



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2022 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2022-291

Proposal Title: Morris GHG Emissions Inventory and Mitigation Strategies

Project Manager Information

Name: Blaine Hill

Organization: City of Morris

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Email: bhill@ci.morris.mn.us

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Conduct GHG emissions inventory of City and County operations within the operational boundary of the Morris Model partnership, implement policy to achieve regional targeted reductions, and document and disseminate findings

Funds Requested: \$170,000

Proposed Project Completion: July 31 2025

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Air Quality, Climate Change, and Renewable Energy (E)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Central

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

The City of Morris has been working on improving the resiliency and clean energy economy of its community and surrounding region for over ten years. While the city has recently realized many successes in the development of clean energy projects and energy efficiency initiatives, community resiliency planning, and waste management practices to divert municipal solid waste from landfills, what has been lacking in these efforts is an explicit climate-focused approach objectively evaluate the results of these practices in line with the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets as stated in the Next Generation Energy Act of 2007. The city has inherently been contributing towards these goals via decarbonization of local energy resources and raising resident awareness of their individual contributions to a changing climate from consequential GHG emissions, however at this time the city has lacked the operational capacity to conduct a thorough stock-take of its emissions profile. An ongoing LCCMR-funded initiative is aggregating all the requisite county-scale energy production and consumption data, creating resiliency and energy efficiency and conservation strategy planning documents, and building volunteer and citizen-advocacy capabilities to support this important next step of quantifying the impacts of this work on actual GHG emissions.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

This proposal seeks to hire a full-time project manager to oversee the implementation of a GHG emissions tracking and reduction program for Morris city operations, as well as identify and execute the most accurate method of modeling and reducing the GHG emissions resulting from residential housing stock and commercial operations within the county. The project manager will also be responsible for integrating GHG reduction initiatives and identifying reduction targets for inclusion in local government planning documents and ordinances. These efforts will expand upon recent successes of the Morris Model partnership to encourage clean energy development and energy conservation/efficiency improvements, and realizes the importance of evaluating these projects within the context of aiding the state in reaching its climate and GHG reduction goals. Through the work of a LCCMR-funded sustainability coordinator the city has drafted solar-friendly zoning ordinances, electrified some of its school and city transit fleet, and is reviewing proposals to install PV systems on municipal buildings. This work will also provide a valuable service to state-level policy makers and program administrators as it will offer a lens through which they can judge the effectiveness and relevance of programs as implemented in Greater Minnesota.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

The specific project outcomes include the production of an accurate tracking system for quantifying and evaluating the climate impacts of Morris Model initiatives as the partnership continues to shape public behavior and implement policy to increase energy efficiency, conservation, and clean energy system deployment. These GHG emission metrics will also provide a single common unit of assessment for prioritizing energy, waste management, transportation, and other improvement projects and policy recommendations to City and County officials. The ultimate goal is to formulate a model process by which other rural communities can implement and evaluate their own processes.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Assessment

Activity Budget: \$57,745

Activity Description:

This activity strives to limit anthropogenic impacts to local, regional, and state natural resources by establishing a system whereby elected officials, business owners, and citizens can establish the metrics required to track the consequential GHG emissions from business-as-usual policies and operations. With this critical information in hand, the Morris Model can then turn to promoting best practices and policies to mitigate these emissions, thus improving local air quality and identifying the most effective natural resource conservation and preservation policies to safeguard these resources. By becoming a signatory member to the ICLEI alliance, local government officials will gain access to a national network and program of communities and sustainability professionals working towards these same goals. This ready access to information and best management practices will aid in integrating climate-sensitive and resiliency-themed goals into the administrative and regulatory proceedings of local government at the city and county levels, and will consistently reinforce the importance of environmental stewardship and responsible energy use in the decision-making process. Finally, the data and conclusions will be compiled into a guidance document that can be distributed to other rural communities, allowing them to create their own initiatives in this regard despite similar funding or staffing limitations.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Conduct complete inventory of City Government Operations-derived GHG Emissions (Scopes 1, 2, and 3)	March 31 2024
Create baseline GHG emissions inventory at the County scale	September 30 2024
Create and present formal report to regional partners and rural communities	January 31 2025

