

**Falcon Heights Environment Commission**  
**January 14, 2013**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**Agenda**

- 1) Welcome and Introductions
- 2) Election of Commission Chair for 2013
- 3) Approval of Minutes for December 2012
- 4) Chicken Ordinance Update
- 5) Community Sustainability Forum Follow-Up
  - a. View slide presentation and review report
  - b. Action for City Council
- 6) Information and Announcements – Council, Staff, Commissioners
  - a. Updates from Council – Council Member Mercer-Taylor
  - b. Updates from Staff – Deb Jones
  - c. Other Announcements

## **Sec. 2-114. City commissions.**

The city council has established the following commissions:

- (1) Planning commission.
- (2) Human rights commission.
- (3) Park and recreation commission.
- (4) Neighborhood commission.
- (5) Environment commission.

(Code 1993, § 2-4.01; Ord. No. 98-02, § 1, 4-8-1998; Ord. No. 07-07, § 1, 4-25-2007)

## **Sec. 2-115. Duties, membership, terms, officers and meetings.**

- (a) *Role of commissions; commissions composition.*
  - (1) The commissions are designed to serve in an advisory capacity to the city council.
  - (2) The city commissions shall consist of not less than seven and not more than nine members. The majority of members shall be residents of the city, unless otherwise designated in the administrative manual.
- (b) *Specific duties.* Specific duties for each commission are included in the administrative manual.
- (c) *Terms, vacancies, oaths.*
  - (1) The term of office of all commission members shall be three years. Except for appointments to fill a vacancy, an appointment in any year shall be deemed effective as of January 1 of such year for purposes of computing the term. No member shall serve more than two consecutive three-year terms unless otherwise specified in the administrative manual.
  - (2) Members shall hold office until their successors are appointed. All members shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses as authorized and approved by the city council.
- (d) *Removal.* Commission members shall be subject to removal with or without cause, by a four-fifths vote of the city council. Failure to attend meetings regularly shall be one basis for removal.
- (e) *Chairperson; officers.* Each commission shall elect a chairperson from among its appointed members for a term of one year. The commissions may create and fill such other offices as determined necessary.
- (f) *Meetings, records, reports.* The commissions shall hold scheduled meetings, not less than one per calendar quarter. They shall adopt rules for the transaction of business and shall keep written public records of resolutions, recommendations and findings. On or before February 15 of each year, the commissions shall submit to the council work reports for the preceding calendar year.

(Code 1993, § 2-4.02)

**State law references:** Minnesota Open Meeting Law, Minn. Stats. ch. 13D.

**Sec. 2-120. Environment commission.**

The environment commission shall serve in an advisory capacity to the city council on all policy matters relating to energy use, air quality, recreation and aesthetic appreciation, green infrastructure, water, solid waste, and environmental education.

(Ord. No. 07-07, § 3, 4-25-2007)

Secs. 2-121--2-139. Reserved.

**City of Falcon Heights  
Environment Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
December 10, 2012**

Present: Commissioners Diane Ross, Nina Semmelroth, Peggy Hall, Isaac Mielke, Rebecca Montgomery, Mayor Peter Lindstrom, Deb Jones (Staff).

Absent: Brian Goodspeed, Jeff Connell, Ethan Wagner

1. The meeting was called to order in the Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m. by the co-Chair, Diane Ross. The minutes for October were approved. Diane Ross was thanked for her two terms of service on the Environment Commission.
2. **Prairie Grass Update from Mayor Lindstrom.** City Council discussed this topic again in workshop and decided to request more research from staff on whether cities restrict this type of landscaping by percentage of the lot.
3. **Beekeeping Update from Mayor Lindstrom.** This did not have majority support in the City Council. Among the reasons given were that lot sizes in the city are too small, “we don’t need any more bees in the community,” at least one Council member is fearful of bees, and the provision requiring permission of neighbors would create dissension in neighborhoods.
4. **Recycling Innovation Grant Update from Staff Liaison Jones.** Falcon Heights is moving ahead with a grant application in collaboration with the City of Lauderdale. The proposed project is a pilot voucher system to aid residents in disposing of bulky waste (e.g. mattresses, furniture, appliances). The Council will be asked to confirm a resolution of support.
5. **Chickens.** Commissioners worked through the model ordinances provided by staff and selected Stillwater’s as the preferred model for a Falcon Heights chicken ordinance, with additional elements from Maplewood and Eagan. Commissioners were in favor of requiring a permit but not requiring neighbor permission or notice. Staff will work with the City Attorney to create a draft ordinance. The Mayor said this will go to the Council after the January workshop.
6. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at about 8:40 p.m.

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_**

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS  
RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTERS 10 AND 113  
OF THE FALCON HEIGHTS CITY CODE  
CONCERNING CHICKENS**

THE CITY COUNCIL OF FALCON HEIGHTS ORDAINS:

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 10 of the Falcon Heights City Code is amended by adding Article IV to read as follows:

**ARTICLE IV. CHICKENS**

10-34 *Keeping of chickens.*

A. Any person who keeps chickens in the City must obtain a permit prior to acquiring the chickens. Chickens may only be kept in zoning districts where chickens are an allowed accessory use. The initial permit is valid for up to two (2) years beginning on the date the chickens arrive on the site and ending on December 31 of the following year. Subsequent permits are valid from January 1 of one year to December 31 of the second year. Applications for permits must be made to the Zoning and Planning Director.

- (1) Fees charged for the issuance of a permit to keep chickens will be set by the City Council.
- (2) If the permit applicant is not the fee owner of the premises on which the chickens are sought to be kept and for which the permit would apply, the application shall be signed by all fee owners of the premises.
- (3) The City may refuse to grant or may revoke a permit if the chickens become a nuisance, as evidenced by a second substantiated violation (within 12 months of a first substantiated violation) of this Section of the City Code, or Chapter 22 of the City Code.
- (4) The City may refuse to grant a permit to, or may revoke a permit from, a person convicted of cruelty to animals.

