

Urban Forest Management Plan

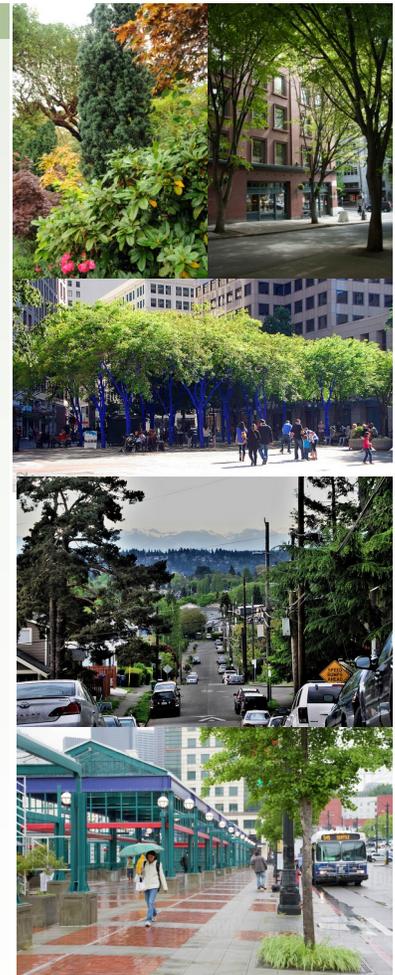
Community Outreach 2018

Background

Focusing on environmental equity, CISC has conducted three community meetings in Oct 2018 to introduce the Urban Forest Management Plan and to initiate community conversation on expectations on the new plan. For a lot of immigrants who are busy adapting their new lives and meeting end needs of the families, they do not pay much attention to the trees in their properties nor in their neighborhoods.

Overview

CISC has started in person recruitment about a month ago prior to the meetings scheduled on Oct 2, Oct 5 and Oct 12. In addition, information of the meetings was also available in Wechat, a Chinese version of Facebook. All of the participants are either current or former program participants of the array of programs and services at CISC. They are all immigrants from China and none of them have ever heard about the Urban Forest Management Plan. For most of the participants, although they know there are trees in their neighborhoods, they never paid any attention to them until they attended the community meetings. The meetings were conducted in Chinese Mandarin and Cantonese. Except the youth, majority of the participants were non-English or limited English speaking. English level varies within the youth group. Almost half of the participants are living in single family and half are living in multi-families homes.



*Oct 2, 2018
18 high school youth
participate the
community meetings.*

*Oct 8, 2018
7 seniors participants at
Lake City Community
Center*

*Oct 12, 2018
29 seniors and adults
participants at CISC main
office*



Challenges

For the immigrants, trees are not a very exciting and interesting topics if compare to information that would meet the basic needs of the families such as food, housing, employment and health...etc. CISC has explicitly make the connection between trees and healthy environment during the recruitment process. In addition, given the short turn around time and comprehensive information of the current Urban Forest Management Plan, it has been a challenge to present the information and facilitate the discussion in a culturally appropriate manner. More importantly, as interest and experience of trees varies among participants, CISC team has to be creative and yet inclusive in facilitating the activities and discussion.

“I have no idea that the government has a team of staff and a plan to manage the trees in the city.” - one Cantonese participant.

Rundown of the Meetings

Trivia game about trees

Warm up activity to connect participants to trees. Participants showed hands if they agreed with the statement on screen.

Brief overview of the Urban Forest Management Plan

An introduction to the UFMP as the focus of the discussion. Purposes and focuses of the current plan has been discussed.

Drawing of trees

Participants drew trees as individual or as a group and then shared about their experience or feelings about trees. Some participants would like to draw their own trees while some would like to draw one tree as a group. Some participants shared their fond memories of the trees they drew.

Planting of trees in the neighborhood

Each group of participants planted trees to the neighborhoods they assigned.

Group Reflection on the tree planting activity

Participants shared how and why the way they planted trees in their assigned neighborhoods.

Inputs on the new UFMP

Participants connected their experience with the previous tree planting activity and share inputs/questions about the UFMP.

Snapshots of the outreach:



Youth group was drawing trees and planting trees in their assigned neighborhood.



Q & A time with city staff Sherry Graham.



Group was working on the tree planting activity.



Working on the input of the new UFMP.



Listening to sharing from other groups.

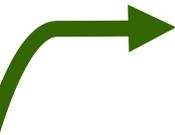


Neighborhood trees planting activity.

Summary of suggestions for the new UFMP:

- Plant different varieties of trees
- Plant big/tall trees in park or sidewalk (not residential area)
- Make good arrangement so that different trees will bloom year-round.
- Plant trees with scents in some areas
- Plant trees in places with more pollutions
- Plant trees near river for less soil erosion
- Plant trees that consume least amount of water
- More investment to focus on education of children
- Maintenance on regular basis (trim branches)
- Don't plant trees that would block the signs on the roads
- Plant local trees
- Pay attention to the species of trees on the street. Make sure trees are not harmful to human or animals
- Choose species that would grow in the local weather
- More trees in park for visual enjoyment
- Plant trees with big green leaves for shades
- Safety first: Ensure health of the trees
- Pay attention to the density of the trees
- Plant short trees in residential area
- Plant harmless (poisonless trees)
- Give out free trees
- Teach people how to grow trees





