



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION

Event Sustainability Report

Spokane, Washington 2019

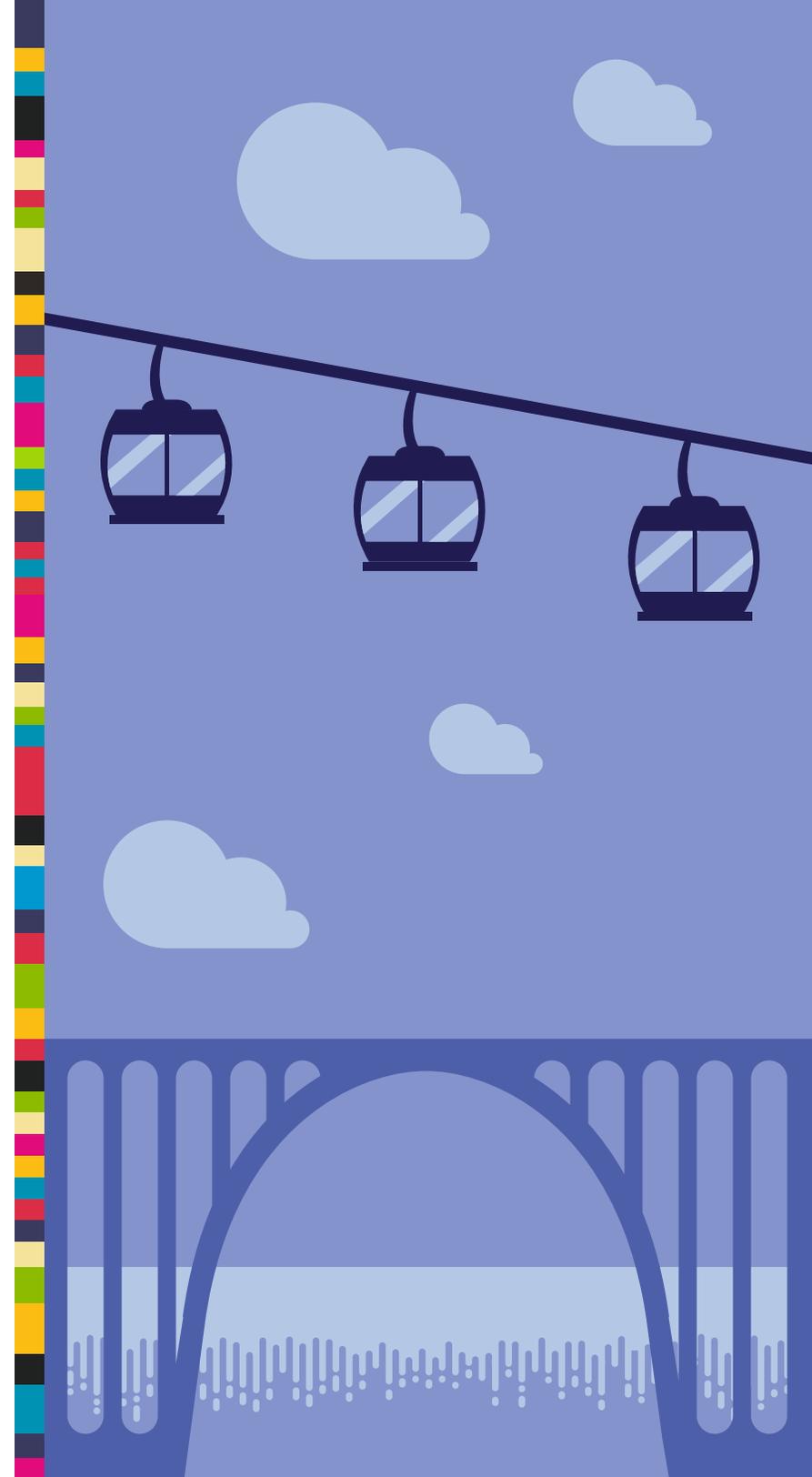
Prepared by
MeetGreen[®]
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We welcome your feedback! For further information or to share your ideas please contact:
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A Message from the Planning Committee

We are very excited to share the sustainability results of another successful General Assembly. Each year we do our best to meet our GA destinations where they are at in terms of their own green initiatives and then look to collaborate with them to help positively impact the communities we are convening as well as our environment at large.

Across our extensive planning with the Spokane Convention Center, Visitors Bureau, and Hotels, we have developed a special partnership through sustainability which included achieving a 92% landfill diversion rate, the acquisition of 1,376 in-room recycling bins by the Davenport Hotel group, the implementation of two kitchen compost programs at Spokane hotels that are now a permanent and ongoing part of their operations, as well as helping coordinate Spokane venues to participate in our first General Assembly powered by 100% renewable energy.

Our tremendous impacts would not be possible without you, the many participants and contributors to General Assembly, our hard-working Green Team Volunteers, MeetGreen for its leadership in sustainability planning, as well as the willingness and dedication of our Spokane destination partners who whole-heartedly joined us in the greening of GA'19.

As proud as we are, we know we can always do better, and we welcome your ideas and input as we begin planning for an exciting future.

Thank you and looking forward to seeing you in Providence,

Debra Boyd



UUA General Assembly Legacies 2004-2019

Seventh Principle Legacies

Since 2004 the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has worked to integrate the Seventh Principle—respect for the interconnected web of life—into the planning of the annual General Assembly (GA). The following impacts are a direct result of UUA's advocacy:



Sustainability Principles

Congregations at UUA abide by Seven Principles that help align individual and community action. These Principles are embedded deeply into the fabric of how GA is planned:

1 The inherent worth and dignity of every person.

2 Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

3 Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

4 A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

5 The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

6 The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

7 Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The Seventh Principle outlines the Unitarian Universalist belief in caring for our Planet Earth. This report summarizes outcomes related to the Seventh Principle only.



