

Sustainability Commission Work Plan

March 2024 - February 2025



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The Executive Summary

Our focus areas and initiatives

Focus Areas

EN
Climate Change
Mitigation: Energy
(Natural Gas and
Electricity)

ELS
Ecological Land
Stewardship

TR
Climate Change
Mitigation:
Transportation

EJ
Environmental Justice

SW
Solid Waste

WTR
Water

Initiatives

- EN – New Health and Wellness Center and Bloomington Ice Garden renovation energy systems recommendations
- EN – Heat recovery options
- TR – Exclusionary zoning reduction to allow for middle housing
- ELS – Natural Resources Prioritization Master Plan support
- ELS – Native plantings ordinance progress
- ELS – Volunteer events
- EJ, ELS – Urban forestry plan development and boulevard tree plantings support
- EJ, ELS – Impacts of pesticides information
- EJ, ELS – Support local community garden plots
- SW – HERC closure response
- WTR, EJ – Water conservation education and outreach

The Commission

Our purpose, duties and responsibilities, membership

Purpose

The purpose of the Sustainability Commission shall be to advise the City Council on policies and practices that relate to the sustainable use and management of environmental resources that include air, water, energy, land, and ecological resources, and waste. The Sustainability Commission will help to ensure that such resources will be sustained and continue to provide for a high quality of life for present and future generations of Bloomington.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Commission shall:

- a) Collaborate with City staff to review, evaluate, develop, and advise the City Council on policies and practices regarding the sustainable use and management of environmental resources that include air, water, energy, land and ecological resources, and waste;
- b) Act as change agent, coordinator and educator for policies, procedures and proposals that relate to environmental sustainability;
- c) Engage with the Bloomington community and serve as a community liaison for issues, ideas, and proposals and provide appropriate feedback;
- d) Cultivate relationships with residents, community groups, businesses, institutions of higher learning, faith-based organizations, outside government bodies, and non-governmental institutions;
- e) Serve as a resource for other Bloomington commissions, boards, committees, and task forces on any issues related to sustainability;
- f) Adopt criteria and processes for making decisions about the use of resources and selection of sustainability projects;
- g) Review sustainability proposals and make recommendations; and
- h) Submit written annual work plans and progress reports to the City Council.

Membership

The Sustainability Commission shall consist of 11 members, including at least two young adults. The majority of the members shall be technical experts in one or more of the areas of sustainability and one seat shall be reserved for a City Council member.

The Commissioners

Who we are



Binaya Acharya, Commissioner

Term 1: 03/01/2024-02/28/2026

Binaya Acharya is driven to leave the world in better shape for his two kids and the next generation. With a B.S. in electrical engineering from the University of Maine and an MBA from the University of St. Thomas, his professional career spans over twenty years in engineering and marketing. Binaya works at the local electric utility company educating customers on electric vehicle charging programs, clean energy, and other energy efficiency related programs. Born and raised in Kathmandu, Nepal, Binaya has been a Bloomington resident for the past twelve years and is looking forward to contributing his experiences to the commission and serving the community.



Alex Brand, Commissioner

Term 1: 03/01/2024-02/28/2027

Alex Brand graduated from Dunwoody College of Technology's HVAC/R Service program and works in Bloomington as a Building Automation Engineer. His work focuses on tracking and reducing energy usage. He has a personal interest in environmentally-conscious construction, efficient and reliable infrastructure, and safe and robust public transportation. He moved to Bloomington in 2021 with his spouse and two cats. They have since added their first dog and their first baby to their family. As a newer resident of Bloomington, Alex is looking forward to learning more about the city and its residents while helping to form a more sustainable, and equitable, living space for all.



Angie Begosh, Commissioner

Term 1: 03/15/2022-02/28/2025

Angie Begosh has a Ph.D. in zoology from Oklahoma State University, where she researched how land use affects pollinator communities. Her career includes work as an extension educator in Kentucky, Iowa, Idaho, and New Mexico focusing on natural resources and agriculture education, a salmon habitat restoration grants coordinator in Washington state, and a field technician and contract ecologist in Minnesota. She is currently an ecologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Her volunteer work in Bloomington involves monitoring a bluebird trail, surveying invasive weeds for Three Rivers Park District, and starting prairie plant seeds for Dakota County parks. She is passionate about preserving and enhancing green space in Bloomington and making quality urban habitats accessible to everybody.

