



Sustainability Commission Agenda

Sept. 26, 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: July 11, 2023

5. Report from Staff:

- A. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update
- B. Everything Electric Event Recap
- C. On-Site Solar Energy Event (Solar Power Hour) Update
- D. Community Solar Garden Promotion
- E. No Cost Energy Audit Promotion
- F. Ambassador Events: Winter Farmers Markets
- G. 2024 Sustainability Commission Work Plan
- H. Sustainable Minnetonka Awards Update
- I. Restaurant Outreach Update

6. Report from Sustainability Commission Members

7. Agenda Items

A. Hennepin County Presentation

- Recommendation: Listen to the Hennepin County presentation and ask questions regarding the county's plans, programs and initiatives. Consider partnership opportunities and ways the sustainability commission can share information or opportunities with the Minnetonka community.
- Presenters: Diana Chaman Salas and David W Schuett

B. Invasive Species

- Recommendation: Listen to the presentation, provide feedback and discuss ways the sustainability commission can share information or opportunities with the Minnetonka

Sustainability Commission Agenda

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- community.
- Staff Member: Leslie Yetka

C. Resilient Minnetonka/Watershed District Grants

- Recommendation: Listen to the presentation, provide feedback and discuss ways the sustainability commissioners can share information or opportunities with the Minnetonka community.
- Staff Member: Leslie Yetka

D. One Stop Efficiency Shop Campaign

- Recommendation: Approve campaign dates and 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**

July 11, 2023

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

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

Staff present: City Planner Loren Gordon, Sustainability Coordinator Drew Ingvalson and Communications Coordinator Jon Lyksett.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Henry moved, second by Birr, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Anderson, Avalos, Birr, Golob, Henry, Ingraham and Pattain voted yes. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Sustainability Commission May 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Avalos moved, second by Ingraham, to approve the minutes as submitted.

Anderson, Avalos, Birr, Golob, Henry and Ingraham voted yes. Pattain abstained. Motion carried.

5. Report from Staff

Ingvalson reported that:

- A public workshop and three focus-group workshops will be held this fall to discuss the climate action and adaptation plan.
- Commissioners are invited to sign up to reach out to 72 remaining restaurants. Commissioners may assist business managers and owners with signing up online to receive an invitation to make an appointment for an energy-smart consultation.

Anderson found that many restaurants do not post their email address on the business' website. Many restaurants have automated phone-answering systems that do not have the option to leave a voicemail. A hotel worker told him that their corporate office handles everything related to the building and its operations.

Ingraham stated that he has been receiving responses after leaving a message at the restaurants requesting a name and email address where he could email the information.

Chair Golob visited seven restaurants between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. and was able to provide and explain the materials to the owner or manager. He found them cordial and receptive to the information. He provided them with his contact information. One manager of a corporate-owned restaurant stated that the information would be passed on to the decision-makers at the corporate office.

- The deadline to submit applications to be considered for a Sustainable Minnetonka Award is Sept. 8. Four entries have been received. No entries have been received for the water, waste and youth categories. Commissioners are welcome to encourage the public to apply.
- The everything-electric event is scheduled to take place at the Ridgedale Commons Park during the farmers market on Sept. 5, 2023 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. All commissioners are invited to attend.
- Two new sustainability commissioners are scheduled to be appointed to the commission at the city council meeting on July 17, 2023.

6. Report from Sustainability Commission Members

Avalos noted that Tonkadale Nursery has a link on its website to Minnetonka's pollinator resource webpage. He hopes more businesses will do the same.

Chair Golob enjoyed attending the farmer's market. The Ridgedale Commons Park site is beautiful.

Anderson toured the UMN's reduce and reuse recycling operation. The sorting is done by hand. It is interesting to see which plastic gets sold to which place. It varies between recycling centers.

Birr stated that she knows of volunteers who would like to participate in events such as the everything-electric event and farmer's market. Ingvalson will research the possibility of utilizing additional volunteers.

Chair Golob requested staff provide an update on the quantity of plastics being collected by the city at a future meeting. He asked if the amount of cardboard dropped off at public works for recycling is tracked. Ingvalson answered that 3,018 pounds of plastic film had been collected by the city since January 2023. Ingvalson will check with the public works staff for the cardboard total.

7. **Agenda Items**

A. Sustainability Communications Presentation

Ingvalson introduced Minnetonka Communications Coordinator Jon Lyksett.

Lyksett gave a presentation on sustainability communications. Staff recommends commissioners discuss and provide comments on the sustainability communications presentation.

Avalos appreciated seeing the numbers related to how many views each post receives. He asked if short-form videos could be utilized on the social media platforms. Lyksett answered affirmatively. Avalos thought creating a short-form video promoting sustainable practices would be beneficial. One example would be a commissioner discussing sustainable practices with a business owner.

Lyksett found that the most successful videos are no longer than 30 seconds to a minute in length.

Pattain suggested doing a video of the sustainable award winners' projects. Lyksett agreed that it is a perfect example and is included on a list of to-do items.

The public input portion of the meeting was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public input portion of the meeting was closed.

B. Sustainable Minnetonka Webpage Update

Lyksett reported. Staff recommended commissioners discuss and provide comments on the sustainable Minnetonka webpage update.

In response to Henry's question, Lyksett stated that visits to the sustainability page have not been real high. The design is not user-friendly. The speed it takes to load the webpage is slow since it holds a lot of information. The new design would move toward being more mobile-friendly. He is optimistic that the changes will increase traffic. Similar changes were made to The Marsh and Williston Center's web pages and resulted in an increase of traffic.

Ingraham likes the tiles instead of the accordion-style format. He asked how it is determined if clicking a link would open a new tab in a new window or bring up the new page in the same tab. Lyksett explained that sometimes, the software is restricted to doing one or the other. Ingraham prefers a new tab opening since it can be difficult to return to the original webpage. Lyksett stated that he could set all of the external links to open in a new tab when clicked.

Ingraham suggested making "energy smart" searchable in **minnetonkamn.gov** to make it easier to find. He searched for it when meeting with a restaurant representative, and

the site did not come up. Lyksett said that could be done. He noted that there is a page with similar energy programs.

Lyksett reviewed the **minnetonkamatters.com** webpage.

Pattain confirmed with Lyksett that the **minnetonkamatters.com** webpage is designed to be more interactive and gather input from the public.

In response to Avalos' question, Lyksett explained that communications staff monitor social media comments and distribute them to the appropriate city staff to make them aware of the comments.

The public input portion of the meeting was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public input portion of the meeting was closed.

C. Future Business Outreach

Ingvalson reported. Staff recommends that commissioners recommend that staff move forward with creating a new business outreach program.

Anderson likes the idea of the blitz campaign and going to a business with the auditor to see how the auditor analyzes a building for ways to improve it. Visiting a site in person is the best way to make a connection.

Henry is in favor of extending some things being done and reaching out to the community. He has talked to people who were not aware that a homeowner might utilize solar power to power their residence without installing solar panels. He supports advertising Xcel's program to allow residences to utilize solar power. Ingvalson explained that there is an issue with identifying community solar gardens with the capacity to handle additional residences. The Green Corp volunteer will be compiling a list of community solar gardens able to accommodate new accounts. Ingvalson likes the idea of providing outreach for the program.

Henry is glad that the links on the website will be updated.

Pattain likes the idea of a blitz and being present in person to continue with the next steps if warranted.

Chair Golob agreed wholeheartedly. A blitz approach may be more effective.

Henry suggested promoting a reduction in salt usage on parking lots to businesses. Ingvalson said that appropriate salt use is on a list for the commission's discussion topics. Ingvalson explained that a new ordinance requires salt to be stored in a manner that prevents it from leaking into the ground. Restricting the amount of salt usage would be hard to enforce. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) provides training to promote proper salt storage and a reduction in the amount used, which may be part of the natural resources staff's presentation to the commission.

