Urban Forestry Commission/Urban Forest IDT
Annual Meeting

November 2, 2016
Noon - 5:00 p.m.
Camp Long – 5200 35th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98126
MEETING NOTES

Attendees: Andrew, Zellers, Art Pederson, Brent Schmidt, Darren Morgan, David Bayard, David Mutchler, Deborah Brown, Deb Heiden, Doug Critchfield, Erik Rundell, Jana Dilley, Joanna Nelson de Flores, Jon Jainga, Joshua Erickson, Katie Beaver, Leif Fixen, Maggi Glowacki, Nolan Rundquist, Pattie Bakker, Reid Haefer, Richard Martin, Sandra Pinto de Bader, Steve Zemke, Tom Early, Weston Brinkley, Shane DeWald, Nicholas Johnson, Lance Young, Sudha Nandagopal, Andrea Petzel

Meeting goals:
- Strengthening the partnership between the Urban Forestry Commission and the Urban Forest Interdepartmental Team in order to accomplish the goals of the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan.
- Create a learning environment for the group to apply the Equity and Environment Agenda's goals to our urban forestry work.

Presurvey Results:
Prior to the start of the workshop, participants were asked two questions, with answers complied as follows:
  1. *Are you aware of the City's Equity and Environment Agenda?*
     Yes: 21
     No: 1

  2. *In your own words, how does your work in urban forestry relate to equity and social justice?*
     • We attempt to provide the same service to all regardless of any other issues. We find, however, that those better connected with technology and contacts (people downtown in more supervisory roles) and those with more time to connect with those contacts, tend to receive more immediate and satisfactory service.
     • Planting trees in an equitable way, considering canopy cover, and underserved neighborhoods.
     • By trying to maintain/increase the City's tree canopy, we can bring the benefits of the urban forest to all the City's communities.
     • Brings community together under the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) and trails to work on improving their natural space.
     • GSP: Some neighborhoods are well represented by volunteer forest stewards (implementing forest restoration) – we look to focus on those that

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are not currently represented and also seek to diversity the roster of stewards and other volunteers.

- Access to healthy public places differs by neighborhood/community.
- Equitable distribution of healthy canopy cover.
- Work to update right of way (ROW) manual design, standards applicable to all ROW land @27% total land base enables SDOT to utilize jurisdiction to equalize public health benefits and land value citywide.
- It's important to ensure our urban forestry services are equitably distributed among all residents. We need to do a better job at engaging Equity and Environment Initiative (EEI) groups.
- Much of my work is focused on connecting different communities and building lines of communication and ultimately understanding all leading to increased common ground.
- Ensuring all parts of Seattle realize the benefit of trees, and advocating for policies that take equity issues into consideration.
- Make sure everyone receives the benefit of trees and has equitable access to nature and a healthy urban forest.
- Try to ensure all communities treated equally in terms of the size and maintenance of trees.
- Development Reviewer – awareness of the issues when raised and when plans and codes are developed.
- We do targeted projects, rehab, and maintenance across Seattle, with a focused eye on serving and giving voice to underserved communities.
- Directly. As a department of City government, we are obligated to serve all constituents, and knowing that American institutions are inherently subject to institutional, structural, racism we are obligated to address equity issues.
- EEA for urban forestry is appropriating maintenance and planting efforts throughout the city in an equitable way.
- SCL works across the city's neighborhoods. We strive to provide a high level of customer service across the city and respond proactively to issues in historically underserved populations.
- Urban forests provide benefits to adjacent communities and therefore should be distributed equitably throughout a city to work towards social justice.
- As an urban forestry commissioner, I work to ensure that projects and policies affecting the urban forest benefit all communities in the city, especially within each community.
- I work directly with young people of diverse backgrounds to help develop linkages between the natural world and cities and the equity and social justice implications.

Equity and Environment Agenda:
Presenter/Facilitator: Sudha Nandagopal, Office of Sustainability and Environment
The Equity and Environment Agenda (EEA) was released in April of this year after an extensive outreach process to communities of color. The intent of the EEA development process is to build support for an environmental movement about people and communities with sustained change for the long haul, and to counter the mainstream environmental narrative by using storytelling and art and creative opportunities to bring new ideas. The EEA process also focuses on the need to build community capacity, and not burdening communities with constant outreach needs from the City

The four goals of the EEA are:

1. Healthy environments for all.
2. Jobs, local economies and youth pathways.
3. Environmental narrative and community leadership.
4. Opportunities for government, environmental organizations, community and philanthropic leadership.

