

**Sign on Letter asking the Hennepin County Board**

to **Approve and Implement their** [**Climate Action Plan**](https://www.hennepin.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/climate-action) **with updated targets**

Cities, Commissions & Organizations can [**sign on to his letter**](https://forms.gle/172ofE8EtFT43TH59) by 4/15 or use it to **write your own** **letter** and [**share it with us**](https://forms.gle/wJE1FaTGH1pYUEBC9).

**Our City is working with other cities to meet our city climate goals.**

**We call on the Hennepin County Board to approve, fully fund and implement a strong Climate Action Plan** **that will:**

* **Achieve county-wide GHG emissions reductions of 50% by 2030, 80% by 2040 and Net Zero by 2050 [**from a baseline of 2005, updating the 2007 Cool Counties Commitment to match current science].
* **We commit our cities and organizations to work with the County & other cities/jurisdictions to achieve these goals together,** **while advancing racial equity, climate resilience and shared economic vitality.**

To achieve coordinated city and county-wide GHG emission reduction targets we support the County’s Climate Action Plan which states:

**“Goal:** Partner in ways that can be most impactful with public entity partners and with community organizations.

**Objective:** Explore and pursue partnership models driven by mutual climate change goals.

**Strategies:** Pursue strategies with the clearest direction forward”

* Foster, long term, integrated planning that includes jointly collecting and analyzing data and modeling with a lens on health and racial equity.
* Reduce localized flooding and coordinate regional storm water resiliency efforts.
* Decarbonize, transportation, buildings [we would add: & energy supply in ways that strengthen equity, local economies & resilience]
* We would add: Expand carbon sequestration, tree canopy, native landscaping, soil health, land conservation
* Educate and engage the public, [and institutions and businesses] in taking collective action.
* Raise a collective voice for climate policy at the local, state [and federal] level.”

**Hennepin County’s leadership** and **convening role** with other public entities could co-create joint initiatives to meet mutual climate goals. **This would** enable the 41 cities within Hennepin County to scale up implementation of high-impact, equitable, low-carbon, resilient policies & projects county-wide during this vital decade.

**We ask the Hennepin County Board** and staff to include language in your Board Resolution and in the text of the Plan that would:

1. **Direct the County Administrator and all Department lead staff to fully support and empower county department staff** to **implement the** **Climate Action Plan** to meet GHG reduction targets county-wide, and regularly report results,
2. **Prioritize application of a Racial Equity lens and Climate Justice considerations in all facets of the Plan.** Representing 25% of the population in Minnesota, the County should play a lead role in our state to reduce racial disparities and strengthen climate, economic and community resilience. We know that budgets and investments are an expression of our commitment to Equity – we can accomplish this by innovating

and changing “business as usual” practices, changing the operating culture within County departments, developing partnerships between public entities and BIPOC community organizations, and funding the Climate Action Plan initiatives in 2022 & future budgets.

1. **Include priority deliverables/benchmarks with reporting requirements/dates** for County Departments
   1. **Bi-Annual Performance Reviews of the County’s Climate Action Plan Implementation with partners.**

Update baseline metrics, data gathering and reporting systems for [county operations](https://mn.gov/admin/government/sustainability/) and [county-wide indicators](https://metrotransitmn.shinyapps.io/ghg_tool/) with [partner jurisdictions](https://metrocouncil.org/Planning/Projects/Thrive-2040/Thrive-Indicator-Dashboard.aspx) (with external reviewed.) Also conduct a consumption-based emissions inventory. Use results to create a more comprehensive approach to climate change mitigation.

Host Bi-Annual Climate Action Plan implementation review event(s)/process with partner jurisdictions and organizations, community groups and diverse stakeholders that are publically accessible, transparent and participatory. Review the actions taken together and metrics/indicators for all sectors and adjust strategies/actions with partners to stay on track to meet GHG and other county-wide indicators/targets.