Ingvalson heard interest from commissioners to do a blitz campaign for the partners in the energy program. Handouts will be reviewed in September, and a date will be chosen after learning the availability of commissioners.

Avalos confirmed with Ingvalson that Xcel's partners in the energy program provided the light bulbs and free energy audit.

Anderson suggested a future program focus on grocery stores that use single-use plastic, have compostable dishware but no composting service, and use a large amount of energy. Ingvalson will add that to the list.

The public input portion of the meeting was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public input portion of the meeting was closed.

Avalos moved, second by Anderson, to recommend that staff move forward with creating a new business outreach program. Anderson, Avalos, Birr, Golob, Henry, Ingraham and Pattain voted yes. Motion carried.

Chair Golob thanked Lyksett for presenting the much-improved web pages.

8. **Adjournment**

Anderson moved, second by Pattain, to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary



**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 7A
Meeting of September 26, 2023**

Title: Hennepin County Presentation

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 Hearing Vote
Form of Action: Resolution Ordinance Other N/A
Votes needed 5 votes N/A Other

Summary Statement

Hennepin County staff will be presenting information on their various sustainability plans, programs and initiatives. They will also discuss ways that the City of Minnetonka can assist with county initiatives that have shared goals with the City of Minnetonka.

Recommended Action

Listen to the Hennepin County presentation and ask questions regarding the county's plans, programs and initiatives. Consider partnership opportunities and ways the sustainability commission can share information or opportunities with the Minnetonka community.

Strategic Profile Relatability

Financial Strength & Operational Excellence Safe & Healthy Community
 Sustainability & Natural Resources Livable & Well-Planned
Development Community Inclusiveness
 Infrastructure & Asset Management N/A

Statement: N/A

Background

The sustainability commission added, "Request Hennepin County to attend a sustainability commission meeting to present on county initiatives and how Minnetonka can assist in shared goals" in their 2023 work plan. Staff reached out to Hennepin County staff to request a presentation at the Sept. 26, 2023 sustainability commission meeting.

Hennepin County staff Diana Chaman Salas, Director of Climate and Resiliency, and Carolyn Collopy, Supervising Environmentalist, will present to the sustainability commission regarding the county's work around sustainability.

Hennepin County Plans

Hennepin County has recently approved two sustainability-related plans:

- [Climate Action Plan](#): In May 2021, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners adopted the Climate Action Plan. The Hennepin County Climate Action Plan provides “initiatives to cut greenhouse gas emissions and strategies to adapt to the changing climate in ways that reduce vulnerabilities and ensure a more equitable and resilient Hennepin County.”
- [Zero Waste Plan](#): In July 2023, Hennepin County finalized its Zero Waste Plan. The plan has a goal of a 90 percent diversion rate to recycling, organics or reuse, with only 10 percent going to landfills or incinerators. The plan includes 62 actions that will help the county transition to being zero waste.

Meetings with Hennepin County

City staff regularly attend meetings with Hennepin County regarding their current and future sustainability initiatives. Currently, city staff are attending two reoccurring meetings with the county regarding tree canopy expansion and electric vehicles, along with several other city staff within Hennepin County.

City of Minnetonka Support of Hennepin County Sustainability Programs

The City of Minnetonka has a long history of supporting Hennepin County programs and initiatives. Below is a list of some county programs and initiatives the city has provided assistance promoting.

- [MNimize](#): This is a program that helps businesses reduce their waste through an audit, funding, and recognition. The City of Minnetonka has supported the MNimize program by adding their webpage link to the Sustainable Minnetonka webpage, promoting it through the sustainability commission’s business outreach, and posting articles about the program in the [Minnetonka Thrive newsletter](#), which goes out to all businesses that the city has contact information.
- Waste Challenges: Hennepin County provides residents with the opportunity to participate in several waste challenges throughout the year. These challenges include:
 - [Zero Waste Challenge](#): A six-month challenge open to about 50 households where people observe their waste production and get personalized information on how to reduce it.
 - [Plastic Free Challenge](#): A month-long challenge open to county residents to learn how to reduce their single-use plastic use.
 - [Stop Food Waste Challenge](#): A month-long challenge open to county residents to learn how to reduce their food waste.

The City of Minnetonka partners with Hennepin County on these programs by promoting them annually on our social media, on the Sustainable Minnetonka webpage and with our city email subscribers.

- [Building Reuse Grants](#): Hennepin County provides grants for residential, commercial, and organizational entities that deconstruct buildings or structurally move their buildings for future reuse instead of demolition. There is also funding available for property owners that incorporate used building materials into their projects. The city has supported these programs by posting a link to them on our webpage, and in 2023, the city will be posting an article in the Minnetonka Memo about the City of Minnetonka's deconstruction project.
- [Business Recycling Grants](#): Hennepin County has two business recycling grants.
 - [Waste Prevention Grants](#): These grants can be for reusable food packaging or reusable shipping and packaging containers, dishwashing equipment, food-waste tracking software, freezers and refrigerators for food rescue organizations, research and development of innovative waste prevention projects or other innovative projects. Applicants can apply for up to \$50,000 grants.
 - [Recycling Container Grants](#): Small businesses and nonprofit organizations can apply for up to \$3,000 in grants for recycling containers and bags.

The City of Minnetonka has posted articles about these programs in the [Minnetonka Thrive newsletter](#).

- Multi-family Building Grants: Hennepin County has two multi-family building recycling grants.
 - [Multi-family Bin and Compostable Bag Grants](#): Multi-family buildings can apply for up to 3,000 grants for recycling containers and bags.
 - [Recycling Grants for Multi-family Buildings](#): Multi-family buildings can apply for up to \$20,000 grants for organics hauling start-up costs (up to 6 months), construction-related costs, such as for waste enclosures and chutes, specifically for recycling and/ or organics recycling, not trash or other innovative projects that prevent waste or target hard-to-recycle items.

City of Minnetonka staff have emailed the city's entire list of multi-family building managers about these grant opportunities and have provided these grant opportunities to individual managers and building residents when opportunities arise. In 2023-2024, the city's GreenCorps member will be reaching out to multi-family building managers to learn more about their building's waste, recycling and organic recycling systems. As part of this outreach, the GreenCorps member will also promote these grants.

- [School Recycling](#): Hennepin County has grants available for schools to reduce their waste by diverting "recycling and organic materials, which includes food and non-recyclable paper, from the trash. Grant funding can also be used to take steps to reduce waste in the first place." Typical project grants are for projects ranging from \$1,000 to \$12,000.

City staff provided this information to school facility managers that we have contacts for earlier in 2023. Staff or the city's GreenCorps member will send this grant information out to more schools in 2023-2024.

- **Organic Recycling Funding and Compost Bins and Bags:** The City of Minnetonka has received grant funds from Hennepin County to cover the first \$50 for all new organics recycling subscribers and to provide compostable bags and bins for Minnetonka community members. Community members can apply or learn more about the funding/materials by going to the city's [Organic Recycling webpage](#).
- **[Chose to Reuse](#):** This is a Hennepin County program that aims to encourage "residents to reduce waste by buying used items instead of new, and by keeping usable things out of the trash through donations, rental, repair and repurposing." The city promotes this program by posting links to the website on the city's Sustainable Minnetonka webpage.
- **[Healthy Tree Canopy Grants](#):** This is a county grant program that focuses on trees and enhancing the urban canopy. The city has received several small grants (<\$25,000) to support efforts related to emerald ash borer mitigation and education/outreach.

Potential Partnership Opportunity

City staff are always looking for potential partnership opportunities with adjoining agencies. Below is one potential partnership example for 2024.

- City staff and the city's GreenCorps member will evaluate a potential building material donation event. This event would be completed in coordination with Hennepin County staff.



**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 7B
Meeting of September 26, 2023**

Title: Invasive Species
Report From: Leslie Yetka, Natural Resources Manager
Submitted through: Will Manchester, P.E., Public Works Director
Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

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

Summary Statement

Natural Resources Division staff will present on invasive species and city programs that help address the impacts invasive species have on the community.

