

**City of Woodbury, Minnesota  
Office of City Administrator**

**Council Letter 22-251**

**October 12, 2022**

**To: The Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council**

**From: Clinton P. Gridley, City Administrator**

**Subject: Strategic Initiatives 2022 - 2024**

**Summary**

The biennial Council Retreat was completed on June 8, 2022, which included a facilitated discussion to develop the Council's highest priorities and emerging, critical issues for the City to address over the short term (two to three years). General Council criteria for an issue to rise to the level of a Strategic Initiative were as follows:

- Identified in the community survey as an area of interest or concern
- Alignment with City's mission, vision, and values
- Issue urgency to be addressed in the short-term
- Supports proactive, rather than reactive management (fiscal and otherwise)
- Consistent with existing City plans, reports and guiding documents (i.e., 2040 Comprehensive Plan)
- Requires resources (staff capacity and/or financial) above what is already available
- Will result in measurable achievement during the time period supported by specific goals
- May result in new ways of doing business, change in the status quo and examining current practices

At the August 31, 2022 Council Workshop, Council confirmed consensus around three Strategic Initiatives:

1. Drinking Water - Water Treatment Implementation
2. Public Safety - Safer Community through Culture, Connections and Crime Prevention
3. Environmental Stewardship - Improving Environmental Outcomes

Since the workshop, there were just a few edits to the Public Safety and Environmental Stewardship Strategic Initiatives, which are redlined. No change from the workshop version was made to the Water Treatment Strategic Initiative.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends Council adopt the three Strategic Initiatives for 2022 - 2024.

**Fiscal Implications**

There are no financial implications specifically required at this time to support Strategic Initiative implementation that has not already been budgeted or will be budgeted for consideration in future years.

**Public Process**

This item was discussed at the June 8, 2022 retreat and at the August 31, 2022 workshop.

Written by:

Clint Gridley, City Administrator

Attachment:

1. Strategic Initiative 22-01 - Drinking Water - Water Treatment Implementation – Final Version
2. Strategic Initiative 22-02, Public Safety - Safer Community through Culture, Connections and Crime Prevention – Strikethrough Version
3. Strategic Initiative 22-02, Public Safety - Safer Community through Culture, Connections and Crime Prevention – Final Version
4. Strategic Initiative 22-03, Environmental Stewardship - Improving Environmental Outcomes – Strikethrough Version
5. Strategic Initiative 22-03, Environmental Stewardship - Improving Environmental Outcomes – Final Version

## Strikethrough Version

### 2022 - 2024 Strategic Initiative 22-03

#### Environmental Stewardship *Improving Environmental Outcomes*

#### Issue

Natural Environment and Sustainability have been Critical Success Factor since 1997. Woodbury has re-affirmed its commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship multiple times through the value statements and implementation actions in the 2030 and 2040 Comprehensive Plans, and the adoption of the Critical Success Factor of “Environmental Stewardship” in 2018.

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan includes the following guiding principle in support of Environmental Stewardship:

*Woodbury is firmly committed to the preservation, responsible use and enhancement of its environment, and recognizes that environmental health, economics and human well-being are interconnected and interdependent. To preserve our environment for future generations, the City will foster environmental stewardship through focused conservation, social responsibility and best management practices. As our local environment faces new challenges, the City will make appropriate investments in preservation, adaptation, mitigation, and maintenance.*

Furthermore, one of the implementation items in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan is to develop a plan that identifies actionable items and strategies to help guide preservation, resilience, and adaptation within the community.

In 2021, Council directed staff to work with the Parks and Natural Resources Commission (PNRC) to evaluate the past twenty years of environmental stewardship. Staff created an inventory of key accomplishments, events, projects, activities, programs, and policies and applied it to a timeline, representing the City’s leadership in addressing sustainability and environmental issues (see attached infographic). Once complete, the Environmental Stewardship Report and Timeline were presented to City Council and the PNRC. The report

#### Critical Success Factor: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Understanding that environmental health, economics, and human well-being are interconnected and interdependent, Woodbury is committed to the responsible use and protection of all resources. To preserve our environment for future generations, the City will foster environmental stewardship through focused conservation, social responsibility and best management practices.

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showed that the City has made remarkable progress in preserving and enhancing the natural environment over the past twenty years, but what is missing is a Council-approved vision or action plan, outlining strategies to ensure sustainability and resilience into the future.

There has been community interest in the issue of environmental stewardship, and there is a unique opportunity now to harness regional and community enthusiasm, and to apply City resources to the Environmental Stewardship Strategic Initiative, to:

- Memorialize the city's status as a leader by developing an Environmental Stewardship Action Plan reflecting past and current initiatives;
- Identify actions that the City and community members can take to sustain and improve the natural environment;
- Foster community engagement aligned with the City's public engagement plan;
- Engage interested parties in research to better understand the risks, rewards, and responsibilities for Woodbury;
- Develop specific goals and strategies that support sustainability and resilience into the future;
- Develop a prioritization guide that weighs potential to advance mitigation, adaptation and community equity strategies, including related risks and rewards;
- Better position Woodbury as a contender for resources such as grants and awards;
- Unite the city's environmental programs, initiatives and responsibilities under a single vision, without competing for resources;

To lead the way to protect our community, and meet the needs of future generations, the City has established Environmental Stewardship as a 2022 – 2024 Strategic Initiative. Establishing this Strategic Initiative unlocks Woodbury's full potential to be a leader and best serve the interests of present and future residents and affirms its commitment to preserve and enhance our environment for future generations.

### **Scope**

As stated in a memo by the PNRC to City Council at their May 25, 2022, meeting, by prioritizing Environmental Stewardship as a Strategic Initiative, we can establish strategies to ensure sustainability and resilience into the future. The PNRC states that this is an urgent, massive, complex, and challenging issue to tackle, and the City needs resources to identify local solutions and strategies that fit the community's needs. As recommended by the PNRC, there should be two focus areas to the Environmental Stewardship Strategic Initiative:

***Part I: Environmental Stewardship Action Plan:*** The PNRC recommended the City allocate resources to develop an Environmental Stewardship Plan that includes a robust community engagement process and provides a practical, local approach to city-level environmental stewardship. The plan will develop specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely goals and provide a roadmap for implementation.

*Part II: Education and Engagement for Property Owners: How to be Environmental Stewards*

During the PNRC discussions about environmental stewardship, it became clear that community members want guidance on how they can take meaningful action at the individual, household, or business level. The PNRC will serve as the appropriate body to guide and oversee this work and assist staff in developing this initiative.

**Fiscal Impact**

~~A proposed budget for the Environmental Stewardship Plan in 2023 will be proposed to support engaging professional services to assist staff in developing the Environmental Stewardship Plan.~~

~~Fiscal implications and priorities related to plan implementation will be reviewed through the Audit and Investment Commission, and proposed to the City Council through the City's annual budget and Capital Improvement Planning process.~~

**Anticipated Timeline**

Q4 2022	Issue framing, project management team assembly, stakeholder inventory, and initiative scoping
Q2 2023	Develop and advertise Request for Proposal for the Environmental Stewardship Plan based on the development of scope
Q2 2023	Consultant interviews and award contract
Q3 2023	Develop and implement community engagement plan with staff, consultant, and PNRC
Q4 2023	Facilitate community engagement plan and draft contents of the Environmental Stewardship Plan
Q1 2024	Progress report memorandum to City Council
Q2 2024	Finalize Draft of Environmental Stewardship Plan
Q3 2024	Present findings and seek input for the Environmental Stewardship Plan from the PNRC, Audit and Investment Commission and Economic Development Commission
Q3 2024	Present draft report and implementation items for the Environmental Stewardship Plan <u>to the</u> PNRC, Audit and Investment Commission and Economic Development Commission, for recommendation to City Council
Q4 2024	City Council adoption of Environmental Stewardship Plan and establishment of priorities and fiscal direction for 2025