- (5) Permits are non-transferable and do not run with the land.
- (6) A permit is a license granted to the chicken keeper by the City and does not create a vested zoning right.
- (7) Prior to issuance of a permit, the prospective permit holder must acknowledge they have read the chicken run educational material provided by the City.
- (8) Prior to issuance of a permit, the prospective permit holder must provide a detailed sketch plan of the premises on which chickens are sought to be kept, including the location, the dimensions and design of the coop and run, establishing compliance with the chicken coop and run specifications provided in this Article.
- (9) Prior to issuance of a permit, the prospective permit holder must provide a plan for maintaining an adequate temperature in the coop for the safety of the chicken hens. The plan must address both extreme winter and summer temperature conditions.
- (10) The permit application will be processed administratively. It will not be referred to the City Council for consideration.

10-35 Each person holding a permit to keep chickens within the City must comply with the following:

- (1) The principal use of the specific property must be either single-family residential or two-family residential. A permit will not be issued for any property which is used principally for something other than single-family or two-family. If the property's principal use is two-family residential, then the property owner must sign the permit in addition to the chicken keeper;
- (2) No person may keep more than four (4) chickens;
- (3) No person may keep a rooster;
- (4) No person may allow chickens to range freely without fencing or without a mobile pen;
- (5) No person may keep any chickens inside a house or garage;
- (6) No person may slaughter any chickens within the City;

- (7) Chickens must be provided a secure and well ventilated roofed structure ("chicken coop");
- (8) The roofed structure for the chickens may only be located in a rear yard and must meet setback and building separations as established in City zoning and building codes, except that the roofed structure and fencing must maintain a 20-foot separation from dwellings on adjacent properties;
- (9) The roofed structure shall be fully enclosed, wind proof, and have sufficient windows for natural light;
- (10) All premises on which hens are kept or maintained shall be kept clean from filth, garbage, and any substance which attracts rodents. The coop and its surrounding must be cleaned frequently enough to control odor. Manure shall not be allowed to accumulate in a way that causes an unsanitary condition or causes odors to be detected on another property. Failure to comply with these conditions may result in removal of chickens from the premises or revocation of a chicken permit.
- (11) Chickens must be kept in the roofed structure, an attached pen, or a detached mobile pen whenever they are unattended by the keeper; but when attended by the keeper, the chickens are allowed in a completely fenced exercise yard;
- (12) The coop's attached pen must be securely constructed with at least a mesh type material and shall have protective overhead netting to keep the chickens separated from other animals;
- (13) The coop's attached pen must be well drained so there is no accumulation of moisture; and
- (14) The floor area of the roofed structure or a combination of the floor area and attached pen area must equal at least ten (10) square feet of area per chicken.
- (15) All grain and food stored for the use of the hens on a premises with a chicken permit shall be kept in a rodent proof container.
- (16) Leg bandings are required on all chickens. The bands must identify the owner and the owner's address and telephone number.

**SECTION 2.** Section 113-174(d) of the Falcon Heights City Code is amended by adding subsection (13) to read as follows:

(13) Keeping of chickens as regulated by the Code.

**SECTION 3.** Section 113-181(d)(1) of the Falcon Heights City Code is amended to read as follows:

(13) All accessory uses as permitted in the R-1 and R-2 Districts except that the keeping of chickens, as regulated by the Code, is only allowed as accessory to a single-family or two-family home.

**SECTION 4.** This ordinance is effective immediately upon its passage and publication.

**ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2013, by the City Council of Falcon Heights, Minnesota.

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Peter Lindstrom, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bart Fisher, City Administrator/Clerk





# Falcon Heights Sustainability Plan

Securing Families, Fields and Fair for future generations



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



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## Acknowledgments

Thank you to City of Falcon Heights residents for providing visions and identifying priorities for moving the city towards its goals of sustainability through this project. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the following people for their assistance and participation with this project:

Bart Fischer, City Administrator

Peter Lindstrom, Falcon Heights Mayor

Pamela Harris, Falcon Heights City Council Member

Chuck Long, Falcon Heights City Council Member

Beth Mercer-Taylor, Falcon Heights City Council Member

Keith Gosline, Falcon Heights City Council Member

A special thanks to residents, elected officials and city staff from St. Anthony Village and Lauderdale who also partnered with us on this multi-community project, expanding relationships and potential collaboration.

Additionally, we extend our thanks to the University of Minnesota's Sustainability Minor Program and instructors Dave Wanberg and June Mathiowetz for making this experiential learning project possible.

## **Introduction**

In the Fall of 2012, University of Minnesota students collaborated with the cities of Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, and St. Anthony Village to engage residents, public officials and city staff in co-creating more sustainable cities. While sustainability projects of varying degrees had already been undertaken in these cities, public officials and residents sought a more visible, comprehensive effort guided by sustainability principles and a more fully engaged community. As part of this effort, students convened stakeholders, facilitated development of an initial sustainability vision, worked to identify potential priorities, and researched and recommended possible sustainability solutions for future implementation for each of the cities. In return, this mutually beneficial relationship provided a unique experiential learning opportunity for undergraduate students as part of their capstone project for the Sustainability Studies Minor program.

This report reflects the efforts of the student group working with Falcon Heights. The students hope this report provides residents and leadership of Falcon Heights with the information sought. It is also hoped that it will allow the city to sustain the ongoing conversations needed to move strategically towards a more sustainable city for present and future generations.

## **History of Sustainability Efforts in Falcon Heights**

In Falcon Heights, concern about the impacts of development and humans on the planet and society has a long history. This concern has been increasingly reflected in city government policies, procedures and investments in sustainable projects.

Over the past four decades, the City of Falcon Heights has developed and refined a comprehensive plan to guide the City in all of its decisions relating to land use, transportation, community facilities, public improvements and investments, and intergovernmental relations. Falcon Heights has made numerous changes throughout the years to the plan to progress to where it is today. Each upgrade has been tailored to better reflect and meet the needs of the City, its residents, and a changing world. Over the past decade, the residents of Falcon Heights have taken the initiative to move toward a more sustainable community and begun integrating sustainability into their comprehensive plan.

