



ROSEVILLE
SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability Newsletter

Public Works &
Engineering Division

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Sustainability Tip
of the Month—
Lessons from Japan



Green to Go



Roseville Bike Plan



Household Hazardous
Waste

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Sustainability Tip of the Month—Lessons from Japan

This spring, I had the great privilege to travel to Japan. It was an incredible experience that I'm still processing, and will continue to process over the next several months. While I was there, I couldn't help but notice different details surrounding sustainability everywhere we visited, and I thought others might be interested in reading my reflections (all photos are my own).



View of residential Himeji from the castle

The first thing you'll notice when arriving in Japan is **how dense its urban areas are**. Streets are narrow, cars are smaller, and shops, restaurants, and residences are smaller than western standards. One building might have a tiny ramen shop that seats 7-8 people on the first level, maybe another restaurant or store on the second level, and maybe even an apartment above that. However, **density is notably offset by added greenery wherever possible in urban areas**, squeezing

trees on street corners and in tiny backyard gardens. While urban areas are dense, cities are also sprinkled with parks, and rivers and canals offer peaceful walkways lined with trees.

Because space is at a premium, car ownership is a challenge in Japanese cities and it's much more convenient to walk, take transit, or bike to your destination - **you see many people walking and on bikes throughout Japan, including many parents with young children on cargo bikes!** Bike parking is abundant, and some areas even included overhead cover from the elements. There were many bike lanes (some protected, some not) and numerous pedestrian-only shopping streets.



A street in Osaka crowded with parked bikes

I can't go to Japan and not talk about trains. **Japan's public transportation system is one of the best in the world**, and we never felt the need for a car to get to any of our destinations. I'd be remiss if I didn't bring up bullet trains (called **Shinkansen**)—it's an unbelievably cool way to get around, and feels like you're flying along the ground! I can't overstate how easy it was to get around on foot and by train or bus in Japan.

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Green to Go Ordinance Proposal

The City of Roseville is considering an ordinance requiring food establishments to provide either recyclable or compostable single-use containers for to-go food packaging. **Packaging includes containers used to transport foods or beverages for immediate consumption such as serving trays, plates, containers, boxes, and cans.** It does not include bags.



CityofRoseville.com/Green2Go

Who is Affected?

Businesses that provide take-out food packaging/containers or utensils. This includes restaurants, but also organizations providing to-go food or beverages (free or paid) at events that require a permit or license, **including restaurants, gas stations, food trucks, grocery stores, and convenience stores.**

Please visit our [Green to Go page](#) for more information, and consider completing our **Green to Go surveys** for either [residents](#) or [local food business owners](#).

Join us at a **community conversation at Cedarholm Community Center on June 24th, 2:00pm-3:00pm!** Stop in to ask questions and hear from Biz Recycling, city staff, and packaging suppliers.

Roseville Bike Plan + Bike Month + Bike News



Roseville recently received an active transportation planning grant from MnDOT to develop a bike plan, and we want your feedback! Our vision is to **develop a bicycle network that is safe and comfortable for riders of all ages and abilities to use confidently.** Scan the QR code to the left, or go to talk.dot.state.mn.us/Roseville-bike-plan to take the survey and add a pin or two to the interactive map with your ideas! **The survey closes on Sunday, June 30th.** Stay tuned for more information on upcoming in-person engagement opportunities.

Did you know May is officially **Bike Month**? The weather is beautiful right now, and if you've been curious about trying to commute to work or an errand by bike, it's a great time to give it a try! The YouTube channel Shifter has [some great tips about how to get started](#), and the [Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota](#) also has an excellent set of resources on its website and through its events. Your sustainability specialist at Roseville (me) is also a bike commuter—[send me an email](#) or give me a call if you want to chat about how I approach commuting!

One thing that's revolutionized my ability to commute by bike is my electric bicycle ("e-bike"), and **soon Minnesota will be offering rebates for e-bikes to make them more affordable!** Rebate applications will open up on **June 5th**, and the rebates will be available to use at eligible retailers starting July 1st. [Visit the e-bike rebate site](#) for more information and a link to sign up for rebate updates.

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Events and Resources

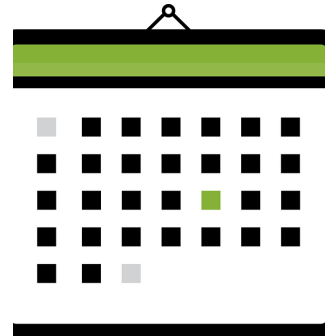
Ramsey County Urban Heat Island Study—Later this summer, Ramsey County will conduct a citizen science urban heat island data collection campaign in partnership with Hennepin County, with support from the NO-AA. Volunteers will receive a \$25 gift card as compensation. Click the link for more info and to sign up.

Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Waterfest—Saturday, June 1st, 11am-4pm, Lake Phalen Park. This free, family festival celebrating our clean lakes provides an opportunity for outdoor hands-on learning about clean water, wildlife, and land and water conservation.

A Conversation with Ernest Scheyder—Wednesday, June 5th, 4pm-7pm, Surly Brewing Co. Scheyder is the author of The War Below, a new book that reveals the tensions over the need to source vast quantities of minerals to power a greener future while still protecting our most sacred natural spaces. Registration is \$25.00 with no-cost tickets available upon request.

