

America in Bloom 2016 EVALUATION REPORT



Community: Lexington, Kentucky

Population Category: Over 50,000

Evaluation Dates: July 7-8, 2016

Judges: Meg Whitmer and Katy Moss Warner

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 evaluation criteria are adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community’s location.

This Evaluation Report is based upon your community’s efforts in each of the following criteria:

Criteria	Possible Points	Actual Points
1. Floral Displays	175.00	155.00
2. Landscaped Areas	175.00	157.00
3. Urban Forestry	175.00	158.00
4. Environmental Efforts	175.00	150.00
5. Heritage Preservation	175.00	162.00
6. Overall Impression	125.00	113.5
Total	1000	895.5
%	0.89550	
Bloom Rating	5	

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%

Community representatives to receive the Evaluation Report:

Name: Ann Garrity	Title: AIB – Lexington Chair	Email: anngarrity@gmail.com
Name: Linda Gorton	Title: Past Vice Mayor, Lexington	Email: lgorton@ky.gov
Name: Jim Gray	Title: Mayor - Lexington	Email: mayorlexingtonky.gov

General Observations and Recommendations:

Congratulations Lexington! You are truly a model America in Bloom city, earning the top rating of 5 blooms this year! You are also the winner in your population category! As a 3rd year participant in the AIB national awards program, Lexington clearly possesses the essence of Southern culture, charm, history and hospitality. Thank you for your warm welcome, gracious hospitality, and thorough, well-planned tour. Lexington's pride shows throughout the community with volunteers and partners working together to make their city a special and unique destination. Hosting the America in Bloom Symposium in 2018 is an exceptional opportunity to showcase and celebrate all of the wonderful things that make Lexington a 5-bloom city.

The tour gave us a clear sense of Lexington's commitment as a community to improving quality of life issues. So many wonderful projects were underway, either in the planning stages, under construction, or recently completed. All these projects dovetail nicely together to create a network of residents who are engaged in improving Lexington's urban outdoor spaces. *If the City of Lexington doesn't already have a webpage for volunteers, it may be a good idea to create one so that volunteer efforts can be quantified to learn how many volunteers, residents and staff are involved in creating and maintaining Lexington's quality of life.*

Lexington's distinct brand is recognizable whether one approaches from the air or the roadways. The wisdom of establishing the nation's first Urban Growth Boundary, enacted in 1958, coupled with the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program protecting farms from development have clearly distinguished this city in a positive way and are perhaps its greatest and most valuable assets. The resulting acreage of open green space surrounding the city distinguishes Lexington as a forward-thinking community that values its agricultural heritage as a primary component of its "brand". Protecting its brand and quality of life has become and should remain a top priority.

The Legacy Bike Trail is a wonderful amenity and important asset that supports and enhances Lexington's quality of life. Signs along the trail tell Lexington's story, its rail culture and economy and role in the Underground Railroad. This rolling history lesson is also a ribbon of public art-in-motion and a heart-healthy transportation alternative that will eventually encircle the city as a pedestrian and cycling green belt. Its popularity will continue to grow as more people discover and use it.

Lexington has a lot to offer visitors of varied interests. America in Bloom appreciates your participation the past three years, your well-planned tours, and your commitment to host the 2018 America in Bloom Awards and Symposium. Many thanks to Ann Garrity, Kay Cannon and Linda Gorton for your leadership, planning and hospitality skills. You created a wonderful, memorable Lexington experience for us and we look forward to your continued participation as a 5 bloom city.

1. Floral Displays

Flower beds, containers, planters, baskets, window boxes, trellises. Arrangement, originality, distribution, location, diversity, balance, harmony, quality of maintenance. Use and integration of annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, bulbs, tropical plants, and seasonal flowers and colorful foliage that provide year-round interest.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Leadership and plan of action for floral displays	20	19
Concept and design, variety of plantings, overall effect	20	18
Maintenance and quality of displays	20	19
Design for all seasons	15	13
Business		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	14
Maintenance and quality of displays	15	14
Residential		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	12
Maintenance and quality of displays	15	12
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in design, planting, and maintenance of floral displays	20	17
Financial and in-kind contributions to floral displays	20	17
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	155.00

Observations and Recommendations:

Lexington has an impressive display of flowers throughout the downtown area. 221 baskets filled with different combinations of petunias in shades of purple, lavender and pink hang from lampposts. 245 large concrete containers are planted effectively with dramatic “thriller” plants, colorful “filler” and “spiller” plants. Many colorful flower beds add to the festive ambience of downtown including numerous tree well/rain gardens with flowers featured. These are all maintained by the city parks department with daily watering starting at 2am and regular fertilizing. *Although the displays are effective, we recommend taking the most successful 2-3 flower combos in baskets and use in all baskets. Try to give*



continuous color effect throughout all baskets and containers. The baskets are removed after the summer with holiday decorations displayed on the lampposts. Containers are planted with a spring display of pansies and a fall/winter display of flowering kale and other cool season crops.

Beautifully planted and maintained pollinator gardens exist throughout Lexington. The pollinator garden placed appropriately and effectively at the entrance to Wellington Park is a particularly attractive garden with over 30 species of plants many of which are native. Many species such as the *Echinacea tennesseensis* are planted in “colonies” and other dramatic plants such as the Rattlesnake Master and the Royal Catchfly are used as accents. Maintenance is well done by the “Wild Ones” with an individual

volunteer assigned a zone to weed and manage throughout the summer with guidance and direction from the passionate pollinator guru Beate Popkin. This colorful display gives residents an inspiring model to follow in their home gardens. In addition, the Women’s Recognition Garden in Wellington Park also has many pollinator plants in their healing garden that was planted in honor of breast cancer survivors. Both of these gardens are maintained by volunteers in a successful partnership with the Parks Dept. *We would recommend registering these gardens as well as all other pollinator gardens large and small throughout Lexington in the “Million Pollinator Garden Challenge”.* It is our understanding that the pollinator garden at the UK Arboretum is already registered. Wouldn’t it be great for Lexington to be recognized as the city with the most pollinator gardens in America? You could do it!

Many downtown businesses add to the floral displays with excellent plantings of their own. The Chase Bank has a striking display. The Irish Pub - as well as a number of other storefront businesses and restaurants throughout the city - have flowering hanging baskets, containers and window boxes. In addition, in areas where industrial buildings have been adapted to retail commercial use, colorful containers add character and a sense of place. *To create a sense of pride, competition and distinction, perhaps all restaurants throughout the city could be challenged to feature flowers at their entrances. America in Bloom Lexington might want to start a fun program of recognizing the most colorful/most creative/funniest/best themed floral displays in restaurants throughout the city to encourage a city wide visual celebration of its restaurants.*



Lexington has many gorgeous horse farms with traditional white fences and rolling green hills. At the entrances to some of these farms are elegant displays of flowers. Ashland Farm and Fasig-Tipton Farm have beautiful entrance displays. *Perhaps you could encourage more farms to incorporate flowers at their entrances.*



Having a place locally to see the new varieties of flowers that are offered by the horticulture industry and that work particularly well in your climate is of great value. The UK Arboretum offers a fine flower trial program that showcase flowers from Ball Horticulture Company as well as those new varieties that have been selected nationally for excellent performance by the All American Selection program. What a great asset to have these trials at your very own arboretum. *It would be helpful for the arboretum to identify the top performers each year and offer the information through an article in the*

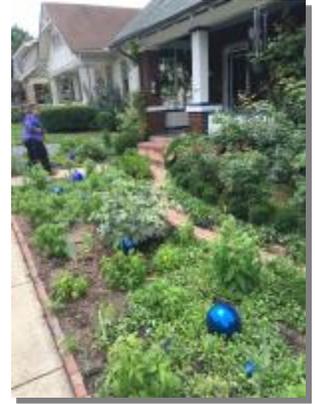


local newspaper, spread the news through the America in Bloom Lexington website as well as through other social media. These are the varieties of flowers that people and businesses in Lexington should be using. These are the varieties that local nurseries should be selling. In addition, the UK Arboretum has in its “Walk Around Kentucky” an area depicting the Bluegrass region that features spring ephemerals, e.g., flowers that appear like magic in the spring and then fade. *Making these plants available – either through arboretum sales or partnerships with local nurseries - could be of great benefit to local gardeners and landscapers.*

Many residences throughout Lexington have excellent front gardens, many of which include both annual and perennial flowers. For many years, Lexington in Bloom (an organization unaffiliated with America in Bloom)



has recognized these gardens in their annual awards program. There are so many beautiful historic homes and so many beautiful historic neighborhoods in Lexington. It would add greatly to the overall beauty of the city if there were obvious clusters of beautiful residential gardens. *America in Bloom Lexington might want to consider hosting an annual event similar to the Garden Walk Buffalo that features residential gardens and offers encouraging advice and ideas to homeowners. This has been a significant economic boost to Buffalo and has positioned them as a garden tourism destination. It*



would be a wonderful way to celebrate different neighborhoods - perhaps a different one each year – and identify Lexington as a garden tourism destination.