Questions from Participants:
Question: Are there still opportunities for City staff to engage with the Community Partners Steering Committee?
Answer: Not really, that was set up to guide the development of the EEA, but there will be Environmental Justice Committee up and running in 20 17.

Question: Will the same people be on the Environmental Justice (EJ) Committee as the Community Partners Steering Committee?
Answer: Potentially. Participation in the EJ Committee is through a formal process, so people have to apply. The intent is that the majority of participants will be people of color and community organizations, so there may be some participation overlap between the two groups.

Question: What about low-income white people involvement in terms of makeup of the EJ Committee? Aren't they are the ones who feel left out?
Answer: With racial justice, we can't talk about economic justice without talking about racial justice. We find that processes designed to be inclusive of people of color works for both low-income populations and people of color, but when processes are designed with just low-income consideration, the representation and concerns of people of color are left out.

Group Exercise:
Breaking into small groups, participants collaborated to answer the following two
questions:
1. What urban forestry programs are already advancing the EEA?
2. What program/policies/procedures could be improved and enhanced to advance
the EEA?

Results Group 1

What we're already doing:
- Identified communities
- Affordable housing partnerships (HALA)
- Canopy assessment in City
- Grants to Georgetown and South Park to plant trees (Dirt Corps)
- Pilot projects engaging communities adjacent to restoration areas from grant
through King Conservation District
- Street Tree ordinance and management plan

Could be improved:
- Engagement in developing programs/policies/plans
  o Lots of time
  o Lots of City programs
  o Lots of communities to engage
- Communicating value of trees and sensitive to different values of different
communities
- Better connection of HALA and urban forestry programs

Group 2:
What we're already doing:
Green Seattle Partnership – restoring forested parks citywide
- SCL urban tree replacement program – tree replacement explicitly focused on
low income/high diversity neighborhoods
- IDT tree canopy cover assessment – informs canopy cover across all
neighborhoods
- SDOT Tree Inventory – Information access for all (assuming you have a
computer and time)
- Providing documents in different languages
- P-Patch, community gardens/City Fruit partnerships and Beacon Hill Food
Forest
- SCL "Green Line" transmission ROW on Beacon Hill
- Bee City USA and pro-pollinator programs at Parks

Could be improved:
- Move Seattle
  - Tree plantings (SDOT) focused on replacement in situ rather than EEI focused explicitly
- City Urban Forestry programs could better connect with public schools to engage youth for environmental benefits across the board (mapping/jobs pipeline)
- Hiring diversity for urban forestry within City government
- Providing documents in additional languages
- Increase pro-urban forestry education/information to communities of color especially immigrant communities.
  - Involve and educate to win hearts and minds.
- Need to make street trees public property/responsibility of the City?

Group 3:
What we're already doing:
Healthy Environments:
- Parks tree planting and maintenance, SDOT tree maintenance and planting, Trees for Neighborhoods tree giveaway
- Parks development (new- gap analysis); Tree Ambassadors; Vision Zero; power line/tree maintenance; Green Seattle Partnership; environmental regulations (SDCI); land use zoning; street tree ordinance

Jobs, Local Economies and Youth
- Tree service company training

Could be improved:
- Job training, apprenticeship program for tree trimming positions
- Policy improvements: land use zoning, tree related ordinances, etc. to address inequity (enforcement)
- Communicating value of trees and understanding residents' perspectives of trees-health-environment

Group 4:
What we're already doing:
- Green Seattle Partnership (How are jobs developed?)
  - Restoration of open space across Seattle
  - Seattle Tilth and other non-profits engaged in outreach
  - Student Conservation Association – training and contracting
  - Seattle Conservation Corps
  - Goodwill Programs (2 of them)

- Antioch and Islandwood Program
  - Environmental education in underserved and environmentally compromised communities
- SCL's Urban Tree Replacement program
- Flood reconnection/riparian forest development
- Transportation investments
  - Priority projects that support underserved communities – resourcing

Could be improved:
- GSP: Recruiting/Engagement of forest stewards/volunteers in underserved areas of the city
- Urban Forestry Commission: Broaden represented communities
  - Tends to be centered around professional organizations or stakeholders
- Broader outreach efforts - central coordination needed
- RSJ Equity Toolkit
  - Myer's Way property (redevelopment proposal)
- Urban street trees in developed areas – use design criteria to maximize size and health potential.
- Smart Development
- Cultural norms in considering tree canopy target in all communities (example: feng shui)
  - Gentrification in neighborhoods
- "Get engaged" program
  - Promotion of engaging youth in local government

Racial Equity Toolkit:
Facilitator: Andrea Petzel, Broadview Planning

Discussion Notes:
The second workshop of the day was focused on moving towards operationalizing the EEA, in part through using the City's Racial Equity Toolkit. The Racial Equity Toolkit lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity.

