

UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION

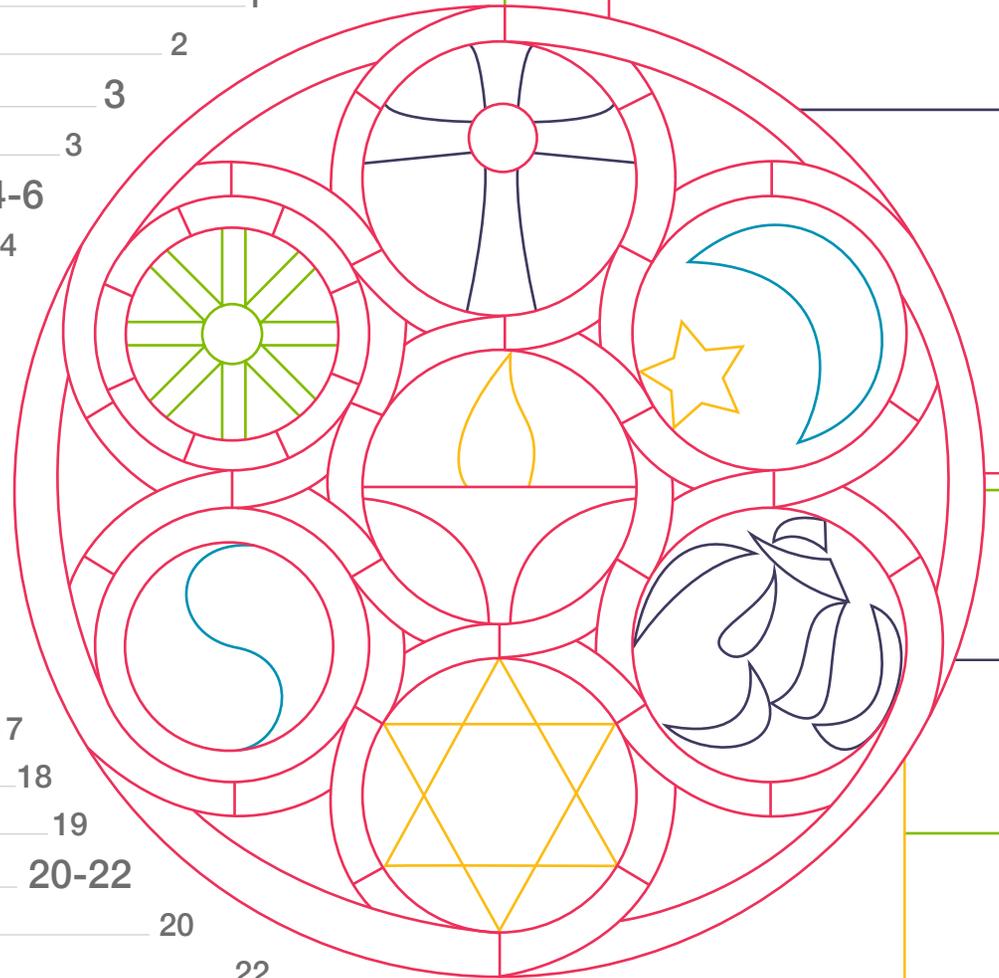
Prepared by
MeetGreen[®]



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
2016

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Summary



6,829

Hotel room nights

126

Offsite Delegates

6

Countries represented

637

Congregations represented

3,771

Onsite Attendees

111

Exhibitor booths

June 22-26, 2016

Greater Columbus Convention Center

Columbus, Ohio

Background

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has been implementing event sustainability best practices through General Assembly (GA) since 2004. Each year, GA is held in a different city, bringing new challenges and opportunities. UUA has been able to collaborate with vendors across the country to improve existing sustainability efforts through the development of a formal event sustainability strategy. In 2016, UUA GA continued by working with the Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC) and Columbus hotels. This report presents the outcomes of this work, including recommendations to continue to improve against sustainability goals.

Dear Friends of General Assembly

The General Assembly Planning Committee has come a long way on our sustainability journey in the past thirteen years! Since 2004, we have been living our faith by putting our Seven Principles into practice. We have engaged a dozen cities in the process of making their hotels and convention centers more sustainable, and in some cases (e.g., Portland), have influenced significant change.

In 2016, I'm especially proud of the work that we've done in Columbus to offset the carbon emissions associated with GA for a second time, from shipping and hotels, to attendee travel. You can read about the metrics from this year, and the cumulative metrics from prior years in the report that follows. We've strived to bring in the voices of attendees and volunteers, and to talk about the ongoing and very real challenges that we face in hosting sustainable events all over the US.

What I want to stress is the commitment to sustainability that has been demonstrated by those who plan General Assembly (MeetGreen, the General Assembly and Conference Services office and the General Assembly Planning Committee), UUA, the volunteers who conduct on-the-ground education and waste diversion, and each curious and helpful GA attendee. This combined effort has been sustained for more than a decade!

We do this work because we want future generations to be able to experience all of the beauty and abundance of our planet. And quite simply, we do this work because it is the right thing to do. Please join us in facilitating powerful experiences for our faith, and doing so in a way that resonates with our principles.

Thank you,

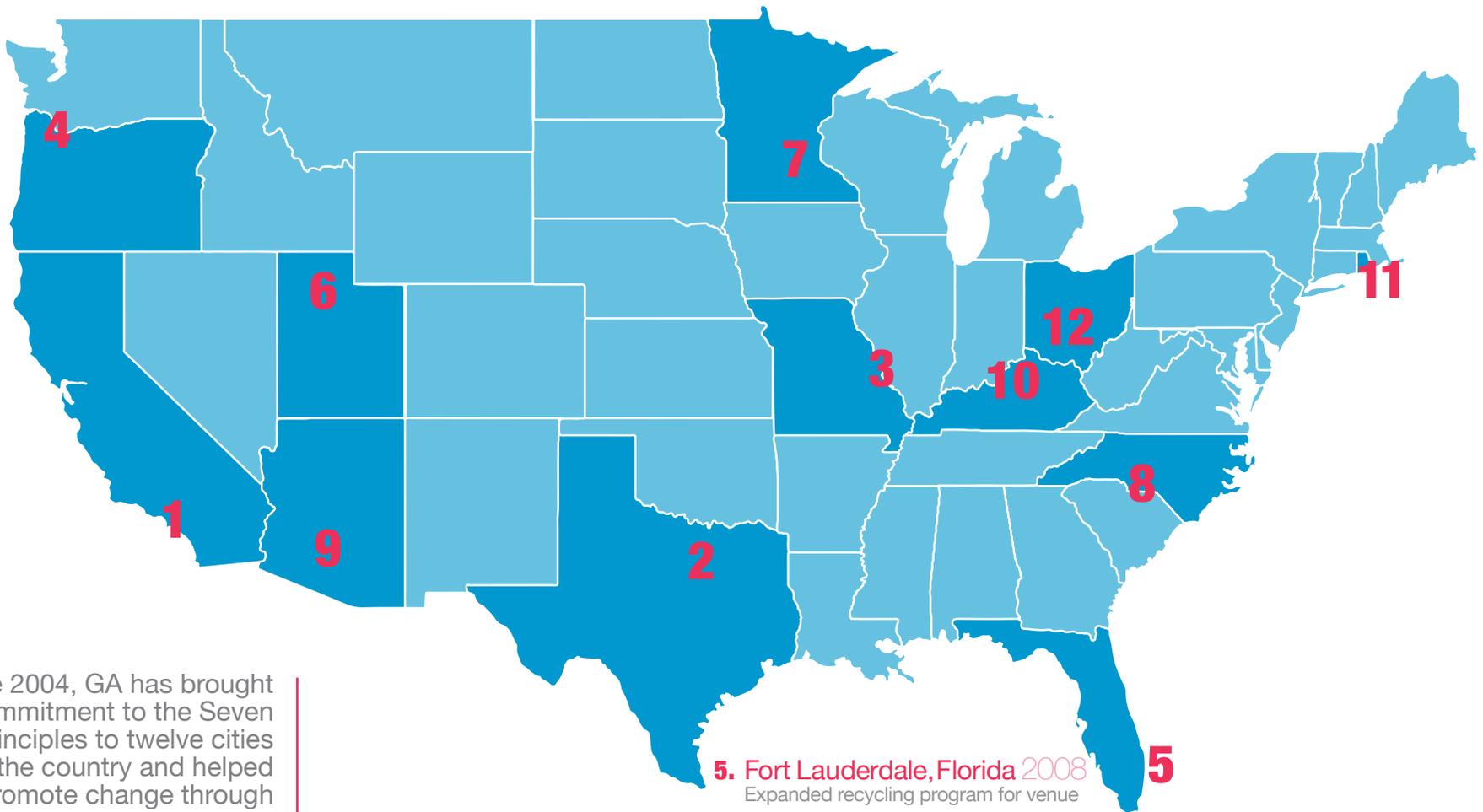
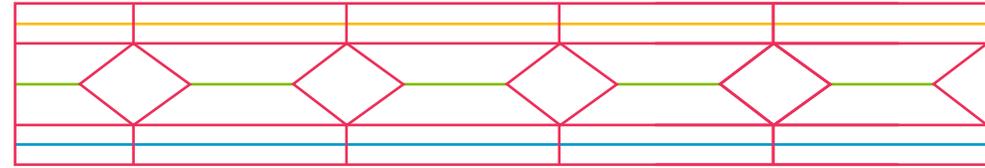


