

Name		Organization	
Goal			
<i>Every community member is surrounded by and connected to nature, parks, and green infrastructure.</i>			
Description			
Connecting everyone to nature isn't just about recreation; it's about building healthy, resilient communities that thrive in a changing climate. Green spaces are powerful tools for climate action. Trees and open spaces act as nature's filtration system, cleaning our air and water. They combat the urban heat island effect, keeping our neighborhoods cooler. By ensuring everyone has access to nature, we empower communities to address climate change, foster connection to the natural world and create a more sustainable future for all. According to the 2023 Multnomah County Environmental Justice Snapshot report, average tree canopy cover is significantly greater in areas home to primarily white people compared to areas primarily home to communities of Black, Indigenous and other people of color. Tree canopy cover in the areas home to the largest shares of communities of color is also significantly lower than the average tree canopy cover of the county. Since trees are linked to health outcomes like birth weight, and beneficial environmental benefits like cooler temperatures during a heat wave, the lack of tree cover in certain parts of Multnomah County is a glaring example of an existing environmental injustice. Beyond trees, access to parks and green space is vital to communal and individual well-being. While access to parks and natural areas is relatively well distributed in Multnomah County, access can be hampered if people don't feel safe traveling to a park because of dangerous streets or public safety concerns. Parks may also lack amenities that people want to use, like splash pads, seating, shade and playgrounds. School yards and playgrounds often lack shade, which makes accessing these resources on a hot day unpleasant and potentially dangerous. A community where everyone feels welcome and safe in their neighborhood park is a healthy community. Moreover, trees, parks and natural areas are also vital for birds, insects and other wildlife that call the urban areas of the County home. The health of the ecosystem is also tied to human health.			
Metrics		Notes	
Tree canopy increases overall and elimination of tree canopy disparity			
Proximity to park or natural area (EJ Snapshot)			
Percentage of people who feel safe and comfortable accessing and using their neighborhood park			
Percentage of people who feel safe letting a child in their care walk to a nearby park			

Strategies	Description
Prioritize street improvements adjacent to parks to increase safe access to parks for pedestrians, especially children (fare-free transit park passes for all Multnomah County parks). <i>Type of action: Advocacy</i>	Do you feel safe letting your kids cross the street by themselves so they can get to the park? Through investments and deliberate decisions, parks and natural areas are well distributed throughout Multnomah County. However, access can be hampered because of busy streets and a lack of safe crossings for pedestrians, especially children. Local governments should make it a priority to invest in safe and convenient access to parks, especially in East County.
Identify parks in greatest need of investment based on existing amenities and demographic characteristics of the surrounding community, and work to increase funding to develop and maintain parks in communities with the least access to quality parks and green space. <i>Type of action: Create/fund program</i>	Not all parks and green spaces are created equal. Amenities like good walking paths that are well-lit at night, playgrounds, exercise equipment, playing fields, shade and other amenities that people want for their parks are important. These amenities can mean the difference between a well-used park and a space that is avoided because it does not feel safe. City and Metro park departments have long-term strategic plans. Multnomah County should prioritize the implementation of the Vance Vision project, including the development of park amenities for Vance Park.
Establish community orchards in communities with high proportions of BIPOC residents. <i>Type of action: Mutual Aid; Governance/Third space</i>	Fruit and nut orchards are powerful tools used throughout human history to address food insecurity. Taking advantage of our region's favorable climate for fruit and nut production can help communities grow their own food and foster connections with neighbors and nature. Community-based organizations, community anchors like schools and churches, and other institutions can team up to create a network of community orchards that are planted and tended by the community.
Plant trees east of 82nd Avenue. <i>Type of action: Advocacy; Create/fund program</i>	Planting and maintaining street trees should be considered vital urban infrastructure, just like sidewalks and streetlights. Unique challenges to street tree planting exist in neighborhoods east of 82nd Avenue. For example, many streets lack sidewalks or a well-defined planting strip for trees — in other words, basic urban infrastructure. Sustained investment and innovation are needed to overcome these challenges. Cities need to prioritize urban infrastructure development and development standards that require tree planting with good infrastructure like adequately sized planting strips in addition to sustained tree planting programs.
Fund pavement removal and tree planting in heat island areas. <i>Type of action: Governance/Third space</i>	Multnomah County has identified neighborhoods that get the hottest in the summer because of pavement, concrete, and rooftops combined with a lack of shade. Removing pavement and planting trees and other greenery can be a powerful intervention for cooling the surrounding area. Multnomah County should identify heat islands, and cities should prioritize interventions that will reduce the heat island effect.
Create solar panels shade structures. <i>Type of action: Governance/Third space</i>	To accomplish several goals at once, installing stand alone solar panel structures can both create shade and provide renewable energy. Cities and Multnomah County should look for opportunities to experiment with combining shade infrastructure with solar, especially community solar that can benefit local residents.
Create more tree shade at bus stops and playgrounds. <i>Type of action: Create/fund program</i>	Shade is becoming more important because of increasing summer temperatures. Many bus stops lack shelter, let alone shade. Many playgrounds also lack shade, making them inaccessible during the hottest times of the year. Strategically investing in tree planting to provide shade that benefits community assets like playgrounds and bus stops should be a priority for cities, especially in partnership with TriMet for bus shelters. This should also include care and support of newly planted trees.

Notes