



Hamilton Street Tree Project

Strategies to Increase Tree Uptake & Improve Community Engagement

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Introduction

In 2013, OPIRG launched the “Hamilton Street Tree Project”, a door-to-door canvassing program designed to:

- Promote the advantages of having trees in urban environments
- Encourage homeowners to take advantage of Hamilton’s free tree planting program

The project focuses on Hamilton’s Lower City neighbourhoods where a lack of street trees and poorer than average air quality persists.

The project, which has run for the past 4 years, has been highly successful. It has garnered approximately 60 new street tree requests annually, roughly 20 times the average number of requests the City’s Department of Forestry would have otherwise received.

In the fall of 2017, OPIRG requested support from McMaster’s Research Shop to provide social psychology related research to help the Street Tree Project enhance the level of community engagement and improve outcomes of its door-to-door canvassing efforts.

Methodology

A team of three student volunteers and one community member began working on the project in November 2017. The team reviewed OPIRG’s project summary and the five Yearly Project Reports for the Street Tree Project (<http://www.streettreeproject.org>).

Team members agreed to use a two-pronged approach, which included a review of literature and a survey to incorporate the first-hand experience of past student canvassers. The literature review focused on best practices related to door-to-door canvassing and included both academic and grey literature. A short, 8-question telephone survey was developed, in consultation with OPIRG, and was implemented by two team members. A total of six former students canvassers were interviewed. The survey responses were analyzed by one team member who grouped data according to theme and frequency of response (ie. one respondent, or more than one respondent). (See Appendix A for survey questions).

There were two primary limitations identified in the research process. First, team members had limited success finding relevant academic literature related to the subject matter and some of the literature was dated. Additionally, time constraints made it difficult to engage in a more comprehensive review of the literature. Second, some of the survey respondents, who worked several years ago, found it difficult to remember some of the details of the experience.

Academic Literature Findings

A cursory review of academic literature focused on the following questions that OPIRG and the Street Tree Project were interested in:

1. What role does gender play in compliance or canvassing success?
2. How can door-to-door canvassing be improved from a social-psychology perspective?
3. What/how can incentives be used to improve canvassing outcomes?

The role of gender in compliance or canvassing success

When considering the effectiveness of door-to-door canvassing, one area that OPIRG was interested in was the potential impact that the canvassers' gender had on the uptake of Street Tree referrals. According to research discussed below, there are three aspects of gender that can play a role in door-to-door canvassing: 1) different approaches used by males and females to persuade others, 2) gender-differences in message receptivity, 3) differences in how individuals respond to male or female canvassers. Awareness of the difference can help ensure that the techniques and strategies used appeal to the population.

Psychological studies have shown that men and women differ in their ability to persuade audiences and be persuaded. For instance, Andrews (1987) conducted a study on persuasive communication and found that when compared, men exhibited more confidence and their perception of their persuasion was rated higher than female participants. Men were also more likely to present their arguments based on pre-existing criteria, while women were more creative in their discussions, incorporating outside concepts more often (Andrews, 1987).

Other studies have shown that women are more easily influenced by persuasive language. A meta-analysis of 148 studies found that women are more easily persuaded and conform more often in comparison to men (Eagly 1981). In the laboratory and small-group settings, sex differences in confidence level and persuasion abilities are interpreted as outcomes of the social structure of society (Eagly 1983).

Lastly, individuals are likely to perceive men and women as safe or threatening strangers, differently. According to Björkqvist (1994), men are more often linked to physical, verbal and indirect aggression than women. In light of this research, canvassers for the Street Tree Project may consider behaviour to increase uptake by citizens. For example, based on the research findings, women canvassers may benefit from an increased level of confidence¹. Likewise,

¹ It is important to note that this research dates back to the 1980's and therefore the information may be a little dated, both in terms of the findings and the potential applicability to the Street Tree Project.

groups of canvassers should not include men only, as this may be more intimidating to the homeowners.

Improving door-to-door canvassing using social psychology

Foot in the door technique vs. Door in the face technique

There are two primary techniques used in canvassing or telephone solicitation to persuade members of the public to comply with a request: 1) foot in the door technique, and 2) door in the face technique. Foot-in-the door technique is “a gradual-persuasion technique in which an initial, modest request precedes a larger request.” (Rodafinos, Vucevic & Sideridis, 2005. p. 237). By contrast, door in the face technique involves a “large first request that the recipient will probably refuse...[followed] by a second, less costly, and more realistic request.”(Rodafinos, Vucevic & Sideridis, 2005, p. 237).

Implementing the foot-in-the-door technique for the Street Tree Project may be relatively simple and might involve asking homeowners to receive a Street Tree newsletter/brochure, sign-up for Street Tree Project email updates, or attend an information meeting/event, or even spend 5-10 minutes learning more about the project. Once the individual has shown interest in the aims of the project they may be agreeable to the larger request of signing up for a free tree.

Implementing the door-in-the-face technique might be more difficult for the Street Tree Project. According to the theory, for the door-in-the-face technique to be successful the larger request needs to be rejected before the smaller request can be asked, and the individual must perceive that there is a concession in the original request (Cialdini et al. 1975). In other words, the individual must feel that the person making the request is trying to compromise with them. As a result, the individual feels obliged to reciprocate and agrees to the smaller request (Cialdini et al. 1975). Interestingly, the smaller request does not need to be objectively “small”; the request could be quite large providing the first request is even larger (Cialdini et al. 1975, 213). The technique is considered effective because it aligns with the (Western) social norm of reciprocal concession (Cialdini et al. 1975), which may or may not be effective in more culturally diverse, non-Western communities. One suggestion for the Street Tree Project would be to ask homeowners to sign up for several trees, and then follow-up with the request to accept only one. However, this strategy may not turn out to be feasible, desirable or even effective for the Street Tree Project.

