

## CITY AT A GLANCE

**Population (2008):** 390,131  
**Area:** 55 square miles  
**Date of Incorporation:** 1867  
**Mayor:** R.T. Rybak  
**Dept of Community Planning & Economic Development:**  
 Wesley Butler

## SUSTAINABILITY APPROACHES AT A GLANCE

**Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth** puts sustainability considerations into all development, and includes target indicators and annual reporting

**Holistic approach** taken to encourage projects to meet multiple goals – affordable housing, sustainability, alternative transportation, job creation – for a sustainable city with high quality of life for residents

**Development includes low-income neighborhoods**, so that all residents have access to alternative transportation, open space, and affordable housing

## PARTNERS

- Aeon
- Minnesota Green Communities
- State of Minnesota
- Project for Pride in Living
- Cabrini Partnership
- Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity

## Minneapolis, MN



The City of Minneapolis is known for being industrially productive, rich with natural resources and an affordable place to live. Yet balancing the City's growth with the protection of its lakes, parks, and other natural resources has required forward-thinking policies from the City government. In the past few decades, sprawl and neglected inner-city areas have pushed the City to look at sustainability even more critically.

Mayor R.T. Rybak has worked with the City Council to set about creating a road map for identifying sustainability principles and integrating them into all city planning. He has been a strong advocate for a comprehensive plan for Minneapolis that includes energy, jobs, protecting the environment and the overall health of the residents. The City's vision includes increasing access to alternative transportation, bike trails, open spaces, and locally raised food.

### The Plan for Sustainable Growth and Supporting Efforts

In 2000, the City Council initiated development of the Minneapolis Sustainability Program and developed sustainability principles to serve as a guide for public and private growth and land development within the City. In 2009, the City updated its Comprehensive Plan to include sustainability indicators, and re-titled it, The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth. As the name implies, all city departments and its partners must consider sustainability (in the context of the indicators, see Key Elements section) with all development decisions.

The Plan specifically incorporates policies about the mix and diversity of housing opportunities available to meet the needs of all members of the community. For example, affordable housing is incorporated into mixed income developments to bolster historically low-income neighborhoods. In addition to its augmented light rail system, the City has also improved bus access in low-income communities as well as improved access to green spaces near these neighborhoods.

## Key Elements of Plan for Sustainable Growth

For each chapter of The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth (e.g., Transportation, Housing), the City presents goals, policies, and implementation guidelines for that issue.

For example, the Plan includes these measurable goals:

- Reduce citywide carbon dioxide emissions by 12 percent by 2012 and by 20 percent by 2020
- Clean up 100 brownfield sites from 2004 to 2014
- End homelessness by 2016
- Increase the percentage of people who enter downtown via alternative transportation (bus, light rail, bicycle, walking, carpool) from 55 percent in 2003 to 67 percent by 2013

The City has also established 25 sustainability indicators to track its progress, each with specific, quantifiable targets and incentives for achieving those targets. The Minneapolis Sustainability Living Well Annual Report measures the progress towards meeting these targets by presenting data and describing recent activities. An example indicator is provided below.

### Example Sustainability Indicator – Permeable Surfaces

*Target (1 of 4):* By 2015, increase the number of large stormwater management amenities (such as ponds and wetlands) that treat multiple properties and large areas to 50, and increase the number of smaller amenities (such as rain gardens) that treat single properties to 500.

*Recent Activity (from Living Well report):* Trained 578 Minneapolis residents how to design and install rain gardens.

To support the overarching Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, the City has more focused plans, such as a Transportation Action Plan, and a Bicycle Master Plan.

Additional details can be found at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability).

## Partnerships

To accomplish the goals set forth in its Plan, the City partners with public and private companies such as Aeon, which develops much of the City's affordable housing (see Ripley Gardens). The City also worked with Project for Pride in Living (PPL), Cabrini Partnership, and Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity to develop The Van Cleve, a mixed income development that includes affordable housing. The City is currently working with PPL to develop Hawthorne Eco-Village, a five-year, multi-phase project to clean up a four block, high-crime area that will incorporate many green features, including installation of a solar panel on a high profile business, tree nurseries, rain gardens, and home weatherization for residents. The City is also considering installing a new light rail line to service the area.

## FACETS OF THE PLAN

**Land Use:** Develop a land use pattern that strengthens the vitality, quality and character of the downtown, commercial and industrial areas, and neighborhoods while protecting natural systems.

**Transportation:** Create access to transportation options (including bicycles, transit and rail), for residents, support the City's land use vision and reduce the overall dependency on automobiles.

**Housing:** Build the strength, vitality, and stability of the City's neighborhoods by providing housing opportunities that meet the needs of all members of the community.

**Economic Development:** Encourage land use designations and infrastructure investment to support commercial and industrial development, the hospitality industry, and workforce readiness.

**Environment:** Promote sustainable design practices in the preservation, development, and maintenance of the natural and built environments. Provide equal access to all of the City's resources and natural amenities.



