City of St. Louis

Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

January 2016

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CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT
MISSOURI

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

THE COMMON SEAL OF THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS

Overview of the Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative Origins & Goals

- In 2013, the City of St. Louis, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG) formed a new partnership to work collaboratively to promote urban conservation: The Urban Vitality & Ecology (UVE) Initiative

- The goals of the UVE Initiative are to **better connect people to urban nature** while also:

  Maximizing ecological potential
  Supporting economic vitality
  Fostering social health & well-being

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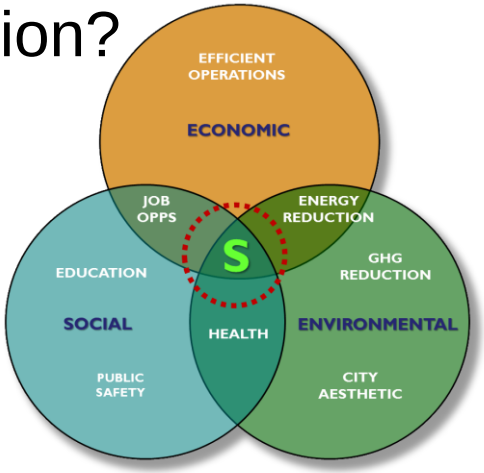
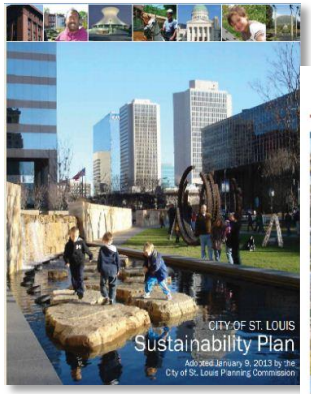
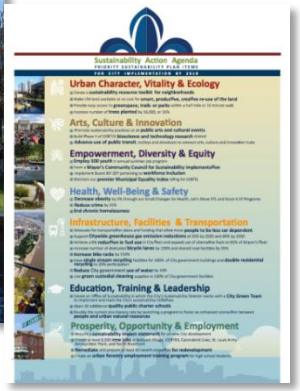
City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Why an Initiative to Promote Urban Conservation?



- Advance **triple bottom line sustainability**: improve economic, social and environmental conditions
- Capitalize on **existing assets** (*e.g.*, parks and trails)
- **Address challenges** (*e.g.*, vacant land)
- Identify common agendas to **leverage resources** and efforts of stakeholders to collectively effect significantly greater impact and find **synergistic opportunities** to achieve shared priorities
- Advance key elements of:
  - *City of St. Louis Sustainability Plan*
  - *Mayor's Sustainability Action Agenda*
  - *OneSTL Regional Plan for Sustainable Development*





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City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Recommended Nature Diet for St. Louis

Nature Pyramid Concept by Tim Beatley

Mayor's Sustainability Action Agenda Priorities (2013-2018)	City of St. Louis Sustainability Plan Objectives	OneSTL Regional Plan for Sustainable Development Objectives
▪ **Make LRA land available at no cost for smart, productive, creative re-use of the land** (Urban 2)	▪ Build a vibrant, community-based urban agriculture industry (pp. 70-73)	▪ Incorporate sustainable practices into government economic development strategies and decisions (pp. 67, 69-70)
▪ **Provide easy access to greenspace, trails or parks within a half mile or 10 minute walk** (Urban 3)	▪ Support and increase the City's greenscape, including its existing park system and urban tree canopy (pp. 47-51)	▪ Plan for and invest in green infrastructure (pp. 91, 93)
▪ **Increase the number of trees planted by 16,000, or 15% more than the City's baseline annual number** (Urban 4)	▪ Encourage creative, smart and sustainable uses for under-utilized land and buildings (pp. 66-69)	▪ Improve the integrity of aging water and utility infrastructure (pp. 99, 101)
▪ Advance use of public transit, trolleys, and streetcars to connect arts, culture, and innovation hubs (Arts 7)		▪ Increase conservation efforts (pp. 113, 114)

