



# 2008 EVALUATION FORM

**Municipality: Columbia, Missouri**

**Population Category: 50,001 – 100,000**

**Bloom Rating: 4**

*The municipality will be judged based on efforts in management, planning, maintenance, improvement, and innovation of the following:*

Yellow fields are automatically calculated – please do not type in them. To update a field, put the cursor in the cell and press F9. To update calculations in the entire document, press CTRL-A, then press F9.)

Category	Points	Possible points
1. Tidiness effort	113	125
2. Environmental Effort	113	125
3. Community Involvement	119	125
4. Heritage	110	125
5. Urban Forestry	105.5	125
6. Landscaped Areas	110	125
7. Floral Display	107	125
8. Turf and Ground Cover Areas	109	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>886.5</b>	<b>1000</b>
%	88.7%	
Bloom rating	<b>4</b>	

**Municipality’s representatives met:**

Leigh Britt - Volunteer Coordinator

Brett O’Brien –Natural Resources Supervisor

Judges’ signatures: Matthew S. Rosen, Julie Riley

Visiting date: June 23 – 24, 2008

*All judging criteria will be adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the municipality. Some criteria may not be applicable.*

## General Comments and Suggestions:

The judges thank Volunteer Coordinator Leigh Britt, Park Supervisor Brett O'Brien and all of those with whom they had the pleasure of interacting for their hospitality, candor and enthusiasm. Indeed, enthusiasm and excitement are two very appropriate words for the attitude exhibited by all those with whom the judges had the opportunity to interact. From City Council members to neighborhood leaders, staff to volunteers everybody with whom the judges met was enthusiastic and excited about Columbia's entry into America in Bloom and proud to show off their community.

Located roughly halfway between St Louis and Kansas City, Columbia is the home of the University of Missouri. A progressive, forward thinking community, Columbia strives to create an environment where all sectors of the community interact in a ostensibly seamless manner. Towards this end, the city seeks to preserve its past while steadily moving towards a future that provides an opportunity for healthier lifestyles and environmentally sensitive practices and policies. In the judges view, it would appear that long time Mayor, the Honorable Darwin Hindman and City Council have provided unwavering leadership in this regard.

The judges commend Leigh Britt for the slide show presented at the initial get-together. In a concise, snapshot form, it provided a great pictorial outline of the up-coming tour of the community whetting the judges' appetite for what lay ahead.

*Because time in a city is always limited, the judges suggest that the City consider holding an Environmental Fair during the evaluation period. If all groups and organizations whose mission falls under one of the eight criteria are invited, the judges are able to circulate from booth to booth interacting with a maximum number of agencies in a minimum amount of time. If the public were invited, the event serves an educational public forum. A very real secondary benefit involves the networking that takes place between the staff and volunteers that are working in the booths of the various participating agencies and organizations.*

Along the same lines, the working breakfast that was scheduled with Park staff and dinner with the Forestry staff from both the Public Works and Park Department were a great use of time because they provided the judges the opportunity to learn and interact with all key people in a focused environment.

*The judges recommend that the City or the America in Bloom Committee consider producing a document annually that discusses the successes that occur each year as a result of its participation in America in Bloom. Such a document would be useful in educating all sectors of the community of the progress that has been made over the course of the year. The document might well be either a stand alone issue or included as a component of one of the City's newsletters.*

Kudos to all involved in the publication of the America in Bloom community profile book. In the judges view it is visually stunning and chockfull of information about the accomplishments under each of the eight criteria. *The judges recommend that the publication be placed in areas like the information desk at City Hall, Library or other locations where it is available to the public. With an eye towards improving the America in Bloom supportive information document, the judges suggest that either a table of contents be added or the different criteria be tabbed.*

*Suggestions are indicated in italics.*

**Coordinator's Signature: Matthew S. Rosen**

<b>1. Tidiness Effort</b> Green spaces, medians and boulevard strips, streets, sidewalks, curbs, ditches, road shoulders, signage (in good repair, sufficient, etc.), scrap yards, unattended and vacant lots, buildings, garbage receptacles and disposal, lack of weeds and noxious weeds, litter, dog fouling, notices/posters, graffiti, vandalism, general maintenance of the hardscape (such as lamp posts, benches, etc.).	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Actual Score
<b><i>Municipal Sector</i></b>					
Tidiness, order and cleanliness	11	15	19	23	20
Maintenance of public roads and shoulders	12	15	18	21	19
Condition of buildings	5	7	9	11	10
Volunteer efforts	2	4	6	8	7.75
<b><i>Commercial Sector</i></b>					
Tidiness, order and cleanliness	9	12	15	18	16.25
Condition of buildings	7	9	11	13	12
<b><i>Private properties/Citizens</i></b>					
Tidiness, order and cleanliness	9	12	15	18	16
Condition of buildings	7	9	11	13	12
<b><i>Total</i></b>					<b>113</b>
<b><i>POSSIBLE POINTS (Adjust field if point splitting is necessary)</i></b>					<b>125</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

Columbia is a tidy city. The judges observed very little litter or graffiti. The City's Public Works Department has staff assigned to pick up litter and has prioritized streets where trash would be highly visible. Parks & Recreation has assigned staff responsible for keeping the City's Parks clean. Public offenders sentenced to community service are also given trash pick-up detail. Public Works has a fleet of street sweepers that appear to do a good job.

The City's medians are free of weeds, thanks in part to a successful Adopt-A-Spot program. Adopt-A-Spot is really two programs, a beautification program managed by the City's Volunteer Services and a litter clean-up program handled by Public Works. Volunteers in both Adopt-A-Spot beautification and Adopt-A-Spot litter control receive recognition for their efforts with signage. Both programs have good participation.

Columbia hosts a spring 'Cleanup Columbia' day that draws volunteers of all ages. More than 100 groups and 1,200 volunteers are reported to participate in picking up trash on this day annually.

