



In January 2015, the latest version of the management plan – The Columbus Green Community Plan: Green Memo III – was released after a year of development. The plan contains both specific actions to maintain current environmental efforts and steps to develop new environmental protection initiatives in the next five years. Goals have been created across 9 environmental areas: 1) climate change, 2) energy, 3) transportation, 4) water, 5) air quality, 6) waste management, 7) parks and recreation, 8) environmental justice, and 9) social equity. The plan was developed through the formation of implementation groups, identification of organizational stakeholders to develop action initiatives, and the assignment of a “liaison” to track and report implementation progress to the city administration. The link to the Green Memo III:

http://columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Programs/Get_Green/Survey/The%20Columbus%20Green%20Community%20Plan%20FINAL.pdf

General Project Description

Comprehensive Description

The City of Columbus, OH, is the 15th largest city in the United States, with a population of approximately 822,000 persons. Located in the geographic center of the state, Columbus is the state capital and the region is home to 15 Fortune 1000 and five Fortune 500 companies. Unlike many major U.S. cities, Columbus continues to grow in population, and is one of the fastest growing large cities in the nation. Columbus is also the home of the nation's largest university campus, The Ohio State University.

The city area is 212 square miles, which contains 2.3 square miles of water, including the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers. A number of smaller tributaries run through the metro area, including Alum Creek, Darby Creek and Big Walnut Creek. The city is also home to several thousand parks and recreation areas, including the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, located just 10 minutes from downtown, where thousands of birds migrating from Central and South America rest as a stop-over in their long journeys.

To protect its natural resources and the health of its plants, animals and residents, the city has created an innovative, comprehensive environmental management plan. The *Columbus Green Community Plan* has achieved significant results in reducing impacts to the environment and promoting environmentally sustainable practices. The plan and associated work uses City staff – working together with community volunteers – to create policy, program and infrastructure initiatives across a wide range of environmental areas.

Each initiative has resulted in significant, measureable improvement. Since 2012, these “green” successes have included:

- City purchase of electric cars and establishment of car charging stations
- City construction of compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling stations
- Launching of free bi-weekly recycling services to Columbus households
- Launching of community car and bike sharing programs
- Downtown dam removal and river restoration resulting in 33 acres of new greenspace
- Installation of the state's largest solar project of its kind on the City's fleet maintenance facility
- Conversion of all city busses to CNG and launching of free downtown circulator bus service
- 10,000 Columbus area residents becoming environmental ambassadors through sign-up in the city **GreenSpot** Program.
- The initiation of an annual Earth Day drug drop-off event at Columbus Public Health collecting over 400 pounds of expired and unwanted medicines, removing them from the waste stream and ultimately protecting community waterways.

Initiatives are identified and developed through a collaborative planning process using paid city staff and

individuals or businesses)in their daily lives to improve the environment. This most visible piece of this educational arm is the web-based **GreerSpot** Program, which currently has over 11,000 registered members. The opportunity to become an active member of the “Green Team” or a registered **GreerSpot** member has helped to expand the sense of environmental stewardship to far more people than would normally occur in a more traditional process limited to only city staff.

Project Motivation

Initial motivation for developing the *Green Community Plan* came in 2004, when 10 Central Ohio political jurisdictions banded together and established an accord to protect the Big Darby Creek watershed system, which was threatened by development. The Big Darby watershed, located southwest of Columbus, is recognized as a high quality ecosystem and much of the river is recognized as a state and national scenic river. In a canoe trip along the creek, Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman was inspired by the beauty of this natural resource and decided to establish a comprehensive environmental management plan

Innovation Sustainability and Partnerships

The most recent version of the *Green Community Plan* included new work that's not been part of past environmental planning efforts. The current plan was developed as part of a process that also included creation of a broader community vision and value statements:

Vision: Columbus- A green community: Beautiful. Healthy. Prosperous.

Values

Foster healthy, safe and vibrant living

Ensure equity, inclusion and access to community resources for all residents

Increase employment opportunities that generate earnings sufficient for living

These broader building blocks helped to engage participants by placing their environmental work within a larger context. They enable Columbus residents to see that the city's environmental efforts are linked to broader community desires. The vision and values also help ensure that the

Superior Practices

valuable, given the large number (50+ persons) who often participated in committee sessions. Clear direction to committee members regarding expected work and work processes was critical in enabling them to do significant work in limited available time. In the smaller workgroup sessions (6-10 persons) the facilitator was extremely valuable in effectively guiding discussion, summarizing workgroup input and identifying future work needs.

Organization's Financial Commitment

Overall coordination of the Columbus Green Community Plan rests with the Office of Environmental Stewardship. Housed in the mayor's office, it contains the city's Environmental Steward, two other full-time staff, and five office interns

In addition, 19 other staff is appointed by department directors as Green Coordinators to 1) serve as liaisons to the Office of Environmental Stewardship, 2) actively participate on the mayor's volunteer Green Team, 3) ensure internal initiatives developed in the Green Community Plan are being carried out, and 4) oversee other environmental activities in their own respective departments. Offices / Departments appointing Green Team Coordinators include:

Civil Service	Human Resources	Public Service	Building & Zoning Services
Public Utilities	Public Safety	Public Health	Community Relations
Development	City Council	Recreation & Parks	Finance & Management
Technology			

Green Coordinators assist the Office of Environmental Stewardship and its volunteer Green Team as part of their normal department responsibilities. Their positions are not funded via grants or outside sources.

