



# Tree Equity Handbook

## A Practical Guide to Closing the Canopy Gap Between Neighborhoods

ACTIVITY 2.5

### → Coalition Roadmap

Toolkit 2: Build an Inclusive Coalition

Issued November 2025



## Activity 2.5: Coalition Roadmap

Toolkit 2 Overview:

### Build an Inclusive Coalition

Urban forests are managed by and for people. They thrive on collaboration. To advance Tree Equity in your community, you will need the support of a strong, inclusive coalition of stakeholders.

Research shows that urban forestry is most impactful when it is positioned as a solution that helps other sectors address their challenges. Seek out coalition members who share your vision, but who might not yet be aware of issues and opportunities related to Tree Equity, to forge new alignments. In this toolkit, you will follow a step-by-step process to bring together diverse, credible and vocal members of a dynamic coalition that will activate a community-wide vision for people and forests.

### Activity Map

→ [Stakeholder Inventory and Map](#)

→ [Community Partner Cultivation](#)

→ [Modified SWOT Partner Analysis](#)

→ [Coalition Recruitment](#)

### Coalition Roadmap

→ [Coalition Mission, Vision and Goals](#)

→ [Tree Equity Commitment](#)

# Coalition Roadmap



## Overview & Basic Steps

With your coalition’s core team in place, you can now lay out a roadmap to support planning efforts. While each member of the team brings unique perspectives and priorities to the table, this activity emphasizes finding common ground to maximize collective impact. Coalition core team members will use a simple “value vs. effort” framework to come together around short- and long-term priorities that will guide your next steps.

**Suggested Time:** 1 month

**Level of Difficulty:** Moderate

**Participants:** Coalition core team

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### Before starting this activity, you might need:

- An established core team of coalition members → [Activity 2.4](#)

### Instructions

- 1 Have each core team member complete a survey to score their priorities for the coalition through a value vs. effort framework.
- 2 Tally the results and enter average values into the **Coalition Priorities Worksheet** ([page 5](#)).
- 3 Use the combined scores to organize priorities into the **Coalition Roadmap Worksheet** ([page 8](#)).
- 4 Finalize your roadmap with input from all core team members and communicate shared priorities with the broader coalition.

### After you complete this activity:

1. Codify shared priorities into a shared mission and vision statement. → [Activity 2.6](#)
2. Develop a Coalition Action Plan to operationalize priorities. → [Activity 3.4](#)

**TOOLKIT 2: Coalition Roadmap | Activity 5 – WORKSHEET**

## Survey Your Core Team



Start by asking every member of your core team to score their priorities using a value vs. effort framework. This activity works best when it reflects all perspectives in your coalition, so consider the best way to ensure that all team members can participate.

One method is to share the **Coalition Priorities Worksheet** ([page 5](#)) and ask each team member to fill out their own copy, either digitally or in print. (Note that they will not need to use the final two columns, which are meant for the next step.)

Another method is to copy the priorities from the worksheet into a third-party survey platform such as SurveyMonkey, Google Forms or Microsoft Forms. Team members can complete surveys on their own, and you can use the combined results to complete the Coalition Priorities Worksheet.

### Priorities are divided into three categories:

1. Tree Equity Initiatives
2. Community Engagement
3. Urban Forestry Operations

Make sure every team member provides scores in all three categories.

## What Is a Value vs. Effort Framework?

A value vs. effort framework is a method for prioritization based on the perceived value of an action relative to the effort required to implement the action. Actions considered highly valuable but requiring little effort might be prioritized first, while actions deemed less valuable and more effort-intensive will be lower on the coalition’s list.

Rank each action according to value — the benefit or impact it may have on the community — and effort — the amount of time it would require from the coalition.

<b>VALUE to the Community</b>	<b>EFFORT to Achieve this Objective</b>
<b>NA</b> – None/Negligible	<b>NA</b> – Not possible
<b>1</b> – Low	<b>1</b> – Low (1-3 person months)
<b>2</b> – Moderate	<b>2</b> – Moderate (up to 1 person year)
<b>3</b> – High	<b>3</b> – High (1-3 person years)
<b>4</b> – Massive	<b>4</b> – Maximal (4+ person years)

A score of “NA” in either category should be understood as a recommendation to drop the priority from consideration by the coalition.

