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what is green remodeling?

Green remodeling is an environmentally responsible approach to design, maintenance and renovation that provides for a healthy, comfortable, durable and energy-efficient home.

It’s a new way of thinking about the products and processes involved in home remodeling. And it’s a personal choice — a way you can make a difference.

Several communities in the Kansas City region have joined together to form the Regional Energy Efficiency Conservation Strategy initiative, with the sole purpose of combining efforts and sharing ideas for energy efficiency throughout the region.

Printing the second edition of the Green Idea Book, originally published by the First Suburbs Coalition, is part of that mission. This book is intended to help area residents make cost-effective remodeling decisions to conserve energy and other resources.

Remodeling itself is a green practice. It reuses older residences rather than building new, and it allows homeowners to stay in the homes and neighborhoods they love, while still giving them the modern conveniences of a new home.

This book provides practical ideas to make any remodeling project a green project — from a fresh coat of paint to a brand new room addition. Green remodeling is better for you, your family, your community and the planet — and you may be surprised to find it can save money, too.
**why green remodeling?**

### it’s better for you and your family

Going green is good for your health — both physical and emotional. Natural materials and natural light help create attractive rooms that make your home more comfortable.

Green designs also make your home healthier by maximizing fresh air. And using low- or non-toxic materials can decrease allergies and prevent some health problems.

Good design choices will make your home a more pleasing space, and contribute to your overall quality of life.

### it’s better for your pocketbook

Energy-efficient designs can have an immediate impact on your monthly utility bills. The most efficient new appliances typically use up to 50 percent less energy than older, more wasteful models.

Efficient and durable materials and features in your home not only last longer, but may also cost less to maintain in the long run.

Green remodeling can also increase the resale value of your home. More than 90 percent of home buyers say they are willing to pay more for a home with green features.

### it’s better for your community

Green homes can minimize the strain on landfills, water treatment plants, power plants and other local government infrastructure.

Buying green products locally not only supports your local economy, but also reduces the amount of energy needed to transport out-of-town goods into the area.

### it’s better for the planet

With green remodeling, you can enhance our environment rather than depleting it. By choosing environmentally responsible products you help protect our air, water, plants and wildlife.

As you plan your remodeling project, look for ways to minimize construction waste and recycle leftover materials. Even small steps can make a big difference.
sustainability

It’s a buzzword we hear a lot when people talk about “green” principles and practices, but what does sustainability really mean?

Sustainability is the ability to meet our needs today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

Living sustainably doesn’t have to mean doing without. You want your home to be livable, comfortable and safe. Just think about the choices you make — as you begin your remodeling project, and as you go about your daily routines.

Take a look around your home. Think about the resources involved in creating the things you see around you — not just the furnishings, but also the structure itself. Everything you see required energy and raw materials to manufacture and transport.

When you choose products that require less energy to produce and maintain, or products that are made from renewable resources, you’re practicing sustainability.

The small steps you take today can make a big difference tomorrow.

principles of sustainable design

- **Use low-impact materials**
  Select materials that are non-toxic, renewable, made with recycled content and durable.

- **Be energy efficient**
  Select products that use less energy and make use of natural energy sources.

- **Choose quality and durability**
  Select products and building techniques that will last longer and function better, needing less frequent replacement and fewer repairs.

- **Reduce, reuse, recycle**
  Reduce usage and consumption. Reuse or donate products whenever possible, and recycle things that have outlived their usefulness.

- **Buy locally**
  Purchase products and materials that are produced or harvested locally to reduce the energy used for transport.

- **Protect your health**
  Reduce pollutants and toxins inside your home.
Americans spent an estimated $112 billion on home improvements in 2009.*

What kind of impact could green remodeling practices have?

- If every American homeowner replaced five of their most frequently used light bulbs with ENERGY STAR qualified bulbs, we would save more than $9 billion annually in energy costs.

- Programmable thermostats automatically adjust your home’s temperature settings, allowing you to save energy while you’re away or sleeping. When used properly, a programmable thermostat will save about $180 per year on your utility bills.

- When it’s time to buy new appliances, choose those that have earned the ENERGY STAR label — you can save $70 a year in energy costs.

- Replacing an older toilet with a high-efficiency toilet saves a family of four more than $90 annually on their water bill, and $2,000 over the lifetime of the toilet.