**Implementation Team**

Development of the Environmental Stewardship Plan will be led by the Senior Environmental Resources Coordinator as the Project Manager, with the Parks & Recreation Director/staff liaison to the PNRC as the Executive Sponsor. The Project Management Team (PMT) will include the Environmental Division of Engineering along with staff from various departments, including Engineering, Public Works, Community Development, the consultant, and others as appropriate.

The two focus areas of work identified above will each be assigned to a task leader who will report back to the project management team. The Senior Environmental Resources Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing task leaders, PMT meetings, allocating resources, overseeing the public engagement plan, documenting goals and outcomes, and supporting the PMT for delivery of the Environmental Stewardship Action Plan (Part 1) and Education and Engagement for Property Owners (Part II) as detailed above.

## **Background**

Although it is listed as an implementation item in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the City does not currently have a vision nor documented plan to guide its work in environmental stewardship and resilience. Urgency for the Environmental Stewardship Strategic Initiative as a priority focus area for the next two to three years is supported by the following factors:

- Woodbury will experience more frequent and intense extreme weather events. Woodbury has already experienced the pendulum swinging more rapidly back and forth from flood to drought and back and increased water restrictions.
- The top climate risk in Washington County will be more frequent, more intense, and longer lasting heat waves. June 2021 was the hottest June on record across the U.S.; July was the hottest worldwide. Heat waves are the deadliest severe weather event in the United States (NOAA).
- Minnesota winters are becoming warmer and icier, with higher minimum temperatures. By 2050, it is predicted that Woodbury's average low temperature will shift up 6.7°F and high temperatures will rise by 5.7°F (DNR).
- Minnesotans are experiencing larger and more frequent rain events. The Minnesota DNR predicts a 13% increase in the size of the heaviest rainfall each year.
- Woodbury is already investing significant time and resources responding to emerging threats related to environmental change, such as Emerald Ash Borer, water quality and quantity, and flood risk reduction.
- In the last few years, residents and businesses have experienced:
  - The longest and most severe heat wave to occur so early in the season, from June 3-11, 2021;
  - The worst wildfire smoke event on record in the Twin Cities in 2021, recognized as the “Summer of Smoke;”
  - Closure of Carver Lake Beach earlier than usual due to algae blooms in 2021;
  - Diminished vitality of the southern-most Tamarack stands in the state, which is already at the edge of survivable habitat limits; and
  - Cancellation of the Cold Catfish Cup bike race on the mountain bike trail because the weather is too unpredictable (50% of years it was above freezing in mid-January).

## 2022 - 2024 Strategic Initiative 22-03

### Environmental Stewardship *Improving Environmental Outcomes*

#### Issue

Natural Environment and Sustainability have been Critical Success Factor since 1997. Woodbury has re-affirmed its commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship multiple times through the value statements and implementation actions in the 2030 and 2040 Comprehensive Plans, and the adoption of the Critical Success Factor of “Environmental Stewardship” in 2018.

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan includes the following guiding principle in support of Environmental Stewardship:

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Furthermore, one of the implementation items in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan is to develop a plan that identifies actionable items and strategies to help guide preservation, resilience, and adaptation within the community.

In 2021, Council directed staff to work with the Parks and Natural Resources Commission (PNRC) to evaluate the past twenty years of environmental stewardship. Staff created an inventory of key accomplishments, events, projects, activities, programs, and policies and applied it to a timeline, representing the City’s leadership in addressing sustainability and environmental issues (see attached infographic). Once complete, the Environmental Stewardship Report and Timeline were presented to City Council and the PNRC. The report showed that the City has made remarkable progress in preserving and enhancing the natural

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