Rev. Chip Roush



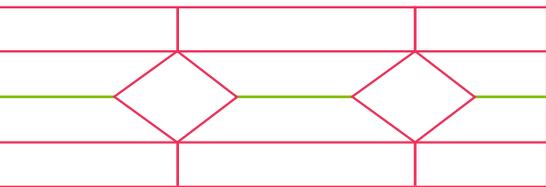
Where Have We Been?

The General Assembly Legacy



Since 2004, GA has brought this commitment to the Seven Principles to twelve cities across the country and helped to promote change through dedicated sustainability efforts.

- 1. Long Beach, California 2004**
Established baseline practices
- 2. Fort Worth, Texas 2005**
First time recycling program
- 3. St. Louis, Missouri 2006**
First time polystyrene ban at event
- 4. Portland, Oregon 2007**
First time front-of-house composting program for venue
- 5. Fort Lauderdale, Florida 2008**
Expanded recycling program for venue
- 6. Salt Lake City, Utah 2009**
First time composting for venue
- 7. Minneapolis, Minnesota 2010**
100% renewable energy use
- 8. Charlotte, North Carolina 2011**
Partnership with local Farmer's Fresh Market for sustainable concessions
- 9. Phoenix, Arizona 2012**
Highest waste diversion rate to date
- 10. Louisville, Kentucky 2013**
First time composting program for venue
- 11. Providence, Rhode Island 2014**
First time composting program for venue
- 12. Columbus, Ohio 2016**
First time composting program for venue



What Do We Do

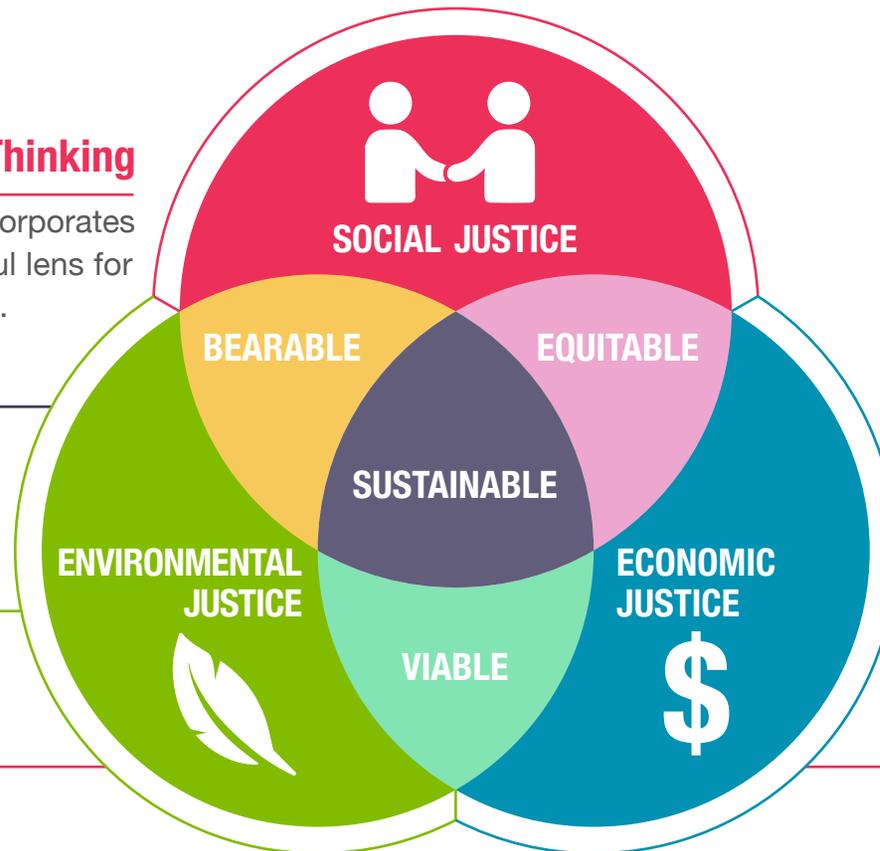
Unitarian Universalists live by Seven Principles. These Principles were created through a grassroots effort, agreed upon democratically, and serve as the cornerstone of Unitarian Universalism.

Seven Principles

- 1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- 2nd Principle: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- 3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- 4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- 5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- 6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- 7th Principle: **Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part**

Triple Bottom Line Thinking

This common sustainability framework incorporates the Seven Principles and provides a useful lens for approaching challenges and opportunities.



What We Do

Event Sustainability Strategy

The Unitarian Universalist Association identified five main sustainability objectives for General Assembly 2016. Each objective is accompanied by individual targets and action items designed to address and evaluate each objective. These targets are customized given the current level of sustainability in each host city prior to the event.

1 IMPROVE OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE EVENT

Improve APEX/ASTM Standards compliance from 82% total



78% (100% planner, 67% supplier)

Improve MeetGreen® Calculator score from 86%



88%

2 REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT IN WASTE, WATER, ENERGY, AND EMISSIONS

Reduce waste per participant to 0.25 kg



0.44 kg per participant per day

Hold a zero landfill waste event



0.17 kg landfill per participant per day

Offset 100% of the carbon emissions associated with UUA GA



Offset 100%; 2,371 MT of CO₂e

3 MEASURE THE BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Collect data before, during and after GA, analyze and present in final report



Completed, see report

4 PROVIDE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND BEVERAGE AT THE EVENT

Specify and measure local and organic foods procured for GA



2016 catered food was 48% local and 9% organic by spend
Sourcing information provided onsite and throughout report See How Did We Do?

5 EDUCATE ATTENDEES IN SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Informational signage, volunteer education, and information provided through social media, web site, and mobile app pre-event and onsite



All educational opportunities completed
See Volunteers, page 18, Feedback, page 19, and Material issues, page 20

What We Do

Methods

Sustainability is addressed at every step of the General Assembly planning process. Environmental initiatives are included in contract language several years before the event, and work is done with vendors throughout planning to ensure objectives are being met. This focus on pre-event, onsite, and post-event work aims not only at internal improvements at GA, but helps engage vendors in a way that promotes long term change and impact.

Pre-event

Contracting: Sustainability expectations are included in most vendor contracts and agreed upon several years before the event. These contracted terms have been refined over years of experience based on stakeholder feedback, changing regulations and UUA advocacy priorities.

Input: The GA sustainability team gathers input from the community, including UUA congregations, GA attendees and delegates, UUA staff, exhibitors, vendors and the host city.

