

# Green Practices Commission

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The Mission of the Green Practices Commission of University City is to encourage sustainable practices and programs that improve the health and quality of life of our community; restore and protect our natural resources, and strengthen our economy.

Green Practices Commission meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm, Heman Park Community Center, located at 975 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Visit [Public Documents - Green Practices Commission](#) to view the monthly agendas, minutes, sustainability plan and other reports (select the Green Practices Commission folder). All agenda item requests should be submitted on the Sustainable Practices Request [Form](#) and returned to the Public Works and Parks Department for review.

The Green Practices Committee was formed in 2008 with a goal to develop a comprehensive strategic plan recommending ways University City become sustainable at the municipal, residential and commercial levels. The Committee was charged with developing practices in University City that improve environmental quality, decrease waste, conserve natural resources and energy, thereby establishing University City as a practical model for other municipalities and businesses. The Committee is made up of residents with expertise in seven areas, including, Ecosystems/Habitat, Water/ Storm Water, Air Quality/Transportation, Water/Resource Conservation, Land Use/Open Spaces and Parks, and Energy/Green Buildings. In October 2010, the Committee completed a draft Community Sustainability Strategic Plan for the City. The plan addressed complex energy and environmental issues.

In August 2011, the Committee was formalized into a Green Practices Commission. The Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council. The Commission has seven members appointed by City Council. The Commission shall make a study of the sustainability practices of the City in the seven areas and have the following powers and duties, including but not limited to:

- Establish sustainability goals, prioritize and track progress;
- Review and advise the City regarding projects and initiatives for all development and redevelopment;
- Establish a list of prioritized projects to be initiated by the City.

The Green Practices Committee completed a citywide Street Light Audit funded by a Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. The study was performed for three main reasons; 1) to inventory all of the street lights located within University City limits, 2) to provide energy and cost savings options associated with providing street lighting, and 3) to develop a new street light policy for today that reflects a better understanding of lighting technology and energy efficiency. The report is available online in the [Public Documents - Green Practices Commission](#) select the Boards and Commission folder.

The Green Practices Committee held three public meetings in February 2011 and gathered input and ideas from the community, including University City residents and business owners, on how

to make our community more sustainable. A variety of information about rain barrels and rain gardens were available during the meetings. For information on how to manage rain water on your property, please view the following information, [Get the most out of Rain](#) and [What is a Combined Sewer Overflow?](#)

The Committee presented the Draft Sustainability Strategic Plan to City Council on Monday, October 18, 2010. The plan was completed in September 2011 and revised in January 2012. The Sustainable Strategic Plan is divided into seven areas with key concepts including, Ecosystems/Habitat, Water/Storm Water, Air Quality/Transportation, Waste/Resource Conservation, Land Use/Open Space/Parks, Energy and Green Buildings. To view the presentation slides, click here [Sustainability Strategic Plan - GPC](#)

What does it take to Go Green? University City is demonstrating that local governments can realize increased energy savings, environmental health and economic benefits by implementing "green" best practices. University City is under the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. The agreement outlines areas where cities can make changes to become more environmentally responsible. Since signing the agreement in 2008, University City has taken steps to conserve energy and implemented several "green" initiatives:

- Uses biodiesel to fuel city trucks.
- Fills tires of city vehicles with nitrogen.
- Promote the purchase of gas-electric hybrid vehicles.
- Added energy-efficient windows, lighting, restroom features, elevator and boiler in City Hall.
- Switched all city-owned traffic signals to LED bulbs.
- Developed a citywide single stream recycling program in 2008.
- Implemented a citywide printing, copying and mailing services administrative regulation in 2009 to lessen the impact on the environment and reduce costs of doing business. Employees are encouraged to only print documents when necessary, reuse paper as note or draft paper, print documents double-sided, recycle discarded paper and to turn off computer monitors, printers, fax machines, copiers and lights when leaving the office.
- The City purchases recycled content paper at a discounted rate along with other local municipalities.
- Installed more than 20 miles of bike paths, walking and pedestrian trails.
- Installed textured sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting and count-down pedestrian crossing signals in high traffic areas.
- City Park benches installed after 2009 are made of recycled materials.
- Developed a Bike and Walkability Task Force in October 2010 who will develop a Community Bike and Walk Master Plan by spring/summer 2012. The Bike and Walk Master Plan will be integrated into the U City Comprehensive Plan.
- Installed signs advising motorists to share the road with bikes.
- Installed a permeable paved parking lot near the local Post Office in 2009.
- Permeable paved municipal parking lot #1, next to the Tivoli Theatre, will be completed by summer 2012.
- Continued commitment to an on-going tree replacement program.
- Installed two dedicated employee car pool parking signs and spaces in the City Hall parking lot.
- Help to manage storm water at several city-owned and residential properties in University City by coordinating the installation of 4 rain gardens, 1 storm water pond and 65 rain barrels throughout the City.