The downtown Special Business District receives additional attention to keep sidewalks and areas around dumpsters and trash cans tidy. Many of the building exteriors in downtown Columbia have been renovated since a concrete canopy that obscured many of the store fronts was removed. Before/after photos shared by consultant Deb Sheals and Carrie Gartner, with the Downtown Columbia Association, showed what a substantial change has occurred. *In keeping*

*with this facelift, hopefully repair of the City's sidewalks in the district is something the Community Development Commission can address.*

The City's comprehensive sign ordinance requires that signs be smaller in scale and fewer in number in the Special Business District. This is an excellent idea.

Columbia's graffiti removal program is only a year old. It was originally initiated by Karis Community Church and is managed through the Office of Volunteer Services. The multi-faceted plan of action involves Park Ranger patrols working in collaboration with the City's Police Department, mobile hidden cameras and the offenders themselves who, when arrested, are assigned to graffiti removal community service. Another innovative solution to the graffiti problem, offered by the Office of Cultural Affairs, was to reclaim typical targets. A highly visible traffic box at 9<sup>th</sup> & Broadway was painted by an artist and no longer provides a canvas for graffiti vandals.

*At 10<sup>th</sup> & Broadway there is a blank wall on a building that's just crying out for a mural. Such a mural could depict something important to Columbia's history. Perhaps the C.A.R.E. Gallery (Columbia's Art Related Experience), coordinated by the City's Parks and Recreation Department could be involved in some way.*

The America in Bloom (AIB) judges did not observe very many vacant lots or unkempt buildings. Columbia has a number of ordinances and programs to help keep neighborhood housing up-to-code. Columbia's Neighborhood Response Team (NRT), made up of personnel from the City Health Department, Police Department and other departments, handles complaints on buildings and properties that are in disrepair or derelict. The judges were shown examples of properties brought into compliance through the help of the Neighborhood Response Team.

Unsafe buildings can be condemned and demolished but Columbia has many programs to assist property owners. These include a Code Deficiency Abatement Program, an Emergency Home Repair Program, and Owner-Occupied Housing and Rental Rehabilitation Programs. The HUD Community Development Block Grant and HOME programs also provide funds to help low-income property owners make necessary improvements to their homes. The City's Community Development Division produces an excellent newsletter called 'The Front Yard' which helps residents sort out all of the above programs. They've also drafted a 'Citizen Participation Plan'.

Dog waste stations with 'mutt mitts' are currently available at 19 locations. The Twin Lakes Recreation Area has been adopted by one of the dog clubs. *Perhaps Columbia's neighborhood associations could be convinced to purchase stations for their neighborhoods and help service stations already in place.*

Public art adds to Columbia's 'pride of place'. Twenty-four pieces of publicly accessible art are listed in the Convention and Visitors Bureau Self-guided Tour of Selected Works. The City's 'Percent for Art' program will continue to make residents proud to live in Columbia.

In addition to those above, the judges offer the following two suggestions:

*1. Convince business owners to adopt a 'beautiful backside pride' policy to promote back alleys and rears of buildings to be as clean, painted and kept up as the fronts. Perhaps Businesses United for a Cleaner Columbia would be interested in launching this campaign.*

2. Work with schools on a program to decorate trash receptacles that are used in the park system. Place receptacles in the parks closest to the schools in which they were decorated. The University of Missouri might have a group or class that would be interested in doing the same thing on campus.



Dog owners are lucky that the City provides dog waste stations in Stephens Lake Park.



Businesses United for a Cleaner Columbia provides blue recycling receptacles in the downtown area.

**TIDINESS EFFORT TOTAL: 113 /125**

<b>2. Environmental Effort</b> Sustainable development: Policies and by-laws, waste reduction, sanitary landfill, hazardous waste collection (oil, paint, chemicals, used batteries, etc), sewage disposal, transfer/recycle stations, recycling (paper, glass, metal, plastic, electronics, etc), composting, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), water source and conservation, naturalization, air quality issues, environmental clean up activities, controlled burns, environmentally friendly transportation.	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Actual Score
<b>Municipal Sector</b>					
Environmental services (waste handling, water treatment, air, etc.)	7	11	15	19	16
Incentive programs, training and information programs	7	9	11	13	11.5
Integrated pest management - timing, policy, by-laws	8	10	12	14	13
New programs - improvement and innovation	6	7	8	9	8.5
<b>Commercial Sector</b>					
Participation in the environmental effort	8	11	14	17	15
New programs - improvement and innovation	8	11	14	17	15
<b>Private Properties/Citizens</b>					
Participation in the environmental effort	9	12	15	18	17
Support/direction to municipality	9	12	15	18	17
<b>Total (the field automatically calculates – do not type in it)</b>					<b>113</b>
<b>POSSIBLE POINTS (Adjust field if point splitting is necessary)</b>					<b>125</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

As a community, Columbia is environmentally astute. The City has an extensive recycling program. Three former sewage treatment areas and two contaminated brownfields have been rehabilitated and turned into high-use park areas. The Columbia Sanitary Landfill is using the first bioreactor technology in Missouri. The methane it produces is converted to electricity. The City operated utility, Columbia Water & Light, buys excess electricity from customers generating solar power.

Columbia's population is young and the City has many progressive programs. Mayor Hindman and the City Council have endorsed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in which cities strive to meet or exceed the Kyoto Protocol greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Columbia's Ordinances require stormwater management plans for all new and re-developments, set up stream buffer zones to protect ecosystems and provide provisions for increasing levels of renewable energy. Citizen's can choose to off-set the higher cost for solar power by signing up to have \$4 added to their monthly electric bills.

Columbia Water & Light provides free energy audits and rebates to offset the costs of purchasing more efficient air-conditioners, water heaters and photovoltaic systems. They even offer a \$2 rebate on compact fluorescent bulbs! Low-interest loans are available to make energy efficient improvements. Build a home to Energy Star rated standards and you qualify for low-interest loans and a \$1,000 rebate.