Recommended Action

Listen to the presentation, provide feedback and discuss ways the sustainability commission can share information or opportunities with the Minnetonka community.

Strategic Profile Relatability

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|--|--|
| <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: N/A

Background

An invasive species is any organism (e.g., plant, insect, mammal) introduced into a new region, either accidentally or intentionally, which negatively impacts the economy, the environment, and/or human health. Invasive species tend to out-compete native species, leading to reduced biodiversity, loss of habitat, food scarcity, lack of cover, topsoil erosion, human health impacts (e.g., poison ivy), and other impacts. In Minnesota, invasive species fall into one of two categories: aquatic or terrestrial.

In Minnetonka, the predominant form of invasive species the city addresses is terrestrial plants, which have a significant impact on the community. Examples include European buckthorn, garlic mustard, Canada thistle, poison ivy, and narrow-leaved bittercress. State law and agency guidance provide a framework for addressing invasive species in Minnetonka, including the state [Plant Pest Act](#), which authorizes municipalities to declare an invasive species a nuisance and allow for nuisance abatement (among other things), and the Minnesota [Noxious Weed Law](#),

which categorizes plants based on whether they are prohibited, restricted, or specially regulated. Table 1 below summarizes regulatory authorities and invasive species in Minnesota, with those in red being most applicable to Minnetonka.

Table 1. Summary of regulating authorities related to invasive species

Regulatory Category (types of species)	Agencies Involved
State Prohibited and Regulated Invasive Species (wild animals and aquatic plants)	DNR
Unlisted Nonnative Species* (wild animals and aquatic plants)	DNR
State Prohibited and Restricted Noxious Weeds (terrestrial plants)	Rules: MDA Enforcement: counties, townships and cities
State Restricted (wild boars)	MDA and DNR
State Plant Pest Act (insects and terrestrial plants)	MDA
Tribal Codes (aquatic plants and animals; terrestrial)	Tribes
Federal Noxious Weeds (aquatic and terrestrial plants)	USDA-AHPIS
Federal Plant Protection Act (foreign plant pests and diseases)	USDA-AHPIS
Interstate Regulations to restrict the movement of various pests	USDA-AHPIS
Federal Lacey Act / Injurious Wildlife (animals)	USFWS
Federal/State ballast water regulations (aquatic organisms)	U.S. Coast Guard/U.S. EPA/MPCA

* *Unlisted nonnative species are aquatic plants and wild animals that have not been subject to a risk assessment or classified by DNR. Any proposed introductions of these species must follow the process established in [M.S. 84D](#), which opens in a new browser tab. Information in the table is taken from the [Minnesota State Management Plan for Invasive Species \(PDF\)](#).*

The City of Minnetonka's Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP), approved by the council and adopted in 2021, identifies invasive species as an [area of concern](#), which requires time and resources to address. The Natural Resources Division currently has six full-time staff and up to five seasonal positions that focus some portion of their day-to-day work on mitigating the impacts of invasive species on the community. Staff also works with and coordinates a number of volunteers to assist in these efforts. With an operating budget of approximately \$650,000, staff engage in invasive species control for the purposes of habitat restoration, tree pest and disease mitigation, and human health protection. Current programs include:

- Buckthorn cutting (and general invasive species removal) and regeneration of native habitat in parks and other public lands – as guided by the NRMP and [park-specific habitat restoration plans](#).
- Noxious weed control – removal of prohibited species such as Canada thistle, Japanese knotweed, poison ivy, narrowleaf bittercress, poison hemlock etc., to the greatest extent practical.
 - Typically, when identified during normal scouting activities or through resident complaints
- Tree pest/disease mitigation ([Plant Pest Program](#)) – guided by council policy, includes regular scouting, risk tree identification, marking and removal on public property and in the right-of-way.
- Education and outreach – community-wide outreach on the negative impacts of invasive species and actions that property owners can take to help manage invasive species on private property. This includes the [Resilient Minnetonka](#) program, including free residential buckthorn pickup.

Staff will present an overview of invasive species, their impacts to the community, and city programs and resources available to help combat the negative impacts invasive species have on the community. The strategies the city uses are also applicable for private properties.



**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 7C
Meeting of September 26, 2023**

Title: Resilient Minnetonka and Watershed District Grants

Report From: Leslie Yetka, Natural Resources Manager

Submitted through: Will Manchester, P.E., Public Works Director
Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

Action Requested: Motion Informational Public Hearing Vote

Form of Action: Resolution Ordinance Other N/A

Votes needed 5 votes N/A Other

Summary Statement

Natural Resources Division staff will present information on the Resilient Minnetonka program, and available funding from local watershed management organizations.

Recommended Action

Listen to the presentation, provide feedback and discuss ways the sustainability commissioners can share information or opportunities with the Minnetonka community.

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: N/A

Background

As an outcome of city council adopting the 2021 [Natural Resources Master Plan](#) (NRMP), the city's Natural Resources Division began piloting an education and incentive program to encourage the adoption of sustainable landscaping practices on private property. Currently branded as "[Resilient Minnetonka](#)" (RM), the program provides access for residents to educational resources, on-site consultations for technical assistance, native plant sale, free residential buckthorn pickup, and rebates for project installation. Projects that are prioritized include turf removal, native/pollinator plantings, invasive species removal, tree replanting, installation of wetland buffers, and raingardens.

Summary of pilot program (2021-2023)

2021 – "*Planting for Pollinators*"

- Education - Workshops from Blue Thumb, including *Planting for Pollinators* and *Turf Alternatives*

Subject: Resilient Minnetonka and Watershed District Grants

- Incentives and technical assistance:
 - Online native plant sale with \$20 discount coupon and fall pick-up event
 - Cost-share grant covering 75 percent of cost for purchase of plants/seed mixes (up to \$200 per household)

2022 – “*Resilient Yards*”

- Education:
 - *Planting for Pollinators* workshop from Blue Thumb
 - *Turf Alternatives* workshop from Blue Thumb
- Incentives and technical assistance:
 - Online native plant sale with \$20 discount coupon and free shipping
 - Free one-hour site consultations through Metro Blooms Design+Build
 - Residents who had a site consultation were eligible for a rebate to offset the cost of plants/seed mixes (up to \$150 per household)

2023 – “*Resilient Minnetonka*” (current program)

- Education:
 - *Resilient Yards* workshop from Blue Thumb
 - *Planting for Pollinators* workshop hosted by city staff
 - Online learning modules (all RM participants were provided this link)
 - The Blue Thumb membership conferred free access for residents to the *Resilient Yards* and the *Turf Alternative* online learning modules, through August 2023
 - The city’s new buckthorn online learning module was promoted to all participants
- Incentives and technical assistance:
 - Online native plant sale – open to all residents (not just RM participants) through September, offering a \$20 discount coupon and free shipping
 - Free one-hour site consultations through Metro Blooms Design+Build
 - First priority given to those who attended the *Resilient Yards* workshop
 - Thereafter, consults offered based on goals the participant indicated in their RM application, prioritizing plans for turf replacement, installing plantings that improve water quality, and/or buckthorn removal and replacement
 - Design and plan session – After site consultation, a small number of participants will be approved for design and plan sessions with Metro Blooms Design+Build, with priority going to:
 - Turf replacement proposals; installing plantings that improve water quality; and/or buckthorn removal and replacement
 - Residents who are in Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (which does not have funding for resident actions, unlike other watershed districts)
 - Rebate – After having a site consultation, participants are eligible for a rebate to offset the cost of plants/seed mixes – up to \$150 per household
 - Buckthorn pick-up – Residents can sign a contract to have the city’s contractor, SavATree, pick up buckthorn debris piled in their right-of-way

Summary of participation (2021-2023)

		Participation		
Program Activity*		2021	2022	2023**
Workshops	Planting for Pollinators	15	54	22
	Turf Alternatives	18	29	-
	Resilient Yards	-	-	40
	Online modules (P4P/BT)	-	-	639
Technical Assistance/ Incentives	Native plant sale	83	119	111
	On-site consultation	-	24	51
	Design/Plan session	-	-	1
	Project rebate (\$150)	1	5	***
	Buckthorn pickup	-	-	27

**Not all activities occurred each year*

*** Year to date*

**** Has a November deadline*

Watershed District Grants

In addition to the city's resources, many residents in the community have access to funding sources through local watershed management organizations. In Minnetonka, there are four watershed organizations: Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Bassett Creek Watershed Management Organization, Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District and Nile Mile Creek Watershed District and as described in the map below. Two of those organizations, the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD) and the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District (NMCWD) have cost-share grants available for residents to support water quality improvement projects, including many sustainable landscaping practices.

