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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Duluth is the winner of the Sustainable Cities 2022 award from League of Minnesota Cities

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Duluth is the winner of the Sustainable Cities 2022 award from League of Minnesota Cities

GreenStep City Step 5 status recognizes Duluth's work to conserve energy & increase efficiency

[Duluth, MN] – The City of Duluth was selected as the winner of the Sustainable City Award for 2022 from the League of Minnesota Cities Annual Conference, held in Duluth last night. The Sustainable City Award is given each year to a city that is working to achieve sustainability goals that align with one or more of the GreenStep Cities program's 29 best practices. The development and implementation of the City's first Climate Action Work Plan (CAWP) was a highlight of the award. The CAWP, which was presented to City Council and published in early 2022, involved three of the GreenStep Cities 29 best practices: Comprehensive, Climate and Energy Plans, Benchmarks & Community Engagement, and Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience.

The CAWP was created in response to the City of Duluth's Climate Emergency Declaration, calling out that our region is experiencing the effects of climate change right now. The CAWP outlines strategies and actions to be implemented from 2022 through 2027, that help us get started to reach the City's goal of carbon neutrality and net zero emissions by 2050. Led by Sustainability Officer Mindy Granley, the CAWP is the result of a year-long iterative process involving eleven different City departments and two outside consultants: Great Plains Institute and Common Spark Consulting. Departments collaborated on the CAWP through the creation of a City Sustainability Advisory Team (C-SAT), which contributed to creating and prioritizing actions in the plan.

Since the adoption of the CAWP, the support and alignment across Departments has helped accelerate implementation of several action items. Recent progress includes:

- Adoption of a new Vehicle Replacement Policy and gap-funding to support lower emission fleet purchases (*Fleet and Sustainability*)
- An MPCA grant for stormwater resiliency planning (*Public Works and Utilities*)
- Funding identified for a City strategic facilities plan (*Property and Facilities Management*)
- A technical assistance award to plan an energy pathway for the Lincoln Park neighborhood through the Department of Energy Communities LEAP grant program (*Sustainability*)
- Community forestry grants to replace trees killed by disease and acquire 83 acres of undeveloped forest for permanent protection (*Park Maintenance*)
- Several pending energy and infrastructure grant proposals (*Sustainability, Public Works and Utilities*)

In addition to the League of Minnesota Cities award, the City of Duluth was acknowledged for maintaining its status as a Step 5 city in the Minnesota GreenStep program. Duluth is one of 147 participating cities and tribal nations in the 12-year-old challenge, assistance, and recognition program. Duluth joined the GreenStep Cities program in 2014 and first reached Step 5 in 2021.

Actions taken within the program focus on cost savings, energy use reduction, resource conservation, climate change, and the encouragement of civic innovation. You can learn more about Duluth's efforts at <https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/city-detail/11981>.

"We are proud of both the Sustainable Cities Award for 2002, and for keeping our GreenStep Step 5 status," said Mayor Emily Larson. "It shows that Duluth is doing its part to help make Minnesota more resilient for the future, while also helping our City thrive economically."

About LMC Sustainable Cities: The Sustainable City Award is given each year to a city for work that is helping the city achieve its sustainability goals through implementation of one or more of the GreenStep Cities program's 29 best practices. <https://www.lmc.org/about/lmc-awards-programs/sustainable-city-award/>

About GreenStep: Minnesota GreenStep is a voluntary challenge, assistance, and recognition program to help cities and tribal nations achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. This free continuous improvement program is based upon 29 best practices that are tailored to Minnesota cities and tribal nations. More at www.MnGreenStep.org.

City of Duluth's Climate Action Work Plan: <https://duluthmn.gov/sustain>

Media contact:

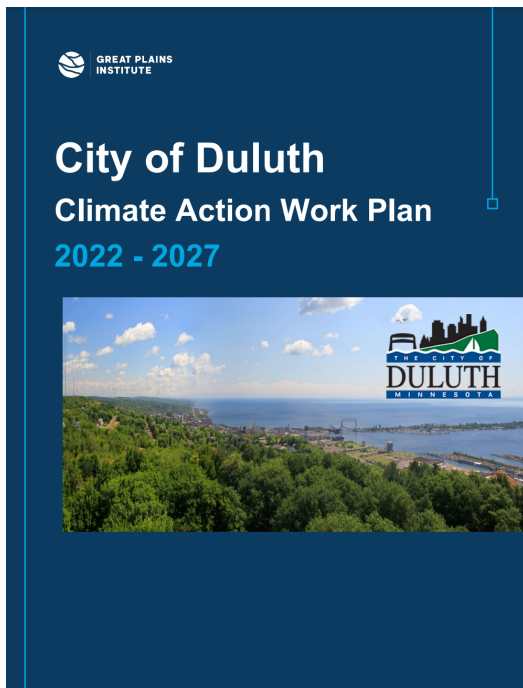
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Cover of the City of Duluth Climate Action Work Plan



Photo of a Minnesota GreenStep Cities award