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2021 1Q Newsletter

Jan-Mar 2021



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Lining Up Our Ducks for 2021

Kicking off 2021 and reflecting on 2020 in the rearview mirror are among the more joyous activities I've undertaken in some time. I think we are all

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exciting projects in the coming year -- each reinforcing our mission of creating and supporting local initiatives that promote sustainability.

Once again Earth Day, April 22, will be the kick-off for many of our projects. **The Green Business Directory** will be unveiled publicly, highlighting local businesses that are striving to reduce their carbon footprint. We are accepting business members -- apply now at GreenStillwater.org

Our **Natural Resources Team** will maintain city rain gardens, cigarette butt boxes, and storm drain cleanups/adoptions. "Plant Identification" activities are resuming on the Browns Creek Trail, and buckthorn removal (the seemingly, never-ending project) will continue throughout the area.

The **GreenStep City** Team, working with the City of Stillwater staff, is on pace to reach Level 3 by the end of the year -- an accomplishment held by 40+ of the 150+ communities participating in the statewide program.

A **Complete Streets** resolution was introduced to the City Council this past week to ensure that all forms of transportation are considered when repairing or designing public roadways in the community. On May 15, 2021, we will host a Migratory Bird Day program in Stillwater as part of the quest to become an Audubon Bird City.

And finally, we aim to get a **Bicycle Friendly Community designation for Stillwater** in 2021. In this endeavor, we are coordinating the installation of more bike racks, route identification, bike training, and education opportunities. Biking represents the most efficient form of transportation ever invented, so the more we can provide the opportunity for everyone to bike, the more we can attain a healthy, resilient, and sustainable community.

Please join us in any or all of these activities, we look forward to seeing you around town.

-- Roger Tomten, SSMN Chair

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improvements to the existing County Highway 5 bridge.

The current recommended design includes re-decking the bridge, removing the existing substandard sidewalk, and expanding the shoulder widths for safer bicycle usage.

A separate trail bridge adjacent to the existing County Highway 5 bridge is being proposed to facilitate the pedestrian movements over Brown's Creek.

Pictured right is the existing bridge.



Final Designs for Stonebridge Trail Renovation Posted - Take Your Pick

February 3 is Comment Deadline

Stillwater residents: Pick one of three possible designs for the rebuilding of Stonebridge Trail, [online now](#). The Washington County needs your final input on the widening and reconstruction of County Highway 5 (N. Owens St) between Sycamore Street and State Highway 96. They include new safety and Complete Streets features like wider shoulders and other bike and pedestrian amenities. Which do you like? Comment now through February 3 at <https://spark.adobe.com/page/IDPxMT8HTLUpK/>. More information on this project can also be found on the [project website](#).

Stonebridge Trail Renovation Survey



Stillwater Should Adopt a Complete Streets Policy Now

Vice-chair Rick Heidick presented our resolution on January 19, 2021 at the Stillwater City Council Meeting on Zoom

We need streets that work for everyone -- not just cars and trucks. At the January 19, 2021 City Council meeting, SSMN Vice Chair Rick Heidick asked the Council to adopt a Complete Street Resolution for new road construction and maintenance that takes into account all methods of transportation: cars and trucks, plus **transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists**. When planning future projects, Stillwater needs to consider people bicycling and pedestrians of all ages, types and abilities. They are the most at risk for serious injury or death when involved in motor-vehicle related collisions. Quality of life, environmental health, and economic competitiveness are other benefits of Complete Streets enjoyed by 15 other Minnesota cities with the policies, Rick explained.

[Read more about Complete Streets](#)

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Complete Streets Resolution

**This is the text of a resolution we wrote and presented on January 19
at the Stillwater City Council Meeting**

*Whereas, the City of Stillwater strives to be the most livable city in Minnesota,
and*

*Whereas, the City of Stillwater recognizes that livability includes safely moving
people and goods along all public rights-of-way; and*

[View full Complete Streets Resolution](#)



Why is GreenSteps Such a Big Deal?

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GreenStep Cities is a unique Minnesota program that lists 29 Best Practices for sustainable cities. As of 2020, 141 cities in Minnesota officially qualified as climbing the green staircase. Stillwater is one of them -- we are hoping to reach Level 3 of 5 by the end of 2021. *An ambitious goal*, by the way, because each level requires more Best Practice actions. Sustainable Stillwater MN created a GreenStep Cities Work Group because the city can't do it all alone. Our volunteers do research and leg work to help out our busy city staff.

