



South Grand Sustainability Initiative

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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





319 Grant –Clean Water Act

- ▶ 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



WALKING TOUR
SIGN 1 OF 6

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.



LOOK



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



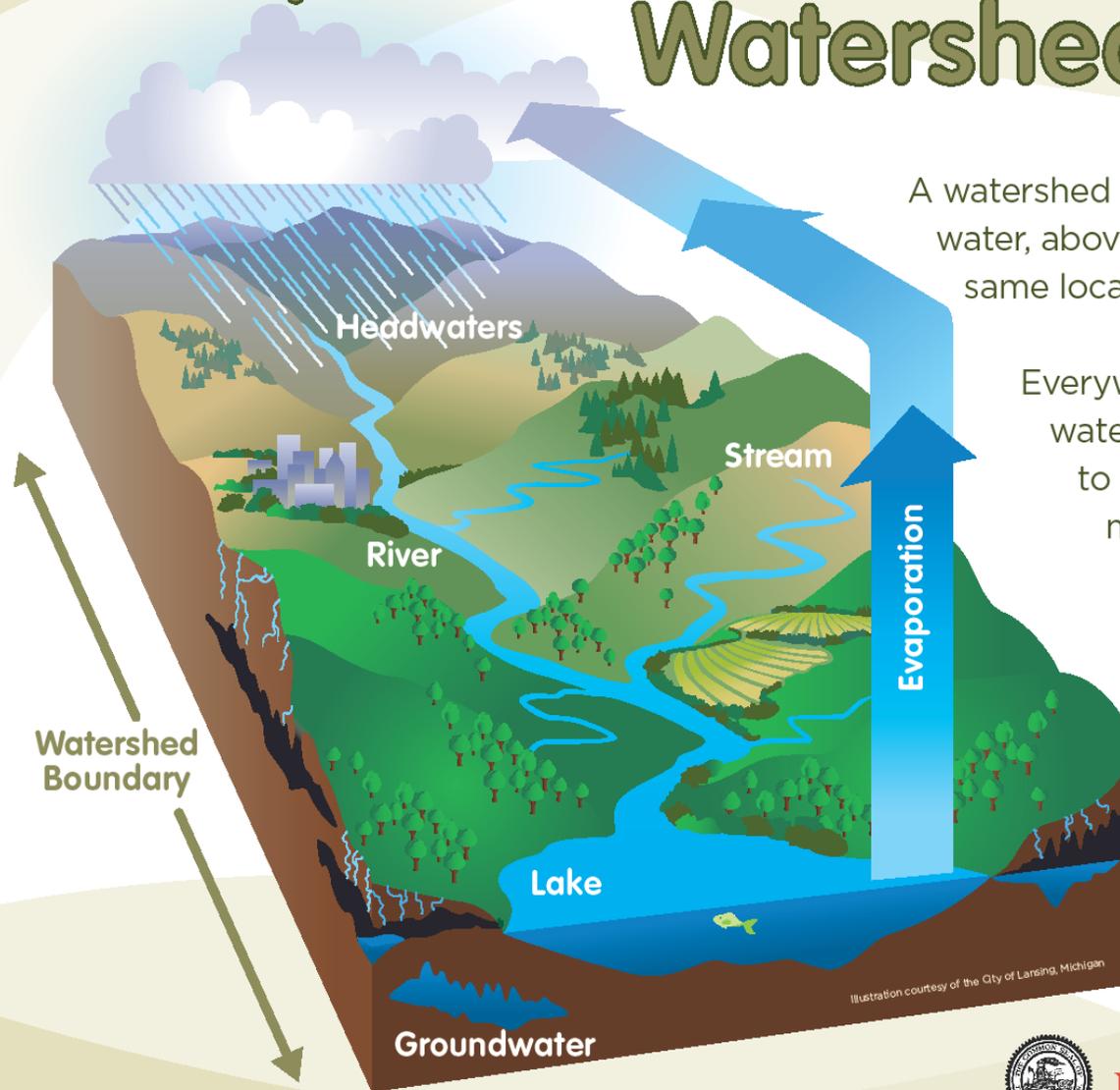
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Everyone Lives in a Watershed



WALKING TOUR
SIGN 2 OF 6



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.

