



# City Council Candidate Sustainability Survey

Dwayne Lowman

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## Question 1:

**Background:** Sustainability means to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony in the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Across many dimensions (atmosphere, water, soil, waste, consumption, etc.), our use / abuse of natural resources is not sustainable – especially for future generations. In many cases quick and dramatic changes must be taken on the part of individuals, businesses, and governments as time is running short. The city of Bloomington has several active sustainability initiatives in progress but has no way of measuring the results and has no stated goals regarding what we want to achieve with these initiatives

In addition, the city of Bloomington has not yet agreed to join the Green Step Cities Program (<http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us>) -- a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals that 57 other Minnesota cities have joined. This free continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership, is based upon 28 best management practices.

**Question:** As a way to focus and evaluate sustainability efforts, would you support the creation of a city wide Sustainability Plan that:

- *Includes areas such as Energy / Carbon, Water, Solid Waste, Transportation, and the Environment?*
- *Identifies specific measures, goals and long term targets?*
- *Is created using outside expertise and includes public input?*
- *Includes becoming a Green Step City?*

**Yes**       **No**

In addition to having a plan, we should create a commission to oversee the development, on-going implementation, and updating of the plan



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### Question 2:

**Background:** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) considers Global Warming to be one of the biggest long-term environmental issues to confront life on earth. However, there is debate in the popular media about whether Global Warming exists and, if so, whether it is the result of human activity.

**Question:** *Do you believe that Global Warming exists and, if so, do you believe it is mostly the result of human activity?*

**Yes**       **No**

The preponderance of scientific evidence from mainstream and peer-reviewed scientists supports the idea that Global Warming exists, and that it is the result of human activity. However, even if this were not the case, we are called upon by our faith to be good stewards of God's creation.



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### Question 3:

**Background:** PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) is a means of financing energy efficiency upgrades or renewable energy installations for buildings. Municipal governments offer a specific bond to investors and then turn around and loan the money to consumers and businesses to put towards an energy retrofit. The loans are repaid over the assigned term (typically 5 or 20 years) via an annual assessment on their property tax bill that typically corresponds to the increased cash flow from the money saved as a result of the investment. This is a way to encourage businesses to make investments in clean energy projects (e.g. solar, LED lighting, insulation, etc.) with little or small impact on cash flow.

Background: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PACE\\_financing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PACE_financing)

What Eagan is doing: [http://www.twincities.com/dakotacounty/ci\\_24004216/eagan-enters-partnership-st-paul-port-authority-provide](http://www.twincities.com/dakotacounty/ci_24004216/eagan-enters-partnership-st-paul-port-authority-provide)

What Edina is doing: <http://pacenow.org/about-pace/feature-c-pace-in-edina/>

**Question:** *In order to help incent residents and businesses in Bloomington to invest in energy savings / carbon reducing initiatives, would you support the city of Bloomington establishing a PACE program for business and residents (once it becomes feasible for residents)?*

**Yes**       **No**

I support the creation of a PACE program. To minimize risk to the city, the program should include such controls as making sure that participant businesses have a track record of profitability and have the means to pay the assessments added to their property taxes.



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### Question 4:

**Background:** Our current solid waste collection system (open collection) results in a very high number of collection trucks travelling up and down any given street once a week creating a public safety issue, spewing out significant pollution and carbon, and causing excessive wear and tear on our streets.

**Question:** *As a means of reducing carbon emissions and pollution, reducing wear and tear on our streets, and increasing the public safety, would you support some form of organized collection (solid waste, recyclables, yard waste) even if that means limiting choice?*

**Yes**       **No**

Yes and No. While we should do something to reduce wear and tear on the streets and the emission of pollutants and greenhouse gases, choice is an important function of economic democracy. Therefore, I would propose that the city select = one or more haulers (one for the entire city, or different haulers for different zones) that provide the most affordable price and sustainable service. The city could then provide an incentive for residents to use a “preferred” hauler. However, I would not restrict residents’ freedom to contract with other haulers, so long as these other haulers meet minimum requirements for services.



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### Question 5:

**Background:** Travel within the city by car creates pollution, emits carbon, causes congestion, and supports a sedentary life style that does little to maintain our health. Getting people onto bikes to take short trips around town reduces pollution and carbon emissions, reduces traffic and wear and tear on our streets, and increases health.

**Question:** *As a means of reducing air pollution, carbon emissions, traffic congestion, and promoting healthy life styles, would you support a plan to create safe biking routes to popular destinations for commuting purposes (in addition to recreation purposes)?*

**Yes**       **No**

I agree with the spirit of this suggestion, but I think we need to do more. Our priorities should also include meeting the needs of senior citizens, or of those with disabilities brought on by defending our country or by poor health. The ability of seniors and the disabled to get around the city should be as important to us as the mobility of those who can drive, bike, or easily walk.



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### Question 6:

**Background:** To address the declining water levels in our deep aquifers, what can the City Council do to make Bloomington a more sustainable community, particularly for groundwater resources?

**Question:** *As a means of reducing the stress on the aquifers that supply the city of Bloomington with fresh water, would you support groundwater demand-reduction goals and strategies to be implemented by the City Water Utility that includes water-conservation incentives and requirements such as requiring large users of water for irrigation to install moisture / rain sensors?*

**Yes**       **No**

Yes and No. We certainly need to promote water conservation for the long-term sustainability of our aquifers. However, I do not think this is best done through regulation. Rather, I would employ a vigorous program of education on water conservation, as well as economic incentives (e.g. strongly tiered water use fees) to encourage residents and businesses to do the right thing.