

America in Bloom 2014 EVALUATION FORM

Participant: Lexington, KY

Population Category: Over 50,000

Visiting Dates: June 23-24, 2014

Judges: Evelyn Alemanni and Stephen Pategas

America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefitting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage; and planting pride through volunteerism.

All judging criteria will be adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the participant's location.

The judges' report is based on efforts in management, planning, maintenance, improvement, and innovation of each of the following criteria:

Criteria	Actual Points	Possible Points
1. Floral Displays	148.00	175.00
2. Landscaped Areas	152.00	175.00
3. Urban Forestry	146.00	175.00
4. Environmental Efforts	133.00	175.00
5. Heritage Preservation	147.00	175.00
6. Overall Impression	105.50	125.00
Total	831.50	1000
%	83.15%	
Bloom Rating	4	

Five blooms = 85% Four blooms = 72.50–84.95% Three blooms = 60.00–72.45% Two blooms = 45.00–59.95% One bloom = <45.00%

Participant representatives met: (including email)

Name: Ann Garrity	Title: Committee Chair	Email: anngarrity@gmail.com
Name: Linda Gorton	Title: Vice Mayor	Email: lgorton@lexingtonky.gov
Name: Susan Plueger	Title: Director, Environmental Policy	Email: splueger@lexingtonky.gov

General Comments and Suggestions:

Suggestions are indicated in italics.



Congratulations, Lexington, on your inaugural year of America in Bloom participation. Since 1992, you have had the Lexington in Bloom program sponsored by the Lexington Council of Garden Clubs and now America in Bloom offers you the opportunity to extend the reach of your program. Congratulations on earning a prestigious four bloom rating in your first year! And many thanks to the Mayor and City Council for their Lexington in Bloom proclamation.



Many thanks for the care you took in developing the judges' itinerary and community profile. As you now realize, the community profile summarizes your achievements in all of the criteria that make Lexington a great place to live. *It is an outstanding economic development tool as well. Be sure to have copies at City Hall, the library, Chamber of Commerce, and Visitors' Bureau. You might even be able to sell advertising in it if you do a reprint.*



Lexington's economy is an interesting mix of horses, health care, high tech, bourbon, the University of Kentucky, and tourism. During the descent of our flight into the airport, we were astounded to see lovely farms with lush green pastures, trees, fences, and horses. City vision is responsible for creating an area where you can still take a Sunday drive starting from the heart of the city and be in the country in twenty minutes.



Lexington demonstrates a healthy respect for the agricultural lands that support the many horse farms. As far back as 1958, the city council enacted the first growth boundary in the US, limiting development to the Urban Service Boundary. Lots outside this boundary are a minimum of 40 acres. In addition, the council has enacted a Purchase of Development Rights program to focus on land use policies that provide for responsible public access to rural areas.

You have already witnessed the power of using the America in Bloom framework to get disparate groups working together and you have seen that America in Bloom is not just about flowers, but the four pillars that support quality of life: horticulture, heritage, environment and community involvement. *You have so many civic groups and agencies that it might be worthwhile to host an annual roundtable to share ideas, promote synergy, and even partner on projects. It might also be a way to recruit new members.*

To increase efficiencies between city departments and organizations, the parks department could convene an annual early spring workshop to share ideas and resources and enhance collaboration. Parks staff, other LFUCG dept. staff (e.g. streets and roads maintenance staff, bike path, etc.), those formally involved (such as Ryan Koch and Victoria Meyer) in non-government initiatives and those informally involved could all be included.

If it isn't already being done, encourage all your volunteer organizations to track volunteer hours and report them to a central agency. You will be amazed at the time the people of Lexington give and the information can be used as the matching portion of some grant applications.

The tour you prepared for the judges is so impressive that you might consider offering it to other towns and cities for a fee.

We look forward to your continued participation in America in Bloom. Please remember that university campuses, business districts, and identified neighborhoods of large cities are also eligible to participate in America in Bloom.

Special thanks to Ann Garrity, Kay Cannon, Linda Gorton, Janet and Jerry Raider, and the many other engaged residents of Lexington who made our visit so special. Thank you again for all your efforts to make Lexington shine. We wish you a bright and vibrant future.

