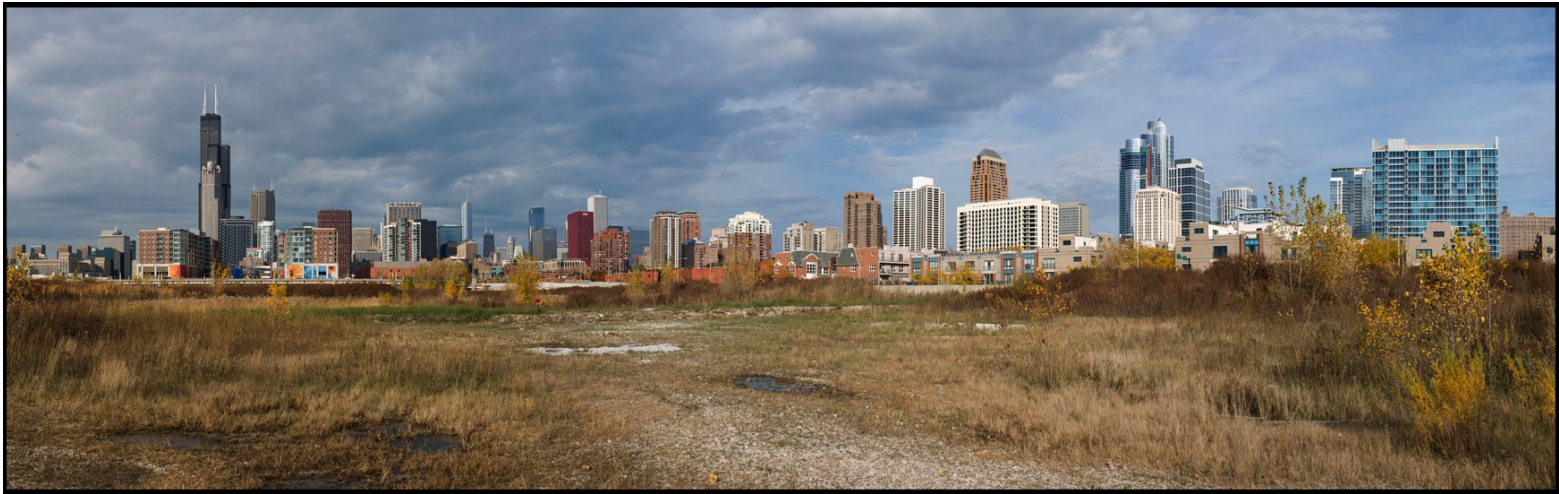


Sustainability at Roosevelt University

A Short History from One Prof's Perspective



SUST 250 The Sustainable University
Chicago IL :: 25 January 2022

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College of Arts & Sciences
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Founding of the University



1945 – First student assembly at Roosevelt College

Sustainability Beginnings



1946 – Roosevelt acquires a new space: the Auditorium Building

Building Renovations



1940s – Students, staff, and faculty renovate the Aud Bldg

Equity in Education



1940s – St. Clair Drake teaches a class at newly-formed Roosevelt University, which had among the most diverse students and faculty in the US

Schaumburg Campus



Mid-1990s – RU acquires property in Schaumburg IL for new suburban campus. Biology faculty insist on preserving trees after initial plans to cut them down to increase parking space. Campus officially opens August 1996.

Learning Outside



1998 – My first field trip with BGS 391 Seminar in Natural Science students to Volo Bog State Natural Area, Volo IL (photo: 2004, M. Bryson)

The Sustainable City



2009 – Students and faculty of PLS 394 The Sustainable City visit with author Van Jones (back row, third from left) at the Museum of Science & Industry. Co-taught by M. Bryson and C. Zimring, PLS 394 was RU's first sustainability-themed course at RU and served as the inspiration for developing the SUST program.

The Sustainable City



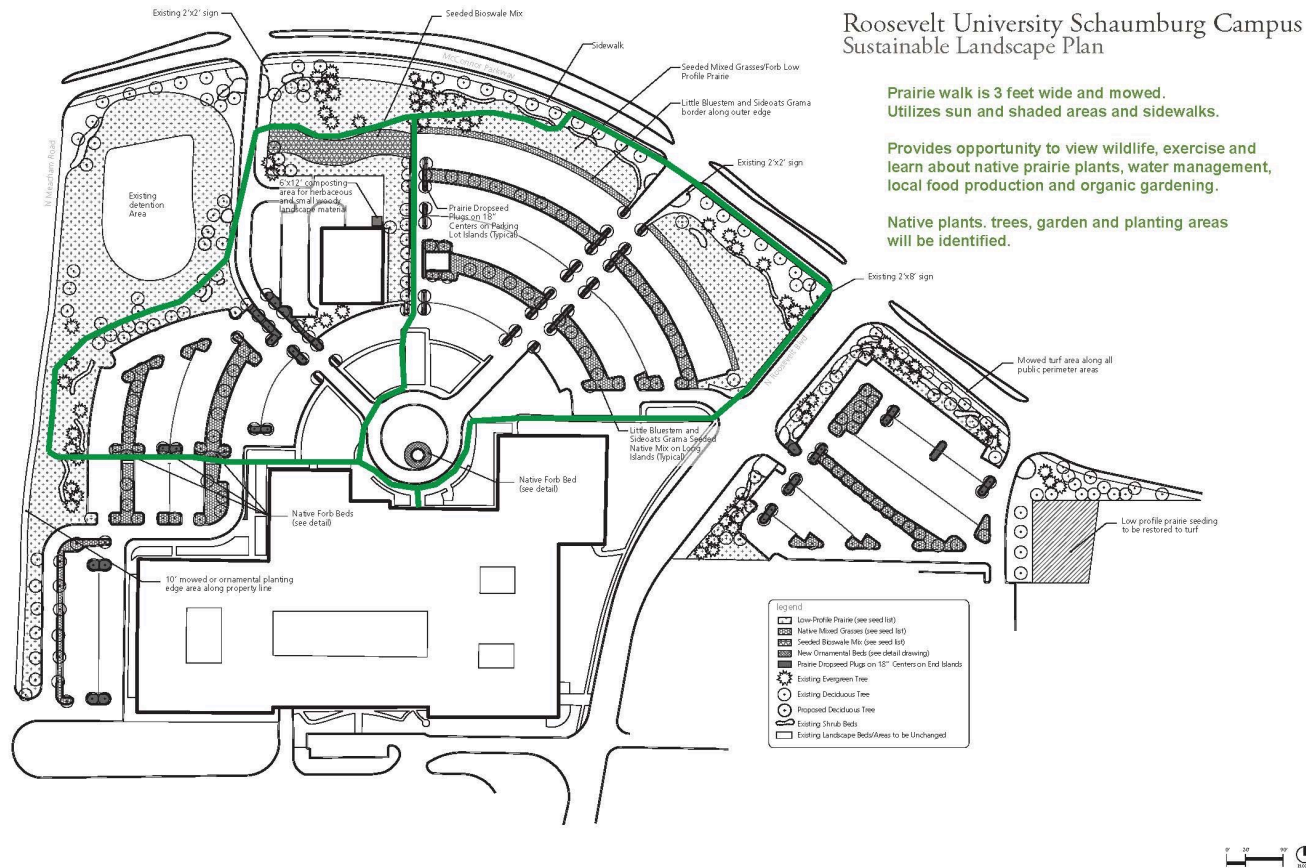
May 2009 – The final field trip in PLS 394 was a historic first: a canoe trip on Bubbly Creek with Friends of the Chicago River (photo: L. Bryson)

