

# America in Bloom 2013 EVALUATION FORM



**Municipality:** Washington, Missouri

**Population Category:** 12,001-18,000

**Visiting Dates:** July 11-12, 2013

**Judges Names:** Melanie Menachem-Riggs and Katy Moss Warner

*America in Bloom promotes nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees and other environment and lifestyle enhancements.*

All judging criteria will be adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the municipality.

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	150	175.00
2. Landscaped Areas	149	175.00
3. Urban Forestry	156.5	175.00
4. Environmental Efforts	145	175.00
5. Heritage Preservation	159	175.00
6. Overall Impression	109	125.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>868.5</b>	<b>1000</b>
%	86.85%	
<b>Bloom Rating</b>	<b>5 Blooms</b>	

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 met: (including email)

Name: Sally Bocklage	Title: WIB co-chair	Email: <a href="mailto:irishiis@yhti.net">irishiis@yhti.net</a>
Name: Dave Wehmeyer	Title: WIB co-chair	Email: <a href="mailto:dave@hillermann.com">dave@hillermann.com</a>
Name: Darren Dunkle	Title: Director of Parks and Rec	Email: <a href="mailto:DDunkle@ci.washington.mo.us">DDunkle@ci.washington.mo.us</a>
Name: Jill Straatmann	Title: AIB Steering Committee	Email: <a href="mailto:jstraatmann@ci.washington.mo.us">jstraatmann@ci.washington.mo.us</a>
Name: Sandy Lucy	Title: Mayor	Email: <a href="mailto:mayor@ci.washington.mo.us">mayor@ci.washington.mo.us</a>

## General Comments and Suggestions:

Congratulations to Washington for being in the America in Bloom program for your third year and for achieving a prestigious FIVE BLOOM rating – the highest level of achievement. It is an inspiration to witness the level of community involvement your Washington in Bloom efforts have brought forth. It is exciting to see all the civic enhancement you have been able to accomplish in a few short years.

Many thanks to the WIB Steering Committee – Sally Bocklage, Dave Wehmeyer, Darren Dunkle, John Steffens and Jill Straatmann - for your gracious hospitality and the warm welcome to your community. It was a joy to meet the WIB Steering Committee and so many of those within the Washington Garden Club, the Washington Historical Society, the Urban Forestry Commission and the City of Washington staff. We were honored to meet your leaders and learn about your outstanding initiatives. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to visit so many fascinating parts of your city. Thank you for hosting us at so many special events. You all have much to be proud of.

The Washington in Bloom Community Profile is superb. It is beautifully written and formatted. Your judges were thankful to have each AIB Criteria addressed so carefully and completely. It was helpful to have the new items highlighted and historical background set apart in boxes. Your attention to accurate professional terminology was instructive and useful. Your judges were particularly appreciative of the recap of your past involvement in AIB. Your Community Profile is fascinating to read. We often wish every resident could accompany us on the incredible tours we are given of the communities we judge as we know we receive insight and information that many of them never get. The Washington in Bloom Community Profile is so well done it deserves to be printed and delivered to every resident of Washington. It would make them so proud – and knowledgeable. *At least, please make your Community Profile available on your city website.*

It is helpful to your AIB judges to know if the advice and recommendations you receive are helpful. *If it is not too much trouble, it might be a good idea in the future to review each of the AIB judge's recommendations and provide your response. Is it a crazy idea? Was the recommendation helpful? Were you already planning on doing what was recommended?*

As a community that sits within the fertile agricultural soils of the Midwest, we applaud your efforts to celebrate agriculture in your Washington City and Country Fair. Also, it was impressive to see agricultural fields within the city limits.

We hope that we offer in this 2103 evaluation useful recommendations for next year and beyond. We commend you on delivering the kind of community enhancement year after year that truly makes Washington a special place to live. We look forward to your continued involvement in the America in Bloom program.

<b>1. Floral Displays</b> 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.	<b>Max points</b>	<b>Actual Score</b>
<b>Municipal</b>		
Leadership and plan of action for floral displays	20	16
Concept and design, variety of plantings, overall effect	20	16
Maintenance and quality of displays	20	17
Design for all seasons	15	13
<b>Business</b>		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	13
Maintenance and quality of displays	15	13
<b>Residential</b>		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	11
Maintenance and quality of displays	15	13
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement in design, planting, and maintenance of floral displays	20	19
Financial and in-kind contributions to floral displays	20	19
<b>Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)</b>	<b>175.00</b>	<b>150</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

Bravo to the Washington in Bloom team. They have done an outstanding job of implementing and encouraging thoughtful well placed floral displays throughout the city. This year the team of volunteers have installed new hanging baskets on the historic lampposts through the downtown district. The in-ground floral displays, planter beds and entry sign plantings are highly sustainable as the team has used a large number of showy flowering and bold leaved perennials, shrubs, and trees. The plantings are well cared for, dynamic, and are updated each season with colorful plant material.

