

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION General Assembly

EVENT SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2013



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2013

Principles-based Assembly planning

WE ARE COMMITTED TO OPENLY AND TRANSPARENTLY SHARING OUR
PROGRESS TOWARD IMPROVING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

We strive to continuously improve the sustainability of General Assembly, the annual business meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

We have a responsibility to act in ways commensurate with our Principles as we attempt to make the world a better place for all living things.

We want to work with host destinations to leave a lasting legacy of improved capacity to hold more sustainable events.

Our attention to environmental and social responsibility includes working within the law and voluntarily exceeding legal requirements in order to model best practice for our congregations and other religious denominations.

As a liberal religious denomination committed to social and environmental justice, we have prioritized issues that are important to our congregations, including:

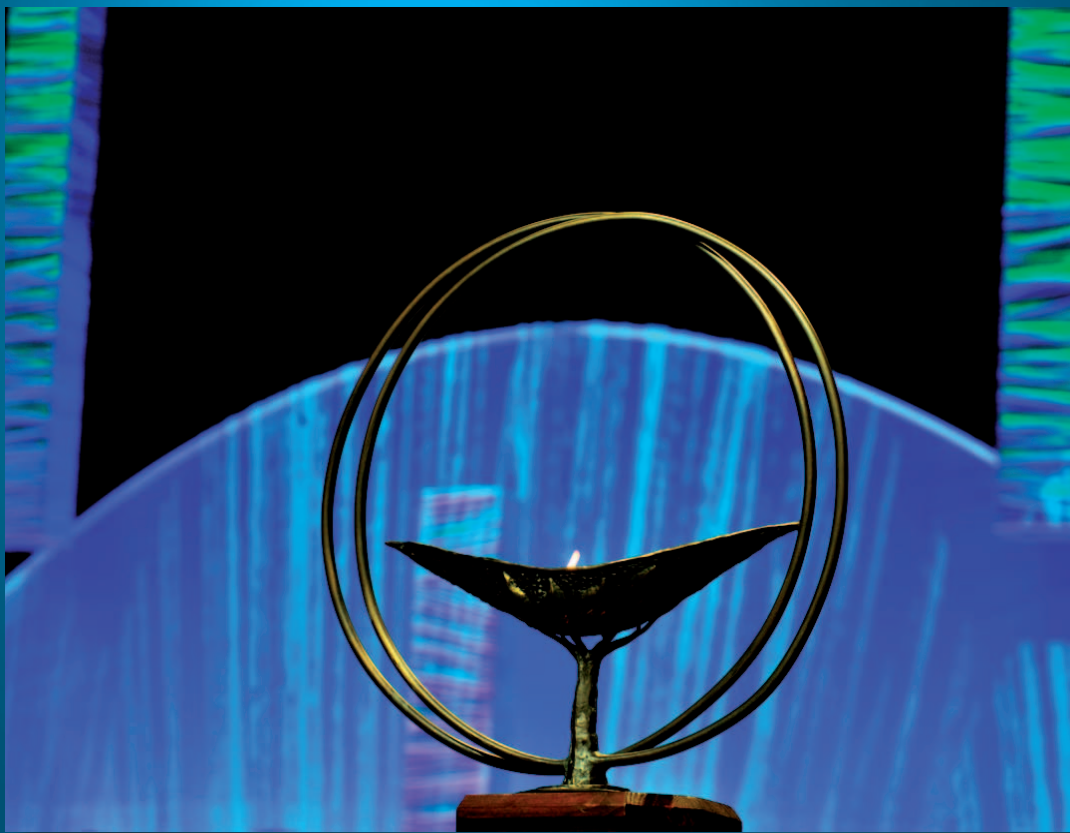
- Equal and inclusive participation of diverse individuals.
- Conservation of water and water quality.
- Promotion of reduced and renewable energy opportunities.
- Reduction of solid waste.

We are committed to openly and transparently sharing our progress toward improving the sustainability of General Assembly. And we welcome feedback from you, our congregations, attendees and event partners in continuously improving.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY SUSTAINABILITY POLICY
ADOPTED 2012, GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA) PLANNING COMMITTEE



Objectives & Outcomes



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2013

Louisville, Kentucky

5 Days | 3,302 participants | 6,522 room nights

OBJECTIVE #1

Improve overall event sustainability

84%	MeetGreen® Calculator score (2% increase over 2012)
67.5	Metric tons of carbon emissions avoided through remote participation options (double compared to 2012)
80%	Compliance with APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Event Standard, Level 1 (1% drop over 2012)
1st	Party conformity assessment against ISO 20121: 2012 Event Sustainability Management Systems Standard

More information: Pages 19-24

Reduction in per participant carbon emissions over 2012 37%

Reduction in per participant carbon emissions compared to nine-year event average 18%

Diversion of waste from landfill, tripling previous venue diversion rate 78%

Reduction in per participant landfill compared to nine-year event average 46%

Increase in per participant waste, including landfill, recycling and compost, compared to nine-year event average 11%

More information: Pages 20-21

OBJECTIVE #2:

Reduce energy, water and waste footprint

OBJECTIVE #3

Measure benefits of more sustainable purchases and practices

10	Vendors educated and engaged in improving sustainable event practices
\$2,700	Economic benefit to local producers from event concessions
\$80,000	Cost avoided by selecting a destination with a walkable convention package
54%	Event carbon emissions voluntarily offset by participants, amounting to 753 metric tons

More information: Pages 6-14, 19-23

Hours donated to onsite sustainability efforts by UUA volunteers 388

Number of Green Team volunteers donating time toward onsite waste management efforts 17

Total green event resource kits provided to congregations for use in their local communities 27

Percent of attendees rating sustainability efforts as good to excellent 93%

Raised for three legacy projects \$110k

More information: Pages 16-18

OBJECTIVE #4:

Engage participants in sustainability

Destination Legacies

Six destinations, transformed

WHILE THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION STRIVES TO IMPROVE OUR OWN EVENT THROUGH PLANNING DECISIONS THAT EMBODY OUR SEVEN PRINCIPLES, WE ALSO AIM TO HELP HOST CITIES IMPROVE THEIR ABILITY TO OFFER MORE SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