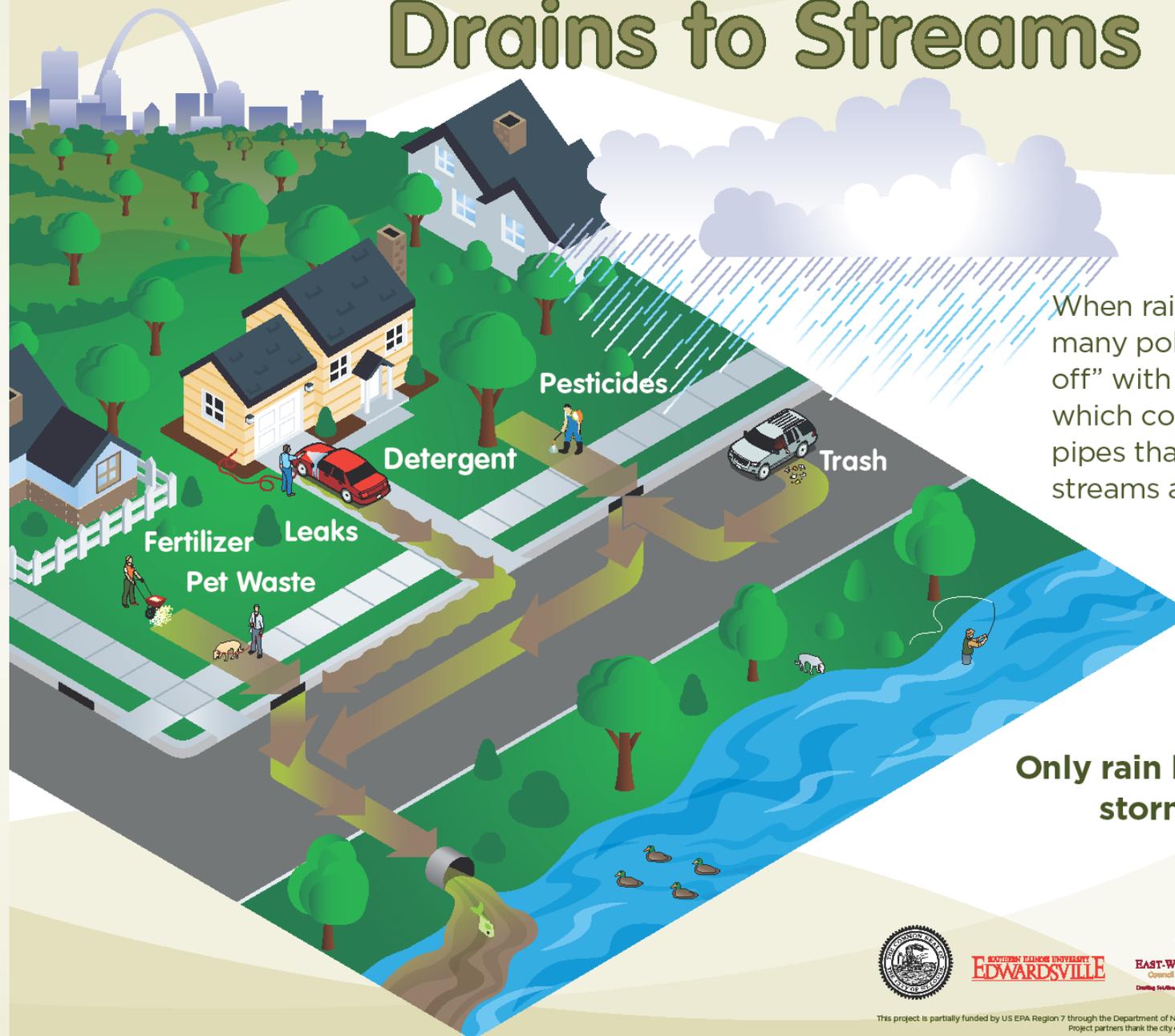
The quality of our water is linked to how we use the watershed surrounding us. Pollution in one stream becomes pollution in all waterways. Everything is interconnected.



EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
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Drains to Streams



When rain hits the ground, the 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.