*The judges suggest a program to recognize businesses who build energy efficient buildings using standards such as those put forth by LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental*

*Design. In a city as environmentally conscience as Columbia, the judges would expect interest in building design to meet LEED standards.*

Electric customers are given free trees through a program called Tree Power which promotes energy-efficient landscaping. Someone from the utility company actually comes out to your house to help determine the best location to plant the tree to reduce heating and cooling costs—amazing! If you have a tree growing into a power line? No problem. It will be replaced for free with a shorter growing ornamental tree.

The City's web site is an excellent source of educational information on environmental topics. Information is available on energy conservation for both homeowners and renters. The site on hazardous waste disposal includes information from reconditioning paint thinner to the proper disposal of pharmaceuticals. There is even a page on xeriscaping. Columbia receives 40 inches of rain annually, but the City encourages xeriscaping to extend the useful life of the City's water supply.

Columbia offers excellent reduce, reuse and recycle options. The Solid Waste Division weekly collects trash, recycling and yard waste. They also offer many innovative recycling programs. Beverage containers can be recycled at convenience stores. Apartment complexes have designated recycling days. Roll carts or dumpsters are provided to businesses that choose to recycle. The City's web site provides a long list of how to dispose of just about everything so that it can be recycled or reused. This includes electronic waste, appliances, eyeglasses and egg cartons. Volunteers working with the City's Public Works Department have a 'Use Less Stuff' campaign each year between Thanksgiving and New Years Day.

However, with such a wonderful recycling program, the judges were a bit perplexed about the blue bags given to residents for their recyclables. Even though recyclables are sorted by hand at the City's Material Recovery Facility, it seemed that the blue plastic bags were a problem. *The judges recommend the City consider other options for non-yard waste recyclables, such as recycle bins, even though this would mean the demise of the Mr. Blue Bag-It recycling mascot.*

Close to the City's landfill is its composting operation where, in addition to leaves, grass clippings, brush and drywall, 32 tons of wiener casings from Kraft Foods are composted each week. Bulk compost is available for sale and the City is looking into bagging its product.

*The judges recommend the City check with Edmonton, Canada, to see how their food composting program is working and also check into the feasibility of recycling waste vegetable oil which can be utilized to produce animal feed.*

The City offers encourages residents to do their own composting and offers classes at its demonstration area next to the Capen Park yard waste drop-off site. Shingles are ground and used in road construction. This keeps them out of the landfill.

Students at the University of Missouri (MU) have formed 'Sustain Mizzou', a non-profit association, which promotes a sustainable way of life. *Mizzou Botanical Garden might wish to develop a sustainability policy for its operations. This trend has been growing with other botanical gardens.*

Two innovative projects MU students have taken on include 'Tailgate Recycling' that encourages recycling of cans/bottles at home football games and 'Tiger Treasures' a

community rummage sale which provides for reuse of items no longer needed by students moving out of dorms, sororities and fraternities.

The City hosts numerous events with an environmental theme, 'America Recycles', 'Compost Awareness Week', 'Earth Day Festival', 'Hinkson Creek Clean Sweep' and 'Stream Extravaganza', which is part of the 'Twilight Festival' held at Flat Branch Park.

CARP, Columbia Aquatic Restoration Project, is a new program in which volunteers assist with aquatic plant management for the growing number of lakes, streams, and rain gardens in City parks. The City's rain gardens serve as good demonstration sites. *The judges feel interpretive signage would help to interest more homeowners in building rain gardens. Another idea for CARP volunteers would be to evaluate the performance of rain garden plant materials and develop a list of recommended species. Since the City provides educational programs to residents, a tour of rain gardens and sites that use water conservation features such as rain barrels and permeable concrete driveways and sidewalks would also be of interest to homeowners.*

The Hinkson Creek Watershed Restoration Project has a good web site which the 'Show-Me-Healthy Yards & Neighborhoods' yard-of-merit signs direct people to, but from the web site it is not clear who manages the site. The information on low impact development (LID) links to non-Columbia sites. *It would be great to include local examples on the Hinkson Creek Watershed Restoration Project web site. The City's web site on xeriscaping includes an example of xeriscape landscaping at Twin Lakes Recreation Area.*

The City's water was recently found to contain higher than acceptable levels of trihalomethanes, a by-product that occurs when chlorine breaks down organic matter in water. Columbia Water & Light is working with the University of Missouri and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to correct the problem.

Columbia is commended for its special interest in non-motorized transportation. Inserting the three words 'Darwin Hindman bicycle' into Google's search engine brought up nearly 150 hits. The Mayor's Challenge: Bike, Walk & Wheel Week had more than 3,000 participants last year. The City has received \$22 million in funds from the Federal Highway Administration's Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot program. The project has been named 'GetAbout Columbia' and will help establish national standards for public awareness and willingness to use active modes of transportation. The judges feel the printed materials developed to inspire residents to walk and bike are marvelous.

The PedNet Coalition, a group of individuals, businesses and non-profits, has developed a 20 year master plan to link subdivisions, business parks, schools, and downtown with a network of trails and 'Pedways' which will enable pedestrians and those using non-motorized transportation to travel anywhere in the City that they need to go. The judges wish the group success in their endeavors.



Educational signage along the trail in Grindstone Nature Area makes hiking and biking more enjoyable.

**ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT TOTAL: 113/125**

<b>3. Community Involvement</b> Citizen's involvement in projects for the betterment and enjoyment of the entire community; AIB committee, horticulture/garden clubs, 4-H, school children, seniors, service groups, etc.; volunteers involved in long and short term projects & recreational programs (e.g., Family Day, Clean-Up Day, etc.).	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Actual Score
<b><i>Municipal Sector</i></b>					
Support for volunteer activities	13	17	21	25	24.5
Information and education programs	9	12	15	18	17.5
Improvement and innovation	6	8	10	12	11.5
<b><i>Commercial Sector</i></b>					
Involvement in community	5	10	15	20	17.5
Sponsorship of programs/activities	3	7	11	15	14.5
<b><i>Private Properties/Citizens</i></b>					
Involvement in community	5	10	15	20	19.5
Service groups/society sponsorships	3	7	11	15	14
<b><i>Total (the field automatically calculates – do not type in it)</i></b>					<b>119</b>
<b><i>POSSIBLE POINTS (Adjust field if point splitting is necessary)</i></b>					<b>125</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

As the score indicates, the City of Columbia, Missouri rates exceptionally high in the area of community involvement. This is, in part, because of the recognition that the City has when it comes to seeking public input and providing mechanisms for both the corporate and citizen sectors to get involved in any number of projects. Volunteer Coordinator Leigh Britt heads a standalone Department that works closely with other City Departments on a broad range of programs and initiatives. During their tour the judges were impressed with the attitude of Waste Minimization Supervisor, Layli Terrill towards the value that volunteers like Dr. Death play in the operation of the Public Works Department. Indeed, the City encourages all sorts of volunteer opportunities. For example the CARP program features a three night class on aquatic management. After taking the class participants are expected to donate 18 hours of time working with City staff on projects like the planting of the shoreline around Stephens Lake. All sorts of appropriate recognition programs are in place to recognize volunteers and a City Newsletter facilitates communication.

*The judges offer the following suggestions:*

- 1. The judges believe that there is an opportunity for the Park and Recreation Department to work closer with volunteers when it comes to the planting and maintenance of annual flower beds. In cities like Des Moines, Iowa, for example, volunteers play a key role in the transplanting of annual seedlings.*
- 2. The judges suggest that the City explore the possibility of establishing a program where youth volunteer their time picking up litter and in return earn credits that are applicable towards recreation programs. The City of Lafayette, Indiana has done this*

very effectively. The name of the program is Workreation.

3. The judges suggest that the City explore the possibility of having community sentencing individuals work off their time assisting various City Departments in menial tasks that sometime are not done on a timely basis because of labor shortages.
4. Funded in part from a grant from Wal-Mart, teens and police in Fayetteville, Arkansas have teamed together to remove graffiti. It seems to the judges that a similar program might be started in Columbia.
5. Stephens Lake would be an ideal location to hold a Children's Fishing Derby. Since they sponsor a highly successful similar event in Des Moines, Iowa, HyVee Food Stores might well consider sponsoring a similar event in Columbia.



Retired chemistry professor Ed Kaiser, lovingly known as Dr. Death, is a committed volunteer at the City's hazardous waste collection facility.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TOTAL: 119/125**

<b>4. Heritage</b> Museums, archives, history books & interpretative programs; policies & by-laws; resource availability; preservation & restoration of buildings, homes, churches, cemeteries; heritage sites and/or monuments; heritage parks, gardens & trees; artifacts; historical society; heritage advisory committee, etc.	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Actual Score
<b><i>Municipal Sector</i></b>					
Preservation and restoration programs	10	15	20	25	22
Information programs	7	11	15	19	16
New programs and incentives	5	8	11	14	12
<b><i>Commercial Sector</i></b>					
Conservation and restoration of properties	5	9	13	17	16
Participation in heritage activities	3	5	7	9	7.5
New programs, innovative ideas	2	4	6	8	6.5
<b><i>Private Properties/Citizens</i></b>					
Preservation and restoration of private properties	9	12	15	18	16
Participation in community projects and programs	9	11	13	15	14
<b><i>Total (the field automatically calculates – do not type in it. Put cursor in cell and press F9 to recalculate)</i></b>					<b>110</b>
<b><i>POSSIBLE POINTS (Adjust field if point splitting is necessary)</i></b>					<b>125</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

Columbia is proud of its heritage. In a number of ways, the City sought to preserve its past while moving forward into the future. Since 1998 when it was established, the Historic Preservation Commission has worked steadily to assist owners of historic properties, create and update an inventory of architecturally significant structures. The program by which 10 “Most Notable” properties are added each year speaks to both the effectiveness of the Commission and the enthusiasm of the corporate and citizen sectors.

There are many examples of refurbishment throughout the business district. The removal of the canopy on the main street of the business district has brought new life to the area and enabled property owners to partner with the Columbia Special Business District and the City of restoring storefronts. The restoration of the Wabash Station is another high profile example. The structure now serves as the home of Columbia Transit. Although a walking tour brochure of the area exists, the *judges suggest that consideration be given to exploring the concept of a “museum of the streets” by installing various types of signage at key locations around town that graphically describe how the area looked and functioned at various points in time. Consideration might be given to designing a plaque for each of the 102 buildings on Broadway.*

*Similarly, the judges recommend that a signage system be established for each of the Historic Districts.*

From their brief tour, it was very evident that the University of Missouri is extremely proud of its heritage and has, in the judges view, done a magnificent job of preserving the architectural

integrity of its historic structures.

The judges wish to commend the efforts of the Boone County Historical Society. Both the Maplewood Home and the History Village enable local citizens and visitors alike to step back into time. The plans to move three more buildings to the site is certainly ambitious and will, because of the added interpretative opportunities add significantly to the potential enjoyment of visitors.

The judges offer the following suggestions:

- 1. As the town at History Village develops the judges suggest that the Historical Society explore whether the local utility would underwrite the cost of period streetlights that use LED illumination.*
- 2. The brick walk leading up to the Maplewood Home was in need of repair to the point where it represented a potential hazard; and thus, the judges recommend that repairs be given a high priority.*
- 3. Consideration might be given to creating a docent program that stationed docents on grounds. The docents could provide tales and other information about life during the period.*
- 4. Perhaps the Genealogical Society could assist with the accessioning of the currently uncataloged records in the doctor's office.*



Thomas Jefferson's original tombstone can be found in the Jefferson Memorial Garden at Mizzou Botanical Garden along with flowers once found growing at Monticello.

