

BEMIDJI SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, June 11, 2026

City Hall – 317 4th Street NW
3:30 PM



1) CALL MEETING TO ORDER

2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A) May 14, 2026

4) PUBLIC COMMENT

Please state your name and address; please use appropriate language and no derogatory comments towards any individuals; please keep your comments limited to 3 minutes or less; and the chair may limit speakers and times accordingly.

5) OLD BUSINESS

B) Comprehensive Planning — Updates

C) Strategic Priorities

i) Native Landscaping

- Discussion on Zoning Code Chapter 28, Article X, Section 28-406 & 28-407
[Planning Code Chapter 28](#)

ii) Waste & Recycling

- Update on Curbside Recycling

iii) Energy Efficiency

D) Prospective Event — Sustainable Places Tour

6) NEW BUSINESS

E) Reports

- Planning Cases

F) Upcoming Events

- Xerxes Society — Bee Atlas (Aug 8 or 9)

7) ADJOURN

Bemidji Sustainability Commission

May 14, 2026 at City Hall

Commissions present: Lisa Weiskopf, Jordan Lutz, Erika Bailey Johnson, Charles Biberg, Sami Holm, Linda Kingery, Jo Li

Commissions absent: None

Liaisons present: Melissa Fahrenbruch, Assistant Planning Director; Audrey Thayer, City Council Member

Guests: Kathryn Burke, HRDC

Call to order

Jordan called the meeting to order at 3:35pm

Approve Agenda m/s by Linda/Erika, add G) Sustainable Places Tour, carries

Approve Minutes m/s by Charles/Sami, carried

Public Comment: none

Old Business

b) Comprehensive Planning - Updates

- Closed the transportation survey so that planning can complete its EV grant.
- HRDC hosted a housing focus group, supplementing the Housing Report that was done prior to the comp plan.
 - a. Upcoming opportunities - dates of other events are not available

c) Earth Day - Review

a. Sanford Health Earth Day Event

Presentations were informative - good mix of topics

Tabling - too little engagement, too little messaging to Sanford staff

Hospital is interested in making improvements with composting

b. AI/Data Center Info Session - CANCELLED

i Policy or procedure to guide future requests for event sponsorship

Melissa will look into the guidance from the City Clerk

d) Strategic Priorities

a. Native Landscaping

i Ordinance governing lawn height - currently 6" limit, encourage raise it so allow 'slow mow'

- Michelle is working on an update to the code, can happen after review.
- * Native Landscaping is under planning, need to update code chapter 28
- Home gardens also fall under the landscaping
- Chickens, Bees, farm permit

- Presentation of Chapter 28 to this group and in the meantime, everyone read that chapter and offer suggestions
- Melissa has a shoreland section - also to be reviewed.

b. Waste & Recycling

- County doing organic collection for composting program
- City has been thinking of curbside recycling or how to manage a bag system

c. Energy Efficiency

i McKinstry audits

- No update on audits
- Solar grants for buildings

Complete streets

- APA updating "Complete Streets" will be updated in the comp plan and new code following.
- The county held focus groups for transportation and emergency services, they will pass information along to the Planning office and to Public Works.

New Business

e) Reports

a) Planning Case - Subdivision Plat

Habitat for Humanity will build 8 houses total, probably 2 per year.

f) Upcoming Events

May 20 at 11am-1pm, Energy Stakeholder Meeting - Headwaters Regional Resilience

Hub

May 29 at 5:30pm - Parks Commission

August 8 or 9 - Xerces Bee event

g) Sustainable Places Tour Planning

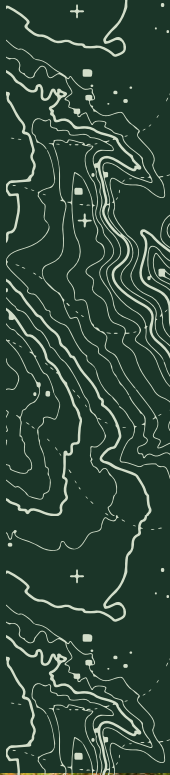
- For several years, the Sustainability Committee, back in the day, and BSU would set up tour stops and offer a 'tour' on a particular day.

m/s by Charles/Sami to adjourn, motion carried.



**NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**

Guide to Passing Wildlife-Friendly Property Maintenance Ordinances



**NWF community
wildlife
habitat™**



NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION LEAD AUTHOR:

Samantha R Miller

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

We appreciate the entire National Wildlife Federation family that is working to create healthy, sustainable, wildlife-friendly communities across the United States. This includes our National Wildlife Federation staff, our state affiliate partners, and our networks of communities, individuals, and schools that are committed to creating healthy communities that support both humans and wildlife.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Front Cover image: Erika Larsen

Second Image: Erika Larsen

Third Image: Mary Anne Borge

Fourth Image: Mary Anne Borge

Fifth Image: Sanja Jennings

Sixth Image: Erika Larsen

Seventh Image: Catherine Zimmerman

Eighth Image: Mary Anne Borge

Back Cover: Kaila Drayton

PROGRAM WEBSITES:

Community Wildlife Habitat: www.nwf.org/communitywildlifehabitat

Mayors' Monarch Pledge: www.nwf.org/MayorsMonarchPledge

Native Plant Habitats: www.nwf.org/Native-Plant-Habitats

Trees for Wildlife: www.nwf.org/trees

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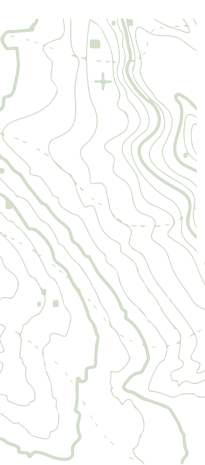
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About This Guide

Transform local landscaping practices and you can empower any individual or organization to participate in the expansion of wildlife-friendly habitat where they live, work, play, and worship.

This guide is for mayors, heads of local and tribal governments, municipal staff, homeowners' associations, and others who want to promote the expansion of wildlife-friendly habitats in their communities. It provides case studies of cities that revised their property maintenance ordinances to incentivize homeowners and other landowners to transform their land into wildlife habitats. This guide will also provide model ordinances and policies that can be adopted by any municipality across the country.



CERTIFIED WILDLIFE HABITAT AT HOME IN BROWARD COUNTY, FL.
PHOTO CREDIT: ERIKA LARSEN

Supporting Healthy, Sustainable, Wildlife-Friendly Communities

The Community Wildlife Habitat™ program partners with cities, towns, counties, neighborhood associations, and other communities across the country to create healthier, sustainable, and more wildlife-friendly communities. The program provides community leaders with a program framework to restore wildlife habitat and educate and engage community members while working to attain the National Wildlife Federation's certification as a wildlife-friendly community.