In addition to gradually weaving sustainability into its comprehensive plan, the City has also developed three sustainability initiatives, which include the following:

## **Sustainable Development**

Falcon Heights began an initiative to retrofit existing city structures and improve upon existing development. The City installed a 40-kilowatt solar panel system on City Hall, installed pervious paving in the City Hall parking lot, and replaced the inefficient 75-watt incandescent bulbs in decorative street lights with the more energy efficient 30-watt LED (Light Emitting Diode) bulbs.

## **Community Gardens**

The City established a community garden that evolved into a place of community collaboration and creativity through events like Picnic Operettas and ice cream socials. These gatherings have turned the Falcon Heights Community Park into a productive and sustainable space and sparked an expanded interest in food growing.

## **Collaborative Services**

Falcon Heights has opted to share a number of its vital services with neighboring communities to improve efficiency and service. These collaborations include the sharing of services with the following entities: St. Anthony Police Department, Falcon Heights Fire Department, Roseville Information Technology, Roseville Engineers, St. Paul Water and Sewer, Ramsey County Elections, and Ramsey County snow plowing.

In general, more focused projects are emerging out of Falcon Heights as residents increasingly organize and collaborate to address specific sustainability related concerns. One example of this is the recent emergence of its Adopt-a-Crop program, focused on assuring food for those in need.

## **Green Step City Recognition**

Falcon Heights has also strived to be more sustainable in accordance with Green Step Cities, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's "voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals." In June of 2012, Falcon Heights became a "Step 3" GreenStep City Award Recipient, the highest award currently available. This was achieved by implementing at least 17 sustainable actions and 12 best practices as defined by the GreenStep Cities program.

These are just a few examples of the steps Falcon Heights had taken prior to their collaboration with the University to address their own and the growing worldwide concern for the environment and a desire to live more sustainably. After receiving this award, Falcon Heights began wondering, "What's next?" and this question led to the emergence of this project.

# Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overarching framework for the City of Falcon Heights to address social, economic, and environmental issues related to sustainability. It provides both a vision and plan for moving forward, reflecting in-depth analysis on topics of collaboration, alternative transportation, sustainable energy, waste management, and biodiversity. Though this framework acts as a platform from which the City may work towards its vision, it is not meant to be a static document, and could be updated on a yearly basis based on the changing goals, priorities, data revelations and progress of the community. Overall, this report seeks to help guide Falcon Heights to ultimately provide a high quality of life for all residents in a manner that respects social, economic, and natural resources.

## Process

This project was completed through a capstone sustainability course at the University of Minnesota, where students were tasked with planning community engagement processes and putting together sustainability plans for the cities of Falcon Heights, St. Anthony Village and Lauderdale. The process over the 15-week period can be described in three phases below.

The **first phase** consisted of the sustainability students developing a shared understanding of systems thinking, sustainability principles and best practices and sharing their varied technical backgrounds, knowledge, and experience with each other. Students had the opportunity to meet with and hear presentations by the three cities' administrators, completed analyses of the various cities involved and conducted extensive primary and secondary research.

The **second phase** involved planning and facilitating two community meetings involving all three cities. At the first meeting, students assisted community members, city officials and city staff in developing a shared understanding of sustainability, presented overarching sustainability principles, and worked with participants to articulate and develop a vision of sustainability for their community. Then students used the information gathered from this meeting to draft an initial framework for moving forward, highlighting major areas of emphasis that had emerged during the discussion. In the case of Falcon Heights, these areas were collaboration, alternative transportation, sustainable energy, waste management, and biodiversity.

At the second community meeting, students presented a draft vision, goals, objectives and strategies, reflecting back to residents what was heard at the first workshop and providing an opportunity for further discussion. The purpose of this meeting was to ensure the emerging sustainability plan draft was aligning with and representing residents' and the City's priorities.

In the **third phase**, the students combined all information gathered and conducted final research to write this report. What follows in this report are the vision, goals, objectives and strategies that emerged out of the semester's effort.



# Definition and Guiding Principles of Sustainability

The concept of sustainable development is both simple and complex. The idea of “meeting today’s needs without affecting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”<sup>1</sup> is a relatively basic concept and commonly used definition of sustainability today. Few people would disagree that they want a world for their children that is just as good, if not better, than the one that exists today.

In practice, however, sustainable development surfaces a range of multifaceted issues affecting our environmental and social commons. Our environmental commons is challenged, for example, with climate change, destruction of wildlife habitat, and the pollution of air and water. In our social commons, we find many people running into societal design errors that are keeping them from being able to meet their own basic human needs.

This breadth and depth of complexity challenges even the most highly organized communities to move from their vision into action on sustainability related matters. Many communities are finding that awareness and application of sustainability principles are critical to success when developing a vision and implementation strategies.

## The Four Sustainability Principles

There are four sustainability principles<sup>2</sup> that have been developed over the past two decades. They have been improved and gained credibility through scientific peer review, been shared worldwide and been adopted by the American Planning Association. They are helping communities and businesses around the world be more effective and efficient in sustainability related efforts. The principles are important because they help determine whether an action being undertaken is ultimately aligned with sustainability as defined by science. Students presented these principles to participants at two community meetings held to help develop a shared understanding of sustainability and guide development of the vision and implementation steps.

These four guiding sustainability principles used are defined as follows:

*“To become a sustainable society we must..”*

**1. Eliminate our contribution to the progressive buildup of substances extracted from the Earth's crust.** This means that fossil fuels, heavy metals, and other minerals cannot be extracted at a faster rate than their re-deposit back into the Earth’s crust. Examples of these include cadmium, mercury, radioactive nuclides, metallic ore, silicon, oil, natural gas, and coal. Long ago, many of these substances filled the atmosphere. Over billions of years these

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<sup>1</sup>Brundtland Commission definition of sustainability

<sup>2</sup>Thomas, P. (2012). *The Natural Step*. Retrieved from <http://www.naturalstep.org/>



substances were sequestered or buried in the earth's crust making life on earth possible, a process we are now reversing in a matter of decades.