The Sustainable Event Planning Process

Planning for the UUA's General Assembly is inspired by and rooted in the framework of ISO 20121, a global management system standard for sustainable events, and linked to key priorities outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Core areas of our planning process include:

Pre-Event

Contracting: Sustainability expectations are included in most vendor contracts and agreed upon several years before the event. One of the key drivers of UUA's Seventh Principle impacts has been through embedding and communicating sustainability expectations from the very beginning of the sales process.

Pre-event Site-Visit: An in-person meeting is held with the venue, catering, general services contractor, AV, and hotels to research destination best practices and communicate UUA values and GA objectives. These include significant planning with the local waste infrastructure including landfill, recycling, compost, and donation outlets.

Objective-Setting, Targets and Action Planning: While objectives are consistent, an action plan is created to address the unique nuances, opportunities, and challenges of each event cycle.

Measurement Requests: MeetGreen works with staff and vendors to identify important data to be collected and reported post-event.

Onsite

Onsite Management: Follow-through on planning is overseen by MeetGreen during GA, including coordination of 20-25 Green Team members, operation of the Green Booth, and interface with waste services.

Onsite Audit: MeetGreen is onsite for seven days to observe onsite practices including front and back of house. These observations are taken into account when analyzing measurement data post-event.

Post-Event

Measurement Analysis & Recommendations:

Vendors and staff provide post-event data which is analyzed by MeetGreen, including attendance, material use, waste, donations, emissions, energy, and water use. A final report is prepared to summarize observations, outcomes, and action steps for the following year.



Key Sustainability Issues

Sustainability intersects with every step of the General Assembly planning process. Below are the key sustainability issues we have identified for 2019 as well as our ongoing goals and objectives related to the Seventh Principle.

- **Equal, inclusive and diverse participation**
- **Water conservation and quality**
- **Climate change**
- **Solid waste**
- **Health and wellness**
- **Accessibility**

Sustainability Goals And Objectives

- **Improve overall sustainability at the event**
- **Reduce environmental footprint in waste, water, energy and emissions**
- **Measure benefits of sustainable practices**
- **Provide and promote sustainable food and beverage at the event**
- **Educate attendees in sustainability efforts**

Photos below of UUA sustainability planning team verifying operational details pertinent to Spokane and Convention Center waste infrastructure - December 2018



UUA General Assembly Spokane 2019

Sustainability Action Steps

The UUA General Assembly seeks to improve sustainability year-over-year in its host destinations. Below are some of our top successes from Spokane 2019.

TOP SUCCESS

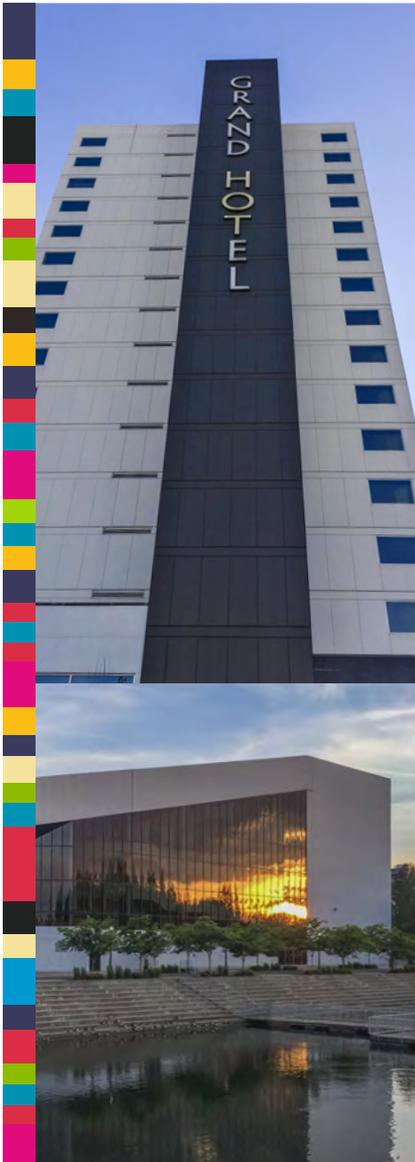
Hotel Engagement

Historically Hotel participation in GA green initiatives has varied significantly year by year. Whether being removed from featured plenary activity, operating in mixed occupancy settings (UUA and outside guests), or bound by less contractual requirements, sustainability at these properties can often pale in comparison to their Convention Center counterparts. In 2019 however, the three contracted General Assembly hotels exceeded all expectations. As will be reiterated throughout this report, their participation encompassed nearly all success categories. Exemplary highlights included:

- **Catalyzing the purchase of 1,376 in-room recycling bins by the Davenport Hotel Group for the Davenport Grand and Davenport Centennial in addition to the Davenport Tower and the Historic Davenport in response to UUA's recycling requests.**
- **The Grand, Centennial, and DoubleTree agreed to remove water bottles during GA, making them available by request only. Over a 7-day period we estimated saving a total of 19,740 single-use plastic bottles at these properties, which is equivalent to saving the energy used by an average family home for one year!**
- **The DoubleTree also collected over 150 pounds of lightly used room amenity soaps for donation during GA.**

Renewable Energy

2019 marked the first General Assembly powered by 100% renewable energy. As new destinations each year provide both unique opportunities and challenges, one area UUA was able to leverage in Spokane was access to renewable energy. Washington State has one of the most advanced renewable energy infrastructures in the United States which allowed our three hotels to source 100% renewable energy during GA at UUA's request. The Spokane Convention Center also sources 100% renewable energy, but does so on an ongoing basis, as part of maintaining its LEED Credential and its overall corporate citizenship. While we will likely not be able to have a renewably powered GA every cycle, Spokane 2019 helped point the way towards the future!