Evelyn Alemanni and Stephen Pategas

1. Floral Displays Flower beds, containers, baskets, window boxes. Arrangement, originality, distribution, location, diversity, balance, harmony, quality of maintenance. Use and integration of annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, bulbs, and seasonal flowers.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Leadership and plan of action for floral displays	20	18
Concept and design, variety of plantings, overall effect	20	18
Maintenance and quality of displays	20	18
Design for all seasons	15	12
Business		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	13
Maintenance and quality of displays	15	13
Residential		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	11
Maintenance and quality of displays	15	13
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in design, planting, and maintenance of floral displays	20	16
Financial and in-kind contributions to floral displays	20	16
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	148.00

Comments and suggestions:



Lexington’s municipal areas boast 205 well-placed, exuberant hanging baskets that are contract-grown for the city. The city pays for baskets and their maintenance which involves daily watering and fertilizing. In addition, the downtown area has 151 large containers that are a small version of what one might see on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. It is clear that these baskets and containers are maintained by trained and caring staff. The Government Center was made colorful and welcoming with containers, hanging baskets, and window boxes.



Rain gardens downtown are nicely designed for functionality and plant selection.

Both universities offered small flower beds, and the Transylvania University’s “T” created from red and white flowers is a fine example of carpet bedding.

The medians in the Woodward Heights historic district are planted and maintained by neighbors. The beautiful colors and textures of the planting beds create a joyous neighborhood gateway and help calm traffic. We also commend the flower-filled medians on St. Ann Drive and Coburn Blvd.

We were honored to be able to visit the exquisite home and gardens of Jon Carloftis and Dale Fisher. These gentlemen are commended for their generosity in opening their garden for a number of fundraising events.

Special commendations go to the University of Kentucky Arboretum and Botanical Garden. The Children's Garden is full of flowers which the children can pick. Other parts of the garden offer inspiration for home owners and landscape designers. The trial gardens showcase new varieties and give people the opportunity to see what grows well in Lexington. Well done! The rose garden features 1200 varieties of roses. *However, you may want to do a soil test to determine whether the roses need supplemental nutrients, as few of the plants appeared to be vigorous.*

The containers at Triangle Park, operated by the Triangle Foundation are in need of sprucing up and in one case, replacement as it appears that a vehicle may have run into it.

Consider selecting a signature flower or shrub for the city – something that really thrives in your environment. Then use it in abundance all around the city.



In the commercial sector, some businesses did a nice job of integrating flowering plants and shrubs into the landscape. Special commendations go to Morgan Stanley, Portofino, Chase Bank, and to the two horse farms we visited, Mt. Brilliant and Gainesway, for their spectacular gardens and mass plantings.

The majority of business landscapes appear to be designed to accommodate the needs of “mow and blow” teams. *Businesses could enhance the appeal of their properties by planting flowering shrubs around their signage and more creative landscaping solutions in general. This is especially needed at the Shriner's Hospital to make their campus look more inviting.*



Special commendations to the Ashland Terrace independent living facility for their lovely cutting garden and for inviting the public to share it and allowing them to cut bouquets (for a fee).

Kudos to the Garden Club for sponsoring a garden contest for residential, commercial, and miscellaneous gardens. *In the future you might consider inviting city council members to help judge with a partner who has horticultural experience. This would give council members an extraordinary opportunity to visit a variety of city areas.*

If it isn't already being done, considering hosting a seed, cuttings, and plant swap.

In the historic districts, encourage residents to use plants appropriate to the period of their homes. Perhaps the garden club can offer help with identifying species shown on old photographs.

Some of the residential neighborhoods are blessed with generous turf and tree-filled medians. *To make the medians more interesting in early spring, consider planting swaths or patterns of snowdrops, muscari, and crocus.*

2. Landscaped Areas Overall design and suitability of landscape, turf and ground covers. Use of native plants. Overall design and suitability for location/use; good use of design principles (i.e., balance of plant material and constructed elements, harmony, color, texture, shape, etc.). Sustainability. Integration of hardscapes, lighting, site features, sculpture. Maintenance (weeds, mulching practices, edging); site rejuvenation and rehabilitation. Efforts in strategic planning. Community gardens, children’s gardens, public gardens and zoos.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Overall design and planting of landscape, turf and groundcovers	15	13
Environmental management of sports fields and turf	15	13
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	14
Sustainable management, naturalization and eco-design	15	14
Business		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	12
Environmental management of turf and groundcovers	10	7
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	13
Residential		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	13
Environmental management of turf and groundcovers	15	13
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	13
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in funding, planting, and maintenance of landscaped areas	15	14
Participation in future planning (committees, councils, and advisory boards.)	15	13
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	152.00