- Considering instituting green building code.
- The City has installed a solar powered Pay Station Unit for paid parking on Loop South from Kingsland Avenue to Leland Avenue.
- Appointed a Green Practices Committee in 2008 who developed a community Sustainable Strategic Plan in 2010. This committee was formalized as a Commission in 2011.
- Developed a Sustainability in University City webpage promoting activities of the Green Practices Committee and local "green" resources and projects available to the community.
- Retrofitted 121 street lights on Olive Boulevard by converting 87 of the double head light fixtures to single head light fixtures and reduced all of the 100 watt high pressure sodium bulbs to 70 watt bulbs during summer 2011.
- Completed an [Energy Audit](#) (report available in the Green Practices Commission folder) of several municipal buildings and developed an energy master plan. The project was completed and recommendations were submitted to City staff in March 2012.
- Retrofitting City owned lights with more energy efficient options using funds from the Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant at the Central Garage location, 4 fueling station lights, at Wellesley Tunnel, 16 lights and at the City-owned Loop Parking Garage. A pilot light test will be implemented at the garage location for 30 days beginning spring 2012. Based on successful results of the pilot, about 55 lights may be replaced.
- The fueling station light retrofit is projected to provide a 74% reduction in energy. The four 400 watt metal halide fixtures were replaced with four 98W LED fixtures in February 2012 and the energy savings equals \$453 cost savings each year. See before and after pictures posted in February 2012 edition of the online [City Newsletter](#)
- During April 2012, four city-owned lights in Municipal Parking Lot (#3) were upgraded to more energy efficiency options.
- Five University City owned streetlights along Pershing and Forest Park Parkway will be retrofitted to energy efficient options (LED lamps) during fall 2012.
- Indoor light fixtures and lamps will be retrofitted to energy efficient options at several city-owned buildings/facilities, including, Centennial Commons (basketball ball court area), the Parks Maintenance Facility and Central Garage. The projects are scheduled for completion by fall 2012.
- Completed a green house gas emissions inventory in July 2011 and currently working on reduction targets. The inventory report is available [online](#)
- Honorable Mayor Welsch signed the Global Cities Covenant on Climate -"The Mexico City Pact"- making University City a member of the Global Cities Covenant on Climate. The Covenant demonstrates the political leadership of local governments in addressing the global climate change challenge. For more information, visit [The Mexico City Pact website](#)

Walking trails and bike routes were developed to help reduce the amount of miles traveled by vehicles and reduce vehicle emissions. Another way to reduce vehicle emissions is by switching to cleaner vehicles, including gas-electric hybrid, biodiesel and E85 flex-fuel vehicles. Biodiesel is the name of a clean burning alternative fuel produced from domestic, renewable resources. It contains no petroleum, but can be blended at any level with petroleum diesel to create a biodiesel blend. Biodiesel is simple to use, biodegradable, nontoxic, and essentially free of sulfur and aromatics. Biodiesel exhaust has a less harmful impact on human health than petroleum diesel fuel. Biodiesel has demonstrated significant environmental benefits with a minimum increase in cost for the City's fleet maintenance program. The City has switched all of its diesel trucks to run on biodiesel and fills tires of municipal vehicles with nitrogen to keep them inflated

longer and improve gas mileage.

