

Identifying Keystone Species in Businesses and Communities

Jenn DeRose
Green Dining Alliance Program Manager
LEED GA
jenn.deroses@greendiningalliance.org
www.greendiningalliance.org

The Green Dining Alliance: An Overview

- ▶ The GDA certifies restaurants in sustainability, with standards based on LEED certification.
- ▶ The GDA has **doubled nearly every year since 2012**, with **over 50 restaurants** added in the last year.
- ▶ The GDA created two **Green Dining Districts**, where 25% of independent restaurants in commercial districts are GDA certified members – within a two year time span.



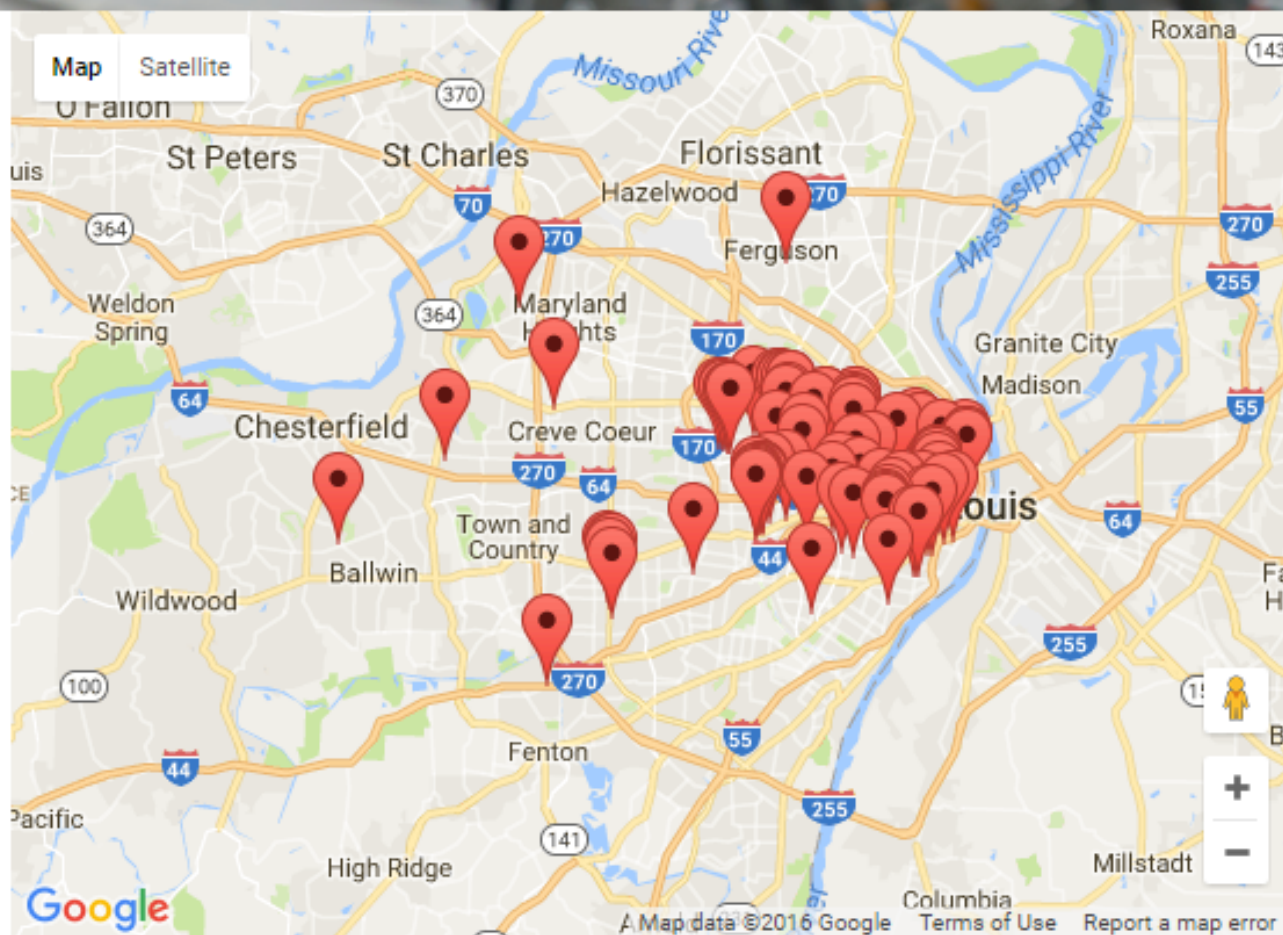
Over 100 Member Restaurants



FIND A RESTAURANT

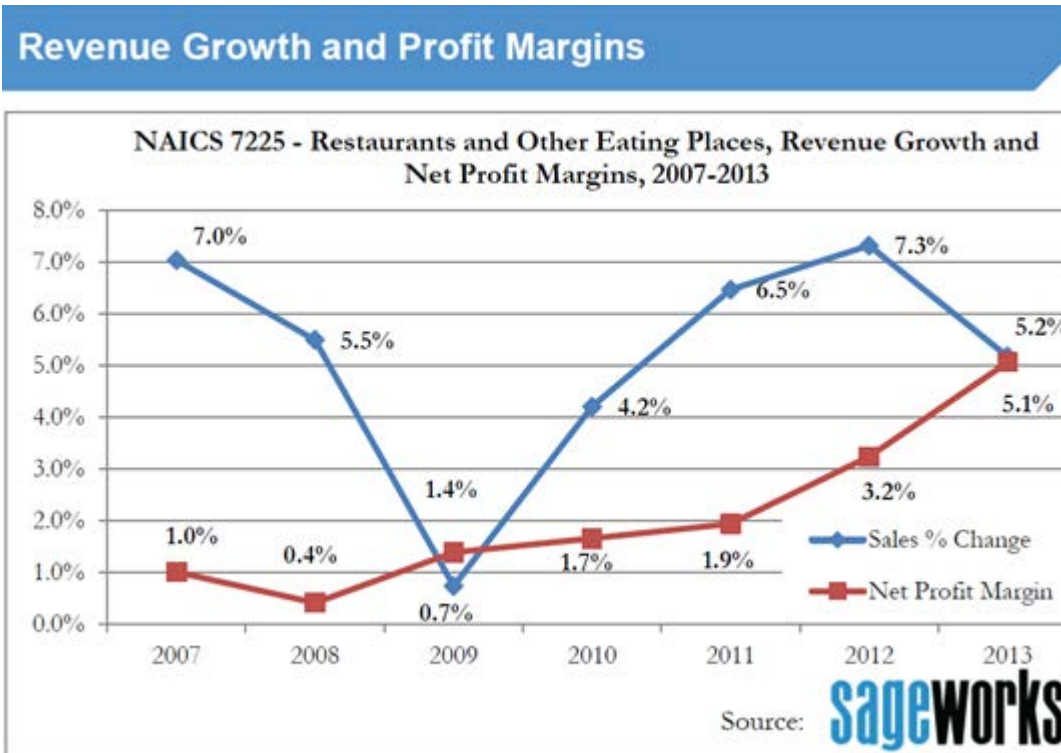
Whether in the Central West End, The Loop, Benton Park, or downtown, Green Dining Alliance offers sustainable, certified options that are committed to doing good for our community. Looking for cocktails or a coursed meal? GDA is ready to cater to all your sustainable dining needs.

For more information on GDA certified restaurants click [here](#)



Challenges to Growth

- ▶ The GDA has upfront costs to joining, and our benefits aren't always tangible.
- ▶ The GDA enters communities and restaurants as strangers, asking for attention, time, and money.
- ▶ Restaurant profit margins are thin, hovering around 5%.



Considering these challenges, how does the GDA grow?

- ▶ With help! Keystone Species in businesses and communities are a valuable, underutilized asset to your organization.



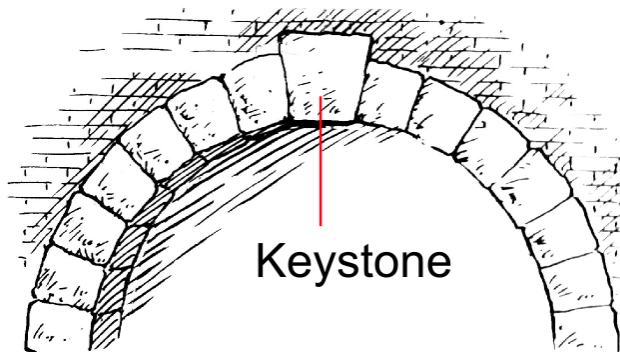
Keystone Species Defined

- In nature: animals or plants that *uniquely contribute* to their environment in such a way that the ecosystem would be unrecognizable without them. *For example, adorable prairie dogs work the soil, helping nutrient-rich grass to grow, feeding the other animals in the ecosystem.*



Keystone species in business and communities defined

- ▶ Keystone species are the people who hold everything together and make things happen. They have *outsized influence* within their communities and workplace.
- ▶ Positions of power/authority are not necessarily indications of keystone species.
- ▶ They are not always environmentalists, but they are devoted to the improvement and growth of their community.

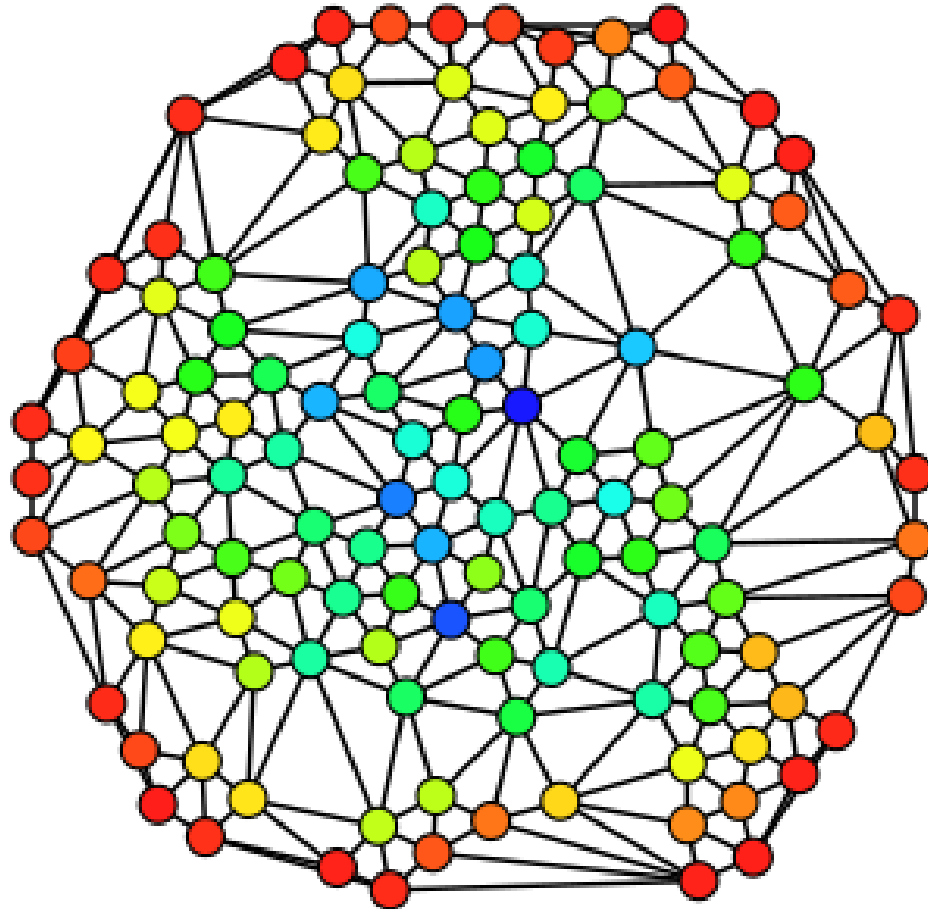


Keystone Species and Social Network Analysis

- ▶ According to The Journal of the NPS Center for Homeland Defense and Security: “...**disperse, non-redundant, open networks have greater access to information and power than smaller, denser, and more interconnected networks** because they supply more diversity of knowledge and information.”
- ▶ The NSA uses this theory in Social Network Analysis to find persons of interest. The government understands that those with the most influence are not necessarily those directly connected with terrorist leaders.

Social Network Analysis

- The same is true for influencing neighborhoods and businesses – it's not immediately evident who is most likely to advance your cause... *So how do you find them?*



Attracting Keystone Species

- By building a **diverse, diffuse network of connections** in your area of interest. Let your keystone species come to you!



Attracting Keystone Species: Be Available

- ▶ “Go to their stuff” – Van Jones
- ▶ **Attend** events.
- ▶ Attend community/business district meetings. **Listen**, and **pay attention**.
- ▶ **Tailor your pitch** to reflect the needs of the community or business; **avoid “in-speak”** that can alienate future allies.
- ▶ **Be helpful**. Follow up/follow through – schedule 30 minutes after meetings to address action items.



Keystone Species: Likely Candidates

- ▶ **Marketing and social media specialists** – they understand the consumer appeal of sustainable practices.
- ▶ **SPD managers** – they've already done the hard work wrangling businesses to cooperate.
- ▶ **“True Believers”** / environmental enthusiasts.
- ▶ Employees, residents, customers, and others **without direct power**, *especially young people*. Collect their testimonials – their words matter.

Utilizing Keystone Species: Learn, Empower

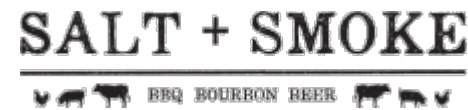
- ▶ How were other successful projects implemented? **Let your keystone species guide you** through the process.
- ▶ **Ask** your advocate about potential challenges and strategies – *they are the experts*.
- ▶ **Teach** them as much as you can about your product or organization and let them spread the word.
- ▶ **Trust them** to represent you. They have more influence than you do, let them use it.
- ▶ **Be useful** and generous with your expertise, even when discussing unrelated projects. Lasting bonds are crucial to continued advocacy.

Case Study: The Loop's Green Dining District

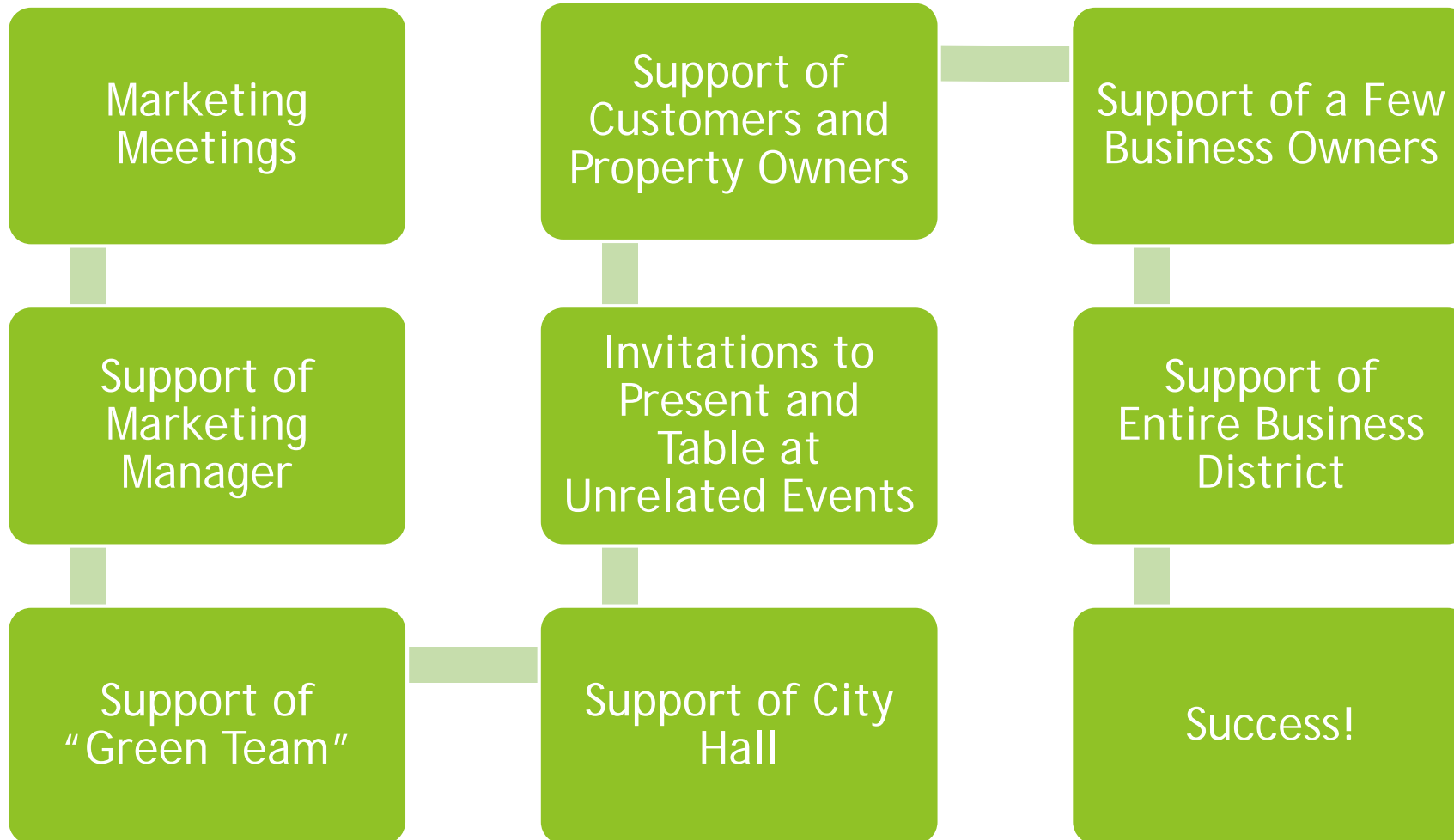


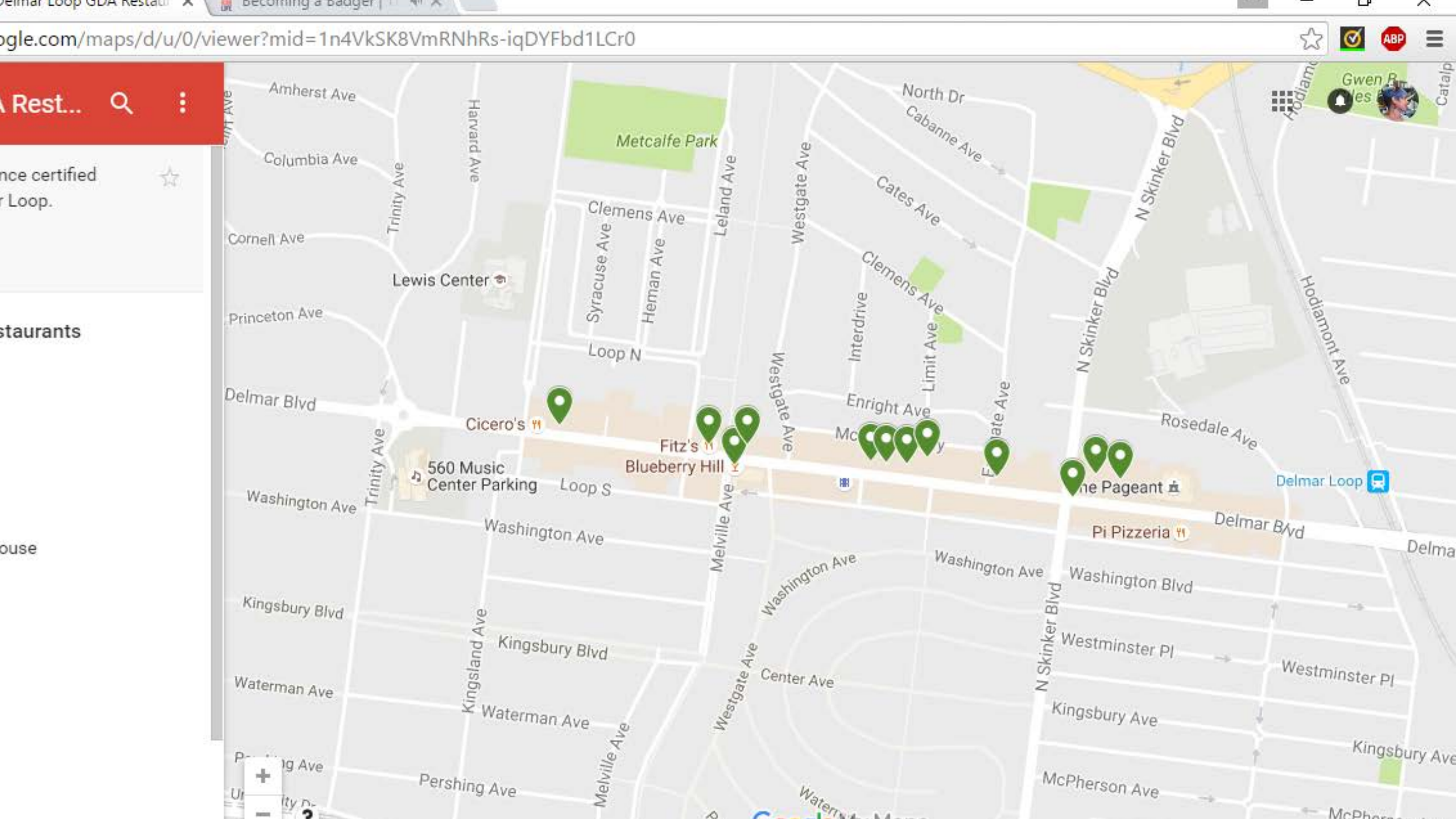
Case Studies: Green Dining Districts

- The GDA was transformed the U city Loop from an area where most restaurants weren't even recycling, into our second Green Dining District, acquiring 12 restaurants in under 9 months.



Green Dining District: U. City Loop Timeline





DELMAR LOOP DESIGNATED AS GREEN DINING DISTRICT

Posted on June 30, 2016

[GDA Certification](#), [Green Dining Alliance](#), [Green Dining District](#).



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (June 30, 2016)

DELMAR LOOP DESIGNATED AS GREEN DINING DISTRICT *Second Business District in the Country to Receive Designation*

Saint Louis, Missouri, June 30, 2016 – The Delmar Loop will be recognized for its achievement of becoming the second business district in the nation to be certified as a [Green Dining District](#).

Twelve Delmar Loop restaurants have undergone [Green Dining Alliance](#) certification and have made the commitment to recycle, reduce energy consumption, phase in energy efficient lighting and equipment, conserve water through smart strategies, purchase local goods when possible, and eliminate the use of Styrofoam To-Go containers.

University City Mayor Shelley Welsch will be presenting awards for GDA certification to the following Delmar Loop businesses: Salt + Smoke, Blueberry Hill, Fitz's, Three Kings Public House, Mission Taco Joint, The Melting Pot, Peacock Loop Diner, Eclipse Restaurant, Meshuggah Cafe, Pin-Up Bowl, Snarf's and Piccione

RECENT POSTS

[Loop Pokémon League presents](#)

[Victory Road](#)

[Movie Filmed in Delmar Loop to](#)

[Premiere at Tivoli Theatre](#)

[Delmar Loop Designated as Green](#)

[Dining District](#)

[Delmar Loop Designated as Green](#)

[Dining District](#)

[Vote on your Favorite Delmar Loop](#)

[Photo](#)

MG_2105.JPG

graph network.png

network.gif

Show all downloads...

Ask me anything



4:15 PM
9/14/2016

CATEGORIES

Around Town

Arts & Entertainment

Eco & Pet-Friendly

Food & Drink

Giving Back

Meetings

Memorabilia

Merchandise

Past Events

Uncategorized

Upcoming Events

World Famous Delmar Loop

[← Back to Area Excursions](#)

DELMAR LOOP DESIGNATED AS A GREEN DINING DISTRICT

Our neighborhood is not only one of the [coolest in the country](#), but also officially a Green Dining District! To be given this designation, 25% of a neighborhood's locally owned restaurants must be [Green Dining Alliance](#) certified. This means they:

- Recycle
- Refuse to use styrofoam containers
- Phase in energy-efficient lighting and equipment
- Conserve water through smart strategies
- Purchase local goods whenever possible

Among the Green Dining Alliance certified businesses in The Loop are Blueberry Hill, Peacock Loop Diner, our very own Eclipse Restaurant and [many more](#).





Keystone Species are Key

- ▶ When insiders back you, **credibility skyrockets**. You are no longer a stranger – you're a friend, a link in their social network, an asset to their future growth.
- ▶ Find your Keystone Species, and let them help you to succeed!