Comments and suggestions:

The city maintains numerous ball fields, five golf courses and 105 parks with the three largest parks at 400, 237 and 216 acres. The city tests the ball field soils prior to treatments to limit use of chemicals. The cemeteries are private and the lush 170 acre Lexington Cemetery is also an arboretum. Wellington Park's Lexington Women's Remembrance Garden is a bright spot of color with a good cause and volunteers to care for it. The dog park is well used and we look forward to seeing the completion of the sensory garden. The astoundingly well visited Arboretum State Botanical Garden of Kentucky has a series of themed display gardens with a wonderful Children's Garden that tells the story of Kentucky's natural systems and teaches with a smile.

The city smartly obtains its plant materials through the cost saving method of contract growing. We noticed lingering and ongoing damage to a few types of plants due to the severe winter that hammered a good portion of the country. We took that weather into account.

Numerous facilities and businesses contribute to the beauty of Lexington with their landscaping. These include: Portofino, Hilton, Fifth Third Center, The Kentucky Horse Park and Foundation, Season's Catering, Keeneland, Triangle Foundation, Mt. Brilliant Farm, Beaumont and much more.

At The Arboretum State Botanical Garden of Kentucky, the majority of their plants are grown in a borrowed greenhouse. *They are in need of a greenhouse on-site to increase their efficiency and have a venue for teaching propagation. They could seek Audubon Certification if they aren't already designated. The Arboretum State Botanical Garden of Kentucky may attract even more visitors, especially from outside of the area, if it was renamed The Botanical Garden and Arboretum of Kentucky.*

The Richmond Road medians in many areas (including at Fontaine and in the Ashland neighborhood) could use plantings to replace the high maintenance grass. Ornamental grasses and groundcovers are suggested. Where there are trees, plantings must be shade or part shade tolerant. Where there aren't major tree roots, lower the grades to create more rain gardens and use curb cuts to allow storm water to drain in.



A successful streetscape has themed, well located and well maintained plaza, water features, benches, trash and recycling containers, street lights, banners, murals, bike racks, signage and planters. Downtown Lexington has all of this. Some planters slightly below grade double as storm water retention (rain gardens). Planting containers abound and overflow with color while hanging baskets draw the eye upward.

Manicured lawns edged with trees and shrubs appear to be the norm in every sector.



A Lexington In Bloom garden contest every other year awards prizes to the best gardens, and this year there were 200 nominees. This raises the bar for gardens throughout Lexington.

Many cities and towns across the United States have turned their back on features that were the reason for their founding - springs, streams, rivers and lakes. *Lexington has a huge opportunity to resurrect the underground portion of Town Branch Creek, bring it to the surface in one form or another and make it an integral part of the downtown. This could be an interactive icon for the downtown. The preferred plan is a thoughtful study that should be considered. If this is not doable in the short term, we suggest that in the near future the pavement above the stream be resurfaced in a pattern to suggest a flowing body of water and perhaps signage relating to the stream. Where the stream exists in its more natural state, public access with a stream side trail and overlooks could be provided.*

While numerous properties contribute to the beauty of Lexington, *some need improvement: Fazoli's at the corner of S. Upper and Winslow where low plantings would decrease the expense of replenishing the mulch and beautify the property; the large and attractive storm water retention pond and water feature at 2349 Richmond Road (at St. Ann Drive with a well planted median) could be greatly enhanced with landscaping including swaths of ornamental grasses; the Bluegrass Community and Technical College campus is a great addition to their campus, but it is in need of landscaping to soften it; Sonic on S. Broadway has lapsed maintenance and the street presence of the University of Kentucky's Memorial Coliseum could be greatly improved by adding landscaping.*

Freshly installed commercial landscapes need inspection by a city horticulturist based in the Environmental Policy department instead of building inspectors. A trained professional in that field is needed to perform those tasks and properly advise business owners. Forestry should come under this umbrella.