- Ducts that move air to and from a forced air furnace, central air conditioner, or heat pump are often big energy wasters. Sealing and insulating ducts can make your heating and cooling system as much as 20 percent more efficient.

- If your washing machine is more than 10 years old, replacing it with a high-efficiency model will save you $135 each year on utility bills.

- Ceiling fan/light combination units that have earned the ENERGY STAR are about 50 percent more efficient than conventional fan/light units. This can save you more than $15 per year on utility bills.

* Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies’ tabulations of the Department of Commerce’s C-30 series.
Where do you begin? Items at the bottom of the pyramid require little time and investment but also are limited in their impact on the planet. Items at the top may be more costly and time-intensive to install, but you’ll also see a greater return on your investment.
WATER EARLY OR LATE
Water your lawn in the early morning or in the evening. Avoid watering between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., especially in hot weather, to reduce water waste through evaporation. Use a drip irrigation system to reduce waste even more.

TUNE UP LAWN AND GARDEN EQUIPMENT
Keep engines tuned on all lawn equipment. When your mower is due for replacement, consider an electric or push model. On hot summer days, mow in the evening to reduce air pollution.

USE GREEN ALTERNATIVES FOR LAWN CARE
Excess chemicals from fertilizers and pesticides are washed into storm drains that then flow into rivers and streams. Use natural alternatives to keep your lawn looking nice while you protect the environment. Find out how at www.safelawns.org.

LIGHT THE WAY WITH SOLAR POWER
Light walkways, patios and other outdoor spaces with photocell lights that rely on solar power.

USE RECYCLED MULCH
Many organic products — from lawn clippings to coffee grounds — can help hold in moisture around trees and plants, either alone or mixed with traditional wood-chip mulch.

LANDSCAPE WITH NATIVE PLANTS
Landscape with flowers, shrubs, trees and grasses that are native to our area. Native plants need less water and fertilizer, and are easier to maintain. Find a list of native plants at www.marc.org/Environment/Water/native_plants_list.htm.

for the yard
Your lawn care choices affect more than your lawn.

Stormwater runoff from rain or melting snow washes all sorts of substances — excess fertilizer, pesticides, pet waste, oil and grease — into storm sewers that flow into streams and rivers.

Unlike sanitary sewers, the water from storm sewers isn’t treated before it goes into streams. Polluted stormwater contaminates streams, rivers and lakes, and can kill or damage plants, fish and wildlife.

Help keep the water supply clean:
- Before you fertilize, test your soil to find out what it really needs, and don’t overfertilize.
- Use lawn chemicals safely. Never apply before watering or rain unless directed.
- Pick up after your pets.
- Recycle used oil.
- Sweep driveways and sidewalks clean to keep debris out of storm drains.
- Wash your car at a car wash that filters wastewater or in a grassy area, not on your driveway.
- Never discard trash or yard waste down storm drains or in the street.

MOWING YOUR LAWN

Instead of bagging the lawn clippings, let them compost in place, right on the lawn. As the clippings decompose, they deter weeds and act as a natural fertilizer.

Don’t mow too short. Keep your lawn’s height around three inches. Longer grass will crowd out weeds, shade the soil to reduce water evaporation, and encourage your grass to develop deeper roots.
SWITCH TO COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULBS
Replace burnt-out incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs that last longer and use less energy. Changing just five of the most-frequently used lights in your home can save about $25–35 per year.

USE NATURAL CLEANERS

MAKE ROOM FOR RECYCLING
Set aside bins to separate and collect recyclable materials, including newspapers, office paper, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, cardboard and batteries. Check with your city or www.recyclespot.org to find out what you can recycle and where.

KEEP INDOOR AIR CLEAN
Use high-quality air filters to capture dust, pollen and other pollutants. Keep filters clean and replace them regularly. Common houseplants may help keep indoor air clean, too. Studies recommend one houseplant for every 100–150 square feet of living space.

ADD FAUCET AERATORS
Add aerators to faucets to save water — and the energy used to heat it — by reducing the flow from the faucet. Choose aerators that restrict water flow to one gallon per minute in bathroom sinks, and no more than two gallons per minute in the kitchen.