Pre-event Meeting: 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. Onsite tours are taken at each hotel and venue, as well as the recycling, landfill, and compost facilities to gauge current practices and working conditions.

Objective-setting, Targets and Action Planning: While objectives are consistent, improvement targets are set based on anticipated issues and destination and vendor baselines. An action plan is created to ensure progression.

Mid-point Check-in: Vendors are checked against targets, and timetables are adjusted based on progress.

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 action steps is overseen by MeetGreen during GA, including daily Green Team meetings and operation of the Green Booth.

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 during post-event analysis.

Post-event

Measurement Analysis: Vendors and staff provide post-event data which is analyzed by MeetGreen, including attendance, material use, waste, donations, emissions, energy, and water use.

Recommendations: A final report is prepared to summarize observations, outcomes, and recommendations for future events. This step also considers if overall objectives should be updated.

How Did We Do?

Columbus In Action

Each city and each venue is unique. Here are some of the highlights from our collaboration in Columbus.



The efforts made at this and previous GAs are amazing! The fact that UJA worked with the convention center and hotels to set up recycling and other green practices; that carbon offsets are required; that we as attendees were encouraged in many ways to adopt ‘green’ practices and offered many messages to raise awareness and educate...most impressive!

-GA attendee



Sustainable food

UJA and Centerplate Catering worked together to build a menu for GA that utilized local, organic and sustainably grown and harvested products (such as coffee and seafood). Centerplate Catering executed the “meat-free Friday” campaign during GA by serving nutritious vegetarian meals. Educational information about the food served and the decisions to consider the impact of menu choices were communicated extensively on the GA mobile event application and signage throughout the dining area.

Commercial composting

The Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC) had never composted in the front of the house prior to GA. GA was also the first time that the GCCC operated the combined pulper and biodigester. This system “cooks” food waste at 315 degrees for 18 hours, creating a dry, fibrous material that reduces the weight of waste by 94%. The material can either be applied directly to the onsite garden at the GCCC, or transported to local community gardens. Creating a pure, uncontaminated stream of food waste was challenging, and was accomplished with very specific signage and diligent, helpful staff and volunteers. After this inaugural convention, the GCCC plans to continue this practice in the future.

Bulk condiment stations

The GCCC switched from single use condiments to bulk condiment stations in multiple concession areas throughout the convention center. Vendors modified their practices and communicated the changes to customers.

How Did We Do?

Columbus In Action



“The best of any organization whose meetings I attend.”
-GA attendee

Reusable service ware

Given the great success using reusable service ware in Portland, OR for GA 2015, the GCCC agreed to offer reusables at a few of the food and beverage concession stands during General Assembly 2016.

Orientation to sustainability at GA

The Green Team attended the orientation for first time attendees, as well as the orientation for the Youth Caucus, explained the overall sustainability initiatives at GA, and offered an invitation to participate in these efforts at GA.

Host hotel engagement

Contracted hotels made changes to ensure environmental initiatives were present and communicated to guests. Guests were made aware of how they could participate in efforts such as recycling, linen-reuse, and efficient energy use through electronic communications. Each hotel also offset the carbon emissions associated with guests' stay.

Exhibitor sustainability

Exhibitors agreed to comply with a set of sustainability guidelines as part of their exhibitor agreement. They were asked to limit giveaways and packaging, participate in the donation program, and use energy efficient lighting to help ensure a less wasteful GA. Those who went above and beyond in the previous year proudly communicated their achievements with the Green Exhibitor placard.

How Did We Do?

Columbus In Action



Courtesy
Engineering for Change



Carbon offsetting

This year, 100% of the emissions associated with GA were offset for the second time! GA has historically required that hotels and venues offset their carbon but the largest contributor, attendee travel, has been offset voluntarily. This year GA worked with Carbonfund.org to calculate and offset emissions from air, ground, and freight travel. Roughly half of the offsets purchased will support the Truck Stop Electrification Project, helping to provide electricity to truckers during rest periods and eliminate the emissions and air quality concerns from idling. The other half will go to the LifeStraws Carbon for Water Project, which uses carbon financing to sustainably provide millions of people with clean water in Kenya.

Public witness:

State Of Emergency; Faith Filled People Rally For Racial Justice

The 2016 Public Witness focused on the UUA commitment to boldly work for Black liberation. This event was a collaboration between the Ohio Student Association, the People's Justice Project, UU Justice Ohio, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, Alicia Garza, UUA President Rev. Peter Morales, and other Movement for Black Lives and many local and multifaith leaders. Local UUA organizers, joining the mass movement for Black liberation, have been displaying Black Lives Matter banners, fighting for criminal justice reform, raising the minimum wage, and defending voting rights all over the country. Even with a last minute venue change, this Public Witness called forth some strong, beautiful, voices to speak up, come together, and shift the dialogue back to real issues affecting people. The Witness complemented workshop tracks for Black Lives of UU and Building a Transformative Movement for Racial Justice, as well as general session programming, worship and healing/ritual space.

How Did We Do?

Event Score: MeetGreen® Calculator

The MeetGreen® Calculator measures overall sustainable event performance. This graph shows sustainability scores for General Assembly over time against other similarly sized events that have been entered into the Calculator system.

Overall Event Sustainability Comparison Against Other Events

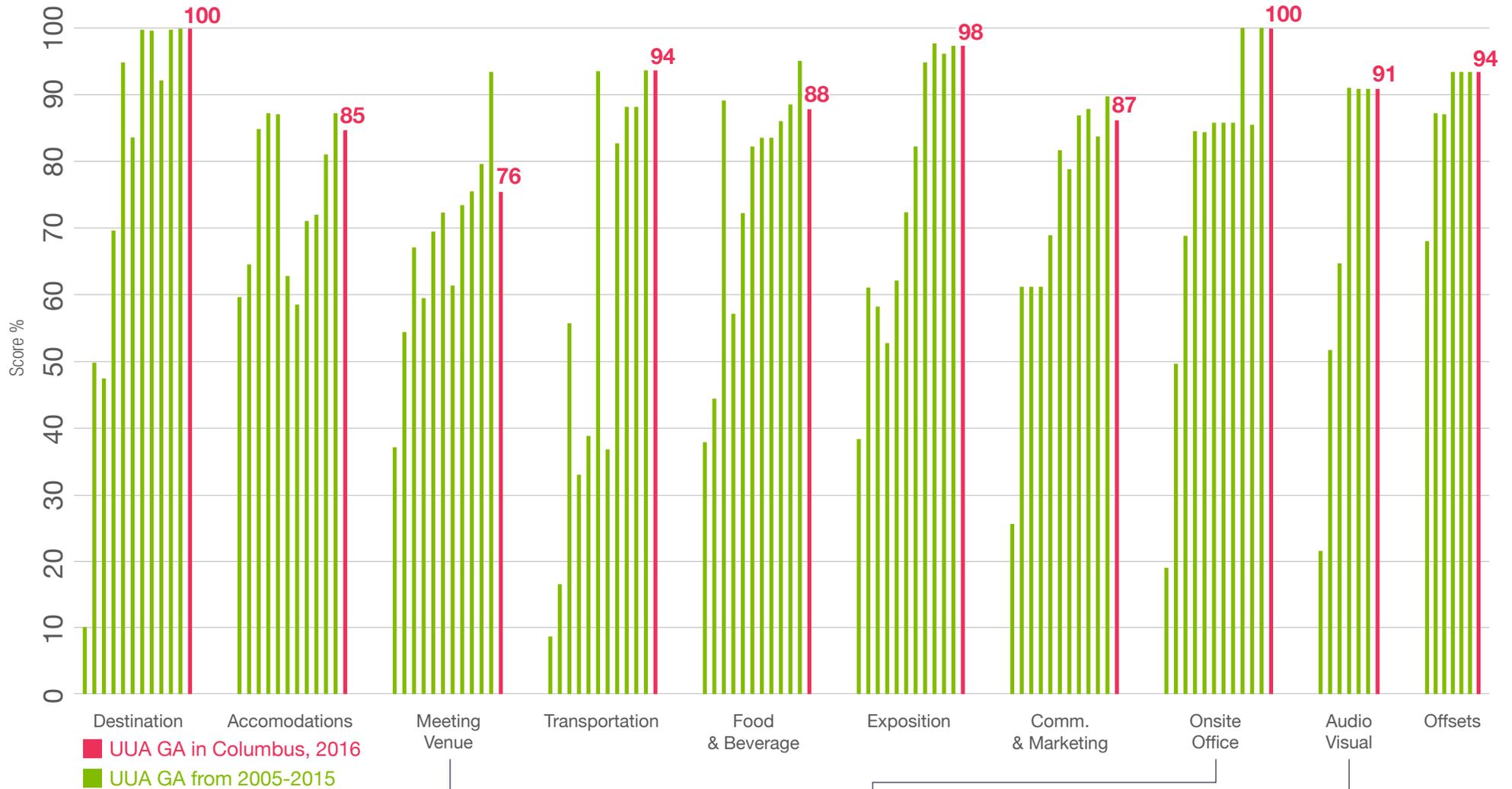


How Did We Do?

