

**Organization: Horn of Africa Services**

**Targeted Community: Decedents/Immigrants of East Africa Currently Reside in Seattle**

**Report Date: 11/27/18**

### **Updated Urban Forest Management Plan: Community Engagement Report**

#### **What were your major findings?**

We found that all members of the community of immigrants or decedents of East Africa who completed the survey said they love the trees. All of them like to live where there is maximum canopy cover. We found that the community is willing to contribute their part to preserve the trees in the city. Most of them concerned about the trees in the city of Seattle, therefore, they like to be contacted by the city on an update about the trees in the city.

The major challenges we faced during the course of completing the survey was people lack of trusting the city to hear their voices, therefore, they answer questions carelessly. To overcome this problem we made a great effort to create a trust between them and the city and assure them that the city is hearing their voices. We presented to the community our previous successfully completed projects we have completed by working jointly with the city.

#### **The process of collecting information**

For this project, we have reached out to our community and recruited 50 people between the ages of 18 to 65. We have collected the information from the community through different methods in a different setting. We engaged our community in this project on the basis of one-on-one outreach, by going from door-to-door, by having the participants come to our office in person, and by meeting participant's community gatherings. We initiated conversation with community members regarding the trees in the city of Seattle. Participants of this project were mainly Afan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrigna, and Somali speaking community. The participants were encouraged to ask asked and answered questions regarding the trees in the city. Then we let them complete the focus community survey questions. 80% of the participants completed the survey questions them self, whereas 20% of the participants were helped by HOAS staffs to fill the survey question by writing their responses without changing their ideas, suggestion and believe.

## **Analysis of the Community Response:**

From analyzing the responses to the focus questions, we have listed the most repeated responses.

### **1. *Why are trees in Seattle important to you?***

The community responded that the trees in the city of Seattle help them in the following ways; They provide oxygen, for beauty, protect soil from erosion, decrease the power of dangerous wind, refresh air, environmental stability, create green view, attract rain, decrease pollution, protect nature, provide shade for summer season, house for birds, place to rest, support life, create healthy environment, for adventure, contribute to water quality, good for site, for nutrition, home of wildlife, balance the ecosystem.

### **2. *What trees issues do you think the city should address? What should the city's highest priorities around the trees be?***

*According what we have learned from the community the city's priorities are:*

- Removing or trimming trees that is: blocking the traffic light, blocking the sight on the driveways, blocking the sidewalks and very old trees in a timely manner.
- Clean fallen leaves, and trim them in a considerable amount of time. To reduce the damage they cause by falling on property the community needs the city to limits the height of the trees in the city except those in parks.
- Create awareness on the current rule and regulations regarding the trees in the city boundary.
- Inform the community what exactly is illegal tree cutting is, and where to report if they encounter with such an issue.
- Make it clear if trees contacted electric wires are safe, or if the community needs to be more cautious when they see trees contacted with the electric wires.
- Plant more trees and support homeowners and landlords who have trees in their privately owned lands to keep their trees and plant more.

- Have trees planted in the areas where we have low canopy cover.
- Make awareness in the public regarding the uses and importance of the trees.

**3. What are important goals we should set or actions we should take?**

- Protect trees existing trees, and plant more trees to create uniform canopy cover throughout the city.
- Educate the community and make rules and regulations clear to the public. Limit the number of trees to be cut in a certain period of time and enforcing the replacements of those trees.
- Encourage cutting only as few trees possible from construction sites.
- Preserve endogenous trees, increases the community engagement, both in short term and long term plan you have on the trees.

**4. *Do you have direct control of any trees in a yard around your home, if so what would convince you to plant more trees/keep the trees you have? Do you own or rent your home?***

87.5% of the participants rent their home and have no direct control of any tree. 12.5% of the participants own their home and have control of their own trees. Tree owners reported that they mainly concern liability they have to take if the trees they owned create damage to people, public or private properties. The tree owners responded that they would likely keep their trees and plant more if they gate promotions such as tax deduction, depending on the number of trees they have.

**5. How can the city better communicate with you around tree issues?**

The community responded that the city can communicate to them through public events, social media, text, email, monthly news latter, and translated brochures. Email communication was the popularly preferred method of communication.

**6. *Do you want to see a draft of the plan when it comes out in 2019?***

88% of the participants need to see the 2019 plan when it comes, whereas 22% do not want to see the plan.

## **7. Demographic questions**

Here is the age distribution of the participants:

≤18%=0%, 18-34=43%, 34-35=48%, 35-64=8%, ≥65=0. 88% of the participants are first generation immigrants, whereas 12% second generation.

Based on what we have heard from the community: We highly recommend the city to take action to inform the community the rules and regulations the city has in place regarding the trees in the city limit. Plant more trees to create uniform canopy cover throughout the city. The city is better to keep the community involved in planning for the future. Specifically, our community showed their willingness to be participated in the future project on the trees.

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