REBATE: \$22,117

ESTIMATED ANNUAL ENERGY SAVINGS: 125,045 kWh

ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS: \$15,565



Contact Energy Smart today to tap into utility rebates for your energy projects. Contact us at info@mnergysmart.com or **(651) 292-3902**.

SUCCESS STORY

NEW CENTERPOINT ENERGY PARTNERSHIP

To advance commercial energy upgrades in the CenterPoint Energy utility service area, the Energy Smart program began partnering with the utility in 2017. During the year, staff conducted 212 site visits and facilitated 15 energy upgrades at CenterPoint customer locations. As a result, Energy Smart facilitated nearly three times as many natural gas upgrades than in any previous program year.

The improvements completed by customers covered a wide variety of natural gas upgrades, including the installation of efficient convection ovens, new boilers, kitchen demand controlled ventilation systems, efficient water heaters, and more.

HIGHLIGHTS

Gandi Mahal

CenterPoint Energy rebate: \$1,170

All Saints Lutheran

CenterPoint Energy rebate: \$1,000



SUCCESS STORY

KOWALSKI'S MARKET

Popular grocer Kowalski's Markets has expanded to include 11 Twin Cities locations. The company — operating in a narrow-margin, competitive industry — recently turned to Energy Smart to assess energy use at all its stores. While doing so, Energy Smart staff identified 10 energy upgrades that qualified for utility rebates.

"The Minnesota Chamber's Energy Smart program worked closely with Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy to help us uncover more than \$75,000 in utility rebates that we were not aware were available," reported Darren Hines, Kowalski's maintenance director. "The staff was great to work with."

HIGHLIGHTS

Utility Rebate: \$76,375

**Annual Electric Savings:
349,912 kWh**

**Annual Natural Gas Savings:
2,858 dekatherms**





SUCCESS STORY

CITY OF MAPLEWOOD PARTNERSHIP

Energy savings offer a cash flow boost to smaller businesses. That's one reason why the City of Maplewood's Benchmark Your Business Program partnered with Energy Smart to help businesses identify energy-saving opportunities, find potential funding assistance, facilitate utility rebates, and benchmark their energy usage.

Shann Finwall, environmental planner with the city, says, "Our partnership with Energy Smart allowed us to work with small, local businesses and help them achieve energy and cost savings." LED lighting upgrades were completed at Sparkle Auto Sales, Gulden's Restaurant & Bar, and Maplewood Bakery, increasing efficiency and earning utility rebates.

HIGHLIGHTS

Project Cost: \$11,423

Utility Rebate: \$3,075

Annual Energy Savings: 43,708 kWh

Annual Cost Savings: \$4,966

SUCCESS STORY

MERCADO CENTRAL

Managing operating costs for 38 businesses in a common space is a continual challenge for Juan Linares, Administrator at Mercado Central in Minneapolis. Linares was interested in upgrading the lighting to LED, but worried about upfront costs and finding consensus among decision makers. Energy Smart and partner Lake Street Council entered the conversation and met with the organization's Capital Improvement Committee. "When they did," said Linares, "they played a key role in the project moving forward." A \$3,000 Minnesota Chamber of Commerce grant was also important in helping Mercado Central become more energy efficient.

HIGHLIGHTS

Project cost: \$26,354

Utility rebate: \$9,777

Year 1 Energy Cost Savings: \$5,669

Annual Energy Savings: 100,374 kWh





SUCCESS STORY

SEWARD COMMUNITY CO-OP

The Seward Community Co-op (SCC) has been a leader in sustainable food in Minneapolis for 40 years. With customer demand growing, SCC needed to expand. They purchased the nearby Creamery building to accommodate dining and office spaces, and a production facility. Energy Smart helped them secure rebates for efficient HVAC units, demand-controlled kitchen ventilation, and an efficient dishwasher. The process required persistence, but eased the up-front costs for SCC. “Energy efficiency speaks to our [goal] to sustain a healthy community that has positive environmental impacts,” says Leo Sanders, Facility Manager.

HIGHLIGHTS

Project cost:
\$75,573 (RTUs, DCKV and DW)

Utility Rebate: \$5,955

Year 1 Energy Cost Savings:
\$1,971.72

Annual Energy Savings: 32,578 kWh

MNimize

MNimize is a campaign to recognize and support businesses as they take action to achieve their sustainability goals. We are helping food service businesses get rid of single-use plastic and we want you to join us.

A MNimize team member will complete a free visit with you to identify single-use plastic reduction opportunities at your business. Then we'll help you research alternatives, educate staff, and apply for funding—whatever makes sense for your business.



Once you've achieved your reduction goals, we'll celebrate and promote your accomplishment!

What's in it for your business?

- Eligible businesses can receive up to \$500 toward the cost of reducing single-use plastic.
- Receive recognition for your actions and promotion as a MNimize participant.
- Reduce your on-site waste and/or waste that is passed along to customers.
- Reduce your procurement costs.
- Ensure compliance with (or get ahead of) local mandates.
- Appeal to existing and new customers

**READY TO
MNimize**

let's do this!

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mnimize.org





**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 7B
Meeting of May 16, 2023**

Title: Electric Yard Equipment Discussion

Report From: Drew Ingvalson, Associate Planner/Sustainability Coordinator

Submitted through: Julie Wischnack, AICP, Community Development Director
Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

Action Requested: Motion Informational Public Comment Vote
Form of Action: Resolution Ordinance Other: Comments N/A
Votes needed 5 votes Other N/A

Summary Statement

The sustainability commission work plan includes “gas-powered lawn equipment discussion (opportunities to promote electrification)” for Q2 of 2023.

