



Michael B. Coleman  
Mayor of Columbus

A year after the announcement of the Get Green Columbus initiative, Mayor Michael B. Coleman's work with City Council, the administration, the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO), neighborhoods and private sector partners is getting results and repositioning the City of Columbus as a greener community. The Mayor's "Green Memo," released on January 28, 2005 outlined a series of ideas, goals and policies to serve as a catalyst for new economic development and environmental changes within City government. With a focus on improved air quality, water quality, recycling and green development and businesses, Get Green Columbus has achieved a number of successes in a short period of time. The following is a one-year progress report on the Green Memo and the next steps in the continuing Greening of Columbus.

## THE GREEN TEAM

On September 16, 2005, the Mayor's "Green Team" met for the first time. Comprised of 35 leaders from the business and environmental communities, local municipalities and neighborhood organizations, the Green Team advises and assists the Mayor on advancing policies to protect the environment while supporting economic growth.



L to R: Michael Schwarzwald,  
Meera Parthasarathy, David Brehm

The Green Team, staffed by Environmental Steward Michael Schwarzwald, is co-chaired by David Brehm, principal architect with the firm DesignGroup, and Meera Parthasarathy, executive director of the Columbus Green Building Forum. Subcommittees focus on individual initiatives, such as alternative fuels and green business development. The Green Team works in conjunction with the Mayor's Environmental Policy Working Group, featuring City directors and key City staff who are focused on implementing green initiatives.



## MAKING PROGRESS

### Citywide Anti-Idling Policy

In December of 2005, Mayor Coleman issued an executive order establishing the new citywide anti-idling policy. The order will reduce emissions from the City's vehicle fleet as part of an effort to improve central Ohio's air quality. Additional benefits include, cutting fuel usage and costs and a reduction of wear and tear on City vehicles. The City is also working with the Green Team's alternative fuels subcommittee and Clean Fuels Ohio to reduce diesel emissions in Central Ohio. One result of this effort has been to test a Cummins low diesel sulfur emission engine in a Public Service Department Refuse Division truck.

The Public Service Department also started using engine and hydraulic heaters on refuse trucks to reduce the need for idling, resulting in fuel savings and a reduction in emissions. Solar panels have been installed on some police vehicles by the Public Service Department to provide power to parked vehicles and avoid idling to operate electronic equipment, such as computers and communications gear.

### Healthy Homes

Directly following up on an initiative to improve the air quality and safety of homes, the Columbus Health Department performed 170 Healthy Home Assessments and consulted another 880 customers. This program took advantage of Federal grant funding and worked in partnership with Columbus Housing Division, which provided \$1,173,725 in matching funds. The program is designed to reduce preventable hazards associated with asthma, lead poisoning, and physical injuries among children.



### **Greening Public Facilities**

The Columbus Department of Public Safety will use green design and building standards in the construction of a new police station and a new fire station. The Recreation and Parks Department currently has two capital projects in the design phase that are incorporating green components. The Old Deaf School building at 400 E. Town St. is being renovated for administrative offices and a new facility, the Smith Farms Interpretive Center at Three Creeks Park, is being constructed using new green technology. Architects will use LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards wherever feasible. In addition, the Public Service Department is designing a new fleet maintenance facility which incorporates many of the latest green technologies

### **Recycling in Public Buildings**

The Mayor and Public Service Department also have taken steps to increase recycling by residents and City employees in all public buildings, by starting a program with Rumpke of Ohio, Inc., for the collection, sale and recycling of all mixed office products. Previously, the city recycled white paper only.

### **Encouraging Citizens to Recycle**

Collaborating with SWACO, the Public Service Department initiated the Blue Bag Recycling Pilot which added approximately 850 new recyclers and diverted in excess of 100 tons of material from the landfill in 2005. The pilot program allows resident in select south, southeast and far-east neighborhoods to separate recyclable materials from their trash. By working broadly across the city using several pickup techniques, an estimated 12% of the select area's waste has been diverted from the landfill, via recycling, composting and household hazardous waste.