Explore obtaining Audubon Certification for the city-owned golf courses. Achieving this goal would ensure they are wildlife friendly.

Encourage schools to create edible gardens and orchards to help students appreciate fresh vegetables and fruits and healthy eating habits. There are numerous organizations within the community to partner with.

We were told that geese are a major problem at the golf courses and some of the parks. *Some cities allow dogs to chase them offleash for a set time each day until the geese get the idea that they should move on. The best geese control programs combine three methods: limiting flock growth, frightening geese (humanely) so they decide to leave on their own, and changing the habitat so it isn't attractive to geese. Check http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/geese/tips/solving_problems_canada_geese.html and http://www.inclinerecreation.com/outdoor_recreation/beaches/geese_patrol for details.*

At least one city brochure advises against volcano mulching (mulch piled high against the trunks). We saw numerous trees including street trees with this affliction. This encourages trunk diseases, prevents water from reaching the root ball and wastes mulch. *A maximum depth of two inches should be applied to the top of the root ball. Perhaps small signs with the universal symbol for "do not" could be placed in some symbolic volcano mulch tree rings in high profile locations.*



The downtown Lexington Park has a large semi-circular stair-stepped water feature that creates a pleasant low roar that blocks nearby street noise and encourages visitors to linger at the cafe tables. *The current (as of mid-June) flowers planted in the containers don't compare to the floriferous containers on the adjacent Main Street. Consultation with a horticulturist or the city is advised.*

Habitat for Humanity could install a raised vegetable bed at each home where owners would like to grow edibles. If a group of homes are being built, perhaps one lot could be used for a well laid out community garden/park.

Wonderful community gardens abound and *Seedleaf*, which has a burgeoning volunteer base, could save money on water by getting agreements to install rain barrels on structures adjoining gardens. *The Habitat Restore could be a source for gutters and downspouts for structures where they don't exist.*

We were impressed by *Seedleaf's* initiative to plant fruit trees and berries such as gooseberries, raspberries and blackberries in community gardens to reduce maintenance and provide fruit in addition to vegetables while adding a permaculture aspect to the gardens.

Seedleaf and other organizations may want to learn more about the operation of the Gateway Greening program in St. Louis, MO. Not only does it train people in gardening and cooking via community gardens, but it helps these individuals find jobs in related areas based on their success in the community gardens. Check <http://www.gatewaygreening.org/>.

3. Urban Forestry Distribution, variety and suitability of trees; new plantings; urban tree program; qualified personnel or access to trained individual(s); inventory or database; frequency of tree surveys; care and maintenance programs; preservation of heritage trees and woodlots; scheduled succession plantings. Efforts in management, planning, maintenance, improvement, and innovation. Written policies, by-laws and regulations, long and short term plans.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Overall plan of action, tree planting programs, variety of species, inventory	20	16
Tree maintenance	15	13
Preservation and restoration of natural areas	15	13
Tree protection/planting regulations and by-laws	15	12
Business		
Overall planting program	20	16
Tree maintenance	15	13
Residential		
Overall planting program	20	16
Tree maintenance	15	12
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in funding, planting, and maintenance of trees	20	18
Volunteer involvement of youth in tree programs (i.e., Arbor Day, etc.)	20	17
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	146.00

Comments and suggestions:

Lexington has worked hard to add trees to the 53,000 currently inventoried and their goal is to increase coverage from 24.5 to 40 percent. However, due to the ordinances currently in place they have a number of impediments - trees on private property are not protected and property owners are required to maintain trees planted on public rights of way.



Meanwhile many positive efforts are taking place. Treekeeper software is used to manage the tree inventory and the city was the first in the state to create an inventory. Presently volunteers are helping to locate ash trees that can be monitored for emerald ash borer infestation. The city must approve any trees being planted in the right of way and requires trees on newly developed properties. Free seedlings are provided during Arbor Day and Reforest the Bluegrass events for the family. Woodland Park trees are to be labeled with ID tags and QR codes. It appears that i-Tree software is being used to calculate the economic value of trees as indicated by this sign on a tree on the Henry Clay estate. More information of this type will help educate the public about the important environmental benefits trees offer.