There is considerable debate in the literature about the effectiveness of each approach. According to Dillard (1991 cited in Rodafinos, Vucevic & Sideridis, 2005), when both techniques were compared separately with a control group they both increased the rate of compliance from 15% up to 25%. However, when the two techniques were compared to each other directly, door-in-the-face was more effective (Rodafinos, Vucevic & Sideridis, 2005).

Similarly, in a telephone solicitation study by Rodafinos et al., (2005) comparing the two approaches, door-in-the-face resulted in a 75% compliance rate whereas foot-in-the-door produced the same compliance rate as the control group. These findings support previous research (e.g., Cialdini et al., 1975; Harari, Mohr, & Hosey, 1980) but contradict the findings from other studies (Schwarzwald, Bizman, & Raz, 1983; Snyder & Cunningham, 1975).

A study by Millar (2010), on the effectiveness of the door-in-the-face technique with friends and strangers, found that when door-in-the-face was used by friends it produced significantly more compliance than did single requests. However, when used by strangers, the door-in-the-face technique did not produce more compliance (Millar, 2010). This finding is interesting as it suggests that it is more difficult to turn down a friend or someone that you know, than it is to turn down a stranger. Likewise, a recent study on the impact of voter campaigning showed that the impact of being contacted during the campaign is greater in areas where some canvassers were working in their own neighbourhood (Sinclair, McConnell, & Michelson, 2013). These findings also match some of the results from the survey.

Factors that promote helping behaviour

Weather & helping behaviour

According to a well-cited study by Michael Cunningham (1979), temperature can affect a person's propensity to participate in helping behaviour. Cunningham conducted two field experiments in a US town and found that people were more likely to help when it was sunnier rather than cloudier (Cunningham 1979, 1949, 1951). In addition, people helped more when there were cooler temperatures and lower humidity in the summer, and warmer temperatures in the winter (Cunningham 1979, 1951). The first experiment was conducted outdoors and asked participants to take part in an 80-question survey, with the amount of questions they were willing to answer being correlated to their perceived helpfulness (Cunningham 1979, 1949, 1954). The second experiment investigated the relationship between helpfulness and temperature in an indoor restaurant setting by looking at the amount of gratuity a waitress received (Cunningham 1979, 1952). In both outdoor and indoor settings, sunnier weather and moderate temperatures were correlated with the greatest likelihood of engaging in helping behaviour (Cunningham 1979, 1954).

Mood & helping behaviour

Mood is another factor associated with altruism or helping behaviour (Bizman, Yinin, Ronco & Schachar, 1980; Forgas, 1997, 1998; Harris & Smith, 1975; Job, 1987; Levin & Isen, 1975; Rind, 1997; Weyant, 1978 cited in Gueguen & De Gail, 2003). Various studies suggest that smiling also influences helping behaviour. In a study by Lau (1982 cited in Gueguen & De Gail, 2003), smiling subjects were considered to be more intelligent than non-smiling subjects. In

another study the smiling person received higher scores on personality traits of leadership, optimism, sincerity, and kindness (Otta, Pereira, Delavati, Pimentel & Pires, 1993 cited in Gueguen & De Gail, 2003). Smiling has also been reported to encourage helping behaviour toward the smiling person (Solomon et. al., 1981; Tidd & Lockard, 1978 cited in Gueguen & De Gail, 2003). In a more recent study, smiling by a stranger encouraged later helping behaviour towards others (Gueguen & De Gail, 2003).

The findings of these studies may have some implications for the Street Tree Project, if signing up for a free tree is considered helping behaviour. If this is the case then taking note of the weather and engaging in smiling, friendly behaviour may be useful techniques to influence the uptake of trees. Canvassers might also consider monitoring their activities to see if canvassing when it is cooler outside—such as in the early evening, and/or on days that are sunnier but not overly hot—results in an increase in tree uptake. While smiling and acting friendly is likely something that canvassers normally do, it is interesting to note that there is evidence that links smiling with helping behaviour.

Using incentives to influence behaviour

According to research by Merritt & Stubbs (2012) some people act on conviction, but many others require an incentive to act. As a result, incentives are often used to encourage specific behaviour and responses among individuals. An incentive experiment reported by Zagorsky and Rhoton (2008) showed that incentives substantially increased response rates among those who have previously refused but had a smaller impact on those who had previously cooperated. Incentives also increased the response rate on different types of surveys (Singer & Ye, 2013). Monetary incentives seem to increase response rate more than gifts, and prepaid incentives increase response rate more than promised incentives or the chance to win a prize (Singer & Ye, 2013). While the size of the incentive varied from survey to survey, as the incentives increased in size/worth, the response rate tended to increase as well. However, this occurred at a declining rate (Singer & Ye, 2013).

In a study that focused on increasing citizen engagement in environmental or green activities, small cash incentives increased the engagement of all age groups (Merritt & Stubbs, 2012). Yet, some people believe that money should not be used to encourage greater civic engagement among citizens (Merritt & Stubbs, 2012).

Providing educational information to the public can be another strategy for encouraging citizens to engage in environmental behaviour. In a project to promote green citizenship in the UK, the Dorset County Council provided a free sustainability calendar to the local community. The calendar included information about twelve key sustainability indicators to help track progress and information about practical actions that citizens could take (Merritt & Stubbs, 2012).