The Commissioners

Who we are



Abby Childs, Youth Commissioner

Term 1: 09/01/2023-08/31/2024

Abby Childs is a junior at Jefferson High School. In the summer of 2022, she attended an international camp (Camp Rising Sun), where she learned about the importance of sustainability through leaders from other countries. In the Sustainability Commission, Abby hopes to learn from experts in the community and to do her part by supporting and contributing to the commission as well as the City of Bloomington. Abby is passionate about creating a world that is sustainable for future generations and taking steps towards preserving the environment. In the future, she hopes to use her passions in STEM and sustainability and is looking into becoming an environmental engineer as a possible career.



Sarah Cobb, Commissioner

Term 2: 03/01/2024-02/28/2027

After graduating from the School of Environmental Studies and earning a degree from the University of Minnesota, Sarah extended her study abroad experience to a regular residence in the foothills of the Andes Mountains, the most biologically diverse zone in the world. Now living in Bloomington with her husband, three kids, some ducks, and her giant yellow jeep, she hopes her award-winning non-profit roles foster a welcoming space for sustainability conversations and action, accessible to everyone. Sarah is especially passionate about preserving the remaining trout stream just south of MOA, protecting keystone species, and promoting the use of sedges and native species to improve Bloomington's playlots from the ground up, east to west.



David Drummond, Commissioner

Term 2: 03/01/2023-02/28/2026

Dave Drummond has a Ph.D. (Environmental Health) from the U of M School of Public Health. He performed the first campus-wide sustainability study for the UW-Madison including a facilities-based carbon footprint. He also served as their Director of Environment, Health and Safety. As a member of the Commission, he continues to learn and participate in its activities and hopes to share his expertise where it will be helpful.

The Commissioners

Who we are



Owen Loken, Youth Commissioner

Term 2: 09/21/2023-08/31/2024

Owen Loken graduated from Jefferson High School and now attends the University of Minnesota. He is studying environmental science with strong interests in energy and transportation. Owen was sent in early summer of 2022 to take part in the 73rd session of Minnesota Boys State. Owen is thankful for the opportunity to be part of the Commission and will work tirelessly to make the most of this position. Owen will take the saying that his parents say often “Think globally act locally” to heart when serving on Bloomington’s Sustainability Commission.



Dwayne Lowman, Commissioner

Councilmember Seat: 01/01/2024-12/31/2024

Dwayne Lowman was born and raised in Bloomington near Effa play lot. He and his wife Kellie enjoy camping up north and walking the parks and trails. Dwayne has a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Urban Studies, concentrating in Public Administration and Community Economic Development from Augsburg University. When reflecting on why he joined the Sustainability Commission, he said, “There are many reasons why I am committed to Bloomington's long-term ecological, social, and economic resilience. Chief among those many reasons has to be those voices that are marginalized or drowned out by obstacles seen and unseen. I trust that I will have the humility to pass on a better Bloomington than what I have found.”



Sean McFarling, Commissioner

Term 1: 10/14/2023-02/28/2026

Sean McFarling is a Civil Engineer whose career has focused on helping communities and campuses reduce carbon emissions while improving energy reliability and sustainability for over the last decade. Using natural resources responsibly and efficiently is a driving motivation for Sean. After moving to Minnesota in college, Sean has lived in Bloomington for 20-plus years with his wife Jill, and enjoys being outside, travel, and learning new things.

The Commissioners

Who we are



Andy Scott

Term 1: 03/15/2022-02/28/2025

Andy grew up in Richfield and has been a Bloomington resident for 10 years. He has a degree in design from MCAD and has been working as a landscape designer since 2017. He is the proprietor of a small landscape company that specializes in native plant communities, habitat gardening, pollinator-friendly practices and residential stormwater management. As an engaged member of the South Loop community, Andy is passionate about continuing to improve Bloomington's natural areas/resources by supporting efforts from the City and its residents.



Beth Stegora (she/her/hers)

Term 1: 03/15/2022-02/28/2025

Beth Stegora received her Doctorate in the medical field from the University of Southern California. She is interested in the effects of climate change on the physical and mental health of humans and all living creatures. She is also a trained Climate for Health Ambassador. Beth joined the Sustainability Commission to help protect the precious natural resources that Bloomington has to offer so future generations may be able to experience clean air and water.

