



Legislation Text

File #: 21-700, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: December 7, 2021

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Beth Kallestad, Program Coordinator

Review of draft Sustainable Building Policy.

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council considers a motion to adopt the Sustainable Building Policy.

Summary Report:

The City of Northfield adopted its Climate Action Plan (CAP) on November 5, 2019. One of the goals of the CAP is to be a 100% carbon-free community by 2040. The CAP also indicates that building energy use makes up approximately 85% of the sources of greenhouse gas emissions within our city. Cities may not require buildings to be built or renovated to standards that are more restrictive than the state building and energy code unless there is a financial incentive from the city. Therefore, it is reasonable for the City of Northfield to implement policies to help reduce energy usage in buildings in the community especially those it assists with financial incentives. As is noted in the supplemental sheet attached there are other cities in Minnesota who have undertaken this effort and several more are in the process of adopting a policy.

Item PP 1.3 in the Climate Action Plan states that *the City should require any new building that receives public funding or incentives to be constructed to green building standards*. This action is also found in GreenStep Cities best practice number 3.

In June 2021, the City of Northfield began working with the Minnesota Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) to develop some language and criteria for a possible Sustainable Building Policy. A group of city staff participated in five meetings with CEE to develop suggested criteria for a policy and engaged with stakeholders for feedback. Stakeholders meetings included: developers, architects and builders, the Environmental Quality Commission, the Planning Commission, the EDA, the HRA and an open meeting for anyone to participate. Staff and consultants reviewed the input and determined modifications that should be made to proposal. A presentation on the elements of the draft Sustainable Building Policy was given to City Council on November 2, 2021.

To help staff implement the policy and provide education and guidance to developers and staff, we will also be proposing to participate in the Efficient Buildings Collaborative. This is an effort started by Hennepin County to bring resources to smaller cities (even those not in Hennepin County) to improve building energy efficiency. Hennepin County is in the process of hiring a vendor to provide education, technical assistance, tracking and reporting to participating cities through a joint powers agreement. Staff will bring forward more details on this as soon as they are available. This contract would be funded through the Carbon Reduction Fund budget.

A draft policy is being shared with City Council at this meeting. The policy has been reviewed and recommended by staff. The City Attorney has also reviewed and made recommendations to the language in the proposed policy. Staff will review the main points of the policy and answer questions from Council.

Staff will be sharing this draft policy with the EDA and HRA at their December meetings and asking for motions of support.

Alternative Options:

- 1.) No policy is adopted.
- 2.) Revisions are made and brought back to City Council.

Financial Impacts:

There will be a cost to the City for participation in the Efficient Buildings Collaborative if the City chooses to participate. At this time the cost is unknown but will come out of the Carbon Reduction Fund.

Tentative Timelines:

- EDA and HRA are asked for motions of support at their December meetings
- Council considers adoption of policy on January 4, 2022
- Implementation of the policy will begin after adoption.