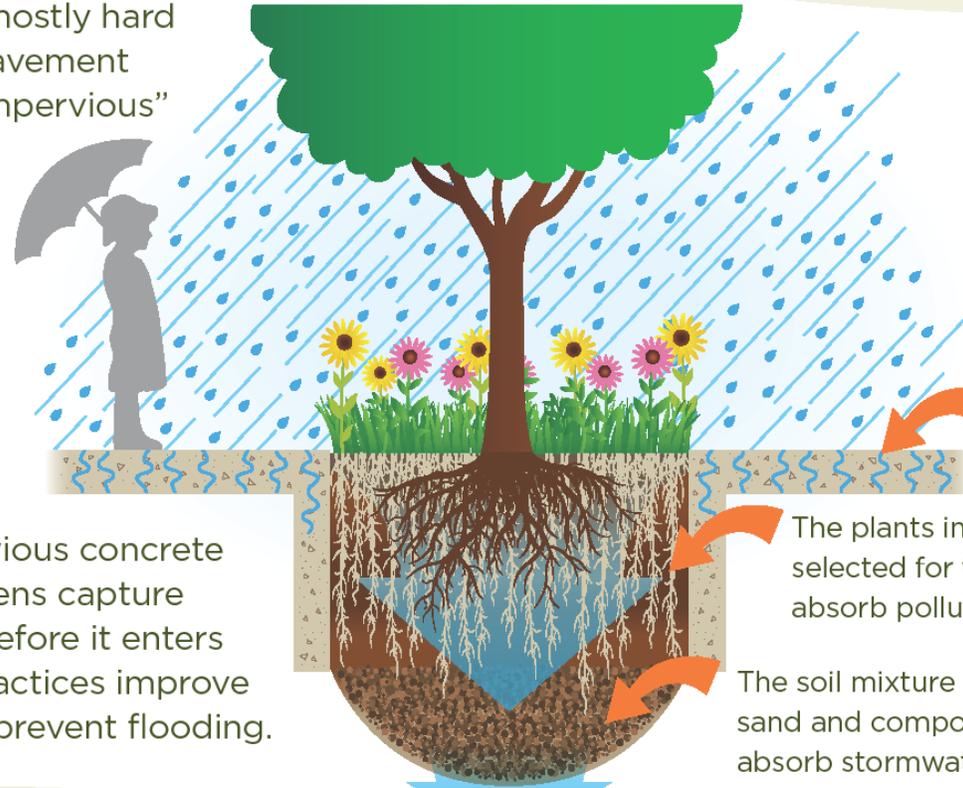
Stormwater Deserves a Treat



WALKING TOUR
SIGN 4 OF 6

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 rain gardens 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



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Creating Inclusive Areas and Shared Prosperity

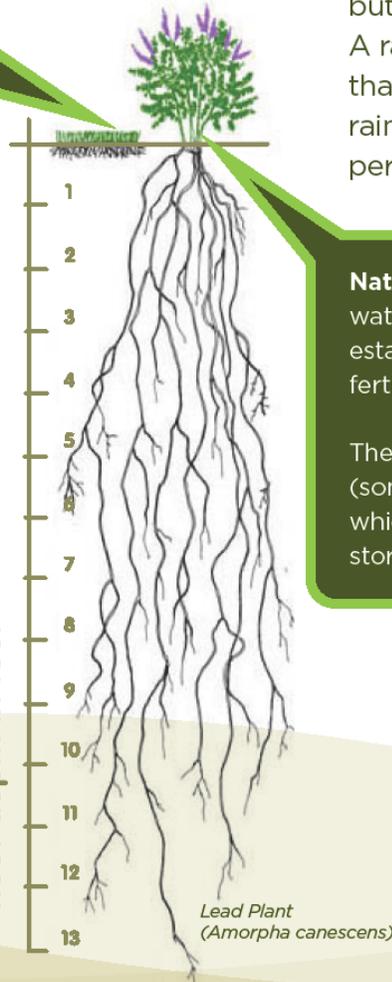


Grand Rain Gardens: Beautiful & Beneficial



WALKING TOUR
SIGN 5 OF 6

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



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 rain gardens 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.

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.