Event Score: MeetGreen® Calculator

The MeetGreen® Calculator also allows for a more in-depth analysis based on ten sustainability categories. Scores are shown for all twelve years below, in chronological order, where the left-most line represents 2005.

Event Summary by Category



The Meeting Venue score went down from 2015. While the GCCC has adopted many sustainable technologies and practices and did improve due to UUA requests, the Oregon Convention Center is a Platinum LEED and APEX certified-building with more advanced operating and purchasing practices.

While destination, hotel and venue capabilities change year-to-year, UUA has excelled in policies and practices related to what they can control each year, such as the Onsite Office and Marketing and Communications.

UUA has focused on systematizing sustainability, in contracts, expectations and culture with repeat vendors such as AV provider CMI.

How Did We Do?

Waste

Waste Facility Audits:

The recycling, compost, and landfill facilities used by the GCCC were inspected prior to GA to ensure proper practices and safe working conditions. Information about each of the facilities was included in onsite education to help attendees better understand where their waste ends up after it is discarded.

Recyclables:

The co-mingled recycled material collected at the GCCC is sent to one of the Rumpke Recycling facilities located in the Columbus, OH area. WestRock Recycling utilized some of the specialty items such as cardboard and film plastic.

Beyond basic comingled recycling, this number includes specific materials that may have been specially recycled. For more information on what was recycled in Columbus, please see the Materials section.

Compost:

Compost was processed in the convention center for the first time during GA, using a pulper and a dehydrator. This is based on the weight of food waste BEFORE it has been processed.

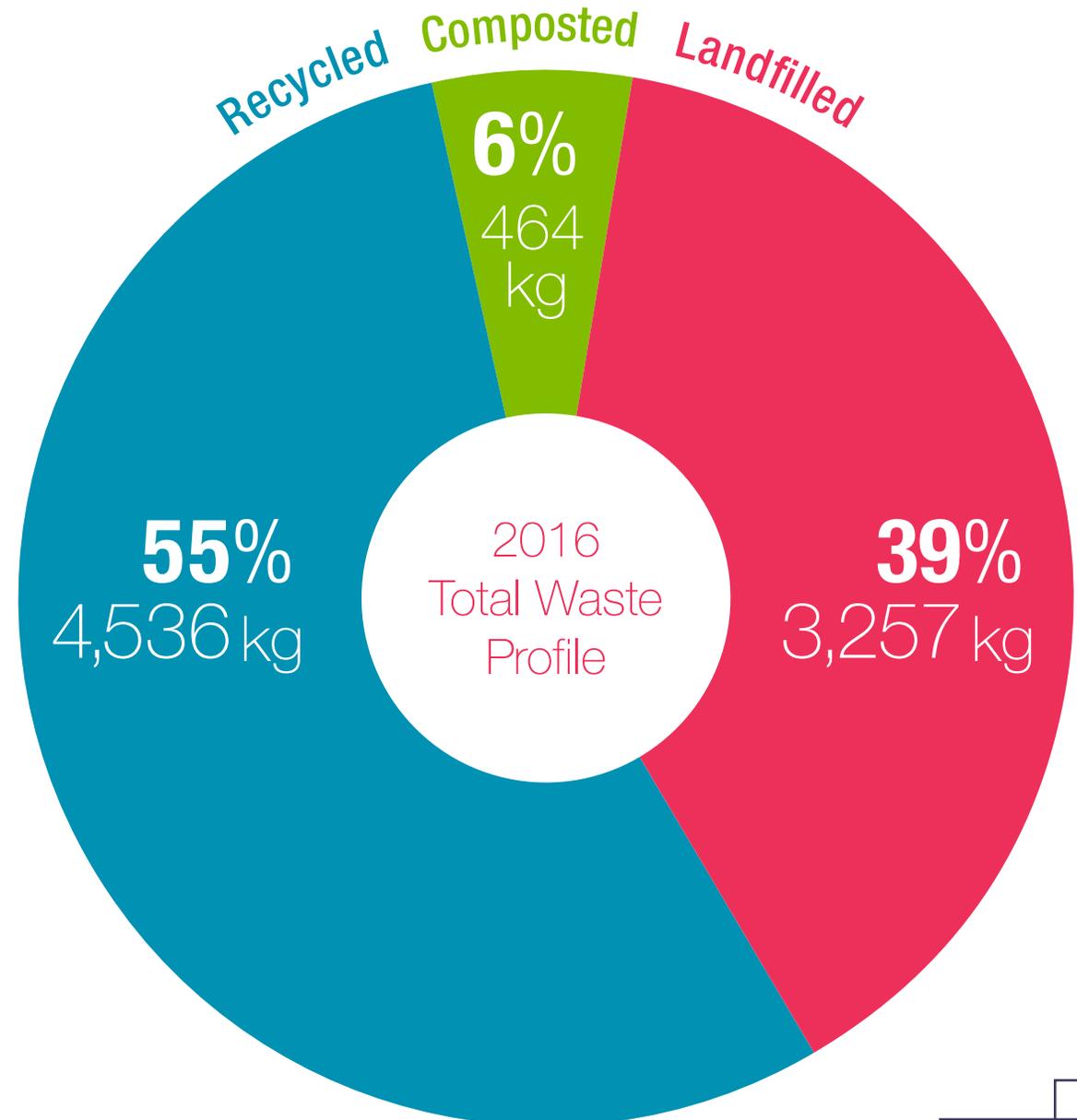
The food waste generated at some of the hotels in the hotel block is sent to Quasar Biomethane facility, which produces energy from waste.

Landfill:

The diversion rate for 2016 GA was 61%, in other words, 61% of materials that were not bound for reuse were diverted from the landfill.

Materials that cannot be reused, recycled, composted, or donated are sent to the SWACO Franklin County Sanitary Landfill.

The annual average diversion rate for the GCCC was:



How Did We Do?