**HERITAGE TOTAL:**

110/125

<b>5. Urban Forestry</b> Written policies, by-laws & regulations, long & short term plans; distribution, variety & suitability of trees; new plantings; urban tree program; qualified personnel or access to trained individual(s); inventory or database; frequency of surveys; care & maintenance programs; preservation of heritage trees & woodlots; scheduled succession plantings.	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Actual Score
<b><i>Municipal Sector</i></b>					
Plan of action, planting program	3	5	7	9	7
Inventory, variety of species	2	4	6	8	6.5
Specifications - maintenance and planting	3	6	9	12	9.5
Naturalization, preservation of woodlots	2	4	6	8	7
Policies, regulations/by-laws	3	6	9	12	10
Qualified personnel and training	3	5	7	9	8.75
<b><i>Commercial Sector</i></b>					
Concept, design, planting	3	5	7	9	7.5
Maintenance	3	6	9	12	10
Conservation	3	5	7	9	7.25
<b><i>Private Properties/Citizens</i></b>					
Design and plantings	4	8	12	16	13
Maintenance	3	6	9	12	10.5
Community involvement in tree planting programs and conservation	3	5	7	9	8.5
<b><i>Total (the field automatically calculates – do not type in it)</i></b>					<b>105.5</b>
<b><i>POSSIBLE POINTS (Adjust field if point splitting is necessary)</i></b>					<b>125</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

The City of Columbia realizes the value of its urban forest and through an exceptionally in-depth, natural resources inventory using GIS technology is in the final stages of wrapping up a study that will provide detailed data about the location, composition, health and value of its urban forest. Once completed later this year the study will enable the City to develop more complete management plans as well as institute more detailed recordkeeping systems which are currently lacking.

The judges were impressed with the quality of the forestry personnel employed by the City. Both Lou Pfemister and Chad Herwald exhibited a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for their work. The judges, however, questioned why the forestry function was split between Public Work and Parks; *and therefore, recommend that consideration be given to studying the structure with an eye toward consolidation under one Department. The Public Works Department for example has no Forestry crew. The Forestry crew is a part of the Park & Recreation Department.*

The judges noted the success of the memorial tree planting program, *but wonder whether from*

*a maintenance standpoint it might be easier to provide maps to donors noting the location, species and memorial information rather than placing plaques on trees. Maintenance of plaques is a problem and in reality the ones most interested in the gift are those making it.*

The judges were impressed with the collection of redbuds at Stephens Lake and the general collection mindset that Chad Herwald possesses. Such thinking will, in their view, lead to an exceptionally diverse urban forest that will maximize the landscape value of the trees in the community. *Because the educational and, over time, historic value of a collection lies in the degree of documentation behind it the judges offer the following suggestions:*

- 1. Trees like those in the redbud collection be given accession numbers and baseline data like genus, species, cultivar, date of planting, and source recorded.*
- 2. For flowering species, blooming data should be recorded annually. As collections like the redbud collection grow, accurate blooming data can result in the scheduling festivals or at least publicity that will result in the attraction of tourists.*
- 3. The Horticulture program at the University of Missouri might be a potential partner. The collections after all represent teaching tools; and thus, may be of interest to faculty and students for reason ranging from plant identification to research.*

*Similarly the judges believe that consideration should be given to plant identification schemes and other types of supportive information like brochures.*

*Currently no landmark tree protection exists. The judges thus recommend that the tree ordinance be modified to incorporate protection for landmark trees.*



A good place to learn the names of trees is at the University of Missouri Mizzou Botanical Garden where prominent specimens are labeled.

<b>URBAN FORESTRY TOTAL:</b>	<b>105.5/125</b>
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<b>6. Landscaped Areas</b> Overall design & suitability for location/use; native & introduced materials; good use of design principles (i.e., balance of plant material & constructed elements, (harmony, color, texture, shape, etc.); tasteful integration of hardscapes; lighting; art elements; high standards of maintenance (no weeds, good mulching practices, clean edges); site rejuvenation & rehabilitation.	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Actual Score
<b><i>Municipal Sector</i></b>					
Plan of action, distribution through community	3	6	9	12	11
Concept and design	3	6	9	12	11
Specifications – maintenance and planting, variety of species	4	8	12	16	14
Sustainable development, naturalization and eco-design	2	4	6	8	7.5
Site rejuvenation and rehabilitation	2	4	6	8	7
Qualified personnel and training	3	5	7	9	8.5
<b><i>Commercial Sector</i></b>					
Concept, design, planting	4	6	8	10	8.5
Maintenance	4	6	8	10	8.5
Rejuvenation and rehabilitation, naturalization and eco-design	3	5	7	9	7.5
<b><i>Private Properties/Citizens</i></b>					
Design and planting	6	8	10	12	10
Maintenance	4	6	8	10	8
Involvement in development and maintenance of public areas	3	5	7	9	8.5
<b><i>Total (the field automatically calculates – do not type in it)</i></b>					<b>110</b>
<b><i>POSSIBLE POINTS (Adjust field if point splitting is necessary)</i></b>					<b>125</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

The judges were impressed with the distribution of parks and open space throughout the community. Of particular note was the degree of sustainable development and eco-design that is currently occurring. The judges saw great examples of attractive functioning rain gardens in every sector. Flat Branch Park, Shelter Gardens and Jeff Zimmerscheid’s yard are three noteworthy examples. Kudos too for the bank restorations efforts at Stephens Lake.

The Percent for Art is having a positive impact on the community and will continue to do so in the future. Since the impact is cumulative as the amount of public art grows over time the full impact of the program in terms of the cityscape probably cannot be assessed for a decade or more.

Hats off too to the University of Missouri. A campus-wide effort, the grounds of University Missouri are attractively landscaped with a diverse selection of trees, shrubs and perennials that form the surrounding framework for the architectural component of the University.