An increase in tree canopy coverage is lagging as the aging canopy is lost and the emerald ash borer takes its toll. It may get worse before it gets better. *Increase the tree canopy significantly by protecting trees on all private property. Requiring permits to remove non-invasive trees and requiring replacement for those removed would add substantially to the canopy coverage. Without this change and by using only publicly owned land it is unlikely the city can ever meet its goal of 40% tree canopy.*

The Tree Board is tasked by ordinance with recommending revisions to the tree protection ordinance and should proceed post haste after surveying ordinances from other cities and developing a matrix comparing selected criteria to develop the best possible ordinances for Lexington.

While new development projects currently require tree protection and replacement along with new tree plantings, there is a large loophole that allows trees of all sizes to be removed prior to the submittal of a development plan for review. *The protection of trees on private property (as some historic homes are protected on private property) would correct this oversight and save many trees. Development plans should be reviewed by the forestry department.*

Once tree protection barriers are in place they need to be monitored and after replacement trees are installed they need to be properly monitored by the forestry department to make sure they are properly planted and any trees that die are replaced. This would increase tree survival and add to the tree canopy.



Lexington has a number of significant trees in rights of way (Catalpa Street with its ginkgoes), parks, city owned land and accessible private property such as Lexington Cemetery with its national co-champion American Basswood almost dwarfing Henry Clay's tomb and memorial. *The cemetery keeps an inventory of its trees and has a map of them. To generate appreciation about all of these trees, identify more significant trees throughout Lexington, create a driving tour and place online a map locating and relating the story about this living heritage.*

Lexington provides well written materials (Street Tree Selection and Care, Stop the Emerald Ash Borer, The Lexington Tree Board and Street Tree Guidelines) to aid the public. *Include links to these publications in the city's email communications with the residents. If there are any mailings (utilities?) from the city these publications could be included or promoted.*

Dead street trees need removal and trees are needed in numerous locations including: William Wells Brown Community School (soil needs amending and landscaping), one median in Beaumont Centre Parkway, Nicholasville Road, Citation Boulevard medians, numerous rights of way (some neighborhoods have none) and single family homes.

Attract more participation during the Arbor Day and Reforest the Bluegrass events by providing children the opportunity to experience rope and harness tree climbing - large trees or crane required.

The cost share program for low income residents for tree removal is helpful. *However, the way to increase the planting of more trees in the right of way is by eliminating the requirement for property owners to maintain the trees in the right of way in front of their property.* The cost to maintain and then remove a large tree is a

serious deterrent for many people no matter their income level. Many communities take on that maintenance task and see much higher participation in right of way tree plantings.

The Tree Board is empowered with a mission that includes outreach and advocacy and *needs to be involved in decisions on how to use a portion of the stormwater tax for the planting of trees to deal with stormwater runoff.*



At the Henry Clay estate, we observed what appeared to be an adopt-a-tree program. *Develop a program which allows donations for memorial trees in the parks. The fee should be high enough to also place money into reserves to pay for lifelong maintenance of the tree.*

The Arboretum State Botanical Garden of Kentucky has a diverse collection of trees and plantings in a unique and educational layout in seven simulated regional landscapes of Kentucky (Walk Across Kentucky). *Many users walking for exercise miss the educational opportunities the arboretum has to offer because exercising means moving. We suggest the development of a cell phone app that provides location-specific information as the walkers move along the path. QR codes could provide information at locations where there are benches.*

Greater diversity of tree species is needed in certain neighborhoods to guard against a catastrophic loss in case of disease.



At Keeneland, the judges were amazed to see large containers (perhaps 300 gallons each!) of water with a faucet and hose leading to dripline at the tree roots. They are the largest “gator bags” we’ve ever seen. This is the way to get trees established.