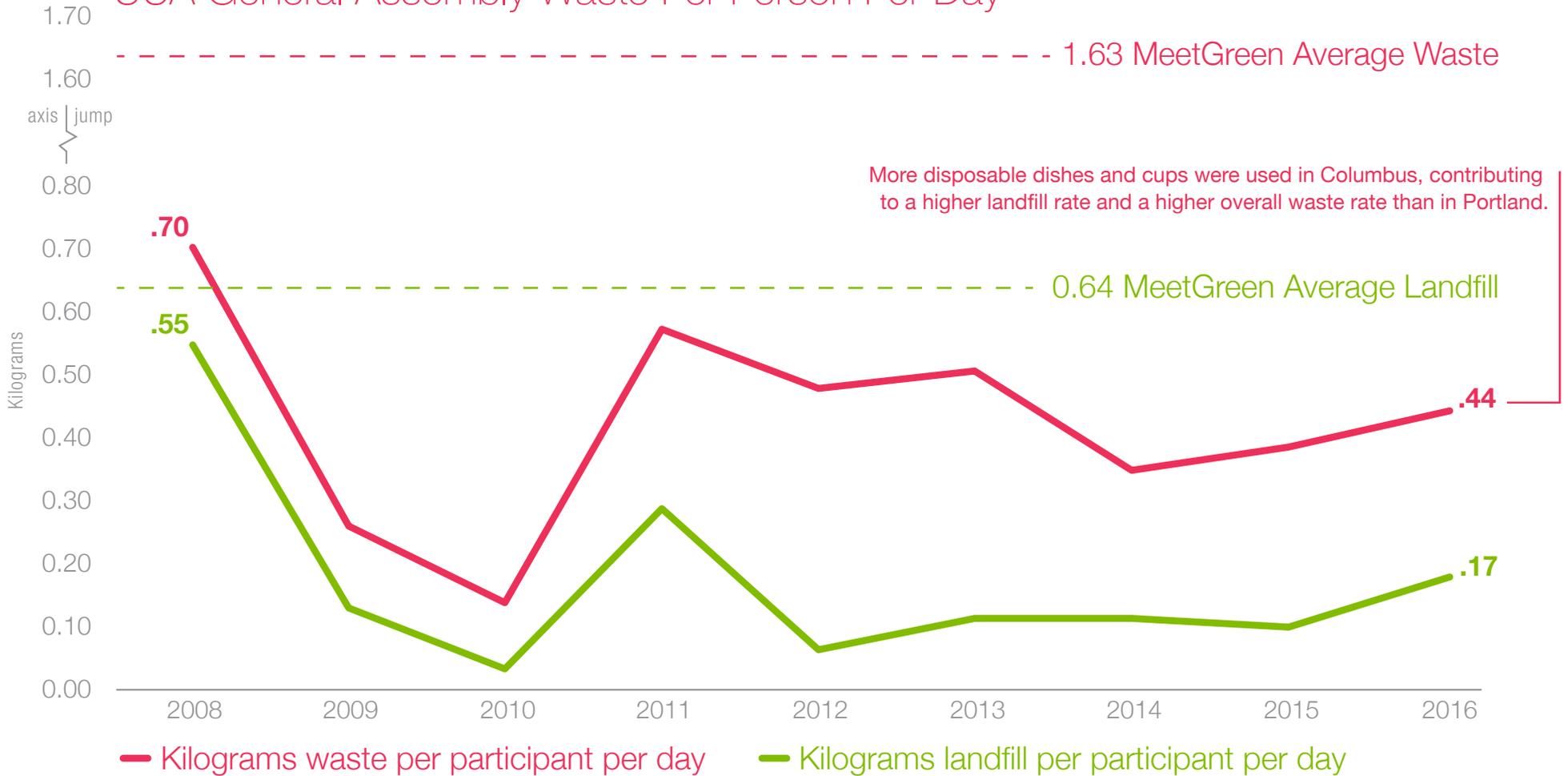
Waste



I've always been impressed by the number of compost cans around and the signs educating attendees about proper use. For you to work with 5,000 people to understand the system, when our church still has trouble making the 400 understand, is great! **-GA attendee**



UUA General Assembly Waste Per Person Per Day



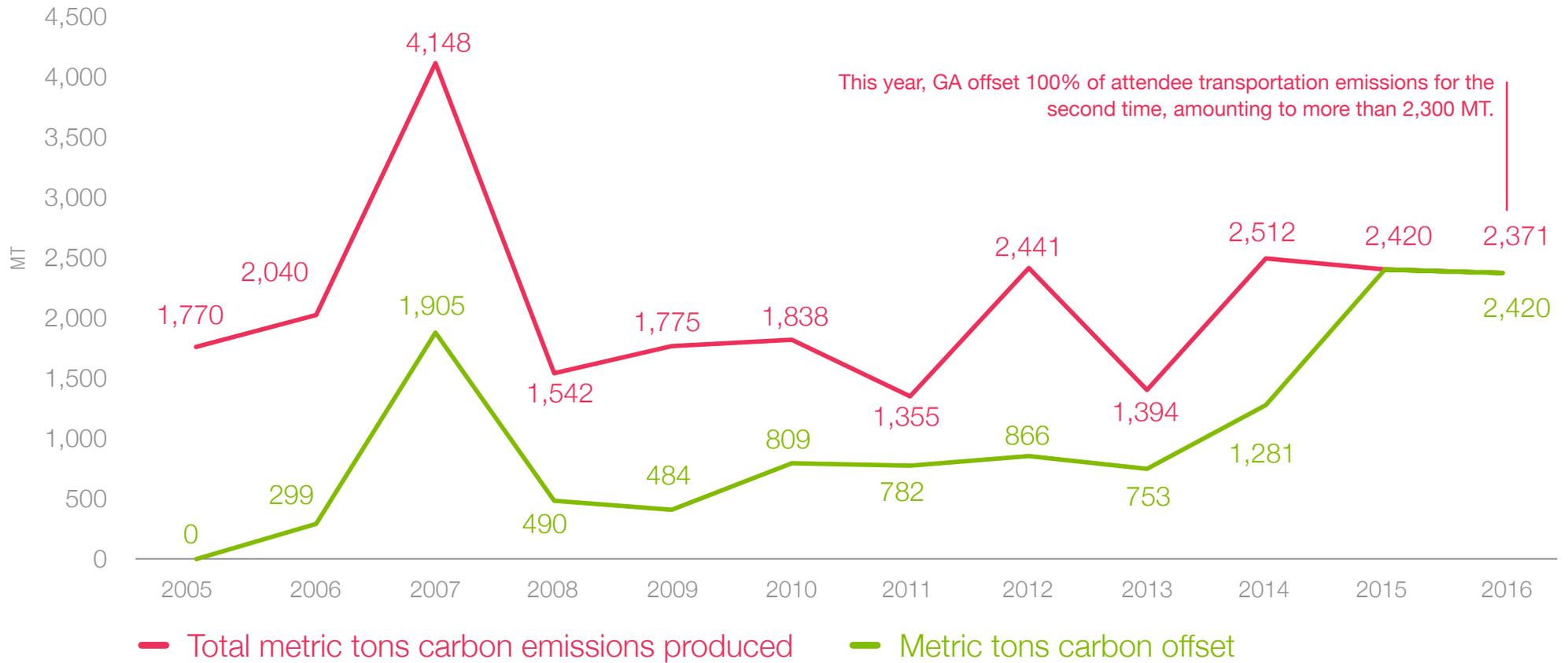
I appreciated the efforts to recycle and the suggestions to bring one's own water bottles and coffee cups. **-GA attendee**



How Did We Do?

Carbon Emissions

UUA General Assembly Total Carbon Emissions



How Did We Do?

Carbon Emissions

UUA General Assembly Carbon Footprint (MT)

Venue, Hotel & Meal Emissions

GA also works with venues and hotels to offset their emissions.