We are facing a wildlife extinction crisis globally. Here in the United States one-third of our wildlife are at increased risk of extinction in the coming decades. We've lost 3 billion birds from the North American bird population since 1970. Bees are disappearing, with the once-common rusty-patched bumble bee now listed as endangered. Monarch butterfly numbers have plummeted by as much as 90 percent in the east and by over 99 percent in the west. But many of these wildlife species can thrive right alongside us if we just give them some habitat within our cities, towns, and neighborhoods.

Healthy, sustainable, wildlife-friendly communities provide the four basic elements that wildlife and nature need to survive: food, water, cover, and places to raise young. When habitat is created with these four elements and is managed with sustainable practices, we can create biodiverse ecosystems wherein both humans and wildlife thrive.



FEMALE ZABULON SKIPPER NECTARING FROM DOWNY SKULLCAP PHOTO CREDIT: MARY ANNE BORGE



PERPLEXING OR CONFUSING BUMBLE BEE ON FEMALE FLOWER OF WINTERBERRY HOLLY PHOTO CREDIT: MARY ANNE BORGE

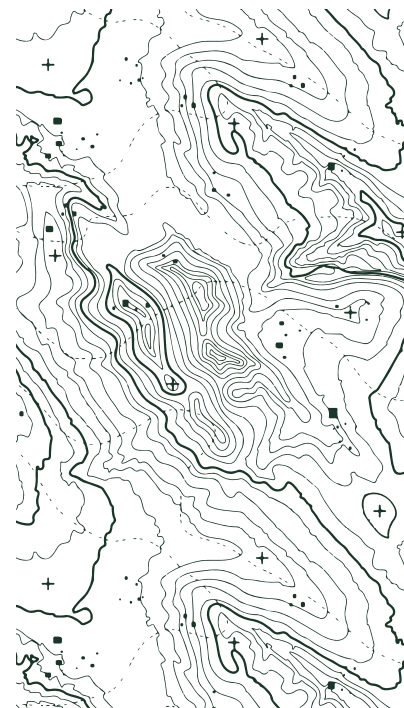


Role of Municipalities in Wildlife Conservation

Cities, counties, and homeowners' associations have control over what plants are installed at municipal buildings, parks, medians, and other common areas. These communities also often have tall grass or weed ordinances in place to ensure homeowners and businesses maintain their landscapes in a way that doesn't create a nuisance or hazard to neighbors or the community.

These ordinances, though useful in keeping communities safe, enforce a conventional landscape aesthetic of a close-cropped lawn that will often provide no benefit for local wildlife. Many of these conventional practices would disincentivize citizens from creating pollinator meadows, prairie patches, and other gardens that grow over a maximum threshold. Property maintenance ordinances should reflect the needs of local wildlife. By creating habitat corridors between larger protected areas and residential, urban areas, we can support a myriad of vital migratory wildlife species such as butterflies, bees, and songbirds.

Green Bay, WI; Evanston, IL; Minneapolis, MN; Austin, TX, and the High Desert Residential Owners Association in Albuquerque, NM have been spearheading the development and expansion of property maintenance practices that create healthy, sustainable, wildlife-friendly communities. These communities have developed models for community-led wildlife conservation efforts at the local level. Each community will serve as a case study that can be adopted by any municipality across the nation.



VOLUNTEERS AT THE SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH TOLEDO, OH. PHOTO CREDIT: SANJA JENNINGS

Recommended Policy Solutions



A decorative graphic in the top right corner of the page. It features a light green rectangular block at the top left, followed by a white area containing a topographic map with contour lines and small crosshair symbols. The map lines are black and represent elevation changes.

Promote Native Plants and Natural Landscaping

In April 2012, Green Bay, Wisconsin’s city council extensively revised its ordinance dealing with weeds and the maintenance of vegetation to recognize the importance of native plants and natural landscaping.

The ordinance promotes natural landscaping and the use of native plants while emphasizing the need to limit uncontrolled plant growth on private and city-managed property. The ordinance gives clear definitions of what constitutes a garden and planned natural landscapes, and includes the plants on the state and local noxious plant lists. Wisconsin native plants are also explicitly recognized as important for soil and water conservation.

These provisions promote the planting of native plants and vegetation and have had an immense benefit to local wildlife and pollinator species. The city has specific guidelines that require individuals and businesses to remove any unmanaged plant growth. Unmanaged plant growth is defined as, “any grass, hay, weeds, brush or other offensive vegetation which has grown to a height of over 9” but the ordinance exempts gardens, planned natural landscaping, and plants in environmentally sensitive areas.

Promoting native plants in your community will provide the highest benefit to local wildlife and pollinators. Allowing homeowners and businesses to create these natural landscapes promotes community engagement and provides opportunities to get people involved in wildlife conservation.

See the adapted model ordinance from Green Bay, WI on the next page and view the full ordinance [here](#).

Model Ordinance

1. **Purpose.** It is the purpose of this section to prohibit the uncontrolled growth of vegetation and to control noxious weeds, while permitting the planting and maintenance of planned natural landscaping that add diversity and richness to the quality of life. There are reasonable expectations regarding the proper maintenance of vegetation on any lot or parcel of land. It is in the public's interests to provide standards regarding the maintenance of vegetation because vegetation which is not managed can decrease the value of nearby properties and threaten the public health and safety. It is also in the public's interests to encourage diverse landscaping treatments, particularly those that encourage the preservation, restoration, and management of native plant communities which can be economical, low-maintenance and effective in soil and water conservation. The city enacts this section to balance these competing interests.

2. **Definitions.**

Garden means a cultivated area dedicated to growing vegetables, fruits, annual and perennial plants, ornamental grasses and ground cover in a well defined location.

Native plants means those grasses (including prairie grasses), sedges (solid, triangular-stemmed plants resembling grasses), forbs (flowering broadleaf plants) that are native to or naturalized to the state. Native plants do not include weeds.

Noxious weeds means any plant listed under § 23.235(1)(a) or 66.0407(1)(b), Wis. Stats., and shall also include *Arctium* spp. (burdock), *Cirsium* and *Carduus* spp. (thistle), *Ambrosia* spp. (ragweed), *Alliaria petiolata* (garlic mustard), *Plantago lanceolata* (buckhorn), and poison ivy.