**2. Eliminate our contribution to the progressive buildup of compounds and chemicals produced by society.** This means that substances must not be produced at a faster rate than they can be broken down in nature. This requires a phase-out of persistent human-made substances not found in nature and a greatly decreased production of naturally occurring substances that are systematically accumulating beyond natural levels. Examples include batteries, weapons and chemicals.

**3. Eliminate our contribution to the progressive physical degradation and destruction of nature and natural processes.** This means that we cannot harvest or manipulate ecosystems in such a way as to diminish their productive capacity, or threaten the natural diversity of life forms (biodiversity). This requires that we critically examine how we harvest renewable resources, and adjust our consumption and land-use practices to fall well within the regenerative capacities of ecosystems. Examples include overharvesting forests, paving critical wildlife habitat, and overdeveloping the land.

**4. Eliminate our contribution to conditions that undermine people's capacity to meet their basic human needs.** This means that basic human needs must be met with the most resource-efficient methods possible, including fair resource distribution. Examples of these conditions include unsafe working environments and not enough pay to live on.”<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Karl-Henrik Robert who spearheaded development of the principles often finds it important to note: “At first reading, these principles might seem to imply that we must rid society of all materials extracted from the earth and all substances produced by society and that, further, we must never disturb a natural landscape. But that’s not what they mean. The problem is not that we mine and use heavy metals, or use chemicals and compounds produced by society, or disrupt natural processes, or even temporarily interfere with people’s capacity to meet their basic needs. It is, rather, that our industrial system has developed so that substances extracted from the earth and produced by society continue to build up indefinitely in natural systems. That means a progressive buildup of pollutants and substances that not only harm us directly, but damage natural processes that have taken billions of years to develop.”<sup>3</sup>

Again, the importance of aligning with sustainability principles is clear. The principles not only help avoid wasted time, energy and resources, they help raise awareness of sustainability as viewed from a scientific perspective, provide a common language, promote a shared understanding, assure consistent integration of goals and actions within and across organizations, and assist in prioritization of efforts for optimal success and efficiency. These principles additionally align with the best practices of the GreenStep Cities and can serve as a compass to guide Falcon Heights towards a sustainable future [Appendix A].

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas, P. (2012). *The Natural Step*. Retrieved from <http://www.naturalstep.org/>

## Development of the Vision

A shared vision is essential to galvanizing a successful collective effort. Grounded in an understanding of sustainability and its principles, the next step in engaging the community of Falcon Heights was to develop a shared vision. This process involved listening closely to what participants said and finding a way to document what was shared to assure the information was received accurately.

### Priorities Portrayed Using Wordle Art

We decided to explore use of Wordle Art in this project as a first step in helping inform and shape the vision. Information used to create the Wordles was gathered from participants during the first community meeting. The Wordles served as tools to document the discussion, visually reflect back to participants the feedback that was being gathered around community priorities and guide vision development and further discussion.

During the first workshop, participants were asked the following three questions:

- 1) What do you like most about your community?
- 2) What most do you want to see improved in your community?
- 3) What is your future vision of a sustainable community?

Using the residents' answers to these questions, key topics or words were identified and tallied based on their frequency [Appendix B]. This frequency is visually demonstrated in a Wordle with the larger words reflecting topics that were mentioned on a more frequent basis. The three Wordles that were created are below.

**Figure 1: Wordle One - What do you like most about your community?**



Figure 2: Wordle Two - What do you most want to see improved in your community?



Figure 3: Wordle Three - What is your future vision for a sustainable community?



The next step of community engagement efforts revolved around taking these articulated priorities and working with residents to co-create a vision for a sustainable Falcon Heights. The vision below reflects what emerged during community engagement meetings held in the fall of 2012 at Silverwood Park in St. Anthony Village.

## **Vision for a Sustainable Falcon Heights Emerges**

*The City of Falcon Heights in 2030 continues to be a community with the unique heritage of families, fields, and fair. We value the growing diversity of the age, economic status, and culture of our residents, engaging this blend in the enhancement of a strong, thriving community. We are proud of our accomplishments to improve upon these qualities and capture their essence in equitable, environmental, and economical ways.*

*Falcon Heights is a caring and collaborative community. Our cooperative movements unite our residents, keep goods local, and work to become a zero-waste city. Through swaps and library systems, we have integrated sharing into our culture, promoting an environment of trust, interdependence, and collaboration among neighbors. Communicative measures give our city a safe and friendly small town feel.*

*We are a multimodal transportation community that meets the needs of our residents from cradle to walker. Though we have one of the busiest intersections in Minnesota running through our boundaries, we have embraced this unique facet by utilizing the mass transit system. Our community circumvents segmentation by uniting bicycle lanes, multi-use trails, sidewalks, and over-street ramps that promote safe, non-automotive transportation throughout the community.*

*Economically, Falcon Heights exemplifies small business success. Though our community's business sector is physically limited to a small section of our city, local establishments flourish with the community's increased accessibility. Our local businesses allow an opportunity for residents to live and work in Falcon Heights, and revenue that stays within the city in turn strengthens it. Falcon Heights has amplified our partnerships with neighboring cities and the University of Minnesota to strengthen relations and maximize community resources.*

*As an environmentally aware community, we understand the importance in taking care of natural ecosystems in order to attain healthy and sustainable landscapes. Citizens continually come together with council members to examine laws and ordinances, restructuring them to facilitate and promote sustainable practices while preserving Falcon Heights' identity. Falcon Heights has restored polluted areas and replaced homogenous landscaping with an array of native vegetation. These efforts work to increase water quality, biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience, providing inimitable services to the community. Upkeep and development reflects our respect to the natural environment, augmenting upon our natural resources in a sustainable manner and benefiting the livelihood and relationship between humans and nature.*

*Our community's heritage has provided structure to our city that magnifies and encourages the fulfillment of Falcon Heights' ideal community. Together we continue to shape and improve our city, promoting a living space in which residents and the environment prosper.*

Options for moving this vision forward include setting up a public comment period, hosting additional focus groups to receive further input, using it as a starting point for elected policy makers to further refine, and/or finding ways to formally "adopt" it.