The process of integrating sustainability into General Assembly begins long before attendees arrive in the host city for the event. In fact, prior to being selected to host General Assembly, all cities must submit detailed sustainability credentials to the planning team. Rarely are destinations prepared to meet all of UUA's event sustainability requirements at this time, so as a condition of selection, commitments and intentions must be captured in all contracts put in place with venues, caterers, hotels and other companies supplying the event. This is perhaps the most critical step in the planning process because it lays the foundation to achieve one of UUA's primary event sustainability goals: improving the capacity of host destinations to hold more sustainable events. To achieve this goal, UUA provides free mentorship to event partners to develop event sustainability policies and action plans. Event suppliers are required to measure improvement-oriented objectives so UUA can have confidence progress is being made before and as a result of General Assembly. The legacies created through this approach are compelling:

2007: Portland, OR

[Travel Portland](#) and major hotels hosting General Assembly in 2007 continue to cite the General Assembly as a turning point in transforming their city into a leading destination for sustainable events and “green” meetings. Since the event the [Oregon Convention Center](#) has standardized sustainable meeting packages for all events. The [Doubletree Portland Lloyd Center](#) has gone on to become one of the most decorated green hotels in the United States, with often-copied models of how to re-invent properties and inspire employees through more sustainable business approaches.





2008: Fort Lauderdale, FL

Sometimes you have to be patient to see signs of the change you want to see in the world. It has been over five years since General Assembly was held in Fort Lauderdale, but even back then [Fort Lauderdale Convention Center](#) operators affirmed a commitment to UUA to become a LEED® certified “green” building. True to word, the venue successfully achieved a LEED® Gold, Existing Building rating in September 2012.

2009: Salt Lake City, UT

A trial composting program was implemented by the Salt Lake City Convention Center to capture organic food waste from kitchens during General Assembly 2009. With no option to capture compostable serviceware available in the state at the time, UUA lobbied the local government to improve diversion of all types of food service waste from landfill through letter writing prior to General Assembly. Since this time the Salt Lake City government has developed a “green” [event resource center](#) for organizers and expanded organic waste options for events.

2010: Minneapolis, MN

While UUA’s General Assembly was a few months shy of benefitting from the Minneapolis Convention Centre’s (MCC) installation of a [solar array](#) in November 2010, we like to think our request for proposal and contract stipulations for improved sourcing of renewables years previous played a small role in catalyzing interest to pursue this project. The 2,613 panel solar array reduces yearly coal consumption

by 367 metric tons and provides 5-8% of the venue’s power. The MCC has also continued a [Green Your Event](#) package launched during General Assembly that enables convention planners to supplement their solar power through purchase of renewable energy credits.

2011: Charlotte, NC

In 2011 UUA placed the largest single order for seasonal, sustainable food through the local Farmer’s Fresh Market in order to supply hot food lines in the General Assembly exhibit hall. This partnership, as well as use of china and silverware, bulk condiments and compostable service ware—practices originally implemented for General Assembly—continue to be offered by facility caterers. General Assembly’s expanded waste management program also enabled [venue](#) operators to develop relationships and procedures that have brought benefit to a series of “greener” events held in the city since, including the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

2012: Phoenix, AZ

Composting in Phoenix is tricky, and requires diligent separation that is uncommon in other destinations. To enable an effective program and gain the trust of composting operators that a clean product could be delivered, UUA partnered with [Global Green Integrators](#) (GGI), a local “extreme recycling” agency (photo, top). While it is still a bit early to tell, it is hoped the record setting 87% diversion of waste from landfill will result in the Phoenix Convention Center working with GGI again for the benefit of future events.

“For UUA we did a lot of things that we might not have usually to this level of detail. Like composting - it was one of the largest things we were always a bit frightened by. But we’ve learned a lot, and enjoy things that challenge the team. As we move forward we will be able to offer this to other groups.”

— Bill Trippet, Director of Catering
Charlotte Convention Center

General Assembly venues improve landfill diversion
by 44% points, on average.



Centerplate Catering

- Developed a written sustainability policy for local operations.
- Provided “disposables-free” hot food lines, changing standard business practice to not allow china service in uncarpeted exhibit halls.
- Eliminated all single serving condiment packages.
- Prioritized and reported on the sustainability of food purchases for hot food lines, including communicating information about farmers providing food to attendees at point of purchase.
- Re-sourced all serviceware for to-go concessions in order to comply with composter guidelines.
- Planned concession menu items to minimize waste from serviceware. This included eliminating discretionary items like lids and straws.
- Required third-party concessions to participate in composting and use only compostable or recyclable serviceware where china was not already provided.
- Provided new recycling and composting stations back of house, achieving full employee engagement.

Kentucky International Convention Center (KICC)

- Contracted with a new waste management partner—Blue Skies Recycling—to improve recycling and organic waste diversion.
- Coordinated a [site visit](#) to waste facilities for all event team members.
- Trained all operations staff in new waste management procedures to reduce landfill,

including participating in administrative spaces that were outside of UUA’s rental contract.

- Purchased renewable energy credits amounting to 100% of total energy use.

Host Hotels

- Expanded recycling programs in guest rooms at all four host hotels, including plastics, glass, metals and paper. Prior to General Assembly only one host hotel practiced in-room recycling. Two properties also only recycled cardboard.
- Implemented a composting program at the Marriott Downtown Louisville. In its first month this program has kept 11 tons from landfill.
- Purchased renewable energy credits amounting to 5% of total energy use.

CMI Communications

- Developed a new, written sustainability policy targeting worker health and safety, energy use and waste reduction.
- Implemented a staff training program and formalized a sustainable purchasing policy and packaging reduction program for operations.
- Furnished a comparative analysis of energy use reduced through the use of more efficient lights, speakers and projectors.

These steps were possible because UUA:

- **ASKED** for commitments early
- **SUPPORTED** suppliers through mentorship, and
- **MEASURED** outcomes against objectives.

This consistent approach is what drives change.

“Working with UUA GA introduced us to the language, terms and processes that are key to supporting sustainable events. Moving forward we can support future groups with the knowledge we gained and the community-wide resources we identified during the UUA GA planning process. GA really helped us work across organizations, facilities and city departments to solve problems and find suitable, sustainable solutions.