Recommended Action

Review the information and discuss alternative methods that the city and commission use to encourage people to move from gas to electric yard equipment.

Strategic Profile Relatability

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Strength & Operational Excellence | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe & Healthy Community |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability & Natural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Livable & Well-Planned Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure & Asset Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Inclusiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |

Statement: See [Strategic Profile](#).

Gas vs. Electric Yard Equipment

There are several areas to consider when purchasing yard equipment. Most of the information below will relate to lawnmowers, but some items will relate to other yard equipment (leaf blowers, chainsaws, hedge trimmers, snow blowers, etc.)

- **Purchase Price:** The price for a new, residential electric lawnmower has gone down considerably in the past few years, and the cost has even become closer when compared to their gas-powered counterparts. Specifically, purchasing a gas-powered, self-propelled 21-inch lawn mower from a box store will generally cost somewhere from \$300-\$800, depending on brand and other elements. While purchasing an electric lawn mower with a battery will cost somewhere from \$400-\$1100, depending on battery voltage and brand.

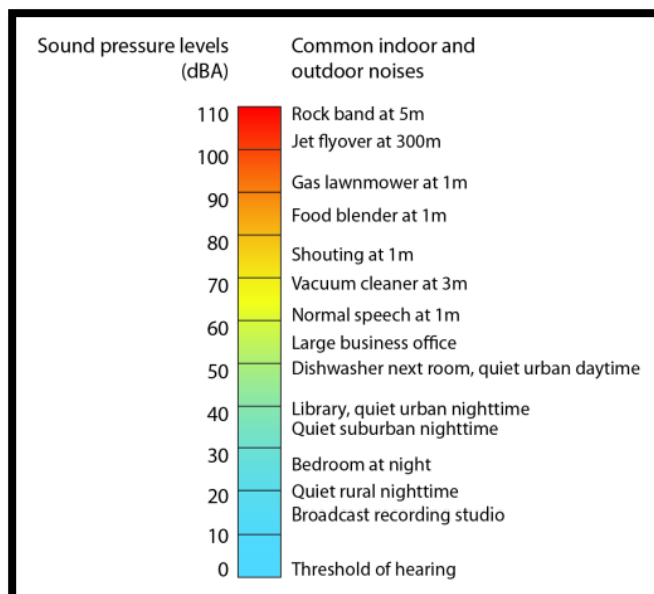
- **Fuel Price:** Fuel price depends on the current cost of electricity and gasoline; however, general research shows that running a gas-powered lawn mower costs around 4-5 times more than the amount of running an electric lawn mower. On average, mowing a ½ acre lot (the minimum lot size in Minnetonka) would cost around 2 dollars for a gas-powered lawn mower, but only 10-50 cents for an electric lawn mower.
- **Maintenance/repair:** The maintenance for electric lawn mowers is significantly lower than what is needed for a gas power lawn mower. Electric lawn mowers, and other electric lawn equipment, do not require oil changes or mixing, filter changes, fuel removal, spark plug replacement, etc. However, for larger repair issues, an electric lawn mower owner may need to ship a malfunctioning lawn mower if major issues arise, while there are several local options for gas lawn mower repair.
- **Power:** Gas-powered lawnmowers provide more power in comparison to electric lawnmowers. As such, a gas-powered lawn mower will be better suited to mowing long, thick grass. However, electric lawnmowers are able to adequately handle a typical turf lawn.
- **Lifespan:** Most lawn mowing companies have a 3-5 year limited warranty for batteries. Lawn equipment batteries lose efficiency as they are used and, unfortunately, may not last much longer than five years before they need to be replaced. This can become rather costly as batteries are an expensive part of the equipment; however, the lawn equipment can last much longer with replacement batteries.

Alternatively, gas-powered lawnmowers can easily last ten years or more with proper care and maintenance.

- **Run time:** Electric lawnmowers and yard equipment have a shorter run time than their gas counterpart. An issue for lawn care service companies is that they don't have time to charge a battery for 60-90 minutes between use, and purchasing multiple battery packs can get expensive and more difficult to haul. At this time, a homeowner can reasonably mow their ½ to 1-acre lawn with a few battery packs, but homeowners with larger lawns or lawn companies would need numerous battery packs and would need a lot of time for charging batteries.

- **Noise:** A significant difference between electric and gas-powered lawn equipment is noise. Gas-powered lawn mower noise can reach 85-95 decibels (leaf blowers get to about this same noise level). This is slightly louder than a food blender at 1 meter away.

Electric lawnmowers (and leaf blowers) emit 10-20 fewer decibels of noise compared to their gas counterparts (65-75 decibels). This is closer to the noise of a vacuum cleaner at 3 meters away and just a

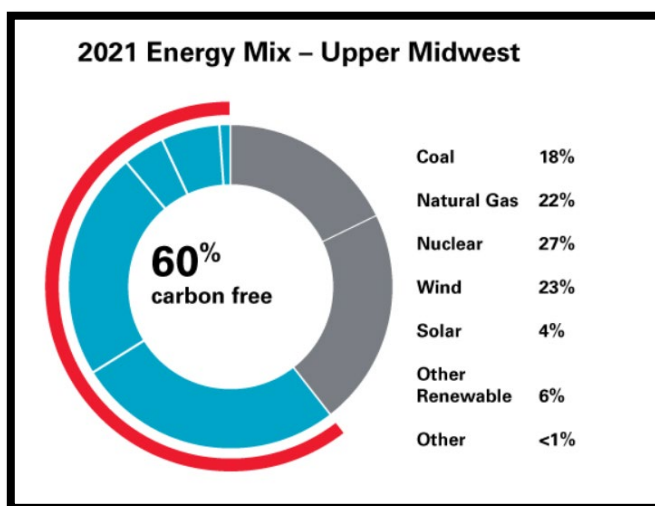


little bit louder than normal speech at 1 meter away.¹

- **Emissions/spills:** Gas-powered lawn equipment, especially ones that have two-stroke engines, emit a significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions. "According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), one hour of operating a new gasoline lawn mower emits the same amount of volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxide as driving a new car 45 miles. Garden equipment engines produce up to 5% of the nation's air pollution."²