In some newer subdivisions, we noticed that only one type of street tree was used. *Consider implementing a standard 30-20-10 approach to tree planting that prevents an overplanting of a certain species and maintains a high diversity of tree species. Thirty species of 20 genera of 10 families creates an acceptable genetic assortment of trees and in turn makes the tree canopy less susceptible to widespread future pest or disease devastation. This selection method will assure that one pest infestation will only wipe out small sections of tree cover.*

4. Environmental Efforts	Max Points	Actual Score
Sustainability practices. Recycling (paper, glass, metal, plastic, electronics, etc.), policies and by-laws, sustainable development strategies, waste reduction, hazardous waste minimization and collection (oil, paint, chemicals, used batteries, etc.), water quality and conservation, energy conservation, environmental cleanup activities, reducing carbon footprint, environmentally friendly transportation, LEED certification, air, noise and light pollution, rain gardens and rain barrels, composting, energy efficiency, youth programs, etc. Events such as Earth Day, Recycling Days, Bike to Work Days, etc.		
Municipal		
Leadership in environmental initiatives	25	17
Effective communication of environmental strategies and initiatives	25	17
New programs, improvement and innovation	25	17
Business		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	16
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	7
Residential		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	17
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	8
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in environmental efforts	20	17
Youth participation in environmental activities	20	17
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	133.00

Comments and suggestions:



At Keeneland Thoroughbred Auction House, manure and straw are mixed and composted, then sold as living mulch. The city offers free mulch to residents.

Public transportation is convenient and inexpensive. Bus fare is only \$1 with unlimited transfers one way. A free trolley also offers downtown circulator service, operated by Lextran! Two routes serve downtown Lexington and connect the University of Kentucky and Transylvania University, and all spots in between. In addition, bicycle riding is convenient on the many trails. Bike racks were noticed in many of the places where they would be expected.

Commendations to Seedleaf.org for collecting food waste from local restaurants and making compost out of it for community gardens.

Kudos to the city for its reclamation and restoration of McConnell Springs. This former dumping site has been transformed into a nature preserve with several miles of trails, programming, and opportunities for volunteers to help remove invasives.

Livegreenlexington has 700 business members who are committed to some of the key elements of

environmental stewardship including recycling, saving energy and water, and composting. The companies are not required to commit to doing each element, however, *it is important to also emphasize the “Reduce” element, encouraging businesses to reduce packaging, and adopt the use of recycled/recyclable materials.*

Because all the local landfills are closed, Lexington has made an admirable commitment to be a zero waste community by 2020. That’s just six years away, so there’s plenty to do. *One avenue of progress on this front would be to design your community events, festivals, and parades to be zero waste. Information on how one town has done that is available at http://www.ivqid.org/conservation/waste_not.*

You may want to evaluate whether the closed landfills are generating sufficient methane to warrant capturing it and using it to heat greenhouses or other uses.

The city picks up yard waste at the curb. *Offering composters at cost and teaching composting workshops would encourage people to compost in their own gardens, eliminating the need to haul yard waste to the city’s facility and saving labor, vehicle wear and tear, and gasoline. In addition, converting to a “pay as you throw” scheme which charges by weight would provide motivation for additional recycling efforts.*

The judges were told about the “Yellow bike” bike loan program, but were unable to find reliable current details – perhaps it has been disbanded. *Consider hiring a private company to promote and manage this worthwhile program.*

At some of the Seedleaf community gardens, an opportunity for “free” water exists if you partner with a neighbor to harvest rainwater from their downspouts into rain barrels. This water can be used to irrigate the raised beds.

Lexington appears to be the land of abundant rainfall, and we were not told about any plans in place to promote reduced water consumption during times of drought. The UN says that water scarcity is one of the most severe problems affecting the world today. <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml>. *While saving water may not be a priority now, reduced water usage will result in reduced water and waste water treatment costs, use of fewer chemicals, and will extend the life of your water treatment facilities. If it isn’t already being done, offer free low flow showerheads and rebates on low flush toilets and on low water use appliances.*



Rain gardens along E. Vine Street are a good start for dealing with stormwater. *Because Lexington has so much rain and stormwater runoff is a problem, consider requiring permeable paving, rain barrels, bioswales and other low impact development concepts into your building code. More details can be found at http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/publications.htm#epa03_imp.*

Curbside recycling is offered as well as 16 7/24 dropoff locations. Route software is used to track recycling habits. Hazardous waste is collected annually, and e-waste can be taken to a dropoff site. *Encourage people to take their metal recyclables to one of the scrap yards where they can be paid for the value of the metal.*

E-waste is accepted for recycling six days per week. It appears from the city website that there is no charge for dropping off e-waste. *Perhaps a vocational school could rebuild old computers and offer them at no or low cost to low-income families.*

The city website did not indicate where and when pharmaceuticals can be disposed of. *Consider enlisting pharmacies or perhaps the police department, and set up a program.*

If it isn't already being done, change traffic lights and street lights to LEDs which use much less energy than incandescent lights and last much longer, reducing maintenance costs.