2. Landscaped Areas

Overall design and suitability of landscape, turf, and ground covers. Use of native and introduced plants. Good use of design principles (i.e., balance of plant material and constructed elements, harmony, color, texture, shape, focal points, etc.). Sustainability. Integration of lighting, hardscapes, and site elements such as lamp posts, water features, drinking fountains, bicycle racks, benches, trash/recycling receptacles, etc. Maintenance (weeds, mulching practices, edging). Site rejuvenation and rehabilitation. Efforts in strategic planning. Community gardens, children’s gardens, healing gardens, pollinator gardens, Backyard Wildlife Habitat, Audubon, and other specialty public gardens and zoos.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Overall design and planting of landscape, turf and groundcovers	15	14
Environmental management of sports fields and turf	15	14
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	14
Sustainable management, naturalization and eco-design	15	14
Business		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	13
Management of turf and groundcovers	10	9
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	13
Residential		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	13
Management of turf and groundcovers	15	13
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	12
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement, i.e. garden clubs, neighborhood groups, Master Gardeners and University extension, in funding, planting, and maintenance of landscaped areas	15	14
Participation in future planning (committees, councils, and advisory boards.)	15	14
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	157.00

Observations and Recommendations:

Lexington is distinguished by its agricultural and equestrian heritage, bourbon distilleries and particularly by its native Kentucky Bluegrass. This beautiful and hardy turf is well maintained by the city staff with very minimal use of pesticides, using Integrated Pest Management. Lexington family farms and ranches surround the city



with acres of expansive green open space. Many farm entrances are located along major gateways to the city center and set the tone for the visitor experience. Fasig-Tipton Farm is a great example of an elegant farm entry. The stacked stone walls and columns, ornamental gates and large planted urns give the property an estate-like impression. Consider sponsoring a competition between other horse farms to encourage more



landscaped farm entrances on major gateway roads, with each farm having its own distinct landscape and hardscape style.

Stacked stone walls are unique to the region and protected from removal; recognition and appreciation of the history and craft of creating dry stack stone walls could be another component of the farm gateways design competition.

From the planted medians at the city's gateways to Lexington's public and private gardens throughout the city, these well-maintained landscape areas feature native and ornamental shrubs, seasonal perennials and wildflowers of the region, all set off nicely by the region's native bluegrass. Clearly Lexington's residents care



about their distinctive regional landscape and particularly about gardening. Rain gardens throughout the city utilize native and ornamental shrubs, wildflowers and groundcovers in the downtown area to illustrate Lexington's commitment to sustainability practices through its storm water management efforts. *Some of the rain garden plantings are sparse and need more vegetation.* Small signs that identify these as rain gardens help to educate citizens about the city's storm water management methods. *Develop a program where businesses and civic organizations can adopt a rain garden as part of their participation and support of the city's environmental strategies.*

The city's visionary long range plan for greening downtown's busy streets and opening up the Town Branch is an exciting example of its commitment to modeling sustainable practices and eco-design throughout the public realm. The Town Branch Commons project floodwater corridors are being re-configured to replicate more natural creek systems, integrating native limestone boulders and riparian plantings to create an amenity along the city's bike trail. *Educational signs and social media are good ways to inform the public about these important environmental efforts. Social media is a good tool to measure public use, enjoyment, education and volunteer recruitment to maintain this new amenity.*

Temporary 'pop up' green spaces in the downtown core help to test proposals before committing to traffic and infrastructure changes. This is an excellent way to engage citizens in designing a more pedestrian friendly downtown. *The 'pop up' spaces could become part of a design competition, a fun way to involve young designers in tactical urbanism.*

