

NASHVILLE CIVIC DESIGN CENTER

Green Office Initiative

The Nashville Civic Design Center (NCDC) is an organization dedicated to elevating the quality of Nashville's built environment, and creating a more beautiful and functional city for all. An environmental consciousness consistent with this goal requires that the NCDC become aware of the daily consumption and waste produced by its own office, and by the entities who utilize its community spaces.

The purpose of this document is to outline an easily accomplishable list of goals that reduces the ecological footprint of the NCDC, as well as the businesses it patronizes, by offering: alternative suggestions for transportation, energy and water use, paper consumption, and kitchen and janitorial supplies; an office recycling system; and a plan for encouraging environmental consciousness (whenever possible) among businesses, government, neighborhood groups and other non-profits associated with the NCDC.

TRANSPORTATION:

According to the US Department of Transportation, the month of March, 2008, marked the largest yearly decrease in monthly travel ever recorded, with a 4.3% decrease from the driving levels of March, 2007. With the increase in gas prices causing Americans to reexamine their mobile lifestyles, it is an opportunity for all city dwellers to evaluate the merits of public transportation and other alternative methods of getting to work. Employees should consider the following questions:

- How do we get to work? How far do we drive, and do we carpool with each other or housemates?
- When we go to work-related functions, do we carpool or use public transportation when possible?
- NCDC currently offers employees a stipend based on the cost of a monthly unlimited MTA bus pass.

ENERGY AND WATER USE:

Office buildings account for the largest portion of energy use among commercial buildings. The largest uses of energy in an office are lighting (29%), space heating (25%), equipment (16%), cooling (9%), and water heating (9%), (*Energy Information Administration, eia.doe.gov*).

Of the energy the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) produces, 60% is generated by coal-burning plants (other fossil fuels generate another 4%), 29% is generated by nuclear plants, and 6% is hydroelectric.

LIGHTING:

Can electric lighting be substituted with more natural or reflected light? Action Plan: All blinds open except right-most Studio Area blinds

Can we use the dimmers, or turn some lights off altogether? Action Plan: Right two switches off, left switch on second-highest level

HEATING/COOLING:

How hard is our temperature control working? Can we turn it warmer in the summer and cooler in the winter?

EQUIPMENT:

How efficient is our office equipment? Do we turn monitors “off” or on “standby” when not in use? Action Plan: Shut down computers at night.

WATER:

How efficient are our water fixtures? Do our sinks have faucet aerators w/ <2.75 gpm? Yes: 2.0 gpm.

Water purifier should be used whenever possible, as an alternative for bottled water.

PAPER CONSUMPTION:

Over the last seven months, the NCDC office has paid overage costs for copying, averaging to about \$67.90 per month in fees, and \$31.50 in paper costs. (The combined expense of these overages is the equivalent of \$1,192.80 annually in extra fees). Therefore, it is essential for both economical and environmental reasons that employees should print and copy documents only when a physical format is necessary. At some stages of revision and design, an on-screen version is sufficient. Ink and paper costs can also be conserved. Employees should consider these questions:

COPY PAPER:

- Do we print double-sided whenever possible? Can we designate certain documents or a specific printer/copier to print on reused paper?
- The recycled content of the paper can also be increased. Current paper: Office Depot--10% recycled--10 reams (\$34.99). Alternatives:
 - Office Depot--35% recycled--10 reams (38.99)
 - Office Depot--100% recycled--10 reams (53.49)
 - Aspen 100--100% post-consumer recycled--10 reams (47.56) (Sam's)

In addition to copy paper, kitchen and event supplies also contribute to paper use. The NCDC should strive to buy products with less packaging, and kitchen supplies that are non-disposable, made from recycled content, or land-fill friendly.

PAPER KITCHEN SUPPLIES:

- Can we avoid buying individually-packaged servings of food and beverage products?
- Can we switch to cloth towels in the kitchen? Action Plan: Purchase ten reusable kitchen towels, one for each day in two business weeks. (\$1.00 each)
- Are current paper towels recycled/unbleached? Current paper towels: Kirkland Signature--12 rolls (\$16.65) Alternative:
 - Marcal--100% recycled--12 rolls (13.88) (Costco prices)
- Current disposable cups: Dixie, 5 oz, 450 ct. (\$9.18--02/cup) (Sam's). Alternative:
 - Compostable, corn-based, 16 oz, 1000 ct. (128.05--128/cup) (Costco)
- Current disposable napkins: Marathon disposable napkins, 3000 ct. (\$12.04--004/pc) (Sam's). Alternative:
 - Marcal luncheon napkins, 100% recycled, 2400 ct. (29.98--012/pc) (Costco)

JANITORIAL SUPPLIES:

- Are our cleaning supplies biodegradable? Surface cleaner: yes--Clorox Greenworks. Dish soap: no--likely comparable price--in store comparison?
- Are our trash bags recycled/biodegradable? Current: Office Depot kitchen bags 13 gal.--200 ct. (\$23.59--118/bag). Alternatives:

- Webster Earthsense--60% recycled, 10% post-consumer--90 ct. (9.99--.111/bag) (Office Depot)
- Webster Reclaim--75% recycled, 10% post-consumer--150 ct. (17.59--.117/bag) (Office Depot)

WASTE/RECYCLING:

The first investment required for a self-drop-off recycling system is recycling bins. After some discussion, it seems that it will be necessary to have two sets of bins in the office: a set in the kitchen and a set in the event space. Because of space restrictions in the kitchen, the set in the kitchen should be space-saving. The set in the event space should be presentable to guests and large enough to accommodate large amounts of recyclable material.

Suggestion for Kitchen: 3 Rubbermaid Containers that allow for the easy separation of plastic, metal and glass.



Rubbermaid "Slim Jim" blue 23 gal. (44.99) (Office Depot), (37.42) (Costco)

Suggestion for Meeting Space: 2 Rubbermaid Containers that allow for the separation of plastic, metal (most commonly used in meetings).



Two-compartment, stainless steel, 30 gal. (69.99) (Bed, Bath & Beyond)

The nearest recycling drop off is the Downtown Recycling Drop-off Point, located half a mile from our office, at 162 8th Ave North.

An office recycling pick-up quote from Earthsavers offers collection of paper, cardboard, and commingled aluminum, plastic, and styrofoam in provided 20-, 40-, and 96-gallon rolling carts. Pick-up for a one-story building is \$25.00 for 7- and 14-day pick-up, and \$36.00 for 28-day pick-up, with five dollars extra for each container over two per floor.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATES:

As an example of community consciousness to the businesses and citizens of Nashville, the NCDC office should show an effort to conserve and protect resources, especially local ones. By recycling, conserving energy, buying products with a low impact on the environment, and buying locally when possible, the NCDC can influence other Nashville groups--particularly those that use our space for meetings and events. Specific ways we can make a "green" statement are:

- Buying locally. Current coffee: caffeinated: Kroger ground Columbian--34.5 oz (?)
decaffeinated: Folgers med. roast--39 oz (?). Local alternatives:
 - Drew's Brews med. roast--16 oz. (7.99)
 - Bongo Java--16 oz? (delivered/shipped) (9.99 +0.20 for grinding)

- Prominently providing recycling bins and recycled products in the meeting space.

- Encouraging the use of earth-friendly practices and products when other groups use our premises. (Perhaps by providing a checklist beforehand of which products or practices they will be using when they are with us? Example provided on final page of this document.)

- Posting a bus map in our entryway or meeting space, or electronically distributing it to guests who will be visiting our office.