Ornamental grasses and groundcovers means grasses and groundcovers not indigenous to Wisconsin. Ornamental grasses do not include turf grasses and weeds

Planned natural landscaping means a planned, intentional and maintained planting of native plants, ornamental grasses and groundcovers, rain gardens, shrubs and trees. Planned natural landscaping does not include any species of turf grasses and is not intended to allow a property owner to ignore lawn care duties. Planned natural landscaping does not include gardens.

Rain garden means a native plant garden that is designed not only to aesthetically improve properties, but also to reduce the amount of storm water and accompanying pollutants from entering streams, rivers and lakes.

Unmanaged plant growth means any grass, hay, weeds, brush or other offensive vegetation which has grown to a height of over nine inches but does not include:

- Gardens,
- Plants located on agricultural land,
- Plants located on shoreland within 35 feet of the ordinary high-water mark, .Plants located within environmentally sensitive areas such as steep slopes, drainage ways, wetlands, and protective buffer areas, or
- Planned natural landscaping that is wholly contained within the parcel on which it is planted and maintained.



Exempt Managed Natural Landscapes from the “Public Nuisance” Property Code

Wildlife-friendly communities have clear guidelines on what constitutes a “nuisance” on public and private properties but also provide opportunities to increase local biodiversity through naturally managed landscapes.

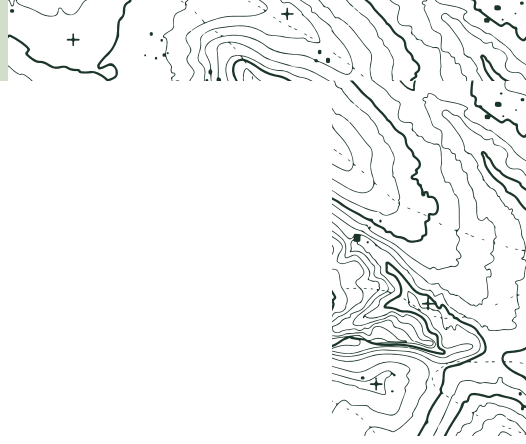
In Minneapolis, Minnesota a public nuisance is defined as noxious weeds, rubbish, garbage, or any other foul or unhealthy material that is dangerous to the health, safety, and good order of the city. This ordinance also has provisions limiting weed and grass exceeding 8’; however, this excludes properties with managed natural landscapes.

The Minneapolis city council, “finds that the installation and maintenance of managed natural landscapes is beneficial to the city’s environment and its residents and serves to further adopted city goals in that managed natural landscapes require fewer potentially harmful and costly inputs, improve stormwater retention, increase water quality and biodiversity, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide habitat for wildlife such as birds, butterflies and other beneficial insects and species”.

Allowing managed landscapes throughout a community provides opportunities to meet other city-wide goals of biodiversity and conservation. Promoting native plants and managed landscape practices expands and improves the quality of habitat corridors between larger protected areas and residential, urban areas. Habitat fragmentation is one of the biggest threats to wildlife and pollinator species, and local policy ordinances have an important role in addressing this.

The property maintenance ordinance in Minneapolis also provides context as to what defines meadow vegetation, rain gardens, and ornamental plants. See the adapted model ordinance on the next page and view the full ordinance [here](#).

Model Ordinance



1. **Right to install and maintain a managed natural landscape.** An owner, authorized agent, or authorized occupant of any privately owned lands or premises may, consistent with this subsection and all other applicable laws, statutes, rules and ordinances, install and maintain a managed natural landscape.

2. **Definitions:**

Managed natural landscape means a planned, intentional and maintained planting of native or non-native grasses, wildflowers, forbs, ferns, shrubs or trees, including but not limited to rain gardens, meadow vegetation, and ornamental plantings.

Meadow vegetation means grasses and flowering broad-leaf plants that are native to, or adapted to, the State of Minnesota, and that are commonly found in meadow and prairie plant communities, not including noxious weeds.

Noxious weed shall have the meaning assigned by Minnesota Statutes, Section 18.77, Subd. 8.

Ornamental plants means grasses, perennials, annuals and groundcovers purposefully planted for aesthetic reasons.

Rain garden means a native plant garden that is designed not only to aesthetically improve properties, but also to reduce the amount of stormwater and accompanying pollutants from entering streams, lakes and rivers.

Turf-grass lawn means a lawn comprised mostly of grasses common used in regularly cut lawns or play areas (such as but not limited to bluegrass, fescue, and ryegrass blends), intended to be maintained at a height of no more than eight (8) inches.

3. **Requirements:**

Managed natural landscapes may include plants and grasses in excess of eight (8) inches in height and which have gone to seed, but may not include any noxious weeds and must be maintained so as to not include unintended vegetation.

Managed natural landscapes may not include any plantings, which due to location and manner of growth constitute a hazard to the public or may cause injury or damage to persons or property when such growth is in violation of sections 244.1580 or 427.280.



Update Tall Grass Ordinances to Exempt Wildlife Habitat Projects

Austin, TX has a property maintenance ordinance outlining the requirements for keeping properties in a sanitary condition. Their ordinance states that safe, sanitary properties may not contain weeds or grasses above 12 inches, garbage, rubbish, and other unsanitary items. The ordinance provides an affirmative defense against tall weed and grass violations which allows properties to have native and adapted vegetation over 12 inches if they are part of a local or national habitat or gardening program.

The ordinance states that grasses above 12 inches are not allowed except for the case of:

(3) a landscaped area arranged and managed consistent with a plan accepted by the City which area includes native or adapted vegetation, where weed control and other periodic maintenance occurs:

Austin residents can maintain their natural landscapes over 12 inches if they are part of the National Wildlife Federation's Certified Wildlife Habitat™ program or another landscaping program approved by the City of Austin.

This exemption is useful because national and local programs that promote neighborhood habitat will often have guidelines and recommendations for growing and maintaining wildlife-friendly natural landscapes. This exemption allows for planned growth of gardens and yards that are intentional, and well managed, and therefore can be a benefit to both humans and wildlife. Read the full ordinance [here](#).

Remove Milkweed from Noxious Plant Lists

In 2017, the town of Evanston, IL updated its ordinance to remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants. Updating your property maintenance ordinance to exclude milkweed from its noxious plant list will provide a tremendous benefit to the monarch butterfly. The monarch butterfly relies exclusively on its host plant milkweed, which can grow two to six feet tall depending on the species. A traditional ordinance would often consider a milkweed garden a public nuisance and required it be cut down. We know that the presence of milkweed in home gardens and public spaces will support monarch butterfly and pollinator populations, while also strengthening ecosystem function.