The UK Arboretum's Walk Across Kentucky provides a unique educational experience in a garden setting; interactive play areas throughout the children's garden provide an excellent hands-on learning experience for its young visitors. Master Gardener and Eagle Scout projects and programs at the arboretum further support the garden's educational mission. The pollinator gardens there and at Wellington Park are excellent demonstration projects to educate residents about all types of pollinator species and the plants that support them. *These two gardens could aid in establishing more pollinator gardens to add to the Million Pollinator Garden registry.*



A common maintenance challenge in most cities is the narrow strips of weedy grass between the curb and sidewalk edge. These strips are often unsightly ragged edges that are too narrow to be maintained by a mower, resulting in string trimmer maintenance. *Consider utilizing other native groundcovers and wildflower borders where use of native bluegrass presents maintenance challenges: roadway medians, shady areas under large tree canopies are especially vulnerable to maintenance decline. Planting utility strips between curbs and sidewalks will help reduce maintenance and soften street edges. Create educational signs along urban pedestrian corridors and bike trails to provide information about the city's water quality and storm water*

management practices. Identification of urban rain gardens in the downtown area, riparian plantings along creek beds, and pollinator species in public areas showcase these areas as demonstration landscapes. Recognition of excellence in commercial, residential and industrial landscapes promotes and supports the efforts of citizens and business owners, encouraging more participation. Posting recognition signs in front of these distinguished landscapes, as well as posting on social media, local television and radio stations, will help to inspire others to improve their property.



Large roundabouts provide another opportunity to showcase the area's regional landscape and cultural history to the public. As a focal point, roundabouts can serve as unique navigational tools, acting as a compass rose, sundial and even a windvane for people negotiating their way through the city. The new roundabout on the UK campus is large and prominent, with an opportunity to make a bold statement that celebrates Lexington's heritage and agricultural identity using native pollinator and wildlife habitat species.

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 and green buffer zones; scheduled succession plantings, Tree City USA and their Growth Award. Efforts in management, planning, maintenance, improvement, and innovation. Written policies, bylaws and regulations, long- and short-term plans, trees on private property protected.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Overall plan of action, tree planting programs, variety of species, inventory	20	19
Tree maintenance	15	14
Preservation and restoration of natural areas	15	13
Tree protection/planting regulations and by-laws	15	14
Business		
Overall planting program	20	17
Tree maintenance	15	14
Residential		
Overall planting program	20	17
Tree maintenance	15	13
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in funding, planting, and maintenance of trees (i.e. Tree City USA)	20	19
Volunteer involvement of youth in tree programs (i.e., Arbor Day, etc.)	20	18
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	158.00

Observations and Recommendations:



Lexington continues to make a significant effort to protect and enhance its tree canopy. The overall impression in visiting Lexington is that you are in a city that treasures its trees and is continually planting. There is evidence of newly planted trees throughout the city. There are grand old heritage trees in the parks, in the Lexington cemetery as well as in residential areas. The city maintains arborists and tree care professionals in a number of its departments so that their expertise is included in planning, maintaining and evaluating trees on a regular basis. In addition, there are a number of commissions, boards and not-for-profit groups that encourage tree protection, planting, proper maintenance and other strategies that recognize the many benefits of trees in the urban environment.

A study of the Lexington tree canopy was commissioned from the Davey Tree Company in 2012. Based on their findings and recommendations, a Canopy Tree Commission was formed with a goal of increasing the canopy of trees in Lexington from the current level of 26% to a recommended goal of nearly 40%. This was not only in recognition of the value trees offer to water quality initiatives as dictated in the “consent decree” but also the value trees provide to enhanced quality of life. As residential areas are the most important areas of opportunity, there is a focus on finding ways to increase the tree canopy in residential neighborhoods. The

Tree Canopy Commission is made up of leaders and representatives of other tree interest groups in Lexington including the Tree Board, the Urban County Council , “GreenSource,” Lexington parks and natural resources staff, “Reforest the Bluegrass,” America in Bloom Lexington, UK professors, professional arborists, etc. *It is recommended that a tree nursery professional be added to this commission.* Such bold initiatives do not happen without specific strategic goals and funding. *It is further recommended that an overall strategy be identified with a fundraising goal. Each tree interest group should take on the responsibility of achieving some aspect of the overall mission of the Canopy Tree Commission.*

The Lexington Tree Board sets policy including the Tree Protection Ordinance for new development which establishes a tree canopy requirement of 30% for existing and/or new plantings and a commercial zoning requirement of 20% tree canopy.