Excellent Planters. The classic rolled rim, black planters are handsome and effective as the standard planter. They are sophisticated and complement the historic feel of the city. They are filled with colorful annuals that beautify the city streets and the Farmers Market. The plantings are showy and vibrant. *The visual impact of these planters can be improved by creating more mass in the containers; a good rule of thumb is that the planting should be about 2 times the size of the containers in volume. A tall vertical element in the center should be bold and dramatic. The cascading plants and filler plants should fill the planters with an abundance of beautiful flowers. Perfect your seasonal planting by using the same plant materials for that particular season on a 3 year time schedule so that you can get to know how to grow those plants for maximum effect.*

The hanging baskets on the historic style lampposts are terrific. They are planted with a nice mix annuals bringing color to the sky. The Sweet Potato Vine is particularly effective. We were impressed by number of the hanging baskets and the fact that they are self watering containers. We were also impressed that they were planted by volunteers in this first time effort. *The baskets could make a bolder statement. It is recommended that you select bright colorful flowers that hang far enough down to hide the container when viewed from*

*below. Also, flowers that are somewhat drought tolerant such as petunias, calibrachoa, bacopa, verbena would require less frequent watering – generally no more frequently than twice a week. It would be most effective to keep it bold but simple by using one color theme for both baskets and containers. Also, as with the containers, it would be a good idea to keep the same plants for 3 years to perfect the technique, scheduling and maintenance.*

The colorful banners add a festive air of celebration. At some of the lampposts the banners conflict with the hanging baskets. *Move the beautiful banners that you currently have that cover the hanging baskets to other locations where there is room for baskets and banners such as at the farmers market. It would add a lot to have baskets at this location.*

Shops along the historic downtown have a variety of beautiful container plantings provided by the merchants themselves. Shop owners use prairie plants including the Rudbeckia and grasses; others used antique containers filled with colorful and unusual foliage plants. *Encourage additional businesses in the downtown area to get in the spirit by adding planters to beautify the streetscape. This will bring additional traffic to this area.*

Lafayette Park is a gem that is planted and maintained by the Washington Garden Club. The design has all the elements of a well-designed landscape including balance, harmony and diversity. The flowers in this little park bloom in abundance and the foliage is colorful and attractive. We like this garden because it uses a large number of perennial and shrub species that return year after year and yet it appears to be a floral display. You have done your work here in this garden of figuring out what grows great together. *Use this garden as a model for other pocket gardens throughout the city.*

Congratulations on the excellent choice of *Rudbeckia* ‘Goldsturm’ as your Washington city flower. It is a terrific cultivar of a native plant that grows well in Missouri. It is a long blooming, long-lived, disease resistant perennial that is adapted to growing in a wide variety of soil conditions and sites. *Encourage businesses and residents to plant Rudbeckia ‘Goldsturm’ until the entire city is full of gold. Perhaps your local nurseries could offer a special for residents in the spring to encourage the proliferation of this plant.*

There seem to be many shrub roses that are well suited to your climate. *You might continue to inspire colorful planting ideas by choosing a rose cultivar to represent the city of Washington.*

<b>2. Landscaped Areas</b> 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.	<b>Max points</b>	<b>Actual Score</b>
<b>Municipal</b>		
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	13
Sustainable management, naturalization and eco-design	15	14
<b>Business</b>		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	12
Environmental management of turf and groundcovers	10	7
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	12
<b>Residential</b>		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	12
Environmental management of turf and groundcovers	15	12
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	13
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement in funding, planting, and maintenance of landscaped areas	15	14
Participation in future planning (committees, councils, and advisory boards.)	15	14
<b>Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)</b>	<b>175.00</b>	<b>149</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

Landscaping is the key to the Washington in Bloom group. It has been like a snowball, gaining speed and volume as time goes by. New landscape projects are becoming the rage in Washington, MO. As one building owner notices a new landscape and how beautiful it is, they are out there with a shovel digging up the ground. The overall design and suitability of landscape materials is pleasing and well suited to the climate. Many landscape projects are outstanding in their use of plant material.

