

Environmental Quality Commission

2024 Work Plan Submissions for Consideration

Janet Petri, Chair

****The Climate Action Plan includes Policy and Planning #5: Implement policies and actions to support substantial waste reduction.**

There are several recommended actions. I am thinking specifically about **scaling up composting**. Curbside Composting does good work. Can their composting pickup become city-wide, and be required? Or, could compost pickup become part of the contract with DSI?

-- I understand that EQC doesn't have the power to make this happen. How could this goal be written so that it is within our purview?

-- There are community members who would be willing to work on a waste plan goal. Could we set up a committee that includes people not on EQC?

****This leads to a related goal: Reviewing the DSI contract.** If my memory serves me correctly, we received a presentation from DSI ~ 2years before the renewal of the last contract, as part of the process. I may have that wrong, but we should check on the necessary timing for that process.

****IRA outreach and education:** The IRA event last week was terrific, and the turnout was good, but only the climate-activist folks attended. I have had many conversations since then with EQC members, CCL, and RCAT members about the need to get the word out to the community. Also, community members have told me that they heard about the IRA event, they couldn't attend, and they wanted to know more.

We could definitely get a group together to work on IRA outreach, which would include info about Xcel and city rebates. I think we have some time to get this going. People will want to know about the IRA rebates. We were told those would be announced in December 2023. But I was on a national CCL IRA-info Zoom, and they said mid-2024 for the rebate availability. I hope that doesn't apply to Minnesota. Still, we need to prepare. An IRA info group will be better if it includes other community members, not just EQC.

What audiences do we want to reach? - Right after the Nov. 2 event, we got a request to give classes, presentations, whatever, at 50N. - I am thinking about contacting NAIA (Northfield Area Interfaith Alliance) and saying we would like to talk to church groups. I was told that David Weeks is the person to contact at NAIA. Also: -CAC; -Neighbors United (though many in the Hispanic community live in rentals or manufactured homes, and I think IRA doesn't apply so well to them). - We do want low and moderate income Northfielders to hear about their options.

Daniel Jones, Vice Chair

- Complete the Urban Forest Management Plan and provide Commission support as the document moves through Council review, approval and adoption.
- A proposed revision to the current ordinance regarding parkway plantings.

Bruce Anderson

- IRA rebate/tax credit workshop series (once MN Department of Commerce rolls out rebate programs), focusing on:
 - Faith communities
 - Other community groups interested in promoting home energy efficiency and affordability, climate action and/or environmental stewardship
- Encourage decrease in vehicle miles traveled in town by encouraging walking and biking as alternatives to driving in town -- educational outreach via collaboration with healthcare providers and other groups promoting community health (Healthy Community Initiative, Age-friendly Northfield, etc. City needs to better communicate the reasons for investing in bike and pedestrian infrastructure.
 - Walking/biking school bus initiative: possible partnership with Healthy Community Initiative, grant funding from Rice County SHIP to hire a part-time coordinator/outreach director.
 - Incorporating physical activity (walking and biking) into adults' everyday lives as the default method of running errands and doing other in-town travel: possible partnership with Age-friendly Northfield, others.
- Major push for large (1 MW+) behind-the-meter, rooftop solar/community solar gardens on-site at major energy users in town -- education/incentives?
- Ongoing efforts to promote tree planting on public and private property, decrease lawn areas and increase native vegetation/pollinator habitat/veggie gardening as an alternative to lawns.

Mike Provancha

- Consider a study of an autonomous electric Trolley system that goes up and down Hwy 3 so all citizens can access North/Central/South Northfield.
- Food education among Northfield residents; how and where do most residents get food via the supply chain and is it equitable? How can we make it more local and equitable?
- Installation of a level 3 DC charger for community members and eco tourists.
- Consideration of support for green hydrogen manufacturing/production.
- Establishment of partnerships with designated warm and cooling centers during extreme weather events.

George Kinney

- Continue implementation of Zero Waste Plan, Minimization of Single plastic use in Northfield