As the research above suggests, incentives can help to increase response rate to surveys and other community initiatives. However, a free tree may in itself be considered an incentive. Highlighting the estimated value of the free tree, and or translating other benefits, such as increased shade/cooler house temperatures in the summer, into an approximate cost savings, may be a useful strategy for the Street Tree Project. Providing a free calendar of the twelve key advantages of having more trees in the neighbourhood, along with a reminder that the City will plant a free tree, might also be a useful souvenir/incentive to provide. A calendar could be used to help educate community members on the benefits of trees and offer practical suggestions on how to encourage a greater uptake of trees in the neighbourhood.

Changing attitudes through public engagement

Although the following information about changing attitudes does not relate directly to door-to-door canvassing, the information may provide important insight about how to build local community support for the Street Tree Project.

According research that explores public opinion on energy technologies related to climate change, group interactions versus individual interactions provide a greater potential for attitude change (Pisarski & Ashworth, 2013). Groups offer a greater range of views, produce more extensive arguments, and require greater cognitive effort than individual interactions. Interestingly, the stronger the cognitive effort required to process the persuasive message, the more likely a person's attitude will change (Pisarski & Ashworth). Discussion groups encourage a stronger cognitive effort in comparison to individual thinking. Therefore, group meetings, roundtables, or educational events that encourage group discussion and engagement may prove useful for the Street Tree Project to try out.

Additionally, when community members participated in a workshop on climate change with a social scientist expert, people over 30 years old were more positive about the information provided in the workshop, and also had a more positive reaction to workshop information presented in radio format (Pisarski & Ashworth). Similarly, females held more social responsible attitudes compared to males, and were more willing to consider environmental issues, both before and after the workshop (Pisarski & Ashworth). As a result, it may be helpful to organize different types of group engagement activities with this target group in mind.

Grey Literature Findings

Door-to-door canvassing, solicitation, and sales

Several Google searches were conducted using the following three search criteria: “Best practices door-to-door canvassing”, “Best practices door-to-door soliciting”, “Best practices door-to-door sales” A number of helpful themes emerged from this search. They are as follows:

1. Limit the amount of time you spend at the door. Some articles suggested spending no more than ten minutes with a “potential customer”, while at least one said, no more than 20 minutes.
2. Door-to-door soliciting/canvassing is a numbers game. Don’t be afraid of getting told “no” at the door. Each “no” means you are closer to getting a “yes”. Timo Rein, co-founder & president of Pipedrive, a computer sales company, argues that it is important for people to feel comfortable saying “no”. He suggests that the salesperson/canvasser say something like, “.... I’ll show you what I have here, and you just let me know whether it’s something that might help you, or something that doesn’t.” That way, customers are less likely to hold off on saying “no” out of politeness. But there’s also another benefit: They’re more willing to take a serious look at the product (offer) once you’ve made them feel comfortable saying no. (Timo Rein, June 3, 2016)
3. Appearance is important! Look professional. Wear caps, vests, etc., with official logo visible. Badges with photo ID and logos are essential for putting people at ease. Being well groomed goes without saying.
4. Time of day is important. Knocking residential doors after standard 9 - 5 working hours increases chances of finding people at home. Knocking doors on weekends can be productive.
5. After knocking or ringing doorbell, take a few steps back (at least 2 feet) to be less intimidating.
6. Project confidence. Smile. Make eye contact.
7. Try using a question to stimulate conversation. After the canvasser introduces themselves they might ask, “Have you ever considered planting a tree in your front yard? Did you know that the City will plant a tree for free in your front yard?”
8. Be prepared to close the deal. Have applications ready, etc.

9. If given the opportunity inject some humour. Sara Blakely’s quote, below, about the effective use of humour is worth noting:

Sara Blakely, Founder of Spanx, “...learned that you have about 15 seconds to capture someone’s attention—but if you can make them smile or laugh, you get an extra 15 to 30.” (Blakely, April 2014)

It is recommended that the following links found in the References section of this report be reviewed as part of the training and orientation process for the canvassers:

- “5 Invaluable Sales Tips from a Former Door to Door Salesman” entrepreneur.com
- “5 Sales Tips You Can Learn from a Door to Door Salesman”, The Blog, HuffPost.com
- “How To Sell Anything Door to Door” WikiHow.com,

Language of persuasion

Finally, a quick Google search using the term “language of persuasion” resulted in an excellent find on the subject. Below is an excerpt that could prove very helpful when developing scripts or pitches. Note that the entire 3-page article is worth reading when time allows.

<https://www.bbc.com/education/guides/zpr49j6/revision/2>

Technique	Examples
Flattery - complimenting your audience.	A person of your intelligence deserves much better than this.
Opinion - a personal viewpoint often presented as if fact.	In my view , this is the best thing to have ever happened.
Hyperbole - exaggerated language used for effect.	It is simply out of this world – stunning!
Personal pronouns - ‘I’, ‘you’ and ‘we’.	You are the key to this entire idea succeeding - we will be with you all the way. I can’t thank you enough!
Imperative command – instructional language.	Get on board and join us!

Triples - three points to support an argument.	Safer streets mean comfort, reassurance and peace of mind for you, your family and your friends.
Emotive language - vocabulary to make the audience/reader feel a particular emotion.	There are thousands of animals at the mercy of our selfishness and disregard for kindness.
Statistics and figures - factual data used in a persuasive way.	80% of people agreed that this would change their community for the better.
Rhetorical question - a question which implies its own answer.	Who doesn't want success?

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/education/guides/zpr49j6/revision/2>

Survey Results

Conducting a survey among people with first-hand experience canvassing for the Street Tree Project proved to be an excellent way of gathering meaningful data that informed this report and corroborated information discovered in the literature reviews.

The OPRIG Project Coordinator, who also thought this would be a useful exercise, was able to connect the researchers with the five team leaders from 2013 through 2017 and one student volunteer who worked on the project in 2014.