Krog Park is an oasis of trees, gardens and memorials across from the Doctor's Building. Small attractive gardens surrounding several monuments use a good variety of perennials; shrubs, trees and annuals are also used in a nice balance. We heard about the show stopping red tulips at the Korean War Memorial. The main monument with the sign that says Krog Park is mulched to the sidewalk with no plants. *We recommend planting some low growing perennials to surround and highlight this sign.*

The Doctor's Building Healing Garden is a garden jewel set between two buildings. This is a green space where patients can sit in the shade of trees surrounded by colorful flowers and leaves and hear the soothing sound of water. The designed pathways, water feature and plantings are well balanced. *Find additional places like this to install new Healing Gardens; a space like this is an invaluable asset to a health care facility.*

An installation of native perennials has been planted in Phoenix Park in the new American landscape style. This is a nice demonstration to illustrate how native perennials can be planted in a gardenesque style with drifts of one kind of native plant rather than mixed planting in a meadow style planting. *Plant the nearby mulched garden space that is awaiting a planting in the same style. This will increase the visual impact and give continuity and beauty to this place.*

A fun and challenging skate park has been built in Optimist Park. *The tall fencing needs to be removed; benches need to be added where non-skaters can watch the kids skating. The grass area between the roadway and the park needs to be landscaped with either a prairie style meadow or with a garden.*

The River Bottom Prairie planting is a nice example of a natural restored eco-system. *We would like to see more of this kind of planting to replace mown grass on the edge of parks and open spaces. Some of the park land in the sports complexes would be excellent locations for this type of naturalist planting. This would also contribute to a reduced amount of mowing.*

Community gardens are flourishing all over the country. *We encourage Washington to establish a main site for a community garden; some locations might include on the grass edges of one the parking lots at the Bernie E. Hillermann Park or near the YMCA parking lot, or down by the riverfront.* People with small and shady properties appreciate the opportunity to vegetable garden at an open sunny location and the opportunity to meet and share ideas with new people.

The Angel of Hope Garden is a very moving sacred place where loved ones' memories are honored. The fence, paving and plant material work well together to create an elegant serene place for contemplation. *We suggest that the planting surrounding this garden be calming and quiet – green, white, lavender. It would be best to use plants that are interesting in the winter season as the main remembrance event here is one that is celebrated during that time. Lenten Rose, early blooming bulbs, witch hazel all might be worth considering.*

The Kohl Muller House is a historical treasure waiting for a beautiful landscape. *In keeping with the era of the house we suggest a period style kitchen garden be developed where vegetable, herbs, flowers and other useful plants are placed within a defined space surrounded by a fence. Orchard fruits could be planted further from the house. Ornamentals typically used during the time period of the house could be added for seasonal interest.*

The colorful new landscape that has been installed at the Library is stunning. It is amazing that the volunteers here in Washington could pull off such a fantastic planting. Bravo! Many interesting flowering shrubs, perennials and trees are new cultivars that have qualities appropriate for this space - dwarf, disease resistant, long blooming, interesting year round foliage. We loved the maples in the front of the library. *We recommend adding more large shade trees in some locations along the perimeter of the parking area to create shade in the future. As you see plants that are unhappy in their location, replace them with plants that have grown well there.* A charming children's garden with a tiny bench is located near the entrance to the Children's Library. How clever to have a Shakespeare Garden right at the library. *You might to consider doing a Shakespeare reading or some other programming for children right here in the garden.*

The library landscape is a great model for other buildings in the city. *Replicate the same type of plantings in other areas of the city, adding drama and color to other buildings.* Now that you know what works best, *work with those best plants and always keep it simple and easy to maintain. Use large drifts of plants to create a*

*lush landscaped look. Target areas such as the schools, the historical museum and other municipal buildings. Lend your expertise to the schools, churches and residents.*

*Encourage businesses with parking lots and larger parcels of land to become a part of Washington in Bloom. Let them know that beautiful landscaping will enhance their business, making it appealing to customers and an enjoyable work place for employees. A beautiful well maintained landscape makes sure that the first impression is a positive one and reflects on the level of excellence they offer.*

We visited some lovely residential gardens that have created their own Shangri-La. Many homes have attractive plant combinations that frame the house and create a visually appealing and inviting landscape from the street. Lawns seemed well maintained. *Encourage more residents to beautify their homes – especially in the front – and use tough perennials like Rudbeckia ‘Goldsturm’ to add color.*