Benefits	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social gathering place• Soil preservation• Economic benefits: Tree related business (for example, in China, grow trees that could farm silk worms)• Light up the environment• Reduce air pollution• Privacy• Reduce noise• Improve surrounding environment• Increase oxygen• Cause less soil erosion• Reduce carbon footprint• Prevent extra water evaporate• Reduce green house gas• Slow down green house effects• Create wind shield• Reduce heat island effects• Reduce hot weather• Habitat for living things• Physical health• Psychological health• Reduce impact from sand storm• Safety• Consolidation of soil• Shade for sunlight• Increase food supplies by growing edible fruit/food trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damage of underground pipes by tree roots• Fallen leaves may block drainage and cause flooding• Damage of pedestrian roads• Fruit trees may attract insects• Block light• Tree pollen cause allergy• Safety hazard during windstorm—damage to properties and facilities if fall• Cause fire if hit by lightning during thunder storm• Fallen leaves cause slippery road condition• Fallen branches during wind or snow storm may cause power outage• Some species may cause negative impacts to health• Take over many space (given housing is getting more and more expensive)• Sign distraction• Overgrown• Too much harmful organism• Clock vision• Potential safety threats during wind storm for big trees
	<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px;"><p><i>“There is definitely more concrete than trees in Chinatown. I wonder if there is anything they (government) could do about it” - Community Member</i></p></div>

Findings

Common Grounds

Despite the difference on the education levels, cultural backgrounds and languages spoken among the participants, majority of the participants agree trees are good for the environment. Most people agree that trees are good for the air, create wind shield and sun shade, cause positive impacts to the environments.

Common Concerns

Common concerns of trees shared by the participants could be summarized as following:



Fallen branch caused damage to properties. Potential safety threat.



Uprooted tree fell and caused damage to house during wind storm. Potential safety threat.



Tree related allergies—negative impacts to health.



Uprooted tree fell and caused damage to properties on the street during wind storm. Potential safety threat.



Slippery road caused by fallen leaves— increase risk of falling.



Blocking of vision and signs on the street.

*“How would I know the benefits of planting more trees would outnumbered the negative impacts ?”
- Community member*



Different Knowledge, Different Voices

While majority of the participants do not have any prior knowledge nor experience in taking care of trees, different voices heard during the meetings. For the youth participants who are currently in high school, they are more receptive and sensitive to scientific data and foreign concepts presented at the meetings when compare with the adult participants. During discussion, the youth participants used more technical and academic terms such as heat island effect, reduce CO₂ and increase O₂, soil erosion and green house gas, which would not be easily understood by the adult participants even though in Chinese. Meanwhile, adult participants would share more day-to-day experience and stories during discussion and reflection.

Yearning for Opportunities to Participate

Regardless of language barriers, majority of the participants, except seniors, are interested to learn more information about the new plan and opportunity to volunteer in tree planting around the city, especially in their neighborhoods. Some parents emphasized the importance of education the younger generation and plant trees together with them.

“There is definitely more concrete than trees in Chinatown. I wonder if there is anything they (government) could do about it” - Community Member

Questions

Participants have asked the following questions in the community meetings and majority of the questions have been answered by city staff.

When is the tree planting day for City of Seattle?

Why is the goal set to 30% of tree canopy? Singapore is 75%.

How to save sick trees?

Cost/Expenses of planting and maintaining the trees? (Water, staffing, planning...etc)

How to report fallen tree?

What kind of pesticide is used to maintain trees on the streets? Are they harmful? Any signs to warning pedestrians?

Are there enough trees?

Do we have enough land to support our goal?

How can we support this event (plan)?

If we plant too many trees, would it harm our ecosystem by absorbing more water?

What's the maintenance plan?

How to avoid more people from suffering tree related allergic symptoms?

In case of wind/snow storm/extreme weather conditions, how to reduce the safety and health risks caused by fallen branches, trees and leaves?

Any tree planting and maintenance support available for residents?

Recommendations

Provide summary of the plan in different languages

While it may not be necessary provide translation of the whole plan for all of the non-English speaking population in Seattle, it would be important to provide at least a one page summary/highlight about the purpose and key messages of the new plan. In addition, avoid using terms/words that are not commonly used. Otherwise, people would not understand even the content is translated.

Stronger connection/presence in the community

None of the participants have ever heard of the Urban Forest Management Plan prior to their attendance to the community meetings, nor they would pay much attention to the surrounding trees. It is important for the community to know about this plan and the work done by the city so that it would be supported and carried on to the future generations. More importantly, a lot of side conversation among the participants related to tree cutting in private properties because of the myths and negative perspectives such as damaging pipes of growing trees at home. UFMP team should consider to expand the scope of community outreach and education in tree related regulations and policy.

Provide and facilitate opportunities to participate

Majority of the participants expressed interested in volunteering in tree planting and landscape work in the city, especially in their neighborhood. UFMP team may consider collaborate with other city departments to facilitate community volunteer opportunities for landscaping and tree planting work in the city.

Provide more community support and resource related to tree planting and maintenance

Most of participants have no prior knowledge and experience in tree planting and maintenance, while they understand the benefits of trees, they do not prefer to have big tall trees in their properties or neighborhood because of they believe they myths of the potential threats in health and safety. Thus, UFMP team and city may consider to provide more support, education, resources (such as free trees) in tree for people who has no prior experience nor knowledge in tree planting and maintenance.