Southern blue flag iris

Monarch butterfly on butterfly milkweed

Skipper butterfly on purple coneflower

Photos by Perry Eckhardt



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Keep Streams Clean

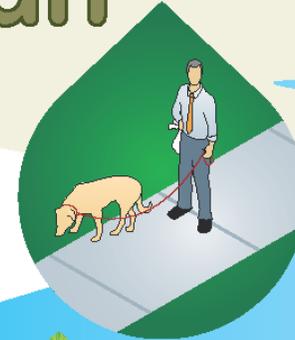


WALKING TOUR
SIGN 6 OF 6

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!



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South Grand EcoCrew



Ritz Park Events & Natives





Great Streets Economic Impact July 2012-Present

	Amount
New Businesses to District	28
Expansions	4
Rehabs	6
Future/In progress Construction Projects	2
Opening Soon	4
New Office Tenants to District	32
Increase in State Sales Tax Revenue	33%



Great Streets Maintenance

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

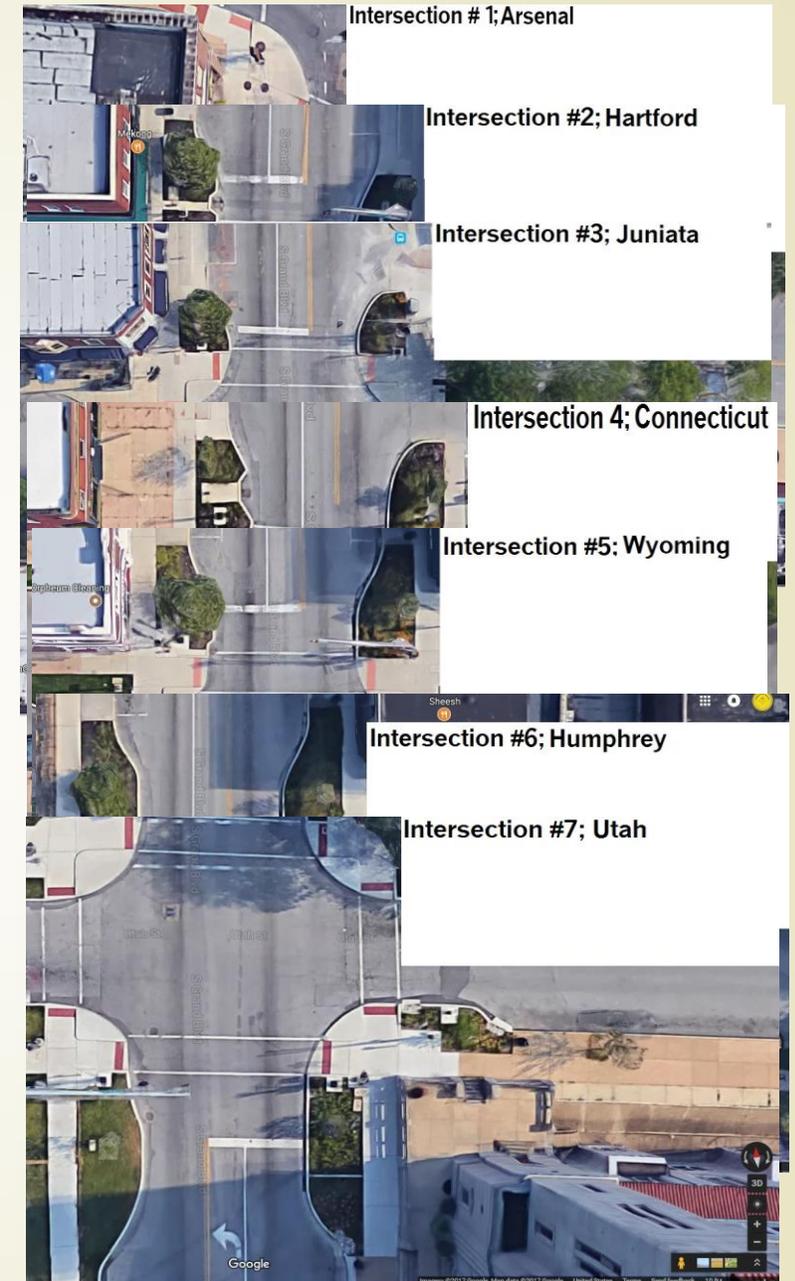
Cost: \$57,000 +/-

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

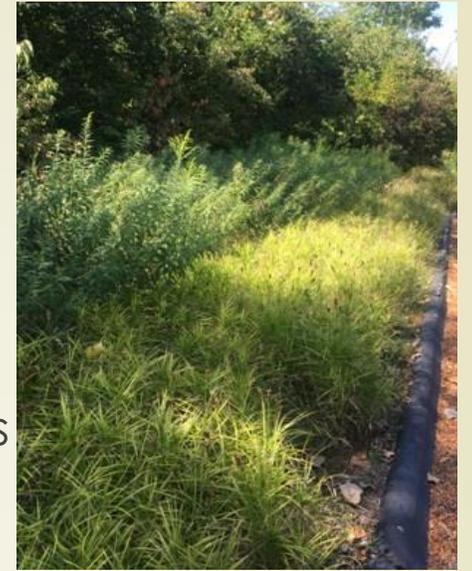
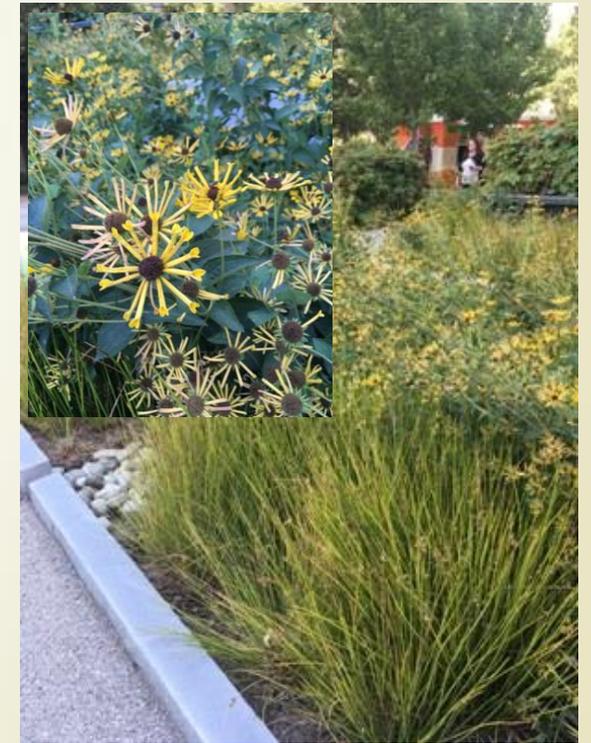
Plans to re-assess site conditions in full every 2-3 years



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. *Symphytotrichum 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.

Year 1 Observations



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”.