Incandescent traffic signals have been replaced by LED lights, which operate using considerably less energy. LED traffic lights cost more to install, but save energy and money. Some lights in city buildings have been changed to compact fluorescent bulbs and remaining incandescent bulbs will be replaced as they burn out. During City Hall renovations energy-saving windows and heating and air conditional systems replaced old systems. City Hall now features "smart" electric panels to regulate lights, water conservation features in restrooms, a low-energy elevator system and energy efficient boiler. All these changes helped the 100 year old City Hall building receive LEED Certification in 2008. LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council which is a non-profit membership organization whose vision is a sustainable built environment within a generation. View the City Hall LEED Certified Project profile here [City Hall Profile](#)

Help University City improve water quality by managing storm water on your property with a Rain Barrel. Visit the River des Peres Watershed Coalition website to find out how to purchase a rain barrel <http://www.thegreencenter.org/rdp/> and to find out more about Rain barrel workshops. Due to local weather conditions, rain barrels are disconnected during the late fall and winter months and re-connected for the spring season.

Check out the resources below for sustainability and energy efficiency programs:

AmerenUE Energy Assistance Programs - [Ameren Energy Efficiency Programs](#)

Missouri Department of Natural Resources information for [Home Energy Audits](#)

Check out [St. Louis Green](#) for green tips and everything green in the St. Louis Region

Download the guide and learn more about how to save money and energy - [Energy Savers Guide](#) or visit the Department of Energy website for tips at [Energy Savers](#)

The National Building Museum launched the [Intelligent Cities Initiative](#) that explores urban design.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and Ameren have partnered and created a Wildlife over Wires (WOW) program that encourages property owners to manage land for wildlife habitat where Ameren easements are located under transmission lines. If your land qualifies, MDC will provide technical counsel and Ameren will reimburse property owners to help reduce costs of land maintenance. Please contact Jennifer Porcelli at 636-441-4554 or [jennifer.porcelli@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:jennifer.porcelli@mdc.mo.gov) for additional information. Visit the [MDC website](#) for information on local conservation projects.

The Sierra Club has been working to protect communities, wild places and the planet. Visit their [website](#)

Information on the Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAA) - [Home Weatherization Program](#)

The City is also working closely with St. Louis County's Community Action Agency (CAA) to bring green to the existing neighbors through home weatherization. CAA hosted a town hall meeting for residents in the Sutter Heights neighborhood. The meeting provided residents with information on the home weatherization program and how simple improvements, such as

insulation, new water heaters and furnaces, repairs to windows and exterior doors, new refrigerators and replacing all light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulb (CFLs) will drastically reduce the energy use in the home. The City would like to "green" the entire neighborhood and demonstrate to U Citians how they can green the earth and their pocket books. Not only will these measures help save the planet, it will add much needed "green" to your wallet. If a family meets the federal income requirements, CAA will make some or all of the improvements to the home at no cost! Visit their [website](#) for more information on the Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAA) - Home Weatherization Program.

Permeable Paved Municipal Parking Lot - The municipal parking lot #5 located near the Post Office (west Loop) has been re-opened for use. The project was completed in June 2009 and total cost was around \$130,000 which included not only the new permeable pavers, but sidewalk, curb, entrances, demolition of the old brick wall and installing a new decorative fence. The project was financed by the Economic Development Fund. Although the permeable pavers are more expensive to install on the front end than asphalt, the pavers will pay for themselves over time because of the 25 year lifespan, low maintenance costs and reduction in costs to MSD for impervious surfaces. The new pavers are also more ecologically sound. By reducing the amount of storm water runoff entering our natural waterways, permeable pavers help protect the quality of our water from contaminants and pollutants. And with less runoff comes less flooding, which in turn helps reduce the rate of erosion on river banks and stream beds. Creating natural filtration and groundwater recharge helps keep our ecological system intact. In fact, research has proved that permeable pavements can reduce pollutants found in surface runoff, like sediments, pesticides, chemicals, and heavy metals, an average of 60-80%. The next parking lot to be refurbished with a permeable surface is the Tivoli lot (located in the Delmar Loop) which is scheduled for completion during 2013.

[Bring Conservation Home](#) is a private lands habitat restoration assistance and certification program, coordinated by the St. Louis Audubon Society. It addresses native and invasive plants, water conservation and wildlife stewardship for the benefit of birds, wildlife and people.