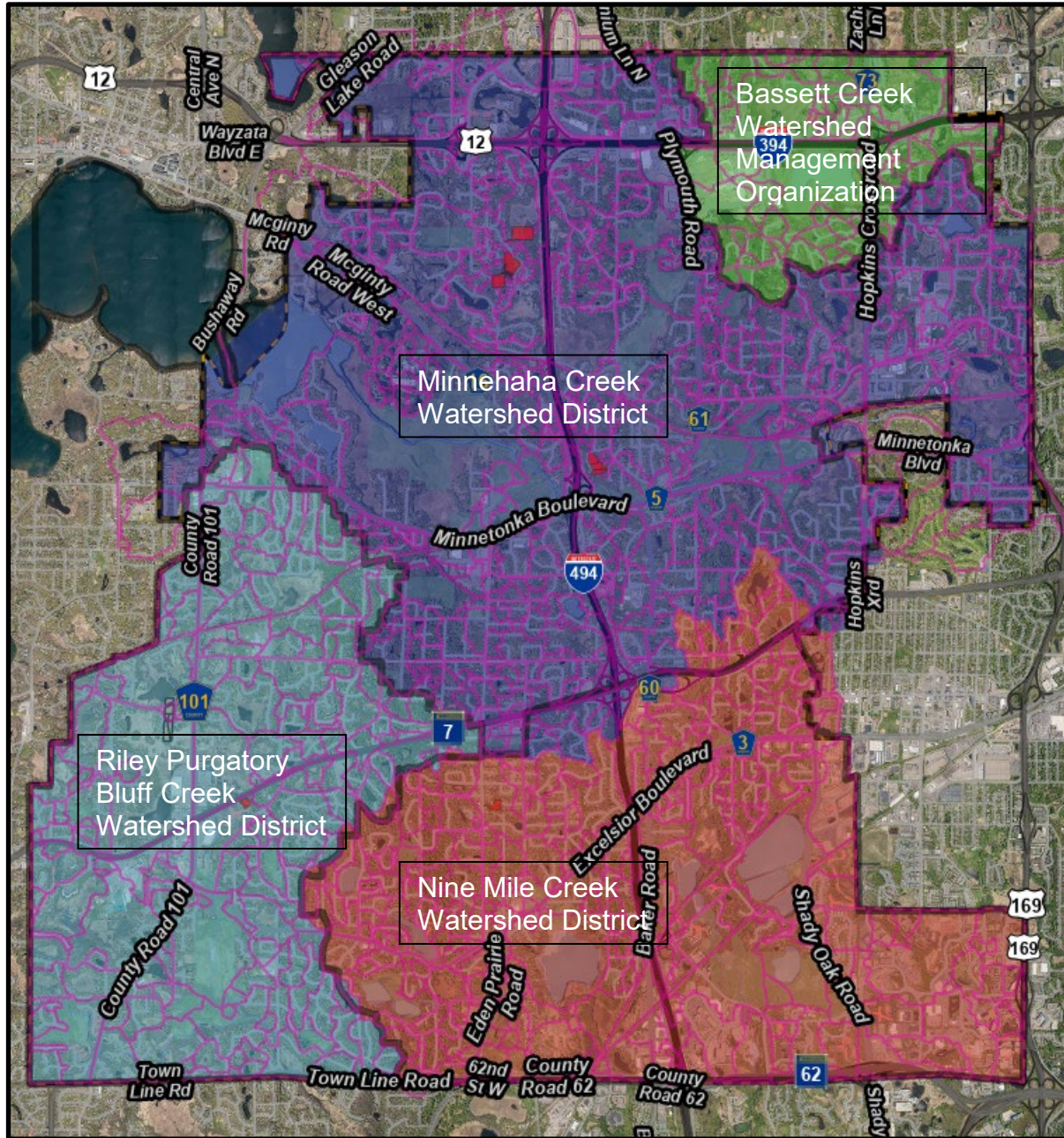
The RPBCWD has [stewardship grants](#) up to \$5,000 with a 25% match for residential property. The district also has several other types of small grants to support team projects and education initiatives. Applications are currently being accepted.

The NMCWD also has stewardship grants of up to \$5,000 for residential property with a 25% match, and up to \$20,000 for HOA's. The district also has habitat restoration grants, along with groundwater protection grants. All grant information can be found [here](#). The application deadline has passed, but the NMCWD will begin accepting applications for 2023 next spring.

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District does not offer residential cost-share grants at this time. The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Organization operates differently than a district, and also does not offer grants opportunities for residents.

City staff has a close partnership with all four organizations to make certain coordination of city and watershed organizations programs benefit residents to the greatest extent possible. Staff

will present an overview of Resilient Minnetonka and watershed organizations and their funding sources for to the sustainability commission for feedback and discussion.





**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 7D
Meeting of September 26, 2023**

Title: Business Outreach Campaign

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.

A program that can help businesses reduce their energy use is Xcel Energy's One-Stop Efficiency Shop. City staff and Center for Energy and the Environment, working on behalf of the Xcel Energy Partners in Energy program, have begun putting together materials and strategies for business outreach on Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023.

Recommended Action

Recommend approval of the letter from the sustainability commission and participation in the program campaign.

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 July 11, 2023 sustainability commission meeting, the commission expressed interest in participating in a one-day business outreach campaign to promote the One-Stop Efficiency Shop.

About the Program

The One-Stop Energy Efficiency Shop is a lighting and HVAC consulting and rebate program for small to midsize commercial properties. This program is also sponsored by Xcel Energy. Staff selected this program for three reasons.

1. **Free, on the Spot, On-Site Visits:** The program can provide free lighting assessments on the spot during the outreach event, and they only take 15-20 minutes. The business owner/manager will also be able to schedule an HVAC assessment and/or installation of a free smart thermostat.
2. **Low/No Commitment Requirements:** The One-Stop Efficiency Shop program's only requirement is that it is limited to small to mid-sized businesses. Businesses are not required to take action on recommendations or make future commitments.
3. **Connection to Additional Funding:** The One-Stop Efficiency Shop will help connect businesses with rebates and loans for various upgrade opportunities. In addition, they will provide estimated payback period timelines for businesses.

One-Stop Efficiency Shop and Partners in Energy Role

The One-Stop Efficiency Shop will:

- Review the list of addresses to confirm eligible businesses for the program;
- Assist with "pre-blitz" communication (emails and mailers);
- Print postcards/letters and mail them to businesses;
- Host a meeting to go over talking points for commissioners prior to the event; and
- Provide 6-8 lighting consultants, and possibly a few HVAC consultants if available, to provide audits on Oct. 18, 2023.

City Staff Role

Staff will continue to work with Xcel Energy and CEE to put together outreach materials to promote the Oct. 18, 2023 visits. Specifically, city staff has proposed to send a letter from the sustainability commission (see attached) and a postcard reminder mailer to each business in the visit areas.

City staff will:

- Create a signup document for commissioners to sign up for a 4-hour morning and/or afternoon volunteer timeslot. Note commissioners will be able to sign up for both sessions
- Coordinate training for commissioners that volunteer for the event to attend; and
- Be available on Oct. 18, 2023 to assist with coordinating the business visits.

