



The Outdoor Circle ~ Outline of Case Statement Framework of a Development Plan for The Outdoor Circle

The Need and Call for Action:

The State of Hawaii is experiencing sustained growth and urbanization, which significantly impacts our quality of life in the Islands. To mitigate potentially adverse environmental impacts of this growth, the Outdoor Circle (TOC) recommends action to protect our environment by actively, systematically, and aggressively pursuing the following:

- Protecting established trees,
- Planting new trees, including native specimens, to expand our urban tree canopy,
- Preserving and enhancing our public parks, green spaces, and view planes,
- Implementing sustainable city and urban area designs that incorporate trees and green space.

Our Background:

Founded in 1912, TOC has worked to enhance the environment in urban areas to improve the quality of life for local businesses, commercial interests, and residents, as well as to enhance the travel experience for our visitors. Because of our work to “keep Hawai‘i clean, green, and beautiful,” the State now enjoys a billboard-free environment, street tree programs, urban park systems, and a statewide network of branches and volunteers invested in maintaining public greenspaces.

In fact, all of Hawai‘i has benefitted from the work of the Outdoor Circle over the past century. Our historic approach has focused on beauty. Yet, when confronted with the reality of proposed urbanization and development, and their effect on the environment, our greenspaces become more than just beautiful, they are essential to our very well-being, our economic viability, and the ‘livability’ of our communities.

Today, TOC is uniquely positioned to significantly escalate the ‘greening of Hawai‘i through our “**Green Advocacy Initiative**” to enhance our local environment and foster crucial urban planning initiatives necessary to address long-term adverse impacts on this environment. By leveraging our existing relationships with municipal and state entities, and by partnering with organizations that share our goals, we can accomplish this and improve the quality of life for all Hawai‘i’s residents.

Our Green Advocacy Initiative Progress To Date:

- 1) Since 2011, our TOC staff and Board of Directors have been actively collaborating with the City Administration in the relocation of thousands of trees along the rail corridor, assuring that trees are either replaced with comparable specimens or moved to other public spaces in communities across O‘ahu. City Council Resolution 2011-111 CD1 mandated that we be consulted, and we have been meeting regularly with Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transit since then on the disposition of the affected trees.
- 2) Since 2014, TOC has taken significant steps to document all urban trees in an open-source, digital map that includes calculations of the amount of environmental benefit

provided by our current green infrastructure. This is a tool for policymakers to use when making decisions. To date, all *Exceptional Trees*, state-wide, have been measured. In collaboration with federal, state and city partners, several O`ahu communities, including Kailua, have had all city-owned trees on public streets, in parks, and on school grounds catalogued; the mapping effort was performed by volunteer *Citizen Foresters*, under direction of TOC and Smart Trees Pacific personnel.

- 3) Since 2016, TOC has been actively participating in the *Carbon Neutrality Challenge* Project, in partnership with UH Manoa, whose goal is to plant trees for carbon sequestration. To date, over 1000 seedlings have been propagated at UH Manoa, and our volunteers have planted hundreds of native specimens on the West side of O`ahu.
- 4) Since 2017, TOC has been actively involved with *Trees for Honolulu's Future*, spearheaded by our Greater Waikiki Branch, in partnership with UH Manoa, and supported by the City Administration, which has a goal to increase O`ahu's urban tree canopy from its current 22% to 35% by 2035.
- 5) Since 2017, TOC has been actively involved in the *Waimea Valley Reforestation Project*, and to date, our volunteers have planted over 90 native trees there.

