South Grand Sustainability Initiative

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Pretty City Gardens and Landscapes

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South Grand Community Improvement District Background

- The South Grand Community Improvement District (CID) was organized under Missouri legislation in 2001 to provide enhanced public safety, maintenance, building improvements and economic development beyond those services already supplied by the city.

- The CID operates as a political subdivision of the state of Missouri by a Board of Directors comprised from unpaid volunteers—all of whom are assessment-paying property owners and/or business owners within the district.
South Grand Community Improvement District Mission and Vision Statement

- **Mission Statement:** To cultivate a robust and supportive business climate on South Grand in order to establish the Tower Grove community as the premiere urban lifestyle district in the Saint Louis Metropolitan area.

- **Vision Statement:** Further enhance, the South Grand Community Improvement District to become a thriving self-sufficient vibrant community that emphasizes safety, cleanliness, promotions, quality tenant attraction and retention, and infrastructure improvements.
Great Streets Initiative

- East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG) launched the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative in early 2006 to expand the way communities think of their streets.

- Rather than viewing a roadway project as solely a way to move more cars and trucks faster, the goal of the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative is to trigger economic and social benefits by centering communities around interesting, lively and attractive streets that serve all modes of transportation.

- Since 2007, EWG has completed a total of 14 projects in 6 rounds and is currently undertaking the 7th round with a project in Missouri and one in Illinois.
Before
After
Natives
Voluntary projects are providing new examples of Rainscaping.

Urban landscapes contain impervious surfaces, where rainwater runs off and straight to storm drains.

On South Grand Blvd., specially designed pervious concrete sidewalks and rain gardens capture stormwater before it enters a storm drain.

These green practices improve water quality and help reduce flooding.

The demonstration project on South Grand was completed in 2014 in partnership with the South Grand Community Improvement District, the city of St. Louis, East-West Gateway and the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District (MSD).

Funding was also provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7, through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), under section 319 of the Clean Water Act.
Rain Garden
Cleaner & Greener Streets

Green streets improve the environment and where we live. Here on South Grand, green street design includes pervious sidewalks, street trees and rain gardens.

Benefits of green streets

- Reduce the amount of stormwater runoff that causes flooding by managing stormwater at its source.

- Improve water quality in streams and rivers by filtering pollutants.

- Street trees and rain gardens provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, and other beneficial wildlife.

- Reduce urban heat island effect and improve air quality.

- Enhance neighborhood livability and increase property values.

The concrete below your feet is no mistake! This odd looking surface is pervious concrete, designed specifically to absorb stormwater.
Everyone Lives in a Watershed

A watershed is an area of land where all of the water, above and below ground, flows to the same location - usually a lake, river, or stream.

Everywhere you stand is part of a watershed... from your front doorstep... to the local park... to the shopping mall... to the stream down the road.

The quality of our water is linked to how we use the watershed surrounding us. Pollution in one stream becomes pollution in all waterways. Everything is interconnected.
When rain hits the ground, the water carries many pollutants in its path “run off” with it into the storm drain which connects to underground pipes that ultimately lead to streams and rivers.

This creates polluted stormwater which can harm aquatic life and make streams unsafe for people.

Only rain belongs in a storm drain.
Stormwater Deserves a Treat

Urban landscapes are mostly hard surfaces that include pavement and roofs. These are “impervious” surfaces that rain can’t penetrate.

Stormwater runs off impervious surfaces straight to storm drains that ultimately lead to streams and rivers. Here on South Grand, specially designed pervious concrete sidewalks and raingardens capture and treat stormwater before it enters a drain. These green practices improve water quality and help prevent flooding.

The small spaces in the pervious concrete allow stormwater to soak into the ground.

The plants in the raingardens were carefully selected for their deep root systems which absorb pollutants and stormwater.

The soil mixture in the raingardens includes sand and compost which was designed to absorb stormwater and filter pollutants.

Drains to neighborhood stream or river
Grand Rain Gardens: Beautiful & Beneficial

The rain gardens on South Grand may look like typical flower gardens but they are actually natural systems specially designed to treat stormwater. A rain garden is a depressed basin that captures and soaks up stormwater that runs off a roof, driveway or other hard surfaces. The plants in these raingardens are native to Missouri and evolved with its climate over a long period of time. They are adapted to living in wet and dry soil conditions.