— Destiny Monahan, Convention Services Manager
Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau

Remote options to attend allowed 112 people access to General Assembly while preventing 67.5 metric tons CO₂.



Principles and Progress

UUA believes in Seven Principles that guide individual and community action

GENERAL ASSEMBLY USES THESE PRINCIPLES AS THE BACKBONE FOR PLANNING. PROGRESS TOWARD EMBODYING THESE PRINCIPLES HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED IN MANY WAYS IN 2013

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 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.
-

“Perhaps we should realize that our need is not to ‘find something to believe’—but rather to discover that our lives indicate what we believe right now. This is the place to start.”

EDITH HUNTER, Religious Educator

First Principle

Each person is important

THE INHERENT WORTH AND DIGNITY OF EVERY PERSON

Accessibility

Abelism is a justice issue for Unitarian Universalists, and event planners work diligently to break barriers that may marginalize those with disabilities to the sidelines of event experiences. Beyond the physical accessibility of facilities used—ramps, captioning, seating cut-outs, etc.—UUA endeavors to take the next step: to truly welcome people with disabilities, integrating those with mobility, visual, hearing, mental health, chemical and sensory, developmental, addiction, and other disabilities into every facet of GA. All sites for the event are evaluated for ease of getting around. Provisions extend beyond merely checking an ADA compliance box, to inspecting rooms and advocating for improvements. Assistive devices are also made available to attendees, including hearing enhancements, wheelchairs, electric scooters, captioning, ASL interpretation and volunteer support for way-finding. Those in recovery can also find information on available meetings in the event program.



Appreciation

When was the last time you looked a janitor in the eye and acknowledged them for the work they do? People employed in waste management are often invisible and receive little appreciation for the essential task they do: cleaning up after the rest of us. During General Assembly UUA took steps to acknowledge and reward the efforts of front line operations staff at daily briefings. Attendees were informed that waste management practices for General Assembly were a significant deviation from standard operating procedure and encouraged to thank staff for their efforts. In addition, venue and catering managers at the KICC were provided with tokens (photo, below) to give to their staff in appreciation for demonstrating values important to UUs: respect, leadership, stewardship, and integrity. Those in receipt of tokens were asked to visit the event Green Booth, where they were personally thanked by UUA organizers for their work and contribution, received a written note of thanks and gift card. We're proud to have worked with these team members recognized through this program:

- KICC Operations: Donald Hayes, Tim Richardson, and Tom Johnson
- Centerplate: Willie Joe and Tonya Wesson





Inclusion

UUA actively reflects inclusivity in programming as well as logistics. Programming is diverse and promotes learning across generations, economics and cultures. Having long provided gender neutral washrooms for attendees for several years, UUA increased the profile of this issue in 2013, expanding the number of locations designated as gender neutral (photo, above). Signage was also placed in all washrooms to educate users about the oppression that can result from facilities that are labeled for women or men only (photo, below), and steps congregations can take to be more inclusive.

*Sometimes because of how people look, they aren't allowed to pee.
Here at General Assembly, we can do better!*

THIS BATHROOM IS FOR EVERYONE

There are real impacts when bathrooms are labeled for women or men *only*.

One of the places where oppression happens is in bathrooms. For transgender and/or gender non-conforming people, the use of public restrooms can come with emotional and physical harassment, deep discomfort, risk of arrest for being in the "wrong" bathroom or even physical violence and death. As a step toward being a Welcoming Assembly, restrooms near the Plenary and Exhibit Halls are designated for use by all genders. Gender-specific men's and women's restrooms are available in other sections of the convention center.

*Please trust that each individual knows
which restroom is most comfortable and
appropriate for them.*

You are encouraged to thoughtfully examine and challenge your assumptions around gender identity and gender expression. We invite compassionate and ongoing dialogue around these issues, and as part of our work toward right relationship, it is important to remember that personal processing should not be done with transgender and/or gender non-conforming people. We encourage you to contact a GA chaplain if you need support in this work.



← Scan this code for more information

Second Principle

Be kind in all you do

JUSTICE, EQUITY AND COMPASSION IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Right Relations

While we all hope people are able to interact in respectful ways at events, sometimes this doesn't always happen. A speaker may say something someone finds offensive. A comment by an attendee may make someone feel discriminated against. UUA communicates an expectation to all attendees to act in a respectful and courteous manner during General Assembly through the program, mobile app, orientations and Plenary. In addition, the [Right Relationship Team](#) (photo, below) exists to listen and engage with people who have experienced problems of racism, discrimination and oppression while at General Assembly. This proactive effort ensures easily identifiable people are available on-the-ground who can assist with specific situations. This team also anonymously communicates teachable moments to attendees at Plenary to help raise awareness about compassionate conduct onsite.



Ethical Eating

Delegates at the General Assembly in Charlotte, NC, approved [Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice](#) as a 2011 Statement of Conscience. Since this time organizers have raised awareness by sharing this Statement with caterers early in the planning process, and requesting them to share more information about how food they buy is distributed and grown. Given many caterers use large companies and distributors, this is typically a difficult task and often the first time they have been asked to dive more deeply into their supply chain by an event host. One question UUA organizers rely on to gauge awareness among caterers is a simple one: asking where their tomatoes come from. This may seem like a basic question, but is important as it can highlight awareness about fair food issues, including campaigns by the [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#). In the case of Louisville, tomatoes were bought from Creation Gardens, who confirmed sourcing through Habegger Mennonite Farms in Scottsville, Kentucky, a grower which provided the majority of vegetable produce for hot food lines at General Assembly. Meat and dairy products served came from Stone Cross Farm and Cloverdale Creamery (photo, below), a [Kentucky Proud](#) farm located in Taylorsville, Kentucky that sells free range, antibiotic, steroid and hormone-free beef, pork and dairy products. General Assembly is estimated to have provided approximately \$2,700 in direct economic benefit to growers and producers within 150 miles of Louisville through special orders for local, seasonal produce for hot food lines.





Worker Health, Safety and Fairness

Since 2009 UUA has exhibited solidarity with the Hyatt 100, a group of house-keepers laid off and replaced with temporary workers at three Boston-area hotels. This has seen UUA cancel contracts with Hyatt, at a cost, until labor issues can be resolved. Discernment for worker safety extends to all suppliers, who are contracted to ensure healthy workplace practices and avenues to expressing workplace grievances.

