
The Shade Brigade

A Pilot Program Proposal for Old Town Chinatown An Employee Volunteer Program

Fischer and Barrett/November 1, 2017



Introduction

The *Shade Brigade Program* is an unparalleled way to engage employees in the local community. It is based on a strategy that partners with local businesses to recruit their employees as part of an EVP program and leverage their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commitment.

An Employee Volunteer Program (EVP) is defined as a planned, managed effort that seeks to motivate and enable employees to effectively serve community needs through the leadership of the employer.



Such programs boost employee morale as well as promote leadership skills. Research shows Millennials in particular “want their work and brands they support to have a sense of social purpose. Innovation is important to them...they are looking for brands that are ethical, responsible and straight talking. They are looking for employers that offer flexibility and impact...” making EVP

programs critical to recruitment and retention.



Old Town Chinatown, an urban neighborhood in the City Center, is Portland’s poorest neighborhood. It is often forgotten when it comes to implementing heat island reduction and green infrastructure programs. The Shade Brigade Program is the appropriate approach for this unique Central City neighborhood, which is home to 4,000 citizens and over 6,000 employees, both of which would benefit from a cooler urban landscape. It may also serve as a model for the four other more commercial, low income neighborhoods. It is estimated Old Town is up to 19 degrees hotter than surrounding suburban and rural areas and is an official heat island.



Why Shade Now?

Heat negatively affects the most vulnerable and is expected to increase significantly in years to come. Climate justice is now an important element of equity and social justice. Climate justice addresses the new normal of climate change in built up areas with these major benefits: reducing summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, water quality and heat-related illness and mortality.

Solutions to the problem of excessive heat include planting and maintaining healthy shade trees and installing structures to provide shade wherever possible. In addition, other prophylactic measures can be implemented, such as using light-colored concrete, white roofs, roof gardens and vegetation cover. Extensions of the sidewalk can make additional space for trees.

Phase focuses phase two structures solutions.



Phase One: Trees shade

One of the program on trees, while begins to address and infrastructures



SUMMER IN THE CITY:
HOT AND GETTING HOTTER

Trees provide shade and are key to an integrated shade solution. Trees are an “incredible way of reflecting solar radiation while at the same time decreasing the urban heat island effect.” They absorb carbon dioxide, release oxygen and fresh air, and provide a cooling effect. The Shade Brigade Program will begin with the practice of tree planting and care. In order to increase the number of trees, building owners’ employees and tenants collaborate to work with a myriad of public and private agencies to increase the size of the neighborhood tree canopy (cited as ‘extremely low’ in the recent Central City Planning process) as well as to identify other measures and structures to cool streets in this highly walkable neighborhood.

The Shade Brigade Program will give employees and participating tenants an opportunity to create and manage a team of volunteers who work in the neighborhood to address the need for shade. The Program will enlist volunteers from local businesses to work with public and private agencies to significantly reduce solar and heat radiation in the neighborhood by providing shade on the streets and byways.

The Shade Brigade Program, Phase One: Trees : Objectives and Two Stage Approach

Objective: Over a five-year period beginning in 2018, implement solutions to increase shade cover and to cool the neighborhood by an order of magnitude, in support of the Central City 2035 Plan’s objectives.

Stage One: The first stage of the Shade Brigade program is to involve businesses in sponsoring the program as part of their employee volunteer program in organizations with an existing CSR function, while the remaining organizations will be encouraged to start an employee volunteer program. By June 2018, outline objectives and strategies of the program, identify roles of volunteers, recruit 25 plus businesses, and create a pool of approximately 100 volunteers. A recruitment kit for business owners, CSR professionals, and community leaders “sells” the program by detailing the social need, benefits, and process.