Below are the main themes that emerged from the survey:

- Canvassers should approach people in a warm, friendly manner and immediately communicate that they are offering a free service and are not selling anything.
- Projecting confidence and being comfortable with the subject matter helps to increase engagement.
- Canvassers should be able to explain, in plain language, the advantages of having a tree.
- Carrying a short list of trees that are available for planting proved to be helpful in the past.
- It is essential to be prepared to answer basic objections related to a) possible property damage from trees, and b) concerns of other costs related to having a tree.

- Best times to canvass varied slightly, but all respondents agreed that late afternoon (3:30 to 4:30 PM until sundown (8:00 to 9:00 PM) were the best times to knock on doors during the week. On the weekends the best time was late morning until dinner time.
- Canvassers felt that uniforms or some kind of professional attire would likely help to put people at ease and make them more receptive.
- The Street Tree Project should find ways to recruit more volunteers in order to expand the effort.
- All respondents agreed that having canvassers from within the communities being canvassed was extremely advantageous. (See full comments in Appendix A).
- The answers to questions about gender and working in teams were less clear as these ideas were not considered at the time and so no mental notes were made. Although some female respondents mentioned they felt safer working in pairs.
- Many survey respondents also mentioned that they often encountered renters who were unable to give permission to plant trees on the property. Therefore, it would be advantageous to develop a way to reach out directly to property owners/landlords for permission (ie. getting access to homeowner contact from tax roll information through MPAC – the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation).

* See Appendix A for the list of questions along with the full transcripts of answers provided to the research team.

Conclusion

The annual Street Tree Project reports were quite comprehensive and provided the research team with considerable background information about the canvassing efforts to date. For example, some of the reports highlighted the number of doors knocked, how many requests were garnered, type of objections that were heard at the door, and solutions found to address the objections. The reports also compared various efforts and strategies used to promote the project. To date, the results clearly indicate that the most effective method of community engagement was the door-to-door canvassing effort.

When we compared the findings in the literature search with the data that emerged from the surveys, it was evident that the Street Tree Project had already learned many of the basic

principles of door-to-door canvassing/marketing and successfully implemented many of the lessons over the years. However, the research gathered in this report should help to cement and/or tweak some of the lessons learned from previous experience.

Recommendations

The following are a few recommendations for the Street Tree Project to consider, which may help to strengthen the project and, ultimately, increase the uptake of trees.

1. Activity Tracking

Canvassers should carefully note number of overall doors knocked, including specific addresses, number of people reached and whether canvassers received a yes or no. This information can then be used to track addresses where nobody was home and circle back at alternate times, in the hopes of catching more people. The project can also figure out how many doors each canvasser needs to knock to achieve a specific number of yes responses, i.e., Knocked on 75 doors, spoke with 15 people, got 3-5 people accepting the offer. Also, canvassers could arm themselves with additional info and try revisiting people who were unsure or “sitting on the fence”. It would be interesting to see if a second visit would result in more people saying yes.

2. Professional Appearance

The grey literature produced many references that addressed the issue of professional appearance. We can conclude that it would be helpful to have a hat or T-shirt, etc., with a logo of some sort and or a badge, with photo ID and logo (perhaps both the City logo and the Street Tree logo). It is thought that the badges would immediately help to put people at ease.

3. Developing the Pitch/Scripting/Role Playing

Canvassers should have the opportunity to develop their pitch and practice on each other in order to get comfortable with the material. This will help with their level of confidence, which is a central ingredient to success. Refer to the “How To” websites provided in the Reference Section, as well as data findings peppered throughout this report, for ideas that can be incorporated into these pitches/scripts.

4. Rental Properties - Reaching out to Landlords

Perhaps a landlord permission form could be generated. The form could be left with home renters who could hand it off to the appropriate person. Also, enthusiastic renters might be willing to provide their email to the canvasser. The permission form could be sent electronically, which might make it easier to follow through. Canvassers could retrieve the signed permission forms and take appropriate action. Another strategy might be to get landlord contact information

through MPAC – Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. However, there is likely a fee associated with the latter approach and privacy laws may also prohibit this idea.

5. Engage More Local Community Volunteers/Canvassers

Both the academic literature and results from the survey suggest that engaging friends or neighbours (people known to the homeowner) in canvassing can help to increase the response rate. It may be useful for the Street Tree Project to consider new strategies for engaging a greater number of local community members in door-to-door canvassing efforts.

6. Consider New/Different Community Engagement Strategies

Explore new approaches or strategies for engaging local community members in conversations, education workshops and/or group events to learn about the Street Tree Project and to discuss the importance of tree coverage in the neighbourhood. Ideas may include workshops, neighbourhood events, and/or the use of promotional material such as a Street Tree Project calendar, or radio messages.

(See Appendix B for other ‘out of the box’ community engagement ideas).

Appendix A

Survey Questions, Analysis, Transcripts

A) Survey Questions

1. What would you say were the key factors that lead to people saying “yes” during your door-to-door program?
2. What were some challenges you faced when canvassing and what steps, if any did you take to address the challenges?
3. What was more effective - knocking doors in groups (2 or 3) canvassers or having individual canvassers knock doors?
4. How did “time of day” effect results? Did you vary times?
5. 2 part question - What role if any did gender play in the success of the program? Did the outcome differ when you talked to women at the door, vs men? Did you notice whether gender of the volunteer had an impact on the outcome at the door?
6. Were any canvassers from the communities they worked in? If so, did you find it made a difference in the uptake?
7. Did you track number of doors knocked per day? If so, did you track how many no’s you heard vs. how many yes’s per day?
8. What would you do differently if given the chance to knock doors again? (interviewer could make some suggestions to encourage discussion, ie., Do you think providing a give away would help? Would wearing a uniform help?)
9. Do you have any more comments/observations to add or anything else you would like to share?