Create a Homeowners Association Landscape Plan or Approved Plant List

“As stewards of this land we are committed to the vision of a community conceived, designed and built to preserve nature’s intricate balance. Our goal is an integrated and sustainable community which honors its Southwestern roots and natural habitats while providing a place that will endure.”- High Desert Residential Owners Association in Albuquerque New Mexico.

High Desert is a master-planned, sustainable community located in Albuquerque New Mexico. The High Desert Residential Owners Association manages the community involvement in the Community Wildlife Habitat program.

The High Desert Residential Owners Association has set landscaping standards for future members, landscape architects, and contractors working in the community. They prioritize practices that support wildlife that is native to the Sandia Mountains and the Cibola National Forest where they call home.

High Desert has an approved and prohibited plant list that clearly states the importance of using native plants. They define native plants as any plant that existed before the development of the High Desert area. However, they also emphasize the value of including drought-tolerant and climate-adaptive plants, even if they aren’t classified as natives. Their approved plant list prioritizes plants that are best suited to survive the region’s desert conditions and support the local wildlife. Equally important, is the discussion of cultural land management practices and plant selections that can reduce the likelihood of wildfires. See the full approved and prohibited plant list [here](#).

High Desert has an extensive landscape master plan that presents the community’s landscape planning and design principles, an assessment of existing conditions, conceptual designs, and priorities for the High Desert landscape. Some of the overall goals of the plan are to respect and maintain native vegetation and habitat and to conserve water through sustainable irrigation practices. View an adapted portion of the landscape plan below and the full landscape plan [here](#).



CERTIFIED WILDLIFE HABITAT AT A HOME GARDEN IN YELLOWSPRINGS, OH. PHOTO CREDIT: CATHERINE ZIMMERMAN

Model Landscape Master Plan

INTRODUCTION: For the purposes of this report a native plant is defined as plants that are endemic or indigenous to the area and that are adapted to the climate, soil, and moisture conditions of the area. Strict adherence to this native plant definition can limit plant choices to the detriment of landscape design. This reports advocates more use of native plant materials while maintaining that adapted native plants (from a nearby or similar region) or introduced plants (from other locales with similar climatic conditions) that have proven resilience are non-native, but appropriate for certain situations where a native is not suitable.

1. **PRINCIPLES:** Create beautiful, sustainable, resilient, and functional landscapes that benefit people and the environment. Respect and seek inspiration from growth habits of native plants and natural systems.
2. **Irrigation Design Principles:** Design irrigation systems in the most efficient, flexible, and durable manner possible to serve new and maturing landscapes. Make use of passive water harvesting. Audit all existing and new spray irrigation systems to measure efficiency.
3. **Planting Design Principles:** Select the right plant for the right location. Study and utilize microclimates created by natural and manmade structures as a factor in plant selection. Create a measurement of landscape resilience for each landscape zone in order to establish a more resilient High Desert Landscape. In response to site conditions and the desired landscape zone's aesthetic, establish plant palettes with a deliberate ratio of native species to non-native species.
4. **Maintenance Principles:** Contractor Obligations: Landscape contractors at High Desert will be expected to educate their staff about arid environment landscape maintenance techniques to perpetuate the vision and goals of the **High Desert Landscape Masterplan**. Landscape maintenance contractors at High Desert will be proactive about creating resilient landscapes. Proactive landscape maintenance means assessing and anticipating landscape and irrigation needs such as maintaining soil and plant health, making irrigation system replacements and controller timing changes before plants fail, and training plants appropriately to thrive in site specific situations.
5. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** This Landscape Masterplan is in part a decision-making document and design manual for current and future HDROA members, landscape architects, and contractors working at High Desert. Recommendations are organized as: A. General Recommendations (applicable to all zones) and B. Recommendations for Specific Zones.

Promote Neighbor-Friendly Landscaping Practices

Top-level changes such as the ones demonstrated in this guide will help protect local wildlife and pollinators and will support the overall resiliency and biodiversity of your community. The residents of your community also have a vital role to play in the creation and management of wildlife gardens.

Natural landscaping practices could be misunderstood by residents or homeowner associations that don't understand the benefit to both humans and wildlife. However, residents can take a few steps to ensure that as they transition to managing natural landscapes that they build those relationships with their neighbors and community members and educate them about the importance of wildlife gardens. Local leaders should encourage residents to adopt neighbor-friendly practices such as having those conversations with their neighbors or starting small with native plants that have pretty blooms. For a full list of neighbor-friendly wildlife gardening tips please check out [this full resource](#).

MINING BEE ON AMERICAN CRANBERRYBUSH PHOTO CREDIT: MARY ANNE BORGE





PHOTO CREDIT: KAILA DRAYTON



**NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**

412.925 NATIVE LANDSCAPES.

(a) A statutory city or home rule charter city shall allow an owner, authorized agent, or authorized occupant of any privately owned lands or premises to install and maintain a managed natural landscape. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given:

(1) "managed natural landscape" means a planned, intentional, and maintained planting of native or nonnative grasses, wildflowers, forbs, ferns, shrubs, or trees, including but not limited to rain gardens, meadow vegetation, and ornamental plants. Managed natural landscapes does not include turf-grass lawns left unattended for the purpose of returning to a natural state;

(2) "meadow vegetation" means grasses and flowering broad-leaf plants that are native to, or adapted to, the state of Minnesota, and that are commonly found in meadow and prairie plant communities, not including noxious weeds. "Noxious weed" has the meaning given in section 18.77, subdivision 8;

(3) "ornamental plants" means grasses, perennials, annuals, and groundcovers purposely planted for aesthetic reasons;

(4) "rain garden" means a native plant garden that is designed not only to aesthetically improve properties, but also to reduce the amount of stormwater and accompanying pollutants from entering streams, lakes, and rivers; and

(5) "turf-grass lawn" means a lawn composed mostly of grasses commonly used in regularly cut lawns or play areas, including but not limited to bluegrass, fescue, and ryegrass blends, intended to be maintained at a height of no more than eight inches.

(b) Managed natural landscapes may include plants and grasses that are in excess of eight inches in height and have gone to seed, but may not include any noxious weeds and must be maintained.

(c) Except as part of a managed natural landscape as defined in this section, any weeds or grasses growing upon any lot or parcel of land in a city to a greater height than eight inches or that have gone or are about to go to seed are prohibited.

