

Improving Tree Canopy for Climate Resilience



South San Francisco, California

Project Team: Coastal Quest, Rise South City, City of South San Francisco

Funding Amount: \$95,000



Project Summary

This project aims to increase urban canopy tree coverage to combat urban heat island effects and poor air quality impacting residents of South San Francisco. This community faces multiple increasing hazards related to climate change and proximity to urban and industrial activities. The project team sought to increase collaboration and community-based decision making for implementing a tree canopy pilot project that was focused on and responsive to the needs and priorities of vulnerable South San Francisco residents. Trees were planted by community work parties and provided to and planted by individual residents. As a result of this work, the partners have successfully pursued funding to continue and expand on this partnership to address climate vulnerabilities in South San Francisco through education, community engagement, and additional tree canopy improvements.

Project Goals



Increase tree canopy coverage in South San Francisco, focusing on locations with communities vulnerable to climate risks



Engage with historically vulnerable communities on climate resilience solutions



Create a replicable framework for climate resilience implementation to continue and scale this work



Trees not only improve our neighborhoods but improve the quality of our physical and mental health. Your program is extremely valuable at a time when we need it most.

- Lizette, South San Francisco Resident and Free Tree Recipient

Project Timeline

Months 1-6

Education and outreach, building collaborative relationships, centering community needs

Months 6-9

Tree planting parties and community outreach

Months 9-12

Distribute trees, continue building relationships

Additional Collaborators

UC Davis – Partner on a proposal to monitor health impacts of increased green space through tree planting

Rotary Club of South San Francisco - Supports tree delivery to residents and assists with volunteer events

Community Challenges



Vulnerable Community

Residents face language barriers and limited resources to address climate-driven vulnerabilities including heat and poor air quality



Poor Air Quality

From industrial/highway setting, exacerbated by hotter temperatures and more extreme heat days



Low Tree Canopy Cover

Community has on average <9% canopy cover but their forest master plan indicates they can achieve >22%

Project Approach

To engage historically underrepresented groups and ensure that the project is implemented in a way that centers community needs while improving tree canopy cover, the project team used the following approaches:

- ★ Providing culturally and linguistically relevant outreach for Spanish-speaking and English-Speaking residents and meeting them in their communities at events like farmer's markets and placing flyers at local businesses.
- ★ Hosting a centrally located, visible tree planting work party to generate community interest and demonstrate success through action.
- ★ Increasing capacity for collaboration between the the City of South San Francisco and community organizations by creating regular meetings between stakeholders and collaborating to implement the pilot tree program.



Impact

- ✓ Strengthened collaboration between the the City of South San Francisco, residents, and community organizations to build long-term program capacity.
- ✓ Engaged residents directly through tree giveaways and work parties, centering their input in planting decisions.
- ✓ Secured new partnerships and funding to continue and expand the program beyond its initial year.

Next Steps

- Continue to implement tree planting in ways that center equity and align with the community's Forest Master Plan.
- Expand and scale this work with funding for an arborist and continued implementation of the program.
- Build on the relationships developed between the the City of South San Francisco, community organizations, and residents to grow the capacity for and interest in this work.

More Information:

 <https://www.ssf.net/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Parks-and-Recreation-Facility-Projects/Free-Tree-Program>

 <https://www.risesouthcity.org/s-projects-side-by-side>