The UVE Initiative aligns with numerous City and partner priorities (1 of 3)

Mayor's Sustainability Action Agenda Priorities (2013-2018)	City of St. Louis Sustainability Plan Objectives	OneSTL Regional Plan for Sustainable Development Objectives
▪ Employ 500 youth in annual summer job program (Empowerment 8) ▪ Decrease obesity by 5% through our Small Changes for Health, Let's Move STL and Good 4 U! Programs (Health 12) ▪ Reduce crime by 25% (Health 13) ▪ Advocate for plans and funding that allow more people to be less car dependent (Infra 15) ▪ Support Citywide greenhouse gas emission reductions of 25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 (Infra 16)	▪ Promote urban conservation and revitalization of the City's unique biodiversity and natural resources (pp. 52-55) ▪ Preserve the City's historically and architecturally significant districts, buildings, landmarks and landscapes (pp. 56-60) ▪ Manage stormwater and wastewater to protect and enhance property and natural systems (pp. 179-182)	▪ Invest in existing communities (pp. 75, 76-77) ▪ Protect the quality of our natural resources and environment (pp. 91-92) ▪ Exceed air quality standards (pp. 91, 94-95) ▪ Protect open areas (pp. 91, 96) ▪ Protect communities from known risks of natural disaster by focusing on prevention (pp. 99, 100-101)

The UVE Initiative aligns with numerous City and partner priorities (2 of 3)

Mayor's Sustainability Action Agenda Priorities (2013-2018)	City of St. Louis Sustainability Plan Objectives	OneSTL Regional Plan for Sustainable Development Objectives
▪ **Double the current eco-literacy rate by launching a program to foster an enhanced connection between people and urban natural resources** **(Education 25)** ▪ Remediate and prepare at least 40 vacant properties for redevelopment (Prosperity 28) ▪ **Create an urban forestry employment training program for high school students** **(Prosperity 29)**	▪ Ensure equal access to amenities, business opportunities, transportation, and safe and healthy neighborhoods (pp. 129-132) ▪ Encourage physical activity, fitness and recreation (pp. 147-150) ▪ Increase environmental literacy (pp. 212-214) ▪ Market the city's assets and special competencies (pp. 222-225)	▪ Foster active and healthy lifestyles (pp. 75, 79) ▪ Improve quality of life in low-income neighborhoods (pp. 83, 88) ▪ Provide increased access to nature for all citizens (pp. 91, 95) ▪ Improve access to fresh, local food (pp. 113, 115) ▪ Increase public understanding of sustainability and healthy lifestyle choices (pp. 119, 122-123)

The UVE Initiative aligns with numerous City and partner priorities (3 of 3)

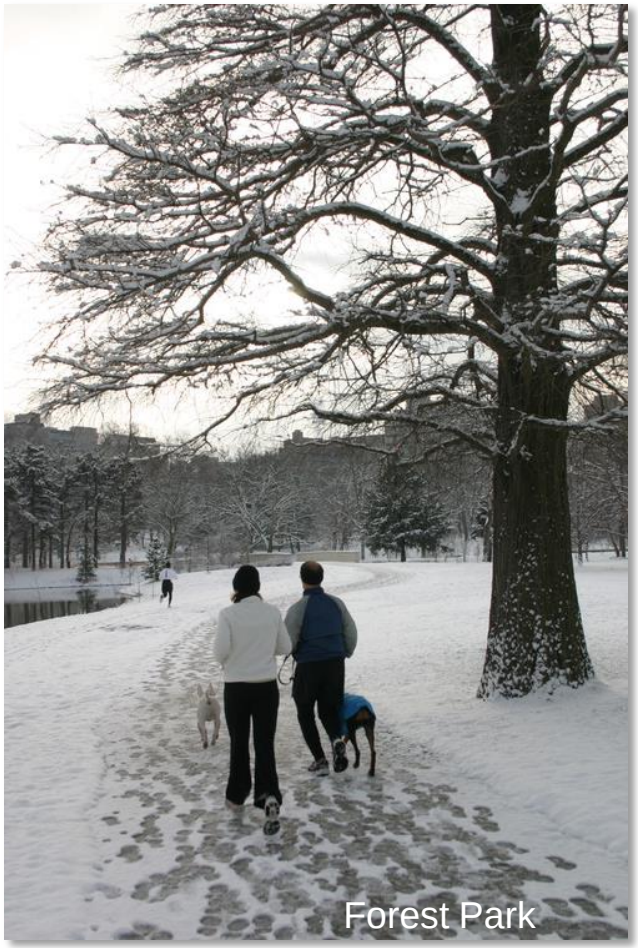
An Urban Ecological Vision for the City of St. Louis