Commission's Role

The commission's role in this outreach plan will be to:

1. Review and approve a letter sent by the sustainability commission regarding the program and upcoming visits (see attached).
2. Volunteer to meet with businesses on Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023. Prior to the event date, commissioner volunteers will be invited to a scheduled training to go over talking points.

Attached Materials

Below is a list of materials ready for outreach:

- Sustainability Commission letter and attachments;
 - Minnetonka Loan handout
 - Minnetonka Business Resources handout
- One-Stop Efficiency Shop overview slides; and
- Maps of target areas.

Proposed Timeline

- **Sept. 26, 2023:** Commission approves letter and participation in the campaign.
- **Early October 2023:** One-Stop Efficiency Shop will host a meeting to go over talking points for commissioners.
- **Oct. 18, 2023:** One-Stop Efficiency Shop Blitz Campaign.

One-Stop Efficiency Shop

mncee.org/commercial





What is the One-Stop Efficiency Shop?

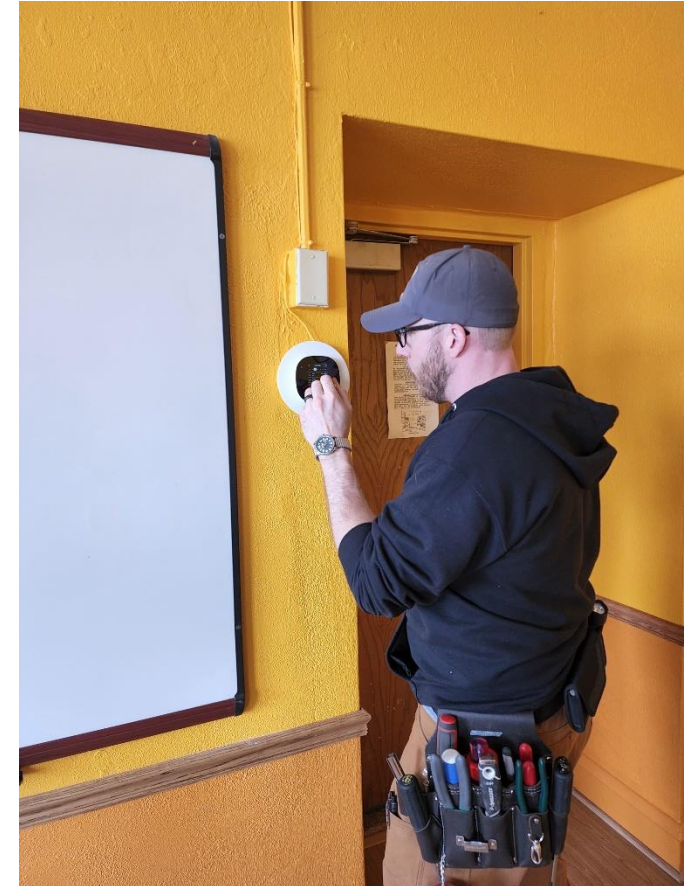
- Free full-service lighting and HVAC consulting and rebate program for small to midsize commercial properties
- Sponsored by Xcel Energy
- Lighting and HVAC consultants dedicated to helping customers obtain the largest rebate and highest energy savings
- Support staff that completes and submits all rebate paperwork to Xcel Energy
- Learn more at mncee.org/onestop





What the One-Stop team provides

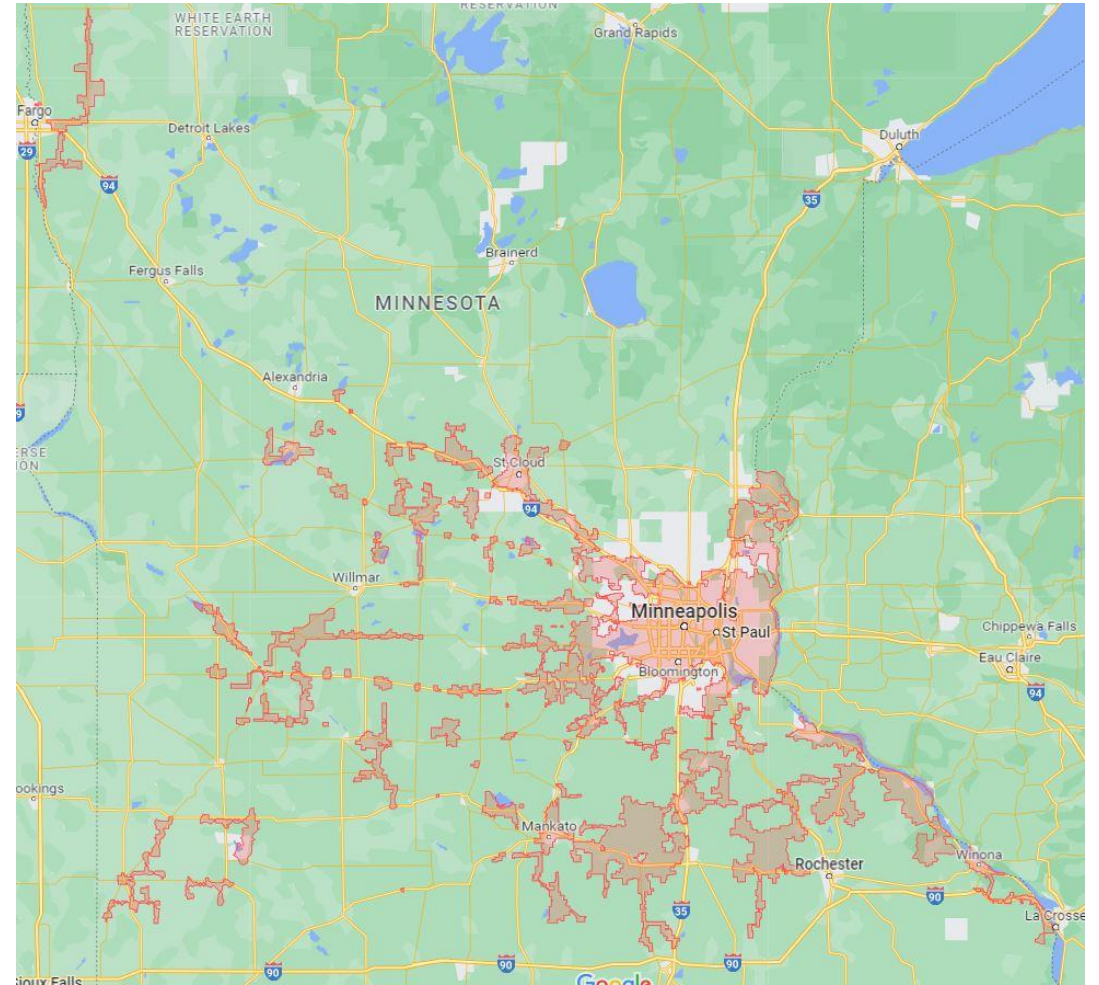
- Free lighting and HVAC assessments
- Free smart thermostat installations
- Reports with recommendations and estimated project costs, payback periods, rebates, and savings
- Rebates up to 75% of project costs
- Access to low-interest financing from CEE and grants
- Assistance reviewing bids and finding qualified contractors
- Project support and technical guidance
- Completion of all program and rebate paperwork





Who One-Stop serves

- Commercial customers in Xcel Energy Minnesota service territory
 - For profit
 - Nonprofit
 - Multifamily
 - Schools
 - Municipal
- Peak demand of 400 kW or less
- Building owners and tenants





• How we've helped Minnesota businesses since 2000

- **20,000+** businesses and nonprofits upgraded lighting and earned rebates
- **217,000 kW / 890,000,000 kWh** of energy conserved
- **\$110 million+** in rebates awarded
- **2,800+** smart thermostats installed



One-Stop's impact on Minnetonka since 2000

- **501** lighting projects completed
- **14,907,523 kWh** of energy conserved
- **\$924,303** in rebates awarded (since 2017)
- **17** smart thermostats installed
- *Currently working Kevin Maas, facilities manager, to assess and create reports for several city buildings*