Thanks to the talents of Gloria Gaus and her staff, the grounds of Missouri Employers Mutual contain many vibrant floral displays. *In the judges view, there is, because of the slope, an*

*opportunity to create a rock garden in one of the beds off to the left of the building. In addition to an assortment of low growing perennials, the judges further believe that:*

- 1. Low growing grasses like Acorus would do well and have a positive impact on the textural look of the bed.*
- 2. In order to maximize the flowering season, the judges suggest that minor spring flowering bulbs also be planted in this bed.*

Finally, last but by no means least, five blooms to the Shelter Insurance Company for the resources that they have devoted to creating and maintaining shelter gardens. The range of different gardens, diversity of plant material, and environmentally sensitive way in which it is managed and maintained are, in the judges view, all praiseworthy.

The judges offer the following additional suggestions:

- 1. In the judges view the raised beds on 8<sup>th</sup> Street could use plant materials that grow over the edges. The inclusion of some of the ornamental cultivars of sweet potato vine or the annual Vinca would soften the overall appearance.*
- 2. The planting of large numbers of minor spring flowering bulbs at key points along the interstate system would provide splashes of color in the spring. Species like glory-of-the-snow would naturalize readily and be maintenance free.*
- 3. City should consider putting compost on all of the Adopt-a-Spot beds each year, and where feasible rototilling the material into the soil.*



The City of Columbia's composting operation produces a valuable product in 4-6 months. Weiner casings from Kraft Foods compose about half the volume of materials composted.

**LANDSCAPED AREAS TOTAL: 110/125**

<b>7. Floral Displays</b> Arrangement, originality, distribution, location, diversity, balance, harmony, high quality maintenance, flower beds, carpet bedding, containers, baskets, window boxes, good use and integration of annuals, perennials, bulbs, and ornamental grasses.	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Actual Score
<b><i>Municipal Sector</i></b>					
Plan of action, distribution through community	5	9	13	17	15
Concept and design and/or eco-design	4	8	12	16	13
Types of plantings and variety of species	7	9	11	13	11
Maintenance/quality	5	10	15	20	19
Qualified personnel and training	3	5	7	9	8.5
<b><i>Commercial Sector</i></b>					
Concept and design	2	4	6	8	6
Plantings	2	4	6	8	6.5
Maintenance	2	4	6	8	7
<b><i>Private Properties/Citizens</i></b>					
Design and plantings	2	4	6	8	6
Maintenance	3	5	7	9	7
Involvement in development and maintenance of public areas	3	5	7	9	8
<b><i>Total (the field automatically calculates – do not type in it)</i></b>					<b>107</b>
<b><i>POSSIBLE POINTS (Adjust field if point splitting is necessary)</i></b>					<b>125</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

Throughout downtown Columbia large brick containers offer a venue for floral displays. They are planted with annuals and maintained by the City’s Parks & Recreation Department. During the fall bulbs are planted for a spring display. Annuals are also used in key locations in Columbia’s Parks. In total, the City grows and plants more than 10,000 annual bedding plants yearly.

Volunteers maintain Adopt-A-Spot Beautification beds planted primarily with perennials in the right-of-ways along city streets, in front of businesses or as part of development projects. The Adopt-A-Spot program includes 89 beds. The City provides perennial plants when the beds are established, but replacement plants or plants added to the bed later are the responsibility of the adopter. A limited amount of mulch, bulbs and annuals are purchased by funds from a ‘Share the Light’ program. Columbia residents can donate to the fund through their utility bills. This is an excellent and innovative way to raise funds for beautification. Purchased mulch is available to volunteers once a year and is delivered to Adopt-A-Spot locations if the volunteer so requests. Free mulch is available from the City’s mulch program, but volunteers must be able to pick it up.

Volunteers maintain their Adopt-A-Spot throughout the season. The beds are reviewed 2-3 times/year either by City Parks & Recreation staff, Volunteer Services staff or by a volunteer group. The goal of the reviews is to maintain every bed in ‘excellent’ condition, defined as weed-free and with season-long color.

To help meet this goal, adopters receive education through annual meetings, e-mails and an excellent newsletter called *The Scoop*. According to the summer issue, about 70% of the beds that were evaluated earlier in the year were considered excellent. The beds were very weed free when the judges visited. Some of them could have benefited from more plant material.

*The bed review process seems a bit cumbersome and might appear inconsistent to volunteers if different people review beds during the same season. The judges feel Volunteer Services should carry-on with the program as it is as long as there are volunteers willing to meet the established criteria. However, the review process could be streamlined if, at the end of the year, slackers were notified that someone else was going to be given an opportunity to maintain the site they had in the coming year.*

*The judges expect there is a strong interest from volunteers to be assigned a bed with on-site water. Volunteer Services should work with the appropriate City department to develop a plan for bringing water to those sites considered to be priority locations for floral displays.*

The City provides an interactive web page for residents to provide input on Adopt-A-Spot beds they enjoy. This is a great idea that other cities should consider using.

The City's home page includes a nice picture of the downtown planters in its banner, *but consideration should be given to including a few more pictures of flower beds throughout the site. The Adopt-A-Spot Beautification program is a large program and is not very prominent on the City's web site. The Adopt-a-Spot page is difficult to find. During the time of year when there is a push to recruit volunteers, perhaps an Adopt-A-Spot bed could be displayed on the home page.*

*Redesigning the Adopt-A-Spot Beautification Program Volunteer application form so that it can be filled out on-line might make a difference in the number of new recruits enlisted.*

The City plants and maintains a showy display in the roundabout at Creasy Springs Road. Since the roundabout is located near I-70 it has been selected as a location to receive special attention. The idea of creating 'gateways' to the City is a good one. *Perhaps there is a spot at which a 'Welcome to Columbia' sign could be installed with special plantings. The planting could be a selection of low maintenance flowering shrubs and perennials if water is an issue.*

*The Chapel Hill Road medians planted with native Missouri wildflowers should be featured as a good example of low maintenance planting once the plants have become established. Although there is no local source for native plants in Columbia, Public Works or Volunteer Services might set up a tour for volunteers and City residents that highlights native prairie vegetation in the City's Parks and landscapes.*

The University of Missouri has done a fabulous job with its perennial beds, container plantings and positioning of annual flowers. The judges were pleased to see that the grounds are considered a botanical garden. Fraternity and sorority houses located along Providence Road and College Avenue also help to beautify Columbia.

