



17th Annual Earth Day Parade & Celebration

April 22, 2017, marked the 47th anniversary of Earth Day — a day intended to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth's natural environment. To celebrate, the City's Solid Waste Division hosted the 17th Annual Earth Day Parade & Celebration. Events included a parade down Massachusetts St. coordinated by KU Environs, South Park tree identification tours hosted by the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department, free yoga in the park provided by OmTree Shala, and a Bike Valet sponsored by the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department. The Lawrence Transit System offered free rides all day, providing the experience and benefits of public transportation on all fixed routes.

The purpose of the Earth Day Celebration is to gather community members to connect, discover, and celebrate local organizations and businesses who support a healthy, sustainable environment. At the same time, the Celebration engages event goers with fun activities and exhibitions. Thirty volunteers participated to help set-up and clean-up the event.



Parade

The parade began at 11:00 a.m., and traveled from Watson Park east to Massachusetts Street, then south on Massachusetts Street from 7th to 11th Streets. It was a beautiful, sunny day; many people came outside of shops and gathered on street corners to watch and wave as the parade proceeded to the Celebration in South Park. Approximately 300 people from 21 groups participated in the parade by foot, bike, or vehicle.

Celebration

The Celebration began at 11:30 a.m. with the arrival of the parade participants and many parade

watchers. South Park activities were for all ages and included live music and environmental informational booths.

There were 60 informational tables at the Celebration, with topics ranging from water and habitat conservation to renewable energy and gardening. Five local food vendors were set up at the park for event goers to choose from. The City's Parks and Recreation Department led participants on South Park tree identification tours throughout the afternoon. The Celebration was free and open to the public. A new activity this year included the 'Monkey Bridge Maze' – a balancing and obstacle course for children. The radio station 105.9 KISS FM provided music and a live remote from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Live music performances began at 12:30 p.m. and kept the crowd entertained until the Celebration ended at 4:00 p.m. There were bins set up at the park for both recycling and food waste composting. An estimated 2,000 people passed through the Celebration during the day. More event photos can be found [here](#).





Left: Staging for the parade began at Watson Park. Groups ranged from walkers, bikers, and carts, to trailers and an electric vehicle. **Right:** Pedestrians watch as Parade participants make their way south on Massachusetts Street. Senator Marci Francisco and City Commissioner Lisa Larsen were among the bikers.



Left: University of Kansas environmental student group, Environs, worked with Solid Waste Division staff to organize the Parade. **Right:** The Solid Waste Division table theme was centered around backyard composting and City composting initiatives, as well as providing resources around upcoming collection service changes – as well as showcasing the yard waste cart and backyard compost bin.



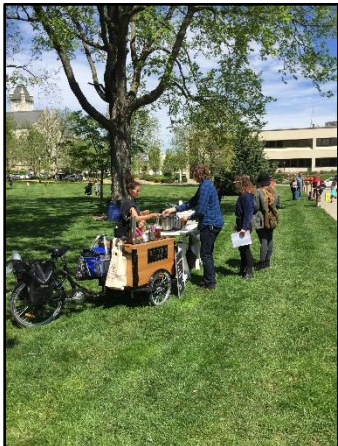
Left: The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department offered a free bike valet to event goers who rode their bikes. **Right:** A trailer display that walked through the CO2 emission & reduction process - the exhibitor gave away free, native trees to attendees.



Left: City's Parks & Recreation staff provided three tree ID tours of South Park – they also displayed their electric aerial lift truck and were on site to answer questions with the Kansas Forest Service. **Right:** View of the park as one of the scheduled bands performed in the gazebo.



Left: The Monkey Bridge Project's balancing course was a new and successful attraction! **Right:** In addition to environmentally themed learning activities, there was a face painter, bouncy house, and snow cone vendor.



Left & Center: Celebration attendees got to choose from five local food vendors, including Boyer's Artisan Meatballs and Repetition Coffee. **Right:** A yearly crowd favorite, the Recycle Cycle entertained children at the event.