In addition, to air pollution, gas-powered lawn equipment is a large contributor to groundwater pollution. "EPA estimates that over 17 million gallons of gasoline are spilled as garden equipment is refueled each year."³ Alternatively, there are no liquid fuels used for electric lawn equipment, and, thus, there are no direct spill concerns with them.

On the other hand, electric yard equipment's carbon footprint is smaller and also depends on where you get your energy. For example, in Minnetonka, Xcel Energy is the electric provider for all residential and commercial properties. In 2021, 60% of Xcel Energy's Upper Midwest power generation (Minnesota's Territory) came from carbon-free sources: biomass, hydroelectric, nuclear plants, solar panels, and wind turbines. The rest was generated by fossil fuels, including coal and natural gas.⁴ As such, electric lawn mower users, without making any renewable energy commitments, would be using 60% renewable energy when they mow their lawns.



States and local governments banning gas lawn equipment sales

Multiple states have considered bans on gas-powered lawn equipment or their sale in recent years. However, only California has approved a bill to limit the future use of gas-powered lawn equipment. Specifically, California passed a bill that will ban the sale of new gas-powered yard equipment (lawnmowers and leaf blowers) starting in 2024. The bill will also restrict the sale of portable gas-powered generators in 2028.

This year, the Minnesota House introduced H.F. 1715, which states that all new lawn and garden equipment sold or distributed in Minnesota after Jan. 1, 2025, will be powered solely by electricity. This sale and distribution ban would include lawnmowers, leaf blowers, hedge clippers, chain saws, lawn edgers, string trimmers, and brush cutters; however, snow blowers were not included.⁵ Most recently, this bill was referred to the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee.

¹ <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/p-gen6-01.pdf>

² <https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/ard-22.pdf>

³ <https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/ard-22.pdf>

⁴ <https://mn.my.xcelenergy.com/s/energy-portfolio/power-generation>

⁵ <https://www.house.mn.gov/members/profile/news/15301/48246>

Some municipalities in the nation (Burlington, Vermont and Washington, D.C.) have enacted bans or restrictions on gas yard equipment. In response to municipal bans, the State of Georgia recently passed a bill to restrict local governments from enacting a ban on yard equipment. City staff is unaware of any municipal bans on gas-powered lawn equipment in Minnesota.

Electric yard equipment funding

Currently, there are a lot of funding opportunities for a variety of sustainable purchases (solar panels, electric vehicles, home efficiency, electrification, etc.); however, there are very few funding options available to support electric yard equipment.

- Federal Funding: On the federal level, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has opened up several funding opportunities for property owners, businesses, and non-profits. The IRA provides funding for electric vehicles, on-site solar, heat pumps, electrification, insulation, and more. Regarding electric yard equipment, the IRA provides a 30 percent tax credit for large, commercial-grade lawnmowers. However, residential grade lawn mowers were, unfortunately, not included.
- Minnesota and Hennepin County Funding: Staff researched state and county information but did not find any funding opportunities for residential property owners.
- Utility Providers: Xcel Energy, Minnetonka's energy provider, has several rebate programs for homeowners and businesses. However, staff reached out to the company and was informed that they do not have a rebate program for electric yard equipment. Researching other energy providers, staff found two adjacent electric utility providers that gave \$50 rebates for electric yard equipment, [Dakota Electric Association](#) and [McLeod Co-op Power](#).

City of Minnetonka promotion of electric lawn mowers

The City of Minnetonka has promoted electric yard equipment in a variety of ways in the last few years:

- Webinar: In 2021, hosted a webinar presentation as part of the Sustainable Minnetonka Webinar Series: [Outdoor Electric Equipment](#), which is still available online. The presenter was the director of the American Lung Association. In the presentation, she covered equipment technology, costs, equipment options, health benefits, and more.
- Events: In 2022, the City of Minnetonka hosted an [Everything Electric event](#). This event had both electric vehicles and community members/businesses that presented their electric lawnmowers. The event promoted an electric golf cart, lawnmowers, weed whipper, snow blower, and chainsaw. In addition, the event had a local company, Gopher Ace, which sells electric yard equipment.
- Minnetonka Memo: The city regularly promotes various sustainability items within the Minnetonka Memo. Most recently, the city encouraged residents to switch to electric yard equipment in the [April 2023 Memo edition](#).

What are our comparable cities doing?

The staff has reviewed our comparable cities and found that most cities are promoting the adoption of electric yard equipment in similar ways as the City of Minnetonka. Specifically, cities

have hosted electric vehicle ride-and-drive events and included electric yard equipment promotion.

City adoption of electric yard equipment.

Where appropriate, the City of Minnetonka does purchase electric grounds equipment used for city maintenance, converting from gas-powered. In addition to the two fully electric vehicles and multiple hybrid vehicles added to the city fleet, the city has invested in an electric golf cart for use at community events, weed whips, and chainsaws. Purchase of the electric equipment is based on the city's replacement schedule of the equipment combined with needed operation timeframes, including available equipment and battery life. Moving forward, the city will continue to consider electric options when purchasing and replacing equipment.