5. Heritage Preservation	Max Points	Actual Score
Historical, natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage. Preservation and restoration of buildings, homes, churches, cemeteries; heritage sites and/or monuments; heritage parks, historical gardens and heritage trees; artifacts; historical society; heritage advisory committee, museums, archives, history books, and interpretative programs; ordinances and policies. Resource availability. Farmers markets, festivals and parades.		
Municipal		
Leadership in preservation and restoration initiatives	25	23
Legal protection of heritage sites	25	22
Resource availability for preservation and restoration	25	20
Business		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	15	13
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	12
Residential		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	15	12
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	12
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in cultural, historical, and natural heritage activities	20	17
Youth involvement in heritage activities	20	16
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	147.00

Comments and suggestions:

Within the urban core we saw a well executed housing renovation project on S. Limestone that preserved the distinctive structures and added contemporary additional living quarters to the rear. This type of responsible development in an area that will feel the pressure for increased density as the area within the Urban Boundary is filled should be showcased. The planned 21C Hotel with its adaptive reuse of a high rise building will place a needed hotel right in the heart of downtown. Habitat for Humanity is now restoring homes and that will eliminate some demolitions. These homes will better fit the character of the neighborhoods.



In rural areas, the cherished historic rock fences have been preserved and in some cases their styles and ages have been noted with signs. *As walls fail due to the vagaries of nature and automobile interactions, long term plans for rebuilding them need to be developed. In the case of car interactions, if the information is available, be sure to submit a claim for repair to the perpetrator’s insurance company.*

Chevy Chase and other historic neighborhoods could use historic lamp posts (to replace silver goose necks) or poles with bronze signs attached denoting the perimeter of the neighborhood. Banner arms could be used to display banners for community or neighborhood events. To aid in night sky conservation, make sure they are Dark Sky approved <http://www.darksky.org>.

Houses along Columbia Avenue are being torn down and replaced with structures that are out of scale to the neighborhood. *Encourage neighborhoods including this one to seek an overlay or historic district to halt demolitions and encourage restorations and renovations.*



The plethora of historic districts with a total of 1,900 protected structures speaks well of the city's respect for its heritage. *Encourage National Register Historic District neighborhoods (unprotected from demolition) to seek local district status or individual landmark designation.*

Assist historic commercial structures in the display of historic photographs of their buildings with dates, activities and people depicted noted.

Create an open doors day with historical displays for businesses that are in restored structures in order to inspire others to restore structures. Perhaps a sidewalk sale can be incorporated.

Ashland Terrace has nice brick walkways and individual 4 x 8 bricks can be purchased and engraved for fundraising. *The 8 x 8 bricks can continue to be used for memorials and/or sold for a higher price. Bricks can also be engraved to recognize donors instead of placing plaques throughout the garden. Typically this is less expensive. This also applies to the Lexington Women's Garden brick walkway. The more bricks with names the more the community is engaged. Excess bricks could be stored at the engraving business.*

6. Overall Impression Cleanliness, lack of litter and graffiti. Maintenance of public open spaces, medians and boulevard strips, streets, sidewalks, walking and biking trails, curbs, ditches, road shoulders, unattended and vacant lots, buildings, garbage receptacles; lack of weeds, dog waste policies and receptacles, notices/posters appropriately displayed, vandalism not evident. Maintenance of the hardscape: walls, lamp posts, benches, playgrounds, etc. Appropriate use and placement of graphic elements such as banners, signs and murals.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Overall cleanliness	10	9
Maintenance of public roads and shoulders	10	9
Condition of public buildings and properties	10	9
Impact of graphic elements - banners, signs, murals, etc.	10	8.5
Business		
Overall cleanliness	20	17
Condition of buildings and properties	20	17
Residential		
Overall cleanliness	10	7.5
Condition of buildings and properties	10	7.5
Community Involvement		
Participation in clean up efforts, adopt-a-spot, annual cleanup days, etc.	15	13
Recognition of volunteer efforts	10	8
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	125.00	105.50

Comments and suggestions:

Flying into Lexington, the views of the beautifully maintained horse farms welcome visitors and set the expectation of a clean and green town. The city does not disappoint. The downtown areas are clean and generally free of graffiti.