* 1. **Direct all County Departments to use the county’s Equity Impacts and Climate Impacts assessment tools when developing/reviewing plans, projects and capital investments.**
  2. **Transportation** – convene interested cities, [Met Council](https://metrocouncil.org/News-Events/Communities/Newsletters/Greenhouse-gas-emissions-tool-2020.aspx) & partners to co-develop plans **to cut VMT county-wide 30%** or more by 2030 and shift county investments and projects accordingly. The plan should remove Level of Service (LOS), a transportation engineering measurement that disproportionately favors moving vehicles rather than people. Alternatively, transit, bicycling, and walking LOS must be equal to or better than private vehicle LOS. Road projects must prioritize safety over speed and insure communities who are often left out are included in the design and construction process. Plan & partner with cities on Living Streets implementation during mill and overlays and street reconstruction to expand safety, walking, biking, trail connections, transit, green infrastructure and climate resilience. Set a 100% electric vehicle county fleet goal. Convene cities and partners to expand [regional transit](https://metrocouncil.org/transit-vision.aspx), [E.V. infrastructure](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/sustainability/electric-vehicles.html) and [shared](http://stage.movemn.org/our-work/advocacy/) & [advanced](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/automated/projects.html) mobility regionally.
  3. [**Housing and Redevelopment Authority**](https://www.hennepin.us/your-government/leadership/hra) – co-develop and implement with Minneapolis, Suburban city HRAs/EDAs and other partners action plans, incentives, equitable financing tools, energy cost [transparency tools](https://www.hennepin.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/efficient-buildings-collaborative) and seamless/vetted/quality energy audit, bidding and installation partnerships to accelerate weatherization of homes, multi-family buildings and commercial properties to reduce energy burdens, natural gas use and GHG emissions while preserving naturally occurring affordable housing, increasing access to solar, E.V. charging, and shade trees and enabling property owners to maintain and update properties and add units/density where zoning allows to meet current/future housing needs.
  4. [**Community Works**](https://www.hennepin.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/community-works)– co-develop partnerships that support cities & developers to expand equitable access, life cycle housing & commercial space, while minimizing displacement through inclusive, [walkable](https://www.hennepin.us/economic-development/programs/active-living), [transit-oriented](https://www.hennepin.us/economic-development/programs/transit-oriented-development) & [large site redevelopment](https://designcenter.design.umn.edu/projects/prospect-north.html) with new net zero buildings, public spaces & [living streets](https://www.edinamn.gov/488/Transportation-Planning).
  5. **Hennepin Pathways** – develop partnerships to **expand equitable access** to skills training, jobs, contracting, business development, capital access & bonding related to [solar](https://www.naseo.org/data/sites/1/documents/publications/Minneapolis%20Workforce%20Development%20Assessment.pdf), [energy efficiency](https://www.mncee.org/resources/resource-center/technical-reports/minnesota-energy-efficiency-workforce-gap-analysis/), clean transportation green infrastructure/soil health/forestry & local/regenerative/agriculture & [food production](https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/homegrown-minneapolis/)/[hubs](https://www.cdsus.coop/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/MDA-Food-Hub-Report-Final.pdf)/[access](https://uroc.umn.edu/content/metro-food-access-network).
  6. **Energy and Environment**

[**Efficient Buildings Collaborative**](https://www.hennepin.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/efficient-buildings-collaborative)- continue to grow partnerships with cities, building owners and developers, to enable/expand [financing options](https://www.hennepin.us/economic-development/programs/minnpace), [incentives](http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/environment/greencostshare), [technical assistance](https://www.mnchamber.com/your-opportunity/energy-smart), & [requirements](http://www.csbr.umn.edu/work/) to expand [building benchmarking,](https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/facility-owners-and-managers/existing-buildings/use-portfolio-manager) energy efficiency, solar, storage, demand response, [E.V.s](https://www.startribune.com/hennepin-county-makes-commitment-to-convert-entire-vehicle-fleet-to-electric/504571112/) & net zero construction ([design assistance](https://www.xcelenergy.com/programs_and_rebates/business_programs_and_rebates/new_construction_and_whole_building/energy_design_assistance), [energy code improvements](https://mn.gov/commerce/industries/energy/efficiency/) & [optional stretch codes](https://www.ncsl.org/research/energy/building-efficiency.aspx)) to meet GHG goals.

[**Zero Waste**](https://www.hennepin.us/solidwasteplanning)– co-develop/implement action plans with cities & State of MN to expand waste diversion, [organics recycling](https://www.hennepin.us/business/recycling-hazardous-waste/organics-recycling), [product stewardship](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/quick-links/product-stewardship), food waste prevention and demolition waste prevention to reduce GHGs associated with waste/material use to reduce/eliminate landfilling & incineration. RCC supports the goal of Environmental Justice groups that are asking Hennepin County to close HERC by 2025 and will support cities, counties and the State to accelerate the actions and policies needed to eliminate the need for landfilling & incineration to manage west metro waste streams by 2025.