Sustainability

Embedding Green Coordinators across 13 city offices and departments – and the fact that these positions are not funded via grants or outside sources – helps ensure long-term continuity (sustainability) in the environmental planning process. It also provides for a ready-made work force that can assist with the development, implementation and management activities associated with the environmental actions. And, because many of the Green Coordinators are staff with significant city tenure, they're often a source of valuable institutional knowledge regarding city processes and community stakeholders needed to implement recommended actions.

Transferability to Other Users

The Green Team planning model can easily be replicated by other governments. All cities have residents passionate about protecting the environment who would gladly be tapped as volunteer advisors. City staff already working in applicable departments (i.e., Public Utilities, Parks and Recreation, Forestry, Public Service, etc.) could be selected to work with them in development of environmental policies, initiatives and programs.

The Green Team model has also produced a number of examples where project activities or results are being shared by others. One Green Team project, formally administered by the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, is now being coordinated by a local bike advocacy organization, whose executive director is Green Team member. The *Pedal Instead* program was initially created by the Green Team in 2007 to encourage more people to reduce their driving by making shorter trips by bicycle. Members recognized that a significant barrier to this goal, however, was the lack of supervised / secure bicycle parking facilities.

In response, *Pedal Instead* was created to provide residents with free, secure, valet-style bicycle parking at public events –

Funding Sources

The Columbus Green Community Plan is directed from the Mayor's Office of Environmental Stewardship, which is financed through a combination of general fund, enterprise dollars and grants. The Mayor's

budget is \$120,000,000 in 2015, \$125,000,000 in 2016, \$130,000,000 in 2017, \$135,000,000 in 2018, \$140,000,000 in 2019, \$145,000,000 in 2020, \$150,000,000 in 2021, \$155,000,000 in 2022, \$160,000,000 in 2023, \$165,000,000 in 2024, \$170,000,000 in 2025, \$175,000,000 in 2026, \$180,000,000 in 2027, \$185,000,000 in 2028, \$190,000,000 in 2029, \$195,000,000 in 2030, \$200,000,000 in 2031, \$205,000,000 in 2032, \$210,000,000 in 2033, \$215,000,000 in 2034, \$220,000,000 in 2035, \$225,000,000 in 2036, \$230,000,000 in 2037, \$235,000,000 in 2038, \$240,000,000 in 2039, \$245,000,000 in 2040, \$250,000,000 in 2041, \$255,000,000 in 2042, \$260,000,000 in 2043, \$265,000,000 in 2044, \$270,000,000 in 2045, \$275,000,000 in 2046, \$280,000,000 in 2047, \$285,000,000 in 2048, \$290,000,000 in 2049, \$295,000,000 in 2050, \$300,000,000 in 2051, \$305,000,000 in 2052, \$310,000,000 in 2053, \$315,000,000 in 2054, \$320,000,000 in 2055, \$325,000,000 in 2056, \$330,000,000 in 2057, \$335,000,000 in 2058, \$340,000,000 in 2059, \$345,000,000 in 2060, \$350,000,000 in 2061, \$355,000,000 in 2062, \$360,000,000 in 2063, \$365,000,000 in 2064, \$370,000,000 in 2065, \$375,000,000 in 2066, \$380,000,000 in 2067, \$385,000,000 in 2068, \$390,000,000 in 2069, \$395,000,000 in 2070, \$400,000,000 in 2071, \$405,000,000 in 2072, \$410,000,000 in 2073, \$415,000,000 in 2074, \$420,000,000 in 2075, \$425,000,000 in 2076, \$430,000,000 in 2077, \$435,000,000 in 2078, \$440,000,000 in 2079, \$445,000,000 in 2080, \$450,000,000 in 2081, \$455,000,000 in 2082, \$460,000,000 in 2083, \$465,000,000 in 2084, \$470,000,000 in 2085, \$475,000,000 in 2086, \$480,000,000 in 2087, \$485,000,000 in 2088, \$490,000,000 in 2089, \$495,000,000 in 2090, \$500,000,000 in 2091, \$505,000,000 in 2092, \$510,000,000 in 2093, \$515,000,000 in 2094, \$520,000,000 in 2095, \$525,000,000 in 2096, \$530,000,000 in 2097, \$535,000,000 in 2098, \$540,000,000 in 2099, \$545,000,000 in 2100.

Other Details: Environmental, Economic and Operational Benefits

The Columbus Green Community Plan has resulted in significant operational and environmental benefits for the City of Columbus and its residents. These benefits have been realized through 1) protecting environmental resources or reducing environmental contaminants, 2) implementing city operational and maintenance improvements, and 3) saving significant tax dollars. Notable highlights include:

I. Volunteer Engagement