B) Survey Analysis - The following are the main themes that emerged from the survey.

Question 1 - What would you say were the key factors that lead to people saying “yes” during your door-to-door program?

Ideas mentioned two times or more:

- Let people know canvassers are offering a free service, not selling anything.
- Helped to have information on hand including pictures to show people the kinds of trees that could be planted. Mentioned twice
- Don’t over do the amount of information you show. Mentioned twice
- friendly, personable, smiling, positive attitude

Ideas mentioned one time:

- Sort list by large, medium, small

- Explaining the advantages of having a tree
- Informing people that the City would provide support i.e., trim branches
- Support from Ward 3 councillor Matthew Green was helpful during the pilot project.
- Not looking too professional
- Being prepared to address objections
- Greatest success on streets that already had a good number of trees.

Question 2 - What were some challenges you faced when canvassing and what steps, if any did you take to address the challenges?

Ideas mentioned two times or more:

- People mainly concerned about damage to underground infrastructure from roots or damage to their property or their neighbour's property do to falling branches, etc.
- Renters not able to make decision. Problems reaching decision makers (property owners/landlords)
- Low number of volunteers

Ideas mentioned one time:

- Trees could get diseases and spread disease.
- Quickly getting the message across that the service was free
- Promoted the Street Tree Project, while keeping the City out of it, as some people are put off by the City for any number of unrelated reasons.
- Canvassers need to feel comfortable in the neighbourhoods where they are working.

Question 3 - What was more effective - knocking doors in groups (2 or 3) canvassers or having individual canvassers knock doors?

- Most survey participants had little or no experience going to the door in teams and therefore had no opinion as to whether it was a good idea or not. However, one volunteer interviewed thought it was a good idea to be in teams as she felt it helped build team spirit, made it easy to have a conversation with the person they were talking to. One canvasser felt working in teams helped to make her feel safe and provided additional security. However, another canvasser felt that being more than one person at the door shortened conversations and made people feel ambushed.

Question 4 - How did "time of day" effect results? Did you vary times?

Ideas mentioned two times or more:

- All survey participants said the best time to canvass was late afternoon, earlier evening. Start times varied from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM. End times varied slightly but most were in agreement that they needed to stop around 8:00 PM although at least one participant said they worked to 9:00 PM.
- Weekends also seemed to be worth working. Times varied here too. But generally late morning, 10:00 or 11:00 AM, until dinner time, 5:00 to 6:30 PM.

- Most participants also mentioned that they needed to be sensitive about intruding noting if people were busy unloaded kids or packages, or preparing or in the middle of dinner, etc.

Question 5 - How did “time of day” effect results? Did you vary times?

- Most participants saw no difference between genders, regardless of who was doing the knocking or who was answering the door.
- Two participants noted that women were more receptive and got more excited than men.
- One participant felt that men were more receptive to female canvassers. While women seemed indifferent to gender.

Question 6 - Were any canvassers from the communities they worked in? If so, did you find it made a difference in the uptake?

- In two instances canvassers had direct positive experience working with someone from within the community. In both cases, a community member was able to change a no to a yes. Also, a third canvasser was from the neighbourhood and worked with fellow community members. She felt it had a positive effect on the outcome.
- At least one participant thought it would be a good idea but had no direct experience.

Question 7 - Did you track number of doors knocked per day? If so, did you track how many no’s you heard vs how many yes’s per day?

- Tracking varied from year to year.
 - 2013 no tracking
 - 2014 extensive tracking done. Tracked date, street address, someone home or not, whether they got a yes, or no.
 - 2015 no tracking done? Check with Randy
 - 2016 tracked number of eligible doors. Tracked positive responses.
 - 2017 tracked number of doors knocked and the respective responses

Question 8 - Do you have any further comments or recommendations to add?

The following is a list of suggestions put forth by the participants:

- possibly reward people for referrals
- A uniform might help - more than one participant thought this was a worthwhile idea
- Useful to have a clipboard
- Not sure a give away would help
- Increase number of volunteers. This issue was raised several times.
- Find a way to contact homeowners/landlords directly to let them know of the offer. This issue was raised more than once.
- GIS system would be helpful.

C) Transcript of Survey Answers

The following answers were transcribed from notes taken by the interviewer during the actual interviews and while we believe that they accurately reflect the answers provided by the interviewee they are not direct quotes.

Respondent 1 (Staff) - 2013 (Pilot)

1. What would you say were the key factors that lead to people saying “yes” during your door-to-door program?
It helped to show people the sorts of trees they could have. He started by showing them a list of trees. He then sorted the list by large, medium and small sizes and added descriptions and pictures to help people visualize their options. People were more receptive once he let them know he was not selling anything but rather making them a free service.
2. What were some challenges you faced when canvassing and what steps, if any did you take to address the challenges?
People were mainly concerned about potential damage from falling branches or trees falling on their property or their neighbour’s property.
3. What was more effective - knocking doors in groups (2 or 3) canvassers or having individual canvassers knock doors?
For the most part Jonathan was the only person working on the program, so he had no opinion on this issue. Although there was one weekend that he had some volunteers working. But he does not remember anything remarkable about that time.
4. How did “time of day” effect results? Did you vary times?
Definitely not worth knocking doors during daytime hours throughout the week. He found best time was 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM.
5. (2 part question) - What role if any did gender play in the success of the program?
 - a) Did the outcome differ when you talked to women at the door, vs men?
 - b) Did you notice whether gender of the volunteer had an impact on the outcome?In both cases he did not notice a difference.
6. Were any canvassers from the communities they worked in? If so, did you find it made a difference in the uptake? He did not have the opportunity to work with others.
7. Did you track number of doors knocked per day? If so, did you track how many no’s you heard vs how many yes’s per day? No
8. Do you have any further comments or recommendations to add?
I've thought about what I would do differently, but I honestly cannot think of anything else that I could have done to improve the outcome. In terms of a giveaway, what I can think would help would be to reward a resident for referring let's say 3 other friends/neighbours to

participate in the Street Tree program. A uniform might help, I'm not sure if the likelihood of someone opening the door or being more open to a conversation would change if someone was wearing an uniform versus if they weren't, it would definitely be interesting to investigate that question.

