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The City of Vadnais Heights
800 East County Road E
Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

Memorandum:

TO: Mayor Krachmer and City Council Members

FROM: Kaylin Clement, Assistant City Administrator

DATE: January 17, 2023

SUBJECT: Gold Leaf Pilot Program Resolution for Participation

Recommended Action

Approve the resolution initiating participation in the Gold Leaf Pilot Program through GreenStep Cities.

Background

At the January 3, 2023, City Council Workshop, staff were directed to begin the process of entering the Gold Leaf Pilot Program, through the GreenStep Cities organization. This program includes 11 other Minnesota cities, each committed to implementing at least two of the 44 high-priority climate-specific actions, as identified by GreenStep Cities coordinators. Some examples of Gold Leaf Action items include, community restoration/cleanup, accessible green spaces, urban heat relief, green business recruitment, sustainable building enhancements, and many more.

Feedback gathered from participating cities will be used to help build a program with vital resources to support any Minnesota community in the important task of taking climate action now. Program coordinators are working to offer support to participants that may include a summer intern to assist in climate action planning and implementation.

Participation in the GreenStep Cities program is not required, however, we've invited representatives to a future workshop to discuss the program as a whole, while also focusing specifically on the Gold Leaf initiative.

**CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
COUNTY OF RAMSEY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

RESOLUTION #23-01- _____

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PILOT GOLD LEAF PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program seeks city participants to pilot the Gold Leaf program which focuses on pathways for communities to take local climate action through the GreenStep program. Participants of the pilot Gold Leaf program will be recognized as they achieve ‘gold leaves’ for completing any new actions from 44 high-priority, high-impact climate action under the categories of: climate mitigation, climate planning, climate adaptation, and community connectedness for Minnesota’s changing climate; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. GreenStep is a free, continuous improvement program, managed by a State agency-non-profit partnership, and based upon 29 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more actions at a 1, 2 or 3-star level, from a list of four to eight actions. These actions are tailored to all Minnesota cities, focus on cost savings and energy use reduction, and encourage civic innovation; and

WHEREAS, steps taken toward sustainable solutions aim to improve community quality of life, building community capital and increasing government efficiency, accountability and transparency; and

WHEREAS, local governments have the unique opportunity to achieve both energy use and greenhouse gas reductions and cost savings through building and facilities management; land use and transportation planning; environmental management; and through economic and community development; and

WHEREAS, efforts to address energy and climate issues provide an opportunity to move toward energy self-reliance and greater community quality of life; provide environmentally healthy and cost-effective public building operations; encourage new economic development and local jobs; and

WHEREAS, climate changes have been observed in Minnesota and have the potential to negatively impact local, regional and state economies; infrastructure development; habitat; ecological communities, including native fish and wildlife populations; spread invasive species and exotic diseases; reduce drinking water supplies and recreational opportunities; and pose flooding, drought and health threats to our citizens; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Vadnais Heights does hereby authorize Vadnais Heights to participate in the pilot Gold Leaf program of the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program that offers a free, voluntary continuous improvement local climate action framework. Passage of this participation resolution allows the City to participate as a pilot community without participation in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council further appoints City Administrator or designee to serve as the City's pilot Gold Leaf program coordinator for best practice documentation/implementation whom will facilitate the involvement of community members and other units of government as appropriate in the planning, promoting and/or implementing of Gold Leaf best practices; and provide feedback throughout and at the end of the pilot period on how well the Gold Leaf program is serving the City and on City needs from the program; and the City will claim credit for having implemented and will work at its own pace toward implementing any GreenStep best practices upon future GreenStep Cities program participation, if so chosen.

Dated: January 17, 2023.

By: _____
Mike Krachmer
Mayor

ATTEST:

City Administrator
Manager/ Clerk