<b>3. Urban Forestry</b>	<b>Max points</b>	<b>Actual Score</b>
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.		
<b>Municipal</b>		
Overall plan of action, tree planting programs, variety of species, inventory	20	19
Tree maintenance	15	13
Preservation and restoration of natural areas	15	14
Tree protection/planting regulations and by-laws	15	14
<b>Business</b>		
Overall planting program	20	17
Tree maintenance	15	13
<b>Residential</b>		
Overall planting program	20	17
Tree maintenance	15	13
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement in funding, planting, and maintenance of trees	20	19.5
Volunteer involvement of youth in tree programs (i.e., Arbor Day, etc.)	20	17
<b>Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)</b>	<b>175.00</b>	<b>156.5</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

Washington has the great advantage of the natural oak hickory forest that surrounds the community. As the old forest of trees surrounding the community has been stressed by development and maturity the Washington Urban Forestry Council along with the Parks and Recreation department have set themselves a vision of adding tree canopy to the city and improving the health of existing trees so that their forest will remain.

Congratulations on the very well designed and planted native tree and shrub demonstration garden at the Water Tower Park by the Urban Forestry Council. This project is part of the vision to create a larger tree canopy in the city; 38 different local native tree and shrub species have been planted. The labeled trees and shrubs give live examples of the native species that are adapted to growing in this climate zone and soil type. This brilliant space is an asset to the community; residents can come here year-round to look at the different species to help them decide what trees and shrubs to plant. As the plants grow and mature there are plans to under-plant the trees with native understory species. *We would recommend advertising the garden by conducting workshops and educational tours at the site to give guidance to homeowners seeking information on planting new trees. If the parks department plants native species, then residents will notice how nice these plants are and they will begin to incorporate native species into their home gardens. Let the nurseries know you are going to recommend various plants so they can stock them or offer special ordering service.*

There is a diversity of older trees planted in Krog Park across the road from the Mercy Doctors building with more trees being added each year. *Perhaps creating a walking guide to the trees at this site would be a nice addition. We noticed that the sign at the Liberty tree signage is very large; it would be nice to see only smaller plaques on the trees.*

The Rotary Riverfront Park biking trail runs through the middle of a Missouri river-bottom forest where the true feel of the river and forest can be experienced. The beautiful mature cottonwood forest matrix located here is being planted with trees for the next generation of forest species including native oak, pecan, red bud and hickory. Great idea. *Tree plantings should be at least 10' from the paved bikeway and outside the 10' mowing strip of land to avoid mower damage and maximize the efficiency of the mowing efforts.*

The Tree Guide for Washington, Missouri, recommended by the Washington Urban Forestry Council is the best tree guide we have seen. Bravo. The guide defines trees for several different conditions and size of trees including street trees, formal trees, natural area trees and undesirable trees. The city plans to update this excellent guide annually. *This guide should be used as a model for other communities.*

Phoenix Park is a gem in the making where 15 new trees were planted in a grove style planting near the entry to the park for Arbor Day by the Urban Forestry Council. The trees are nicely spaced at the entry and when they grow will make a lovely stand of trees as a welcome to Phoenix Park.

Trees are a great asset to the community. *Tree maintenance needs to be recommended and enforced. A strong tree ordinance should be put in place. Proper pruning techniques including no topping need to be stressed and the public educated. Tree planting under utility lines needs to be restricted to small trees only; proper spacing of trees and choice of suitable cultivars for the site needs to be stressed.*

It is encouraging to see stately trees as the ones in front of the 5<sup>th</sup> Street School. *As trees age they need vigilant eye of a certified arborist to oversee their pruning and health or they can become a hazard. The tall stately trees at 5<sup>th</sup> Street School need to be pruned.*

<b>4. Environmental Efforts</b>		
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.	<b>Max Points</b>	<b>Actual Score</b>
<b>Municipal</b>		
Leadership in environmental initiatives	25	22
Effective communication of environmental strategies and initiatives	25	20
New programs, improvement and innovation	25	22
<b>Business</b>		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	17
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	8
<b>Residential</b>		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	15
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	7
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement in environmental efforts	20	18
Youth participation in environmental activities	20	16
<b>Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)</b>	<b>175.00</b>	<b>145</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

Washington has embraced a number of environmental initiatives throughout the city. Some of these are city driven with residents are encouraged to participate. Some are encouraged by the business community. For each of these environmental initiatives, it is impressive to witness in Washington a high level of involvement in environment and sustainable practices. But you don't rest on their laurels. You keep thinking of new and better ways to embrace your commitment to sustainable practices.