Respondent 2 (Staff) - 2014

1. What would you say were the key factors that lead to people saying “yes” during your door-to-door program?
Many people were already aware of the program but didn't take action until someone actually came to their door.
2. What were some challenges you faced when canvassing and what steps, if any did you take to address the challenges?
It was the year after the ice storm and many people were afraid of damage from broken branches etc. Another concern was that roots could damage water lines, sewers etc. Also, there was some concern that trees could get diseases and cause problems and perhaps cost the homeowner who had to contend with the costs related to having a tree, especially a sick one.
3. What was more effective - knocking doors in groups (2 or 3) canvassers or having individual canvassers knock doors?
She was neutral on this question.
4. How did “time of day” effect results? Did you vary times?
Definitely got better results from knocking doors between 5:30 and 9:00 on weekdays and 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekends. She did note that some people were annoyed if they were busy getting dinner ready or contending with children. But that's part of the door-to-door process.
5. (2 part question) - What role if any did gender play in the success of the program?
 - a) Did the outcome differ when you talked to women at the door vs. men?
Did not observe a difference that she could remember
 - b) Did you notice whether gender of the volunteer had an impact on the outcome?
Did not observe a difference that she could remember
6. Were any canvassers from the communities they worked in? If so, did you find it made a difference in the uptake?
Having someone from the neighbourhood knocking doors a definite advantage. In at least one case someone who had said “no” to her changed his/her mind when approached by a community member.
7. Did you track number of doors knocked per day? If so, did you track how many no's you heard vs how many yes's per day?
She remembers tracking activity with a spreadsheet with the following headings: Date,

Street address, whether someone was home or not, whether they got a “yes” or “no”. (we should revisit her report. Ask Randy if he might have the record.)

8. Do you have any further comments or recommendations to add?
I'm not sure what I'd do differently. Regarding a give-away, I don't think it would necessarily help. Getting a tree put in is a pretty big decision and most people who said no were aware of that, so I think it'd be hard to convince them with the opportunity to win something. A uniform might help, I remember some people seemed unsure of who I was - the clipboard helped me seem official when going door to door though!

Respondent 3 (Staff) - 2015

1. What would you say were the key factors that lead to people saying “yes” during your door-to-door program?
People more receptive once they knew we were offering a free service and understood that the City would provide support i.e., trimming branches. Note: Matthew Green provided support to the team, which was also very helpful.
2. What were some challenges you faced when canvassing and what steps, if any did you take to address the challenges.
Biggest challenge was having to deal with renters who were not able to make decision for property. Info was left behind but didn't think that renters took the time to pass stuff along to their landlords.
3. What was more effective - knocking doors in groups (2 or 3) canvassers or having individual canvassers knock doors?
Could not recall for sure, but didn't think there was a difference when they when there were 2 people. Definitely 3 people was too much.
4. How did “time of day” effect results? Did you vary times. Worked from 5 until sundown. Did not work on weekends.
5. (2 part question) - What role if any did gender play in the success of the program?
 - a) Did the outcome differ when you talked to women at the door, vs men?
Women were definitely more receptive, more excited. But usually consulted with their husbands/mates before committing.
 - b) Did you notice whether gender of the volunteer had an impact on the outcome?
Did not notice a difference
6. Were any canvassers from the communities they worked in? If so, did you find it made a difference in the uptake?
No canvassers from community. They tried to get people involved but were not successful.

7. Did you track number of doors knocked per day? If so, did you track how many no's you heard vs how many yes's per day? No
8. Do you have any further comments or recommendations to add?
The only recommendation was to find a way to increase number of volunteers.

Respondent 4 (Staff) - 2016

1. What would you say were the key factors that lead to people saying "yes" during your door-to-door program?
It helped to have a lot of information on hand. Each team member carried a book with all of the trees available. They found that was too much to show everything so they scaled back for the initial pitch.
2. What were some challenges you faced when canvassing and what steps, if any did you take to address the challenges?
People were concerned about root damaging water lines etc. Trees growing too high and falling on their house or damaging wires. Also, ran into lots of renters who were not able to make decision.
3. What was more effective - knocking doors in groups (2 or 3) canvassers or having individual canvassers knock doors?
Found no difference. Did work in pairs within neighbourhoods, but didn't actually knock doors together. Thought safety was an issue and she sometimes felt a bit threatened, so felt it was important to work in teams.
4. How did "time of day" effect results? Did you vary times?
Worked 5:00-ish to 8:30 weekdays. On weekends started at anywhere from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM and worked to about 6:00 PM.
5. What role if any did gender play in the success of the program?
a) Did the outcome differ when you talked to women at the door, vs men?
b) Did you notice whether gender of the volunteer had an impact on the outcome?
Could not recall a difference in either case.
6. Were any canvassers from the communities they worked in? If so, did you find it made a difference in the uptake?
Having volunteers from the community definitely helped. An example - a homeowner turned a student volunteer down. They returned to that home with a community member known by the homeowner, who was able to easily get them to change their decision and agree to a tree.
7. Did you track number of doors knocked per day? If so, did you track how many no's you heard vs how many yes's per day?
Tracked number of eligible doors. Tracked positive responses.