# Goals, Strategies, Objectives and Measurements for Consideration

In addition to creation of a vision, the development of goals, strategies, objectives and measurements based on sustainability principles and a community's vision is an effective way to further articulate priorities and provide structure to the work of sustainability. This section reflects research conducted on areas of interest that were raised during the two community meetings and as part of the vision. The community and policy makers will need to have many more discussions about defining next steps. However, it is the students' hope that the following provides useful and applicable ideas for moving work forward. As mentioned earlier, the major areas of emphasis that emerged from the Falcon Heights community meetings were collaboration, alternative transportation, sustainable energy, waste management, and wildlife and biodiversity.

## Collaboration



### Definition

Community collaboration emphasizes interaction and sharing between residents of a certain geographical area to reduce reliance on natural resources and eliminate waste. It stresses the use of effective communication to create an environment of trust and transparency throughout a community, and encourages residents to share and reuse rather than buy new. Community collaboration, once established, can play a large role in guiding a city towards sustainability.

### Vision Statement for Collaboration

*In 2030, the City of Falcon Heights will have significantly improved all aspects of community collaboration. Residents of all demographics will have established a sense of mutual trust with one another and communication will have steadily increased over the past decade. The community members, with the help of city administrators, will have worked together to create a tool rental and/or lending system and a library book swap, both of which have produced positive results. Falcon Heights also will have increased its production of homegrown goods through the*

*use of several new community gardens. These three initiatives will have reduced Falcon Heights' dependency on natural resources, pleasing residents, and motivating them to continue to strive to transform Falcon Heights into the sustainable city they believe it can become.*

## **Goals**

The goal is to reduce the dependence on natural resources and materialistic consumption by encouraging community collaboration through the sharing and reuse of both organic and inorganic items.

## **Objectives**

- Increase the number of community gardens and amount of food produced in each.
- Decrease spending on tools and other homeownership equipment.
- Increase awareness and education on sustainability topics.

## **Strategies**

- Implement swaps and library programs within the community. This will help reduce materialism and consumption of goods. In addition, it will promote an environment of trust, interdependence, and cohesion between residents.
  - Implement a tool swapping program, whereby residents can exchange and rent tools from one another and the inventory is kept at City Hall or a frequented community location.
  - Create and encourage residents to use a book exchange program.
- Promote and engage the community through sustainability training initiatives. The community hopes to hold various workshops for its citizens addressing pertinent sustainable issues and providing solutions and education on the topics at hand.
  - Host community gardens, energy efficiency and composting workshops.
  - Engage community members via e-mail marketing programs and local ad campaigns.
- Implement and promote the use of organic community gardens. This will help lower the consumption of foods that use heavy pesticides and high fossil fuels, due to being transported large distances, and will improve connectedness and promote better health within the community.

## **Measurements**

- Number of tool lending libraries established.
- Number of square feet, acres, plots or memberships in community gardens.
- Pounds of produce grown in the city or community gardens.
- Number of sustainability workshops held; number of participants.

## Alternative Transportation



### Definition

Transportation involves the movement of goods and people from one place to another. The transportation sector is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions and many other human health hazards. Shifting people and products to alternative transportation sources including busing, riding trains, carpooling, biking, and walking, is good for health and budgets. The City plays important roles in making transit affordable and convenient, promoting its use, and creating dynamic corridors that are safe and accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists.

### Vision Statement for Alternative Transportation

*The City of Falcon Heights in 2030 has embraced alternative transportation. By implementing paths that can accommodate walkers, bikers, strollers, and wheelchairs, everyone in the City is able to enjoy the benefits of a walkable community. Residents spend less money on fuel and reduce pollution as they are able to get to community events, run errands, and enjoy their city using these paths. Public transportation has also become a staple in the lives of Falcon Heights residents, which has allowed them to travel the Twin Cities area quickly, conveniently, and affordably. The ability to use alternative transportation has brought the community together and has increased the quality of residents' lives.*

### Goal

The goal is to improve quality of life, the local economy and resident health through decreased use of fossil fuels and increased levels of physical activity in reaching destinations in and around Falcon Heights.

### Objectives

- Increase walkability and bikeability of Falcon Heights, especially in ways that further unite the four sectors of the City.
- Increase resident use of trails, sidewalks and public transportation.

### Strategies

- Host an annual biking day, consisting of a bicycle tour of Falcon Heights, local business vendors, food and drink stations, and live entertainment. The tour will allow participants



from within and outside of the community to view the beautiful city of Falcon Heights and provide opportunities to stop at local shops and parks. The event will also host a kids' ride to increase youth interested in bicycling and showcase the Falcon Heights Community Bicycle Hub.

- Install bike racks for convenient parking within the business sector. These racks make biking easier and increase traffic to businesses. The bike racks may also provide new avenues for on-the-street advertising if business names, logos, and/or slogans are allowed. Efforts will be made to find locally made, sustainably produced (by reclaiming and reusing construction materials) bike racks.
- Encourage businesses to promote bicycle ridership by incorporating a rewards program or offering coupons to customers who bike to their store. This is a win-win approach to bringing more customers to businesses while encouraging residents to ride bicycles.
- Create safer crosswalks in strategic locations by utilizing LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights embedded in the sidewalk and road in order to alert drivers of pedestrians in low-light situations, inclement weather, and at night. These LED lights improve biker and pedestrian safety. It would also benefit residents if a ramp were built above Snelling Avenue to provide a safe crossing alternative during the high traffic.
- Collect and evaluate data regarding who is using sidewalks and bike paths and where they are going. This information will identify the high traffic areas where multi-use trails might be most beneficial.
- Establish Nice Ride locations within Falcon Heights to encourage more biking and improve accessibility to the new light-rail transit system located only 3 miles from the Snelling/Larpenteur intersection on University Avenue.
- Assess all existing bike and pedestrian paths for width and accessibility to those with limited mobility including baby strollers, walking frames often used by seniors, and wheelchairs.
- Establish HOURCAR within the city. HOURCAR is a vehicle sharing service in which users pay an amount per hour. Such a service can help reduce vehicle dependence by allowing users to use the service only when needed, rather than using a vehicle in all circumstances. It can also support households in becoming single or no car households.
- Create trail maps in multiple languages including English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.
- Build a community bicycle hub that hosts workshops for community members on bicycle maintenance and has the following features:
  - Water bottle filling station with a water bowl for dogs
  - Communal bicycle mounts and tools for repair and maintenance
  - Compressed air/manual pump
  - Shelter
  - Centralized Information/Communication Center providing a map of local businesses, biking and walking paths, and connections to the light rail transit system and Metro Transit, and information about the city's walking club and the newly created cycling club