City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Environmental & Social Benefits

Imagine a St. Louis where . . .

All residents can easily access parks, trails and greenspaces designed to build community, provide healthy, active living and enjoyable recreation opportunities.



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City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Environmental & Social Benefits

Imagine a St. Louis where . . .

Strategically planned/placed ecological corridors support wildlife and ecosystem functions, while offering community amenities and creating aesthetic enhancements.

Green Hairstreak Butterfly Corridor, San Francisco

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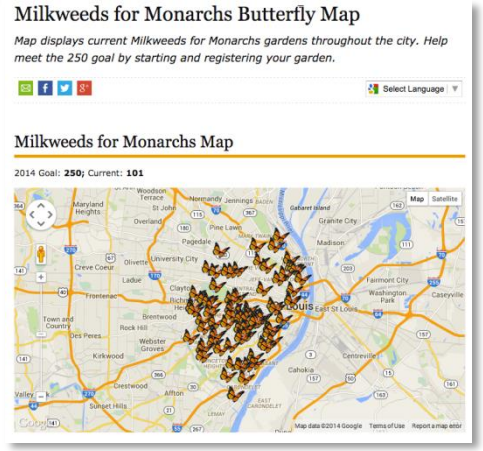
Environmental & Social Benefits

Imagine a St. Louis where . . .

Monarch Butterfly gardens proliferate throughout the City, creating important habitat patches and migration corridors, while providing seasonal enjoyment where people live, work, learn and play.



City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Environmental & Social Benefits

Imagine a St. Louis where . . .

We celebrate our big river, natural heritage, prairies, savannas, and the only known remnant urban tallgrass prairie as important community amenities that are rich in biological diversity.

Shaw Nature Reserve

Prairie Fork Conservation Area

Calvary Cemetery Prairie Restoration Area

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City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Environmental & Social Benefits

Imagine a St. Louis where . . .

The City and its people reconnect physically and psychologically to the Mississippi River as an economic, recreational and cultural asset.

Dubuque, IA

Alton, IL

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City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Environmental, Economic & Social Benefits

Imagine a St. Louis where . . .

Restored waterways and streams enhance community character, connect people to natural systems, manage stormwater quantity while improving water quality, and safely conveying stormwater away from residences.

Chicago Nature Boardwalk

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City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Environmental, Economic & Social Benefits

Imagine a St. Louis where . . .

Every child enjoys a safe place to play outside, experiences an increase in environmental literacy and derives educational benefits -- such as improved performance on standardized test scores, better problem-solving and critical thinking skills, enhanced creativity, and reduced attention deficit occurrences.