Case Study: Once Upon a Child (Waite Park)

- **Problems**

- Frequent fluorescent tube burnouts
- High maintenance costs
- Poor lighting quality and color for displaying merchandise
- Confusion about lighting rebate options

- **Results**

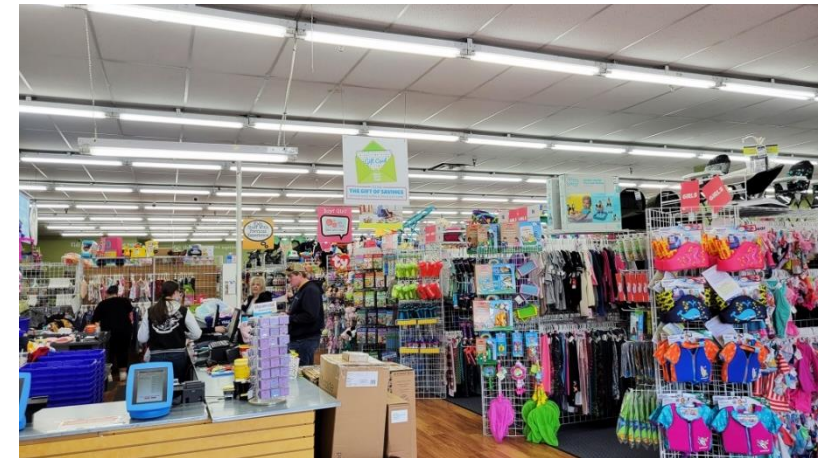
- Simplified lighting
- Easier maintenance
- Improved aesthetic and lighting color
- Optimal rebate and fast project payback
- **Smart thermostat also installed for free**





Case Study: Once Upon a Child (Waite Park)

- **Rebates and energy savings**
 - \$2,377 in annual savings
 - \$3,469 in rebates
 - 23,273 kWh saved
 - 1.3-year payback period





Free Smart Thermostat Program

- Available to One-Stop eligible facilities
- **Thermostats and installation are free** (installed by CEE)
- Facility is enrolled in Xcel Energy's AC Rewards program and receives annual bill credits for each thermostat installed
- Maintenance staff gain the ability to monitor and adjust multiple thermostats remotely from one device
- Learn more at mncee.org/thermostats





Commercial Refrigeration Assessments

- Refrigeration can be the one of the **biggest drives of energy use** for grocery, liquor, and convenience stores
- Xcel Energy's **HVAC-R program** offers free, on-site refrigeration assessments to help businesses find ways to lower energy costs and earn rebates
- Assessments are performed by CEE staff
- Learn more at xcelenergy.com





CEE loans for businesses and nonprofits

- **Business Loans**

- Rates starting at 3.75%
- Loan amounts up to \$100,000
- Terms up to 10 years

- **Nonprofit Loans**

- Rates starting at 2%
- Loans amounts up to \$25,000
- Terms up to 7 years
- Must be a nonprofit entity exempt from taxes under 501(c)(3)



Business blitz support

- List and map creation based on CEE/Xcel database
- 6-8 lighting and HVAC consultants
- Pre-blitz communication (emails and mailers)
- Printing of flyers and letter from City



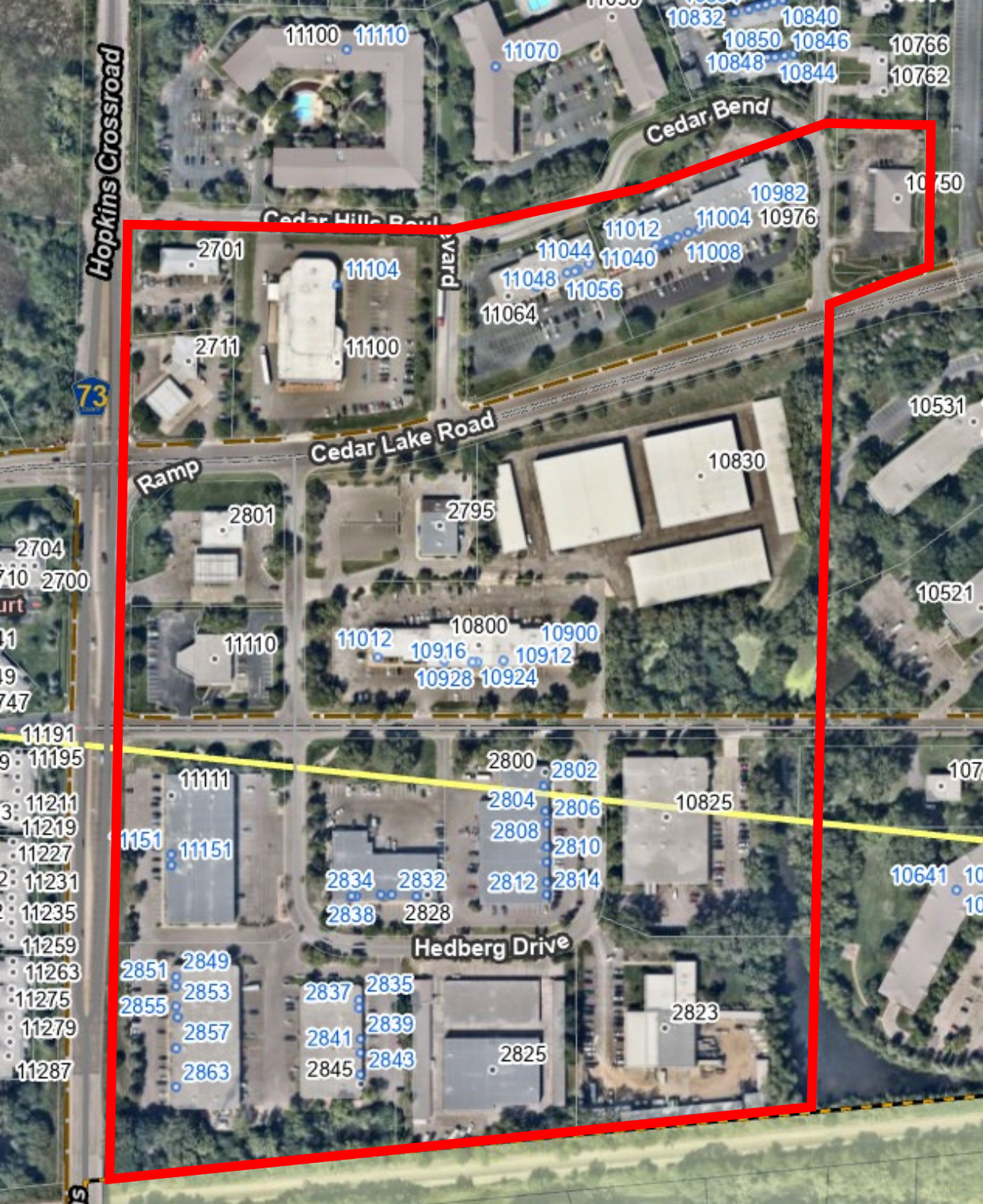
Business blitz assessments

- Consultant introduces themselves and explains why they are there
- Ask if they can look at lighting (usually takes less than 15 minutes)
- Ask if they have smart thermostats
- May schedule a time to come back
- Ask a few questions about the business, how the lights are used, pain points, current contractor relationships, etc.
- Send report in 2 – 3 days

Thank You!