UUA General Assembly Spokane 2019

TOP SUCCESS

Sustainability Action Steps

Collaboration With Destination

One of the lessons we learned in Kansas City 2018 was how important an active and engaged Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) can be towards rallying event teams. We were tremendously fortunate that Visit Spokane embraced our GA sustainability initiatives so whole heartedly. During the course of our planning, they not only helped GA teams audit and visit local recycling, waste and compost partners, they also convened over 20 event stakeholders on a conference call with our team to help ensure details were executed. Their team even volunteered to help sort waste back of house at the Convention Center. Visit Spokane really helped us cover the extra ground needed to make this GA so successful for sustainability.

Waste Management

One of the most challenging areas of every GA is building a unique waste plan that often winds up dramatically transforming the site's waste infrastructure and operations. The Spokane Convention Center and ISS, its Facility Services team, did an outstanding job working with UUA planning and Green Teams to meet our diversion rate objectives, **which included an industry leading diversion rate of 92%**. Another waste management impact we are extremely proud of is helping catalyze the **adoption of permanent compost programs at both the Davenport Grand and Davenport Centennial** as a result of GA. Our first goal is to try and make cutting-edge green initiatives happen during our event itself but we are gratified these compost programs will have an ongoing benefit.

Visibility Of Sustainability

General Assembly teams did their part to raise the profile and visibility of sustainability across-the-board in Spokane. This included the **first ever public expression of support for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** both during plenary walk-in slides, as well as Green Booth signage. The Grand and DoubleTree hotels also featured slide loops sharing information about their collaboration with UUA around sustainability, while the Grand even featured this slide sequence on its in-room TV. There also was an active series of sustainability themed posts on the GA App helping amplify the visibility of these initiatives and allowing for enhanced engagement by attendees.

Food And Beverage

Spokane 2019 marked the first time since Portland 2015 that UUA was able to plan a **100% reusable cup and service-ware buffet line at GA**. With our compost program in place, it allowed lunch and dinner buffets to essentially fall under a zero-waste planning category. Centerplate Spokane also made a tremendous effort to source its ingredients locally and its menu included items from 14 regional farms in Washington and Idaho. Spokane teams worked tirelessly to ensure any applicable food could be donated. The Convention Center reported 976 pounds donated to the Union Gospel Mission and 226 pounds from the Grand Hotel which included Ministry Days activities. **Of the 1,202 pounds donated, this translated to approximately 1,000 meals to those in need.**



UUA General Assembly Spokane 2019

Sustainability Action Steps

The following are areas we have identified for improvement at future General Assemblies.

SUSTAINABILITY OPPORTUNITIES

Move-In Planning

One area we learned we could be more effective in waste management was during show move-in. Several challenges this time period presents is that there is no Green Team onsite, the UUA Planning Team members are in Day 1 meetings with venue and stakeholders, and much of the venue labor contractors are local teams not directly connected with our general contractor Heritage. This scenario plays out each year to some extent, however we believe we have the opportunity to better organize the move-in process from a waste bin and signage perspective that could help improve our Day 1 and Day 2 waste diversion rates at future GAs.

Compostable Service-Ware

While Centerplate Spokane did an outstanding job collaborating with our team regarding a sustainable food and beverage program, we were once again reminded how challenging and confusing it can be for venue procurement teams to source BPI certified compostable service-ware. While extensive efforts were made throughout the planning process, the disposable forks and spoons at the Riverside Bistro and Go Gourmet ‘grab and go’ outlets contained a mixture of both compostable bio-plastic and PET non-compostable plastic, which rendered them somewhere in between both substances, and drove our decision to not route to our compost partner. Fortunately, this was only a very small part of our waste stream since the Exhibit Hall buffets used 100% reusable service-ware.