Waste hauler facilities are inspected to ensure safe operating procedures (photo, above). During inspections it was learned that glass is particularly dangerous for workers at the recycling plant. Understanding this, UUA opted to take special efforts to sort glass as a single stream onsite. In addition to this special handling, Volunteers are also provided with gloves and trash grabbers to ensure waste is handled safely (photo, below). In addition, UUA purchases with a conscience, including volunteer t-shirts from union-made, USA-based factories. Caterers are also required to provide a fair trade coffee choice for attendees.



“Caterer agrees to inquire and provide information about health, safety and general labor conditions at farms where products are sourced in compliance with the UUA’s Statement of Ethical Eating.”
— Contract clause excerpt

Unitarian Universalist Association Conference Services

100% of meat protein and 56% of vegetables were bought from farms within 220 miles of Louisville, amounting to \$2,700 in spend.



Third Principle

We are free to learn together

ACCEPTANCE OF ONE ANOTHER AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH
IN OUR CONGREGATIONS

Community Matters

Do you know where your energy comes from when you turn on a light switch in your own home? Every year, UUA raises awareness about a locally-relevant justice issue through a public rally during General Assembly. This year, the [Witness event](#) (photo, below and preceding page) highlighted how climate is changing because of how we harness and use energy in ways that do harm to our planet, our communities, our neighbors, and our future. Through words, song and prayer, 2,000 Witness rally participants highlighted the harmful effects of practices like mountaintop removal, hydraulic fracturing, mining, and drilling. The UUA was joined in this effort by Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light, the Sierra Club and 350.org, as well as Wendell Berry, author, environmental justice activist, economic critic, and farmer, and Tim DeChristopher, climate activist and founder of Peaceful Uprising. Prior to the rally an [Environmental Justice Tour](#) was held to profile and discuss solutions for energy use impacts on those living in poverty. The Witness led to six high-profile [articles](#) in non-UUA media that raised the profile of this important issue.



Capacity-building Collections

Every year UUA raises funds for important causes that align with the Seven Principles. [Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light](#) was selected as this year's service project and Sunday collection recipient, receiving \$34,000 in contributions. Interfaith Power and Light is a national organization that has local and state chapters that provide an interfaith religious response to global warming. They offer support to promote energy conservation, efficiency and renewable energy to over 14,000 congregations in 40 states. In addition, \$16,900 was raised through a mid-week collection that benefitted [New Orleans congregations](#) still recovering from Hurricane Katrina (photo, below). \$60,000 was also donated to the [Living Tradition Fund](#) at the Service of Living Tradition. The Living Tradition Fund provides three types of support for ministry: need-based scholarships for theological students who have completed a full year of theological education; new minister assistance to reduce the burden of high educational debt and repayment; and grants to ministers for emergency assistance.





Ware Lecture

This year's Ware Lecture focused on a profound and difficult question posed by Eboo Patel: "How are all of us, with our beautiful resonances and our deep disagreements, to share a nation and a world together?" A leader in promoting interfaith movements, Patel called on those gathered to respond to a specific and difficult call: "We need exceptional people who are able to hold the tensions here in a way that binds together rather than breaks apart, people who are willing to lead with their chin and take a punch. That's you. In fifteen years of doing this work, here's what I can promise: it is worth it, but it is not easy." For a complete transcript of the Ware Lecture visit the UUA General Assembly web site.

Attendee Communications

UUA stepped up communications to attendees and UUA departments in an effort to improve awareness and engagement this year. Youth and Young Adult Ministries and Ministry Days were provided with support and assistance from MeetGreen® to integrate sustainability principles into their event plans. A Green Booth was set up onsite to provide information about how organizers reduce impacts, and invite feedback on areas to improve (photo, above). This expanded previous communications to attendees that have included Plenary slides, orientation briefings, written program content and a back of house tour for youth campers. 27 attendees signed up at the Booth to receive educational resources to help "green" events at their congregations. Following the event, 93% of attendees indicated they would rate sustainability efforts as "Good" to "Excellent". The split between Excellent/Very Good was 31%/47%, compared to 37%/41%

in 2011 and 41%/42% in 2012. The implication? Overall reception remains positive, but ratings at the highest level dropped. 172 specific comments were received about event sustainability, providing feedback related to communications (specifically paper use and wi-fi – 30%), hotels (19%), waste (14%), venue air conditioning (12%), and general topics (12%) (see next page). It is important to note that the majority of comments related to communications and air conditioning expressed frustration at wasteful practices, while waste and general comments were positive. Hotel comments included a mix of positive and negative feedback.

Exhibit Hall

General Assembly has a relatively low-impact exhibit hall. Aisle carpeting, UUA signage and kiosks are reused year-to-year. Uncarpeted booths reuse drape, aluminum framing, folding chairs and wooden tables (photo, below). Exhibitors may supplement booths with reusable racks, signs, shelves and lighting, most of which are small and travel with them, rather than being shipped separately. The biggest issue in the exhibit hall is waste from giveaways. Since 2009 UUA has acted on this issue by providing Green Exhibitor Award program incentives. In 2013 this program was discontinued and replaced with mandatory sustainability terms and conditions that all exhibitors must sign prior to exhibiting. Conditions align with minimum requirements in the APEX ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Exhibit Standard E2742. In addition, special efforts are taken to reuse typically disposable items. Heritage reused 85 of 112 cardboard waste baskets and 1,190 or 1,240 square feet of tabletop covering provided to exhibitors. All shrinkwrap generated during move-in was also separated and recycled locally. No visqueen is used on carpets, further reducing waste.



Paper use / Wireless access

"I would like to see more online links to both worship programs and workshop materials. While being respectful of those who do not have access to smart phones and other technology,"

The highest number of comments on event sustainability evaluations related to paper use, particularly in Plenary. Many want to see reduced paper use and improved wi-fi access in order to take advantage of the mobile app. On the other hand, others expressed appreciation for paper handouts, and a desire to receive hard-copy programs in advance. It is clear that General Assembly is still in transition between digital and paper-based means of communication. 2,840 downloads of the mobile event app suggest people are becoming more accepting of technology as a way to get information. However, complete transition to an app would require cellular network access among attendees or a good event wireless network, both of which cost money. With a bylaw now passed for electronic voting, discussion about wi-fi access onsite will no doubt continue into future. Still, paper will remain a necessity onsite for those unable to use or afford wireless devices. In the meantime, paper used onsite continues to contain a minimum 30% post-consumer content, sourced from certified sustainable forests, supporting forestry jobs throughout North America.