In its water supply and waste water processing, Washington takes an approach that requires a minimum of input while ensuring maximum results with relatively minimal costs. Potable water is piped from nine deep wells (1500') to three water towers and then to the homes and businesses in the community. There is no chemical treatment of this water. The water towers ensure that both the volume and pressure are adequate for drinking water and fire protection without the need for additional pumping. The water is tested 15 times/month to ensure quality. 3.2 million gals per day are pumped from the ground water. The city recently installed a new automatic meter reading system for monthly billing. This system also provides early detection for leaks. The city maintains over 1000 fire hydrants.

Waste water is processed in a new \$24 million facility that depends in large part on gravity flow in its state of the art "vertical loop reactor". This new facility was installed in 2009 and has a capacity of 4 million gallons a day – capacity sufficient to allow for growth. The gravity flow is strong enough that capturing hydro energy is seriously being considered as a potential by-product of the treatment process. Once processed, 2.3 million

gals of clean waste water are sent to the Missouri River per day. The sludge is sent to drying beds and then to one of the first “Cannibal” solids reduction plants in Missouri where it is pressed into “sludge cake” and then trucked to the landfill to be used as cover for the landfill.

Water shortages are rarely a concern in Washington as the depth of the municipal wells ensures adequate supply. Water conservation is generally not an issue. In times of serious drought, however, such as the summer of 2012, water conservation practices were encouraged with limiting irrigation being the first step. *It might be a good idea to investigate water conservation strategies that would be more effective than limiting irrigation. New landscapes require water and can be seriously damaged without it. However, turning off ornamental fountains, flushing every other use and other strategies might be more effective and less damaging.* There are commendable efforts to use native plants that will adapt easily to whatever natural water conditions exist. Storm water retention is a feature of many of the new landscapes and is well done in back of the Target Shopping area where Phoenix Park is located. *Examples of beautiful and effective rain gardens and/or bio swales might provide incentives for this kind of responsible on site water retention of storm water for developers.*

Responsible waste management is critically important to Washington’s overall environmental strategy. Recycling is a high priority for both residents and businesses. Recycling containers were seen throughout the city indoors and out. Residents receive municipal recycle bins which they set out once/wk. The city picks up the recyclables and sorts them curbside. They are brought to the unbelievably clean and well organized Washington Recycle Center where 8 different items are recycled and then sent to market. Residents can bring their recyclables directly to the Recycling Center as can businesses. The Center will pick up business recyclables at no charge to businesses that request this service. The Washington Recycling Center has programs for recycling large appliances, used motor oil, Christmas trees, paint, batteries, electronics as well as hazardous waste. The state of Missouri requires that stores that sell hazardous waste such as tires, oil and batteries to take them back. When Washington businesses were asked by Washington in Bloom to list their environmental efforts, many were proud of their recycling efforts. This is impressive. The new Library has a beautifully designed recycling container at its new entrance. *This is a model that could be replicated throughout the city.* In addition to standard recyclables, The Recycling Center has an innovative project for recycling shoes in cooperation with Brown’s Show Center and The Shoeman Water Project. *It would be helpful if the Recycling Center could in some way measure its success by determining what percentage of all the recyclables in the community it is capturing. Quantities are not nearly as helpful as percentages in setting goals and measuring results. Perhaps you could start with setting a goal of capturing 75% percent of all residential recyclables and 25% of all commercial. And then go from there!*

Residents are also given containers for “green waste” which is picked up once/month. The green waste is ground and piled and is made available to residents for free as “compost”. *Composting actually requires a bit more management than merely piling organic waste. The organics need to “cook” in order to ensure that weed seeds and pathogens are destroyed and that what is added to the soil does not draw nitrogen from the plants instead of delivering nutrients to them. It would be worth investigating what it would take to provide true compost. This does not need to be an expensive process, but would deliver a horticultural soil product that would help the fine landscapes being installed now in Washington thrive.* Municipal food waste composting would probably not be possible at this time in Washington. *Homeowners, however, could be encouraged to compost food waste at home in order to keep it out of the waste stream. This compost could then be used in their containers and home gardens.*

Residential trash is being collected in Washington once/wk in 35 gal containers. This material is being sent to

the landfill with no program to recover recyclables. Commercial waste is handled by private waste handlers. *Many communities are encouraging waste minimization and increased recycling by reducing residential trash pickup to every two weeks. Washington might want to consider such a strategy.*

The all-volunteer organization Missouri River Relief sponsors river clean up days twice a year. What a great program. In addition, an impressive “Clean Up Day” was scheduled in June to remove weeds and trash from downtown Washington. Sponsored by Downtown Washington Inc, the Bank of Washington and the Lions Club, over 40 volunteers – including youth – showed up to make a difference in their community.