The GSC Workgroup right now is helping the city establish a Complete Streets Policy -- but that's not all. We are helping the city accomplish "Green Tourism" through introduction of the [Green Business Directory](#). We have cheered on efforts to save energy at City Hall with technology changes and lighting retrofits. (The redesign of the Recreation Center was a major energy conservation endeavor.) We are currently working with Stillwater Sunrise Rotary and city staff to write grants for at least two electric vehicle charging stations downtown by late summer. Then there is the Bike-Friendly City designation we're fighting for in Stillwater. Linda Countryman is the team leader for our GreenStep Workgroup.

Thank You!

Thank you to the ongoing efforts of City Zoning Director Graham Tait who faithfully attends our monthly GreenStep meetings and serves as a liaison between the city and Sustainable Stillwater MN. His tireless advocacy is a great asset to our community and we thank him for his service.



Helping the Natural World

After a very successful Lily Lake Buckthorn Bust at Lily Lake Park, Sustainable Stillwater MN's Natural Resource team is organizing follow-up activities and we hope YOU will be around to help us: more forest management, more native plants throughout the park and along the shoreline, partnering with My Wahoo! Adventures kayak tours for Lily Lake, and more. Many thanks to Dan MacSwain and SSMN member Mike Lyner for their leadership and to Lily Lake residents and some Rotary Club members for helping get that job done in a little over 2 hours! And thanks to Public Works for following up with herbicides on the buckthorn stems.

The 2020 "What's That Plant?" events along the Gateway Trail at Neal Park in early July and early September will expand to include May and June, 2021. The Gateway Browns Creek Trail Association will be promoting those events too. Caitlin Bergh will be in charge of this program expansion and coordination! We may also hold a garlic mustard removal event along the Trail in May.

Read more about What's Next for Natural Resource Workgroup



Bike Agenda Moves Forward for 2021

Bicycling popularity has grown during the pandemic. Both retailers and manufacturers say they haven't seen such demand for bikes in several decades. So we haven't slowed down either. The Bicycle-Friendly Community Workgroup is determined to complete our application to BikeMN for Stillwater's certification as a Bike-Friendly Community by August 2021. We believe bicycling will be a popular COVID-safe activity and that it can be safely promoted once the snow clears out in the spring. Several priorities are: developing a school bicycle education program involving several local elementary schools to coincide with National Bike to School Day in early May; working with the city for purchase and installation of several permanent bike rack systems for downtown Stillwater (which will help bicyclists gain easier access to Main Street); and helping to create a local group ride, formally sponsored by the Stillwater Sunrise Rotary Club but will be supported by SSMN as a bicycle-friendly event tentatively scheduled for August 15, 2021. - Rick Heidick, Bike-Friendly Team



Congratulations River Market Co-op!

One of the sparkling gems of our city is River Market Co-op, which has just won a **Gold Level Green Business Award from Sustainable Stillwater MN**. River Market is a community-owned grocery store downtown overlooking the scenic St. Croix River. Since opening its doors in 1978, River Market has been a cornerstone of organic and locally produced foods for more than 40 years, and is cooperatively owned and democratically controlled by more than 5,334 members of the St. Croix Valley community and beyond. Its outstanding sustainability practices have continued through the pandemic with measures to stay open and keep staff and customers safe to shop. **Support River Market**. They are a wonderful business we can all be proud of.

Any business or organization in Washington County can apply for a membership at **GreenStillwater.org**. The application is free, and if the business qualifies, they are rewarded with a free profile listing online, a Gold, Silver, or Bronze award, and social media promotion.



Zoom Meeting Calendar

>>> Our Board of Directors virtual online Zoom meetings take place every first Thursday of the month from 6.30-8.00 pm and are open to the public. For updated details or to get on the agenda contact Roger Tomten, chair, at sustainablestillwatermn@gmail.com.

>>> The GreenStep team meets in virtual online Zoom meetings on the first Monday of the month 6:30pm – 8:00pm. For updated details and login address contact sustainablestillwatermn@gmail.com.

The Bike-Friendly Community team meets on Zoom every two weeks on Thursday mornings at 8am. To get in on the action, contact rick@sustainablestillwatermn.org

For all our events, see our Events calendar on our [Facebook page](#).

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Once a month we are now contributing editorials to the [Stillwater Gazette](#). Support The Stillwater Gazette -- local journalism is essential for a sustainable community. You can also find our Gazette editorials in the [archive online](#).



Donations Welcome!

Sustainable Stillwater MN depends on people who share our interest in living a green, healthy, and sustainable lifestyle. Tax-deductible contributions help us fund our all-volunteer programs and allow us to serve as a catalyst for green recovery in the city and surrounding areas. Now more than ever, your contribution can make a difference!

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