USE ORGANIC COTTONS
Choose household linens made from organic cotton. Unlike ordinary cotton, which is treated with a variety of chemicals, organic cotton is grown without synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, hand-picked, and processed with natural dyes and finishes.
CONTROL LIGHT AND HEAT WITH WINDOW COVERINGS

Thermal or insulated window coverings can significantly improve energy efficiency and comfort. Choose window coverings that put nature to work for you by taking advantage of natural light. In winter, open south-facing window coverings during the day, and close all window coverings at night to retain heat inside. In summer, shade windows to help keep your home cool.

Weatherize your home to reduce heating and cooling costs.

Sealing air leaks is one of the quickest and least expensive improvements you can make to your home’s energy efficiency.

Test for leaks by holding a lit incense stick next to doors, windows, outlets and other openings. If the smoke stream travels horizontally, you may have an air leak.

- Caulk and weatherstrip around windows and doors that leak air.
- Caulk and seal air leaks around plumbing and electrical wiring.
- Use rubber gaskets behind outlet and switch plates on exterior walls.
- Make sure your attic has adequate insulation.
- Keep fireplace flue dampers closed tightly when the fireplace is not in use. A fireplace plug — an inflatable polyurethane “pillow” that seals the chimney flue — is easy to install, and can be quickly removed to light a fire.
- Change your furnace filter regularly, and make sure that supply air registers and cold air return grills are clear of all obstructions so your heating and cooling system can move and condition air most effectively.
**CHOSE AN EFFICIENT IRRIGATION SYSTEM**

Drip or trickle irrigation systems are more efficient than sprayers because they deliver water slowly and directly to the roots under the soil surface. This promotes deeper roots and a healthier lawn. If you use a sprinkler system, choose one that has a timer and sprays close to the ground.

For trees and shrubs, use soaker hoses at the base of plants to water the root system rather than the leaves and reduce evaporation.

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**USE A RAIN BARREL**

Make a rain barrel to collect and store rainwater from downspouts and use it to water your lawn or garden. Using a 55-gallon drum, a vinyl garden hose and some other common materials found at most hardware stores, you can create your own rain barrel.

During the summer months, almost 40 percent of household water is used for lawn and garden maintenance. Using a rain barrel can lower your water bill and improve the vitality of plants, flowers, trees and lawns. Learn how to create a rain barrel at www.marc.org/environment/water/rainbarrels.htm.

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**CREATE A COMPOST BIN FOR ORGANIC WASTE**

Almost any organic material is suitable for a compost pile, from grass clippings to banana peels. Over time, with help from earthworms and other organisms, the organic matter you add to the compost bin will decompose into a useful soil supplement.

Place your compost pile or bin in a level, shaded, well-drained area, away from trees. Keep the pile about as moist as a well-wrung sponge and turn the compost occasionally to aerate. When it turns into a dark, crumbly humus, use it to enrich garden soil.

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**GROW YOUR OWN PRODUCE IN AN URBAN GARDEN**

An enormous amount of energy is used to transport food from distant farms to the city and store and refrigerate it at supermarkets. We compound the energy use by driving to buy our groceries and returning home.

Many fruits and vegetables are easy to grow in a home garden or in containers. Even if you are not an expert gardener, you can enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables from your own garden and help the environment, too. Learn more at www.urbangardeninghelp.com.
Landscape for winter sun and summer shade

Strategically locating trees and shrubs with energy savings in mind can save heating and cooling costs.

- Plant deciduous trees — the kind that lose their leaves each year — on the southwest side of your home, about 20 feet away, to shade the summer sun.
- Plant trees on the north and northwest sides of your home to serve as winter windbreaks.
- If you plant trees on the south side, choose deciduous trees that will allow winter sun to shine through bare branches onto south facing windows.
- Shading your air conditioner unit with shrubs — planted three to four feet away — can increase the unit’s efficiency by up to 10 percent.
- Choose evergreens for foundation plantings to block drifting snow and create dead air space that helps insulate your walls.
- To keep the air cooler in summer, keep paved surfaces to a minimum, or locate them where they will be shaded during the hottest parts of the day.

THE RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Trees can be an excellent long-term improvement to your home. Before you plant a tree, consider its overall size, shape and appearance, and choose a species that will thrive in our area. Avoid species that are known to be susceptible to ice damage or that have disease problems. Visit www.righttreerightplace.com for advice from the Heartland Tree Alliance on selecting, planting and caring for your trees.
**ENERGY-SAVING APPLIANCES**
When buying new appliances, look for the ENERGY STAR label. Be sure to consider size, too. Don’t buy a refrigerator or dishwasher that is larger than you need. If you choose natural gas appliances for their efficiency, be sure they are well vented.