Activity 2: Public education and outreach, implementation of Activity 1 findings into government decision-making process

Activity Budget: \$57,265

Activity Description:

Armed with the data and observations obtained via the pursuit of Activity 1 goals, the project coordinator will serve as a critical subject matter expert to key decision-makers in the community. Leveraging the established networks within the Climate Smart Municipalities program, GreenStep Cities program, ICLEI network, and other state and regional agencies the project coordinator will work closely with elected officials in the drafting and implementation of planning processes and sustainable targets within local government ordinances and zoning laws. This work will ultimately result in the codification of sustainable goals and climate action plans into formal government policy, and cement the ambitions of the Morris Model into the future of the city and county. This work will inevitably require community outreach and education as well, and the project coordinator will be expected to liaise with citizen advocacy groups, relevant conservation agencies and non-profits, and local media organizations to raise awareness of the importance of the work and build grassroots support for its inclusion in public conversations around prioritizing taxpayer resources and concerns toward climate conservation and adaptation to secure a sustainable future for the region.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Coordinate local government administrative and regulatory intent with State goals	December 31 2024
Draft policy recommendations for Planning Commission, Morris City Council, and County Board of Commissioners	December 31 2024

Document and disseminate project obstacles and best practices in instituting local climate-sensitive government policy	July 31 2025
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Activity 3: Energy audit and monitoring at community scale

Activity Budget: \$54,990

Activity Description:

Actions within this activity are in line with the proposed Long Term Implementation and Funding goals of the City’s 2019 LCCMR-funded project, “Modeling Energy and Environmental Roadmaps for Minnesota Communities.” Phase One of this project saw the rapid expansion of data collection and analysis capabilities related to energy use and production patterns in the County in accordance with the goals of the Morris Model and the Strategic Plan of 2018. Baseline data has been established for city operations with associated plans and projects for realizing improvements in energy use and conservation therein, however significant difficulties have been experienced in attempting to accurately quantify community consumption profiles for targeting areas for improvement. Phase Two, as referenced in the long term implementation section of the 2019 application, calls for a large-scale energy audit to ascertain the thermal efficiencies of building envelopes in the buildings in the community utilizing drone technology. Stevens County has an average household energy burden of 5% (compared to the state average of 2%) and this fact, in addition to the older housing stock present in the community, points to the existence of large, cost-effective improvement potential to end-use energy efficiency profiles once they can be accurately quantified.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Milestone 1: Coordinate partners and secure funding for aerial thermal imaging of public/private buildings	July 31 2024
Coordinate outreach campaign with utility providers and funding sources to address Milestone 1 findings	January 31 2025
Continue tracking and reporting energy consumption trends for city operations	July 31 2025

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Bryan Herrmann, Vice Chancellor of Finance and Facilities	University of Minnesota - Morris	As a member of the Morris Model partnership, continue to provide technical and administrative support to the implementation of Morris Model initiatives in coordination with applicable University resources and programs.	No
Troy Goodnough, Sustainability Director	University of Minnesota - Morris, Office of Sustainability	As a member of the Morris Model partnership, continue to provide technical and administrative support to the implementation of Morris Model initiatives in coordination with applicable University resources and programs. Provides oversight and mentorship to student interns who assist the Morris Model.	No
Eric Buchanan, Renewable Energy Scientist	University of Minnesota - West Central Research and Outreach Center	As a member of the Morris Model partnership, continue to provide technical expertise and analysis support to the implementation of Morris Model initiatives in coordination with applicable University resources and programs.	No
Rebecca Young, County Administrator	Stevens County, MN	As a member of the Morris Model partnership, continue to provide coordination with Stevens County Board of Commissioners and other key decision-makers and elected officials to assist in the implementation of County-scale projects and policy derived from Morris Model work.	No