Printed Programs

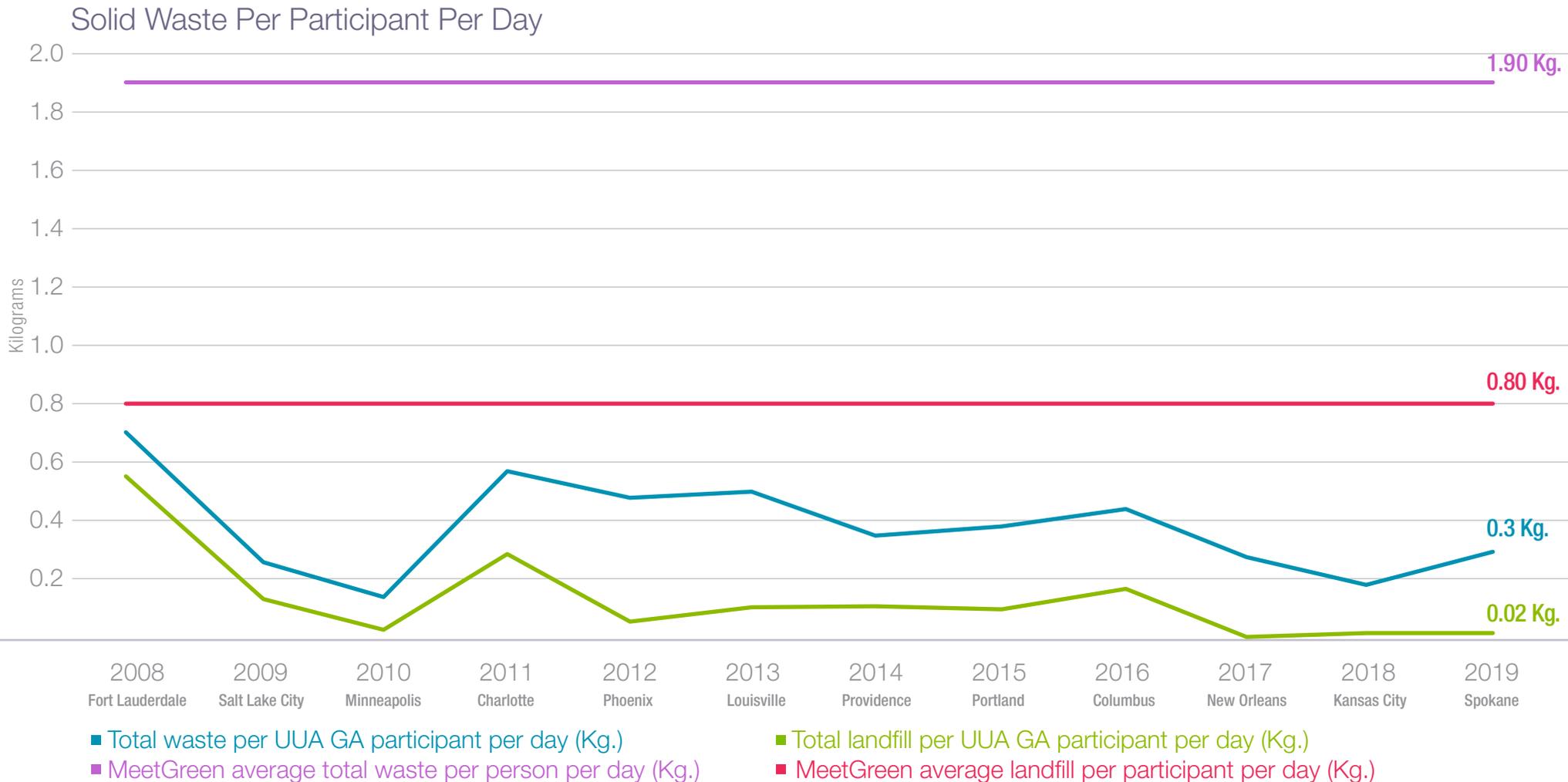
At our best estimate, 12 boxes, for a total of 984 printed UUA programs, were recycled onsite. While this counted as recycling and towards our diversion rate, we continue to seek to strike the right balance between meeting the needs of our attendees amid a growing app-driven future.



Sustainability Outcomes

Solid Waste Impacts 2008-2019

While the UUA GA sustainability program has been in place since 2004, measurement and metrics have only been reliably gathered since 2008. The ongoing collection of participant impact data is one of the longest running in the events industry.



Spokane 2019 ranked as the third lowest General Assembly in terms of overall volume of waste. While the total amount of waste was slightly higher than 2018, we were able to recycle and compost even more of it. When viewed at the per-person per-day level, attendees at GA generated an average of .02 kgs of landfill material per day. That is equivalent to a half an ounce, or the weight of half a slice of bread!

Spokane Fun Fact: Landfill waste in Spokane is incinerated at a waste-to energy facility near the airport, where through a combustion process, the waste volume is reduced by 90%, leaving about 10% ash residue that is ultimately landfilled in the region. At this ratio, of the 300 kg of GA waste incinerated at the facility, it translated to about 30 kgs or 66 pounds of ash landfilled for the entire convention.