Common turf grass (what’s planted on most lawns) has a very shallow root system that requires frequent watering and extensive maintenance.

Native plants need very little water or maintenance once established, and don’t require fertilizer or pesticides.

These plants have deep roots (some as deep as 15 feet) which absorb pollutants and stormwater.

Native plants also provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies and other beneficial wildlife.

Lead Plant (Amorpha canescens)

Southern blue flag iris

Monarch butterfly on butterfly milkweed

Skimmer butterfly on purple coneflower

Photos by Perry Eckhardt
Keep Streams Clean

By following these five simple rules, you can do your part to keep our rivers and streams cleaner!

**Wash your car on the lawn or at a commercial facility.**
Detergent entering the storm drain can harm fish and other aquatic life.

**Bag pet waste and put it in the trash.**
This keeps harmful bacteria and excess nutrients from washing into the storm drains.

**Sweep grass clippings onto the lawn.**
As leaves and grass clippings degrade, they rob the water of oxygen. Like people, fish need oxygen too!

**Use an ashtray.**
Do not throw cigarette butts on the ground or down the drain. Cigarette filters are not biodegradable. They harm aquatic life.

**Watch where your fertilizer goes and sweep up when you are finished.**
When you over fertilize or leave fertilizer on paved surfaces, it can end up in the river.

The choices you make affects the water quality in your community!
South Grand EcoCrew
Ritz Park Events & Natives
Great Streets Economic Impact
July 2012-Present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Businesses to District</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future/In progress Construction Projects</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening Soon</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Office Tenants to District</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in State Sales Tax Revenue</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Great Streets Maintenance

- Landscaping
- Irrigation System
- Pervious Concrete
- Ironwork
- Light Poles

Cost: $57,000 +/-
Landscape Stewardship

- Current contract & renovations began with Sep. 2017 inventory/assessment – 4 step process:
  1. Outline Objectives
  2. What Works
  3. What Doesn’t Work
  4. Recommendations

Plans to re-assess site conditions in full every 2-3 years
Outline Objectives

Start with the basics ex: walk the district and meet it where it’s at. Look at original plans for South Grand CID plantings, consult local resources, and think about similar local successful projects (field trip!)

1. Improve aesthetics
2. Stormwater Management
3. Support Biodiversity (increase # of native species)
4. Education & Outreach (EcoCrew + events)
What Works?

- Tree well plantings: Dropseed/Liriope (except 3 w/ Carex praegracilis)
- Iris virginica in Rain Gardens
What Doesn’t Work?

- Infrequent maintenance; weeds
- Taller plants near sidewalk/flopping; 4-5ft + (i.e. Symphyotrichum novae-angliae)
- Plants that have expanded their original footprint /bullies(i.e. Monarda fistulosa)
Recommendations

- Remove and replace the majority of Wild Bergamot (Monarda fistulosa) and New England Aster (Symphyotrichum novae-angliae) through district.
- Increase quantity of some existing plants (i.e. Prairie Dropseed; Sporobolus heterolepis and Black-Eyed Susan; Rudbeckia fulgida)
- Add some shorter profile plants (or cultivars) – Monarda bradburiana
- Recommended plants are listed by the MO Botanical Gardens in their Native Landscaping Manual as “Top Performing Native Plants for Landscaping” based on: 3-4 Season of interest, long life expectancy, and compact form.
We were able to trim Monarda fistulosa to keep plants shorter when blooming. Adjusted planned renovations where appropriate.
Ongoing Maintenance Challenges

Rain Garden inflow & debris
Ongoing Maintenance Challenges

Vehicle traffic – Added extra labor hours to total budget in 2nd year to address “Emergency Garden Repair”.

[Images of maintenance challenges]
Ongoing Maintenance Challenges

Vehicle traffic – Added extra labor hours to total budget to address “Emergency Garden Repair”
Ongoing Maintenance Challenges

Pedestrian traffic
Ongoing Maintenance Challenges

Line of sight
Ongoing Challenges*

*Challenges not pictured: Trash, Vandalism (sprinkler heads), Sidewalk crack weeds

Weeds & unexpected surprises
Current Conditions July-August 2019
Current Conditions July- August 2019
South Grand is fun!
2018 Volunteer Program

Goals: Build Capacity & Awareness

- Initial outreach to local neighborhood associations
  - Tower Grove East
  - Tower Grove Heights
  - Tower Grove South
  - Compton Heights Neighborhood Betterment Association
  - Compton Hill

- Identified volunteer program structure
  - Volunteer tasks & appreciation
  - Event schedule

- Distribute PDF flyer with event schedule
  - Email and social media platforms
We Need Your Help!

