



## Legislation Text

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**City Council Meeting Date:** January 4, 2022

**To:** Mayor and City Council  
City Administrator

**From:** Ben Martig, City Administrator

Consider resolution to adopt Sustainable Building Policy.

**Action Requested:**

The Northfield City Council adopts a resolution for a 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 the 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 are also proposing that the City of Northfield 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 was shared with City Council on December 7, 2021. At that time it was requested the resolution for adoption be placed on the January 4, 2022 Council agenda as a Consent Agenda item.

Staff have shared this draft policy with the EDA and HRA at their December meetings and both have adopted motions of support for the policy.

**Alternative Options:**

- 1.) No policy is adopted.

**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:**

- Implementation of the policy will begin after adoption.