Tower Grove Park

Forest Park

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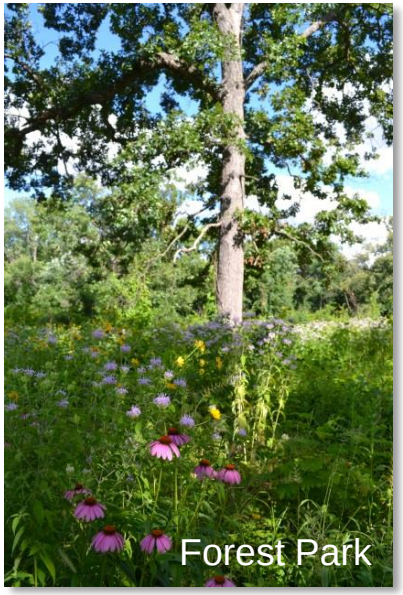
City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Environmental & Economic Benefits

Imagine a St. Louis where . . .

Greenspace areas result in cost savings and directly support economic redevelopment by providing ecosystem services, such as capturing stormwater, cleaning the air, providing shade and enhancing neighboring property value.


Forest Park

Old North St. Louis

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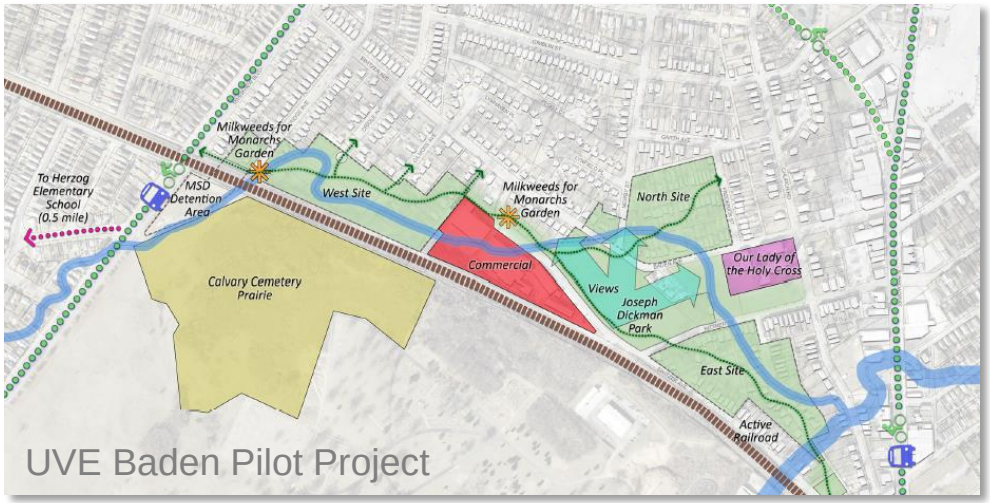
City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Environmental & Economic Benefits

Imagine a St. Louis where . . .

Vacant land is strategically repurposed into assets or amenities that contribute to neighborhood character, economic vitality and environmental quality; whether as an interim or permanent use.



UVE Baden Pilot Project

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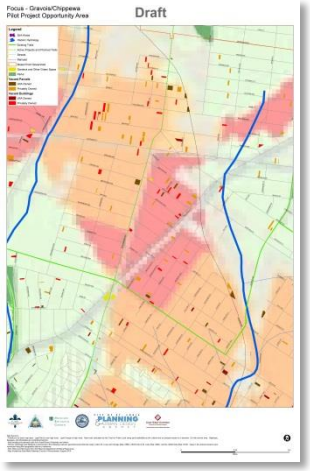
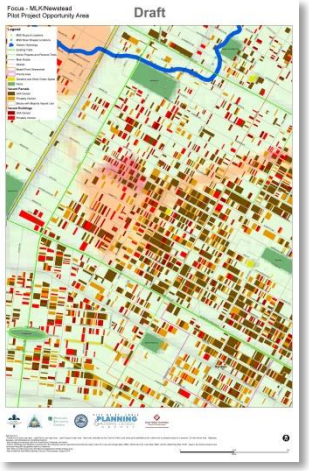
Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative: 2014 - 2015

