

April 4, 2007

Dear Friends of Minnesota Green Communities,

Consider this: the United States is responsible for one quarter of all carbon dioxide sent into the atmosphere each year. When we consume energy derived from fossil fuels, the generation of that energy (whether using gasoline in cars, heating our houses with natural gas, or lighting our homes with electricity) produces greenhouse gases.

At this year's [Green by Design conference](#), energy will be a recurrent topic: from the ambitious goal of net zero energy affordable housing to new energy efficiency standards for new construction multifamily projects. And, of great interest to me, reducing energy consumption through community and project design by providing people with options to walk, bike, or use transit for their travel.

For more details on the conference agenda, check out our [recently released full agenda](#).

In planning for Green by Design, we also considered our own energy impact and are working to reduce it. With the assistance of Renewing the Countryside and The Depot, locally-produced food is being incorporated into our conference menu, reducing transportation energy while supporting our farming community. We chose a location in downtown Minneapolis that not only adheres to green practices, but also allows the greatest number of participants to choose to arrive without cars, perhaps parking at a suburban park-and-ride, taking a local bus, biking in on the trail by the Mississippi River, or taking the Hiawatha Light Rail. To utilize the Twin Cities transit system, go to the [MetroTransit trip planner](#) or visit [our ride-share board](#) to connect with other attendees looking to reduce their impact.

We also estimated our own carbon footprint for the conference, taking into account our energy consumption at [The Depot](#), travel for presenters, staff and attendees, conference planning, and the production of conference materials. Through a partnership with NativeEnergy, we purchased [Green-e Certified](#) carbon offsets and designated our donation recipient as a Minnesota wind-turbine project that assists family farmers in reducing their long-term electricity costs using small-scale power generation. [Learn more.](#)

Each of us can find ways to consume less energy—at work and at home. Making big and small changes, together we can make a difference.

Minnesota Green Communities invites you to attend Green by Design on May 16 and 17, 2007 to learn more about the role you can play in creating healthy, sustainable, energy-efficient housing and communities in Minnesota.

[Register for Green by Design today.](#) Early conference registration discount ends Friday, April 6.



Janne Flisrand
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More information available online: www.greencommunitiesonline.org/minnesota/default.asp