2010 – A Watershed Year for Sustainability



Sustainability Studies founded in the former College of Professional Studies (first official class was SUST 210 Sustainable Future, Spring 2010)

2010 – A Watershed Year for Sustainability



Schaumburg Campus plan for sustainable landscape redevelopment;
Environmental Sustainability Committee founded Fall 2010

2010 – A Watershed Year for Sustainability

Sustainability Studies @ Roosevelt University

Chicago's first sustainability BA program



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The Sustainable Future, Fall 2010 →

Welcome to Roosevelt University's Sustainability Studies blog.

Posted on June 3, 2010 by [SUSTatRU](#)

Hello, and welcome! This blog will contain information and news about [Roosevelt University's brand-new Sustainability Studies BA/BPS degree program](#), the first of its kind in the Chicago area. These Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Professional Studies degrees are designed to instill in students a deep knowledge of the pressing environmental issues of the 21st century while providing a thorough grounding in the liberal arts. This means that the major provides the same type of broad-based knowledge as more traditional liberal arts majors but with a cutting-edge environmental focus.

We'll be updating this blog with more news and information, but if you are just beginning

Search

Enter your email address to subscribe to the Roosevelt University Sustainability Studies blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

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■ [Position Available at](#)

SUST at RU Blog founded June, 2010

Roosevelt University

Sustainability Initiatives Since 2010

Sustainable Buildings & Operations

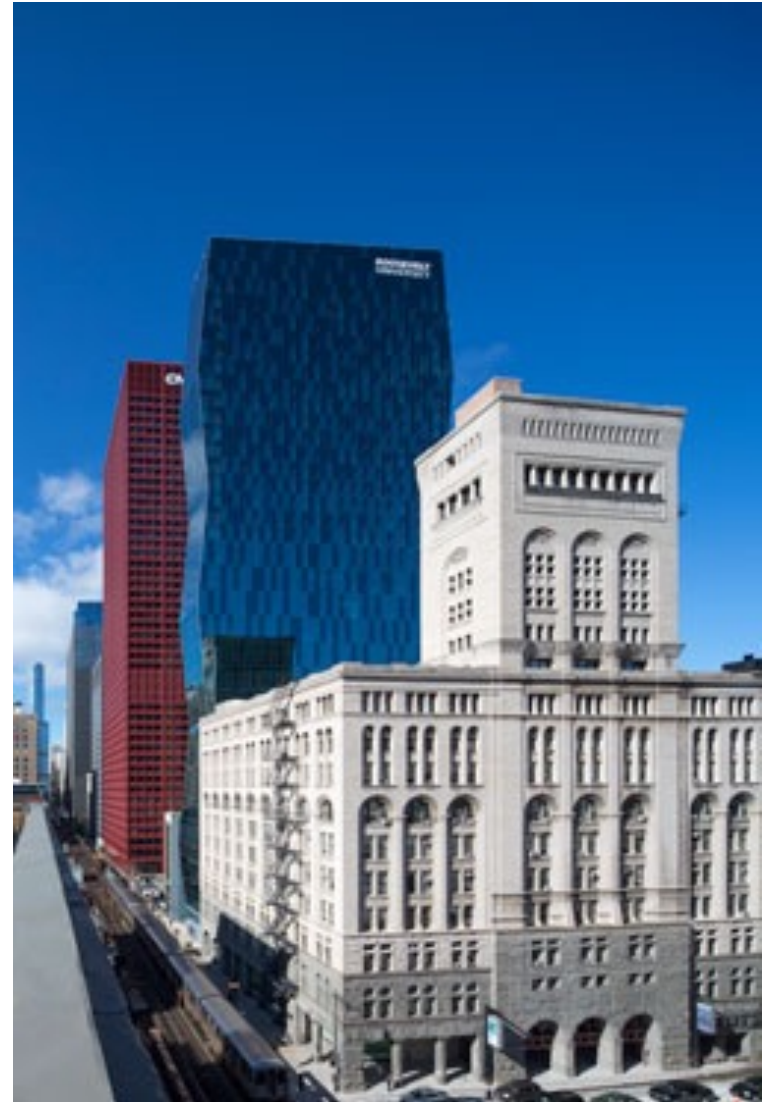
Wabash Building (LEED Gold)
Goodman Center (LEED Silver)
AUD retrofits (SERF certified)
Schaumburg Campus Redevelopment

Academic Innovation

Sustainability Studies undergrad program
launched Fall 2010 (1st in Chicago)
SUST Student Symposium (biannual)
Environmental Science Minor
Civic Engagement through STEM
Service Learning & Internships
Sustainability Planning /Assessment 2014-15

Student Organizations & Activism

RU Green (revived in 2015-16)
RU Reforesting (conservation biology)
RUrbanPioneers (Schaumburg garden)
RISE (student activism & social justice)
Net Impact (business and sustainability)



Sustainability at Roosevelt

Selected Awards & Recognition



Campus Operations / Facilities

STARS Bronze 2015

LEED Gold: Wabash Building

LEED Silver: Goodman Athletic Center

Tree Campus USA and NWF Certified Habitat
for RU Schaumburg

Green Innovation / Green School award from
USGBC

Green College selection by Princeton Review
2013-2015

IL Governor's Sustainability Award 2013

Academics

Business: Real Estate grad students win 2013-15 Eisenberg competitions

Science: Conservation Biology students travels to Tanzania to do
environmental conservation; chemistry and environmental science students
conduct research on local ecosystems

Sustainability Studies: student pursue internships & research fellowships,
lead campus sustainability planning, write for [SUST blog](#), create websites,
perform service learning, conduct waste audits, manage gardens

Sustainability in Action at RU



Building a hoop house at the Chicago Lights Urban Farm (Spring 2012)

Working on an Urban Farm



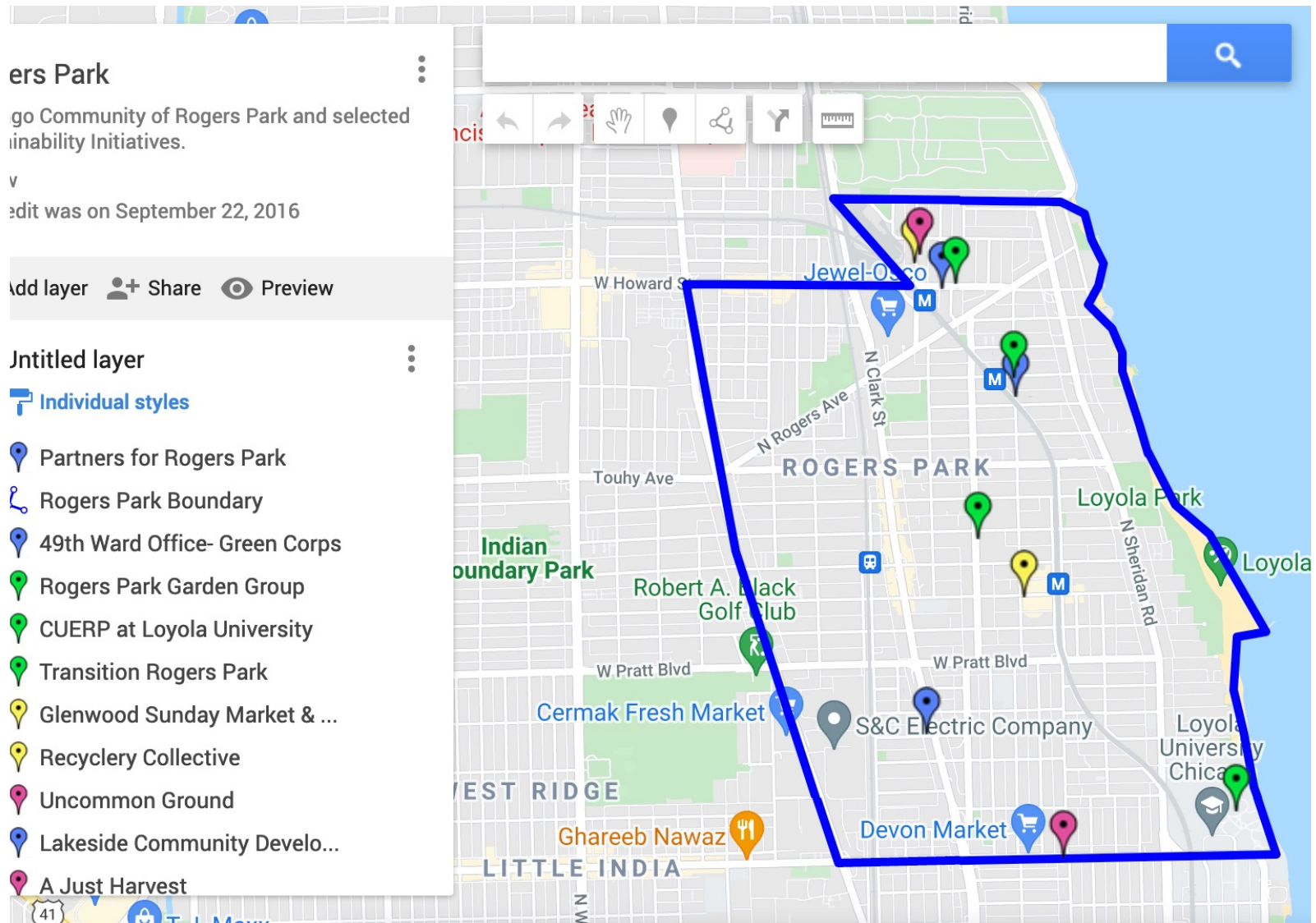
SUST 350 Service & Sustainability / Spring 2013
[Action Research Projects](#) for the Chicago Lights Urban Farm

Exploring Urban Landscapes



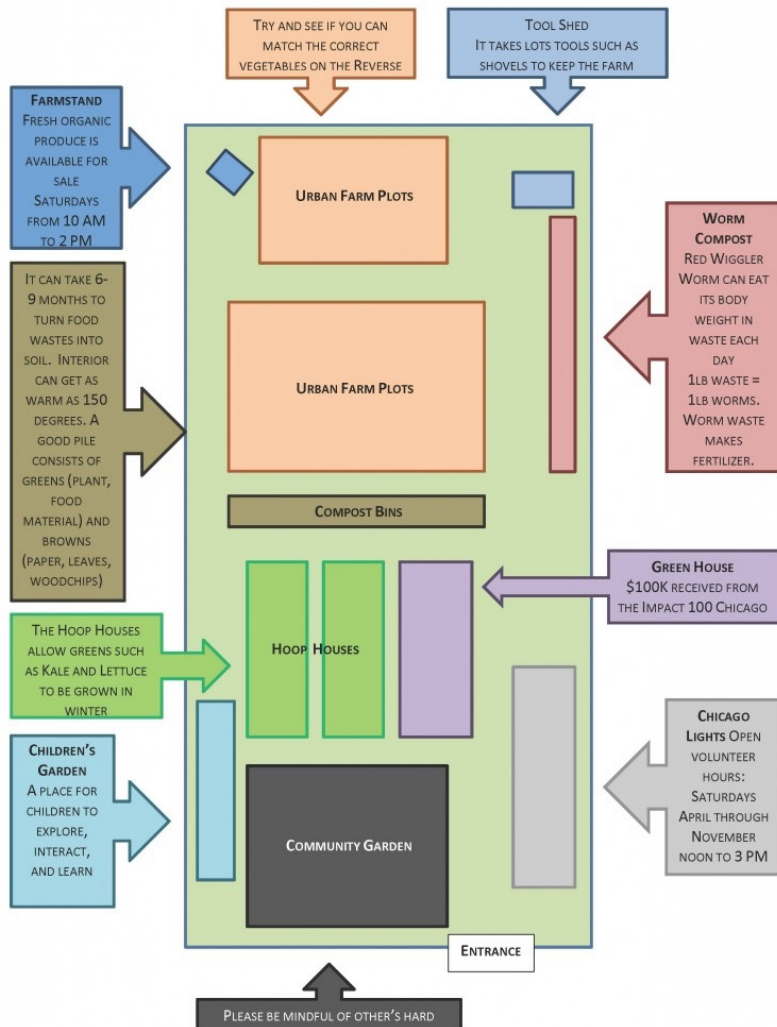
2019: Water quality testing at Palmisano Park wetland and fishing pond

Community-Based Research



2012: Interactive map of sustainability community assets in Rogers Park, created by SUST 210 Sustainable Future (honors) students

Community-Based Research



Community Empowerment and Youth Enrichment (CEYE) Program

Community Gardeners' Guide

Farm Education Lessons and Activities

Knowing Your Neighborhood:
Community Assets Brochure and Map

Rainwater Harvesting Plan

Self-Guided Tour and Farm Map (left)

SUST 350 Service & Sustainability / Spring 2013

[Action Research Projects](#) for the Chicago Lights Urban Farm

Ecological Restoration



2018: Removing invasive phragmites
at Eden Place Nature Center in Chicago's Fuller Park neighborhood

Field Museum Collaborations



SUST majors Kristina Lugo and Colleen Dennis intern at the Botany Division, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago IL (2012-14)

Field Museum Collaborations



SUST alum Laura Miller Hill (2015) was RU's first sustainability intern at the FMNH;
Prof. Julian Kerbis teaches SUST 330 Biodiversity at the museum each fall

Schaumburg's Sustainable Future Project

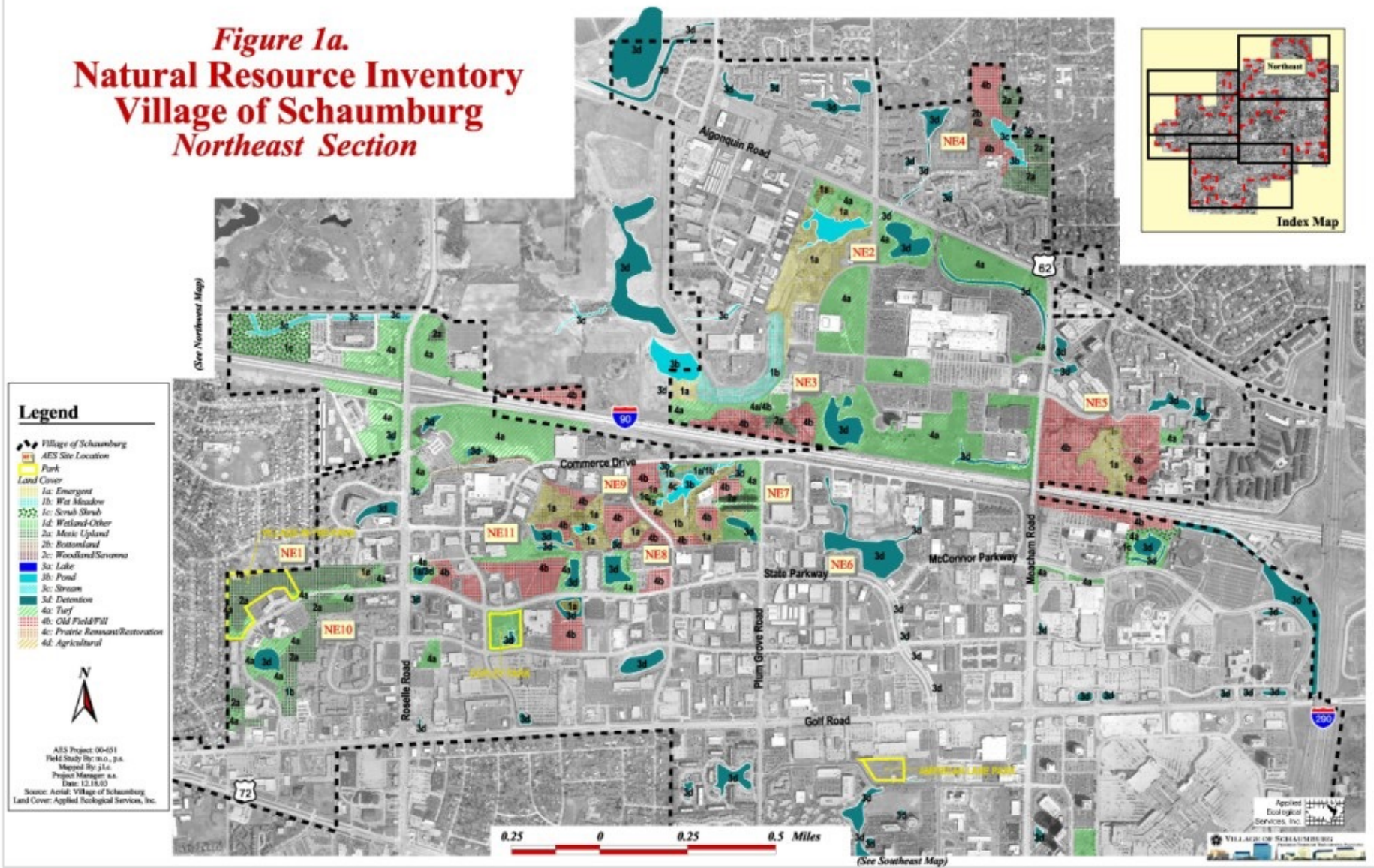


Schaumburg's Sustainable Future

2011: Student-authored [website and blog](#) focused on documenting & advancing sustainability in the suburbs (photo: Spring Valley Nature Center, M. Bryson)

Enhancing Suburban Biodiversity

Figure 1a.
Natural Resource Inventory
Village of Schaumburg
Northeast Section



Map from the Schaumburg Biodiversity Plan (2004)

Landscape Sustainable Site Transformation

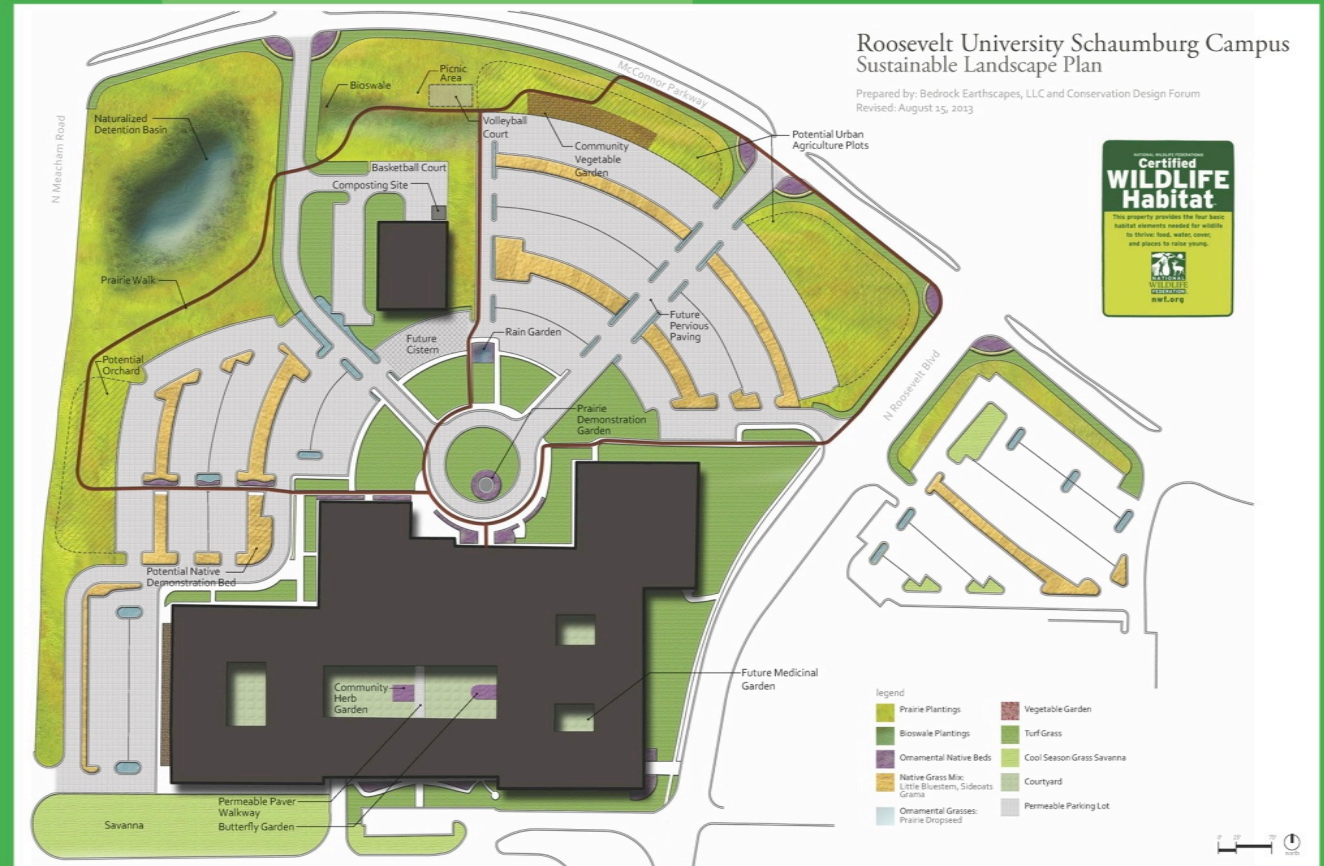
Roosevelt University is committed to transforming the Robin Campus into a truly sustainable site. The landscape plan here is being implemented using native plants and sustainable water conservation methods to transform this campus into an environmentally sustainable, cost-effective earthscape. The result: a beautiful setting which supports biodiversity, uses less water, costs less to maintain and enriches campus lifestyle.

Good Stewardship Makes Good Sense

Economic: the conversion to native plants was paid out of savings from funds previously spent on turf maintenance. The University saves 50% annually overall on landscape maintenance, primarily due to the native plantings which save 80% over the cost to maintain turf.

Environmental: Native plants require less fertilizer, herbicides, fuel and labor. They beautify and support biodiversity. Natives have deep roots which absorb water, reduce runoff, thus reducing energy and water use while providing effective bio-regulation of this habitat.

Social: The Robin Campus uses less resources and generates fewer pollutants, demonstrating corporate social responsibility by planting natives and observing sustainable site practices.





The RU Community Garden, summer/fall 2013 (photos: M. Radeck)

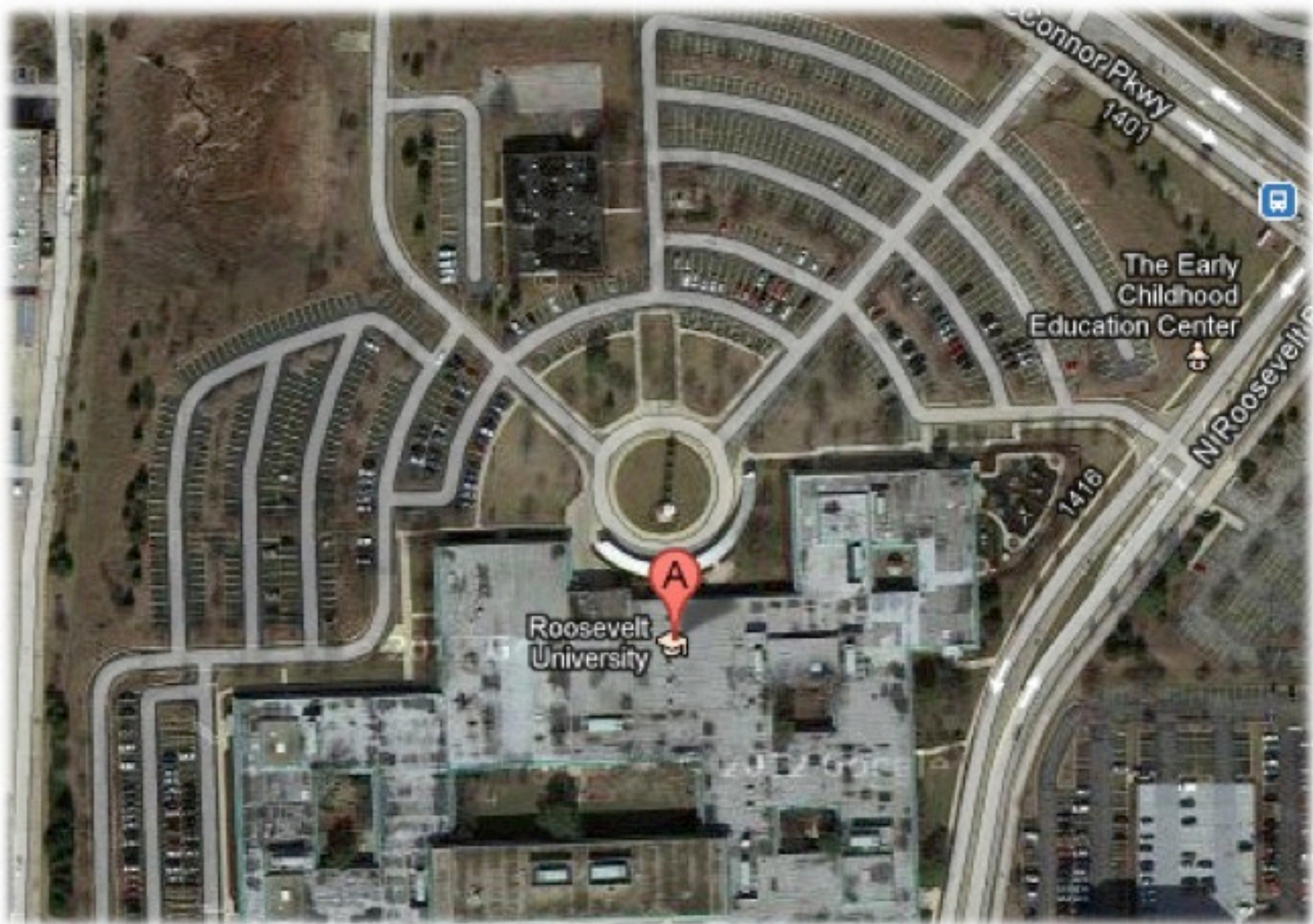


Prescribed burn of detention pond/wetland (April 2011)



Prairie restoration at detention pond (Fall 2012)

Transforming RU: from concrete slab . . .



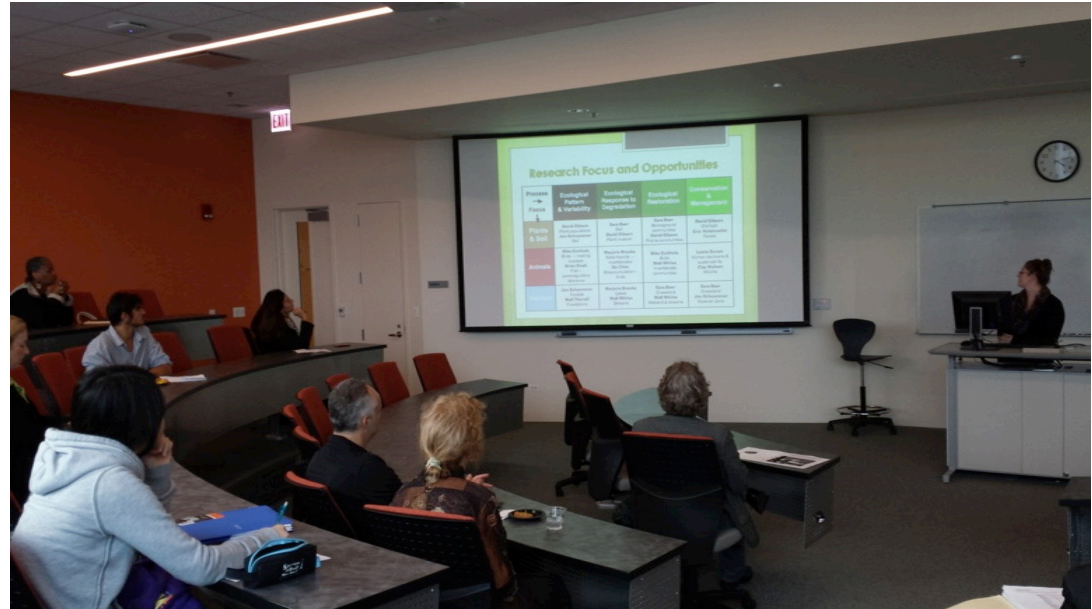
Aerial view of RU Schaumburg Campus, pre-redevelopment (Google Maps)

. . . to living lab*



Schaumburg Campus prairie restoration, Summer 2013
(photo: M. Radeck, a SUST major who also coined this phrase*)

SUST Symposium (est. 2013)



Sustainability Studies Student Symposia, 2013-14

May 2014: campus redevelopment, FMNH collections, marine biodiversity (left); Oct 2013: agroecology, urban farming, transportation policy (right)

Campus Sustainability Planning (2014-15)



ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY
**STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY
PLAN 2015-2020**



SUST students help lead strategic sustainability planning workshops, Fall 2014;
[Strategic Plan approved Spring 2015](#) (photo: M. Bryson)

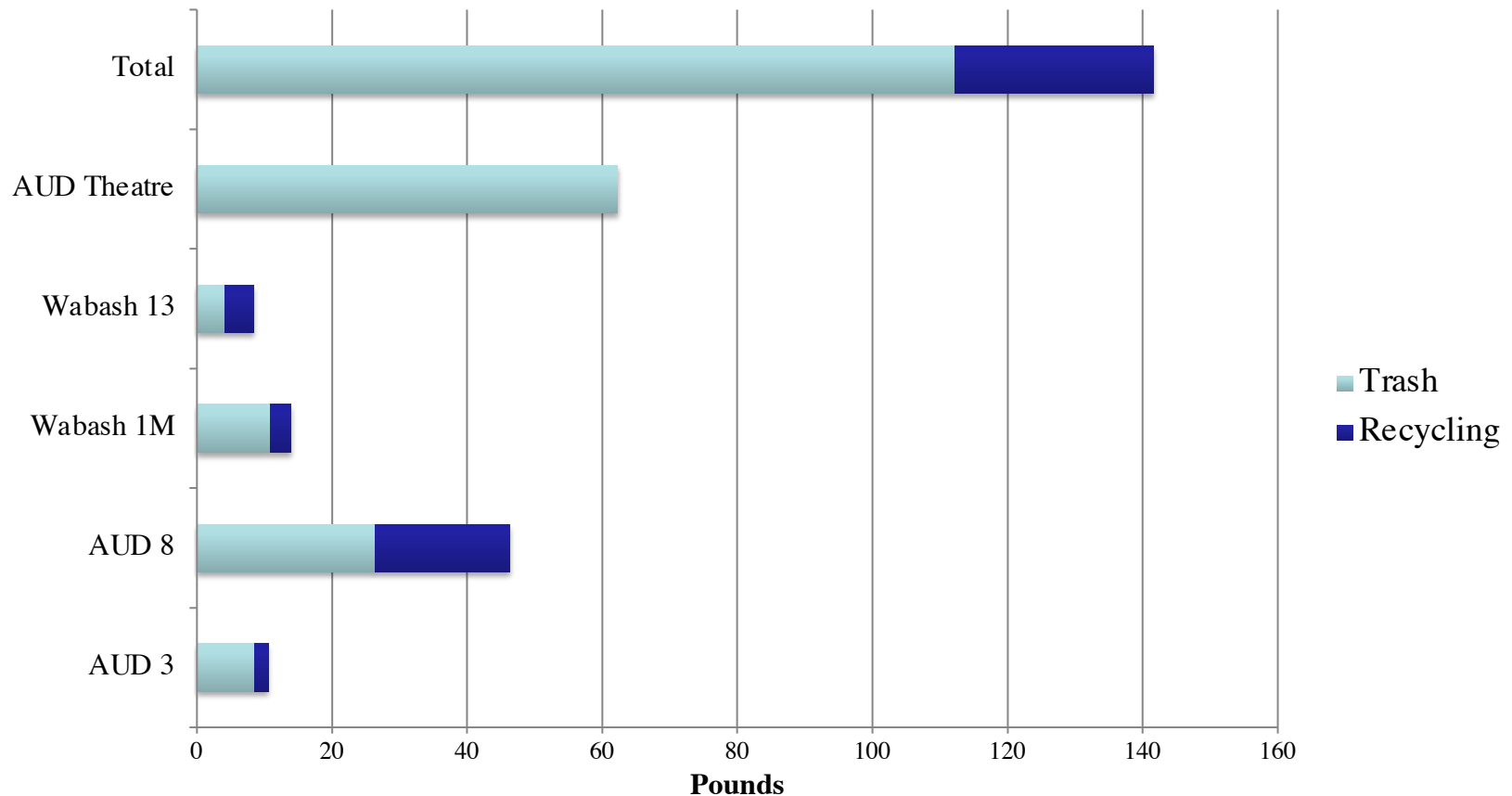
Assessing RU's Waste Stream



SUST 240 Waste students conduct a waste audit of WB and AUD, Fall 2014 (M. Bryson)

Fall 2014 Waste Audit

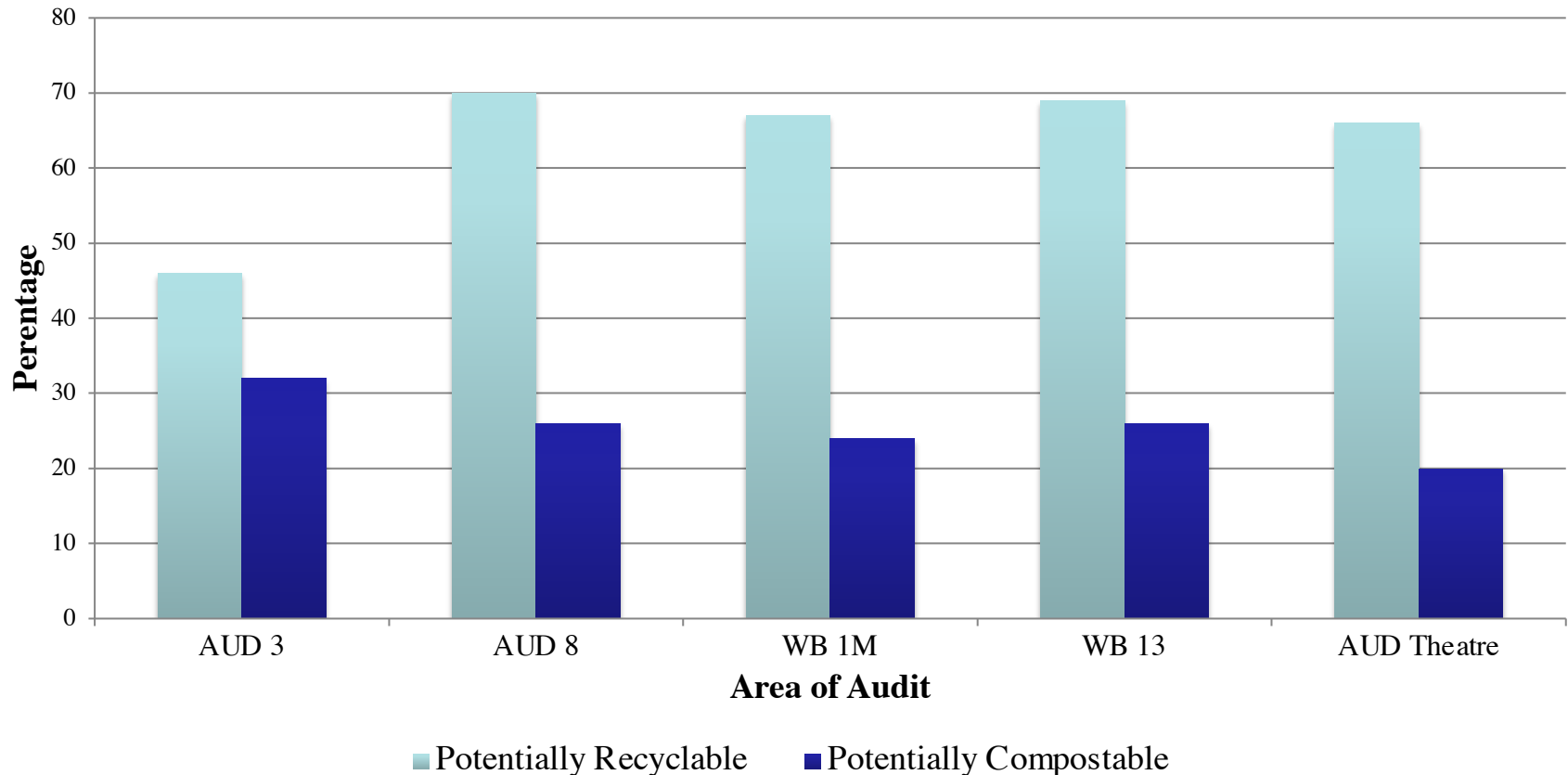
Waste (in pounds) Collected in Trash vs. Recycling Bins



This graph summarizes the amount of material collected in all five Chicago Campus building areas in AUD and WB on 15 Oct 2014

Fall 2014 Waste Audit

Chicago Campus Waste Audit 16 Oct 2014 Percentage of Trash Recyclable or Compostable, by Area



This graph shows the percentage of the waste stream in each area as well as the total sampled areas (far right) that could be diverted from the landfill by recycling or composting. Composting is done within the waste stream of the WB Dining Center, but nowhere else. Recycling rates must improve.

The Great Composting Project



RU students launched a compost collection project in Spring 2017 to reduce food waste on RU's Chicago Campus (poster design by R. Avidi and E. Vuillemot; photo by E. Vuillemot)

The Great Composting Project



Students ran [compost collection volunteer projects in 2017-18](#), and in 2019 RU established [campus-wide composting](#). Now even faculty can do it!

Rooftop Garden (est. 2013)



SUST alum Maria Cancilla (BPS '18), SUST prof Vicki Gerberich, and RU Green prez Michelle Giles (BA '18) work on the WB Rooftop Garden during RU Service Day, Sept 2018 (M. Bryson)

Roosevelt Urban Sustainability Lab (est. 2015)



STARS Assessment Report (2015)



Writing Urban Nature Project (2015-)

RU's Chicago Campus c. 2014

Building on the Past, Staking out the Future



ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY
**STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY
PLAN 2015-2020**



Efforts to build on in ACP/SUST 250 The Sustainable University:

[Strategic Sustainability Plan](#), adopted Spring 2015;

[STARS Assessment Report](#), submitted Fall 2015

Alumni Success



Employment

- **Ben Shulman** (BPS '12), Director of Publishing @IIT Architecture, blogger, editor
- **Christian Cameron** (BA '14), urban forester & youth educator
- **MaryBeth Radeck**, entrepreneur & sustainability consultant
- **Cheryl Roberts** (BPS '14), energy mgmt at GE
- **Rebecca Quesnell** (BA '15), sustainability coordinator @ RU, operations director @ Independent Recycling Services
- **Yessenia Balcazar** (BA '18), Southeast Environmental Task Force
- **Jessie Crow Mermel** (BPS '12), communications director @ Angelic Organics Farm
- **Jesse Williams** (BA '15), director of sustainability @ Rust Belt Riders
- **Tiffany Mucci-Heitman** (BPS '16), published freelance writer, massage therapist and holistic health pro

Alumni Success



Graduate School

- **Mike Magdongon** (BPS '13), MBA @ Erasmus Univ (Netherlands)
- **Yessenia Balcazar** (BA '18), **Josh Campbell** (BA '13), **Tom Lewallen** (BA '15), & **Akilah Mitchell** (BA '16), UIC Urban Planning MA
- **Moses Viveros** (BA '17), Eden Hall Fellow in Food Studies MA + MBA joint program @ Chatham Univ
- **Ben Shulman** (BPS '12), UIC Communications MA
- **Lindsey Sharp** (BPS '16), Wayne State U Anthropology MA

Employment & Internships

- **Margaret Allen** (BA '19, environmental technician @ Env Design International
- **Maria Cancilla** (BPS '18), horticulture intern @ Shedd Aquarium; garden educator @ Gardeneers / Americorps
- **Emily Rhea** (BA '16), project manager & energy analyst @ Eco-Achievers
- **Ron Taylor** (BPS '12), director of parks & energy, City of Harrisburg

Students Can Drive Us Forward



RU's Chicago Campus c. 2014

On the Campus:

- Environmental literacy
- Sustainability education
- Research symposia
- Waste reduction
- Energy conservation
- Climate action plan
- GHG mitigation
- Student and staff engagement
- New student orientation
- Green living & learning communities



Students Can Drive Us Forward



RU's Chicago Campus c. 2014

In the Community:

- Sustainable development
- Public engagement / citizen science
- Applied environmental research
- Detecting & remediating toxins
- Soil / air / water analysis
- Environmental justice advocacy
- Community sustainability asset mapping
- Sustainability leadership