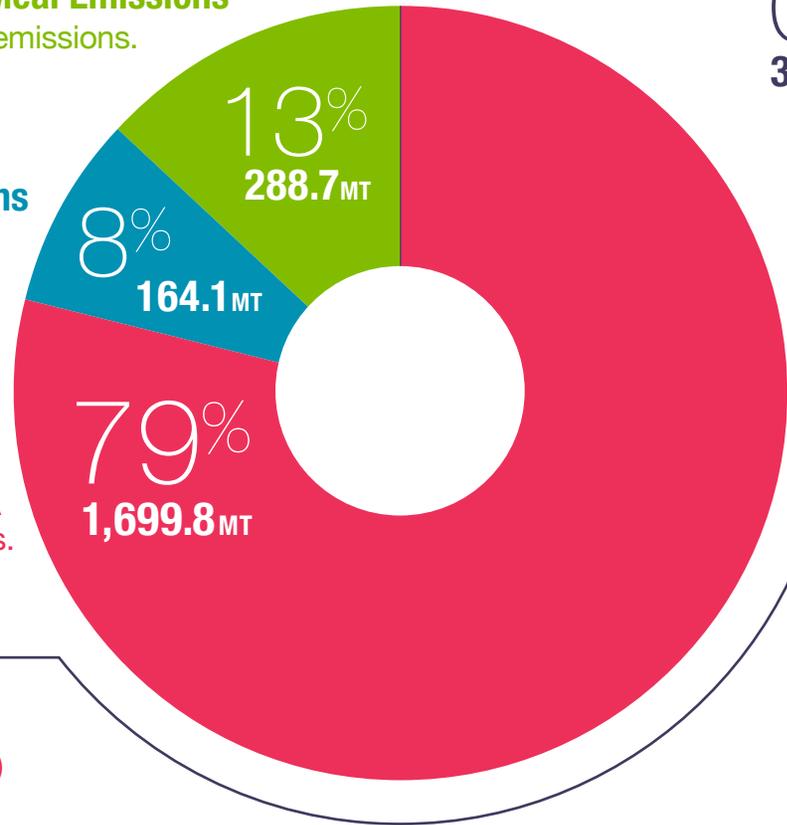
Auto & other Travel Emissions

Flight Emissions

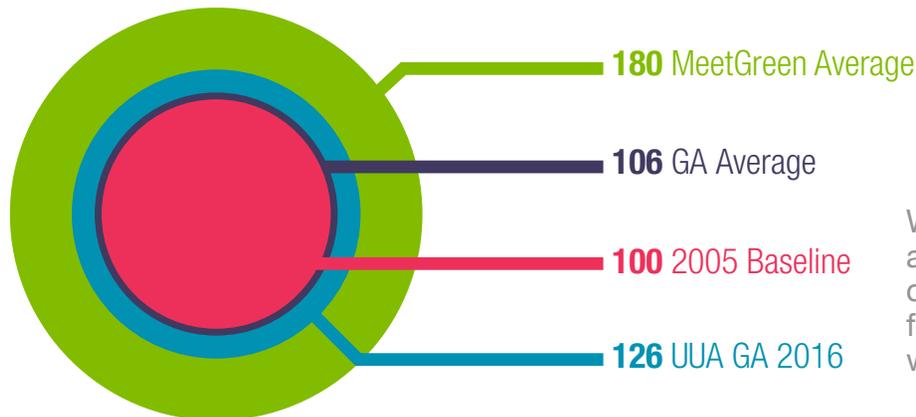
Air travel is typically the largest contributor of event emissions. For reasons of accessibility, GA is held in a different region of the United States each year, which has a large effect on overall emissions. This unavoidable variability in travel emissions is one of the reasons GA now relies on offsets to compensate for all travel emissions.

Shipping Emissions

0%
3.1 MT



Carbon Emissions (kg CO2 per person, per day)



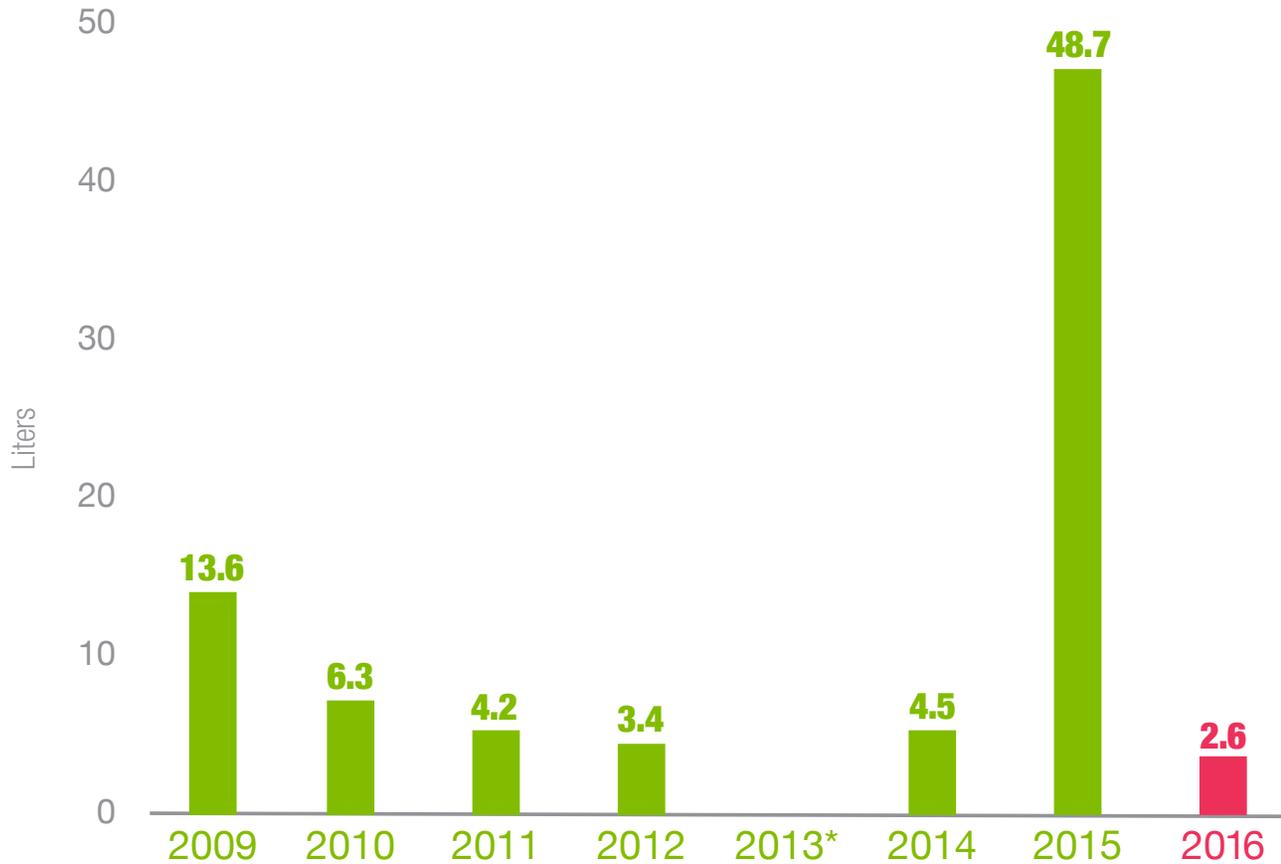
While many attendees drove to Columbus, Ohio, this location also led to a high percentage of attendees who flew from both coasts. As air travel is the largest contributor of event emissions for GA, the 2016 number is higher than the event baseline as well as the GA average.

How Did We Do?

Water

UUA General Assembly Water Use Analysis

Liters water use per participant per day



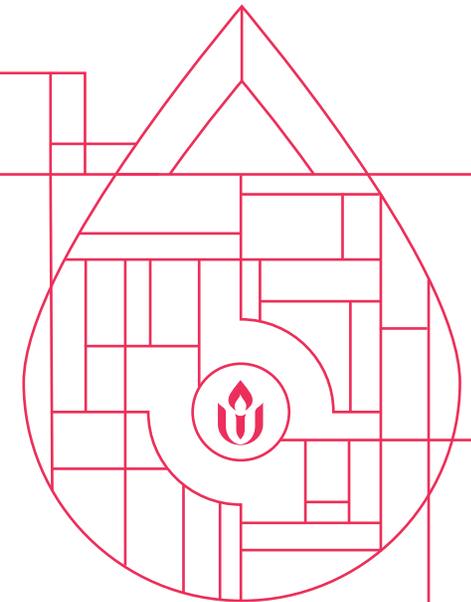
*GA 2013 water use data unavailable.

Venue water use has been explicitly tracked for GA since 2009.

In 2015, a reusable dish program was instituted for GA in Portland, which resulted in a 600% increase in water use for dishwashing. The results of lifecycle analysis show that using reusable dishes is a better choice overall, when considering material use, overall water use, air pollution, and solid waste.



One water saving technique that was adopted in Columbus was having the catering company use bulk beverage containers instead of pre-poured beverages.



How Did We Do?

Materials

Material use has always been a priority at GA. Working with Heritage, the decorator for GA, large amounts of waste have been alleviated through reductions, reuse, and recycling. The following table shows what materials were used during GA and how they were treated after the event.