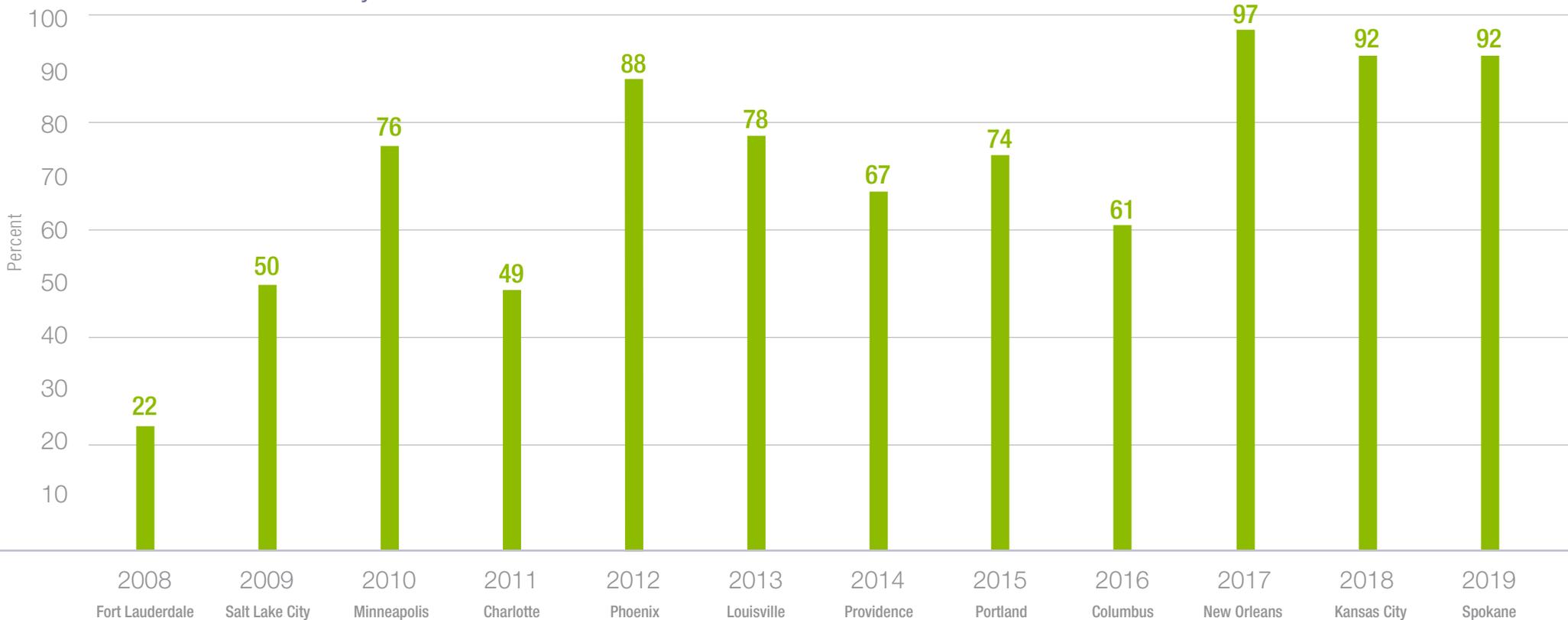
Sustainability Outcomes

Solid Waste Impacts 2008-2019

Onsite our 28 committed Green Team volunteers provided waste education and helped keep our recycling, compost, and landfill bins sorted in their appropriate stream. Waste was then routed to the back dock where ISS venue facility services provided a second “back of house sort” of the material before being weighed and tallied. To date there have been four General Assemblies that have provided enhanced back dock sorting services. They were Phoenix 2012, New Orleans 2017, Kansas City 2018, and Spokane 2019. These years all rank as the highest diversion rates in UUA history.

At 92% landfill diversion, for the third year in a row, the UUA General Assembly exceeded the criteria for a “Zero Waste Event” achieving a diversion from landfill rate above 90%. We are especially proud of this achievement and grateful for the hard-work of the Green Team and the generosity of the Convention Center and ISS teams to contribute labor to our cause.

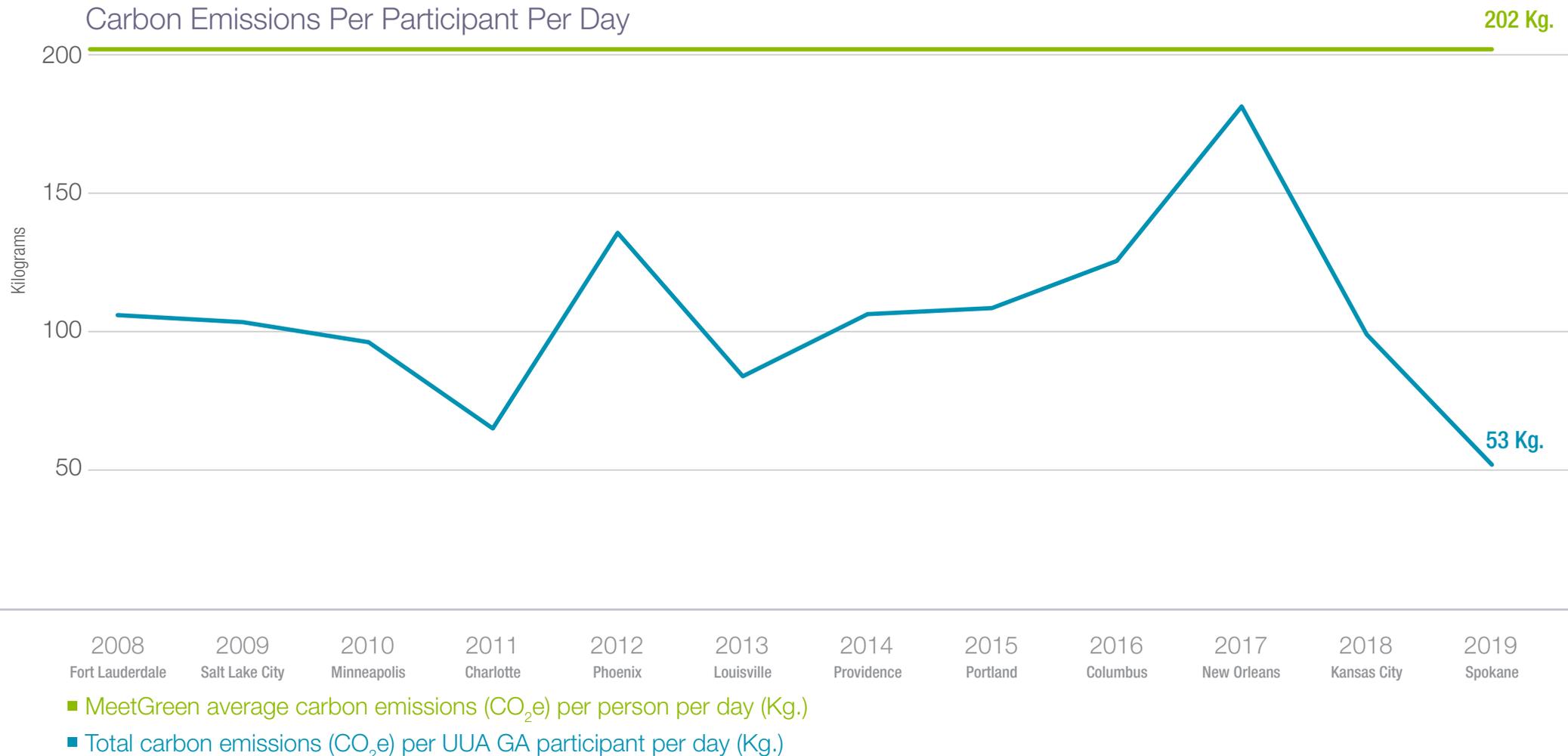
Solid Waste Recovery Rate From Landfill



Inspired by our first-time use of a scale onsite in Kansas City in 2018, UUA acquired a portable pet scale of its own in Spokane to weigh and record each bag of waste after it was sorted. Without this method it would have been nearly impossible to obtain a credible waste number at the Convention Center as the facility is billed by number of dumpsters picked-up and not by weight.

Sustainability Outcomes

Carbon Impacts 2008-2019



In 2019 UUA explored a new method of funding the carbon offset portion of GA. As such, an \$8 attendee “opt-out” offset was added into registration as a means of helping raise funds for this endeavor. Out of 2,582 on-site attendees, only 159 opted out of the \$8 carbon fee which still enabled UUA to offset 100% of its event footprint in Spokane including travel.

