



SUFC STRATEGIC PLAN 2016

Mission

We convene and mobilize a network of diverse national organizations to foster thriving communities through healthy urban and community forests.

Value Proposition

The Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition (SUFC) holds the common belief that thriving, vibrant communities grow from healthy natural systems. SUFC serves as a unifying and amplifying voice to speak up for policies, research, education and technologies that promote resilient urban and community forests. SUFC's value lies in leveraging the collective breadth and depth of our members' programs and expanding the network of urban and community forest advocates. Our members each operate unique and successful programs; they serve as the hub for grassroots networks that reach down into communities nationwide. SUFC provides a unified, science-based voice on key urban forestry issues – the catalyst for success now and in the future. SUFC members and partners join or support SUFC for the unique relationship building and collaborative opportunities it creates.

SUFC Focus Areas:

LEVERAGING OUR NETWORK

RECOMMENDATION 1:

SUFC will create the support structures to facilitate pro-active networking and collaboration on common topics by interested SUFC members.

- o This networking is in four inter-related areas: (1) attracting joint funding for members, (2) developing joint member programs, (3) providing education, and (4) endorsing each other's (and SUFC's) initiatives.
- o SUFC will identify a specific topic of common interest and support a pilot effort to explore pro-active networking facilitation.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

SUFC will facilitate collaborative efforts with and among members for grant opportunities. SUFC has two roles:

- o Develop the guidelines, protocols, and infrastructure to facilitate collaborative efforts among its members AND
- o Participate directly or indirectly (through member organizations) as a grant applicant when the potential funding will either support SUFC's operations or advocacy efforts.

POLICY

RECOMMENDATION 3:

SUFC will better educate its members to:

- o Demonstrate how advocacy applies to urban and community forestry principles;
- o Clarify and justify funding (if any) that is expected to go to urban and community forestry; and
- o Ensure SUFC members understand and support reasons for endorsing legislation or appropriations.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

The SUFC Policy Working Group will develop its advocacy platform and annual priorities via a transparent and consensus-driven process that reflects members' priorities as they align with urban and community forestry interests.

- o The advocacy platform will address legislation, appropriations, national initiatives/opportunities, and federal agencies' policies and priorities.
- o SUFC will work to align itself with other national coalitions which overlap with aspects of the advocacy platform (e.g., healthy communities) to strengthen its voice.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

SUFC will engage Congressional delegations in a strategic and ongoing manner to advance the SUFC policy platform, including:

- o Developing a Congressional strategy to leverage SUFC members' strengths, connections, and locations.
- o SUFC members and Steering Committee members taking an active role in visiting the Hill throughout the year, advocating for the SUFC platform.
- o Utilizing SUFC members (and their constituencies) to target key Congressional delegations in their home state as well as in DC.
- o Developing timely and appropriate tools (talking points, policy papers etc.) and access to the tools (keeping website current) to support SUFC member advocacy efforts and for Congressional staff.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

SUFC will develop productive relationships with multiple federal agencies in addition to the USDA and the Forest Service (e.g., EPA, DOI, HUD) to integrate urban forests into the agencies' agendas (e.g., promoting healthy communities).

URBAN FORESTRY SCIENCE DELIVERY NETWORK

RECOMMENDATION 7:

SUFC will develop the concept of a national science delivery framework for urban and community forestry through the Urban Research Working Group.

- o The Urban Research Working Group, in coordination with the Policy Working Group, will take the lead in developing and championing the concept of this framework. It is not recommended that SUFC develop the framework but rather stimulate the framework's development.

DIVERSIFYING FUNDING

RECOMMENDATION 8:

SUFC will create a dedicated working group focused on diversifying funding to support its operations, advocacy work, and other priorities.

- o As part of its membership, this dedicated working group will: (1) have representatives from the private sector, and (2) tap the development expertise of SUFC member organizations, even requesting that development staff serve on this working group.
- o SUFC will focus its funding diversification efforts on private-sector partnerships/sponsorships and foundations.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

SUFC will aggressively pursue private sector partnerships and sponsorships.

- o SUFC will not develop any hard-and-fast criteria for pursuing and accepting strategic partnerships or sponsorships. Rather, it should stay true to its consensus orientation by developing a process whereby members provide guidance.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

SUFC will leverage its members' development capacities to build relationships with foundations and attract grants to support its operations and/or advocacy work.

- o Directly educate members' development departments and provide talking points around SUFC's purpose, value, (including how SUFC helps its members achieve their goals), and development goals (i.e., supporting SUFC's operations and advocacy).
- o Request that members' executive directors (or SUFC member representative) have their development staff identify grant opportunities appropriate for SUFC and build the supporting mechanisms so that members' development departments can easily share potential opportunities.

COMMUNICATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 11:

SUFC will evaluate and develop communications tools to better support the needs of the Coalition as a whole and to foster proactive networking and advocacy efforts among its members.

- o SUFC will prioritize the evaluation and redevelopment of its current website so that it features information to support member networking to: (1) provide, collect and share relevant organizational capabilities and expertise, (2) share grant opportunities, presentations, and letters of support, etc., and (3) create an online workspace (via an intranet structure).
- o Further, SUFC should ensure the appropriate level of operational and maintenance support for the website and content, including updates from members and partners.

RECOMMENDATION 12:

SUFC will develop a targeted communication strategy and supporting processes, appropriately resourced, to successfully implement the initiatives outlined in the strategic plan.

- o To ensure coordination between the Working Groups, SUFC will establish a planning calendar whereby Working Groups will share their annual goals and needs.
- o In keeping with its nimble orientation, SUFC will continue to seek opportunities to promote networking of members and the urban forestry community. The Strategic Engagement/Communications Working Group will develop strategies to facilitate these opportunities.
- o On an annual basis, the SUFC Director and the Strategic Engagement/Communications Working Group will prepare a plan to provide this support for Steering Committee review.