## Measurements

- Develop baseline data on City and citywide vehicle miles traveled and set high but realistic goals to reduce it each year.
- Increase ridership of annual bike day by 10 percent by the year 2020, and 20 percent by 2025.
- Conduct bike and pedestrian user surveys of trails (using volunteers) to monitor use levels and set goals to increase it.

## Sustainable Energy



### Definition

Renewable energy sources include solar, hydro, wind and geothermal. Expanding use of renewable energy is critical to reducing increasing levels of pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Renewable energy also contributes to energy security, stable energy prices, climate change solutions and green jobs. Increasing sustainable energy is a significant step towards creating a sustainable community.

### Vision Statement for Sustainable Energy

*The City of Falcon Heights in 2030 will have made large strides towards implementing sustainable energy initiatives. Citizens of the Falcon Heights community are well informed of where their energy comes from and conservation best management practices. Sustainable sources of electricity have been sought after and implemented by the City and its collaborating neighbor communities. The Falcon Heights community is proud to call itself a community powered by sustainable energy.*

### Goals

Falcon Heights will reduce its total energy usage while increasing the percentage of energy being brought into the City by sustainable sources.

### Objectives

- By 2030 Falcon Heights will source 30 percent of its energy from sustainable sources.
- Community members will be informed about and implement methods of efficient energy use through best practices in insulation, lighting, appliance use and purchases, heating and cooling. This will reduce the community's overall energy use by 5 percent.

## Strategies

- Create a collaborative effort with neighboring communities to implement sustainable energy projects in the local area. This cooperative effort reduces the costs of implementing these technologies and benefits every community involved.
- Explore the potential of implementing Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) legislation passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 2010. This allows local governments to create PACE programs that allow local business and residents to finance clean energy projects by including the cost of energy efficiency and conservation improvements as a special assessment to their property and paying for them alongside property taxes. The City of Edina can be looked to for an example of a PACE program emerging for businesses.
- Host a sustainable energy community workshop to involve community members and inform the community of best practices in efficient energy use including:
  - Low energy lighting
  - High-efficiency appliances
  - Best in-home wiring practices
  - Efficient electronics usage
  - Winter and summer insulating methods
  - Safe and efficient insulation types and installation
  - Energy auditing
  - Efficient heating and cooling methods
- Create incentive programs to promote sustainable energy practices for homeowners, renters and landlords alike.

## Measurements

- Develop baseline data on City and citywide energy use. In municipal operations, increase renewable electricity to x number of kilowatts or one megawatt by a certain date.
- Establish the baseline number of renewable energy projects currently in Falcon Heights and a goal for increasing the number of renewable projects by a certain date.

## Waste Management



## Definition

Waste management includes prevention, collection, transport, processing or disposal, monitoring and managing of waste materials. Resource recovery can be implemented during collection to provide sustainable waste management. Transportation of waste and recovered resources is conducted by a hauling company, which then delivers the collected material to the appropriate disposal sites. Single hauler refers to contracting with one company to serve the entire City.

## Vision Statement for Waste Management

*As an environmentally aware community, we understand the importance of recycling and conserving our natural resources in order to maintain a healthy and sustainable environment. Recycling efforts allow materials to be reused and help reduce the amount of mined substances needing to be extracted from the earth and amount of chemicals produced by society. Residents and council members have voted to become the next “zero-waste” city in the U.S. and the first in Minnesota. The City has contracted with a single-hauler to remove refuse, recyclables, and compostables, which has simplified waste management and reduced emissions for Falcon Heights. Additionally, community members participate in efforts that prevent the creation of waste and support producers working to eliminate product waste.*

## Goals

The goal is to have the City of Falcon Heights become a zero-waste city by 2030.

## Objectives

- Eliminate waste and increase recycling and composting rates.
- Transition to a single hauler for transport of recycling, compost and waste to improve efficiency and reduce the number of miles driven for collection.
- Implement an Integrated Waste Management System.

## Strategies

- Develop a “Zero Waste by 2030” initiative.
- Require the separation of waste into three streams: compostables, recyclables and residuals.
- Explore options for a single-hauler in Falcon Heights.
- Promote backyard and community composting.
  - Explore options for expanding composting at community gardens.
  - Explore development of micro-scale composting in neighborhoods.
  - Organize workshops to educate residents of the benefits of composting.
  - Provide subsidized backyard composting units.
  - Explore the potential for curbside compostable material pickup through Eureka and Waste Management’s Pilot Program.

- Promote recycling, composting and waste reduction in homes, businesses and institutions.
  - Introduce grade-school students to waste reduction programs.
  - Host awareness campaigns for waste management strategies.
  - Promote zero-waste events.
  - Support producer efforts to responsibly reduce and eliminate product waste.

## Measurements

- Develop baseline data of recycling rates, number of composting households, and tons of residual waste collected.
- Increase recycling and organics as a percentage of discarded waste tonnage by x percent by a certain date. Decrease overall residual waste tonnage by x percent by a certain date.

## Biodiversity



## Definition

The yards, parks, and fields of Falcon Heights provide unique habitat for a variety of mammals, birds, amphibians, and insects for residents of the community to observe and enjoy. Populations of wild animals and vegetation living in a natural state can provide insight into the health index of a landscape or ecosystem. Healthy regions score well in species richness and biodiversity. In order to maintain healthy wildlife populations, it is important that these areas contain the quality host plant coverage needed for habitat and foraging purposes.