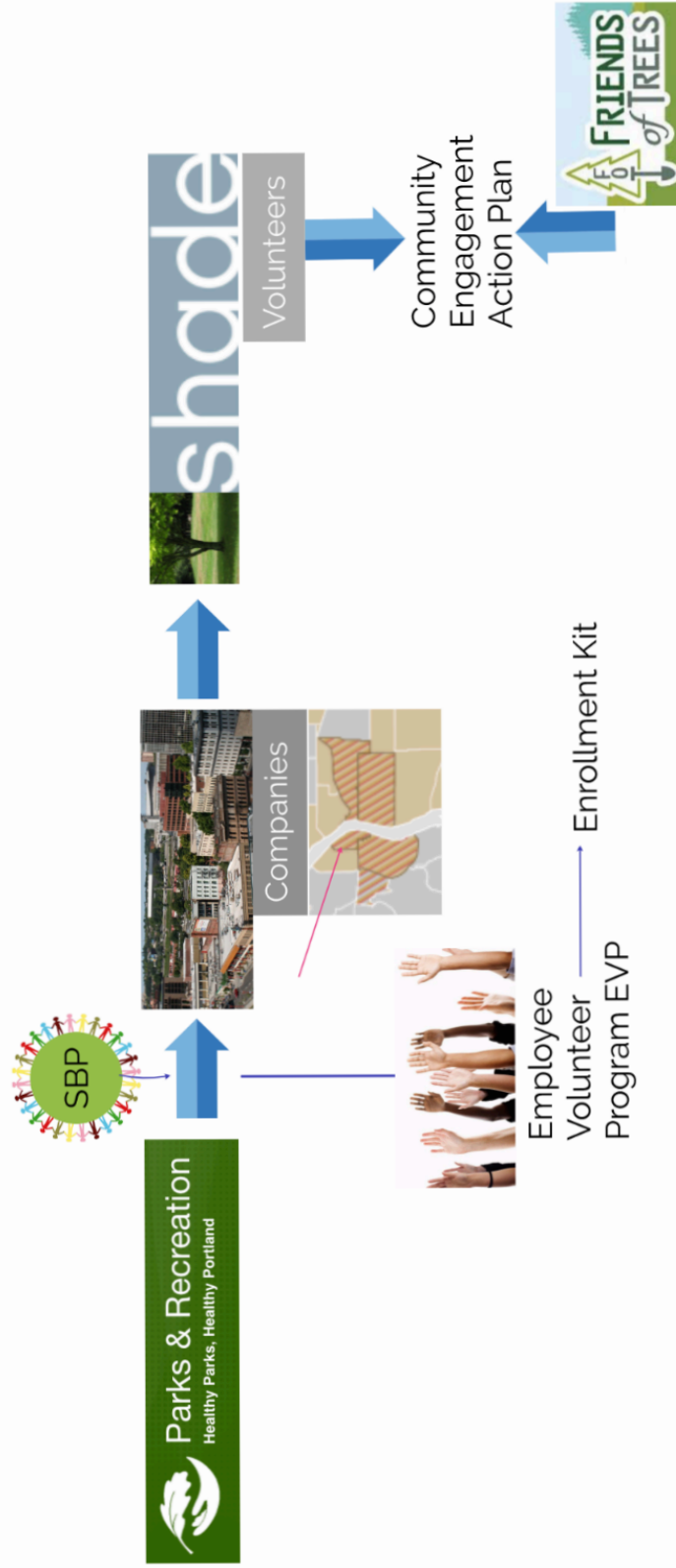
Stage Two: Beginning July 2018, organize approximately 100 volunteers and empower them to set objectives and fill volunteer positions based on their interests and skills. Such volunteer positions will include working with policy makers and planners to understand how the City works and what is needed to increase the tree canopy of the neighborhood.

The Shade Brigade Program, Phase One: Trees : Community Engagement Approach

This approach to engaging an audience is akin to a Business-to-Business (B2B) strategy as opposed to the Business-to-Consumer model (B2C) presently used by many City bureaus to recruit volunteers regardless of the type of neighborhood - urban, suburban, rural - and the income levels of residents.

Shade Brigade Program (SBP): Phase One: Trees

Community Engagement in Old Town Chinatown,
a commercial and urban landscape



K.Fischer / 2017



Trees alone are not going to adequately address the need for shade. *The The Shade Brigade Program, Phase Two: Structures and Infrastructure* further integrates tactics for addressing shade in order to meet the Central City 2035 Plan's objectives - sooner if possible.

Being strategic by addressing shade coupled with employee volunteer programs as a Shade Brigade Program works for a wide variety of tactics involving a range of government, public and private organizations while keeping everyone focused on an integrated solution for heat - shade.

Partnership + Integration + Collaboration

Katherine Fischer and Ruth Ann Barrett are digital marketers who live in Old Town Chinatown, Portland, Oregon.

This program proposal is licensed under Creative Commons. This license allows others to download this document and share with others as long as credit is given to the authors. The document can't be changed in any way or used commercially.



Attribution-NonCommercial

Resources:

Seven Practices of Effective Employee Volunteer Programs, Business 4Better, May 2013, Download [here](#).

What Is Corporate Social Responsibility?, Business News Daily, April 2017, [Article](#)

Contact Katherine Fischer at (503) 891-3828 to receive a PDF of the document.