Product	Product Type	Quantity Used	Reused	Recycled	Landfilled	Locally Sourced	Reusable	Recyclable	Post-Consumer Recycled Content	Post-Industry Recycled Content
Carpet (linear ft.)	Emerald	5,821	5,711	60	111		♠	♠		♠
Carpet (linear ft.)	Standard	580	580				♠			
Padding (linear ft.)	Grandeur	310	310			♠	♠		♠	
Signage (sq. ft.)	PVC Sintra	270		270		♠	♠	♠		
Signage (sq. ft.)	Cardstock	2,120		2,120		♠	♠	♠		
Shrinkwrap (linear ft.)	Polyolefin	700			700	♠		♠		
Table tops (linear ft.)	Vinyl	1,320			1,320	♠	♠	♠		
Double-face tape (linear ft.)		1,750			1,750	♠				
Wastebaskets	Cardboard	165	145	20			♠	♠		



How Did We Do?

Volunteers

24 recycling volunteers gave **315 hours** to help educate and sort waste at GA 2016.



“ Being part of the Green Team was thrilling, because it made me believe that the dream is possible. Ordinarily, when I sort a lone compostable cup from the recycling bin to the landfill one, I know that the bins will soon be contaminated again and that every other bin in the building is likely just as mixed up. But as part of the Green Team, I knew I could rely on the shared responsibility of our team as sorters and educators, and the rest of the conference-goers became part of our team by extension, as learners and educators in their own right.
– Jim Hays ”

“ I was surprised by the enthusiasm and gratitude of the Assembly attendees - people are intimidated and confused by the differing rules in different city, but want to do the right thing. I really enjoyed the long conversations I was able to engage in, and enjoyed how willing people were to being educated. It was clear that people appreciated the presence of a team to assist with environmentally conscious waste disposal. -Angela Wilcox ”

“ I enjoyed building a little community with the group and it was nice to see our team walking around with the grabbers around the convention center. I think people (in general) really appreciated the work we did and many people expressed gratitude to me as i was working. :) - Erin Holmes ”

“ The most often mentioned words I heard from GA attendees as they recycled their stuff was "thank you!" I think that speaks volumes about UU's!!!
– Robert Freer ”

How Did We Do?

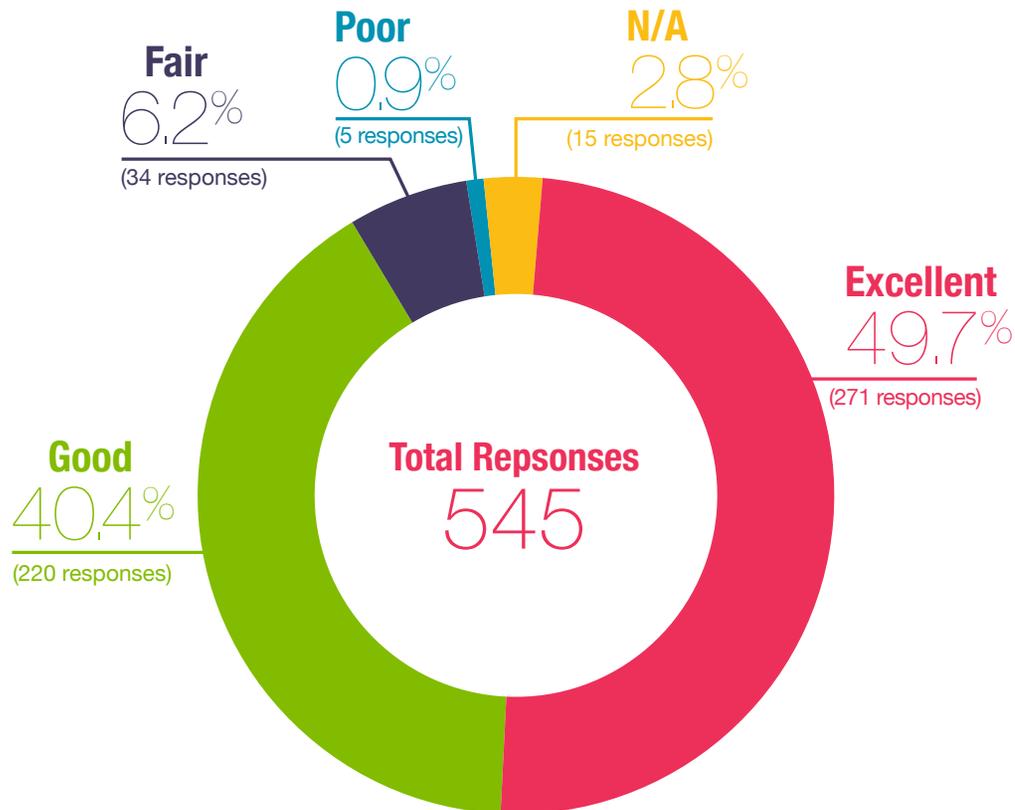
Sustainability Feedback Survey Results

Attendee feedback on sustainability efforts is gathered each year, onsite, and from an online evaluation which asks the following question:

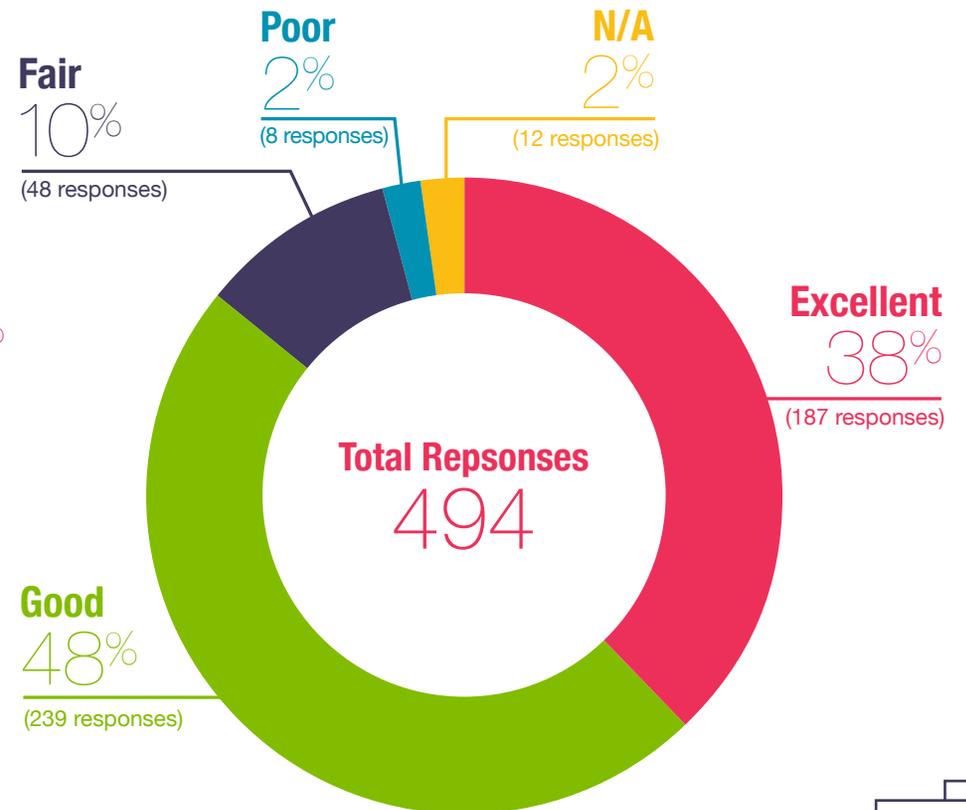
Question:

The Unitarian Universalist Association and the General Assembly Planning Committee are committed to reducing the impact of our annual meeting on the environment. How would you rate General Assembly efforts to support greening, both in preparation for GA and at GA, including hotels, transportation, the convention center, handouts, etc.?

GA in Portland 2015



GA in Columbus 2016



Where Are We Going?