2019 yielded the smallest carbon footprint at GA in its history and UUA was able to ultimately achieve a total offset with the funds raised. This stems in a large-part to the renewable energy sourced for the hotels and venue, which neutralized the entire portion of the greenhouse gas mix. Carbon impacts also benefited from reduced attendance in Spokane. Read on for more information about the exciting projects that UUA supports.

Carbon Offsets

Changing the world, one offset at time...

Since 2015, UUA GA has taken responsibility for carbon emissions that cannot be avoided by supporting carbon offset projects. This year offsets purchased supported the:



Truck Stop Electrification Project, located throughout the United States, and with locations throughout the Pacific Northwest, the Truck Stop Electrification Project helps provide electricity to truckers during rest periods and works to eliminate the emissions and air quality concerns from idling. Long haul truck drivers idle their trucks to heat or cool their cab and power on-board appliances during the federally mandated 10 hour rest period for every 11 hours on the road.



Blandin Improved Forest Management (IFM) Project, is a Native American Hardwoods Conservation and Carbon Sequestration project that is conducting improved forest management practices on 187,000 acres of forest under its ownership in northern Minnesota, which has been initiated to mitigate climate change. Project activities involve Smart Forestry practices, maintaining diversity of natural forest communities, as well as reducing harvest impacts. Its project area provides critical habitat for rare species such as the northern long-eared bat and the golden winged warbler.



Aqua Clara Safe Drinking Water in Kenya, works to bring affordable, sustainable and safe hydration solutions to communities throughout Kenya. This project employs local people to distribute and construct a range of water filtration systems that do not emit greenhouse gases.



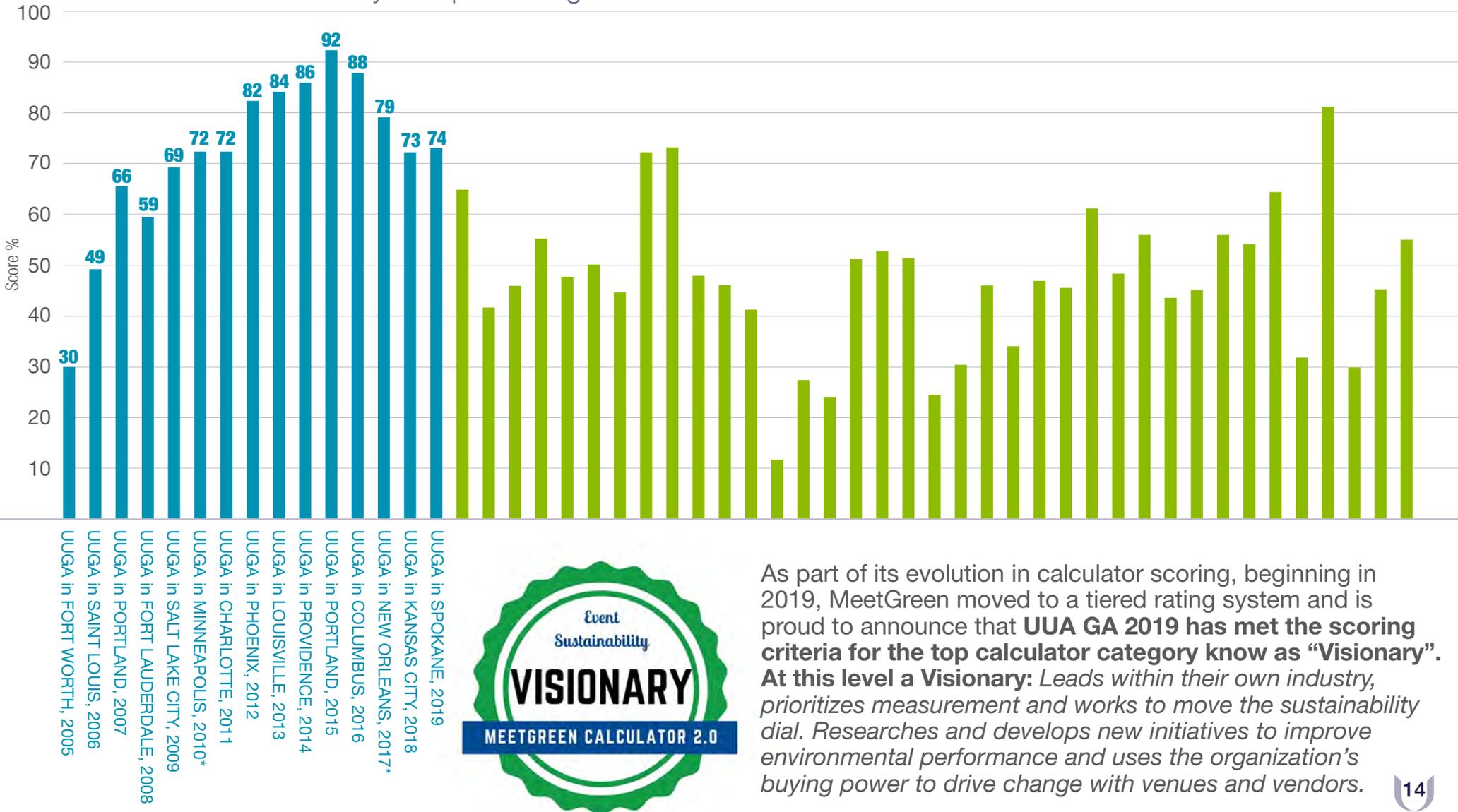
Avoided Deforestation Projects In The Brazilian Amazon, oversees forest carbon inventories and implements community and biodiversity monitoring plans to mitigate deforestation. Local projects and programs include offering thousands of community members free agricultural extension courses, working on granting official land titles to local communities to help strengthen land tenure and improving local schools.