Good way-finding signage is apparent throughout the city.



It was great to see the solar-powered trash compactor downtown. It's an example of an investment in a cost and labor-saving device that also helps keep the streets clean.

Versailles Road heading into Lexington from the airport needs a gateway. Some intersections along the gateway have mast arm traffic lights but others are lacking them. The appearance would be improved if all the traffic light structures are consistent.



Several murals enhance the streetscape and help create a sense of place. We were particularly impressed with the mural of Abraham Lincoln on E. Vine Street. *Meanwhile Woodland Park's racquet ball court wall facing E. High Street looks drab and could sport a colorful mural.*

Doggie bags are readily available. *Consider having these sponsored by veterinarians – targeted marketing at its best!*

Weeds in street and sidewalk cracks and gutters detract from the appearance of neighborhoods. *These can actually damage the pavement if permitted to grow. But they can be easily removed with herbicide, pressure washing, steam, or even flame. <http://www.northcoastgardening.com/2009/03/organic-weed-control-how-to-kill-weeds/>.*

Many of the fire hydrants and curbs would benefit from a fresh coat of paint. This could be a project for Scouts or students who need community service hours.

There are a number of strategically placed utility boxes. *Invite artists to paint them with Lexington related scenes/themes and place a page with their locations on the city website.*

To improve property appearance, encourage businesses to keep their large trash cans behind their buildings and to screen their dumpsters.

Checklist for Judges and Participants:

Yes	No	N/A	
X			Were the judges given a community profile, itinerary, and map prior to their arrival?
X			Did the itinerary provide for seeing a representative cross-section of the participant?
X			Were the guides knowledgeable about the participant and horticultural aspects?
X			Were the judges able to modify the schedule if needed?
X			Did the judges meet with the media?
X			Did the judges meet with municipal leaders?
X			Were the judges asked to give presentations?
X			Were the judges able to meet with and talk to volunteers?
X			Was enough time allotted to complete the evaluation form in a quiet place?

Comments:

Next time, it would be helpful if the people we meet could wear nametags so that we can get to know them more easily. Also, please be sure to complete the last page of the profile that lists the names and contact info for people the judges meet.

DEFINITIONS

Municipal: City hall and other municipal properties, parks and open spaces, roads, roadsides, sidewalks, cemeteries, schools and sports facilities, empty lots and brownfields, libraries, hospitals, assisted living, churches, universities, and colleges

Business: Commercial and industrial sectors, shopping centers, stores, office buildings, restaurants, mixed use developments, service stations, railway and bus stations, plant nurseries/garden centers

Residential: Single family residences, condominiums, town houses, planned communities, apartment buildings, gated communities, manufactured home communities, trailer parks, residential developments, neighborhoods, graduated care facilities

Community Involvement: Volunteer efforts by individuals, clubs, youth groups, church groups, civic organizations, and social clubs for community enhancement



2014 Special Mention

Participant: Lexington, KY

General description of the recognized criterion (200 words max)

Landscaped Areas

A Lexington In Bloom garden contest every other year awards prizes to the best gardens and this year there were 200 nominees. This successfully raises the bar for gardens throughout Lexington. The astoundingly well visited Arboretum State Botanical Garden of Kentucky has a series of themed display gardens with a wonderful children's garden that tells the story of Kentucky's natural systems and teaches with a smile. Wellington Park's Lexington Women's Remembrance Garden is a bright spot of color with a good cause and volunteers to care for it.

Numerous facilities and businesses contribute to the beauty of Lexington with their landscaping. These include: Portofino, Hilton, Fifth Third Center, The Kentucky Horse Park and Foundation, Season's Catering, Keeneland, Triangle Foundation, Mt. Brilliant Farm, Beaumont and much more. Numerous residences including numerous historic homes are also well landscaped.

Special Project or Initiative (50 words max)

The Urban Boundary created in 1958 continues to protect the culture, history, and agricultural lands from urban sprawl and define the city's character. A Purchase of Development Rights program spearheaded by Fayette Alliance has saved 27,000 acres from development. This program assures that owners of agricultural lands are kept whole in exchange for not selling their land for more dense development.

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