## Vision Statement for Biodiversity

*The City of Falcon Heights residents take pride in their open spaces and wildlife. The presence of diverse wildlife and plant species is often an indicator of healthy land use, and we are proud of our flourishing natural communities. Through diligent and considerate habitat conservation and construction, we have provided homes to healthy populations of creatures, from deer to honeybees. Monitoring wildlife habitats within our community allow us to be aware of how our living choices affect the natural environment and can respond in a proactive manner. Apart from the awe of natural beauty our human community appreciates, we understand that healthy ecosystems give back to us in water and pollution filtration, reduction in invasive plant and*

*animal species, and a healthy air quality environment, motivating us to ensure their optimal functionality.*

## **Goals**

Increase the biodiversity within the community and maintain healthy populations of plants and wildlife in Falcon Heights by 2030.

## **Objectives**

- Decrease homogenous landscapes, restructuring environments to increase plant canopy diversity.
- Increase habitat that fosters rich levels of native insects and animals.

## **Strategies**

- Promote native plants and diverse planting
  - Provide residents with training on the importance of wildlife and biodiversity to help motivate them to take initiative in restructuring lawns and open spaces.
  - Develop native vegetation ordinances for lawns.
- Encourage boulevard planting
  - Incorporate more native plant varieties and a more diverse tree species on boulevards.
- Increase pollinator awareness
  - Partner with the University of Minnesota to provide training for residents on pollinator.
  - Pass a beekeeping ordinance.
- Construct intentional habitats
  - Increase structures on private and/or city space that increase the presence of native species or particular ecosystems.
- Remove invasive species
  - Increase awareness and action of residents to help decrease spread of invasive species.

## **Measurements**

- Develop baseline measurements of current plant diversity and canopy coverage, as well as biodiversity and species richness counts of insects and animals. Repeat measurements every five years, tracking progress toward a 30 percent decrease in homogenous landscapes, restructured environments including a minimum of 50 percent increase in plant canopy diversity, and a 40 percent increase in native insect richness.

## Conclusion

This report is the result of a collaborative effort between the cities of Falcon Heights, St. Anthony Village, Lauderdale and University of Minnesota students. It describes sustainability principles that can be used to guide community efforts forward in ways that are effective and efficient. It provides a snapshot of a vision articulated by participating residents, policy makers, staff and University students in the fall of 2012 that can be used as starting point or a guide for expanding sustainability efforts in Falcon Heights. This report also provides goals, objectives, strategies and measurements in the areas of collaboration, alternative transportation, sustainable energy, waste management and biodiversity to help frame future discussions and to start giving structure to the work at hand.

This progress can continue with the aid of further community discussions, partnerships with neighboring cities, and collaboration with the University of Minnesota. While there may be areas in which Falcon Heights develops its own unique solutions to the challenges at hand, our research has shown that there are many projects and efforts underway by cities around the state, country and world which can be drawn upon for inspiration or examples and be repeated or modified for application in Falcon Heights.

We applaud the City of Falcon Heights on all of their sustainability actions to date and hope this effort inspires even more community members to join in the work that is needed to ensure that our planet and community are healthy well into the future.

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## Appendix A: The Four Sustainability Principles

<i>Scientific Wording</i>		<i>Everyday Language</i>
Eliminate our contribution to systematic increases in concentrations of substances from the earth's crust.		We cannot dig up stuff from the earth at a rate faster than it naturally returns and replenishes.
Eliminate our contribution to systematic increases in substances produced by society.		We cannot make stuff at a rate faster than it takes to naturally break down into the environment.
Eliminate our contribution to systematic physical degradation of nature.		We cannot cause destruction to the planet at a rate faster than it takes to re-grow.
Remove barriers that undermine humans' ability to meet their needs worldwide.		We cannot do things that cause others to not be able to fulfill their basic needs

Source: Global Zen. (2011). *The Natural Step*. Retrieved from: [global-zen.com/who-we-are/the-natural-step/](http://global-zen.com/who-we-are/the-natural-step/)



# Appendix B: Priorities Portrayed Using Wordle Art

Question 1: What do you like most about your community?

## Frequency of Answers

17 Walkability	2 Schools & Education
12 Parks	4 Clean & Aesthetically Pleasing
5 Alternative Transport (Public & Biking)	2 Quality of Life
4 Environmentally Friendly	4 Multiple Generational Living
10 Convenience & Location	3 Positive
10 Small Community (Involved & Friendly)	2 Progressive
4 Gardens & Agriculture	2 Schools & Education
1 LED Crosswalks	

Question 2: What do you most want to see improved in your community?

## Frequency of Answers

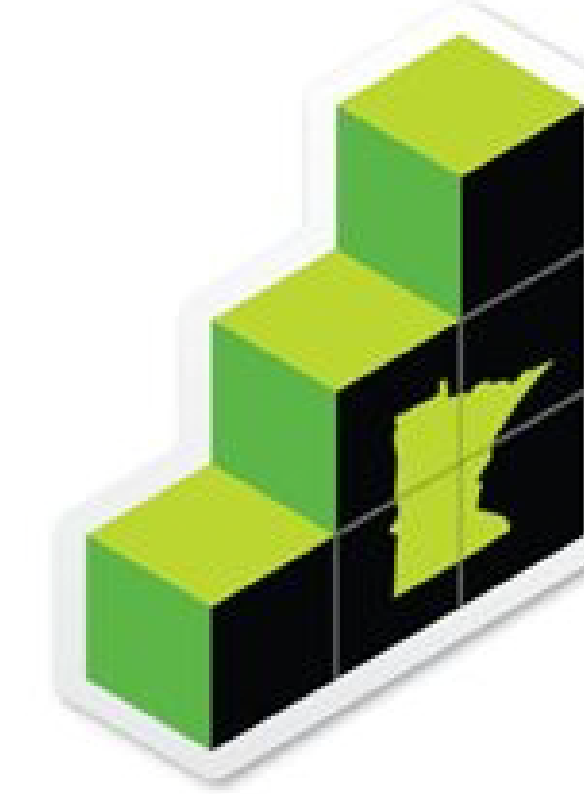
10 Community Gardens	3 Redevelopment
6 Bike/Walking Paths & Sidewalks	1 Shared Services
11 Water Quality & Efficiency	1 Walkability
6 Safety & Traffic	2 Sustainable Lawns
7 Communication, Cohesiveness, & Integration	1 Solar Panels

Question 3: What is your future vision for a sustainable community?