Calling all gardeners and outdoor enthusiasts! The South Grand Community Improvement District is seeking hard-working volunteers to help us steward the native landscape areas located throughout the District.

We have events scheduled throughout the year that are open to small groups and individual volunteers. Check out the crew size below to see how many folks we need for each event. Experience is not required but enthusiasm is a must!

Volunteers will meet in the South Grand free parking lot at Hartford Street and Arkansas Avenue (3500 Hartford) at the beginning of each event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PROJECT LOCATION</th>
<th>CREW SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>9AM — NOON</td>
<td>Plant landscape areas at Grand &amp; Arsenal</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 4</td>
<td>9AM — NOON</td>
<td>Plant tree wells from Arsenal to Utah</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>6PM — 8PM</td>
<td>Weed Ritz Park and parking lot</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 8</td>
<td>9AM — NOON</td>
<td>Plant additional landscape areas</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>9AM — NOON</td>
<td>Prep landscape areas for winter</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Free Food!

REGISTRATION:
Contact Angie Weber at 314-583-0971 or ecolandscapingstl@gmail.com
2018 Volunteer Program

- Mid-Year Evaluation
  - First three events had low volunteer turnout (May, June and August)
  - Where do we go from here?
2018 EcoCrew Program

- **Outreach & Promotion**
  - We needed a name
    - South Grand EcoCrew was born 😊
  - Expanded outreach to community organizations
    - Brightside St. Louis
    - Master Naturalists
    - Master Gardeners
    - Churches and Schools
    - Missouri Botanical Garden
      - BiodiverseCity St. Louis
  - Created Constant Contact newsletter
  - Developed webpage with online registration
    - [http://southgrand.org/who-we-are/south-grand-ecocrew-volunteers/](http://southgrand.org/who-we-are/south-grand-ecocrew-volunteers/)
2018 EcoCrew Program

**Successes & Challenges**

- (+) Higher event turnout during second half of the year
- (+) At least one volunteer showed up for every event
- (+) Program Totals: 6 events, 18 unique volunteers, 60 hours contributed
- (-) Limited means to promote events and communicate with volunteers
- (-) Lacking our own webpage to house volunteer program information
- (-) Work sites were District-wide and along busy street
2019 EcoCrew Program

Goals: Expand Program & Cultivate Relationships

- Increased number of events from 6 to 8
- Established the EcoCrew Corridor
- Created EcoCrew logo & tshirts
# South Grand EcoCrew

## 2019 Event Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>District-Wide Spring Cleanup: cut back dead vegetation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>District-wide Spring Cleanup: mulch beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Plant decorative planters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>District-Wide Landscape Stewardship Day: weeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 10</td>
<td>Ritz Park/Hartford Parking Lot Stewardship Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Ritz Park/Hartford Parking Lot Stewardship Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 5</td>
<td>Plant Hartford Parking Lot Islands &amp; Stewardship Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 7</td>
<td>District-Wide Winter Cleanup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Help us steward the native landscape on South Grand!

All events will be held from 9:00 AM—12:00 PM.

Snacks & tools provided

For additional details and to register visit the South Grand website at:  
[www.southgrand.org](http://www.southgrand.org)

Questions? Contact Angie Weber at 314-583-0971 or ecolandscapingd@gmail.com
EcoCrew Events & Volunteer Tasks
EcoCrew Program Management

- Dedicated funding and part-time Volunteer Coordinator
  - Total annual budget of $5,450
  - $4,950 – contractor expenses (outreach, recruitment and event facilitation)
  - $500 – volunteer supplies
- Free T-shirts for volunteers
- Volunteers like to be fed 😊
- You can never say THANK YOU enough!
Questions?

- Rachel Witt, rachel@southgrand.org, 314-772-5750
- Cody Hayo, cody@prettycitystl.com, 314-282-1084
- Angie Weber, ecolandscapingstl@gmail.com, 314-583-0971