Minimizing the use of fossil fuel is a key environmental effort achieved through encouraging bicycling, walking and the use of mass transit. Washington encourages recreational biking and walking with the beautiful Rotary Riverfront Trail. Bringing more activity to downtown and to the riverfront will encourage more walking and bicycling. The work being done by the Downtown Association Inc. to encourage good quality 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor residences over the commercial establishments is excellent. *Additional bike racks and bike trails throughout the city are encouraged, particularly in areas where residents might bicycle or walk to work and shop.*

Conservation of natural areas is important in the overall environmental strategy of a community. Washington embraces this responsibility and makes the preservation of habitat highly visible to its citizens. The Rotary Riverfront Trail features a natural floodplain forest and a newly reconstructed tall grass prairie with bat houses and birdhouses along the 2 ½ mile route. *Although the city has four terrific trams, it might be a good idea to secure a smaller tram with a narrower profile so that tours could be given regularly – even on a predictable timetable – through the Rotary Riverfront Trail. This could be excellent for seniors as well as for tourists.*

Although preservation of historic buildings is important as a way of preserving the heritage within a community, it is also an important environmental initiative. By preserving a building, the environment is protected from all the waste that would have been generated. Even more impressive is when a restored building incorporates LED lights, added insulation, water and energy conserving fixtures and appliances, recycled products, energy efficient windows and doors, etc. So many buildings in Washington have been preserved and improved from an environmental perspective. The Post Office, the Farmers Market Building, the Old Dutch Hotel, Cowan’s Restaurant and the Library to name a few. This is certainly to be applauded. This establishes a foundation of knowledge and offers examples for others wanting to do the right thing.

Washington has many landscape practices that are environmentally sustainable:

- 1) Oak mulch that is organically dyed dark brown is used. It lasts two years. *Reconsider using organically dyed wood pallet mulch as the metal is now effectively removed.*
- 2) Integrated pest management is practiced and natural organic fertilizers preferred
- 3) Color is achieved in many of the new landscapes with perennials instead of annuals that need to be replaced every season
- 4) Parks Dept waters baskets with electric pumps at 6am. No noise pollution. Bravo. *You might want to investigate other ways of eliminating noise in landscape equipment so this can be modeled to residents and landscape contractors. Noise pollution is a concern in communities like Washington with a lot of lawn.*
- 5) Native trees are preferred in parks and urban landscapes with the Parks Dept leading by example. These native trees adapt easily to natural water conditions.
- 6) Hillermann Nursery is a satellite collection center for the Missouri Botanical Gardens’ innovative pot recycling program. They model many other excellent environmental initiatives for home gardeners.

- 7) The Parks Dept has a “Natural Resource Management Plan” that includes the protection and restoration of environmentally valuable areas such as wetlands, riparian habitat, wildlife habitat, forests, prairie.
- 8) Removal of invasive species is a high priority in volunteer efforts

The schools in Washington are also embracing green practices:

- 1) Use of ipads instead of books, newsletters and memos
- 2) Recycling. They do their own collection and sorting.

*Perhaps Washington should celebrate Earth Day and plan a special event to highlight all of the various environmental accomplishments and initiatives. You have a lot to be proud of!*

<b>5. Heritage Preservation</b>	<b>Max Points</b>	<b>Actual Score</b>
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.		
<b>Municipal</b>		
Leadership in preservation and restoration initiatives	25	24
Legal protection of heritage sites	25	22
Resource availability for preservation and restoration	25	24
<b>Business</b>		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	15	13
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	14
<b>Residential</b>		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	15	13
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	14
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement in cultural, historical, and natural heritage activities	20	19
Youth involvement in heritage activities	20	16
<b>Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)</b>	<b>175.00</b>	<b>159</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

Washington does an incredible job of celebrating its history through the preservation of its buildings and the effective placement of monuments. There are 6 historic districts on the National Register of Historical Places including the Downtown Washington Historic District. The Washington MO Division of Tourism has an excellent website that offers visitors information as to how to plan a visit to see the history, offers a “Step-On Tour Guide” and gives info on the two historic walking tours offered by the Washington Historical Society.

