

Scorecard Project to Help Neighborhoods Live Green

reprinted courtesy of Omaha By Design

How green is your neighborhood?

A new tool designed to help local groups answer that question was launched in the metro area on Tuesday, April 15. The Green Neighborhood Scorecard, a 15-question survey that covers topics ranging from food to transportation, will be open to registered neighborhood associations and sanitary improvement districts in Douglas County.

The scorecard was developed by the Green Omaha Coalition's Green Neighborhood Council, a venue for neighborhood associations, homeowners and nonprofit groups committed to educating residential neighborhoods on the collective benefits of sustainable home ownership. Its goal, said Committee Chair Trilety Wade, is to create an awareness of the elements associated with green living at the neighborhood level and to, over time, encourage individuals and organizations to institute behavior changes that facilitate green living.

Wade highlights the collaborative nature of the scorecard:

The Green Neighborhood Scorecard committee, comprised of people from a variety of neighborhoods, worked diligently to develop an inclusive tool, which can gauge areas of environmental need and success in neighborhoods throughout Douglas County.

The scorecard is divided into four categories – waste and recycling, food, water and stormwater, and transportation. Each relates to the Green Neighborhood Council's focus areas for programming in 2008. The questions are varied. Some ask for "yes" or "no" responses while others call for a count based on observational analysis. One of the questions in the transportation category asks groups to determine their neighborhood's walkability score by using www.walkscore.com, an easy-to-use online measurement system.

"We encourage neighborhoods to complete the scorecard as a group activity, perhaps as part of a neighborhood meeting," Wade said. "Some neighborhoods might want to form a smaller team to take on the scorecard as a mini-project."

In addition to collecting neighborhood data in each category, the scorecard will provide users with a list of local resources directly related to the questions asked. "We want to give people access to easy-to-understand, usable information that supports a greener approach to living," Wade said.

All groups that receive the scorecard will be asked to complete it and return it to the Green Neighborhood Council by June 30, 2008. The scorecard results will help the Green Neighborhood Council identify neighborhood groups interested in improving their green status but who need assistance in achieving this goal, Wade said.

Recognition of neighborhood groups with a high green rating will be held in conjunction with a regional neighborhood summit set for this September in Omaha.

The Green Neighborhood Scorecard is available for download at the Green Omaha Coalition website, www.greenomahacoalition.org. If you would like more information or would prefer to receive a mailed copy of the Scorecard, please contact Trilety Wade via telephone at 551.3887.

For more information about the Green Neighborhood Council, visit www.omahagreenneighborhoods.wetpaint.com.