



Legislation Text

File #: 20-105, **Version:** 1

EQC Meeting Date: February 19, 2020

To: Members of the Environmental Quality Commission

From: Beth Kallestad, Program Coordinator

Climate Action Plan Initiatives

Action Requested:

The EQC receives an update and discussion on two potential Climate Action Plan initiatives.

Summary Report:

Staff are providing information on two items and their corresponding funding opportunities they would like to move forward with that fall under the Climate Action Plan.

1. [Minnesota GreenCorps <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/mngreencorps/host-site-application>](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/mngreencorps/host-site-application)

The Minnesota GreenCorps program is a statewide initiative, coordinated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment while training a new generation of environmental professionals.

The program places AmeriCorps members with host organizations around the state to assist communities and local governments in addressing a variety of statewide needs, aiming to:

- Reduce solid waste and increase recycling in Minnesota communities.
- Reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) and other air pollutants.
- Reduce water runoff and improve water quality.
- Assist community members to take eco-friendly actions.
- Increase community resilience and build local capacity to respond to the threats of climate change.
- Train new environmental professionals.

The City would like to apply to be a GreenCorps host site from September 2020 - August 2021. This is a full-time position funded by the MPCA and AmeriCorps. Based on the application options for this year, staff suggest applying for the category of **Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Organics Management** (see details in [host site application guide <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/mngreencorps/host-site-application>](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/mngreencorps/host-site-application)). Focusing in this area is suggested as it will help support two areas of the Climate Action Plan, which current staff do not have capacity to devote much time. The City has some funding through a donation received in 2019 to work on waste reduction and recycling education. We have been doing work to develop some

programming and having this position would help to move items forward. The Climate Action Plan has several strategies around food that this position could also support. In addition, this could also lay the groundwork for a community supported Food Coordinator. The GreenCorps member would also be allowed to help with other aspects of the Climate Action Plan not to exceed 340 hours of time over the course of the year.

As a host site, the City will be required to provide physical working space and supervision with an estimated time commitment of 3.2 hours/week on average. Program Coordinator, Beth Kallestad, would provide supervision of the GreenCorps member. The City has past experience with hosting a GreenCorps member in 2011-2012 when the Engineering Department hosted a person who focused on stormwater and GreenStep Cities.

Due to the timeline to provide the application, the EQC will not be able to meet to review the completed proposal. Staff will work on the application prior to the February 19, 2020 EQC meeting and give an update on progress at that time.

2. [Environmental Assistance Grant Round: Climate Adaptation- State FY 2020](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mpca/grants-community-strategies-adapt-climate-change)

[<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mpca/grants-community-strategies-adapt-climate-change>](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mpca/grants-community-strategies-adapt-climate-change)

MPCA is soliciting grant applications for approximately \$250,000 (total for all requests) to research, develop, and implement strategies for communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change and improve community resilience while achieving positive environmental outcomes. These efforts will prevent or reduce the environmental impacts including waste and pollution caused by warming temperatures and extreme precipitation while protecting public health and well-being.

- **Application deadline:** March 11, 2020
- **Eligible applicants:** Minnesota not-for-profit organizations, institutions, political subdivisions of the state, and tribal governments. Multi-organizational collaboration is encouraged.
- **Match requirement:** 25% or more of the total project budget from local direct and indirect matching support. Match may be in the form of in-kind services or cash. A reasonable dollar-value must be assigned to all in-kind matches. The match cannot be met with services or funds derived from other grant sources administered by the MPCA.

The complete Request for Proposal can be found at:

[<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mpca/grants-community-strategies-adapt-climate-change>](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mpca/grants-community-strategies-adapt-climate-change)

After reviewing the list of possible projects the funding stream would allow, items in our Climate Action Plan and discussion with staff, they would like to submit a proposal for the following item in the RFP example list:

- *Conduct planning and implement projects (e.g., tree inventories, gravel bed nurseries, etc.) that support increased resilience and coverage of tree canopy for the many climate mitigation and resilience benefits that trees provide.*

This item is being suggested as it could help the City make progress on items in the Climate Action Plan to update and approve our draft Urban Forest Management Plan and make progress on increasing our tree canopy. Having information on what trees need to be planted, where and how many will also help the City to launch a Carbon Fund (another item in the Climate Action Plan).

Due to the timeline to provide the application the EQC will not be able to meet to review the completed proposal. Staff will work on the application prior to the February 19, 2020 EQC meeting and give an update on progress at that time.

Alternative Options:

1. The City does not apply for the GreenCorps member and has to seek out other methods to implement Climate Action Plan items.
2. The City does not apply for the Environmental Assistance Grant and seeks other funding mechanisms to pay for the proposed work.

Financial Impacts:

1. Minnesota GreenCorps: The City provides in-kind support in terms of supervision and physical space. We would also pay for materials needed for outreach and education. Some funding is already in the 2020 budget and will be requested for 2021. The City would benefit from having work done full-time for a year without having the added expense of a staff person.
2. Environmental Assistance Grant: Funds would become available in July 2020 and need to be spent by June 30, 2023. We anticipate the majority of match will come from in-kind staff time and equipment use, although some funding request may also be included in the 2021 and future City budgets. As the proposal is still in development, an exact funding request amount is not available at this time. We do not anticipate requesting more than \$50,000 which would require a match of \$12,500 (cash or in-kind).

Tentative Timelines:

1. Minnesota GreenCorps
 - Application to City Council for resolution of support, March 10, 2020.
 - Application submitted by March 18, 2020.
 - Notification of approval would come in late April 2020.
2. Environmental Assistance Grant
 - If proposal is for more than \$25,000 application will be provided to City Council for approval to submit on March 10, 2020
 - Application submitted March 11, 2020.
 - If funded, begin work after July 2020.