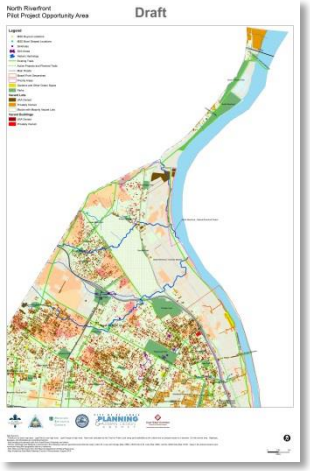
City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

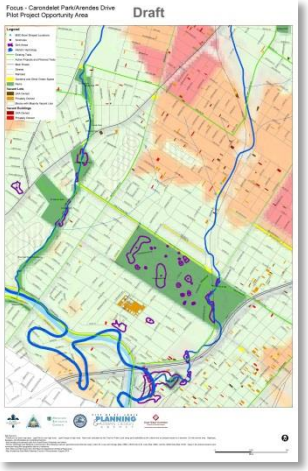
UVE Work Completed or Underway:

- Identification of Potential UVE Pilot Project Areas (Examples Below)
- Launch of UVE Baden Pilot Project
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Citywide Research Efforts
- Urban Biodiversity Inventory Outline and Framework









City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Pilot Project Identification Criteria & Selection Process

	High Parkscore Need (UVE 3)	High Concentration of Vacant Land (UVE 2)	Supportive of Priority Planning Areas	Active Living Focus Area (HWS 12)	Possible future MS R. Connection	Great Rivers Greenway	Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District	Missouri Department of Conservation	Missouri Botanical Garden
Baden	**x**	**x**	**x**		**x**	**x**	**x**	**x**	**x**
Harlem Watershed	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
St. Vincent Greenway		x	x			x			x
S. Riverfront/Bellerive Park	x			x	x	x		x	x

Supported Sustainability Action Agenda Items

UVE 2. Make LRA land available at no cost for smart, productive, creative re-use of vacant land

UVE 3. Provide easy access to greenspace, trails or parks within a half mile or 10-minute walk

UVE 4. Increase number of trees planted by 16,000, or 15%

EDE 8. Employ 500 youth in annual summer job program

HWS 12. Decrease obesity by 5% through our Small Changes for Health, let's Move STL and Good 4 U! Programs

ETL 3. Double the current eco-literacy rate by launching a program to foster an enhanced connection between people and urban natural resources

POE 4. Create an urban forestry employment training program for high school students