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

The project will create a suite of documentation and recommendations for incorporation into City and County planning and regulatory creation processes. The only ongoing work that will need to be continued at the completion of the project is the data entry and maintenance of the GHG tracking dashboard to continually monitor performance vs. reduction targets. One of the deliverables of the project will be a plan that streamlines the requisite data entry to facilitate the continued tracking into existing city administrative operations that minimizes the additional time requirements for current staff, thus no additional funding should be required to support.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Morris Energy and Environment Community Resilience Plan	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 07d	\$150,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Blaine Hill

Job Title: City Manager

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Mr. Hill has an extensive and storied career in public administration and project management. He has been serving as a

City Manager for communities in West Central Minnesota for over 31 years. During this time he was concurrently serving as an officer in the Minnesota National Guard, amassing 33 ½ years of military leadership experience and retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. His expertise and ability was recognized by his selection to serve as President of the League of Minnesota Cities in 1997, the only City Manager to be elected to this position. In his time as City Manager of Morris he has provided project oversight and management for various sustainability initiatives, mentored and led University student interns and GreenCorps members, and worked alongside partner organizations to collaborate on initiatives to place Morris at the leading edge of clean energy and sustainability development in rural West Central Minnesota. Mr. Hill has also been an active participant and contributor to the Climate Smart Municipalities partnership, traveling and coordinating extensively with his counterparts in the German sister city of Saerbeck, and used this knowledge and experience obtained towards guiding the city of Morris through its decade-long process of expanding citizen participation and involvement in the drafting of resiliency and sustainability goals for the region.

Organization: City of Morris

Organization Description:

The City of Morris is the county seat of Stevens County, MN. The city has a population of 5,286, and has a staff of 43 FTE employees. The city is home to the University of Minnesota – Morris campus, and has a long-standing history of collaboration and partnership with the University to achieve sustainability goals. The city joined the Climate Smart Municipalities partnership in 2016, and has been working closely with its German sister city of Saerbeck in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia to implement best practices learned from Saerbeck to improve community resiliency in terms of energy efficiency and conservation and climate-sensitive planning. Towards this end the city has forged strong partnerships with the University, Stevens County administration staff and councilmembers, and local businesses and utilities, and brought these parties together into the Morris Model partnership to realize the goals laid out in the city’s Sustainability Strategic Plan of 2018. This work has been ongoing for the past ten years, and throughout the process the city has benefitted greatly from University interns, Greencorps members, and recently a contract-hire Sustainability Project Coordinator funded via a 2019 LCCMR ENTRF grant.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Project Coordinator		Conduct research, analysis, and project implementation in accordance with proposed outcomes			32%	3		\$164,970
							Sub Total	\$164,970
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Subscription to ICLEI ClearPath software (3 years)	Purchase a 3 year membership to ICLEI to obtain access to online GHG reporting tool and network					\$1,530
	Tools and Supplies	As-needed multi-media supplies for dissemination of findings and reports	Educational signage and other multi-media supplies to be used by project coordinator and manager for dedicated education and outreach programming.					\$1,050
							Sub Total	\$2,580
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Amount includes \$1,635 for mileage (4 trips per year x 2.5 (rounded to 3) x average round trip of 250 miles x \$.545 / mile), \$600 lodging (2 nights per year x 2.5 (In-state travel for project manager and coordinator to conduct outreach to Minnesota communities					\$2,450

		rounded to 3) years x \$100 per room), \$216 for employee meals while on trips assuming 12 lunches and 6 dinners due to overnight stays, also assuming lodging will have continental breakfast @ \$12 /meal for lunches and dinners.						
							Sub Total	\$2,450
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$170,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [57300674-570.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

General map showing location of Stevens County and Morris, MN...

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
City Manager Letter re: Incoming board resolution	c0b6fd0f-dfd.doc

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Morris Sustainability Strategic Plan (2018)	c2e8b76d-13e.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Map of Stevens County and Morris, MN