**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 7C
Meeting of May 16, 2023**

Title: Work Plan Amendment and Event Materials
Report From: Drew Ingvalson, Associate Planner/Sustainability Coordinator
Submitted through: Julie Wischnack, AICP, Community Development Director
Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

Action Requested: Motion Informational Public Comment Vote
Form of Action: Resolution Ordinance Other: Comments N/A
Votes needed 5 votes Other N/A

Summary Statement

Each year, the sustainability commission creates a work plan that is reviewed and approved by the city council.

The items below were scheduled to be discussed in Q2 of 2023. Staff is recommending these items be moved to the timeframe shown below.

- Discuss ways the city and commission can promote watershed district grant opportunities (proposing to be moved to Q4).
- Organics recycling discussion (renter options, city participation, pricing issues, opportunities to increase participation) (proposing to be moved to Q4).

Recommended Action

Amend the sustainability commission work plan as described in the report and approve the watershed grant handouts for event materials.

Strategic Profile Relatability

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Strength & Operational Excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe & Healthy Community |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability & Natural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Livable & Well-Planned Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure & Asset Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Inclusiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |

Statement: See [Strategic Profile](#).

Background

The purpose of the work plan is to provide the city council with an outline for the commission's work and create a guide for the commission's work the following year. These items are placed into specific quarters of the year to create a timeline for when items will be reviewed. Staff is recommending that these items be moved to ensure the commission has the best information available to discuss and make recommendations.

Discuss ways the city and commission can promote watershed district grant opportunities.

Staff is recommending that this discussion item be moved from Q2 to Q4.

As discussed at previous meetings, the city has created a new initiative called [Resilient Minnetonka](#). This program provides residents personalized assistance from the city's natural resources engagement coordinator based on resident responses to a short survey. This assistance includes, but is not limited to:

- Education events, online learning modules, and other resources;
- Funding opportunities (including watershed district and state cost-share grants); and
- Technical assistance and incentives (such as site consultations, residential buckthorn pick-up, rebate funding, and a native plant sale discount while funding lasts).

Unfortunately, the staff person managing the Resilient Minnetonka program (Christine Petersen, Natural Resources Engagement Coordinator) is unavailable to present at the May 16th sustainably commission meeting. Staff recommends moving this discussion item to get an overview and update on the Resilient Minnetonka program at the commission's September or November meeting.

If commissioners haven't already, it is recommended that they review the [Resilient Minnetonka webpage](#) and subscribe to the city's [natural resources monthly e-bulletin](#) to stay up to date on the Resilient Minnetonka program and other city natural resources events and initiatives.

Watershed District Grant Handouts

There are several different layers of government, and sometimes they overlap each other (for example, school districts, cities, and counties all overlap one another). One government layer that also overlaps these political boundaries, with a very specific mission, is watershed districts. Watershed districts have a mission to protect and manage water resources based on natural water pathway boundaries rather than political boundaries. Due to this type of boundary, watersheds overlap both city and county boundaries.

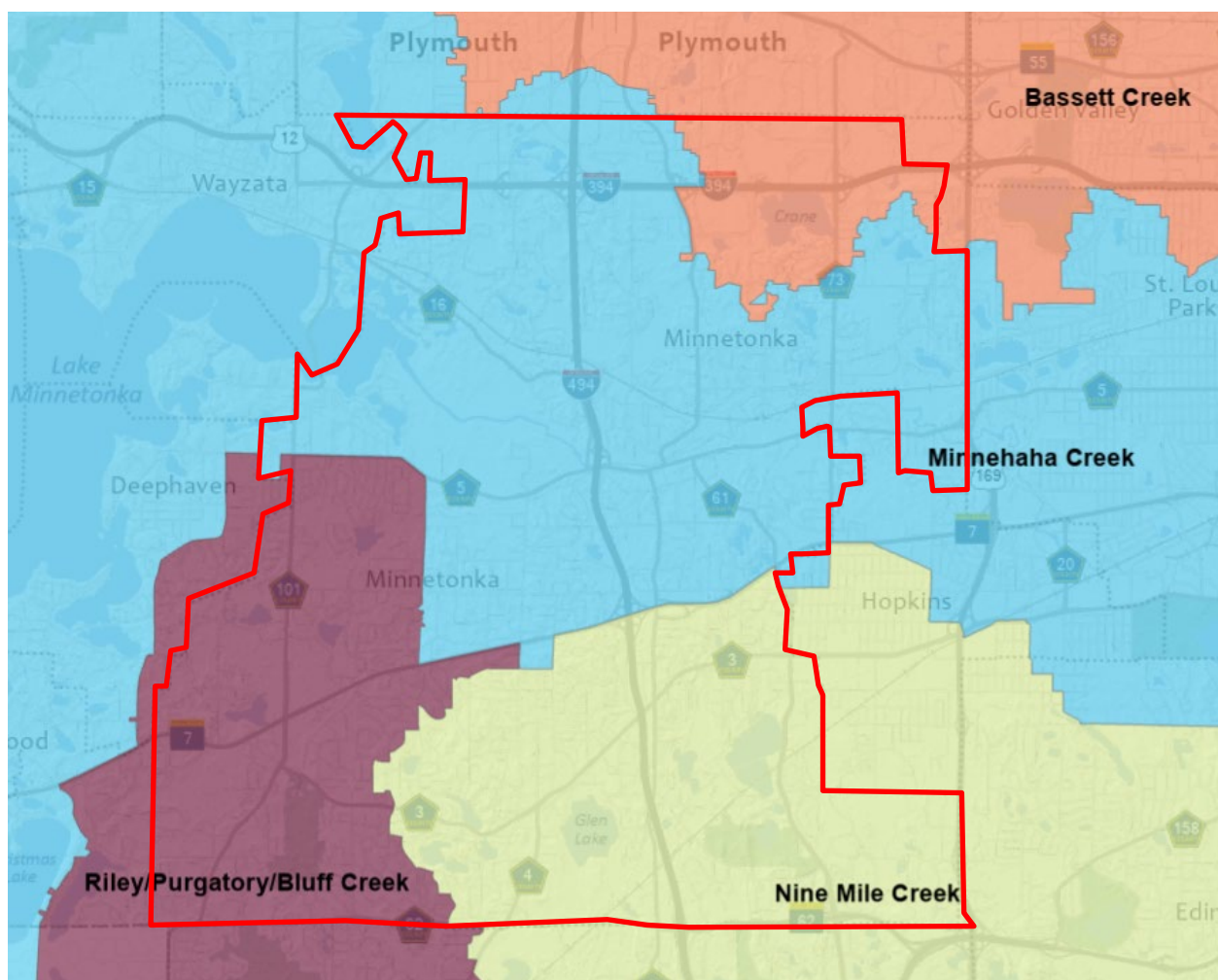
Within the City of Minnetonka, there are four watershed districts (Nine Mile Creek, Bassett Creek, Minnehaha Creek, and Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek). The map on the following page shows the four different districts within the city.

