

# Environmental Quality Commission

## 2026 Work Plan Submissions for Consideration

### **Susannah Shmurak**

- EMFs from wi-fi and cell towers
  - Mounting research is showing wireless radiation is harmful to human, animal, and plant health, examine what safeguards are in place and consider whether others should be added.
- Address pesticide and herbicide use

**Staff Response:** While these are environmentally related topics, the City is asking the Commission to focus on tangible initiatives that align with or are derived from the City's Climate Action Plan, Strategic Plan, and Comprehensive Plan.

### **Robert Hanson**

- **2026 making progress with Xcel to figure out solutions for our electric grid congestion**

**Staff Response:** This initiative is already being monitored by staff in Engineering and Community Development. City staff have an ongoing relationship and dialogue with Xcel on this issue, as it affects many of the City's future projects. This isn't an initiative where the EQC could play an active role, since it falls under staff responsibilities.

### **Mike Provancha**

- Establish a reuseable diaper bank (includes reusable diapers, bio-detergent, two 5 gal buckets with lids, and water sprayer for toilet hookup)
  - Encouraging the use of reusable diapers reduces landfill waste, conserves resources, and saves families money over time compared to disposable options. Establishing a city-sponsored diaper bank can help make sustainable diapering accessible to all families, especially those facing financial hardship. Such a program promotes environmental responsibility while supporting public health and equity within the community.
- Green roof project on city property or a program to promote such initiatives
  - Promoting and implementing green roofs can significantly enhance urban sustainability by reducing stormwater runoff, improving air quality, and lowering building energy costs. Municipal incentives, such as tax credits or grants, can encourage property owners and developers to adopt this eco-friendly practice. Collaboration between city planners, architects, and environmental organizations ensures that green roof projects are both practical and impactful for community resilience.
- Add 3 more community gardens on city property
  - Community gardens provide residents with access to fresh, healthy produce while fostering social connections and a sense of shared purpose. They transform

underused spaces into vibrant, green areas that support pollinators and improve neighborhood aesthetics. Additionally, community gardens promote environmental awareness, food security, and local resilience through hands-on education and collaboration.

- Add more pollinator grasses and flowers on city owned property by partnering with organizations like Prairie Restoration
  - Planting pollinator-friendly grasses and flowers on city property enhances biodiversity and supports essential species like bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. These low-maintenance landscapes reduce mowing frequency, conserve water, and beautify public spaces. By adopting pollinator-friendly practices, cities like Northfield can lead by example in promoting ecological health and environmental stewardship.
- Outreach to residents about composting
  - Community outreach on composting helps educate residents about reducing food waste and turning organic materials into valuable soil nutrients. Workshops, demonstrations, and public campaigns can empower households to start composting at home or participate in local collection programs. By fostering awareness and participation, composting outreach strengthens community engagement and supports Northfield's sustainability and waste reduction goals.

### **Bruce Anderson**

- Continue educational/promotional campaign focused on home energy efficiency and electrification and EV adoption. The State of Minnesota plans to FINALLY roll out what they are now calling the "[Save Energy Minnesota](#)" program bundling state and federal rebates for home energy efficiency and electrification in early 2026. This warrants building on the 2025 work plan item related to this with regular promotion of these opportunities.
- As Rob suggested in his email this morning, he and I discussed working on addressing the roadblock to solar development in the Northfield area by partnering with Xcel on battery storage options to address grid congestion issues.
- Education campaign on the climate change implications of agricultural practices and dietary choices, perhaps with one or several forums/panel discussions focused on growing the local food economy, growing your own food, natural and edible landscaping, and greenhouse gas emissions associated with various diets (omnivore, vegetarian, vegan, flexitarian, pescatarian, etc.). Could partner with [Cannon Valley Grown](#) and the [Cannon River Sustainable Farming Association](#).

### **Ava Podracky**

- Water quality as its own, not put with water conservations. So focusing on the water quality of Northfield and like the manganese levels.
- Invasive Plants