Air conditioning

"From a greening perspective, the Convention Center air conditioning could have been adjusted by just a couple of degrees (warmer), and improved the comfort level and saved them money."

Typically UUA receives as many complaints about building temperatures being too cold as it does about it being too hot. Planning for appropriate room temperatures for a diverse audience is a challenge! This year an abnormally high number of complaints were received. Temperature was adjusted, but sustainability evaluations were impacted as participants were concerned about wasted energy use. Organizers will continue to inform venues to conserve energy and maintain comfort when it comes to heating and air conditioning. Our steps will include educating venues that attendees do not necessarily fit the typical set point profile of an adult male in a business suit and that adjustments may be required. UUA will also continue to contract for reduced energy use and purchase of renewable energy credits by hotels and venues. We ask for attendees to understand that it is better to keep temperatures slightly cooler, as it is more difficult to provide a healthy environment for someone experiencing heat than it is for someone who is chilly to bring and wear a sweater.



Hotels

"I was impressed that even in our hotels, efforts had been made to support our desire to recycle." | "I did not see cans for recycling in the lobby or hallways or rooms in the Galt House, which was one of the designed hotels. I indicated my disappointment in this in a post-visit survey of the hotel. For the next GA, I would suggest that the UUA work with the hotels to ensure that they provide a mechanism for recycling paper and beverage containers."

By staying within the housing block provided by UUA, General Assembly participants can have confidence that the hotel has been required to meet minimum sustainability requirements in their contract. This includes providing towel and sheet reuse options and recycling choices, as well as other energy and waste-wise house-keeping guidelines. Because programs are often new and breakdowns in consistent service occur, UUA monitors guest room practices during General Assembly through a "secret sleeper" program. Participants in the program provide immediate feedback about guest room compliance with sustainability requests through an online form. Any audit reports received are sent to hotels which are requested to follow up within 24 hours with solutions to address any communication and training breakdowns contributing to the issue. UUA is unable to guarantee sustainability practices will be in place at housing sites outside of our contracted block and will provide notification on the event website of any hotels we are aware that are not willing to sign contracts with sustainability commitments.



Carbon footprint of air travel

"I don't know how we can be green when we are flying across the country.. but I also think the importance of meeting in person is so very important. I think maybe GA once every other year is the answer."

A fair and valid point! The reality is, the carbon impact of air travel IS a most significant impact of General Assembly. However, it is important as a community to enable times for face to face contact in order to keep our community connected. So how do we do this in the most carbon-responsible way? Firstly, UUA provides options for remote participation. This year 112 delegates took advantage of this option, growing from 85 in 2012. This avoided 67.5 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions. Also, UUA adopts a three-year pattern to destinations chosen for General Assembly that enables attendees the option to attend an Assembly within driving distance of their location at least once every three years. It is hoped this reduces overall carbon compared to a less systematic site selection pattern. UUA also addresses non-travel emissions by requiring all contracted hotels to be within easy walking distance of the venue, and stipulating reduced energy practices in contracts with hotels and venues. This includes driving market purchases for renewable energy.



Fourth Principle

We search for what is true

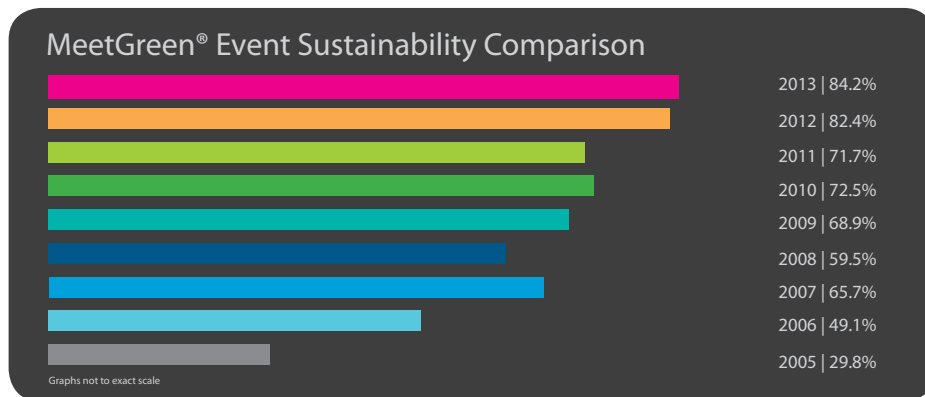
A FREE AND RESPONSIBLE SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND MEANING

Data-driven Methods

General Assembly organizers use data-driven techniques to evaluate efforts and make informed choices. This can be difficult as event sustainability metrics are not yet commonly available and the impact of all decisions cannot always be known. Based on our experience to date UUA has been able to confirm the following outcomes from event sustainability planning.

