

Problem Solving for Environmental Change

- 1. A Proposal for Right-of-Way Vegetation Management** - The City of West St Paul is interested in proper management of vegetation growing in traffic ROW areas and how to best maintain these areas. West St Paul is active in the GreenStep Cities program and values sustainability and improving quality of life for residents. Recent improvements of ROW areas on Robert St have been a struggle to maintain properly. A pollinator resolution was passed in February 2016, which emphasized evaluating best practices, limiting insecticides, and promoting native plants to enhance and protect pollinators (e.g. bees, flies, and birds) when applicable. **OUTCOMES:** Creating a working management plan for existing ROW vegetation. Recommend new and replacement planting options for future ROW projects. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty
- 2. Expanding the Use of Fruit-Bearing Trees and Shrubs in Parks and Public land** – The City of West St Paul’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and Environmental Committee are interested in exploring the use of fruit-bearing trees and shrubs in parks and public spaces, including the community’s interests, perceptions, and potential liabilities for the City. **OUTCOMES:** Determine feasibility of planting fruit-bearing trees and shrubs, develop a policy and management plan, and develop a plan for public promotion and education. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty
- 3. Green Step Cities Advancement and next steps** – The City of West St Paul joined the GreenStep Cities program in 2017 and recently achieved Step 3 of the program. Staff has had limited time to dedicate to research and advancement and has utilized volunteer help through the City’s Environmental Committee. An outside look at West St Paul’s participation will be useful in advancing towards Steps 4 and 5. **OUTCOMES:** Determine how West St Paul is currently performing in their best management practices (BMP), perform an overview/inventory of current actions that could count toward a GreenStep BMP, and explore other actions that could be taken to advance West St Paul to step 4 and 5. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty
- 4. Volunteer Urban Tree Surveys – creating/updating an inventory of West St Paul trees** – West St Paul contracted a formal tree inventory for all boulevard/ROW trees in 2014. An informal volunteer tree survey within City parks was attempted in 2015. The boulevard tree survey is a valuable tool for tree management and vital for carrying out the City’s EAB Management Plan, that was adopted in January 2015. Given the number of trees that have been planted and removed in the last 5 years, updating the City’s tree inventory is critical. This project could be accomplished using volunteers. **OUTCOMES:** Determine the feasibility of updating the City’s tree inventory using volunteers, develop a plan of action, and recommend next steps for creating a park tree inventory. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty
- 5. Bike and Ped Plan review for environmental changes & equity of access** – The City of West St Paul City Council accepted the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan in December 2011. This document is used as a guide to make West St Paul a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly City. The plan is referenced on all road reconstruction projects as well as for all commercial development projects. In the past 10 years many new improvements, including reconstruction of Robert Street and many multiple-housing projects have occurred, as well as the City’s advancement in the GreenSteps program. The plan needs to be reviewed to determine if it still properly aligns with the City’s vision. **OUTCOMES:** Review the plan and compare current conditions with those from 2011. Recommend changes to the plan that are needed due to

changes within the City. Evaluate the plan for equitable access for all within the City. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty, Melissa Sonnek

6. **Residential Yard Nutrient Management and Water Use** – West St Paul has a large network of small lakes, ponds and wetlands that work to manage storm water and street runoff. West St Paul has worked with Dakota County to monitor many of these wetlands over the years. The City also has an active program for treating many of the ponds for algae and duckweed. The relative health of the ponds are good, but could be improved through more education and better management of yard waste by residents. **OUTCOMES:** Recommend best practices for management of City owned lands around ponds and wetlands. Create an education program for residents regarding proper and safe lawn care and educate on the effects of improper care on the City's wetland areas. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty
7. **Compostable to-go containers, Styrofoam/Plastic Bag ban, and organics recycling education** – The City of West St Paul has shown it cares about sustainability and effects our actions have on the environment. The City's Environmental Committee has explored bans on harmful products used in commercial businesses, such as plastic bags and Styrofoam containers. The City is also active in promoting recycling and composting. West St Paul also has a high rental population that are unaware of these programs or may have limited ability to access them. **OUTCOMES:** Create an education campaign to increase recycling and composting within the City, especially with the rental community. Determine the feasibility of bans of harmful products in commercial businesses within the City. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty, Cassandra Johnson
8. **Park Use Assessment to better understand equity and areas of need** – West St Paul is very proud of its park system. The City's parks have a wide range of activities for all residents to use and maintain an active lifestyle. That being said, it is important to reevaluate from time to time and be sure that all residents are being represented and considered when it comes to activities available in our park system. **OUTCOMES:** Create an inventory of current park activities available to residents. Determine any areas of need within the parks. Determine if any areas within the City are lacking opportunities for active living for residents. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty
9. **Promoting Adopt-A-Drain Program and Stormwater Management education** – The City of West St Paul has a vast stormwater management network consisting of ponds & wetlands and storm sewers and drains. Many residents do not understand how the whole network works together to prevent flooding and erosion within the City. One of the biggest issues City maintenance staff encounter in management of the stormwater system is clogged storm drains. Trash, leaves and other debris can quickly build-up and cause drains to become completely blocked up. The City joined a pilot program in 2019 to get residents to "adopt-a-drain" and help City staff keep the stormwater flowing properly. More education is needed to make this program more effective. **OUTCOMES:** Develop a promotion campaign to get more residents to Adopt-a-drain. Recommend effective ways to educate residents about stormwater and the importance it has in the City. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty, Cody Joos
10. *Possible/backup in case there are more students:* **Pollinators/Bee & Bird City USA** – The City's Environmental Committee has been very interested in pollinators and the issues they have had in recent years. The City Council passed a pollinator resolution in 2016. The Environmental Committee has also had interest in making West St Paul a Bird City USA. Both these actions are supported and encouraged by the GreenStep Cities Program. **OUTCOMES:** Determine the

feasibility of becoming a Bird City USA and next steps needed. Look at the City's best practices regarding pollinators and recommend any changes. Recommend ways to educate residents about both these topics and ways to get involved. **Staff Liaison:** Dave Schletty