The Washington Historical Society operates an excellent museum in the historic Presbyterian Church featuring artifacts from Washington industry (beer, corn cob pipes, zithers, shoes, etc.), Washington business (photography studio, doctor’s office, etc.), local personalities and civic organizations. Books with copies of historic photos are popular as well as the genealogical library. *Perhaps Washington in Bloom could work with the museum to improve its overall landscape.* The Washington Historical Society also recently acquired the historic African Methodist Episcopal Church and has plans to share the history of African Americans in this area. The Kohmueller Farmhouse has also just been newly acquired and will offer an excellent opportunity to tell the story of early farm life in Washington. *An historic kitchen garden with typical historic breeds of chickens would add greatly to the lure of this property.* With one paid staff and over 600 members, this group offers educational programs, festive re-enactments, celebrations of important historic events and maintains historic records for the City of Washington. What a tremendous contribution is being made. We got a glimpse of just how rich the heritage of Washington is when Sally Bocklage presented a remarkable fashion show of dresses still in her family’s possession. What a treat! *With so many beautiful historic homes still remaining in the downtown area, an historic home with authentic furnishings open to the public would be an excellent addition to the touristic offerings of Washington – especially if were close to the museum and AME Church.*

The Washington Historical Society partnering with the Parks Dept and other city groups are currently preparing for the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city by creating a monument/tomb headstone for Lucinda Owens, the founder of the city, to be placed in Krog Memorial Park alongside that of her husband. How remarkable to have found the tombs of both William and Lucinda Owens. Excellent sleuthing. This lovely park has a number of beautifully maintained war monuments as well as one of the city's very special heritage trees. All the volunteers responsible for maintaining the beauty of this park are commended. *In order to get young people to understand the importance of these monuments and the sacrifices members of a community are often called on to make, it might be interesting to set up a geocaching experience using the monuments as some of the destinations.*

Another local 501c3, the Historic Downtown Foundation, focuses its attention and efforts on preserving the historic character of downtown Washington by purchasing important properties that are at risk. They work closely with Downtown Association Inc. to sustain the vitality and character of this historic mixed commercial and residential area. The Historic Downtown Foundation owns the historic downtown Post Office. With tenacity and perseverance, they figured out how to purchase it when news of its demolition surfaced. They brought it back to its original design as much as possible and were able to work with the Post Office to continue to provide postal services. This was critically important to the vitality of the downtown. This was such a successful and unique adaptive reuse of an old Post Office that the leader of this organization has been asked to consult with numerous other communities facing the closure of their downtown post offices.

The Historic Downtown Foundation also purchased the Farmer's Market Building, the second oldest building in the city and partnered with the city and the Chamber of Commerce to put up \$1 million to offer public restrooms, create a permanent home for the Farmers Market (it meets twice a week) and for community events in the historic downtown. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the building were remodelled into apartments for city workers and were done in a way to model this process for other historic buildings downtown. The Association is currently working with three historic property owners to remodel their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. The Historic Downtown Foundation also owns the oldest home in Washington and is remodelling it into rentable accommodations. *The Historic Downtown Foundation and Downtown Association Inc. might consider partnering with Washington in Bloom to add a "Victory Garden" downtown with vegetables that would have been grown when these buildings were built and then tell some of the agricultural history of Washington. This could add a valuable spot of quality green space downtown.*

There are a number of excellent historic signs - some of them wayfinding signs, some informational, some recognition, some relatively new, some in need of updating. *It might be a good time to review the historic signage in context of other signage throughout the city and set a standard for design, placement and character of signage to lend continuity and consistency. The signage should work closely with the self-guided walking tour and guided walking tours.* You have such a fabulous story to tell – to residents, tourists and young people.