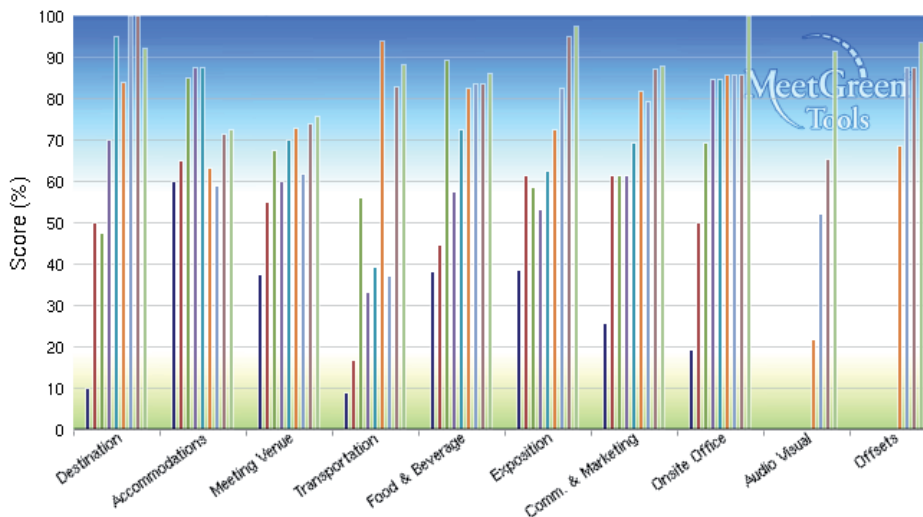
Overall Event Sustainability Comparison

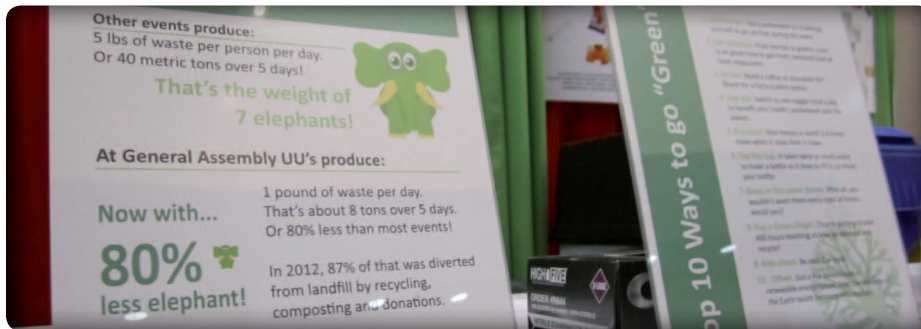
The MeetGreen® Calculator shows overall success at implementing more sustainable practices at General Assembly. It provides a “meta-score”, taking into account event planner and supplier actions and outcomes across all aspects of the event. Events that request, implement and measure sustainability impacts receive highest scores in the Calculator. As is shown, General Assembly received it’s highest score ever in 2013: 84.2%.



Event Summary by Category

The MeetGreen® Calculator also shows performance in each aspect of event planning. The left-most blue bar is General Assembly 2005 while the right-most green bar is 2013. As is shown, the event experienced reduced performance for destination, primarily due to lack of renewable energy options. The event experienced improvement in all other categories, including audio visual, which resulted from new policies and practices by CMI Communications.





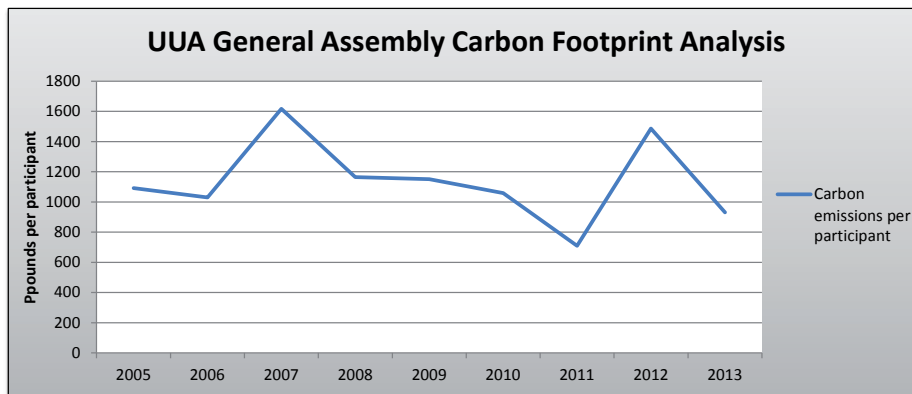
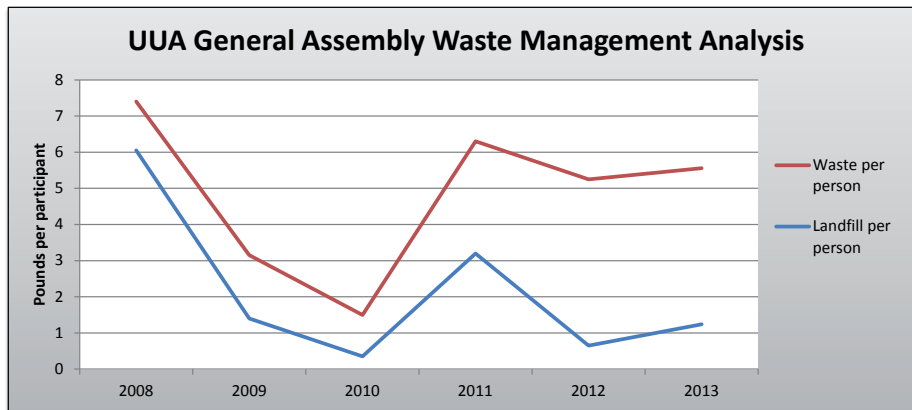
Carbon Emissions

Waste Management

319 lbs CO ₂ per person/day	MEETGREEN® "AVERAGE"	1.40 lbs landfill per person/day 3.60 lbs waste per person/day
323 lbs CO ₂ per person/day (2007)	UUA GA "WORST"	1.21 lbs landfill per person/day (2008) 1.48 lbs waste per person/day (2008)
142 lbs CO ₂ per person/day (2011)	UUA GA "BEST"	0.07 lbs landfill per person/day (2010) 0.30 lbs waste per person/day (2010)
227 lbs CO ₂ per person/day	UUA GA "AVERAGE"	0.46 lbs landfill per person/day 1.00 lbs waste per person/day
186 lbs CO ₂ per person/day	UUA GA 2013	0.25 lbs landfill per person/day 1.11 lbs waste per person/day



Prior to General Assembly the KICC was achieving 19% diversion from landfill. This rate increased by 59% points during the event.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	MeetGreen® Average	UUA GA Baseline	UUA GA "Best"	UUA GA 2013
Carbon per event attendee (pounds)	1,595	1,092 (2005)	709 (2011)	931
Landfill per event attendee (pounds)	7.00	6.05 (2008)	0.35 (2010)	1.24
Waste per event attendee (pounds)	18.00	7.40 (2008)	1.50 (2010)	5.56
Diversion from landfill rate	N/A	67% (2007)	87% (2012)	78%
Sustainability rating "Very Good" to "Excellent"	N/A	78% (2011)	83% (2012)	78%

BENEFIT AND LEGACY INDICATORS	Since Baseline	UUA GA 2013
Funds raised for UUA causes (USD)	\$281,489 (2008)	\$110,900
Carbon emissions avoided through hybrid experience (metric tons)	100.5	67.5
Carbon emissions offset (metric tons)	6,328 (2005)	753 54%
Vendors educated and engaged	74 (2005)	10
Sustainability education hours onsite	1,606 (2009)	388
Net cost-savings from sustainability (USD)	\$354,971 (2007)	N/A

Reusing carpet in the Exhibit Hall and Plenary has saved 259,000 gallons of water since 2011 - enough to fill two million 16 fl.oz. water bottles.