Although the urban growth boundary has been in place for many years protecting the agricultural and natural lands in Lexington, there has been a concern that the definition for the kinds of acceptable recreational activities permitted on these protected lands was inadequate. The city council recently approved an ordinance that more clearly defined acceptable recreational activities further protecting stands of trees on natural lands.



“Reforest the Bluegrass” is a group of volunteers ranging from Boy Scouts to community advocates that has planted tree seedlings in riparian areas of the city for a number of years. Over 200,000 seedlings have been planted to date. Generous grants from local corporations and energy companies have made this possible. Trees in many of the areas are now mature such as the impressive stand in McConnell Park. Although the original initiative was intended to improve water quality in creeks, it has shown itself to be a way to save maintenance dollars by removing the need to mow. Bravo! *It might be worth considering planting groves of seedlings at schools where landscapes have not been improved.*

Arbor Day is celebrated each year at the UK Arboretum with an official proclamation, educational exhibits, a ceremonial tree planting and a tree give away. *As we were told education as to tree selection, tree planting and tree maintenance is the barrier to residents planting trees, it might be useful to stage 2 or 3 more events such as this each year in different parts of the city.*



Many of the municipal parks have lovely old trees. The tree walk in Woodland Park is excellent - a wonderful way to showcase the trees both native and introduced that are adapted well to the climate and soil conditions of Lexington. The new graffiti proof labels on vandal proof concrete posts are attractive and informative. The mulch rings around the trunks offer an elegant frame to these special trees and allow the label to be placed inside the ring for ease of maintenance.

The UK Arboretum has an impressive display of trees native to Kentucky in its “Walk Around Kentucky.” From the Prairie Meadow with no trees to the Mississippi Embayment with water loving trees to the Bluegrass Region with its many beautiful conifers and hardwoods, this is a place to see the best trees for Lexington and see them in their mature stature. In addition, the “Home Demonstration Garden” as well as other areas of the UK Arboretum showcase trees from other areas around the world that are well suited to the climate and conditions of Lexington. *As various local volunteer groups require information for homeowners on trees best suited for specific locations – whether native or introduced - perhaps the UK Arboretum staff could provide a valuable one-on-one service to those looking for advice on what to plant and where to find the trees.*

Cities are often challenged with tree diseases that severely compromise the overall tree canopy. When these diseases hit the largest and most beautiful trees, the effects can be devastating. Anticipating the damage and setting strategies for tree replacement is critical. Lexington, like many other cities in the Midwest, has been hit hard by the Emerald Ash Borer. It was impressive to note no dead ash trees. It was also impressive to learn of the strategy taken by the city to protect the most valuable of its ash trees, the Blue Ash. These trees, some of which are over 300 years old and healthy, are being treated by Arbor Jet to protect against the Emerald Ash Borer. Bravo to Lexington for having this foresight and committing the resources to these valuable trees. In addition, it was encouraging to learn at the UK Arboretum that research is being done to determine if the “Fringe Tree” is susceptible to the Emerald Ash Borer to determine if this valuable species should be protected.



The Lexington Cemetery has an excellent collection of grand old trees of many different species. The Tree Walk brochure is excellent. Many other grand old trees have been protected throughout the city on public and private lands. Many of these trees are local, state and national champions. *A guide to the “Heritage Trees of Lexington” would be of great value and interest.*

4. Environmental Efforts

Sustainability practices. Recycling (paper, glass, metal, plastic, electronics, clothing, etc.), transfer/recycle stations, 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, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), rain gardens and rain barrels, composting, energy efficiency, youth programs, etc. Events such as Earth Day, Recycling Days, Bike to Work Days, etc.	Max Points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Leadership in environmental initiatives	25	23
Effective communication of environmental strategies and initiatives	25	22
New programs, improvement and innovation	25	23
Business		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	17
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	8
Residential		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	16
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	7
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	150.00

Observations and Recommendations:

Lexington’s environmental culture is woven into the community on every level. The 2011 EPA consent decree finding LFUCG in violation of The Clean Water Act for waste water and sewage flooding spurred resident-driven improvements that have had a ripple effect for the entire city. The Division of Environmental Services is the city’s lead agency charged with educating and engaging city staff and the public on all environmental issues. Among their most recent accomplishments are the following: measured over 20% reduction of its carbon footprint, initiated a bike loan program, installed rain gardens throughout the downtown, retrofitted all of the traffic signals with LED lights, purchased 11 natural gas powered vehicles, and restored McConnell Springs creating a nature park with trails and a boardwalk around the springs, which was a former industrial dump site.



