**CORVALLIS SUSTAINABILITY COALITION**

**Equity Impact Assessment (12/09/20)**  
**Proposed Project: CIAT/NAAT Collaboration   
Tree Planting in Low-income Neighborhoods**

Present:   
**Community Inclusion Action Team:** Johannah Hamilton, Jim Stratton, Annette Mills, Mike Beilstein, Emily Bowling, Aleita Hass-Holcombe, Ruth Johns, Maura Paxton, Jason Seivers  
**Natural Areas Action Team:** Lauren Merrill, Molly Monroe, Amy Becker, Suzanne Ortiz

1. Identifying stakeholders

* Low-income residents
* Renters and homeowners
* Neighbors
* Landlords
* Tree Stewards/City of Corvallis
* CIAT and NAAT members

1. Engaging stakeholders

* Person-to-person (knocking on doors)
* Flyers
* Neighborhood associations
* Social media, including Next Door
* Jennifer Killian/City of Corvallis (to engage Tree Stewards)
* CIAT and NAAT Google groups

1. Identifying/documenting inequities

* Heat island effect from lack of tree cover
* Unhealthful air quality
* Poor livability; i.e., neighborhood is less attractive and less walkable due to lack of trees
* Need to identify eligible neighborhoods
  + Contact Peter Banwarth (Benton County Health Dept.) to identify low-income areas
  + Work with Jennifer Killian (City of Corvallis) to determine whether green strip between sidewalk and street meets tree-planting criteria
* What about neighborhoods that don’t have sidewalks or don’t meet the City’s physical criteria? How will we address their need for tree cover? People in these neighborhoods may have more health problems.

1. Examining causes

* Lack of planting spaces; lack of funds to plant and maintain trees
* Our focus needs to be on leveling the playing field so everyone benefits from having tree canopy, even if their neighborhoods don’t meet the City’s criteria for street trees.
* Street trees through the City are free to the residents; the homeowner/renter doesn’t have to pay for them.

1. Clarifying the purpose

* Our goals are to promote healthier neighborhoods through cleaner air and fewer heat islands and to improve the health of people living in tree “deserts”.
* We want to engage in dialogue with low-income residents.
* We want to create a sense of equality by making pleasant urban environments for everyone.
* This is an opportunity for civic engagement.
* This project may be the first phase of other projects to improve neighborhood livability (e.g., pocket parks).
* To be inclusive, we need to address what to do about neighborhoods that don’t meet the City’s criteria or that don’t have sidewalks.

1. Considering adverse impacts

* Does the presence of trees contribute to wildfires?
* We need an educational component (flyers, social media, etc.).
* What if demand exceeds supply? We need to find out how many trees the City will supply.
* What about maintenance after the trees are planted? If the residents are excited, then landlords might pay for maintenance.

1. Advancing equitable impacts

* Result of the project will be more shade, lower electricity bills in the summer.
* Simply having greenery around makes you feel cooler.
* Even if the trees aren’t at their maximum height, people will get some benefit.
* Reflection of the sun off trees is better than off of pavement.
* Trees will help filter the air for people who historically have poorer health.

1. Examining alternatives or improvements

* Include flyers in Spanish and other languages
* Invite neighbors to participate in the process
* Work with Tracy Ullman (City of Corvallis) and the neighborhood associations.
* Rebecka Weinsteiger (Tunison Neighborhood Association) is another good contact.
* When we put together our proposal and identify areas, we need to reach out to people and get them involved early in the process.
* Ask neighbors to indicate their interest in the process - the types of trees they’d prefer, placement, their level and type of participation, etc.
* This should not be about Coalition volunteers going into neighborhoods and “doing to or for” the neighbors.

1. Ensuring viability and sustainability

* The project can be funded through a combination of City and Coalition funds.
* This year is a good time to look for outside support (i.e., donations).
* Data collection will include # of volunteers, # of neighbors, # of trees.
* After each planting event, ask neighbors for feedback on the process.
* There’s a website that shows all the trees in Corvallis.

1. Identifying success indicators

* Letters to the editor
* “Roses & Raspberries” in the Corvallis *Gazette-Times*
* People in the neighborhoods are happy with the outcome.
* Looking long-term, measure changes in ambient air temperature.