Currently, there are two watershed districts that have grants available for residents in their district.

- [Nine Mile Bluff Creek Watershed District Grants](#): Grant awards can cover up to 50% of the project cost. The minimum grant award is \$500. The maximum awards are \$3,000 for residential projects, \$5,000 for townhome, condominium, or lake associations, and \$10,000 for commercial, government, or non-profit projects.
 - o Stewardship Grants: Help homeowners, associations, businesses, schools, and other organizations install projects that prevent stormwater pollution to our lakes and Nine Mile Creek. Examples of projects include rain gardens, shoreline buffers, and permeable pavers. **The deadline has passed.**
 - o Native Habitat Restoration Grants: Help homeowners, associations, businesses, schools, and other organizations install projects that restore native plant and wildlife habitats and lead to a healthier ecosystem. Examples of projects include prairie and woodland restorations. **Aug. 14, 2023 deadline.**

- [Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District Grants](#): Grants awards can cover 25-75% of the project costs and have a maximum amount of \$1,500 for homeowners and \$10,000 for governments, businesses, and non-profits. **Applications are typically accepted on a rolling basis from late winter/early spring through October or until funds are committed.**
 - o Stewardship Grants: Funding and technical help for projects that protect and improve water resources. Examples: Raingardens, buffers, habitat restoration, tree trenches, rainwater reuse.
 - o Action Grants: Small, simple grants for team projects and activities that protect clean water. Examples: an Earth Day clean-up, planting native flowers with a group of friends. Who can apply: residents, students, local businesses, groups, or troops.
 - o Educator Grants: Support for educators to incorporate water resources into their teaching. Examples: a trip to a nature center, building terrariums, nets for exploring a creek. Who can apply: teachers and informal educators.

The staff has received a grant handout from Nine Mile Creek Watershed District and Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (see attached). Staff recommends the commission have these handouts available at city events and learn more about the city's current initiatives at a meeting in Q4 of 2023.



Organics recycling discussion (renter options, city participation, pricing issues, opportunities to increase participation)

Staff is recommending that this discussion item be moved from Q2 to Q4.

The City of Minnetonka has been selected to host a 2023 GreenCorps member that will focus on waste reduction, recycling, and organics management. The staff has recreated a work plan for this individual. One area of the work plan involves multi-family organic recycling work, including:

- Use the new city multi-family registration information and compile their current participation in organic recycling.
- Create organic recycling handouts to share with both residents and facility managers. The handouts will provide benefits to organic recycling, examples of facilities that participate in organic recycling, best practices, funding opportunities, and how to participate.
 - o An opportunity that the member will share is available grants. Specifically, Hennepin County currently has grants available for multi-family buildings that:
 - [Improve site recycling](#) (including organics). Eligible projects include contracting new hauling services (funding for up to 6 months) or installing enclosures/construction upgrades (50% of costs up to \$10,000); and
 - [Purchase compostable bins and bags](#) (up to \$3,000).
- The member will reach out to all building managers (via email, phone, and/or in-person meetings) to discuss their facility's needs. If possible, the member will create a survey to measure the number of residents that are interested in participating in organic recycling.
- The member will assist facilities with the next steps to increase or start organic recycling at each facility. This will include providing step-by-step instructions and best practices for facility managers.

The GreenCorps member is scheduled to join the City of Minnetonka in mid-September. Staff recommends that the member starts their multi-family organics recycling work at the beginning of their assignment and report to the sustainability commission at their November meeting in Q4 of 2023.