Redevelopment of older, historic neighborhoods within the Urban Service boundary is ongoing. Adaptive reuse of historic and industrial buildings is becoming the norm rather than the exception. Food Chain is an exciting new business co-op housed in a former bread factory. Among the tenants are a microbrewery, fish market and café, bourbon distillery, community bike repair shop and aquaponic farm. Future plans include a fresh produce market and kitchen. This co-op of businesses is non-profit; the building is located next to the Legacy Trail, a perfect place for Broke Spoke, the community bike repair shop. The grain waste from the microbrewery is recycled into fish food. Water use in the aquaponics operation is minimal, filtered by plants and recycled back into the fish tank system. ‘Food Feet’ is the measurable outcome of this new business enterprise, i.e., twenty feet is the distance the fresh fish

travel to the end user. *Twenty feet! Tthis is a fact worth spreading! Does the city have a 'page that counts'? This information could be available on the city's Division of Environmental Services webpage, or on the city's social media feeds along with other valuable information, such as the bike share program, waste collection information and data, composting locations and availability, all things having to do with environmental policies, programs, events, volunteer opportunities, and accomplishments.*

UK's north campus is experiencing a building boom, mostly student housing. All new buildings have a Silver LEED rating. This is a fact worth sharing. *It would be beneficial to document and regularly post the energy savings of these buildings compared to existing older buildings and how much their reduced carbon footprint will help the city's overall environmental air and water quality index to make the case for cost benefits of building to the LEED standards. Perhaps this could be an annual student project.*

The Town Branch project, a future 2½ mile linear park along the soon-to-be restored Town Branch creek, is already influencing the improvements to industrial and commercial properties bordering this long neglected waterway. Culverted, paved over and reduced to an industrial dumping ground, the Town Branch environmental cleanup is now influencing a rebirth along its course, especially in the Distillery District. Old industrial buildings are being repurposed as micro-distilleries, artist studios, small locally owned cafes, bars and restaurants, even a handmade ice cream shop. Many of these small business enterprises have complementary partnerships with their neighboring businesses in the vicinity, which shrinks their carbon footprint further. *As Town Branch project evolves, develop a visual/virtual water tour of businesses along the TB to celebrate how the creek is showcased as part of their business.*



Rain gardens installed throughout the urban core help address storm water issues by providing natural filtration processes using water loving plants and well-draining soils to filter storm water pollutants on city streets. These mini urban bogs are a simple way to educate the public about water management, which is just as important when plentiful as when water becomes scarce. *Continue to incorporate rain gardens as part of every new water management project and require Low Impact Development (LID) standards for all new construction.*

A cluster of affordable handcrafted homes made from metal shipping progressive Lexington initiative. crafted mostly of recycled/repurposed materials, and the sturdy metal shipping containers provides the necessary modest home, to be customized and clad with whatever homeowner desires. *Encourage more modest housing partnering with the city's housing authority in identifying available for redevelopment. Incentives for high percentage building materials could be given through rebate on permit inspection and Certificate of Occupancy.*



traditional shotgun containers is another These homes are adaptive re-use of structural shell for each material the clusters like this by contiguous lots of recycled/green fees after final

5. Heritage Preservation

Historical, natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage. Preservation and restoration of buildings, homes, churches, cemeteries; heritage sites and/or monuments; heritage parks, historical gardens; historical trees, artifacts; historical society; heritage advisory committee, museums, archives, history books, land trusts/conservation easements and interpretative programs; ordinances and policies including protection of structures/sites from demolition/development. Resource availability. Farmers markets, festivals and parades.	Max Points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Leadership in preservation and restoration initiatives	25	24
Legal protection of heritage sites	25	23
Resource availability for preservation and restoration	25	24
Business		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	15	14
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	14
Residential		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	15	14
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	14
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in cultural, historical, and natural heritage activities	20	18
Youth involvement in heritage activities	20	17
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	162.00

Observations and Recommendations:

Lexington's heritage is rich and multi-layered, from the ground up. Agriculture and architecture visually define the city's cultural history. The Bluegrass Trust identifies buildings of historic significance with their bronze plaque. Entire historic neighborhoods are identified, historic home tours, 'Detours', are offered weekly, champion trees are identified and marked. One citizen held a birthday party for her 200+ yr old Slippery Elm tree. Clearly Lexington cherishes its history and heritage celebrating it in several ways throughout the year. *Birthday parties for the city's champion trees are a great way to celebrate the city's urban forestry heritage, and in particular, its oldest green residents.*

The Legacy Trail, currently 12 miles in length, weaves Lexington's history through the trail ride, tracing the city's economic and railroad roots, particularly its role in the Underground Railroad, as a narrative for riders to take in during stops. *Keep up the great work! Continue to extend the trail. If you haven't already, consider forming a Friends of Legacy Trail foundation to help maintain the trail and help make decisions on how and where to extend the trail.*

Courthouse Square, the Fayette County Courthouse project, is an ambitious adaptive re-use of an iconic building in the heart of downtown Lexington. Congratulations to the city and the development team on brokering an exciting partnership to deliver a project that promises to be very successful with its proximity to Cheapside Market and the heart of the downtown business district. *Considering the substantial investment in the restoration of this building, the congestion of power lines around the building make it difficult to get an unobstructed view of the building from the street for photo ops. Burying all power lines around the building will eliminate the visual clutter and open up the vertical space around the courthouse. It will also reduce possibility of weather-related damage. Perhaps the power company will partner with the development team and the city in a pilot project to begin burying all power lines.*



Isaac Murphy Park, recently completed, is a wonderful tribute to the contributions of Isaac Murphy and other African Americans to the horse racing industry. Situated on Isaac Murphy's former home site, the space promises to become a gathering place for storytelling, performances, art making events and passive enjoyment of this new park. *The new plantings provide minimal separation from busy traffic lanes, giving the park an exposed feeling, more like an upscale bus stop. Perhaps additional perimeter plantings of trees and native shrubs or ornamental grasses would help define and separate the park space from bleeding over into busy street space. Programming for the space will help cement its identity in the neighborhood, acting as the anchor for the historic East End neighborhood.*

The most significant cultural and historical resource of Lexington and Fayette County is the preservation of its agricultural lands. Since the establishment of the Urban Service Boundary in 1958, and Lexington's Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, the city has accomplished over half of its goal to protect 50,000 acres of farmland from development. This surrounding green space clearly sets Lexington and Fayette County apart from other typical cities. *If it doesn't exist, consider documenting the value of this program in terms of environmental benefits, as well as cultural and historical narratives that tell the story of these farmlands. Include information about how this long range planning decision has supported other heritage preservation efforts.*

6. Overall Impression

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/recycling receptacles; lack of weeds, dog waste policies and receptacles, notices/posters appropriately displayed, vandalism not evident. Maintenance of the hardscape: walls, lampposts, benches, playgrounds, etc. Appropriate use and placement of sculpture, public art, wayfinding signs, 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, wayfinding signs, murals, etc.	10	9.5
Business		
Overall cleanliness	20	19
Condition of buildings and properties	20	19
Residential		
Overall cleanliness	10	8
Condition of buildings and properties	10	8
Community Involvement		
Participation in clean-up efforts, adopt-a-spot, annual cleanup days, etc.	15	14
Recognition of volunteer efforts	10	9
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	125.00	113.50

Observations and Recommendations:

The overall impression of Lexington is a city that takes great pride in its appearance. All areas of Lexington – municipal, commercial and residential – appear clean and litter free. There was no sign of graffiti. Buildings are well maintained. Street fixtures are elegant and attractive.



Exceptional murals are positioned throughout the city with the Lincoln mural being a true signature of Lexington. *To give appropriate stature to the Lincoln mural, it is recommended that you consider removing the parking under the mural, landscape this strip of land and designate it as a small but significant city park.*

Art has been effectively placed around the city. From the beautiful bronze horses in Thoroughbred Park to the temporary sculpture placed in Isaac Murphy Park to the creative designs at bus stops, art celebrates the people and culture of the city. *At some point, a curator position that is responsible for outdoor art to give it the stature of an*



you might want to establish curating your collection of outdoor museum.