## Successful Implementation of Plan Ripley Gardens

**History.** In the late 1800's, Dr. Martha Ripley, one of the first female doctors in the United States, founded a Maternity Hospital in the Harrison neighborhood that served all people, regardless of ethnicity, financial means, marital status or age. The hospital operated until the 1950's, when the site was converted into a nursing home. By the 1990's, it was abandoned, creating an eye sore at this prominent intersection. Recognizing its historic value (i.e., on the National Registry of Historic Sites), the Harrison Neighborhood Association (HNA) approached Aeon about developing this site. Aeon purchased the site in 2000. Construction began in May 2006.

**Overall Design.** The project team, the local community and historic preservation groups created a new vision that focused on historic preservation, energy efficiency, and sustainability. Three original structures were retained, but received complete rehabilitations. To meet the housing goals of 52 rental units and 8 for-sale town homes, the team added 3 new buildings. The project provides mixed income homes, ranging from very low-income rentals to home ownership units.

The historical groups required that the historic buildings be framed, not overshadowed, by new buildings, and that open spaces be maintained to preserve their views. Measures taken to achieve this included situating new buildings at the bottom of the hill to keep their rooflines below historic buildings' rooflines; and locating parking underground to maximize the site's visual appeal. Walkways and landscaping separate the historic buildings from the streets, providing walkability and a beautiful streetscape.

**Site Design.** Underground parking and clustered buildings allowed for substantial green space. The site includes a playground, gardens, and rain gardens and bioswales that use the City's tax incentives for storm water management. For safety, walkways are well lit and the parking garage is painted white to appear brighter. Two bicycle storage spots for every parking spot encourage the use of nearby trails and transit stops.

**Buildings.** In both the existing and new buildings, the team tightly sealed the envelope, installed enhanced insulation, and installed energy efficient lighting and appliances. Existing materials were reused whenever possible, including brick from the old smokestacks and old window sills resized.



### RIPLEY GARDENS AT A GLANCE

**Project Type:** Mixed Use Single-family & Multi-family homes (studio, multi-bedroom)

**Completion Date:** October 2007

**Project Size:** 52 rental units, 8 for sale town homes, 1.9 Acres

**Density:** 31 Units / Acre

#### Project Team

**Developer:** Aeon

**Architect:** LHB, Inc.

**Contractor:** Watson-Forsberg Co.

#### Key Partners:

City of Minneapolis (main funder), State Historic Preservation Office, National Park Service, Harrison Neighborhood Assoc., Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity

#### Development Costs

(Based on rental units)

<b>Land Cost:</b>	\$300,000
<b>Hard Costs:</b>	\$10,000,000
<b>Soft Costs:</b>	\$4,000,000
<b>Total Costs:</b>	\$14,300,000
<b>Grants:</b>	\$9,500,000
<b>Net Cost:</b>	\$4,800,000

#### Affordability

**Area Median Income:** \$81,000  
**% of AMI (avg.):**

< 40%	4 units
40 - 80%	32 units
<b>Market rate</b>	24 units

#### Cost of Green (per unit)

<b>Total Cost of Greening:</b>	\$5,800
<b>Rebates / Incentives:</b>	\$3,000
<b>Net Cost of Greening:</b>	\$2,800
<b>Percent of Total:</b>	3 %*

(\*based on Net Development Cost)

#### Green Standards Used

MN Green Communities – Granted

**“All we’re doing is rebuilding the streetcar city...where you could find a place that was affordable to live, you could find transit that got you to work, much of your life could be lived without a car.”**

– Minneapolis Mayor Rybak

**“Every day I open that door, and there’s that little plaque about the history...The building I live in, it had such an importance to the history of Minnesota, and to the history of women. And of course back in those times the women were the poor and the homeless when they were pregnant. So that’s a really good vibe in that building.”**

– Ripley Gardens resident  
Tonya Hollen

**“Ripley is sort of an oasis, and there are several in the City, oases of sustainability – socially, economically, environmentally. But we’re hoping that they’re more than oases; they’re paradigms of the new city.”**

– City council member Don Samuels

### CONTACTS

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## Financing

The City’s strategies for financing projects such as Ripley Gardens include:

- Minneapolis’ Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which provides \$10 million dollars of development gap funding per year
- Tax Increment Financing
- Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
- Minnesota Green Communities

In the specific case of Ripley Gardens, the project set a HUD record with 30 different funding sources, including:

- Save America’s Treasures Fund
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Historic Rehab Tax Credits

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

For the City, one challenge has been accomplishing its goals while maintaining the affordability of neighborhoods. Larry Hiscock, the director of the Harrison Neighborhood Association (HNA), says, “Improving the physical area and displacing the current residents – isn’t sustainable for the community.” Mayor R.T. Rybak emphasizes community involvement in overcoming this and other challenges.

Community involvement was a solution used in Ripley Gardens. While the neighborhood was generally supportive of some sort of development on the site, they were wary of an affordable housing project that would continue the legacy of containing poverty in the Harrison neighborhood. Aeon and the HNA engaged the community through 18 months of meetings and modified plans to meet community priorities. The neighborhood now embraces the mixed income project.

The Ripley Gardens project team also found face-to-face meetings to be crucial in working with historic preservation partners. For example, the look of the historic windows needed to be preserved while their energy efficiency needed to be improved. With future projects, Aeon plans to have more meetings with community stakeholders earlier in the planning process, and to involve all parties, so that the various neighborhood interests can be more effectively communicated to the project teams.