Asked to comment on their experience applying the Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) to urban forestry programs, participants responded:

- This is the right process, but it depends on the program and what we are trying to do. It's useful because it might positively affects the end result of the program.

- When I took on applying the RET to the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan update I learned that outreach and engagement are very different. I used to think of them as the same. When we do outreach we come to the community with something already 'baked' and ask them for their input. Doing engagement is coming to the community BEFORE we create a policy or a plan and involve them so that they help create the product and express their needs and desires along the way. Then, City staff would put together a product. I realized I did not do any engagement for the last update of the Urban Forestry Stewardship Plan (UFSP). Once we have applied the RET, then it will important to get funding to do inclusive engagement for communities of color, immigrant, refugee and low-income residents to actively participate and provide input to help shape policies, strategies and actions in the UFSP. Things like providing childcare to support participation would be necessary.
- As Sudha said, nine months of engagement is too short a process. The toolkit comes in after the program is pretty much set. The ability to do outreach hand engagement has passed. Decisions about the program have already been made. The challenge with the toolkit is whether or not the department is really ready to relinquish control of the program. Also, look around who is in the office: white, highly educated, men. Even if they try, they can try and do the equity analysis but they don't have the perspective. What is the City willing to do about this?
- It sometimes feels like the RSJI effort is to get minority groups to advocate for City programs and make it easy to meet our goals. It might be going through a checklist now but on the other side there are true benefits for these communities.
- Are there resources and support? It depends on the department. Katie is working on stakeholder's analysis and working with the SPU team that knows the subject.
- Trying to work with cross-representational teams.
- Sometimes Parks is considered to be the bad guy if the use pesticide or other tools that have some negative effects. As professional experts working on the management of important resources, we know all about RSJI by what we are doing every day in terms of urban forestry. It feels weird in tis applicability to urban forestry related programs. Isn't' that what we do and why we exist? To make sure we are connecting different deliverables to our residents.
- We need to strike a balance between looking at the reasons for a program and listen to the community and engaging in back and forth. The community doesn't necessarily have to have the final say but there should be communication.

Group Exercise
The group then broke into four smaller groups to brainstorm innovative ways on how to connect and advance urban forestry and social equity goals. Groups came up with the following responses:

Group 1:
- Plant evergreens around police stations and share research on calming effect
- Advance GSP restoration efforts on private property
- Reduce energy costs in schools
- Strong non-profits analyze asthma and targets high asthma neighborhoods with plantings
- Funding to reduce CSO through increased tree planting on impervious surfaces
- Fruit tree stewardship – City Fruit gleaning in disadvantaged neighborhoods
- Full engagement leads to universal stewardship
- More trees will reduce crime
- Trees increase IQ and without power lines there will be more and bigger trees
- Cost for sidewalks will create jobs with equitable pay
- Pedestrian and bike connections through fully restored unimproved ROW
- Next generation forest stewards = diverse leaders

Group 2:
- Healthy forests/healthy communities
- Treed streets without power lines provide safe, calming avenues/access to save schools
- Integrated community out of work/live/school/ - like Junior Achievement
- Food forests/P-Patches
- Fruit trees in the greenways
- Revise Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) policy for the City (Council supports)

Group 3
- Volunteer opportunities met the needs and provide opportunity for all communities
- Early urban forestry education leading to a more diverse urban forestry workforce
- More diverse urban forestry workforce = more equitable urban forestry outcomes
- Removing invasive species from public natural areas will improve green space access
- Targeted employment programs for planting street tress in targeted neighborhoods
- Utilize the stewardship ethic to assure each community adequate housing for its diverse residents

<u>Group 4</u>
- Policies need to be flexible to allow:
    - o Monetary aid for lower income populations for required tree maintenance
    - o Maintain existing trees
    - o Maintenance: planting of trees required with affordable housing
- Diverse incentives that are developed for specific neighborhoods
- Public transportation from all neighborhoods to parks/green space/open space/hiking trails
- Increased geographic diversity and "use type" of parks
- More, better, diverse education and outreach, including engagement with schools, business community, residential, non-profit, foundations
    - o Input on what it means to each group re: greater than 30% canopy cover
- Required urban forestry education for all elected officials