

#9: STORMWATER

CORE METRIC FOR CATEGORY A & B & C CITIES

Bold, green font indicates data elements that are eligible to be recognized at Step 5 if improvement is demonstrated.

DATA ELEMENT

9.1 Assessment number (percent) from the Minnesota Blue Star City program

DEFINITIONS

- **The Minnesota Blue Star City Program**, developed by Friends of the Mississippi River, is a self-assessment, certification, and recognition program designed for municipalities and developed in concert with GreenStep's Stormwater Best Practice.
- **This self-assessment covers** a wide range of policies and practices in three areas: Water-Friendly Planning & Preservation; Stormwater Management Standards & Practices (including street sweeping); Stormwater Pollution Prevention (including street salt alternatives).
- **The assessment attempts to express with a percentage** the degree to which a city is minimizing stormwater volume and pollutant loading across its entire land area.
- **Alternative data elements:** if you have been gathering different stormwater data that directly measure city-wide stormwater volume and pollutant loading, report those data and explain why you think they are a better measure than this GreenStep metric.

DATA SOURCES

- City public works/engineering records, and common knowledge of city planning and other staff
- <http://www.bluestarmn.org>

CALCULATION AND PUBLIC REPORTING

- **Complete the assessment by December 31st each year** and report the resulting number in the following GreenStep Step 4 reporting year.

RATIONALE

Increased stormwater runoff and associated water pollution are often a result of land use changes and urbanization, which negatively impact water quality. This, in turn, compromises clean drinking water and fishable, swimmable waters that support plants, animals and our local quality of life. Using the low-impact development, green stormwater infrastructure and maintenance approach reflected in the Blue Star Assessment, pollutant loading from stormwater sources is minimized, water is managed on-site in such a way as to mimic predevelopment hydrology, and water quality benefits are recognized in the receiving waters. Cost savings are typically realized through this approach.

The status of city surface water bodies (into which stormwater flows) has been assessed in many cities, with extensive data available. Cities are at various points in a many-years' process of meeting, as they are established, TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads) of allowable pollutants under the U.S. Clean Water Act. Data and reports from these regulatory activities are generally difficult for community members to understand and act on.

Minnesota GreenStep Cities Performance Metrics for Recognition at Steps 4 and 5

This GreenStep metric, in contrast, aims to “go back ‘upstream’” to reflect, with one number, the totality of actions a city is taking to both prevent the generation of stormwater volume and pollutants and to keep them from reaching bodies of water (including groundwater). Extensive evidence exists for the stormwater volume and pollutant efficacy of the specific management practices assessed in Blue Star. The assessment questions, however, do not get directly at city-wide stormwater volumes and total pollutant loads, direct measurement of which is extremely complex and expensive. Thus the Blue Star assessment number is an indicator and not an outcome/direct results measure as are other GreenStep metrics such MWh of renewably generated energy within a city.

STEP 5 GOALS

Individual cities are best equipped to set realistic goals for improvement. Feel free to discuss yours score, ways to improve it, and comparison issues with other cities and with the metric advisor listed below in the Contact section.

Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS: see GreenStep action 17.1 at <http://www.MnGreenStep.org>) represents the State of Minnesota’s guidance on cutting-edge stormwater management. MIDS contains three main elements: (1) a higher clean water performance goal for new development and redevelopment, focused on infiltrating rainwater, that provides enhanced protection for Minnesota’s water resources; (2) new modeling methods and credit calculations that standardize the use of a range of innovative structural and nonstructural stormwater techniques; (3) a credits system and ordinance package that will allow for increased flexibility and a state-approved streamlined approach to regulatory programs (TMDLs, impaired waters) for developers and communities.

NEED HELP? CONTACT

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