mncee.org/commercial





Hopkins Crossroad

73

11100 11110

11070

10832 10840 10850 10846 10848 10844

10766 10762

Cedar Bend

Cedar Hill Blvd

2701

11104

Yard

11064

11044 11012 11004 10982 11048 11040 11008 11056

10750

2711

11100

Cedar Lake Road

Ramp

2801

2795

10830

10531

2704 2710 2700

11110

11012 10800 10900 10916 10912 10928 10924

10521

11191 11195

11111

2800

2802

107

11211 11219

2804

2806

10825

11227 11231

1151 11151

2808

2810

10641 10

11235 11259

2834 2832

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2814

11263 11275

2838 2828

Hedberg Drive

2823

11279 11287

2851 2849

2837 2835

2825

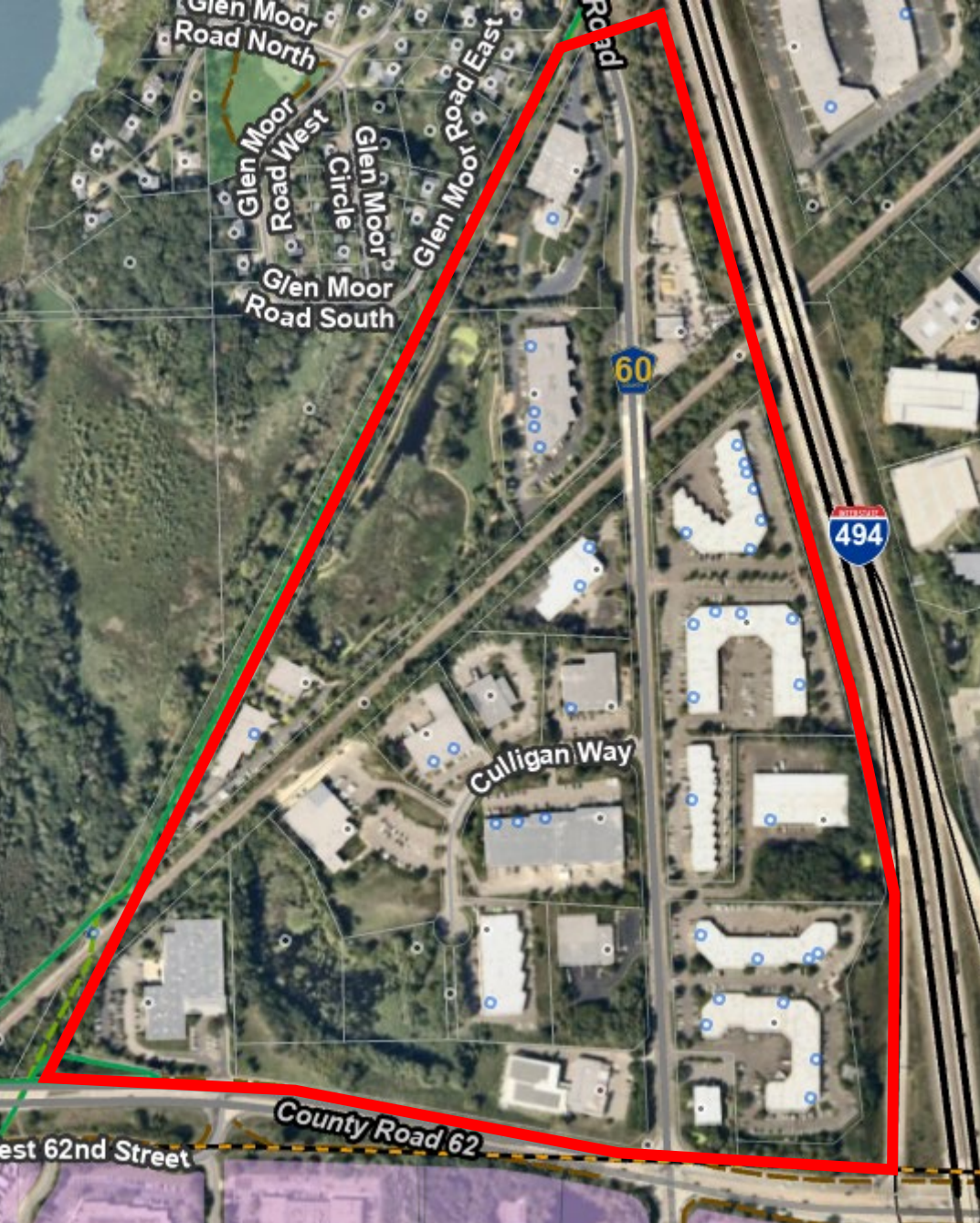
2855 2853

2841 2839

2857 2855

2845 2843

2863



Glen Moor Road North

Glen Moor Road West

Glen Moor Circle

Glen Moor Road South

Glen Moor Road East

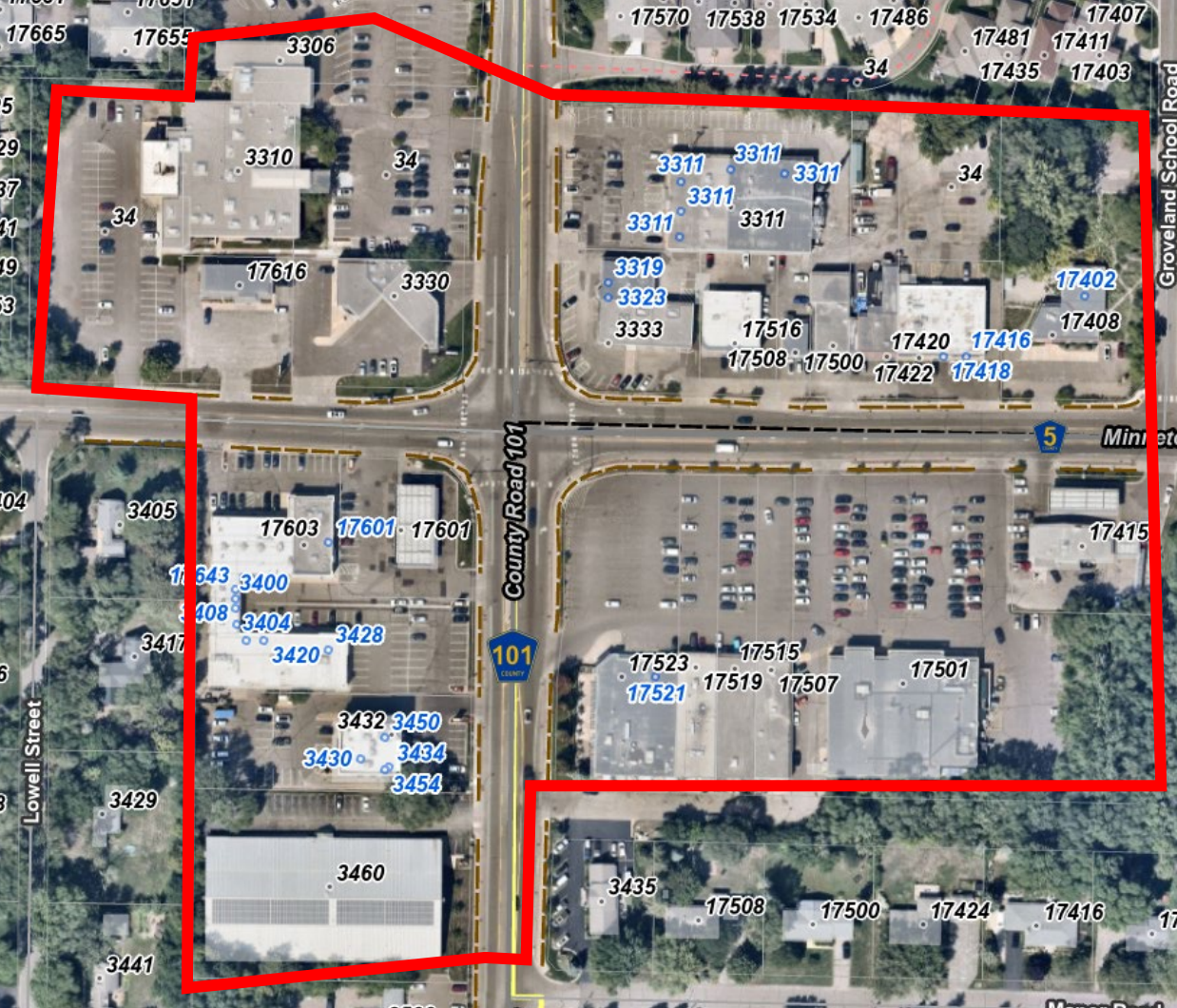
Culligan Way

County Road 62

West 62nd Street

60

494



3306

3310

34

17616

3330

3311

3311

3311

34

3319

3323

3333

17516

17508

17500

17420

17416

17402

17408

17422

17418

3405

17603

17601

17601

17643

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3454

3429

3460

3441

17523

17521

17515

17519

17507

17501

3435

17508

17500

17424

17416

17

County Road 101

101 COUNTY

5

Minnetonka

Groveland School Road

Lowell Street



758 760 712 721
812 806 723
809 808 770 731
811 802 735
803 801 777
917 781
921 787
919