The America in Bloom booklet lists 11 businesses in Columbia that do an excellent job with floral displays along with a couple of multiple location chain restaurants. The Shelter Insurance Company Gardens were beautiful and the judges were exceedingly impressed with the

landscape and floral displays at Missouri Employers Mutual. The floral display contractor, Gloria Gaus, owner of Creative Surroundings, seems very attentive to her clients wishes. The large water feature and meticulously cared for turf, work together with the flowers to make the site exceptional. *Perhaps Missouri Employers Mutual would be willing to schedule a 'community day' when homeowners could tour the grounds with a knowledgeable tour leader.*

The judges did not have an opportunity to visit private residences with a focus on floral displays, but were driven by many well-landscaped yards that included flowers. Educational materials developed for Adopt-A-Spot Beautification volunteers by City Volunteer Coordinator Leigh Britt includes flower growing information that is also applicable to home gardeners.

A few suggestions for the downtown planters are listed below:

*1. The planters would be more attractive if designed with taller plants in the center. This appears to have been done in the past. The America in Bloom booklet prepared for the judges visit shows Canna in one of these planters. Tall species more economical to use than Canna include Rudbeckia 'Indian Summer' and cleome. Given the height of the planters, the judges suggest also using plant material that would cascade over the sides. 'Wave' petunias don't require the deadheading that used to be necessary with some of the older petunia cultivars. See additional comments on plant selection in the Landscaped Areas section.*

*2. Vegetables are currently making a splash in ornamental plantings. Try using artichokes as annuals. Their big, bold texture would be perfect in the downtown planters. Parks & Recreation might want to try growing a few first in a less prominent location.*

*3. Another suggestion with the downtown planters would be to set up a competition among local businesses to try to out-do one another. There could be a Citizen's Choice Award given to the planter that receives the most votes.*



Missouri Employers Mutual's floral displays are among the most beautiful in Columbia.



Containers flanking the entrance to Jesse Hall on campus are massive enough to highlight the building's entrance.

<b>FLORAL DISPLAYS TOTAL:</b>	<b>107/125</b>
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<b>8. Turf and Ground Cover Areas</b> Quality of turf as well as use of naturalization, ground covers and wildflowers; good turf management practices (maintenance, mowing height/frequency, use of Integrated Pest Management [IPM], fertilization program, irrigation, water restrictions, etc.); sport fields, athletic parks, and other active & passive recreation areas maintained to appropriate specifications.	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Actual Score
<b><i>Municipal Sector</i></b>					
Plan of action - distribution of turf areas and ground covers	3	6	9	12	11
Concept and eco-design	2	4	6	8	7
Diversity of species, type of plantings	2	4	6	8	7
Quality of maintenance	4	8	12	16	14
Turf management/Integrated pest management (IPM)	4	7	10	13	12
Site naturalization and rehabilitation	2	3	4	5	4.5
Qualified personnel and training	3	5	7	9	8.5
Information and education programs	3	5	7	9	8
<b><i>Commercial Sector</i></b>					
Concept and types of covers	2	4	6	8	7
Maintenance	3	6	9	12	10
Site naturalization and rehabilitation	3	5	7	9	8
<b><i>Private Properties/Citizens</i></b>					
Design of turf and ground cover areas	2	4	6	8	6
Maintenance	2	4	6	8	6
<b><i>Total (the field automatically calculates – do not type in it)</i></b>					<b>109</b>
<b><i>POSSIBLE POINTS (Adjust field if point splitting is necessary)</i></b>					<b>125</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

Columbia's turf is excellent. The City does an outstanding job with its sports fields, the two municipal golf courses, and the turf in its parks. Businesses and homeowners show pride in their yards and grass in kept in good condition. Gerry Worley, with Columbia's Environmental Health Division, stated that there were seldom compliance problems with the City's weeds and mowing height ordinances.

Information prepared for the America in Bloom judges lists Columbia's total parks & green space at 2,847 acres with approximately 1,080 acres of that as undeveloped. This includes 50 developed parks, 11 undeveloped parks and 4 prairies. Fifty-six athletic fields are owned or managed by the City in addition to private outdoor athletic complexes owned by the Daniel Boone Little League, Twin Oaks Baseball Complex, Columbia Pride Soccer Club and Carrerra Soccer Club. In addition to the two municipal golf courses, and the University's course there are three private golf courses. This is a lot of turf. *The judges recommend that Columbia's Parks and Recreation Department determine how many acres of turf they actually manage. Although the staff probably has a fairly good idea, actual acreage would be useful for planning purposes.*

The Parks & Recreation staff is to be commended for establishing a turf maintenance program which prioritizes the level of care sites receive. The Mode of Care program, which has four levels of maintenance, should be useful in budget preparation.

The 'Standards and Guidelines for Landscaping and Tree Preservation' developed by Columbia's Public Works Department contains lists of appropriate turf, ornamental grasses, and groundcover species. The Standards are available on the City's web site and are thus available for other sectors of the community to utilize.

In the definition section of the Standards the examples given for 'pervious surface' include grass, mulch and ground cover. *Although the definition says pervious surfaces are not limited to these three, during the next revision of the Standards, materials like grasscrete and porous concrete could also be mentioned.*

The grass/concrete spiral of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is beautiful and provides for a very strong 'sense of place' for Columbia. The refurbished planting, designed by Brett O'Brien, effectively incorporates interesting evergreens.