Amended 2023 Sustainability Commission Work Plan

City of Minnetonka

1st Quarter

Area	Items
Events and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ambassador events (Winter Farmer’s Market) ✓ Review tabling materials ✓ Discuss ways the city can celebrate 2023 Earth Day (Saturday, April 22nd) ✓ Share sustainability programs and initiatives with personal networks to spread awareness in the community
Education and Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sustainable Minnetonka Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider changes to the award program ✓ Present and preview the updated Sustainable Minnetonka Webpage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include tools available to the public (Regional Indicators Initiative, solar tools, etc.) ✓ Decide on 2023 Sustainable Minnetonka Webinar topics (quarterly)
Input and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attend kick-off meeting
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attend a tour at Hennepin County Energy Recovery Center ○ Attend environmental justice presentation ✓ Attend other tours or presentations
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Foster new partnerships and build existing relationships with other organizations, commissions, and others
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Present information on no-cost energy audits for multi-family buildings and non-profits with the sustainability commission. Sustainability commission members share ideas on how to promote programs. ✓ Share vulnerability assessment data, if available

Amended 2023 Sustainability Commission Work Plan

City of Minnetonka

2nd Quarter

Area	Items
<p>Events and Outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ambassador events (Summer Fest, Summer Farmer’s Market) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Obtain public input on CAAP ✓ Consider changes for the "Everything Electric" event ✓ Plan for solar energy event (Solar Power Hours) ✓ Discuss ways the city and commission can promote watershed district grant opportunities ✓ Host Earth Day event/program (if desired by commission) ✓ Sustainable Minnetonka Webinar Series or other presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attend and present where applicable ✓ Share sustainability programs and initiatives with personal networks to spread awareness in the community
<p>Education and Recognition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sustainable Minnetonka Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Post the application on the city website ○ Promote awards on various city platforms ○ SC members consider additional strategies to promote awards
<p>Input and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CAAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attend workshops/meetings ✓ Discuss and provide input on sustainability commission learning opportunities (presentations/tours)
<p>Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ City staff presentation on city trail planning and/or stormwater, if available ✓ Attend other tours or presentations
<p>Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Foster new partnerships and build existing relationships with other organizations, commissions, and others
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Organics recycling discussion (renter options, city participation, pricing issues, opportunities to increase participation) ✓ Gas-powered lawn equipment discussion (opportunities to promote electrification) ✓ Recommend additional learning opportunities ✓ Review and approve sustainability commission bylaws ✓ Elect Chair and Vice-chair

Amended 2023 Sustainability Commission Work Plan

City of Minnetonka

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3rd Quarter

Area	Items
Events and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Potential ambassador events (Summer Farmer’s Market) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Obtain public input on CAAP ✓ Host Everything Electric Event ✓ Host on-site solar energy event (Solar Power Hour) ✓ Discuss ways the commission and city can promote responsible chloride use ✓ Sustainable Minnetonka Webinar Series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attend and present where applicable ✓ Share sustainability programs and initiatives with personal networks to spread awareness in the community
Educational and Recognition Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Present and promote winners of the Sustainable Minnetonka Awards
Input and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CAAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attend workshops/meetings
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invite a guest speaker to present to SC on chlorides (best practices, water softeners, effect on the environment, etc.) ○ Attend recycling facility tour ○ City staff provide an overview of the city's invasive species removal and management ✓ Attend other tours or presentations
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Foster new partnerships and build existing relationships with other organizations, commissions, and others
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Update on the city's promotion of no-cost energy audits for non-profits and multi-family buildings ✓ Staff follow up on meetings with community solar garden providers ✓ Discuss ways to encourage community participation in off-site renewable energy

Amended 2023 Sustainability Commission Work Plan

City of Minnetonka

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Request Hennepin County to attend a sustainability commission meeting to present on county initiatives and how Minnetonka can assist in shared goals
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4th Quarter

Topics	Items
<p>Events and Outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Potential ambassador events (City Open House, Winter Farmer’s Market) ✓ Learn about City’s Resilient Minnetonka program and discuss ways the city and commission can help promote watershed district grant opportunities ✓ Sustainable Minnetonka Webinar Series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attend and present where applicable ✓ Share sustainability programs and initiatives with personal networks to spread awareness in the community
<p>Educational and Recognition Material</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recognize Sustainable Minnetonka Award winners
<p>Input and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CAAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attend workshops/meetings ○ Review the final draft of CAAP
<p>Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research alternate transportation opportunities (future light rail, car share, e-bikes, etc.) ○ Attend a presentation on PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances) ✓ Attend other tours or presentations
<p>Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participate in metro environmental/sustainable commission workshops ✓ Continue to foster new partnerships and build existing relationships with other organizations, commissions, and others



Learn more at rpbcmd.org/grants

3/9/2023

Eligibility

- Project must be located in the watershed district.
- Applicant must be a homeowner, non-profit organization, business, school, or municipality.
- Applicant must be property owner or representative.
- Applicant must agree to maintain project for 5 to 10 years, depending on property type.



Shoreline restoration

Maximum Grant Awards

Grant money is paid out like a rebate. The grantee installs the project as outlined in the grant agreement and submits receipts and other documentation to get reimbursed.

Applicant Category	Cost share percentage	Cost share maximum award value
Homeowner	Up to 75% of project cost	Not to exceed \$1,500 to \$5,000 (depends on project type)
Non-profit property owner	Up to 75% of project cost	Not to exceed \$10,000 to \$20,000 (depends on project type)
Municipality, school, business	Up to 50% of project cost	Not to exceed \$10,000 to \$50,000 (depends on project type)

The size of the cost share (award) for a project is determined by how well the project meets program objectives. Habitat restoration, lake shoreline restoration, and buffer strip projects may also qualify for professional maintenance support during the first three years after installation.

Visit the grant webpage to see how you can **MAXIMIZE** your cost share!



Overview of Grant Process

Request a site visit

Develop a plan

Submit an application

Sign an agreement

Install the project

Submit a report

Get reimbursed

Maintain your project

Projects that Qualify

The grant program supports seven types of projects, each with its own award limits and requirements.