4 936
9 933
004
pur

1170
11500
3

Fairfield Circle

1280

11260 11240 11220 11210 11210 11210 11210 11210

960

11544 11522 11450 11390 11300 11300 11300 11300 11300

Wayzata Boulevard

73



14600 Minnetonka Blvd. | Minnetonka, MN 55345 | 952-939-8200 | minnetonkamn.gov

DATE

TO:

FROM: City of Minnetonka Sustainability Commission

RE: Free Lighting Audit

Dear Minnetonka Business Owners and Managers,

The City of Minnetonka has created an Energy Action Plan that aims to bring energy and dollar savings to our businesses and residents. Your unique business has the potential to save energy and money!

One of the easiest ways to save is with a lighting upgrade. To help you get started, we have partnered with Center for Energy and Environment's One-Stop Efficiency Shop®. Their lighting experts will **be stopping by your business on October 18th** to either provide you with a 15 minute assessment on-the-spot or sign you up for a time that works for you. Learn more about the program at mncee.org/lighting-upgrades or call 612-244-2427.

Once you have completed this free assessment, ask your lighting consultant about the rebates the One-Stop Efficiency Shop provides. If you would like to look for savings beyond lighting, you can also sign up for a free roof-top unit (RTU) assessment and smart thermostats from the team.

When our business community is able to thrive, our whole community is better for it. Thank you for signing up to ensure your business takes advantage of this opportunity to increase your energy efficiency!

Learn more about our Energy Action Plan and more resources for businesses at minnetonkamn.gov/sustainability. Also, enclosed are handouts about Minnetonka business resources and loan opportunities.

Thank you for all you do for Minnetonka,

The City of Minnetonka Sustainability Commission



Minnetonka Code Compliance Loan Program Guidelines

The City of Minnetonka offers a commercial code compliance program that helps local businesses get their properties up to code. The program provides low-interest loans to help property owners make repairs to improve safety and structural integrity, address accessibility issues or address other identified areas of concern by city officials.

Loan Amount

Up to \$25,000 (subject to credit requirements and program eligibility)

Loan Term

- Five years for loans less than \$15,000
- 10 years for loans between \$15,000 to \$25,000
- There is no prepayment penalty
- Payments will be made monthly

Interest Rate

2-percent fixed interest rate

Match Amount

At least 10 percent of the total project costs

Eligibility

Commercial properties must be:

- Located within the City of Minnetonka or in the process of securing a location within Minnetonka.
- Addressing an active property maintenance corrective order issued by the city.
- A for-profit business legally allowed or licensed to operate within the City of Minnetonka and legally registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State in good standing.
- In compliance with city ordinances and licensing and must not have any delinquent taxes, bills or other charges due to the city.

Eligible Borrowers

- Legal residents of the United States and a registered business in the State of Minnesota
- Property owner or tenant of the property where the corrective action is discussed or ordered by city staff.

Eligible Improvements

Repairs may improve safety, structural integrity, address accessibility issues or address any other areas of concern as determined by the city staff. Examples of eligible projects include:

- Exterior painting
- Screening elements (i.e. fencing, visible mechanical screening, visible trash enclosures)
- Window and door repair or replacement
- Signage connected to the building
- Fire suppression or other related issue as requested by the city fire marshal
- Exterior lighting
- Building and health code related items
- ANSI/NSF approved equipment upgrades with approval from the city building official
- Parking lot improvements
- Improving exterior or architectural barriers that restrict the mobility and accessibility of elderly or disabled persons to a premise
- Installation of exterior security devices
- Landscaping improvements

Improvements not on this list but required for correction per city staff can be considered eligible for this program on a case-by-case basis.



For more information and full program guidelines:

- Visit mncee.org/minnetonka
- Call 612-335-5884
- Email bizsupport@minnetonkamn.gov

Minnetonka Emergency Business Fund

The City of Minnetonka offers one-time assistance of up to \$2,500 to local businesses that have experienced an emergency or unforeseen circumstances that threaten the business operation and jeopardize job retention for employees.

Eligibility

Applicants must be:

- Located within the City of Minnetonka and have a physical commercial property.
- A locally owned and operated business (including independently owned and operated franchises).
- A for-profit business legally allowed or licensed to operate within the City of Minnetonka and legally registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State in good standing.
- In compliance with city ordinances, codes and licensing and must not have any delinquent taxes, bills or other charges due to the city.
- Must have met with a business advisor or city staff to determine project need. City staff can provide recommendations for advisory services.

Eligible Expenses

- Situational marketing assistance (e.g., in response to construction project, road closure, detour, natural disaster, etc.)
- Technical assistance (e.g., consulting, engineering, etc.)
- Unplanned relocation expenses (if within Minnetonka)
- Security updates
- Inventory
- Critical equipment repair
- Operational systems repair

Ineligible Expenses

- Rent
- Payroll expenses
- Insurance costs
- Taxes/Utilities
- Other operating expenses/noncapital costs



Loan Amount

A one-time forgivable emergency loan up to \$2,500

Loan Term

All loan funds must be utilized within three months of a fully executed loan agreement.

For more information and full program guidelines:

- Email bizsupport@minnetonkamn.gov

Economic Development

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is the state's economic development agency. Minnetonka staff is more than happy to assist in the application of any of the DEED programs below:



EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program

Supports the growth of businesses owned by women-owned or minority-owned business enterprises to fund business start-up or expansion.

- More info: mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/deed-programs/elp

Minnesota Investment Fund

Provides financing to help add new workers retain high-quality jobs. The focus is on industrial, manufacturing and technology related industries.

- More info: mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/deed-programs/mif

Minnesota Job Creation Fund

Incentives to new and expanding businesses that meet certain job creation and capital investment targets.

- More info: mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/deed-programs/mn-jcf

City of Minnetonka Resources

Minnetonka Fire Sprinkler Assistance

Allows businesses to spread the cost of a fire sprinkler installation in an existing building over a 10-year period.

- More info: minnetonkamn.gov/business



Minnetonka SAC and REC Deferral Program

Allows eligible businesses and property owners to finance up to 80 percent of sewer availability charges (SAC) and residential equivalency charge (REC) charges over a 10-year period.

- More info: minnetonkamn.gov/business



Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)

Allows local governments to fund the up-front cost of energy efficiency improvements on properties.

- More info: minnpace.com

Economic Development

Open to Business

The Open to Business program provides free business counseling to current and prospective entrepreneurs. Experienced consultants help business owners access the technical assistance and financing options they need to succeed.

Consultants can assist with:

- Loan packaging/facilitation
- Direct loans for new and growing businesses
- Sharia-compliant or asset-based financing
- Gap/Acquisition financing for real estate

For more information, email info@mccdmn.org or call 612-789-7337.

Minnetonka is



Elevate Business HC

This program assists Hennepin County businesses to re-build, re-establish and re-ignite business following the COVID-19 pandemic. The program offers expertise in three areas:

- **Technical assistance:** One-on-one consultation with professional service providers in a variety of areas including financing, human resources, technology, etc.
- **Peer-to-Peer roundtables:** Reoccurring and facilitated small group discussions with a focus on sharing best practices and problem solving.
- **Webinars:** Industry and subject matter experts discuss issues facing employers with a focus on workforce needs in remote environments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn more at elevatehennepin.org.