History: 2023 c 62 art 3 s 9

Sec. 28-406. Landscaping requirements.

In all zoning districts, all open areas on a lot not used for approved buildings, driveways, parking, patios, pools and similar improvements, shall have a vegetative cover, including grass seed or sod, and be kept free of noxious weeds and plants. Vegetative cover may include lawns, other landscaping vegetation, or indigenous plant species, provided that the vegetative cover also complies with other applicable property maintenance code requirements. Rocks, boulders, etc. may be used as an accent material within the landscape design, but shall not cover a majority of any area calculated to meet required green space areas on a development site.

Open space requirements by zoning district:

Zoning District	Minimum Required Green Space
Rural Area (R-1)	75%
Suburban Residential (R-2)	75%
Suburban Residential (R-3)	70%
Moderate Density Residential (R-4)	60%, or 40% with approved CUP
High Density Residential (R-5)	60%, or 40% approved CUP
Multiple Family (R-6)	75% (unsewered) - 30% (sewered)
Manufactured Housing Park (MH)	60%
Low Density Commercial (B-1)	40%
General Commercial (B-2)	20%
Lake Oriented Commercial (LC)	30%
Lake Oriented Development (LD)	40% (w/flexibility)
Urban Renaissance Area (UR)	0%
Office/Medical (OM)	50%
University (U)	70%
Light Industrial (I-1)	20%
General Industrial (I-2)	30%
Shoreland Overlay (SH)	75%
Trunk Highway 197 Overlay	30%

(a) *Native landscaping.*

- (1) *Purpose.* To prohibit the uncontrolled growth of vegetation, while encouraging the planting and maintenance of native vegetation, edible landscapes, and rain gardens. There are reasonable expectations regarding the proper maintenance of vegetation on any lot or parcel of land.
- (2) *Definition of landscape area.* The area of the lot between the minimum building setback and the street of the official address of the lot.
- (3) *Design required.* Ornamental plants; and grasses; or vegetable and fruit bearing plants are allowed in the landscape area, but they must be planted pursuant to a design. The design must either be created by a professional landscape designer or be consistent with model community soil and water conservation district (SWCD) standards.
- (4) *Setbacks.* A three foot setback must be provided along the sidewalk or street. A one foot side yard setback is required but may be reduced to zero feet if:
 - a. A fence is installed adjoining the landscape area, or
 - b. The planted area abuts:

-
- i. A restoration area on any adjoining lot,
 - ii. A public park or open space,
 - iii. A vacant lot,
 - iv. A wetland, pond, lake, stream, or natural area, or
 - c. The landscape area is located on slopes equal to or greater than three feet horizontal to one foot vertical (3:1).
 - (5) *Plants allowed.* Ornamental plants; native plants and grasses; and fruit and vegetable bearing plants are allowed.
 - (6) *Restoration and establishment of native plant communities.* Restoration or establishment of native plant communities is allowed in the rear, side or front yard. Restoration projects should be consistent with the MN DNR's brochure, How to Use Native Plants for Landscaping and Restoration in Minnesota. Ornamental plants; native plants and grasses; and fruit and vegetable bearing plants are allowed.
 - (7) *Unattended vegetation.* Every owner and responsible party who fails to keep private property clear of unattended vegetation is in violation of this article and subject to the remedies and enforcement specified herein.
 - (8) *Prohibited vegetation.* Every owner and responsible party is in violation of this development code and subject to the remedies and enforcement specified herein if they fail to keep their private property clear of vegetation that:
 - a. That presents a fire hazard;
 - b. That attracts or harbors disease vectors;
 - c. That obstruct sight lines for the traveling public on streets or alleys; or that includes noxious weeds or secondary noxious weed as identified by the State Commissioner of Agriculture pursuant to Minn. Stat. 18.171, Subd. 5.
 - (b) For new construction and major building additions the following tree planting requirements shall apply for all parcels as the minimum number of trees required for development:
 - (1) One and two family dwellings shall preserve existing or plant at least two trees between the front property line and the minimum front yard setback line. For corner lots there shall be a minimum of two trees per street frontage.
 - (2) Multiple family dwellings shall preserve existing or plant at least one tree per 30 lineal feet of street frontage between the front property line and the minimum front yard setback line. The development site plan submitted for approval shall provide a landscape plan which provides a minimum total tree count as follows:
 - a. < 1 acre = 1 tree per 600s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
 - b. 1—3 acres = 1 tree per 900s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
 - c. 3 acres = 1 tree per 1,200s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
 - (3) *Commercial zoning districts.* Developments shall preserve existing, or plant at least one tree per 50 lineal feet of street frontage between the front property line and the minimum front yard setback line. As part of the development site plan submitted for approval, the landscape plan shall also include a minimum total tree count according to required minimum green space as follows:

-
- a. <1 acre = 1 tree per 800s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
 - b. 1—3 acres = 1 tree per 1,100s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
 - c. 3 acres = 1 tree per 1,400s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
- (4) *Industrial zoning districts.* Developments shall preserve existing, or plant at least one tree per 50 lineal feet of street frontage between the front property line and the minimum front yard setback line; or a minimum of four trees, whichever is less. As part of the development site plan submitted for approval, the landscape plan shall also include a minimum total tree count according to required minimum green space as follows:
- a. <1 acre = 1 tree per 1,600s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
 - b. 1—3 acres = 1 tree per 2,200s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
 - c. 3 acres = 1 tree per 3,800s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
- (5) *Non-residential uses in residential zoning districts.* Developments shall preserve existing, or plant at least one tree per 50 lineal feet of street frontage between the front property line and the minimum front yard setback line. As part of the development site plan submitted for approval, the landscape plan shall also include a minimum total tree count according to required minimum green space as follows:
- a. <1 acre = 1 tree per 800s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
 - b. 1—3 acres = 1 tree per 1,100s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
 - c. 3 acres = 1 tree per 1,400s.f. of minimum required pervious site surface.
- (6) Modifications to the tree planting standards may be approved by the council for unique or unusual conditions associated with the development.
- (7) *Locations of tree planting.* Trees shall be planted on the site based on the proposed use with special consideration to restoration areas including steep slopes, common areas, buffer zones between different land uses and/ or activities, and project entrance areas. If there is a lack of sufficient suitable area on the site, the council may consider allowing planting on other land, especially on or adjacent to land owned by a participating jurisdiction on the council (LGU). Areas required to be developed as "green space" within the parking lot are required to contain at least one tree per each island.
- (8) *Size and types of trees.*
- a. Trees must be no less than the following sizes when planted:
 - b. Deciduous trees shall be no less than one and three quarter caliper inches; except on steep slopes (e.g. slopes greater than 3:1), and for slow growth deciduous trees such as bur oak, ironwood, etc. which may be no less than one and one-quarter caliper inches.
 - c. Coniferous trees shall be no less than four feet high, except on steep slopes where coniferous trees shall be no less than three feet in height.
 - d. All tree planting requirements shall be completed prior to building occupancy. Tree planting requirements which cannot be completed prior to building occupancy shall post with the council a landscaping performance bond or escrow to be held until the required planting is completed.
 - e. As an alternate to the preceding two size requirements, the council may approve an off-premise planting size which includes seedlings or bare root stock. The plan must provide for an increased quantity of trees, a watering maintenance provision, and the total caliper