### **Encouraging businesses to Recycle**

A pilot program was launched in September utilizing Waste Cost Recovery Inc., working with the city's Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District to increase recycling in downtown office buildings. A large hotel and a large office building were approached and they have joined the pilot effort. The intent is to expand the program to additional office buildings in the Spring of 2006.

### **Bringing Green Construction Standards to Housing**

Several local builders have signed on to build homes at Green View Estates, the city's first green housing development. Based on building and design standards from an established green consultant, construction is expected to begin in late summer of 2006. These homes will feature green, energy saving materials and designs to cut heating and cooling costs. Upon completion, 30 homes will be built, thanks to a unique partnership between the city, Miracit, the Enterprise Foundation, Ohio Department of Development, Columbus Housing Trust and the Building Industry Association of Central Ohio.



*Green View Estates is the city's first green housing development.*

### **Encouraging Green Businesses and Jobs**

The City's Economic Development team in the Department of Development created a unique set of new incentives for a future business park at Cassidy Avenue and I-670, that are designed to attract green businesses or encourage businesses to build green buildings. Companies locating into the area would be eligible for a tax abatement of 50% of real property tax over 10 years, but if the company builds to green standards, the city will extend the life of the abatement to 12 years. The incentive is the first to be offered by the city to encourage green development. A subcommittee of the Green Team is working to identify additional incentives the City can use to encourage green development. Coinciding with that effort is ongoing research on potential building code changes that would reward the use of green design and construction practices.

In addition, work continues by Turner Construction and Schooley Caldwell Associates, Architect & Engineer, to redevelop the historic Lazarus on High Street, which is being renovated using the latest green building practices. The crews are not only

installing energy-efficient materials and recycling much of the debris, but also following LEED standards for the reconstruction and operations of the building, which is the largest green historic rehabilitation project in the nation.



*Former Lazarus Building redevelopment*

### **Protecting our Rivers and Streams**

The Department of Public Utilities applied for and received approximately \$860,000 in grants from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate the benefits of removing or modifying the lowhead dam on the Olentangy River at Fifth Avenue. The study will start in July, 2006.



*Mayor Michael Coleman completes a trip down the Big Darby Creek*

The Mayor and Council also continue to work to protect the Big Darby Watershed, and extended the development moratorium until June 30, 2006. They are in detailed negotiations with 10 area jurisdictions to establish development principles to protect the Big and Little Darby and provide for responsible development in the watershed.

The White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation recognized the Department of Public Utilities for its support of the Scioto River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). In 2006, approximately \$2.6 million in water resource restoration projects were funded through Utilities sponsorship in the program.

### **Buying Green**

The Department of Finance and Management worked with City Council to change City Code, directing City agencies to use the City's purchasing power to encourage economic development, innovation and job creation by buying environmentally-preferable products and services.

### **Greening our Neighborhoods**

In order to reach Mayor Coleman's goal of having 20,000 trees planted over the next five years, the Recreation and Parks Department's Forestry Section will plant 2,000 trees in 2006, with an additional 2,000 trees being planted by a contractor. Thanks to unseasonably warm weather, the tree planting project is underway early and the 4,000-tree goal will be met this year.

In conjunction with Metro Parks and Audubon Ohio, the city will redevelop the Whittier Peninsula into parkland, a new urban neighborhood and an Audubon Nature Education Center. The Whittier Peninsula will showcase best management practices in the areas and green building and environmentally responsible development. A developer for the site is expected to be named in April. Audubon Ohio has completed a business plan for the construction and operation of its nature center and continues to develop exciting nature education partnerships with area institutions and organizations.

The Department of Public Utilities is considering participation in the MORPC Greenways Pilot Prairie Project. The project seeks to demonstrate an alternative to resource intensive industrial lawns, as well as promoting an understanding of natural ecosystems.

*In 2006, approximately \$2.6 million in water resource restoration projects were funded through Public Utilities Department sponsorship*