Ongoing Maintenance Challenges

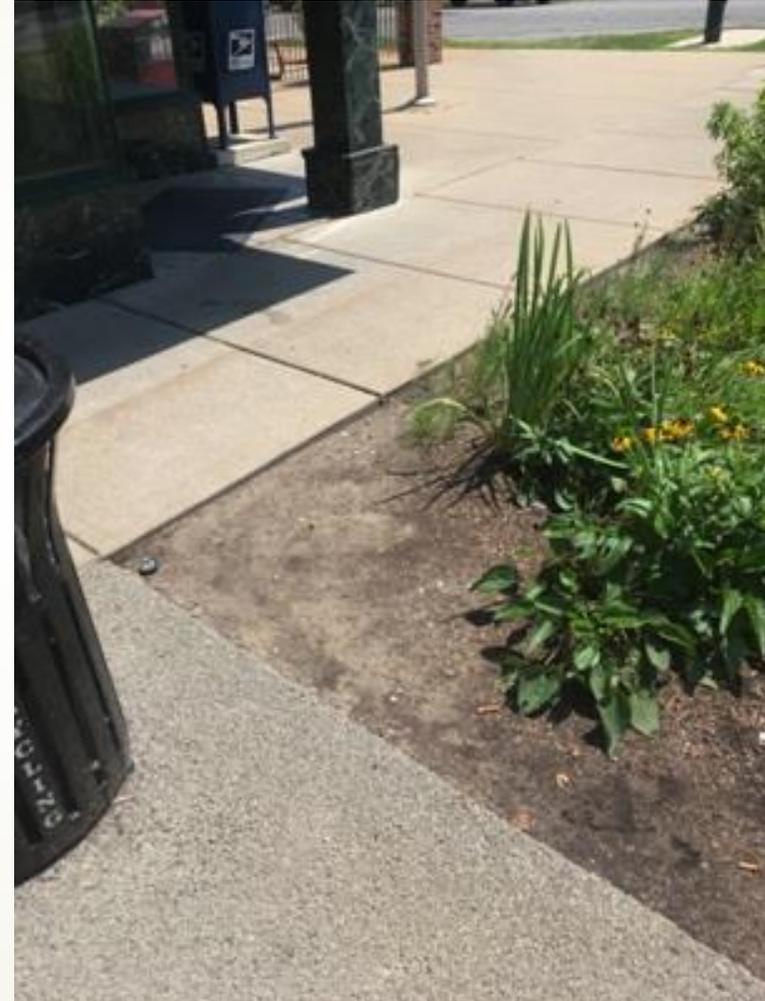


Vehicle traffic –
Added extra labor
hours to total budget
to address
“Emergency Garden
Repair”

Ongoing Maintenance Challenges



Pedestrian traffic



Ongoing Maintenance Challenges



Line of sight



Ongoing Challenges*



Weeds & unexpected surprises



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

Grand/Humphrey Sept 2017 vs July 2019



Sep 2017



July 2019



Current Conditions July-August 2019



Current Conditions July- August 2019



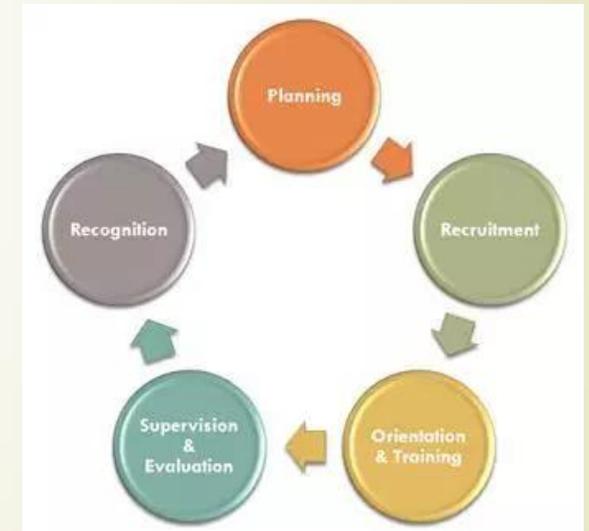
South Grand is fun!



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





SOUTH GRAND 2018 VOLUNTEER EVENTS



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.

DATE	TIME	PROJECT LOCATION	CREW SIZE
May 5	9AM — NOON	Plant landscape areas at Grand & Arsenal	6
June 4	9AM — NOON	Plant tree wells from Arsenal to Utah	6
August 7	6PM — 8PM	Weed Ritz Park and parking lot	6
September 8	9AM — NOON	Plant additional landscape areas	10-12
December 1	9AM — NOON	Prep landscape areas for winter	10-12

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/>



~Join Our EcoCrew! ~

October 5th: Pollinator Garden Planting



Volunteers are needed on Friday, October 5th from 1:00 - 3PM to install a pollinator garden at the Hartford Street parking lot with plants donated through the Brightside St. Louis Neighbors Naturescaping program. The parking lot is located at Hartford Street and Arkansas Avenue (3500 Hartford). Snacks, water and tools will be provided.

SAVE THE DATE for Saturday, December 1 from 9 AM- NOON . We'll need a crew of 10 - 12 people to help prepare the native landscape for winter.

Preregistration is not required but is encouraged so we know how many tools to have on hand and so we can plan the food accordingly. [Click here to sign up.](#)

Contact Angie Weber at 314-583-0971 or ecolandscapingstl@gmail.com if you have any questions.



THANK YOU!

A huge thank you to our volunteers who helped with the District wide planting event on September 10. We're pleased that the rainy day on our original September 8 volunteer date didn't discourage you from lending a hand the following Monday. Lucky for us the sun Gods were in our favor this time.

With your help, we added several hundred grasses and flowers to the tree wells and landscape areas along the South Grand business district in less than 3 hours. Nice work EcoCrew!

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

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

Questions?
Contact Angie Weber at
314-583-0971 or
ecolandscapingstl@gmail.com

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



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