Material Issues

This table explains some of the key issues that arose for 2016 GA stakeholders, and describes some of the barriers that are considered in designing sustainability initiatives for GA. Please note that the strength of the sustainability approach for UUA lies in integrating all of the Seven Principles, and especially in honoring social and economic justice at the same time as environmental justice.

Issues

Barriers

Comments from 2016 attendees



Solid Waste

ACHIEVING A
“ZERO WASTE”
GOAL

In order to address **ACCESSIBILITY** for people with various economic backgrounds and levels of technology adoption, paper handouts, programs, and voting are still a fixture at GA.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE is needed by the venue and vendors in order to attain the zero waste goal, and these capital projects are often slow, complex and costly.

“I am booklet dependent. I am glad the app worked for some but it probably would only lead to frustration if the only program materials were electronic.”

“I realize a printed program uses up trees. And that said I really appreciate it, not having or wanting a smart phone. Please keep the printed book.”

“My biggest issue was that the app was not referenced like the program was. I tried to solely use the app, but was not as informed as those who had the program.”

“Seemed like the quantity of food service materials that went to landfill rather than recycle was up, but this may be more a function of the 'system' in Columbus.”



Carbon Emissions

ENERGY USE IN
CONVENTION
CENTERS

HEATH & SAFETY

play a big role in setting the temperature in large meeting rooms within Convention centers.

The physical **LIMITATIONS OF HVAC SYSTEMS** for large rooms require pre-chilling to accommodate large groups.

“Cold temperatures and the waste of energy that UUA has taken stands on accommodating disabilities; however, I was dismayed to find the convention center (“CC”) so cold on many occasions that I found it difficult to concentrate.”

“Let’s do some direct democracy and vote online.”

ATTENDEE
TRAVEL

AIR TRAVEL

is typically the largest contributor of event emissions. For reasons of accessibility, GA is held in a different region of the United States each year, which has a large effect on overall emissions.

“A lot of things were clearly aimed at greening GA, but really -- how can an annual conference that people fly to from all over the continent, that inevitably uses hotels with a huge footprint (AC 24/7, for starters), make a significant dent in environmental degradation?”

Where Are We Going?

Material Issues

This table explains some of the key issues that arose for 2016 GA stakeholders, and describes some of the barriers that are considered in designing sustainability initiatives for GA. Please note that the strength of the sustainability approach for UUA lies in integrating all of the Seven Principles, and especially in honoring social and economic justice at the same time as environmental justice.

Issues

Barriers

Comments from 2016 attendees



Food

LOW-IMPACT CHOICES

LOCAL ECONOMIES

dictate whether each unique city and venue have access to locally grown and processed food at a comparable cost.

SEASONALITY

is a barrier to fresh, local food in many climates.

“We need to offer far less meat and a lot more plant-based food, if we are going to truly live into the value of greening our GA.”

“Thank you for supporting "Meatless Fridays." This campaign needs more publicity.”



Education

ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT

UUA promotes education and awareness about event sustainability programs in a variety of ways, however the message can still be missed, given the **LACK OF TIME** and the diversity of activities at GA.

“I think GA did really well; I noticed that we (the congregants) could have done better- I saw lots of waste and misuse of trash bins, leaving AC on in the hotel rooms, etc. We can do better.”

“Really appreciated the info about this at the orientation meeting and all the volunteers who stood at the recycling bins -- an outstanding effort!”



Supply Chain

DESTINATION AND HOTEL

VARIABILITY is a factor in pushing hotels to deepen their sustainability practices, as they each begin at a different level of sustainability.

“The efforts are stellar! The overall impacts are still in question. The hotels try to cooperate, but the message doesn't always get down to the workers.”

Recommendations



UUA Objectives

2017 Recommendations

1. Improve overall sustainability for the event

- Develop a comprehensive UUA Sustainability Policy to align sustainability operations across UUA and within GA.
- Establish a long-term sustainability plan for GA, including 5, 10 and 20 year goals that consider environmental, social and economic justice.

2. Reduce environmental footprint in waste, water, energy, and emissions

- Improve upon visual aids during sessions and GA mobile event application use and promotion in order to reduce the need for paper handouts, voting, and other promotional materials.
- Run a reusable coffee cup campaign.
- Design new system to encourage sustainability best practices with exhibitors.
- Consider local food and beverage vendors outside convention center to better plan for potential waste streams.

3. Measure the benefits of sustainable practices

- Refine event staff training and direction during move-in to increase diversion rate.
- Track legacy of UUA collaboration with local suppliers from prior GAs.

4. Provide and promote sustainable food and beverage at the event

- Continue to advocate for the use of local, organic and sustainable food options in each GA destination.
- Provide more information at the Green Booth about local food producers and sustainable retail options in the host city.

5. Educate attendees in sustainability efforts

- Increase teachable moments and touch-points during GA, for example, during orientations.
- Conduct main stage announcements about sustainability.
- Increase specific recycling directions on mobile event application.
- Coordinate green booth with Commit2Respond, Green Sanctuary, and Religious Education curricula.

Acknowledgements

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Suppliers: Carbonfund, Centerplate, Crowne Plaza Columbus-Convention Center, Hilton Columbus Downtown, Heritage Expositions, Hopkins Printing, Hyatt Regency Columbus, Greater Columbus Convention Center.

Event Sustainability Team: Destination: Jennifer Davis, Rodney Faulk, Matt Long, Adrienne Yates, Eric Seifferlein, Jasmine Hardy; Heritage: Ernie Davis, Bob Kleen, Vito Kruschke, Ryan Yemm; CMI Communications: Greg Bates; UUA Team: Stacey Dixon, Michael O'Herron, Don Plante, Steve Ransom, Janiece Sneegas; MeetGreen: Aaron Elliott, Romana Cohen.

Sustainable Exhibitors (2015): Allies For Racial Equity, Art and Stole(s), Association of UU Administrators, Austin Computing Solutions, Barbara Ford-Cultural Artisanhip for a Changing World, C&M Designs, Church Membership Software, Accounting, & Payroll, First Unitarian Church of Dallas, Guignon Designs, Icon Systems Inc., Northern Sun, Paul Kivel and Associates, Pshaw! Artcessory, Stevens Worldwide Van Lines, Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth, Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, UU Mystics in Community, UUA Bookstore, UUA Presidential Search Committee, UUA Socially Responsible Investing Committee.

Scope: Carbon calculations include: Venue energy use, guest room energy use, all participant travel to and from the event, and show management freight. Waste metrics include: venue landfill, recycling, donations, and compost. Supply chain verification includes: venue, hotels, caterer, general services contractor, audio-visual supplier, freight providers, mobile event app, print and signage vendors.

Baselines: Since data tracking occurred on an evolving basis, baseline dates for data collection may be different depending on the metric. For example, tracking for carbon metrics began in 2005, while waste metrics only began to be reliably collected in 2008.

Definitions: “Local” is assumed to include goods purchased within 250 miles of the event site. “Organic” and “fair trade” must include verification or certification by a third party, such as USDA or Equal Exchange. “Green” cleaners must bear a third-party certification, such as Green Seal. “Landfill” is waste to landfill (no recovery). “Waste” includes landfill, recycling, compost, and donations that are discarded from the event.

Source: All metrics direct reported by vendors through metering, hauling records, and procurement analysis. All reports are checked in comparison with historic and external baselines and onsite observations to validate and error-check data. Carbon offset calculation completed by the Carbonfund.org, reported carbon calculations completed by MeetGreen.

Auditing: Supply chain compliance with external standards, such as Green Seal, Fair Trade and USDA Organic, verified by MeetGreen. Conformity of event practices with APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Event Standard and ISO 20121: 2012 first-party verified by MeetGreen. Where multiple vendors are required to demonstrate conformity with the APEX/ASTM Standard, credit for compliance is only given where all comply with a specification. Therefore no credit is given for partial conformity among vendors. This significantly impacts the Accommodation and Communication scores where a single non-reporting or non-conforming vendor can neutralize the efforts of other suppliers.