

PROVO CITY SUSTAINABILITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

ACTIVITIES 2010-2014

This update: 14 April 2014

1. **FOUNDING:** In 2010, Provo Mayor John Curtis initiated a long-term planning process named Vision 2030, and as part of that convened a Natural Resources Sub-committee. In April 2011 Mayor Curtis re-convened members of that volunteer sub-committee, renamed it as the Provo City Sustainability and Natural Resources Committee, and linked it with the city Planning Division. Mayor Curtis charged the Committee to advise him and the Municipal Council on environmental issues. He has subsequently stated that our group has been the most active and successful of all committees charged to help implement Vision 2030.
2. **AIR QUALITY**
 - a. **Air Quality Summit:** In December of 2014 we helped organize a Utah County Business Clean Air Summit, attended by forty key leaders from business, government, education, and health care. Presenters explained local air pollution's danger to public health and economic interests, then outlined specific measures that local business, government, and education entities could take to reduce it. Participants chose a task force to continue the work of the Summit; Provo's mayor has devised a pledge program to help residents reduce pollution and he has set city policies for red air days; legislators who attended the Summit worked on bills to mitigate air pollution state-wide; a flag program to indicate air quality is being implemented in public schools.
 - b. **Anti-idling campaigns:** We carried out "Idle-free" campaigns in 2011, 2012 and 2014. Mayor Curtis and volunteers distributed window clings to drivers at local secondary schools; we handed out flyers in English & Spanish during the Latin American Festival; we distributed flyers all three years to all Provo school students; we posted permanent anti-idling signs in every Provo school parking lot and at many businesses; met with all Provo school principals and give them materials for continuing the anti-idling campaign.
 - c. **Clear the Air Challenge:** We participated in this vehicle-trip reduction campaign in 2011 and 2012, working with the Provo Bike Committee and with the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce.
 - d. **Compressed Natural Gas:** To improve air quality, we are investigating and advocating for a public CNG station in Provo.
3. **RECYCLING**
 - a. **Residential recycling:** As the Municipal Council was considering opt-out recycling early in 2011, we publicized it and advocated support, which helped get it approved. Provo residents' recycling subsequently increased from around 30% to nearly 70%. We have involved our recycling company to update information to residents on what is acceptable to recycle.
 - b. **Tax credits for businesses' recycling:** In 2012, we alerted and then assisted the Mayor's Office of Economic Development to apply for a Recycling Market Development Zone, which was approved and now allows Utah tax credits for Provo businesses that recycle or use recycled materials.
4. **LAND USE**
 - a. **Support of Utah Lake Commission:** In 2012 the Committee recommended to the Planning Commission that all appropriate elements from the Utah Lake Commission's Model Ordinance be implemented to protect the Lake's shore line and public access.
 - b. **Water-wise landscaping ordinance:** In 2012 we submitted to the Planning Division a revision of the city's residential landscape code that allows for water-wise landscaping, which

the previous one did not. Our draft served as a basis for a new landscaping ordinance eventually adopted by the Municipal Council.

- c. **Utah Lake Nature Center:** The Committee supports Utah Lake Commission's plans to establish a nature center on the lake shore for research, education, and recreational use. Funds for its maintenance could ensure that it is located in Provo.
 - d. **Open space:** Committee members are meeting with stakeholders and planners to support the Vision 2013 commitment to protect agricultural and open space on Provo's west side.
 - e. **Public gardens:** We have advocated that the Parks Division provide community gardens, which are now included in the Parks Master Plan.
5. **PROVO GREEN BUSINESS PROGRAM:** We have designed a recognition program for Provo businesses that engage in significant environmental changes. We are now working with local officials to find the proper group to administer it.
6. **EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION** This is critical to our charge to advocate best practices.
- a. **Provo's Mayor and City Council:** The Committee's chair meets monthly with Mayor Curtis and works with City Council members to improve Provo's environment.
 - b. **Survey of City Departments:** In 2011 we met with heads of appropriate departments to conduct a survey on their sustainability efforts. The results were positive enough to garner an award for the city from Utah Valley Earth Forum, a local citizen environmental group.
 - c. **Environmental engineering consultants:** The Committee maintains contacts with Brendle Group, a nationally-known environmental engineering company.
 - d. **National and Regional Meetings**
 - i. Net Zero Cities: the Committee's Chair, a City Council member, and a Planning Division Member attended this international conference in Ft. Collins, CO in October of 2013. They returned with examples of success in energy efficient buildings and transportation.
 - ii. Sustainability Advisers: A Committee representative attended a national workshop for sustainability advisers at Grand Lake, Colorado in August of 2013. We gained useful contacts and important advice for our work.
 - iii. Sustainable Transportation: We alerted and helped Provo get a team to a national conference on sustainable transport funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and organized by the Institute for Sustainable Cities in November, 2012. We recruited for this UTA's chief planner, Mountainland Association of Governments' chief planner, a Provo traffic engineer, and Provo's Planning Division head.
 - iv. Intermountain Sustainability Summit: Representatives attended this regional conference on environmental issues in 2011 and 2012, making important contacts and bringing back to Provo important ideas such as Utah tax credits for recycling.
 - e. **Committee networking:** Many of our committee members have vital roles with local environmentally-focused organizations, including Central Utah Water Conservancy District, Friends of Slate Canyon, LDS Earth Stewardship, Rock Canyon Preservation Alliance, Utah County Health Department, Utah Interfaith Power and Light, Utah Lake Commission, Utah Lake State Park, Utah Valley Earth Forum, and American Institute of Architects.