8. Do you have any further comments or recommendations to add?
- Find a way to contact landlords directly and let them know the many reasons to put in a tree.
 - Thought a 2nd “volunteer” coordinator from the community might be useful.
 - Getting people out to canvass was tricky. But it would help if the number of community volunteers could increase and also get out more frequently.
 - Suggested a longer timeframe for project so that more area can be covered.
 - Suggested shirts immediately identifying the project could be beneficial. The small buttons volunteers wore were not significant enough to make a difference.
 - They experimented by dropping flyers ahead of the campaign at only half the houses. They found this made no difference. On a whole, people did not take note of the flyers. However, they did leave flyers behind with people who needed time to consider before agreeing. In this case, approximately 3-4 people followed up via email with a positive response.

Respondent (Staff) - 2017

1. What would you say were the key factors that lead to people saying “yes” during your door-to-door program?
- I think the major factors that contributed to people saying yes at the door include the friendliness put forth by the volunteers, how effectively and quickly we were able to disfigure the stigma surrounding canvassers, and individual’s knocking on their door whilst holding a clipboard. If we looked less professional, it seemed to be beneficial, as we may be more personable, but perhaps this is me looking too far into it. It just seemed like when we looked as if we were outdoorsy, such as wearing baseball hats, or casual clothing, it appeared to help. Furthermore, my particular door-to-door program surrounded getting householders to plant a city tree on their front lawn, free of cost. There was greatest success on streets with a more prominent urban tree canopy than those without. Thus, if the norm on the street was to have a tree on your lawn, then more people were willing and excited to do so.
2. What were some challenges you faced when canvassing and what steps, if any did you take to address the challenges?
- Our major challenge was finding times to go out in groups, as the number of volunteers we had were limited, and as project coordinator, I had to work around their schedules. Thus, the time’s we were able to go out as groups were not as long in duration, or as frequent as they could have been, and occurred at times that may have contributed to a lack of requests (i.e. in the afternoon when many householders were not home). Another major challenge was trying to disfigure the stigma many householders instinctively experience towards individuals knocking on their door with clipboard in hand. The quicker, and more efficiently we were able to convey that we had something to offer them, as opposed to sell them or manipulate them into being interested in, the more effective our canvassing was.

We tried to advertise the name of the project as much as possible, in visible and verbal ways. Furthermore, we tried to separate ourselves from the city, even though we were promoting a city program. This is because City associates are likely to threaten the householders, whereas simply being a young adult, who presents themselves as very friendly and personable, is easier to converse with, and listen to without automatically assuming the worst – if that makes sense.

3. What was more effective - knocking doors in groups (2 or 3) canvassers or having individual canvassers knock doors?

It was more effective to knock individually. When householders saw an additional person on their steps, or their front walkways, there was almost a shortened time limit on the conversation. It seemed to make the householders feel rushed and ambushed, as inferred from their responses and body language. They were quicker to end the conversation, and less likely to truly listen to what was being said.

4. How did “time of day” effect results? Did you vary times?

Time of day had varying effects on our results. Between 2 and 6pm seemed to be the most effective times for canvassing. However, catching people as they were getting home from work resulted in the opposite effect, as did approaching someone’s home while they were still at work. Furthermore, knocking during dinner time, where families are eating and relaxing, was ineffective.

5. (2 part question) - What role if any did gender play in the success of the program?

a) Did the outcome differ when you talked to women at the door, vs men?

b) Did you notice whether gender of the volunteer had an impact on the outcome?

- (a) Women in general seemed more willing to receive a tree on their lawn; And generally more excited for the process. However, it is worth noting that many men used the excuse their wife would not allow it, or they needed to get her permission first. Though this suggests that they were interested, it was their spouse who was not, it is likely this was just a way to get the canvassers to leave without being mean, or directly rejecting the tree. Also worth noting is that younger individuals, often first-time home owners seemed more willing and excited than older ones.
- (b) The gender of the volunteer seemed to have an effect when it was a man who answered the door, where female volunteers experienced greater success. Women seemed to be indifferent to the gender of the volunteer, as mentioned before, representing greater responsiveness to the canvassers than men in general.

6. Were any canvassers from the communities they worked in? If so, did you find it made a difference in the uptake?

Yes, not only was I extremely familiar with the community in focus, due to my local upbringing, but a couple of the volunteers were as well. I hadn’t considered this a factor until this question, but if memory serves, it did seem to make a difference. These volunteers seemed more comfortable and personable in their interactions with householders than did those who resided elsewhere in the city. This ultimately increased the effectiveness of their attempts to disenfranchising the stigma surrounding canvassers, as they were not speaking from a script, but truly trying to relate to them.

7. Did you track number of doors knocked per day? If so, did you track how many no's you heard vs how many yes's per day?
I did record the number of doors knocked on and the respective responses, however have lost the access to this information. From my memory however, there was a significantly larger number of no's than yesses. Perhaps a quarter being yes, a quarter not being home and one half representing individuals who said no.