# Coalition Priorities Worksheet

After gathering surveys from all participants, tally their scores and enter the average values into this worksheet. If any priorities received “NA” votes, tally the count for each. Each NA vote should be understood as a recommendation to drop the priority from consideration by the coalition.

## Priority Category 1:

TREE EQUITY INITIATIVES					
PRIORITY	Value to the Community	Effort to Achieve this Objective	Count of NA: Value	Count of NA: Effort	Completed
Cultivate a diverse, inclusive and sustainable <b>Tree Equity Coalition</b> to advance Tree Equity.	3-High	2-Moderate	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Establish an independent organization as an <b>anchor institution</b> whose role is to galvanize the initiative.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop an <b>urban forest management plan with a Tree Equity framework</b> that explicitly focuses resources on neighborhoods with fewer trees and greater vulnerability to climate change.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Integrate Tree Equity goals into broader community-wide plans</b> such as comprehensive climate resilience and stormwater plans.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a <b>binding Tree Equity commitment</b> in all community-wide initiatives and programs relating to urban forestry.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a <a href="#">1T.org pledge</a> and participate in that community of practice.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Monitor and evaluate program progress</b> toward achieving Tree Equity objectives.					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>



**Priority Category 2:**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT					
PRIORITY	Value to the Community	Effort to Achieve this Objective	Count of NA: Value	Count of NA: Effort	Completed
<b>Develop engagement policies</b> that require more inclusive engagement around tree planting, maintenance and removal (such as establishing an advisory committee of tree stewards).					<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop a <b>community engagement plan</b> that focuses on gathering and integrating the needs of people living in areas with fewer trees and greater vulnerability to climate change.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Engage under-resourced communities and faith-based organization(s)</b> with allied missions to participate, amplify and leverage their networks in support of the initiative.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage residents from diverse backgrounds to <b>participate in the decision-making process for Tree Equity initiatives</b> and ensure that their voices are heard and valued.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Address resident concerns</b> that hinder buy-in for new tree planting or maintenance efforts.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Build <b>long-lasting tree stewardship programs</b> that engage residents in tree care, maintenance and advocacy.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Create and fund <b>long-term citizen science monitoring</b> of impacts for extreme heat areas, invasive control, pests or other.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Bolster <b>youth education and introduce young people to careers</b> in urban forestry and Tree Equity.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Raise awareness and media visibility about Tree Equity</b> for residents to become advocates for urban forestry initiatives.					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>



**Priority Category 3:**

URBAN FORESTRY OPERATIONS					
PRIORITY	Value to the Community	Effort to Achieve this Objective	Count of NA: Value	Count of NA: Effort	Completed
<b>Prioritize low Tree Equity Score neighborhoods</b> with low tree canopy cover and limited access to green spaces in targeted tree planting initiatives.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish <b>cyclical, programmatic maintenance</b> that includes low Tree Equity Score neighborhoods so trees remain healthy as long as possible.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrate <b>climate vulnerability and climate projections</b> into tree nursery, planting and protection initiatives.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Develop localized tree planting guidance</b> on climate-adapted tree species that can support public health, climate mitigation and stormwater management in future climates.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish <b>dedicated Tree Equity staff</b> in urban forest-related departments, community organizations and anchor organizations.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish <b>baseline tree canopy percentage</b> and track change over time.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Train an urban forestry workforce and expand career opportunities</b> , with programs specifically designed to serve under-resourced residents.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Recruit, train and mobilize community volunteers</b> to help plant and maintain trees.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish <b>income-contingent private property programs</b> where public funding is available for low-income property owners to plant or maintain trees, including hazard removal.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Expand <b>tree nursery capacity and local supply</b> of native and climate-resilient species available at tree nurseries.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop <b>urban wood reuse capacity</b> and potentially a self-sustaining urban wood reuse economy.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Adopt <b>ordinances, policies and regulations to protect existing trees</b> , particularly in areas with limited canopy or undergoing development or urbanization.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strengthen enforcement of laws and policies</b> affecting both public and privately owned trees.					<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish a <b>finance mechanism</b> to support urban forestry through returns on investment for such impacts as carbon sequestration, prison recidivism or reduced hospitalizations.					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>