Sustainability Outcomes

MeetGreen® Calculator 2005-2019

The MeetGreen® Calculator measures overall sustainable event performance. This graph shows sustainability scores for General Assembly since 2005. The Calculator is regularly updated to reflect leading sustainable event practices and has undergone an upgrade in 2010, and another in 2017, dramatically increasing its rigor and difficulty which has led to an expected drop in scores for Kansas City and Spokane.

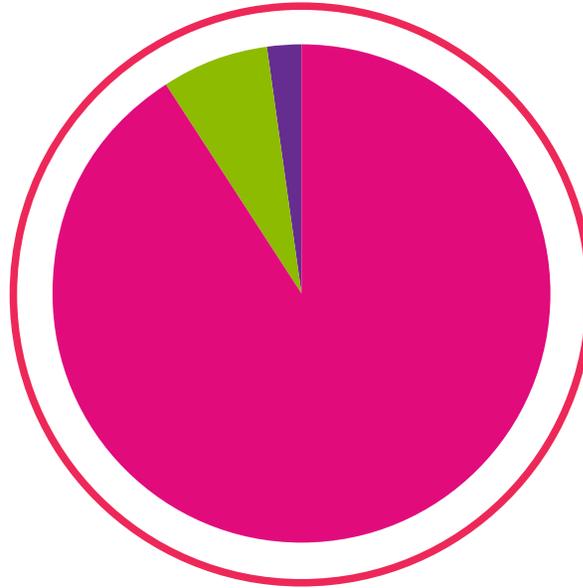
Overall Event Sustainability Comparison Against Other Events



As part of its evolution in calculator scoring, beginning in 2019, MeetGreen moved to a tiered rating system and is proud to announce that **UUA GA 2019 has met the scoring criteria for the top calculator category know as “Visionary”**. **At this level a Visionary:** *Leads within their own industry, prioritizes measurement and works to move the sustainability dial. Researches and develops new initiatives to improve environmental performance and uses the organization’s buying power to drive change with venues and vendors.*

UUA General Assembly Spokane 2019

100% of attendee travel-related carbon emissions offset
686 metric tons



Emissions came from the following sources:

91% air travel

7% automotive travel

2% freight and shipping

0% venue, hotel and meals

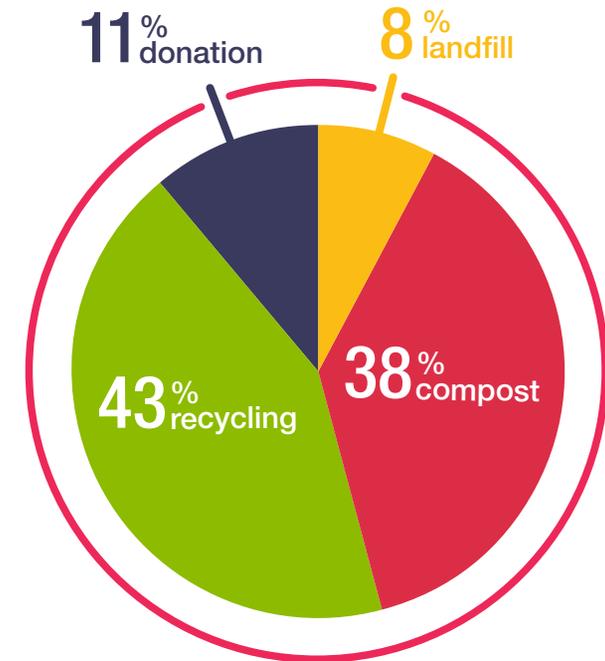
Each event participant at GA:

Generated **300 grams of solid waste** (including landfill, recycling and compost) per day, the weight of **3 apples**

Produced **20 grams of landfill** per day, the weight of **4 quarters**

Emitted **53 Kg. of carbon dioxide** equivalent to the emissions from driving a car **130 miles**

Used **114 L of water** enough to fill **6 standard water bottles**



92% of solid waste recovered from landfill
3,569 Kg.

Top ways GA participants engaged in sustainability:

96% **sorted waste** at the convention center

78% **participated** in green efforts at hotels

80% brought and **reused a water bottle**

Impacts from hotels removing in-room water bottles during GA 2019:

Saved enough energy to charge 1,681,048 smart phones

Equivalent to saving a single family homes' energy use for one year

Sourcing 399,820 kWh of renewable energy during GA 2019:

Helped avoid 283 metric tons of CO2 emissions

Equivalent to the carbon sequestered by planting 4,765 trees

According to projections by Visit Spokane Convention and Visitor's Bureau:

GA 2019 had an estimated impact of \$2.6 million on the region.



Visit Spokane so enjoyed working with UUA on its important green initiatives. Hosting this convention and learning new ways to be green was fun, engaging and valuable. We appreciated the guidance, support and instruction MeetGreen provided during the run up to the convention and throughout the program. Spokane has long championed sustainability and environmentally friendly practices. We're thrilled to have new tools to use long into the future!

-Amy Cabe, Director of Destination Services, Visit Spokane



I can't say enough about how enjoyable it was working with both the UUA and MeetGreen staff. We were pleased to be able to exceed the goals for sustainability set forth at the conference. Doing our part to monitor energy efficiency and maintain responsible environmental standards is extremely important to us here at the Spokane Convention Center, Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena and the First Interstate Center for the Arts.