There is no question that you are in beautifully manicured farms with white fences are visible from the plane as you fly in. The Blue Horse way finding signs are a true signature of Lexington and are well placed and beautifully designed to offer excellent information as to the various features and destinations throughout the city. Thoroughbred Park is perfectly located at the center of the city. *For those who don't ride, there did not seem to be a place where someone might learn to ride or where someone might have an opportunity to explore Lexington by horse. Consider the possibilities.*

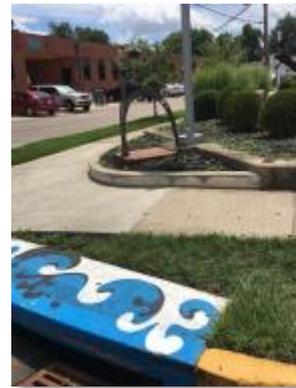
on arriving into Lexington horse country. The

It is also obvious in spending time in Lexington that this is a dog city. People love their dogs. Off leash dog parks are plentiful and good looking. Doggie bags are also readily available. *You might want to consider having doggie bag stations "adopted" by dogs with information about the dog shared at the station. This was done in AIB city Slippery Rock, PA.*

Although it is apparent that utility lines have been put underground in many areas of the city, there is a need for a strategic plan to fund the removal of all overhead lines. These lines mar the aesthetics of important historic structures such as the Court House. In addition, they make the businesses and residents vulnerable to power loss and loss of phone connection.



In Lexington, even the storm sewers canvas for ground level art, enhanced graphic images that draw attention to important public works function. Bravo visual solution as another means to about storm water management. the storm drains to tell the story of interesting way.



have become a with colorful their vital and to this creative educate citizens Continue to paint water in a visually

Checklist:

Yes	No	N/A	
x			Were the judges given a Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and map prior to their arrival?
x			Did the Evaluation Tour Itinerary provide for experiencing a representative cross-section of the community?
x			Were the guides knowledgeable about the community 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 Report in a quiet place?
x			Were you informed about pollinator gardens? How many? (Please use comments section to add details if necessary.)
	x		Was there a wrap-up session at the end of the tour?

Comments:

DEFINITIONS (determined by who owns and/or manages the property)

Municipal: city hall and other municipal properties, parks and open spaces, roads, roadsides, sidewalks, public cemeteries, public schools/universities/colleges, sports facilities, empty lots and brownfields, libraries, hospitals, public railway and bus stations

Business: commercial and industrial sectors, shopping centers, stores, office buildings, restaurants, mixed use developments, service stations, private railway and bus stations, plant nurseries, garden centers, assisted living/nursing home/graduated care facilities, apartment buildings, hotels, private hospitals, churches, not for profit/civic organizations, private cemeteries, private schools/universities/colleges, residential common areas managed by associations

Residential: single family residences, town houses, individual homes in planned/gated/manufactured home communities, residential neighborhoods or developments

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



2016 Special Mentions 2016 Community Recognitions

Community: Lexington, KY

Recognized Criterion: Urban Forestry

The overall impression in visiting Lexington is of a city that treasures its trees and is continually planting. There are grand old heritage trees in the parks, in the Lexington cemetery as well as in residential areas. The city maintains arborists and tree care professionals in a number of its departments so that their expertise is included in planning, maintaining and evaluating trees on a regular basis. In addition, there are a number of commissions, boards and not-for-profit groups that encourage tree protection, planting, proper maintenance and other strategies that recognize the many benefits of trees in the urban environment.

Noteworthy Project or Initiative: Food Chain

Food Chain is a startup nonprofit located in a former bread factory in downtown Lexington. Since 2011, Food Chain has played the leading role in developing a non-profit business co-op, repurposing a derelict industrial building into a thriving compound of locally owned businesses. Situated next to the Legacy Trail, this unique business incubator has become popular with locals and tourists alike. Among the building's tenants are a seafood market and café, craft brewery, bourbon distillery, community bike shop, not-for-profit aquaponic farm, with a future teaching kitchen and produce market coming soon. The leftover grain from the brewery is used as fish food; waste stream is minimal from this business compound. This is a remarkable adaptive reuse project.

America in Bloom ... Planting Pride in Our Communities
2130 Stella Court, Columbus, OH 43215 • (614) 453-0744 • Fax (614) 487-1216
www.AmericaInBloom.org • aib@AmericaInBloom.org