Fifth Principle

All people need a voice

THE RIGHT OF CONSCIENCE AND THE USE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
WITHIN OUR CONGREGATIONS AND SOCIETY AT LARGE

Locally-driven event sustainability solutions

UUA's approach to integrating sustainability into General Assembly is highly collaborative. While the event adopts clear priorities for action, such as waste and carbon reduction, the methods used to achieve goals are community-driven. This means that rather than downloading non-local solutions onto Louisville suppliers, UUA relies on venues, caterers and hotels to research and propose solutions that make sense not only for the short term event, but also the long-term realities of operating their business. Two examples include hotel amenity donation and recycling and composting programs. UUA requires all hotels to participate in a program to divert gently used bathroom amenities to charity. While options to participate in soap recycling programs like Clean the World and the Global Soap project are attractive for UUA, UUA only proposes these solutions to hotels if no local community options exist. This ensures local agencies can receive benefit and that non-local programs can be suggested where they may be lacking in a given city. Similarly, when it comes to waste management, UUA promotes partnership with local providers, such as Blue Skies Recycling, in order to build business relationships we hope will grow following the event. This approach has been very successful at transforming supplier attitudes in support of sustainability as it enables them to propose and adopt solutions that make sense for them.



UUA General Assembly Sustainability Team members don hard hats to visit facilities selected to handle event waste. Kevin McCoy, Assistant Director of Operations, KICC; Mike Sausman, Director of Operations, KICC; Janiece Sneegas, UUA Director, General Assembly and Conference Services; Scott Fluhr, Assistant Facility Director, KICC; Antonia Lindauer, Event Services Manager, KICC; David Kohn, Blue Skies Recycling; Jamie Ostermeier, Centerplate; Destiny Monyhan, Convention Services Manager, Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau; Shawna McKinley, Director of Sustainability, MeetGreen®; Sarah Brockus, Assistant Assembly Chair, United Methodist Women; Margie Washburn, Senior Sales Manager, KICC.

“It was well worth my time and a great experience going on the site visits to Koetter & Smith and QRS Recycling plants. It opened my eye to a completely new world. I was amazed how well our KICC staff were willing to participate and go the extra step to see GA was a huge success. I believe the way KICC staff were treated, supported and recognized encourage them to go the extra mile for UUA and future recycling projects.”

— Scott Fluhr, Assistant Facility Director
Kentucky International Convention Center

New waste programs put in place at the Marriott Louisville to prepare for General Assembly diverted 11 tons of waste from landfill in the first 30 days of operation.



100%

Food and beverage

100% of meat protein and 56% of vegetable produce were bought from farms within 220 miles of Louisville. This amounted to \$2,700 in spend, not including third party concessions.



70%

Waste diverted

70% of all onsite waste was diverted from landfill, improving venue diversion by 51%. Improvements were enabled through efforts of local partners KICC, Centerplate and Blue Skies Recycling.

While organizers successfully reduced exhibit hall waste to 200 pounds, composted food waste increased over previous years. The amount of recycled materials per person has remained fairly consistent the last two years.



68%

Carbon emissions

68% of event carbon emission are from attendee flights to and from General Assembly. This is lower than the 2005 baseline of 75% and average since then of 75% of emissions attributed to air travel. General Assembly exhibits a lower carbon impact than other national conventions as a result of a destination selection priority that aims to make the event drivable to every UU at least once every three years. Non-air emissions resulted from ground transport (13%) and building energy (19%). 54% of event emissions are offset by 37% of participants voluntarily.



\$34k

Local legacy

Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light received \$34,000 through collections at General Assembly. Every year UUA selects a local agency to receive legacy funds from the event. This year's funding will support energy efficiency programs to diverse faith communities throughout Kentucky.



Sixth Principle

Build a fair and peaceful world

THE GOAL OF WORLD COMMUNITY WITH PEACE, LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

International System Standards Compliance

For several years UUA has developed a sustainability plan for General Assembly in isolation, without an accepted methodology to guide action. Following adoption of the [ISO 20121 Event Sustainability Management System Standard](#) in June 2012, UUA has worked to integrate the standard into how General Assembly is planned. This is an important step for the event given ISO 20121 is the first internationally-validated management standard for sustainable events, having been used by events that include the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games. This report discloses important elements of UUA's management system, including a sustainable event policy, principles, objectives, targets and progress against these items during the 2013 event cycle. It also represents the outcome of our event review, including recommendations by the planning team and the methods for and results of stakeholder engagements. It is a critical part of ensuring we continue to improve the sustainability of all event efforts. All steps to conform to ISO 20121 have been documented in the Sustainable Event Management Tool (SEMS), and reviewed via an internal, first-party audit conducted by MeetGreen®.

National Technical Standards Compliance

UUA assesses General Assembly performance against the [APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Event Standard](#). Level One of this consensus-based standard was fully launched in 2012. In 2012 UUA achieved 81% compliance with all criteria under the standard, with the exception of Accommodations which was not yet available at the time. This year the event was self-assessed to be 80% compliant with Level One of the standard, including the newly-launched Accommodations criteria.

Sharing Lessons Learned

Each year UUA looks for opportunities to cooperate with other event planners hosting events in the same destinations. This year United Methodist Women were included in site inspections to waste management facilities to assist them in implementing their own sustainability program for their Assembly, which will be held in Louisville in 2014. UUA also contributes to broader awareness of the benefits and challenges of planning more sustainable events by sharing case studies and tips through webinars by meetings media (such as Meetings and Conventions Magazine) and associations like the [Green Meeting Industry Council](#) and [Religious Convention Management Association](#).