The University of Missouri is to be commended for implementing environmental practices in the management of Gustin Golf Course. Gustin was the first golf course in the country to become a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary (1996). Audubon International awards certification to recognize golf courses that protect the environment, conserve natural resources, and provide wildlife habitats. Gustin Golf Course employs best management practices for chemical use and water quality management. Natural areas with prairie species are managed by controlled burning. The judges were shown baby bluebirds in one of the 26 houses the golf course maintains.

There was good use of mulch all around Columbia, in Adopt-A-Spot beds and landscaped areas in front of businesses and homes. Undoubtedly, the City's mulch program, where yard waste is chipped into mulch and then sold back to residents at a reasonable price or given away free, helps encourage this practice. Additional options for mulch exist. A vendor in West Lafayette sells a slightly different product, as does a garden center. The City prefers to use an oak bark mulch, which is a by-product of the forestry industry, in many of their beds. The judges also had a chance to see the cottonbur mulch that Jeff Zimmerscheid, The Lawn Company, uses because of its soil building capacity.

The Show Me Yards & Gardens program is an excellent way to reduce the amount of pesticides and fertilizers used by home owners. The City's Public Works Stormwater Program has had excellent participation in their classes. The goal of the program is to reduce harmful run-off and improve the quality of rivers and lakes. Turf managers and lawn care companies have also been participating in these educational programs and Columbia's American in Bloom booklet states that as a result, there has been a shift to using fescues which accommodate more environmentally-friendly management practices.

The judges would like to offer the following recommendations:

*1. In high wear areas subject to compaction, turf managers should pay special attention to irrigation and drainage. Consider the use of modular paving blocks/grids and soil enhancement technologies used to increase the site's load-bearing capacity.*

2. *In the spring before the grass begins to grow, mow the turf slightly shorter than normal to remove dead blades and other debris. Be careful not to scalp turf during this initial mowing. Once turf begins active growth, mow at the proper height and frequency. Most turf should be mowed no lower than 3" unless there is a reason (such as golf course putting greens).*

3. *Do not automatically dethatch each spring. Determine if thatch has accumulated to greater than 1/2" before proceeding.*

4. *If annual weeds are a problem, try using an herbicide that contains corn gluten as the active ingredient. The material is a pre-emergent and as with other pre-emergents, must be used prior to weed growth in the spring. Corn gluten cannot be used in areas to be reseeded or overseeded and may be a solution for chickweed, pineapple weed or annual bluegrass on school grounds where toxic products cannot be used.*

5. *Mowing patterns can be used to provide visual interest on occasion. This process, called lawn striping, works best on cool season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, fescue and rye grass. Use a reel-type mower or a rotary mower, with an attached roller, to lay the grass down in a desired direction. (Sometimes a sweeper will also work.) The turf surface either reflects or absorbs sunlight depending on the direction the leaf blades face and it is this light/dark contrast that is used to create a design/pattern.*

6. *Remember that the University of Missouri has faculty whose specialty is turf. The judges suggest that Columbia's Parks & Recreation Department contact those faculty listed on the University's web site and ask for a meeting if an existing relationship has not already been established. The winter months may be the best time of the year to do this. Brad Fresenburg is Extension & Research Associate with the Division of Plant Sciences. According to the University's web site Brad is presently developing a program on maintenance and management of sports fields and golf courses. Assistant Professor Xi Xiong should also be contacted to find out which area of turf is his primary interest.*



The University of Missouri takes an environmental approach to turf management. The grass growing on the Francis Quadrangle is the only turf on campus that is not allowed to go dormant during summer.

**TURF AND GROUND COVER AREAS TOTAL**

**109/125**

## Questions on organization:

Yes No N/A

- Were the judges provided with the completed 'Municipal Information Form' prior to their arrival?
- Was there an initial orientation meeting with introductions?
- Was this with the mayor and/or members of council?
- or the AIB committee?
- Were the judges given a schedule and map of tour at first meeting?
- Did the itinerary provide for seeing about 80 percent of the community?
- Was the guide knowledgeable about the community and horticultural aspects?
- Were the judges able to ask questions and modify the schedule if they felt there was not enough time spent on a judging criteria?
- Did the judges meet with the media?
- Were the judges asked to give presentations?
- Were the judges able to meet with and talk to volunteers?
- Was enough time allotted to view the community?
- Was enough time allotted to complete the evaluation forms in a quiet place?
- Were the judges given an opportunity to contact the next municipality?

## DEFINITIONS

-- **Municipality/Public properties:** Parks and open spaces, roads, roadsides, sidewalks, cemeteries, schools and sports facilities, empty lots and brownfields. (*Municipal employees*). Includes -- **Institutional:** hospitals, churches, military bases, assisted living, universities & colleges

-- **Commercial Sector:** shopping centers, stores, office buildings, restaurants, service stations, railway and bus stations (*Owners/staff*). Includes - **Industrial:** refineries, chemical and manufacturing plants, mining, etc.

-- **Private properties/Citizens:** Residences, condominiums, town houses, planned communities, apartment buildings, gated communities, manufactured home communities



## 2008 Special Mention

**Municipality:** Columbia, Missouri

**Population Category:** 50,001 – 100,000

**Criteria Being Recognized:** Community Involvement      **Bloom Rating:** 4

### General description of the special mention

The judges are pleased to award a special mention to Columbia for Community Involvement. Throughout their tour, the judges were continually impressed with the high degree of recognition that the City has when it comes to seeking public input and providing mechanisms for both the corporate and citizen sectors to get involved in any number of projects. In order to ensure staff support the City has a Volunteer Coordinator, Leigh Britt, who heads a standalone Department that works closely with other City Departments on a broad range of programs and initiatives that enable citizens to participate in a broad spectrum of programs and initiatives that are all designed to maximize resources and increase quality of life.

### Special Project or Initiative

The multi-million dollar, non-motorized transportation Federal Highway Grant to Getabout Columbia might well create policies and practices regarding alternate forms of transportation within Columbia that will positively impact the environment while resulting in healthier life styles for local citizens; and therefore, serve as a national model for other cities to follow.

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