Our Green Advocacy Initiative Future Goals:

- 1) By 2020, TOC will have calculated the amount of greenspace and new trees needed to properly manage storm-water run-off, as well as to off-set current carbon emissions. We will develop a plan in partnership with government agencies, donors, like-minded partners, and citizens to plant the thousands of trees need by 2035.
- 2) By 2020, Hawai`i will begin the process of propagating thousands of new trees needed to mitigate the impacts of urbanization, working in partnership with other organizations to provide job training to volunteers.
- 3) By 2021, Hawai`i's Environmental Court (established in 2015) and the City's Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (established 2016) will be fully funded and well-implemented; we will rely on them to uphold laws established to ensure our communities are resilient, public trust resources are well-maintained, and public health is protected.
- 4) By 2025, at least 500 new specimens will have been added to the State Exceptional Tree Inventory.
- 5) By 2025, planting thousands of urban canopy trees in our communities will have begun.
- 6) By 2035, we will have increased our urban tree canopy from its current 22% to 35%.

How we will do it:

- 1) Beginning now through 2025, we will partner with non-profit organizations, University of Hawaii, private citizens, and corporations that align with our mission to expand our options for both maintaining and installing greenspaces.
- 2) In the next 1-2 years, we will complete our map of Hawai`i's urban forests, including all urban greenspaces. Mapping Hawai`i's existing trees and parks will help us to know the extent of our current green infrastructure, improve management of and protections for this infrastructure, stimulate public appreciation for the value of our urban forests, and direct new planting projects to where they are most-needed. We will use sophisticated green infrastructure estimates to calculate the value of environmental benefits provided by our urban forests.
- 3) Over the next 5 years, we will expand our community-based network to 1,000 volunteers needed to plant trees and expand public parks and other greenspaces. Volunteers will also support on-going maintenance of new and existing greenspaces through enhanced

Adopt-a-Park programs and in partnerships with advocates for environmental enhancement and protection.

- 4) Beginning now and continuing through 2025, we will advocate for specific public policies that ensure our cities are visually and environmentally welcoming and green, resilient, and sustainable.

These policies include:

- **Park Improvements:** we will enhance the Adopt-a-Park programs in all counties to better utilize volunteer-labor, serve community needs, and protect trees.
- **Design Standards:** we will advocate for construction regulations to be adapted to address change in local environments due to development, with an emphasis on planting trees and implementing green space to foster cooling.
- **Complete Streets:** we will advocate for streets designed for multi-modal use, with canopy shade trees essential.
- **View Plane Protection:** our existing exemplary city and state ordinances regarding maintaining our view planes, free of visual blight, will be championed as new challenges to them arise.

What we need to make this happen:

- 1) Additional Annual Budget: \$350,000
- 2) Additional Full- and Part-time Staff of 5-6 people to lead the effort, including:
 - **Public Policy Advocate:** to establish the above public policies to protect our environment. This person has a graduate degree in public policy or a juris doctorate.
 - **Development Director:** to help raise funds from private donors, grants, earned income, and innovative sources like carbon sequestration, to sustain this effort. This person has 5-10 years of fundraising experience.
 - **Tree Specialist:** to organize the volunteer effort to map all urban trees, provide essential technical expertise, and advocate for greater protection of existing trees. This person has graduate degree in Environmental Sciences or arborist certification.
 - **Greenspace Advocate:** to spearhead the planting of new urban canopy trees, participate in decision making on park renovations, cultivate relationships needed to expand planting and beautification project opportunities. This person has graduate degree in urban planning.
 - **Volunteer Coordinator:** to support volunteers engaged in the mapping effort, public advocacy, and beautification projects. This person has an Associate Degree and 2-4 years of experience working with volunteers.
 - **Administrative staff:** to ensure compliance with all regulatory reporting requirements, banking policies, and internal controls. These staff people have Bachelor Degrees and 2-4 years of accounting or administrative experience.
- 3) Our Current Board of Directors and Advisors:
 - An experienced team of dedicated volunteers, including Urban Planners, Landscape Architects, Arborists, Legal Consultants, Financial Consultants, Educators, Horticulturalists, green industry representatives, and native species experts, willing to contribute their time and expertise.
- 4) Our current Executive Director and existing staff to support the efforts.
 - An experienced team of three dedicated individuals, including our Executive Director with Certified Association Executive credentials, our Programs Manager with extensive background in Environmental Sciences, our Office Administrator with extensive background in database management and graphic design.