
PARTICIPANT PROFILE

The City of Elk River, MN, was named “Energy City” in 1997 by the Minnesota Environmental Initiative. It’s a badge the city wears proudly. Environmental efforts take priority in the city, which has been one of the fastest-growing suburbs of the Twin Cities.

The city itself takes the lead in promoting sustainability efforts for its residents. In the past several years, Elk River has achieved step 5 — the highest level possible — in Minnesota’s [Green Step Cities](#) certification program and held EV days at the local farmer’s market. The city maintains a fleet of more than 100 vehicles, which currently includes 11 EVs, and they are actively exploring the possibility of transitioning to electric school buses. In the summer of 2023, Elk River held an [ElectriFUNcation](#) event with Recharge America, which drew hundreds of attendees and offered test drives of both e-bikes and EVs.

“ *The City of Elk River offers many amenities to its residents, offering a small-town feel but close enough to the Twin Cities and St. Cloud.* ”

— Vern Iverson, Chair, Energy City Commission

As Elk River continues to work toward its sustainability goals, they have already learned lessons along the way. They have installed 2 EV charging stations so far, but the cost of installation and the rapidly-changing technology for charging stations presents a challenge to further investment.

The city is currently drafting sustainability building requirements for review and approval by the City Council. Demonstrating their commitment to environmental justice, the city has also been working with Elk River Municipal Utilities to facilitate access to alternative power opportunities for all residents across the city’s 44 square miles.