The Work Plan

What we will do

New Health and Wellness Center and Bloomington Ice Garden renovation energy systems recommendations

Description Conduct energy systems review and make recommendations for new Health and Wellness Center and Bloomington Ice Garden renovation

Focus Area(s) Climate Change Mitigation: Energy (Natural Gas and Electricity)

Team Champion - Commissioner Sean McFarling
Support - Commissioner Sarah Cobb

Heat recovery options

Description Look into validity of capturing waste heat from City infrastructure to reduce reliance on fossil fuel usage and investigate potential money savings

Focus Area(s) Climate Change Mitigation: Energy (Natural Gas and Electricity)

Team Champion - Commissioner Owen Loken
Support - Commissioners Angie Begosh, David Drummond, and Sean McFarling

Exclusionary zoning reduction to allow for middle housing

Description Promote the environmental benefits of middle housing to the Planning Commission, Planning staff, HRA, and City Council. Explore reduction in exclusionary zoning

Focus Area(s) Climate Change Mitigation: Transportation

Team Champion - Commissioner Owen Loken
Support - Commissioner Dwayne Lowman

The Work Plan

What we will do

Natural Resources Prioritization Master Plan support

Description Support progress on Natural Resources Prioritization Master Plan

Focus Area(s) Ecological Land Stewardship

Team Champion - Commissioner Andy Scott
Support - Commissioners Angie Begosh and Sarah Cobb

Native plantings ordinance progress

Description Continue to support progress on native plantings ordinance and revise City Codes related to native plantings in residential areas

Focus Area(s) Ecological Land Stewardship

Team Champion - Commissioner Andy Scott
Support - Commissioner Sarah Cobb

Volunteer events

Description Continue hosting and supporting volunteer activities such as buckthorn busts, garlic mustard pulls, seed collections, tree plantings, and adopt a park in priority areas identified in the Natural Resources Prioritization and Management Plan

Focus Area(s) Ecological Land Stewardship

Team Champion - Commissioner Angie Begosh
Support - Commissioners Sarah Cobb and Andy Scott

The Work Plan

What we will do

Urban forestry plan development and boulevard tree plantings support

Description Support staff in developing urban forestry plan and increase boulevard tree plantings to decrease urban heat islands, especially in vulnerable communities; includes parks, natural areas, and City-owned property

Focus Area(s) Environmental Justice and Ecological Land Stewardship

Team Champion - Commissioner Beth Stegora
Support - Commissioners Abby Childs, Owen Loken, and Andy Scott

Impacts of pesticides information

Description Collaborate with Parks and Recreation and Public Health staff to provide information regarding impacts of pesticides on BIPOC communities and vulnerable populations including seniors and children

Focus Area(s) Environmental Justice and Ecological Land Stewardship

Team Champion - Commissioner Abby Childs
Support - Commissioners Angie Begosh, Sara Cobb, and Beth Stegora

Support local community garden plots

Description Explore opportunities to support Parks and Recreation staff in promoting and providing access to local community garden plots.

Focus Area(s) Environmental Justice and Ecological Land Stewardship

Team Champion - Commissioner Sarah Cobb
Support - Commissioner Abby Childs

The Work Plan

What we will do

HERC closure response

Description Develop HERC Closure Response/Zero Waste group to initiate Bloomington-specific programs/projects to significantly decrease waste that would go to HERC/landfill using already-created Henn County Zero Waste Action Plan

Focus Area(s) Solid Waste

Team Champion - Commissioner Dwayne Lowman
Support - Commissioners David Drummond and Beth Stegora

Water conservation education and outreach

Description Explore what other communities and organizations are doing to promote equitable water conservation through rebates, rates, and educational outreach; assist with water rate study as needed. Help educate community about potential changes to the rates

Focus Area(s) Water and Environmental Justice

Team Champion - Commissioner Angie Begosh
Support - Commissioners Dwayne Lowman and Beth Stegora



Public Works
1700 W 98th St
Bloomington, MN 55431

Staff Liaison: Emma Struss, Sustainability Coordinator
Staff Lead: Ellen Biales, Deputy Director of Public Works
Staff-Appointed Commission Secretary: Kim Larson, Office Coordinator

Contact us for further inquiries

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BLOOMINGTON
MINNESOTA