**PLUMBING FIXTURES**
If you need to replace pipes, choose copper or consider PEX tubing. When you install a new toilet, shower head or faucet, choose a low-flow model to save water.

**REPLACE WINDOWS**
When it’s time to replace your windows, choose high-performance windows that can save on heating and cooling costs. In the Kansas City region, look for a U-factor (heat-loss rating) below 0.40 and a Solar Heat-Gain Coefficient (SHGC) less than 0.55.

**SEAL AND INSULATE**
Air leaks can downgrade the effect of insulation. Sealing the leaks and adding insulation will make your home more comfortable and energy-efficient year round. Look for insulations that include recycled or bio-based content.

**KITCHEN COUNTERTOPS AND CABINETS**
Use materials that have a high recycled content, but also consider durability. Cabinets can be made from compressed plant material, like wheatboard or strawboard. For counters, consider concrete, stone, glass tiles, wood or paper composite.

**FLOORING CHOICES**
Use certified woods for flooring. Bamboo is a durable, renewable alternative to traditional woods. Look for carpets that are made from natural fibers. In synthetics, choose carpet that has high recycled content or is made with little petroleum.
CHOOSING WOOD

Wood is a renewable resource, but not all wood comes from responsibly managed forests. Look for certifications such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label to ensure that the product comes from forests managed in accordance with strict environmental and social standards.

CONSTRUCTION WASTE

As you complete your remodeling project — whether it’s as simple as a fresh coat of paint or as complex as a room addition — be sure to dispose of construction waste responsibly. Recycle as much as possible, and dispose of hazardous waste products safely. For more information on what to do with construction waste, visit www.recyclespot.org.

CHOOSING PAINT

Paints, stains and other coatings are the second largest source of polluting volatile organic compounds (VOCs), after automobiles. Paints also may contain toxic chemicals, such as formaldehyde. Manufacturers aren’t required to list all of the ingredients on paint labels, so to be sure you’re getting low-VOC, non-toxic paints, look for certifications such as the Green Seal label.

CHOOSING WOOD

Wood is a renewable resource, but not all wood comes from responsibly managed forests. Look for certifications such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label on wood and paper products. FSC certification ensures that the product comes from forests managed in accordance with strict environmental and social standards.

Use materials that are:
- clean or nonpolluting
- renewable
- abundant
- natural
- made with recycled content
- energy efficient
- locally obtained
- durable
**PROTECT STREAMS WITH NATURAL BUFFER ZONES**

If your property is adjacent to a stream, protect water quality and wildlife with a natural buffer zone. Let native trees, grasses and shrubs grow naturally, with little or no mowing, and without chemicals or pesticides. Stream buffers control erosion and help filter pollutants and sediment that might otherwise impact water quality.

**CREATE A RAIN GARDEN**

Plant a rain garden in a depression — natural or dug — to capture and soak up stormwater runoff from your roof or other impervious areas around your home like driveways, walkways and patios.

Fill your rain garden with suitable trees, shrubs, flowers and other plants for a beautiful addition to your yard that helps protect water quality. For more information, visit [www.rainkc.com](http://www.rainkc.com).

**DESIGN LANDSCAPES THAT NEED NO IRRIGATION**

Xeriscape your lawn to save on watering and maintenance. Xeriscaping refers to landscaping in ways that require no additional irrigation — using plants with water requirements appropriate to the local climate and designing planting beds to avoid losing water to evaporation and runoff. Minimize turf areas to cut down on mowing, and use drought-tolerant grasses.

**USE PERMEABLE PAVING**

Consider permeable paving for patios and driveways. Porous pavement materials let air and water pass through, filtering pollutants on the spot and reducing the “heat-island” effect of traditional asphalt and concrete paving. Options include porous aggregate, open-jointed blocks, pervious concrete and porous asphalt. Porous pavement generally does not cost more, but it must be installed properly to be effective.
Heat and cool your home with the earth’s energy

Geothermal heat pumps take advantage of the consistency of the Earth’s temperature underground, which translates to energy savings for you.

The systems use underground coils to collect heat in winter when the air temperature is low and the underground temperature is comparatively warm. In the summer, the coils release heat from your home into the cooler soil. Geothermal heat pumps are 30 to 40 percent less energy-intensive than traditional systems.