[**Trees and Forestry**](https://www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/trees-forestry)– We support the Plan’s intentions to, "Expand the urban forest canopy by preserving mature trees, planting more trees and addressing barriers associated with maintenance" "Set goals to maintain or increase three canopy cover on county property” and, we hope it can be county-wide with cities. Explore/expand City-County-State partnerships to set and meet new county-wide, climate resilient, equitable, tree canopy goals. Collaborate to respond cost-effectively to EAB & new infestations. Preserve, replace, diversify and expand tree cover county-wide to manage storm water, improve air quality and reduce heat islands - especially in low-income areas.

[**Natural Resources Management**](https://www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/natural-resources-management-planning) **to Preserve/Restore/Regenerate** [**Agricultural Lands**](https://www.mda.state.mn.us/environment-sustainability/farmland-protection) **and** [**Natural Areas**](https://www.hennepin.us/land-protection)– we appreciate the areas of the Plan that will:

“Plan for and mitigate anticipated ecosystem and open space impacts” [and, we suggest, for the preservation, acquisition, and restoration/regeneration of open spaces/natural areas/habitat/ecosystems].

“Create and preserve affordable [agricultural space](https://www.renewingthecountryside.org/farmlandaccess) for every scale of local food production.”

“[Promote BMPs](https://www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/cleanwaterfund/forevergreen) on agricultural land with a focus on practices that build [healthier soils](https://mnsoilhealth.org/) with increased carbon storage & water holding capacity of soils while maintaining or improving long-term crop yields.”

"Conduct [education and outreach](https://uroc.umn.edu/content/university-minnesota-extension-hennepin-co-agriculture-and-natural-resources) that helps current and future agricultural producers and their partners understand both the need for and financial benefits of building climate change resiliency” [and lets add [regenerative practices](https://mnsoilhealth.org/)] “into their farming operations and the agricultural economy.”

[Furthermore, we suggest that the County convene developing edge and rural cities/townships, farmers, developers, home builders, solar developers and ecologists to visit successful example [cluster/conservation developments](https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/bp-detail/81722) and explore additional land use, zoning, financing & ownership solutions to preserve natural areas and agricultural land while welcoming a [new generation of farmers onto the land](https://www.renewingthecountryside.org/farmlandaccess) expanding [regenerative farming](https://www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/cleanwaterfund/forevergreen) practices, expanding [affordable housing](https://metrocouncil.org/Housing/Planning/Affordable-Housing-Measures.aspx) choices, [permitting/supporting](https://www.betterenergy.org/our-work/communities/) [pollinator-friendly solar gardens](https://fresh-energy.org/beeslovesolar/) preserving the character of [rural communities](https://www.strongtowns.org/), while reducing new [low-density development and VMT](https://www.eqb.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/documents/CCS%20Appendix%20with%20policy%20details%20and%20results.pdf).]

**City Councils &/or Environmental Commissions Signing on to the letter** (as of 3/3/2021)

* [West Metro Climate Action](https://www.facebook.com/WestMetroClimateAction/)

Additional cities & organizations will be listed here as they are confirmed.

**Additional Letters Supporting Hennepin County Climate Action** (as of 3/3/2021)

<http://rccmn.co/topics/letters-supporting-hennepin-county-climate-action/>

* [Citizens for Sustainability](https://citizensforsustainability.org/) (St. Anthony Village)
* [City of Minneapolis, Sustainability Office](http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/index.htm)
* [Community Power MN](https://www.communitypowermn.org/)
* [Wayzata Energy & Environment Committee](https://www.wayzata.org/620/Energy-Environment-Committee)

**For more information** on the

* **RCC** **Hennepin County Cluster** of Cities visit [www.rccmn.co/hennepin-communities](http://www.rccmn.co/hennepin-communities)
* **Or contact** Sean Gosiewski, Program Director,612 250-0389 [sean@rccmn.co](mailto:sean@rccmn.co)
* [**RCC’s Full/Detailed Recommendations**](http://rccmn.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/RCC-Initial-Climate-Action-Recommendations.pdf)for Hennepin County’s Climate Action Plan

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