Native Planting | Add native plants to your landscape

- Use funds to purchase native plants from an approved native plant supplier
- Include a diverse mix of plants including keystone species to support insects
- Maintenance must be ecologically-friendly

Habitat Restoration | Restore a developed area to native habitat

- Existing condition of site must be impervious (hard or paved surface) or near impervious (standard lawn/turfgrass); severely eroded or otherwise highly degraded natural sites may also be considered for grant
- Project size must be at least 250 square feet (contiguous)
- Use only native plants from approved native plant supplier/vendor
- Include a diverse mix of plants including keystone species to support insects
- Maintenance must be ecologically-friendly

Lake Shoreline Restoration | Naturalize your shoreline

- Must restore at least 25 feet of shoreline or 25% of shoreline, whichever is greater, with an average natural area width of 10 feet
- Design must utilize bioengineering techniques such as native plants, soil pillows, live staking, coir logs, etc.
- Use only native plants from approved native plant supplier/vendor
- Include a diverse mix of plants including keystone species to support insects
- Maintenance must be ecologically-friendly

Buffer Strip | Create a buffer strip to protect a lake, pond or creek

- Must extend at least 25 feet along shoreline with average width of 10 feet
- Use only native plants from approved native plant supplier/vendor
- Include a diverse mix of plants including keystone species
- Maintenance must be ecologically-friendly

Alternative Lawn | Convert turfgrass to an insect-friendly lawn

- Existing condition must be standard lawn
- Project size must be at least 100 square feet (contiguous)
- Must submit seed species list and seed application rate
- Maintenance must be ecologically-friendly

Stormwater Best Management Practice | Install a BMP

- BMP is defined within the Minnesota Stormwater Manual.
- Funds may be used for stormwater best management practices above and beyond permit requirements.
- Priority is given to municipalities and commercial/association properties with permanent maintenance staff.

Rain Barrel | Reduce runoff through capture and reuse

- Grant maximum is \$100 per rain barrel
- Select a drainage area to be captured and re-used

Project Requirements

To be eligible for Stewardship Grant Program, some project types have requirements related to native plants and ecologically friendly maintenance. Below is how RPBCWD defines native plants and ecologically friendly maintenance.

Native Plant Rules

- 1 Native plants must be in their natural form.** Cultivars (cultivated varieties) are NOT allowed. Tip: Purchase plants from a nursery that specializes in native plants.
- 2 Native plants must be purchased from approved source.** See the resources section on the grant webpage for a list of potential vendors.
- 3 Plant selection must be appropriate for site conditions.** In other words, evaluate your site's sun exposure and soil conditions and find out what plants will do well there. Also, avoid selecting herbaceous plants that have been grown in containers for more than two years.
- 4 Plant selection must include at least three species that bloom in spring, three that bloom in summer, and three that bloom in fall.** All flowering plants count — including trees, shrubs, and grasses! Staff are happy to offer species suggestions!
- 5 Plant selection must include at least one keystone species.** A list of keystone species may be found on the resources section of the grant webpage. Don't worry - we can help you select a keystone species!

Learn more on the grants webpage
rpbcwd.org/grants

Questions?

Contact Liz Forbes,
LForbes@rpbcwd.org
or 952-607-6481



Ecologically Friendly Maintenance



Do not use fungicides or insecticides. These kill “good” and “bad” fungi and insects.



Limit herbicide use to weed control and carefully follow label directions.



Plan to pull or otherwise control weeds at least three times during the growing season.



Native plants usually don't need fertilizer. If used, limit to natural fertilizers such as compost.



Limit watering to the plant establishment phase (usually the first couple of years).



Select appropriate weather conditions for proper planting and seeding.



Provide soft landings (native plants, leaf litter, & plant debris) under trees to support overwintering & pupating insects.



Practice “messy” gardening by leaving some dead plant material in place to protect soil & provide homes for native insects and birds.



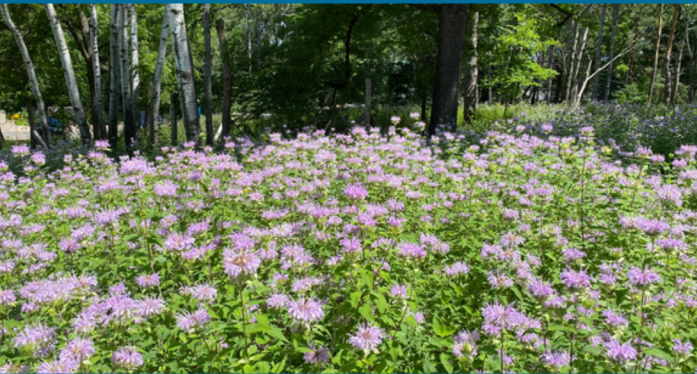
Project Eligibility

To receive grant funding, projects must achieve one or more goals:

- Improve water quality or increase storage or infiltration of water
- Protect and preserve groundwater quality and quantity
- Preserve, protect, and restore native plant and wildlife habitat

Example Projects

Habitat Restoration Grant: Prairie Restoration



Stewardship Grant: Raingarden



Grant Questions?

Let us help!

Nine Mile Creek Watershed District

952-358-2276

esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org

HABITAT RESTORATION AND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT GRANTS

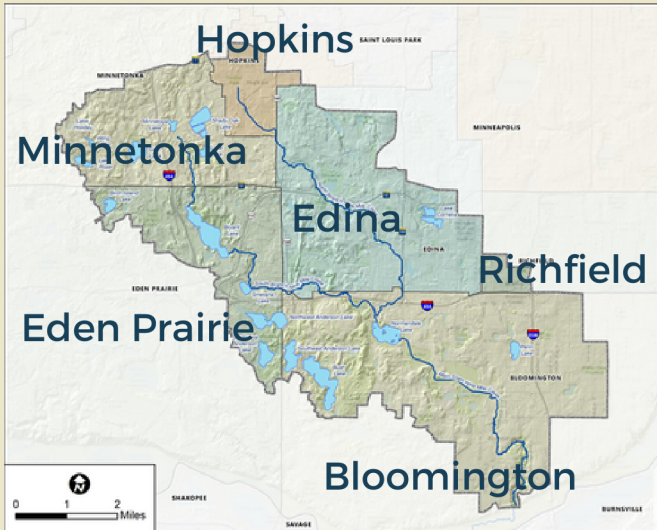


Apply for a grant to get started on your water protection project!