Juneteenth Celebration—Saturday, June 15th, 11am-3pm, Frank Rog Amphitheater at Central Park. Connect with Black-owned businesses, enjoy some free food and entertainment, and celebrate the significance of the day. This will be a zero-waste event!

16th Annual Taste of Rosefest—Thursday, June 27th, 5pm-8pm, Central Park Muriel Sahlin Arboretum. Enjoy food, wine, and beverages from over 35 area businesses and music from the Roseville Jazz Band. Tickets are \$40 in advance or \$50 at the door. Must be 21+ to attend, rain or shine. This is a zero waste event!



Household Hazardous Waste and A to Z Guide Update

Roseville will soon be the home to a new **Environmental Service Center** where residents of Ramsey County can bring their **household hazardous waste**, but in the meantime you can bring it to the **Bay West site** in Saint Paul.

Household hazardous waste includes batteries of all kinds, cleaning chemicals and solvents, needles and syringes, and automotive products.

Did you know the Bay West site also has a free product reuse room? The staff will set aside items that still have usable product left for residents to take for free—consider taking a peek if you have a project needing a specialized cleaner, solvent, or adhesive!

Not sure how to get rid of something correctly? Check out **Ramsey County's new A to Z Green guide**! County solid waste staff updated the guide to include new items and improved the search function. Results will be listed from most to least environmentally-friendly reuse or disposal options.



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(Continued from Page 1) Sustainability Lessons from Japan

While transportation and land use are two positive sustainable attributes to life in Japan, the country has opportunities to improve in other areas. Japan has some of the highest consumption rates of single use plastic in the world - you'll often find food and other items coming individually wrapped in plastic, packaged in a larger plastic bag, and then carried out in a third plastic bag. For example, I bought some face masks that were each individually wrapped and came in an additional plastic bag. Additionally, **vending machines can be found on every corner selling drinks and other items in plastic bottles** - as someone who prefers to carry around a reusable water bottle, there were very few places to refill a bottle anywhere, but vending machines were everywhere. On the flipside, Japanese recycling rates for PET bottles are extremely high.



A very colorful drink vending machine in Osaka

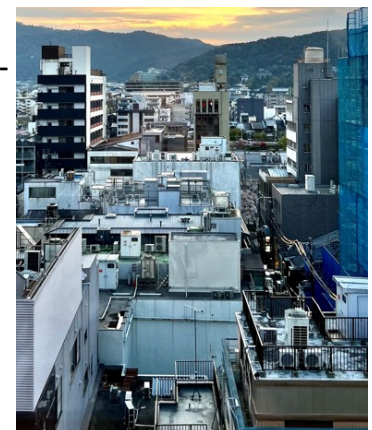
Ironically, due to a terrorist attack in the 1990s, **urban areas in Japan have very few waste bins in public areas**. The expectation is that you must carry your trash around until you find a place to dispose of it, either at home, at a train station, etc. You might think this would lead to lots of litter in cities, but streets and sidewalks are impeccably clean - **Japanese people largely act for the collective good rather than individual convenience**, and this comes across both in how few pieces of litter are on the ground, as well as the high levels of politeness and etiquette on trains and elsewhere.



A cherry blossom-themed handkerchief I purchased in Matsumoto, artfully folded like a kimono

While plastic is everywhere, **one thing you won't find often are paper towels in bathrooms, or endless napkins at restaurants**. Most people in Japan carry around small hand towels to dry their hands with or use as a makeshift napkin as needed when dining, and you can find endless varieties of these towels at stores, sometimes called *tenugui*. I purchased several to use during my trip, and because they function so much better than a paper towel or napkin, they're now part of my daily routine - I always carry one with me to use as a handkerchief, napkin, or to clean up errant spills, and it's such a joy to interact with something that brings me back to my time in Japan.

Finally, I couldn't help but notice that heat pumps are everywhere in Japan. The archipelago has a wide variety of climates, many of which require both heating and cooling, and the technology was identified early on as a way to reduce dependence on fossil gas and promote energy efficiency. It was exciting to imagine a similar view across Roseville, and because it's my job, I'll end with a plug—if your air conditioner is aging, think about replacing it with a heat pump! Don't forget that you can stack federal, state, and Xcel Energy incentives together to save money on installation.



The view from my Kyoto hotel room—hard to see, but I counted at least 20 heat pumps in this picture! You can see two in the bottom right corner.

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Positive Climate News



Big wins for train travel! On Tuesday May 21st, **the new Borealis route from Amtrak will provide service from St. Paul to Chicago**, the first time in 45 years there will be twice-daily service between the two cities. Additionally, the new **Brightline West high-speed electric rail line between Las Vegas and Los Angeles** broke ground in late April. The train will reach speeds over 186 miles per hour and make the 218 mile trip in just 2 hours and 10 minutes. [Learn more about the history of high speed rail development worldwide here](#)—it's a fascinating topic.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) passed big transmission reforms—

The new reform to transmission grid planning will enable (much-needed) faster transmission expansion to support a nationwide transition to renewable energy. The rule requires grid operators to develop regional plans for transmission expansion in the next 12 months. The linked Canary Media article does a great job explaining why this new rule is so important.

'Wind Repowering' will represent nearly half of all new wind capacity in 2024—wind repowering is the process of updating aging wind turbines with newer components to reduce noise and produce power more efficiently, often adding 10-20% more productive capacity to wind farms built prior to 2012, while costing 50-80% less than building a brand new installation from scratch.

Thank you from your Roseville Sustainability Team!

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