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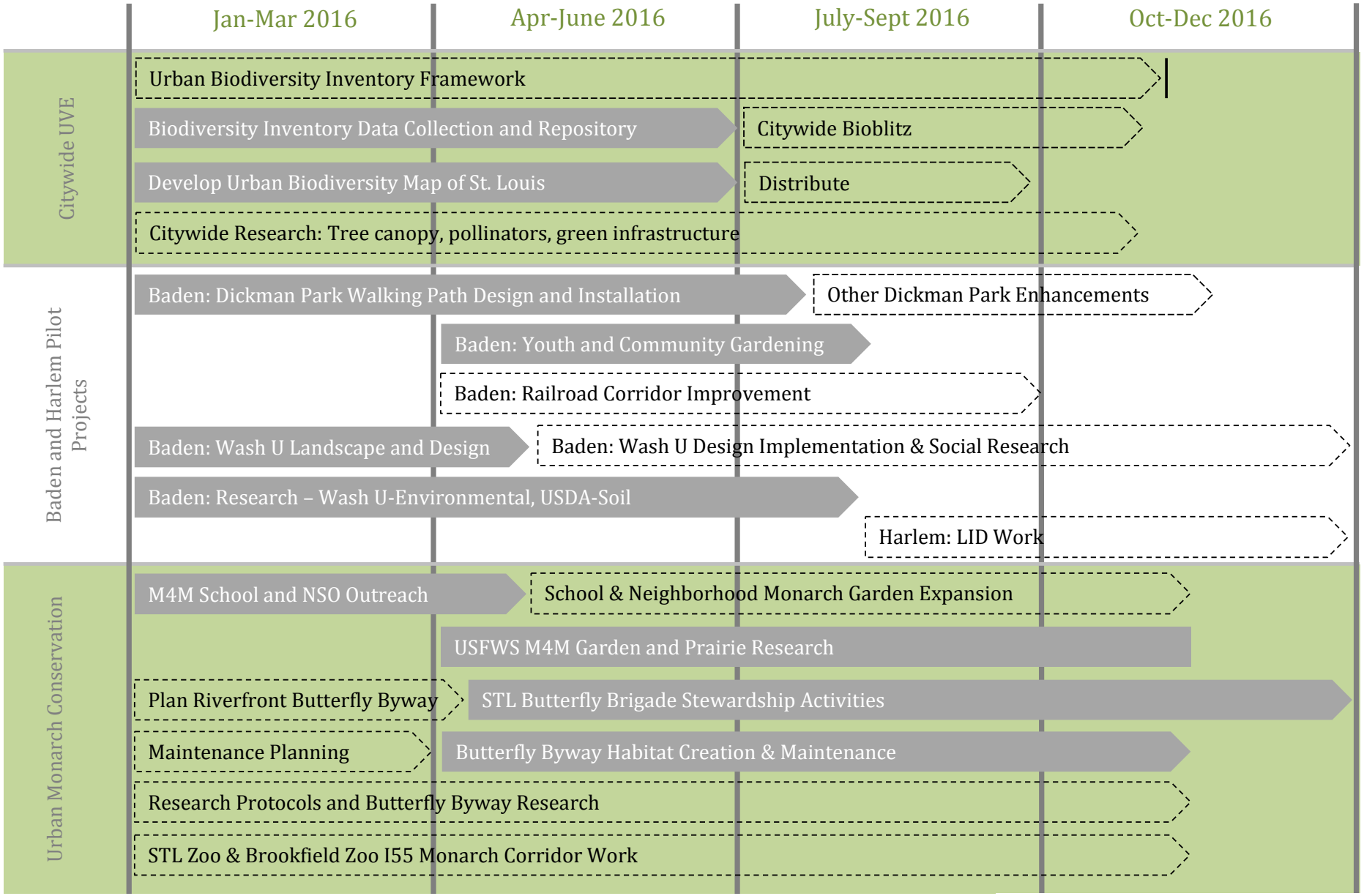
Baden Pilot Project Launch

- UVE partners engaged the community by attending community meetings and community garden workshops.
- Started a Youth Gardening program employing several local young adults to foster community engagement within the community garden.
- Local universities conduct socio-economic (*e.g.,* eco-literacy) and environmental (*e.g.,* soil, mosquitos) studies in the pilot project areas.

Looking Forward:
2016

City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative: DRAFT 2016 Workplan



KEY: Planned | To Be Determined

For more information visit stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability or contact Catherine Werner, City of St. Louis Sustainability Director, at wernerc@stlouis-mo.gov

October 30th, 2015 DRAFT

City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative

Activities Underway and Planned for 2016

- *Continue the Baden Pilot Project, implementing further neighborhood enhancements and amenities; launch the Harlem Pilot Project*
- *Expand Urban Monarch Conservation* program to landscape scale
- *Create an Urban Biodiversity Map* to raise awareness of biodiversity assets and opportunities to connect with nature in the City of St. Louis
- *Create an Urban Biodiversity Inventory Framework* and repository of urban biological information for the City of St. Louis
- *Further engage stakeholders in the collaborations and build capacity for strategic action planning* through community engagement, building partnerships and funding relationships to support long-range planning processes and implementation

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Urban Vitality & Ecology Strategic Action Plan

Strategic Action Plan Preliminary Goals:

- Create the basis for well-informed policy modifications and community-based decisions
- Strategically prioritize redevelopment and key natural resource opportunities
- Identify actionable items for implementation
- Establish funding and resources to implement action items

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