For a small fee, trained habitat advisors visit private landscapes, perform an assessment and consultation, and provide a written report with a menu of recommendations on how to improve the landscape. When the owners achieve certain levels of conservation on their lands, they will earn one of three levels of certifications. The program is focused initially on residential landscapes, but will eventually include religious organizations, school, and commercial properties.

**We Encourage Everyone To Use Reusable Water/Drink Containers.** You can keep tons of individual water bottles from crowding up landfills and even save on the energy that would be used to recycle them by using reusable drink containers. Keep an eco-friendly drinking container or bottle that can be refilled and re-used. If you are planning a small meeting or training, offer an eco-friendly drinking container or provide glassware instead.

**Recycle at Work and Home.** Did you know you can recycle at your desk? Place unsoiled paper, drink containers, magazines, cardboard, etc, right into your recycling container. It can all be mixed together as long as it is not soiled with food. Almost 90 percent of the waste generated at work can be recycled. Help preserve the environment, do your part, and recycle! If you need a recycling container contact the Public Works and Parks Department at 314-505-8560.

**Recycle your used CFL bulbs** by depositing them in the CFL container at City Hall on the 3rd Floor (Public Works and Parks Department or at Centennial Commons). Specially marked CFL bulb containers were provided by AmerenUE as a part of their UE Efficiency program. Please, no florescent tubes.

**Recycle your used mobile/cell phone, rechargeable and non-rechargeable batteries** in specially marked recycle containers at City Hall on the 3rd Floor or at Centennial Commons. We recycle Nickel Cadmium (Ni-Cd), Nickel Metal Hydride (Ni-MH), Lithium Ion (Li-ion), Nickel Zinc (Ni-Zn) and Small Sealed Lead (Pb) weighing less than 11 lbs./5kg.

\*Inevitably, in going about our daily lives--commuting, sheltering our families, eating--each of us contributes to the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change. Yet, there are many things each of us, as individuals, can do to reduce our carbon emissions. The choices we make for our homes, travel, the food we eat, and what we buy and throw away all influence our carbon footprint and, chosen wisely, can help ensure a stable climate for future generations. You can live more sustainably by reduction your carbon footprint. Small actions can make big contributions toward reductions. Here are a variety of ways you can reduce your carbon footprint today:

**Unplug appliances.** Plugged in appliances still use energy. Consider using a power strip for devices so you can easily unplug them all at night or before you leave for the day.

**Shut down your computer when it's not in use.** Whether it's a laptop or a desktop, you'll use much less energy by not keeping your computer running and/or having to charge it so often.

**Lower the brightness of your computer screen.** Most people keep their computer screen at the maximum level of brightness, though it's not necessary and uses much more energy.

**Use the top shelf of the oven.** The top shelf cooks food faster so it's less time you'll have to wait and less time the oven has to be in use.

**Use CFL or LED bulbs.** Compact fluorescent lamp bulbs use 80% less electricity than regular ones and last 15 times longer. If everyone switched to CFL or LED bulbs, our collective energy demands would plummet.

**Use cold water.** A lot of energy is required to heat water, so when it comes to doing laundry, consider whether or not you really need to wash something in hot water.

**Shop local.** From clothes and accessories to fruits and vegetables, imported products involve the use of great amounts of energy. Aside from saving energy, buying local goods would help support local businesses.

**Shop with a reusable bag.** They're eco-friendly, they don't break and they won't wear out your hands. Plus, some stores give you a discount for using them!

**Donate or recycle your old clothes.** Rather than throwing out clothing you're ready to part with, donating it or creating something new from it saves the energy and resources that are used to create new clothes.

**Get creative with your recycling.** If you have something you're about to toss – consider looking up its reuses before deeming it useless.

**Carry less in your vehicle.** For any extra weight your vehicle has to carry, whether it is unpacked items hanging out in the trunk or a bike rack, it has to work that much harder which requires more gas. So remove the bike rack or unpack the trunk because it could end up saving you some money at the pump.

**Walk, bike, carpool or take public transit.** Drive less. Take public transit, walk, bike or car pool.

*\*Stephanie Bernstein is the Founder and CEO of [To-Go Ware](#)*