inches in the third year after planting must equal the above required caliper or size requirements. Required escrow and landscaping performance guarantees shall be held by the council during this additional time period until a final inspection is completed and approved.

- f. Trees planted shall be the same species or similar to the trees which are lost or removed from a development site. A suggested list of desired trees is shown in the table below. In most situations it is recommended that not more than 40 percent of the trees be from the same species when planting more than 20 trees. Indigenous high quality species are preferred.

(9) *Tree planting table.*

DECIDUOUS TREES	
COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME
Norway Maple	Acer Platanoides
Cultivars	Cleveland
Red Maple	Acer Rubrum
Cultivars	Northwood, Firedance
Silver Maple (seedless)	Acer Saccharinum "Silver Queen"
Sugar Maple	Acer Saccharum
Cultivars	Green Mountain
River Burch	Betula Nigra
Hackberry	Celtis Occidentalis
Green Ash	Fraxinus Pennsylvanica
Cultivars	Kindred, Newport, Bergeson, Marshall's, Seedless, Patmore, Summit
Ginko	Ginko Biloba (male only)
Honey Locust	Gleditsia Triacanthos
Kentucky Coffeetree	Gymnocladus Dioica
Ironwood	Ostrya Virginiana
Robusta Poplar	Poplux X Robusta
Siouxland Cottonwood	Polus Deltoides X Sioukland
White Oak	Quercus Alba
Swamp White Oak	Quercus Bicolor
Pin Oak	Quercus Palustris
Northern Red Oak	Quercus Rubra
American Linden (Basswood)	Tilia Americana
Small-Leaved Linden (Basswood)	Tilia
Cultivars	Glenleven, Greenspire
Redmond Linden	Tilia Americana "Redmond"
Yellow Birch	Betula Lutea
Paper Birch	Betula Alba Papyrifera
Bur Oak	Quercus Macrocarpa
Black Ash	Fraxinus Nigra
Black Walnut	Juglans Nigra
Pagoda Dogwood	Cornus Alternifolia
Hawthorne	Crataegus
American Plum	Prunus Americana

Black Cherry	Prunus Serotina
Northern Pin Oak	Quercus Ellpsoidalis

CONIFEROUS TREES	
COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME
Balsam Fir	Abies Balsamea
White Fir	Abies Concolor
European Larch	Larix Decidua
Black Spruce	Picea Mariana
Jack Pine	Pinus Banksiana
Austrian Pine	Pinus Laricio Austriaca
Ponderosa Pine	Pinus Ponderosa
Norway Pine	Pinus Resinosa
Scotch Pine	Pinus Sylvestris
White Pine	Pinus Strobes
Douglas Fir	Pseudotsuga Taxifolia
Canadian Hemlock	Tsuga Canadensis
Colorado Spruce	Picea Pungens
Northern and Eastern White Cedar	Thuja Occidentalis
White Spruce	Picea Glauca
Tamarack/Larch	Larix Laricina

(Ord. No. 199, 3rd series, § 1, 11-6-2023)

Sec. 28-407. Tree preservation.

- (a) *Purpose.* The city desires to preserve significant trees in urban, rural and other areas identified as containing substantial forested areas with high quality mature tree cover. When significant trees are lost through removal, grading, or other action, the city, property interests and the general welfare may be impacted by such tree loss. More specifically, the purpose of this section is to:
 - (1) Promote protection of significant trees and overall tree cover for the benefits which they provide including: aesthetic value and contribution to the community's image, shading and cooling, air quality, energy use reduction, buffering, enhancement to property values, tourism, erosion control, noise reduction, and support of wildlife and natural habitats.
 - (2) Preserve standing trees on undeveloped land until development occurs.
 - (3) Recognize and protect the natural environment consistent with the community's goals and the city comprehensive plan by preserving "old growth" and protection of significant high quality mature tree cover areas.
 - (4) Establish requirements on cutting, removal or destruction of high quality significant trees and identified high quality tree cover areas.
 - (5) Establish reasonable requirements for the preservation and of high quality significant trees and overall canopy coverage in an effective manner.
 - (6) Ensure fair and reasonable development opportunities for the city in a manner which does not create over burdensome regulations.

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- (7) Ensures that tree replacement will occur when high quality significant trees are damaged during site development and grading activities.
 - (8) Provides fair, understandable, cost effective administration, and enforcement of tree preservation regulations.
- (b) *Applicability.*
- (1) The provisions of this section shall apply to all land use activity in the city, except as may otherwise be regulated under section 28-474C of this development code. For developments which only involve street, utility, drainage or other site improvements which result in a loss of high quality significant trees, the requirements under this section shall apply only to the disturbed areas of the property.
- (c) *Exclusions.*
- (1) The provisions of this section shall not apply to commercial nurseries in the business of growing and selling trees, or active tree farms or commercial forests, if managed under a forest stewardship plan. The section shall also not apply to properties containing single or two-family residential housing units owned and occupied, or intended for occupancy, by their residents, except as may be otherwise restricted according to a development plan approved by the council. This exclusion shall not apply to land being platted and/or developed for single or two-family residential housing.
- (d) *Permit required.*
- (1) It is unlawful for any person to use land or to engage directly or indirectly in tree removal, as defined in this section, unless such person shall first have applied for and obtained a permit, from the council, authorizing high quality significant tree removal. An approved permit authorizing such tree removal shall be obtained by an applicant prior to commencing any land development, site demolition, or grading activities. A separate permit is not required, in accordance with these regulations, as part of an approved site plan review on parcels containing one acre or less.
 - (2) Trees shall not be removed in preparation for, or as part of, a development project until the project has been approved and all required permits have been obtained. Failure to obtain a permit shall be cause to deny issuance of a land use or building permit, prohibit continuation of any construction on the property, connection or extension of any utilities on the property or on any adjacent streets, issuance of a certificate of occupancy, as applicable, and to require remedial action in accordance with the tree preservation table for high quality significant trees lost or expected to be lost as a result of activity on the site.
 - (3) The council may hire an independent certified tree inspector, arborist, landscape architect, or similar professional, to assist the city and it's planning director in the review of such tree removal permits, analysis of unauthorized tree removal, or any other site assessment of tree loss, damage, and/or replacement from land within its jurisdiction, as may be deemed necessary. The cost for such professional services shall be paid for by the land owner, contractor, permit holder, or other individual responsible for tree loss, damage, or replacement. A permit escrow fee, payable to the council, for professional services and/or tree replacement shall be paid by the permit holder or responsible party and used to defray any or all costs of such services, including administrative and collection costs.
- (e) *Application for tree removal.* An application for a permit for tree removal shall be made in writing using the form provided by the council. The application shall include:
- (1) Applicant information.
 - (2) Owner information.

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- (3) Tree preservation plan including existing and proposed buildings, roads, utilities and easements, public parks and open spaces, lots and blocks, water bodies and wetlands, proposed building pads, equipment and material storage areas, the tree inventory, and tree protection.
 - (4) Schedule for completion of tree removal.
 - (5) Topographic map of site (the council may waive this requirement if site grading or disturbance will not result in changes to finished site contours or elevations.)
 - (6) Proposed use of site.
- (f) *Tree inventory.* The applicant shall have a tree inventory prepared to include:
- (1) The quantity, species by type, condition including any existing tree hazard conditions as a result of disease or damage, and location of all significant high quality trees on a parcel or development site. On heavily wooded sites which contain two acres or greater of mature tree cover, forest mensuration methods may be used to determine the total tree quantity. On such parcels, the inventory shall also include an area calculation of the high quality significant tree canopy coverage during full leaf on conditions and a detailed species assessment.
 - (2) Significant high quality trees which will be lost due to the proposed activities. Such trees shall be considered lost as a result of grade change, including grading or filling, whether temporary or permanent, affecting 45 percent or more of the tree's critical root zone, utility construction (e.g. sewer, water, storm sewer, gas, electric, telephone, cable television, fiber optics or similar facilities) resulting in the cutting of 45 percent or more of the tree's roots within the critical root zone.
 - (3) The location, number, type and size of trees required to be preserved pursuant to this section.
- (g) Tree preservation and tree protection for all except single and two-family dwelling uses:
- (1) High quality significant trees designated for preservation shall be protected by a snow fence or other means acceptable to the council. The protective measures must protect the entire critical root zone of the trees, unless more protection is warranted due to the proximity of a structure, road or similar obstruction to be part of the development in which case at least 55 percent of the critical root zone of the tree must be protected. The protection measures shall be clearly identified on the site disturbance, demolition, and/or grading plans.
 - (2) The applicant shall preserve high quality significant trees on a development site. Existing significant trees identified in the tree inventory with hazard conditions as a result of disease or damage should be considered for removal. They shall be clearly identified in the site tree inventory. These hazard trees shall be excluded from the high quality significant tree preservation requirements.
 - (3) The significant high quality tree preservation table establishes performance criteria for tree preservation on a development site that has over and above the base minimum landscaping standard determined in accordance with the maximum impervious surface allowed in the underlying zoning district, according to section 28-406 of this development code. This standard shall only apply to parcels or developments which contain more existing high quality significant trees than the minimum base landscaping standard.
 - (4) Removal of high quality significant trees identified by the tree inventory which are equal to or less than the base minimum landscape standard shall be prohibited except by CUP.
 - (5) Removal of up to 60 percent of the high quality significant trees over and above the base minimum landscape standard may be permitted. Any removal of high quality significant trees beyond this standard may only be approved by CUP.

- (6) If significant high quality trees exist on the property and are competing with development requirements, then the trees authorized for removal shall be according to an approved plan. The final determination of the tree removal and replacement location(s) shall be made by the council.
- (7) Notwithstanding the tree preservation requirements, new boulevard tree planting in the required front setback area according to section 28-406 shall be required.
- (8) Tree removal permits and inventory evaluation for a development project involving more than one parcel of land will include all parcels of land as one development project.
- (9) Trees shall not be removed until a development project has been approved and permitted.
- (10) If the required inventory of all high quality significant trees results in a number greater than the base minimum landscape standard required in section 28-406, then the number of trees to be preserved shall be in accordance with the following tree preservation table:

SIGNIFICANT HIGH QUALITY TREE PRESERVATION TABLE
(Not Including 1 and 2 Family Dwelling Uses)

Parcel or Development Size	# Existing* High Quality Trees Retained Over Base Landscape Standard	#Existing* High Quality Trees Retained Over Base Landscape Standard	# Existing* High Quality Trees Retained Over Base Landscape Standard
< 1 Acre	25% or >	40% or >**	60% or >***
> 1 Acre	40% or >	50% or >**	60% or >***

* For base minimum landscape standard per square foot of pervious surface, please refer to section 28-406.

** For developments which preserve 50 percent or more of existing high quality significant trees over and above the base minimum landscape standard, the total maximum allowable impervious surface may be increased by an additional two percent, provided adequate plans for on-site storm water management improvements are approved.

*** For developments which preserve 60 percent or more of existing high quality significant trees over and above the base minimum landscape standard, the total maximum allowable impervious surface may be increased by an additional five percent, provided adequate plans for on-site storm water management improvements are approved.

- (h) *Action by the council.*
 - (1) Permit denial, approval, or approval subject to conditions shall be based upon the extent to which tree removal may be consistent with or detrimental to the above stated purposes of this section and the health, safety or general welfare of the public.
 - (2) For initial development and new subdivisions and plats, the applicant shall enter into a written agreement with the council prior to the approval or issuance of a permit for any activity in which trees are required to be replaced. Such agreement will require the applicant to comply with the provisions and conditions imposed in connection with any such approval or issuance of a permit and the required provision of security for the performance of all obligations.
- (i) *Procedures.* The following identifies the general steps to be taken to comply with this development code:
 - (1) Submit tree inventory and replacement plans with the data and submission requirements according to the council approved tree preservation plan application checklist and procedures.