There was regular reference to the cultural heritage of Washington with primary reference made to the German heritage. The sister city relationship with Marbach, Germany is something to be proud of. We also heard mention of immigrants from Kentucky and other American states. African American heritage as well as Native American heritage was referenced. *Perhaps there is a way to make this cultural heritage more visible in a walk around the city.*

<b>6. Overall Impression</b> 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.	<b>Max points</b>	<b>Actual Score</b>
<b>Municipal</b>		
Overall cleanliness	10	9
Maintenance of public roads and shoulders	10	8
Condition of public buildings and properties	10	9
Impact of graphic elements - banners, signs, murals, etc.	10	8
<b>Business</b>		
Overall cleanliness	20	18
Condition of buildings and properties	20	18
<b>Residential</b>		
Overall cleanliness	10	8
Condition of buildings and properties	10	8
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Participation in clean up efforts, adopt-a-spot, annual cleanup days, etc.	15	14
Recognition of volunteer efforts	10	9
<b>Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)</b>	<b>125.00</b>	<b>109</b>

*Comments and suggestions:*

The overall impression of Washington is of a clean city where everyone – municipal government, businesses and residents - are all dedicated to creating beauty with plants, preserving beauty in their historic buildings and proudly working together to accomplish miracles in their city. The Washington in Bloom team has worked smart and hard to rally volunteers as they transform many parts of the city into spots of beauty.

There is remarkable community involvement in a variety of initiatives that keep Washington beautiful.

Washington has a lot to celebrate. With a major fair that draws nearly 100,000 people as well as over 20 other annual events, Washington is a community of civic organizations working closely with local government and councils to make Washington a festive and joyful place to live. Washington is a community that not only provides its citizens with a chance to celebrate, but brings visitors from around the St Louis region to experience their special kind of enthusiasm and spirit. Washington recognizes the need to look good – and festive – year round. From lamp posts and attractive urban furnishings to colorful containers and hanging baskets to shade trees and beautiful parks, Washington offers guests a welcome mat that speaks volumes about their values. With all this, residents feel loved no matter where they walk, bicycle or drive. *The banner program might need some rethinking. The lower bars on some of the light poles have been removed leaving the beautiful Washington In Bloom banners unanchored. These banners might need to be designed more as triangles. The light poles near the Farmer’s Market are taller and could probably accommodate the current Washington in Bloom Banners. Don’t give up. It’s a program worth perfecting!*

Throughout the city, buildings are well maintained with grounds well cared for. No matter where we walked or drove, we saw painted buildings, no trash, no weeds, clean streets. Green spaces are well placed and provide for multiple activities including active and passive sports. *It might be worth considering to bring more small pocket parks into the downtown area when vacant lots become available.*

Playgrounds are evident throughout the city in parks big and small. Additional creative playground concepts are in the works. *It would be wonderful if young people could get to these places on their bicycles. Providing safe routes to schools, library and play areas might be worth considering in your long range planning. Grants are available.*

The entry signs to the city are attractive and welcoming. The signage in the historic area in general is appropriate, informative and attractive. A few signs such as the Old Dutch Hotel neon windmill offer a fun reminder of an earlier era. There are currently a number of different styles to the historic signs. *It might be a good idea to standardize the informational and historic signage in the city.*

The skyline of the historic center of the city is picturesque with three steeples piercing the sky. *The large grey silos, on the other hand, do not lend any special elegance or interest to downtown. You might want to consider making these a real "must see" attraction. Perhaps a large mural or painting which reflects the agricultural history of a city on the river. Perhaps a dramatic "green wall" similar to Patrick Blanc's work at the Branly Museum in Paris. As the downtown is revitalized, these structures deserve some of your most creative thought. They could be your unique touristic drawing card.*

## Checklist for Judges and Communities:

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 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 form in a quiet place?

**Comments:**

### 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



## 2013 Special Mention

**Municipality:** Washington, Missouri

### General description of the recognized criterion (200 words max)

#### Urban Forestry

Washington, Missouri has the great advantage of a natural oak hickory forest that surrounds the community from the early days of settlement. The Washington Urban Forestry Council along with the Parks and Recreation department have set themselves a vision of adding tree canopy to the city. The old forest of trees surrounding the community has been stressed by development and age due to maturity. Initiatives to be proactive about the health of their existing trees are a priority so that the urban forest will remain and continue to grow. We congratulate Washington, MO on the introduction of tree programs such as the Arbor Day Tree planting, the Rotary Riverbottom Trail, The Phoenix Park, The Water Tower, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street areas and the new library landscaped gardens which have all added new trees to the community.

### Special Project or Initiative (50 words max)

#### Tree Guide for Washington MO

The Tree Guide for Washington MO is a superlative document produced by the Urban Forestry Council in association with the Parks and Recreation Department. This format of this innovative document suggests tree species for different uses separating street trees, formal trees, natural area trees and undesirable trees. The city plans to update this excellent guide annually. This is one of the best tree guides we have seen for a city.

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