Respondent 6 (Volunteer) - 2014

1. What would you say were the key factors that lead to people saying "yes" during your door-to-door program?
Having positive attitude, smiling, believing in what you are doing. Identifying what advantages a tree brings to our lives, and being prepared to address objections.
2. What were some challenges you faced when canvassing and what steps, if any did you take to address the challenges?
Reaching the person who can make the decision, usually the property owner/landlord. Also, the canvassers need to feel comfortable in the neighbourhood they are working in.
3. What was more effective - knocking doors in groups (2 or 3) canvassers or having individual canvassers knock doors?
Liked knocking doors with a partner. It provided her with a level of security. She learned from her partner. Created community among team members and she found it easier to engage the homeowner when she was with someone else.
4. How did "time of day" effect results? Did you vary times?
Doors were knocked between 3:30 and 8:00 PM. No variations. A few Saturdays were tried as well. Nothing exceptional to report.
5. (2 part question) - What role if any did gender play in the success of the program?
a) Did the outcome differ when you talked to women at the door, vs men?
b) Did you notice whether gender of the volunteer had an impact on the outcome?
- (a) Nothing exceptional stood out in Anna's mind with the people answering doors. And since there were only females knocking doors, nothing to report there either.
6. Were any canvassers from the communities they worked in? If so, did you find it made a difference in the uptake?
There were no locals among the canvassers. But Anna thought it would be helpful to have people from the neighbourhood.
7. Did you track number of doors knocked per day? If so, did you track how many no's you heard vs. how many yes's per day?

She was not in charge of tracking this kind of data.

8. **What else can you add? What would you do differently?**

They wore T-shirts. It helped the volunteers headspace. Helped them to feel more like a team. Definitely suggests some sort of uniform. Also, she would have liked to spend more time circling back to houses who had shown an interest but not taken action. Thought a GIS System would be helpful. One final note, she worked with international students. The language barrier was a negative. People at the door were impatient, etc.

Appendix B

Thinking Outside of the Box Engaging Community to Increase the Uptake of Trees

There is some evidence from the survey to suggest that involvement from local community canvassers helped to increase responsiveness and uptake among local homeowners. Many non-profit organizations also rely on some form of community engagement to meet their project and organizational goals. Likewise, asset-based community development (ABCD) recognizes and builds upon the skills, strengths and social capital that exist within the community (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996). Engaging the assets (skills, connections, knowledge) of the local community can be an important strategy for bringing about local community change.

As table 1 below shows, there are several ways to engage community members in projects and initiatives ranging from low-engagement (educate to inform) to empowering (community ownership of the project). Empowerment can be difficult to achieve and may not be a realistic goal for this project. However, there may be several opportunities to consult and involve the local community and/or work collaboratively with local organizations to help increase the uptake of trees. Below are a few suggestions to consider in the future.

TABLE 1 - Public Participation Spectrum²

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	Provide accurate info for public to make decisions	Obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives, and decision making	Involve the community in some aspect of process	Work with community and other local stakeholders	Community ownership. Final decision-making rests in hands of community

Source: <https://sustainingcommunity.wordpress.com/2012/04/07/types-of-community-engagement/>

² The table is based on a table produced by Spectrum Public Participation by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) (2014). The table relates primarily to public participation in the planning process and has been modified slightly to relate the concepts and ideas to broader community engagement/participation efforts. Retrieved from: <https://sustainingcommunity.wordpress.com/2012/04/07/types-of-community-engagement/>

CONSULT

- Consider strategies for getting feedback from the local community about why/why not they were willing to take on a tree.
- For those willing to take on a tree – ask what convinced them.

INVOLVE

Canvassing

- Recruit local community members to canvass as “Local Tree Ambassadors” (consider offering small incentives or rewards for doing so).
- Connect with local high schools (environmental clubs & environmental studies teachers) to involve high school students in canvassing (students get volunteer hours for doing so)
- Hire students from the local neighbourhood to assist with canvassing, if funds are available.

Marketing of the Program

- Connect with local high school students/environmental clubs to develop educational material/events to inform other students and their parents about the benefits of planting trees in the local neighbourhood.
- Encourage students to organize public education events, host films about tree planting within local schools.
- Potential Films (The Man Who Planted Trees; Trees in Trouble: A Documentary Film About America’s Urban Forests)³. Some evidence suggests documentary nature films can have a positive impact on environmental attitudes and behaviour, including donating to environmental causes.⁴

³ The Man Who Planted Trees - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTvYh8ar3tc>;
<http://arbordayblog.org/misctrees/trees-trouble-documentary-film-americas-urban-forests/>

⁴ See: Barbas, T.A, Stefanos Paraskevopoulos, S. & Anastasia G. Stamou, A.G. (2009) The effect of nature documentaries on students’ environmental sensitivity: a case study, *Learning, Media and Technology*, 34(1), 61-69; Janpol, H.L., & Dilts. R. (2016) Does viewing documentary films affect environmental perceptions and behaviors? *Applied Environmental Education & Communication*, 15(1), 90-98; Arendt, F. & Matthes, J. (2014) Nature documentaries, connectedness to nature, and pro-environmental behavior, *Environmental Communication*, 10(4), 453-472.

COLLABORATE / PARTNER

- Develop relationships/partnerships with the local Neighbourhood Association to support the project.
- Get local community organizations to advertise/promote Streets for Trees Project at local meetings, in newsletters, social media and within the local community.
- Explore opportunities to piggy-back on existing efforts to hire local student/youth through summer employment programs. Could local summer students employed at the local Neighbourhood Association or local youth organization assist with the Street Tree Project as part of their employment duties?

Activities could include:

- Canvassing
 - Assisting with some aspects of project development/administration
 - Organizing events - Info Tables at existing local community events
 - Community Info Session: Provide info about Streets to Trees program; show inspirational tree related films/documentaries
-
- In partnership with the local Neighbourhood Association or youth organization, apply for funding to hire local students to learn about and produce a low-cost video about the Street Tree Project. (Students learn new skills and earn money, while Streets to Trees receives a locally grown product to market the program within local schools/community organizations).

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