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- (2) The planning director shall require a performance bond, an irrevocable letter of credit, or an escrow fee in accordance with the council fee schedule in order to ensure completion of work consistent with any conditions imposed.
 - (3) If approved by planning staff, implementation may begin.
 - (4) Upon completion of the implementation activity the applicant shall request inspection and approval of the work by planning staff. Upon approval, the surety provided shall be released by the council to the applicant, less any direct costs incurred in the review and issuance of the tree preservation permit.

(Ord. No. 199, 3rd series, § 1, 11-6-2023)



Planning and Zoning Department
City of Bemidji
317 4th Street NW Bemidji, MN 56601
Office (218) 759-3579
Email SGAdmin@ci.bemidji.mn.us.

June 3, 2026

SUP-2026-0002: - Amy DeLap representing Just for Kix is requesting an Interim Use Permit (IUP) to remodel and operate a Dance Studio (Indoor Fitness, Health Club or Spa) in the (I1) Industrial Park/Light Industrial Zoning District. The subject property is located at 1407 Naylor Dr SE (PIN 800453700) in the City of Bemidji.

The City of Bemidji Planning and Zoning Commission will consider this proposal at its meeting on **Thursday, June 25, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at Bemidji City Hall or may be viewed on Local Channel 2.

If you have any comments, you may present them to the Commission at that time. It would be encouraged to direct your comments in writing to the Planning and Zoning Planner assigned to the Case, **Melissa Fahrenbruch's** attention at the Planning office at 317 4th Street NW, or by email to SGAdmin@ci.bemidji.mn.us. If possible, your comments should be submitted by **Thursday, June 18, 2026**, so they may be incorporated into our report to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The report, along with any other pertinent information regarding this planning case will be available prior to the meeting on our website ([City of Bemidji/Boards, Commissions, and Committees/Planning Commission](#)) and at city hall. Attached is a copy of the application and other supporting documentation.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact our office at 218-759-3579 or email the planner assigned to the case (see email address above). City departments may access through SmartGov application **SUP-2026-0002**.

Respectfully,

Planning and Zoning Staff
City of Bemidji



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June 3, 2026

SUP-2026-0004: - Matthew Korpela representing Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Behavioral Health, is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow Counseling Services (Behavioral, Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol Abuse) at 614 Railroad St SE (PIN: 800422100) in the City of Bemidji. The property is in the B-2 General Commercial Zoning District.

The City of Bemidji Planning and Zoning Commission will consider this proposal at its meeting on **Thursday, June 25, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at Bemidji City Hall or may be viewed on Local Channel 2.

If you have any comments, you may present them to the Commission at that time. It would be encouraged to direct your comments in writing to the Planning and Zoning Planner assigned to the Case, **Melissa Fahrenbruch's** attention at the Planning office at 317 4th Street NW, or by email to **SGAdmin@ci.bemidji.mn.us**. If possible, your comments should be submitted by **Thursday, June 18, 2026**, so they may be incorporated into our report to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The report, along with any other pertinent information regarding this planning case will be available prior to the meeting on our website ([City of Bemidji/Boards, Commissions, and Committees/Planning Commission](#)) and at city hall. Attached is a copy of the application and other supporting documentation.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact our office at 218-759-3579 or email the planner assigned to the case (see email address above). City departments may access through SmartGov application **SUP-2026-0004**.

Respectfully,

Planning and Zoning Staff
City of Bemidji



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June 3, 2026

SUB-2026-0002: - Tim Marco (Marco McLane Development) representing Greater Bemidji is requesting approval for a Final Plat to develop a multi-phase project which would include a YMCA Community Wellness Center and a hotel and convention center along with other future developments. The St. Michel parcel has been added to the final plat request to accommodate a future cul-de-sac and road improvements at the end of Midway Dr. S. The whole plat lies within the Urban Renaissance (UR) zoning district and the Shoreland Overlay. The subject property is located at multiple addresses off Minnesota Ave NW and Midway Dr. S (PINS #800034499, 800050504, 800050505, and 800116600) in the City of Bemidji (also known as the railroad corridor).

The City of Bemidji Planning and Zoning Commission will consider this proposal at its meeting on **Thursday, June 25, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at Bemidji City Hall or may be viewed on Local Channel 2.

If you have any comments, you may present them to the Commission at that time. It would be encouraged to direct your comments in writing to the Planning and Zoning Planner assigned to the Case, **Jamin Carlson's** attention at the Planning office at 317 4th Street NW, or by email to SGAdmin@ci.bemidji.mn.us. If possible, your comments should be submitted by **Thursday, June 18, 2026**, so they may be incorporated into our report to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The report, along with any other pertinent information regarding this planning case will be available prior to the meeting on our website ([City of Bemidji/Boards, Commissions, and Committees/Planning Commission](#)) and at city hall. Attached is a copy of the application and other supporting documentation.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact our office at 218-759-3579 or email the planner assigned to the case (see email address above). City departments may access through SmartGov application **SUB-2026-0002**.

Respectfully,

Planning and Zoning Staff
City of Bemidji



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June 3, 2026

SUP-2026-0003: - Dennis Batty of The Dennis Batty & Associates Group, Inc., Architects & Planners Enc., representing Crossroads Church, is requesting a conditional use permit (CUP) for an existing church to be able to expand the sanctuary along with the parking lot and other outside improvements. The subject property is located at 3354 Laurel Dr. NW (PIN: 80552400) in the City of Bemidji. The parcel is in the B-2 General Commercial District and the Airport Zones 3 & H Overlays.

The City of Bemidji Planning and Zoning Commission will consider this proposal at its meeting on **Thursday, June 25, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at Bemidji City Hall or may be viewed on Local Channel 2.

If you have any comments, you may present them to the Commission at that time. It would be encouraged to direct your comments in writing to the Planning and Zoning Planner assigned to the Case, **Jamin Carlson's** attention at the Planning office at 317 4th Street NW, or by email to SGAdmin@ci.bemidji.mn.us. If possible, your comments should be submitted by **Thursday, June 18, 2026**, so they may be incorporated into our report to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The report, along with any other pertinent information regarding this planning case will be available prior to the meeting on our website ([City of Bemidji/Boards, Commissions, and Committees/Planning Commission](#)) and at city hall. Attached is a copy of the application and other supporting documentation.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact our office at 218-759-3579 or email the planner assigned to the case (see email address above). City departments may access SmartGov application **SUP-2026-0003**.

Respectfully,

Planning and Zoning Staff
City of Bemidji