"I found everything in the program worthwhile to learn about. Everything went more smoothly than I had anticipated. Our crew was onboard and focused on understanding and working within the system. Personally, it's caused me to consider implementing some organic waste management practices – beyond just the single-stream recycling we already do – at a festival I organize outside of work."

— Antonia Lindauer, Event Services Manager
Kentucky International Convention Center

Paper used at General Assembly is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and has a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content.

Seventh Principle

We care for the Earth

RESPECT FOR THE INTERDEPENDENT WEB OF ALL EXISTENCE OF WHICH WE ARE A PART

It seems odd to end on this Principle; given it was the impetus to begin the journey of planning General Assembly more sustainably in the first place. As early as 2003, the [UU Ministry for the Earth](#) urged UUA organizers to consider how the conference could better embody the Seventh Principle. In the early years we were a bit awkward, slow and sometimes reluctant to start. But since this time we've transformed to become strong advocates of the effort as we have seen real, measurable and inspiring impacts which we hope have been conveyed through this snapshot of General Assembly 2013 in Louisville.

In addition to planning team efforts it is important to not forget actions are fundamentally delegate driven, resulting from the passion of our event participants and their commitment to action that extends far beyond General Assembly. This is expressed through program content and evidenced through Actions of Immediate Witness, including passage of an AIW in Louisville that calls for denomination-wide conversations in all congregations related to [divestment from the fossil fuel industry](#).

Thank you for supporting action to embody our Principles

We sincerely thank all who have contributed to these efforts:

Our dedicated staff: Janiece Sneegas, Don Plante, Stacey Dixon, Steve Ransom, Michael O'Herron

Our amazing vendor team: Mike Sausman, Scott Fluhr, Antonia Lindauer, Margie Washburn, Tim Richardson, Tom Johnson, Robert Krebs, Curtis Gamble, David Kohn, Jamie Ostermeier, Beverley Woodring, Scott Timothy, Angela Radwan, Executive Chef Ye Tun, Regional Executive Chef Frank Marrara, Destiny Monyhan, Ryan Yemm, Bob Kleen, Chip Lacure, Greg Bates.

Our enthusiastic volunteer champions: Erin Alpert, Christian Boatsman, Becca Calhoun, Jan Doyle, Lesley Henney, Kathleen Hering, Dick Hildenbrand, Barbara Kemp, Alix McCabe, Megan McGrath, Thane McGrath, Sally Mills, Regina Pugh, Karne Wuinland, Linda Stratford, JP Fentress, Susan Milles.

We welcome your feedback!

Please forward your ideas to:
 Shawna McKinley, MeetGreen®
 E: smckinley@meetgreen.com

We are already thinking of how
 to continuously improve!

“What an eye-opening experience to be involved in the transformation of a building’s waste-management system.

From day one, we knew the process would be a challenge but never did I fully understand the impact one event could make just by composting and recycling until I saw it with my own eyes! The challenge was certainly well worth the effort as we watched the bins quickly fill with items that we would typically consider “waste”, knowing that the items would be taken to QRS Recycling or Koetter & Smith, rather than to a landfill. I was surprised by how well our staff received the change and really got involved in making the waste stations a success. From the cooks in the kitchen to the banquet servers in the exhibit hall, our team worked together to help each other and ensure each area was monitored closely.”

— Jamie Ostermeier, Catering Sales Manager
 Centerplate, Kentucky International Convention Center

Reusing a one liter bottle saves three liters of water.



CLIMATE
SUMMIT

WHAT IF IT'S
A BIG HOAX AND
WE CREATE A BETTER
WORLD FOR NOTHING?

- ENERGY INDEPENDENCE
- PRESERVE RAINFORESTS
- SUSTAINABILITY
- GREEN JOBS
- LIVABLE CITIES
- RENEWABLES
- CLEAN WATER, AIR
- HEALTHY CHILDREN
- ETC. ETC.

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Moving Forward

Continuously improving

MEETGREEN® OFFERS THE FOLLOWING IDEAS IN THE SPIRIT OF CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING EVENT SUSTAINABILITY AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Embed a small, non-voluntary fee in each registration that ensures 100% of the event footprint can be accounted for.
- Increase the renewable energy credit purchase clause in General Assembly contracts to 100% of event energy use for hotels and venues.
- Eliminate waste baskets from exhibitor booths, or require they bring their waste from currently provided baskets to self-sort it at the close of each day. While a handful of exhibitors are responsible and sort their own materials, it takes two volunteers up to two hours each day to sort exhibitor waste to ensure recyclable and compostable materials are diverted for those who do not take responsibility for their own waste.
- Pursue alternatives to vinyl tabletops and PVC kiosk panels for the 2014 event. Although these are reused it would be a responsible decision to reduce the use of PVC wherever possible.
- Research the legal risks around providing information about rideshare and carshare services. If deemed appropriate provide information on these services on the event web site so participants have the option to take advantage of these reduced-carbon options to attend.
- With the proliferation of bikeshare programs across the USA it would also be helpful to provide links to these in the travel information section of the General Assembly website, if available locally.
- Discuss options with caterers to reduce food waste.



References

SCOPE: Carbon calculations include: Venue energy use, guest room energy use, all participant travel to and from the event, show management freight, waste to landfill and meals. Waste metrics include: venue landfill, recycling and compost. Supply chain verification includes: venue, hotels, caterers, general services contractor, audio-visual suppliers, freight providers, print and signage vendors.

BASELINES: Due to the evolving nature of this initiative, baseline dates for data collection may be different. For example, while carbon metrics are available beginning in 2005, waste metrics only began to be reliably collected in 2008.

DEFINITIONS: “Local” assumed to include goods purchased within 250 miles of the event site. “Organic” and “fair trade” assumed to 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. Landfill compactor weight adjusted based on pressure readings to account for shared haul with another event which was estimated to use 0% of the 3rd Street dock, 20% of the 2nd Street dock and 50% of the Lower Level dock. We expect actual landfill to be less than reported. Carbon calculation completed by the Carbon Fund.

AUDITING: Supply chain compliance with external standards, such as GreenSeal, 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 audited by MeetGreen®. Compliance with ISO 20121: 2012 documented and audited using Sustainable Event Management System (SEMS) Tool, SEMS Compliance (highest level). 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 neutralized the efforts of other vendors who were 100% compliant.



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