APPLY FOR A GRANT!

Projects must take place in the
Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.



Are you in the watershed?

Check your address!



Yearly Application Deadlines

Stewardship Grants: March

Restoration Grants: May & August

Learn more!

ninemilecreek.org/grants

STEWARDSHIP GRANTS

Example Projects

Raingarden



Permeable Pavers



Shoreline Buffer



Maximum Grant Funding

- Residential: \$5,000
- Associations: \$20,000
- Nonprofit, business, or government: \$50,000

25% match required.

HABITAT RESTORATION GRANTS

Example Projects

Prairie Restoration



Woodland Restoration



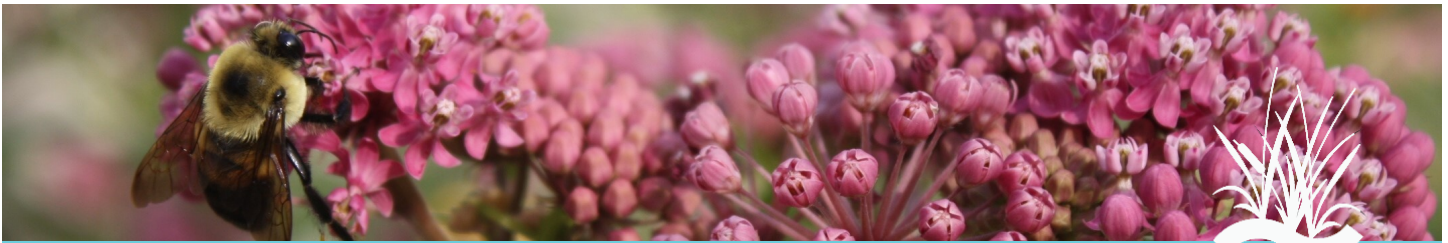
Native Planting



Maximum Grant Funding

- Residential: \$3,000
- Associations: \$5,000
- Nonprofit, business, or government: \$10,000

50% match required.



Habitat Restoration Grants



Grants are available for projects that protect and improve water resources and native plant habitat in the Nine Mile Creek Watershed. Habitat restoration projects work to restore Minnesota native plant communities to create healthier ecosystems.



Native restoration

Habitat Restoration

Habitat restoration restores the landscape through the planting of native plants and may include removing invasive species. Native plants provide habitat for wildlife, help filter rain water, and reduce erosion.

Eligibility

Projects must take place within District boundaries.

- Residents of the District
- Townhome, condo, and lake associations
- Nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies



Native planting installation



Buckthorn Removal
(done with matching grant funds)

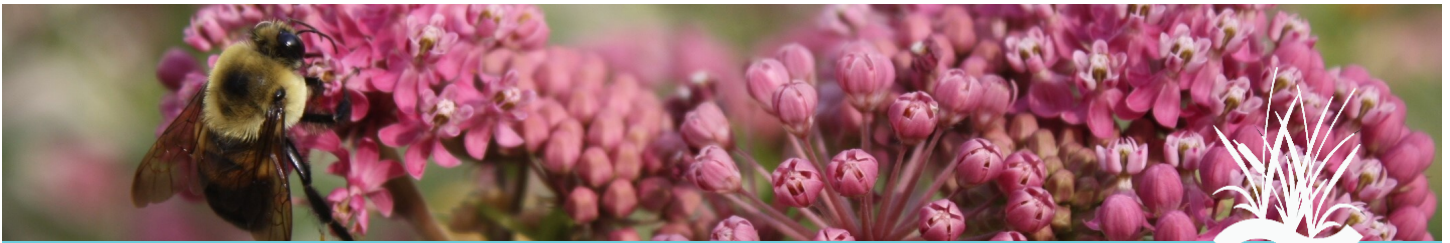
Funds

Maximum grant award (up to 50% of a project's cost):

- Residential: \$3,000
- Townhome, condo or lake association: \$5,000
- Nonprofit, businesses or government: \$10,000

Getting Started: Apply for a habitat restoration grant today.

- Two yearly application deadlines in May & August
- Visit ninemilecreek.org/grants for more information and to access applications



Stewardship Grants



Grants are available for projects that protect and improve water resources in the Nine Mile Creek Watershed by preventing erosion, reducing runoff, and filtering pollutants from stormwater. Typical projects include raingardens, pervious pavement, shoreline buffers, and more.



Raingarden

Stewardship Projects

Raingardens, permeable pavers, and shoreline buffers slow stormwater and treat it before it goes to our groundwater and surface water resources. Other projects that protect and conserve groundwater or reduce winter salt use are also eligible for funding.

Eligibility

Projects must take place within District boundaries.

- Residents of the District
- Townhome, condo, and lake associations
- Nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies



Permeable Pavers



Shoreline Buffer

Funds

Maximum grant award (up to 75% of a project's cost):

- Residential: \$5,000
- Townhome, condo or lake association: \$20,000
- Nonprofit, businesses or government: \$50,000

Getting Started: Apply for a stewardship grant today.

- Application deadline: Annually in March
- Visit ninemilecreek.org/grants for more information and to access applications