Trees as a tool for equity

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Background | Important (if irrelevant)

Momo

Scout
Background | Urbanization and Hydrology

Before development, soil and plants absorbed rain

Development disconnected rain from natural systems
Environmental Services Tree Program (ESTP)

- Our work: outreach, education, planting, establishment pruning, technical support, monitoring

- **Strong reliance on partnerships** with public partners, community groups, property owners, and volunteers

- Planted over 45,000 trees with partners in the built environment over the past nine years. Wow!

- **Focus (not exclusive):** low-tree canopy, low-income, racially diverse communities
Equity Framework

- **Office of Equity and Human Rights**
  - Title VI compliance
  - Citywide Racial Equity Goals and Strategies

- **City Plans**
  - Portland Plan (2012) equity framework
  - Climate Action Plan (2015)
  - 2035 Comprehensive Plan (2016 early implementation)

- **Environmental Services Plans**
  - Equity Action Plan (2016)
  - Strategic Plan (2017)

- **Environmental Services Tree Program Five-Year Strategy**
  - Plant trees to improve stormwater management, mitigate urban heat island effect, and narrow the gap in urban forest benefits received by all Portlanders

ESTP | How we focus our work WRT equity

• **Extensive**—focus our service delivery in low-tree-canopy, low-income, racially diverse neighborhoods

• **Intensive**—develop partnerships with organizations and individuals who help us achieve our equity goals
  • Friends of Trees
  • Confluence Environmental Center AmeriCorps
  • Community Coalitions (e.g., Jade Greening)
  • Community Benefit Organizations
Equity Geographies (Neighborhoods)

- **Low-canopy**: <25% tree canopy cover in residential areas (Metro 2014 1 m LiDAR)
- **Low-income**: proportion of households earning ≤80% MFI is greater than the citywide average (41%)(ACS 2009-2013)
- **Communities of Color**: proportion of population who identified as “not white alone” is greater than the citywide average (27.6%)(ACS 2009-13)

- # trees planted/year ranges from ~2,200-6,700
- Average 75% within focus
- Year 1 (67%)
- Years 2, 5, 6 (79%)

Trees planted within (green) and outside (orange) equity geographies

- **2016-17**: 76%
- **2015-16**: 70%
- **2014-15**: 73%
- **2013-14**: 79%
- **2012-13**: 79%
- **2011-12**: 75%
- **2010-11**: 70%
- **2009-10**: 79%
- **2008-09**: 67%

**First year of new community contract**

**Extra focus in east Portland neighborhoods (free trees)**

**First door-to-door canvass; ODOT**

**No canvass; no equity focus**

75%
Confluence Environmental Center | AmeriCorps

• Since 2011

• Build relationships

• Make focused investments

**Ponderosa Pine/el Pino Ponderosa**

*Pinus ponderosa*

~NATIVO A PORTLAND~

¿Cómo reconozco qué árbol es?

**Tipo:** conífera con hojas perennes

**Hojas:** agujas, 10” de largo, en grupos de tres

**Piñas:** morado-roja-marrón, 4” de largo

**Corteza:** Los árboles maduros tiene placas distintivas de amarillo o color canela

**Talla Maduro:** 60’-100’ de altura

Piñones y agujas maduro.

Foto de: http://oregonstate.edu/dept/idplants/

Región Natural: el oeste de los Estados Unidos
Jade Greening Coalition | Jade Green Team

- Improve air quality, transportation safety, and livability in the greater Jade District
- Oregon Solutions and Declaration of Cooperation
- “Green” partners meet quarterly to collaborate and support one another
  - Shared outreach tools: Multi-lingual “breathe” tree tag
  - Joint events: tree planting, tree walks
  - Translation and canvassing help from Jade partners, APANO
Friends of Trees | Community Trees Contract

• Planting trees since 1990s
• 2008-2016—first large contract with BES
  • 32,400 trees planted
  • Young tree structural pruning
  • Monitoring protocol
• 2016-present—first equity-focused contract
RFP Development | Building a Better Tool

GOAL: five more years of community education, tree planting, and tree establishment:

✓ Include equity metrics (data)
✓ Increase investment in green jobs
✓ Involve community
✓ Focus on program goals:
  • Plant to manage stormwater where it falls,
  • Plant to mitigate urban heat island and improve human health outcomes, and
  • Offer services equitably to Portland residents—focus on low-canopy, low-income, racially diverse communities with vulnerable populations
GOAL: five more years of community education, tree planting, and tree establishment:

✓ Develop and implement an **equitable outreach strategy**
  • Outreach/education plan includes working with 6 CBOs to provide youth internship and leadership opportunities and to invest in culturally relevant community engagement (focus groups, community meetings, multi-lingual outreach materials)

✓ Engage with and involve leaders of communities of color, faith groups, and organizations that serve communities in **historically underserved areas**
  • 33% of outreach budget for CBOs

✓ Report on progress in meeting **equity goals**
  • 75% service delivery in equity geographies;
New Equity-Focused Contract | Early Achievements

- Education and Outreach Plan incorporates feedback from communities and work plans for CBOs
- Plan elements:
  - Door-to-door canvass, advertisements, direct mailings, follow-up
  - Focus group conversations and strategy development
  - Youth leadership program expansion
  - School-based education and outreach
  - Community meetings and cultural events
  - Outreach materials translation
New Equity-Focused Contract | Early Achievements

- Door-to-door canvass and follow up
  - 43 neighborhoods (88% equity focus); over 90,000 properties
- Latino focus group conversation and proposal for strategy development
  - Culturally relevant outreach and recruitment
- Youth leadership program expansion
  - Leadership training and opportunities
- Jade Greening collaboration with multiple partners
  - Oregon Solutions collaboration to support greater Jade District improvements

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Can Equity Metrics Help Achieve Equity Goals?

• Yes! Only 2/3 of trees planted where most needed without equity focus

Contract Tools

• Minimum 75% service delivery in equity geographies (e.g., canvassing, planting, structural pruning)

• Resources for community benefit organizations (~$275K/5 years)

Community Partnerships (a few examples)

• Jade Greening Coalition (7-fold increase in signups with APANO)

• Confluence Environmental Center | AmeriCorps

• People.Places.Things. and Excursion Learning Activities
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*Pinus ponderosa*

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Questions?