Geothermal heat pump systems do the work that usually requires two appliances, a furnace and an air conditioner, making the initial cost more palatable to those who may need to replace both appliances.

Another benefit is that they can be located inside, since they are not releasing heat into the air. Their small size and low noise allow some models to even be installed in a closet. The indoor location also means the equipment is protected from mechanical breakdowns due to exposure to harsh weather.

USE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

Use the wind and sun to supply your energy needs.

Wind turbines may offer savings of more than 50 percent on electricity costs. Before installing wind turbines, be sure to check your local zoning regulations.

When it’s time to replace your roofing, consider using solar shingles. At first glance, they look like regular asphalt shingles, but they contain photovoltaic cells that capture sunlight and transform it into energy.

The energy generated by wind turbines or solar panels can provide power to your home or to a utility’s power grid.
When you install a new heating and cooling system, choose the highest efficiency model you can afford. Make sure the system is sized right for your home, and be sure to seal the duct work. Keep ducts clean, and have your system checked every two years to make sure it is still operating efficiently. Check with local utility companies to find out if they offer incentives for installing high-efficiency systems.

If you need to update your home’s electrical system, consider connecting to an alternative source of power such as solar or wind energy. Even if you aren’t able to install a solar system now, you may be able to make your home solar ready during your renovation by adding an empty, sealed conduit that runs from the electrical panel to the roof. This conduit will be available for wiring when you do add solar panels in the future.

Replace a worn-out water heater with an ENERGY STAR-rated tank. Or consider an even more efficient tankless or solar water heating system. Tankless (on demand) water heaters do not store hot water, so there is no stand-by heat loss — but they may not be viable for whole house use. Solar water heaters are very efficient, but may be costly to install. Whatever type you choose, get the right size system for your home and use.

You can help the environment by minimizing the amount of waste generated during your remodeling project. By planning your remodel carefully and removing materials to retain their value (deconstructing rather than demolishing), you increase the likelihood that materials can be reused.

Donate usable materials to Habitat ReStore (www.restorekc.org in Missouri or www.heartlandhabitat.org/restore in Kansas).
Adding on? Plan now to save energy later.

If your remodeling project involves a room addition, you have the opportunity to incorporate energy-saving options into your design from the beginning.

Place your addition to take advantage of natural light and reduce the need for electric light. Use passive solar strategies to help with heating and cooling costs by using large, south-facing windows for light and heat in the winter. To shade the windows in the summer, consider awnings or overhangs, or plant deciduous trees where summer foliage will offer shade.

Natural ventilation can also help with cooling costs. Install operable windows on the east and west sides of your addition to allow air to flow naturally. Doorways with transoms or louvered vents can help air flow from one room to another.

Whole-house fans and ceiling fans can be used to supplement natural air flow.

CONDUCT AN ENERGY AUDIT

Before you begin any renovation project or system upgrade, it’s a good idea to conduct a comprehensive energy audit. A professional analyst can evaluate your home and prioritize improvement strategies based on fact, not guesswork. Energy-efficient improvements often enhance the durability, comfort and air quality of a home. The Metropolitan Energy Center, www.kcenergy.org, can help you locate a trained energy auditor or contractor. Many local utilities also provide services that will help you evaluate your home.
Some remodeling projects are easy to do yourself, but others may require professional help. To find an environmentally responsible contractor, ask friends and neighbors for references and check online resources:

**The Green Building Certification Institute • www.gbcn.org**

The U.S. Green Building Council provides this online directory of professionals certified in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

**National Association of the Remodeling Industry • www.nari.org**

NARI provides a directory of member contractors that have gone through an extensive screening process and agree to abide by NARI’s code of ethics.

When you choose a contractor for green remodeling, start with the basic questions you would ask any contractor about their skills, experience, licensing and references. Then ask specific questions related to green remodeling:

- Do you have any experience with green remodeling or sustainable design?
- What is your interest in green building? What are your areas of expertise?
- What memberships and certifications do you hold?
- What materials will you use? Where do they come from? What is their recycled content?
- What will happen with construction waste? How much will be reused or recycled?

Work with your contractor to:

- **plan your project**
- **develop a budget**
- **agree on a schedule**
**green remodel checklist**  
where will you go green?

