

#9: STORMWATER

CORE METRIC FOR CATEGORY A & B & C CITIES

METRIC

9.1 Assessment number from the Wisconsin green infrastructure audit

METRIC DEFINITION

- **For 2019, cities will have to use a University of Wisconsin tool**, developed by in 2016. This audit of local codes and ordinances aims to help cities evaluate local codes to facilitate green infrastructure. Specifically, the audit identifies: (1) local regulations that directly prohibit or are ambiguous, contradictory or silent on the use of green infrastructure practices; (2) regulations pertaining to parking, frontage and streetscapes that could be updated and amended to reduce impervious surfacing requirements, and; (3) conditional uses in zoning districts that are potential sources of stormwater pollution to determine if additional standards are in place to protect water quality.
- **The Minnesota Blue Star City Program**, developed by Friends of the Mississippi River, is currently not available for use. During 2019 the MPCA is convening state-wide stormwater experts to revise and relaunch this self-assessment and recognition tool, which was designed for Minnesota municipalities and developed in concert with GreenStep's Stormwater Best Practice.
- **Alternative metrics:** if you have been gathering different stormwater metrics that directly measure city-wide stormwater volume and pollutant loading, report those in the notes section of the metrics survey form 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
- WI green infrastructure audit at http://seagrant.wisc.edu/home/Portals/0/Files/Coastal%20Communities/Green_Infrastructure/AuditTool.pdf (Metric 9.1)

METRIC CALCULATION AND PUBLIC REPORTING

- **Rate your city with A through F grades on the 141 questions** of the WI green infrastructure audit, then convert grades to numbers (A+=6; A=5; A-=4; B=3; C=2; D=1; F=0), then sum numbers, and report the resulting number in the GreenStep survey form. Note that the audit questions, beginning on page A8, have a drop-down for selecting a letter grade, and that all the letter grades are collated in a summary Audit Tool Report Card following page A64.

METRIC RATIONALE

Increased stormwater runoff and associated water pollution are often a result of land use changes and urbanization, largely affected by city regulations, which can negatively impact water quality. Increased runoff can compromise 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 WI green infrastructure audit, 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.

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

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.

This GreenStep stormwater metric, in contrast, aims to “go back ‘upstream’” to reflect, with one number, the totality of regulatory standards a city has in place 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 regulatory/management practices assessed in the audit. The audit 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 audit 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 METRIC TARGETS

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

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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