-Michael Gaffaney, Director Of Event Operations, Spokane Convention Center



Working with MeetGreen and the Unitarian Universalists in achieving a "Zero Waste" 92% diversion rate at your recent conference here in Spokane was awesome! In no small part the standards and systems put in place by MeetGreen and the Unitarian Universalists made this possible. Centerplate is grateful and inspired to work with clients who share a vision of sustainability. Centerplate is committed to improving the experience of gathering, for our clients, our guests, our communities, and our future. Our environmental initiatives encompass best practices in waste reduction and diversion, responsible purchasing, resource management, and support of local community organizations. Thank you!

-Stanley Hoff, General Manager, Centerplate

From Local To Global

Activities at the 2019 UUA General Assembly closely align with many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were launched in 2015 and are designed to help end poverty, promote prosperity & well-being for all, as well as protecting the planet. The Green Team sought to raise awareness this year by including them on plenary walk-in slides, and Green Booth signage.

1,202 pounds of GA food donated to the Spokane community.



399,820 kWh of renewable energy sourced during Spokane 2019.
Our first 100% renewably powered GA!

686 metric tons of GA carbon impact neutralized through Carbon Fund project offset support.



Successful sustainability partnerships built between the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Convention Center, three hotel properties, food & beverage, and general contractor teams.

92% landfill diversion rate!



Awareness raised from Smart Justice Public Witness and support for Carl Maxey Center.

Recommendations

UUA Objectives	2020 Recommendations
<p>1. Improve overall sustainability for the event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a sign for the Green Booth to differentiate what it is. Attendees onsite did not know what it was because it was not demarcated. • Consider eliminating name badge ribbons in favor of a waste-free approach. • Using compostable liners to cover urinals in gender neutral restrooms instead of PET plastic standard liners. • Continue coordinating with destination partners to reach out to local sustainability resources. Proved to be a critical link again in 2019.
<p>2. Reduce environmental footprint in waste, water, energy, and emissions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request back dock material sort as mandatory at future GAs. After experiencing their success first-hand in 2017, 2018 and 2019, it is strongly recommended that UUA adopt this as a standard practice request for venues during the sales process. • Ensure waste bins follow same order throughout building. Green Team noticed contamination when not arranged in the same order despite signage. • Not dropping exhibit hall waste bins until close to show opening to drive move-in waste into venue rolling bins.
<p>3. Measure the benefits of sustainable practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the use of a waste scale on all future GA back docks (<i>in conjunction with enhanced material waste sort</i>) for credible, real-time data measurement. • Assess all printed material, including show guides for reasonable areas of print reduction. • Remind Food and Beverage teams to report weight of kitchen prep compost and food donated daily to our diversion calculations. • Confirm with operations if cardboard will be bailed at a later date.
<p>4. Provide and promote sustainable food and beverage at the event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider communicating that commercially packaged items at Grab and Go settings are frequently not recyclable. • Potentially adding a hot plate of eggs as a venue breakfast option. Having a protein available could be a valuable alternative to long hotel breakfast lines. • Consider implementing a program of buying a UUA destination coffee tumbler and getting a discount onsite. • Researching feasibility of "donating" GA Planning Team's uneaten catering to Youth Room as a means of eliminating waste. • Work with hotels to source a to-go coffee cup that can be recovered at the event venue.
<p>5. Educate attendees in sustainability efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update pipe and drape signage to better illustrate differences between compostables and coffee cups. • Include Plenary Hall ushers in brief onsite sustainability communications. • Further expand communications and linkages regarding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. • Include UUA World and any other onsite press outlets in green initiatives and impact legacy.

Thank You!

UUA Staff: Stacey Dixon, Michael O’Herron, Don Plante, Steve Ransom, Latonya Richardson, Janiece Sneegas

Green Team Volunteers: Joan Benderson, Linda Casey, Steve Chalk, Barb Clagett, Kaed Croxford, Alison Derevensky, Margaret Dibble, Sally Du Gar, Juliana Engel Storms, Rebecca Hardy, Amy Huntereece, Susie Idzik, Bridget Lewis, Sara Leyser, Doris Marlin, Yvelyne McCarthy, Oriana McKanan, Tammy McKanan, Benjie Messer, Cassandra Montenegro, Thomas Neale, Jen Raffensperger, Carol Stanfill, Julia Stewart, Christopher Ultican, Scott Weaver

Spokane Convention Center: Michael Gaffaney, Sophie Lee, Shardell Shrum

ISS: Jon Bransford

CenterPlate Spokane: Chef Harold Froewiss, Stanley Hoff, Megan Kasper

VisitSpokane: Amy Cabe, Bethany Letcher

Hotel Partners: Davenport Grand, Davenport Centennial, DoubleTree Spokane

All photos: UUA GA Green Team, MeetGreen, unless otherwise noted

Waste data: Includes all materials discarded by UUA staff, vendors and event participant at event venues, from move-in through move-out of General Assembly. This may include materials that are recycled, composted, donated, landfilled, incinerated, and/or used as waste-to-energy. It does not include material discards at hotel sites, or non-UUA events, unless otherwise noted. Waste generated in the planning process (i.e. at UUA headquarters and during site visits) is also excluded.

Waste disposal sites are visited to verify follow-through on actual recovery. Recovery from landfill includes materials that are composted, recycled and donated. Landfill and incineration are not calculated as recovered waste.

Carbon data: : Is calculated by TheCarbonFund.org in collaboration with MeetGreen, using data provided by UUA (registration) and vendors (freight and bus fuel, building energy use, landfill). The following emissions sources are considered in-scope for UUA GA:

- *Event space energy for UUA-functions (convention venues and hotel event space)*
- *Hotel guest room energy for UUA guest rooms booked in the UUA housing block*
- *UUA-freight, including items shipped from UUA headquarters and by exhibit contractors*
- *UUA-provided shuttle buses (if used)*
- *Event participant travel to and from the event by air, train, bus, transit and/or personal vehicle, including staff, vendors, speakers and all participants*
- *Landfill*