### FOR THE YARD

**rethink**
- native plants
- solar-powered lighting
- lawn equipment
- recycled mulch
- limited chemical use
- watering early or late

**replace**
- rain barrel
- efficient irrigation
- urban gardening
- composting
- locating plants and shrubs for sun and shade

**redo**
- stream buffer
- rain garden
- xeriscape
- permeable paving
- solar shingles

### FOR THE HOME

**rethink**
- CFL bulbs
- recycling
- faucet aerators
- organic cottons
- indoor plants
- natural cleaners
- weatherization

**replace**
- replacement windows
- efficient appliances
- plumbing fixtures
- added insulation
- countertops and cabinets
- sustainable flooring
- certified wood
- low-VOC paint
- construction waste

**redo**
- HVAC systems
- hot water heater
- electrical systems
- wind power
- demolition
- ventilation
- orientation
When you buy materials for your remodeling project — and when you shop for everyday items — consider the entire life cycle of each product:

**RESOURCE MATERIALS**
Think about what materials went into the product. Is it made with renewable resources, like organic cottons, and FSC-certified wood? Was the material grown without synthetic pesticides and fertilizers?

**MANUFACTURING**
Was the product manufactured in an environmentally responsible manner? Buy from businesses that minimize waste and limit pollution in the manufacturing process.

**TRANSPORTATION**
Buy locally to reduce the energy needed to transport goods to market. When you shop, combine small errands into one trip and carry your purchases in reusable shopping bags.

**DISPOSAL**
When you buy something new, think about how long it will last and how you will eventually dispose of it when it has outlived its usefulness. Is it easily recyclable, or can it be reused? Before you dispose of waste, look into recycling and reuse options. Be sure to dispose of hazardous waste safely.

**LOOK FOR LABELS LIKE THESE:**
- The ENERGY STAR label identifies appliances and other products that meet government standards for energy efficiency.
- The Water Sense label identifies products and programs that meet EPA water efficiency and performance standards.
- The Green Seal label marks products that meet independent standards for performance and environmental responsibility.
- Forest Stewardship Council certification identifies wood and paper products from forests managed under strict environmental standards.
- Look for products that have a high post-consumer recycled content and can be recycled after use.
online resources

10,000 Rain Gardens
www.rainkc.com

http://kcmetro.apwa.net/chapters/kcmetro/specifications.asp

Bridging the Gap
www.bridgingthegap.org

Compost Guide
www.compostguide.com

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
www.eere.energy.gov

ENERGY STAR
www.energystar.gov

EPA Watersense
www.epa.gov/watersense

First Suburbs Coalition
www.marc.org/firstsuburbs

The Green Home Guide
www.greenhomeguide.org

Habitat for Humanity ReStore
www.heartlandhabitat.org/restore (Kansas)
www.restorekc.org (Missouri)

Heartland Utilities for Energy Efficiency
www.huee.org

Home Builders Association of Greater Kansas City (Resources for Contractors)
www.kchba.org

Kansas City Power & Light Energy Efficiency Programs
www.kcpl.com/residential/hee.html

Low-Impact Living
www.lowimpactliving.com

Mid-America Regional Council Environmental Programs
www.marc.org/environment

Metropolitan Energy Center
www.kcenergy.org

National Association of Home Builders Green Building Program
www.nahbgreen.org

National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI)
www.nari.org
www.remodelingkc.com

Passive House Institute U.S.
www.passivehouse.us

Recycle Spot
www.recyclespot.org

U.S. Green Building Council
www.usgbc.org
www.usgbckansascity.org

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The nationally recognized First Suburbs Coalition Idea Book for updating Post-World War II homes was published in 2005. The book examines four of the most common housing types found in Kansas City’s first suburbs — Ranch, Split Level, Two Story, and Cape Cod — and provides dozens of ideas for appropriate ways to update and make additions to them. The 40-page, folio-sized book offers color illustrations of each housing type and the elements which can be renovated or added. The book also addresses windows, doors and garages, as well as other basics of exterior appearance. Energy efficiency, financing and universal design are discussed, along with a section of guidelines for selecting and working with reliable contractors.

Order the Idea Book online ($10 plus shipping) or download the PDF version at www.marc.org/firstsuburbs/planbook.htm.
This book has been reprinted with permission from the First Suburbs Coalition. The First Suburbs Coalition is made up of the cities that were first to grow around the core of Kansas City. Leaders from these communities work together on common issues, including modernizing housing stock, maintaining public infrastructure, and attracting and retaining businesses.