## Frequency of Answers

3 Sidewalks	2 Energy Efficiency
7 Recycling	4 Neighborhood Unit & Good Civil Attitude
7 Safety & Traffic	2 Locally Sourced Food
2 Green Space	2 Attractive, Destination City
7 Solar Energy	3 Compost
5 Alternative Transport (Biking & Light Rail)	1 Cleaner Lakes
	1 Schools & Education





## What is MN Greenstep Cities?

MN GreenStep Cities is a challenge, assistance, and recognition program to help cities achieve sustainability goals through implementation through 28 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing at least one of several specific actions from a list (ranging from four- eight actions). These actions are tailored to all Minnesota cities, focus on cost savings and energy use reduction, and encourage innovation.

## PICTURE

## Falcon Heights: A MN GreenStep City

Through several steps, Falcon Heights became a MN GreenStep City. The city began by building community knowledge and interest in becoming more sustainable, and ways in which to do so through the 28 GreenStep best practices. Then, City Council resolved to work towards GreenStep Cities recognition by applying online and establishing a GreenStep coordinator. Then, information was entered to the GreenStep cities website regarding Falcon Heights, such as the size, population, and best practices that have already been implemented. After that, more best practices were implemented, and to date Falcon Heights has implemented 13 of the 28 best practices, making it a STEP 3, category B GreenStep city. Falcon Heights continues to work towards the remaining best practices to achieve STEP 4 recognition.

## PICTURE

## IMPLEMENTED BEST PRACTICES



### BUILDINGS & LIGHTING

**[BP 01] EFFICIENT EXISTING PUBLIC BUILDINGS:**  
Benchmark energy usage, identify savings opportunities, and work with utilities and others to implement cost-effective energy and sustainability improvements.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 1: Enter baseline information into the MN B3 benchmarking database and routinely enter monthly energy use data from all city-owned buildings.  
Action 2: Make no/low cost facility operations and maintenance changes to city-owned/ school buildings to reduce energy costs.  
Action 3: Invest in energy efficiency opportunities through recommissioning/retrofitting city-owned buildings.

**[BP 02] EFFICIENT EXISTING PRIVATE BUILDINGS:**  
Provide incentives for energy, water, and sustainability improvements in existing structures.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 6: Provide a financial or other incentive to private parties who add energy/sustainability improvements or renovate using a green building framework.



### LAND USE

**[BP 06] COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION:**  
Adopt a Comprehensive Plan and tie regulatory ordinances to it.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 1: Adopt/have an adopted comprehensive plan.  
Action 2: Demonstrate that regulatory ordinances comply with the comprehensive plan.  
Action 3: Include requirements in comprehensive and/or other plans for intergovernmental coordination addressing land use and watershed impacts, infrastructure, economic development, and city/regional services.

**[BP 07] EFFICIENT CITY GROWTH:**  
Promote financial and environmental sustainability by enabling and encouraging higher density housing and commercial land use.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 1: Limit barriers to higher density housing by including in the city zoning ordinance and zoning map.



### TRANSPORTATION

**[BP 11] COMPLETE GREEN STREETS:**  
Create a network of multimodal green streets.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 1: Adopt a complete streets policy that also addresses street trees and stormwater.  
Action 6: Implement traffic calming measures, including road diets, in at least one street redevelopment project.

**[BP 12] MOBILITY OPTIONS:**  
Promote active transportation and alternatives to single-occupancy car travel.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 1: Promote walking, biking, and transit.



### ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

**[BP 15] PURCHASING:**  
Adopt environmentally preferable purchasing policies and practices.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 1: Adopt an environmentally preferable purchasing policy or administrative guidelines/practices directing that the city purchase at least EnergyStar certified equipment appliances and paper containing at least 30% post-consumer recycled content.  
Action 7: Lower the environmental footprint of meetings and events in the city.

**[BP 16] URBAN FORESTS:**  
Increase city tree and plant cover.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 4: Maximize tree planting along your main downtown street or throughout city.

**[BP 18] PARKS AND TRAILS:**  
Support active lifestyles by enhancing the city's green infrastructure.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 1: Identify and remedy gaps within your city's system of parks, offroad trails, and open spaces.  
Action 3: Achieve minimum levels of city greenspace.  
Action 8: Develop a program to involve community members in hands-on land restoration and stewardship projects.

**[BP 23] LOCAL AIR QUALITY:**  
Prevent generation of local air contaminants.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 2: Regulate outdoor wood burning.



### ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**[BP 24] BENCHMARKS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**  
Adopt outcome measures for GreenStep and other city sustainability efforts, and engage community members in ongoing education, dialogue, and campaigns.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 1: Report progress to community members on implementation of GreenStep City best practices.  
Action 3: Engage community members in a public process that results in city council adoption of and commitment to measure and report progress towards sustainability indicators.

**[BP 25] GREEN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:**  
Support expansion of the green business sector in your city.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 2: Connect businesses with assistance providers, including utilities, who conduct personalized energy, water, environmental sustainability, or waste audits and assistance.  
Action 7: Conduct or participate in a buy local campaign.

**[BP 27] LOCAL FOOD:**  
Strengthen local food and fiber production and access.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**  
Action 3: Inventory and promote local food production/distribution within the city with either a farmer's market or co-op buying club, an urban agricultural business or community-supported agriculture arrangement between farmers and community members/employees, or a community or school garden, orchard, or forest.

Best Practices not  
yet implemented

## List of BPs not yet im- plemented

## PICTURE