

# Public Utilities Commission approves \$9 million investment in three Resilient Minneapolis projects

The projects will provide three community centers backup power sources to use during outages

July 19, 2022 (MINNEAPOLIS) The City of Minneapolis and Xcel Energy applaud the [Minnesota Public Utilities Commission](#)'s recent approval of resiliency investments at three Minneapolis community centers. The \$9 million Resilient Minneapolis projects will help these centers be more resilient in times of power outages while meeting the City's and Xcel Energy's equity, environmental justice and distributed energy objectives.

Xcel Energy will work with the community organizations to install solar and battery microgrids at the Minneapolis American Indian Center, Sabathani Community Center and the Renewable Energy Partners' North Minneapolis Community Resiliency Hub. These microgrids will provide these centers electricity in the event of power outages. The centers serve communities with large populations of Black people, Indigenous people and people of color that have been disproportionately vulnerable to climate change and other stressors.

The Resilient Minneapolis projects came about as the result of the City's Sustainability Division working with Xcel Energy on the energy company's Integrated Distribution Plan, which covers investments in distribution lines, substations and other energy distribution resources. Together they broadened the focus of that plan to encompass equity and resiliency objectives, drawing attention to the longstanding and continuing racial disparities in health, wealth and safety in Minneapolis and across the state.

The solar and battery microgrids will allow the three chosen community centers to operate as "islands" separate from the larger power grid in the event of an outage so they will continue to have electricity, enabling them to act as community gathering spaces and deliver critical services such as food, shelter, communications and more. This is one of the first major investments that will support the development of a [resilience hub](#) at all three locations.

"If the grid goes down, people still need food and they still need power," said Mayor Jacob Frey. "We're working to make sure that they do, and these three community centers will be leading the work. So long as the sun comes up, solar panels will provide power – and our trusted community partners will provide food access, family support, and housing resources to our most vulnerable residents. Thanks to our partners at Xcel Energy and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for working towards a resilient city for years to come."

“We can take this opportunity to create a green jobs economy to address the equity gaps in our Black communities, Indigenous communities and communities of color,” said City Council President Andrea Jenkins. “It’s my hope that this project can also provide choices for our young adults to enter careers by learning more about green technologies and sustainable practices instead of paths that can lead to violence. I am excited about the possibilities this development could bring towards building resiliency long term.”

“Approval of the RMP represents an important milestone for Xcel Energy,” said Chris Clark, Xcel Energy – Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. “We are working to advance equity, invest in our BIPOC customers and communities, diversify our workforce, and integrate more distributed energy resources that deliver benefits for all our customers across the system. The RMP – even if only one piece of those broader efforts – provides us a key opportunity to learn and build partnerships in our communities.”

“Having experienced historical trauma that long predates statehood, Minnesota’s American Indian community is perhaps the most resilient of any cultural population in our region,” said Mary LaGarde, executive director of the Minneapolis American Indian Center. “That resiliency continues today with the urban American Indian community leading a revitalization along and around Franklin Avenue that’s already created new jobs, attracted visitors and identified additional space for activities and events. Resilient Minneapolis will further the Minneapolis American Indian Center’s commitment to ensuring that our community has access to a safe place to gather and get support in times of need. It will also provide essential resources to protect the environment and contribute to the sustainability of the center for generations.”

"Sabathani Community Center is motivated to participate in this project as it supports our goal to truly transform our energy systems and become a community resilience hub, particularly in times of crisis," said the center's chief executive officer Scott Redd. "The project is part of a bigger plan that will dramatically reduce carbon pollution and, as a result, provide energy equity, wealth building, a healthy environment and workforce development in our predominately Black and brown community. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to define a new paradigm for our community that addresses systemic racism; rights historical wrongs; closes racial gaps in income, and wealth; and boldly meets the climate moment."

“Renewable Energy Partners is excited to be a partner on this project that deliver a resilience hub in the heart of North Minneapolis,” said president and CEO Jamez Staples. “Resilient Minneapolis will support the North Side community in power outages and provide teaching tools to help engage, educate, train and prepare underserved community members to be a part of the clean energy economy. It complements our broader vision for the East Plymouth Innovation Corridor, developing high quality housing, retail opportunities, expanded childcare services, senior housing and an expansion of the training center.”

In the coming months, Xcel Energy will work with the three community centers to formalize agreements, create a plan on how to use stored electricity during outages and develop detailed project designs and technical specifications before issuing a request for proposals to begin building the microgrids. The systems are anticipated to be online by late 2023, pending construction timelines and supply chain constraints. The company will also work with the

community centers, the City and other stakeholders to develop resiliency metrics and will report progress annually.

### **About Xcel Energy**

Xcel Energy (NASDAQ: XEL) provides the energy that powers millions of homes and businesses across eight Western and Midwestern states. Headquartered in Minneapolis, the company is an industry leader in responsibly reducing carbon emissions and producing and delivering clean energy solutions from a variety of renewable sources at competitive prices. For more information, visit [xcelenergy.com](http://xcelenergy.com) or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

### **About Minneapolis American Indian Center**

The [Minneapolis American Indian Center](#) provides educational and social services for a large and tribally diverse urban American Indian population, numbering well over 35,000 in the eleven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metro areas. Founded in 1975, it's one of the oldest Indian centers in the country is located in the heart of Minneapolis' American Indian community. The center preserves and supports American Indian cultural traditions through art, youth and inter-generational programs.

### **About Sabathani Community Center**

Established in 1966, [Sabathani Community Center](#) is one of Minnesota's oldest African American-founded nonprofits. Its core programming includes distributing a million pounds of food a year through its food shelf, providing affordable clothing and household goods for low-income individuals and families and, beginning this fall, providing affordable housing for older adults and seniors at a new 48-unit residential development.

### **About Renewable Energy Partners**

[Renewable Energy Partners](#) is a for-profit business based in north Minneapolis that helps clients earn revenue from unused roof space. The company works to increase resilience by investing in the metro area's infrastructure and people to create a more equitable future for the Twin Cities. REP's partners for the North Minneapolis Community Resiliency Hub include Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota.