

2022 Raleigh Environmental Award Winners

This year, Raleigh's Environmental Advisory Board recognized the best in climate action, community engagement and corporate stewardship in our city. These winners represent the hard work of dozens of community members to make Raleigh a healthier, greener and more sustainable city.

Raleigh Environmental Stewardship Award (RESA)

Each year, the RESA recognizes an individual or organization that has shown environmental leadership and recognizes the relationship and continuity of the environment, economics, and equity or social justice aspects of human society.

Raleigh City Farm

This year's RESA winner is [Raleigh City Farm](#). Situated just one mile north of Raleigh's bustling downtown, Raleigh City Farm is a nonprofit urban farm founded in 2011 on a formerly vacant one-acre lot. Its mission is to connect and nourish the Raleigh community through regenerative agriculture working toward its vision of a healthy community supporting the next generation of farmers. In 2020, Raleigh City Farm refined its strategy to place a greater emphasis on food insecurity and food access, donating over 3,600 pounds of food to nonprofit partners, including the Salvation Army and A Place at the Table, and transitioning its farmstand into a pay-what-you-can program. The farm engages nearly 2,500 volunteers and visitors in its activities, including volunteer workdays, farm tours, and workshops.

The Environmental Advisory Board recognizes Raleigh City Farm's dedication to environmental stewardship through regenerative agriculture, to equity through its farmshare and food donation programs, and to community building through people-centered programming that spread a love of urban agriculture while strengthening people's ties to their neighborhood.

Raleigh City Farms show the transformative power of urban farms on neighborhoods and throughout the city. Urban agriculture has the power to bring people together and create beautiful, safe spaces where they can learn, thrive and "dig where we live!"



Figure 1: Raleigh City Farm, Image credit: @raleighcityfarm Instagram

Climate Action Awards

Each year, the Environmental Advisory Board recognizes a number of awardees for their contributions to climate action in Raleigh. The Climate Action awards recognize the work of residents, organizations and businesses in Raleigh that advances the goals of [Raleigh's Community Climate Action Plan](#). The plan's objectives are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050, build community resilience to climate change impacts and support climate equity. The winners of these awards are making meaningful contributions to awareness, action and equity in our community.

Transportation: Jayna Victor

Jayna Victor is Raleigh's Transportation Demand Management Community Relations Coordinator. In that role, she works with local businesses and community members to share the benefits of switching from single-



Figure 2: Jayna Victor

occupancy vehicle commuting to more sustainable forms of transportation like cycling, walking, carpooling or using GoRaleigh buses. Within her first year, she increased participation in the City's employee GoPass bus benefit by nearly 200% through direct outreach and collaboration with various departments. Her work has directly impacted the region through behavior change resources to reduce vehicle miles traveled. During Jayna's tenure in the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) field, she has amplified the City of Raleigh's Commute Smart Raleigh program through innovative projects; including but not limited to the creation of a web series "[Commute Smarter, Not Harder](#)", installation of a Bike Mural to increase the visibility of the bike racks at Raleigh Union Station, going out in various communities directly to educate and encourage residents and businesses to participate in commuter benefit programs. Jayna's work directly contributes to achieving Raleigh's Community Climate Goal by reducing emissions from vehicles!

Urban Adaptive Reuse: 716 South Saunders Street by Raleigh Architecture Company

The building at 716 South Saunders Street was once an automotive garage. The site required extensive repair and renovation as well as environmental remediation to remove residual toxins from the soil. Now an office building, the site uses its natural daylight on the east and south sides of the building from prior garage bay doors. New landscaping adds beauty and character to the site. Offices are an adaptive re-use and renovation project for a local architecture firm. The project serves as a reminder that thoughtful renovation of existing industrial spaces can reduce necessary construction resources and carbon footprint for development in the area. Renovating, rather than demolishing the space saved tons of physical material from being transported to the landfill. The masonry shell and roof were revamped with high performance insulation to create a robust thermal envelope, lowering energy requirements for heating and cooling for the life of the project. Low-water usage plumbing fixtures and LED lighting package likewise reduce utility requirements and demand. Operable

large format windows are used on temperate days for natural ventilation of the interiors, something rarely found in most new office environments. Locating office space adjacent to downtown and nearby neighborhoods instead of satellite office parks allows for reduced worker commute and increases potential for walkability to work. Bike racks are present for employees that wish to use the city's nearby greenways for access to and from work. The offices embody many of Raleigh's goals to reduce environmental footprint while creating sustainable development patterns in the downtown region.

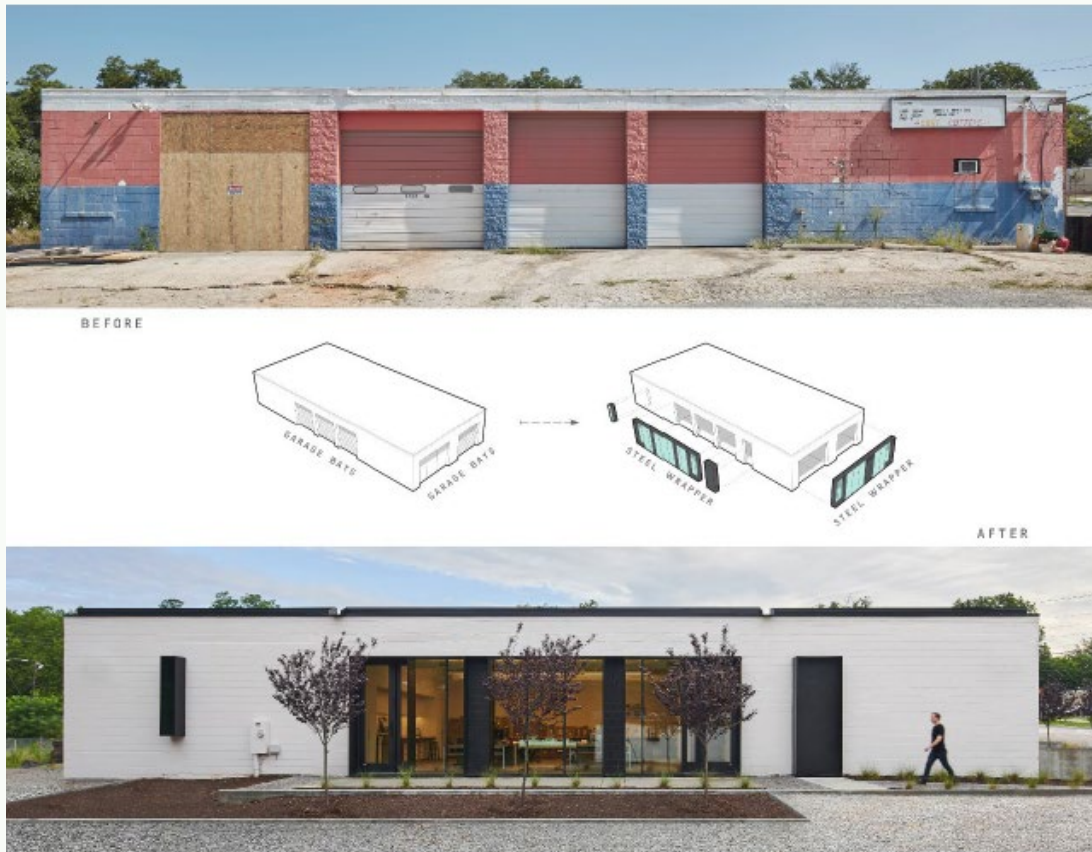


Figure 3: 716 S. Saunders Street. Image courtesy of Raleigh Architecture Company

Land Conservation and Air Quality: Raleigh Rose Garden

Raleigh Rose Garden is a historic site that hosts special events throughout the year and is open year-round for residents and visitors to enjoy beautiful gardens, bench seating under mature trees and natural walking paths. The site is also home to the Raleigh Little Theater. However, the site is also located in a low-lying area and is subject to frequent stormwater flooding. Heavy rainfall events frequently cause the garden to flood to a depth of over 1 foot. Flooding created maintenance challenges like clogged grate inlets, sediment debris, and rose and grass health issues.

A renovation of the garden, undertaken by SEPI, Inc, included new features designed to be incorporated into the historic site. The main part of the design is a planted, stormwater bioretention area that will redirect and absorb stormwater runoff while providing water quality benefits. The new planted bioretention area is

designed to fit into the existing landscape surrounding the rose beds. Plants within the stormwater device will feature a mix of native, ornamental grasses and pollinator-friendly, flowering perennials and low shrubs. The design also includes a re-configuration and expansion of the existing stormwater drainage pipes and inlets while avoiding impacts to existing garden features such as the fountain, arbor, and shade trees. Some of the underground stormwater infrastructure improvements will be within the area of the rose beds.



Figure 4: Raleigh Rose Garden. Image courtesy of SEPI, Inc.

The bioretention feature is planted with native perennials, grasses, and small woody plants appropriate for the Rose Garden aesthetic as well as working within the soil and site conditions of the stormwater feature. Plant selection will be primarily for species considered to be native pollinators. The project saved many of the existing trees and replaced trees found to be "unhealthy and hazardous".

Business Innovation for Environmental Stewardship

The Business Innovation for Environmental Stewardship Award recognizes innovative business practices which protect natural resources, reduce carbon emissions, reduce waste, or increase resilience of our community.

Tiffany King

Tiffany is an environmental champion through and through; she embodies everything it means to be a responsible steward of the community. Since moving to North Carolina to join the building and development community, she has worked tirelessly to further eco initiatives both internally and externally at her building firm while also volunteering time outside of work to clean parks and further her education in sustainability as well as to create opportunity for employment and mentorship of historically underrepresented marginalized peoples within the industry. The Raleigh office of her firm, Samet Corp, employs approximately 80 people, and Tiffany immediately set out to secure better waste and recycling options for the office while also implementing a new composting program. She has also dedicated much time and energy to creating a new waste and recycling program



Figure 5: Tiffany King

company-wide, while educating herself and her peer group on more sustainable building practices, including the introduction of mass timber framing in commercial construction. She has spent significant effort into upgrading fleet vehicles to more fuel-efficient alternatives and has mentored numerous colleagues on better building practices. These efforts have not gone unnoticed, and have resulted in her new position as a Director of Sustainability for the Samet Corp.

Community Action

The Community Action Award recognizes volunteers, individuals or non-profit organizations working in Raleigh on environmental stewardship, community building, environmental justice, or conservation.

The Great Raleigh Cleanup

The Great Raleigh Cleanup has been hosting litter cleanup and community-building events throughout Raleigh since October 2020. Founder and Executive Director, Preston Ross III organizes hundreds of volunteers every week to pick up litter from Raleigh streets and roadsides. After starting out cleaning up roadside trash in his neighborhood with his wife Becca, Preston has grown the Great Raleigh Cleanup into an organization that's seen over 400 volunteers, work over 2500 hours, picking up over 58,000 pounds of trash, and recycling over 3,000 pounds of metal in under two years (as of April 2022)! Preston organizes these volunteer events through social media (usually 1-2 per week) and provides all the tools necessary for volunteers to do the work safely and successfully. Each cleanup event creates opportunities for volunteers to get to know each other, get moving, and work towards a general goal: making Raleigh greener and cleaner.



Figure 6: The Great Raleigh Cleanup volunteer event. Image courtesy of Great Raleigh Cleanup

Next Generation of Environmental Leaders

The Next Generation of Environmental Leaders awards recognize actions by, or which encourage, young residents of Raleigh to take climate or environmental action in their communities through conservation, community engagement, or workforce development.

Building R, Wake Tech Community College

Building R, the Hendrick Center for Automotive Excellence on Wake Tech's Scott Northern Wake Campus consists of 100,000 square feet and serves as a complete automotive repair and automotive collision repair training facility. An initial impression of a project like the automotive collision and repair facility might not suggest environmental stewardship: dirty fluids like oil or brake fluids, rust, exhaust fumes

and greasy rags. Yet, Wake Tech took the chance to create a sustainable facility and use it to train the next generation of automotive experts. Sustainability is built into the buildings design, taking into account proximity to transit routes, pedestrian circulation paths, outdoor gathering spaces, and bioretention strategies to address both stormwater retention as well as crafting beautiful spaces. Drought tolerant, native plant species were dispatched across the project landscape. Design efforts focused on bringing natural light deep inside the building, mitigating solar heat gain through smart glazing design strategies and cool roof material, requiring low VOC materials to ensure excellent indoor air quality, design of high performance mechanical building controls and sequences with data analytics, installation of advanced lighting controls, and selection of building materials that are sensitive to function, content, where they were sourced, and how they were assembled. An EV charging station was included in the site parking strategies.



Figure 7: Building R, Courtesy of Wake Technical Community College

In addition to traditional internal combustion engines, students learn to service hybrid and electric vehicles to meet the growing need for skilled technical workforce knowledgeable in these emerging automotive technologies. Students at Wake Tech will take these skills back into our community and build a 21st century workforce that can meet the needs of a clean energy future.