## Coalition Roadmap Worksheet

After completing the Coalition Priorities Worksheet, place each priority into one of the four roadmap categories below. If certain priorities received NA scores, discuss with the team whether they should be dropped or included in the roadmap.

- **Short-Term High Priority:** Actions with “high” or “massive” value (aggregate scores of 3 or 4) and “low” or “moderate” effort (aggregate scores of 1 or 2)
- **Long-Term High Priority:** Actions with “high” or “massive” value (3 of 4) and “high” or “maximal” effort (3 or 4)
- **Short-Term Low Priority:** Actions with “low” or “moderate” value (1 or 2) and “low” or “moderate” effort (1 or 2)
- **Long-Term Low Priority:** Actions with “low” or “moderate” value (1 or 2) and “high” or “maximal” effort (3 or 4)

### Sample Coalition Roadmap

*Sample priority rankings are for illustrative purposes only and do not reflect actual priorities.*

#### SHORT-TERM HIGH PRIORITY

High or Massive Value with Low or Moderate Effort

Prioritize low Tree Equity Score neighborhoods with low tree canopy cover and limited access to green spaces in targeted tree planting initiatives.

#### LONG-TERM HIGH PRIORITY

High or Massive Value with High or Maximal Effort

Train an urban forestry workforce and expand career opportunities, with programs specifically designed to serve under-resourced residents.

#### SHORT-TERM LOW PRIORITY

Low or Moderate Value with Low or Moderate Effort

Develop localized tree planting guidance on climate-adapted tree species that can support public health, climate mitigation and stormwater management in future climates.

#### LONG-TERM LOW PRIORITY

Low or Moderate Value with High or Maximal Effort

Establish a finance mechanism to support urban forestry through returns on investment for such impacts as carbon sequestration, prison recidivism or reduced hospitalizations.

**SHORT-TERM HIGH PRIORITY**

High or Massive Value with Low or Moderate Effort



**LONG-TERM HIGH PRIORITY**  
High or Massive Value with High or Maximal Effort



A large, empty rectangular area with a light beige background, divided into ten horizontal rows by thin black lines. This area is intended for handwritten notes or a list of items.

**SHORT-TERM LOW PRIORITY**

Low or Moderate Value with Low or Moderate Effort



A large, empty rectangular area with a light beige background, divided into ten horizontal rows by thin black lines. This area is intended for handwritten notes or a list of items.

**LONG-TERM LOW PRIORITY**

Low or Moderate Value with High or Maximal Effort



A large, empty rectangular area with a light beige background, divided into ten horizontal rows by thin black lines. This area is intended for handwritten notes or a list of items.

## Finalize Your Coalition Roadmap

Review and refine the results of the Coalition Roadmap Worksheet with your core team, making sure everyone's perspectives are included and that all team members can unite around these shared priorities.

Next you can share this roadmap with the broader coalition or the public to establish transparency around your Tree Equity efforts. This coalition roadmap can be a reference and guide for decision-making conversations going forward, as well as a tool to hold your coalition accountable to its stated priorities.



Leonid Clim / NYC Parks Tree Time / American Forests

**American Forests and Bulleit NYC planting near Brooklyn Queens Expressway and the Long Island Expressway to mitigate air pollution and heat for pedestrians.**

## Activity 2.5: Coalition Roadmap

### Toolkit 2: Build an Inclusive Coalition

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<https://treeequityhandbook.org/tree-equity-handbook/build-an-inclusive-coalition/#activity-coalition-roadmap>



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