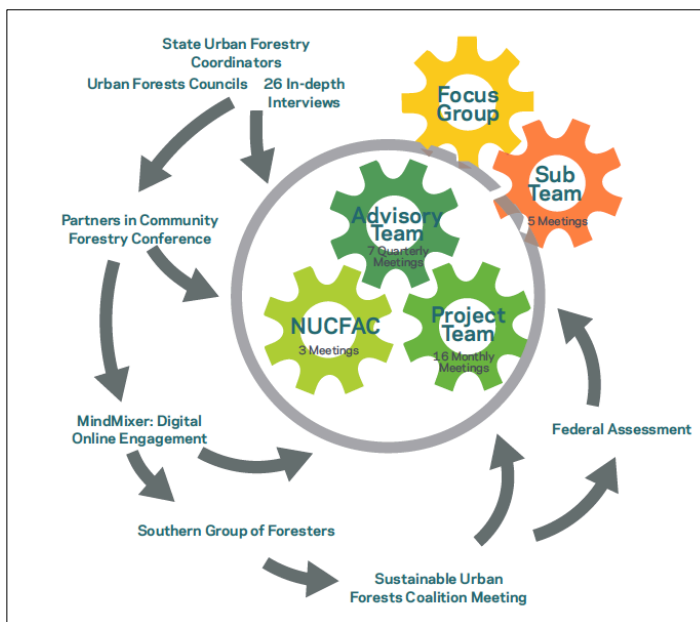


Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan Project Evaluation October 1, 2015

This evaluation was conducted in September of 2015 by the project facilitation team, led by the Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN) and Dialogue + Design, to assess the development of the Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan planning process. The consultants provided the project leadership and direction, supported by the Project and Advisory Teams (see below) who provided expertise on different areas as research and funding needs. The team reviewed trends and factors that will influence UCF in the next 10 years, as well as strengths, opportunities, issues and challenges. It also reviewed the current status of UCF programs, activities, resources, and scientific research. The project team synthesized all of those inputs and identified specific needs and gaps that were used to develop the goals, strategies and actions for the next ten years. In addition, community outreach was done through face-to-face and a digital engagement process to enrich the Action Plan. The following figure shows how the community was engaged through the whole process.



This evaluation includes a quantitative as well as a qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis shows different metrics related to community outreach, literature research, and the results from the project evaluation online survey. The qualitative analysis includes the summary of the project evaluation discussion held with the Project Team and Strategic Advisory Team as well as final reflections from the facilitation team.

Project Team:

- Kathy McGlaufflin, American Forests Foundation, project oversight and contract management, expertise in Urban and Community Forestry education programs
- Tanya Denckla Cobb, University of Virginia Institute for Environmental Negotiation, project direction and lead, facilitation and community engagement
- Christine Muehlman Gyovai, Dialogue + Design Associates, senior project management, facilitation and community engagement
- Tatiana Marquez, IEN Project Manager

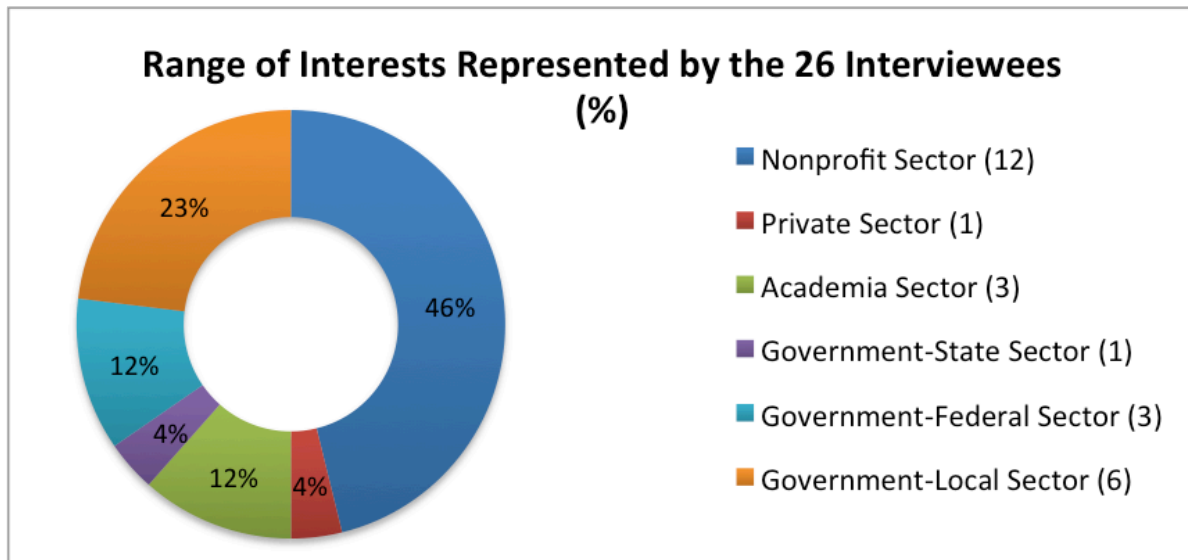
- Abigail Sandberg, University of Virginia Institute for Environmental Negotiation, document and graphic design
- IEN staff, Eiline Cai, Elise Cruz, Katie Gronsky, Jason Knickmeyer, Elizabeth Moore, Ross Weaver, and Shujing Zhang
- Nancy Stremple, USDA Forest Service: project guidance, NUCFAC executive staff
- Kathleen Wolf, Ph.D., University of Washington, expertise in socio-ecological research
- Jennifer Cotting, University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center, finance and costing
- Eric Reed, University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center, finance and costing
- Mark White, Ph.D., University of Virginia McIntire School of Economics, economic finance and costing

Advisory Team:

- Federal Interests: Ed Macie, Forest Service Urban Forestry Coordinator
- State Interests: Nick Kuhn, Missouri State Urban Forestry Coordinator
- Municipal Interests: Angel Spell, City of Spokane
- Broad Community of Practice Interests, and NUCFAC liaison: Greg Ina, Davey Resources Group, and Liam Kavanagh, City Parks Alliance.
- Professional Association and Nonprofit Interests: Jennifer Judd Hinrichs, Convener: Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition
- Grassroots Community-Level Interests: Carrie Gallagher, Director, Alliance for Community Trees (first half of the project), Sarah Anderson, Program Director, Alliance for Community Trees (second half of project)
- Scientific Community Interests: Lynne Westphal, Research Social Scientist, Northern Research Station, USDA Forest Service and Beth Larry, National Program Lead, Urban Research, USDA Forest Service
- Project Team: Kathy McGlaufflin, Tanya Denckla Cobb, Christine Muehlman Gyovai, Nancy Stremple

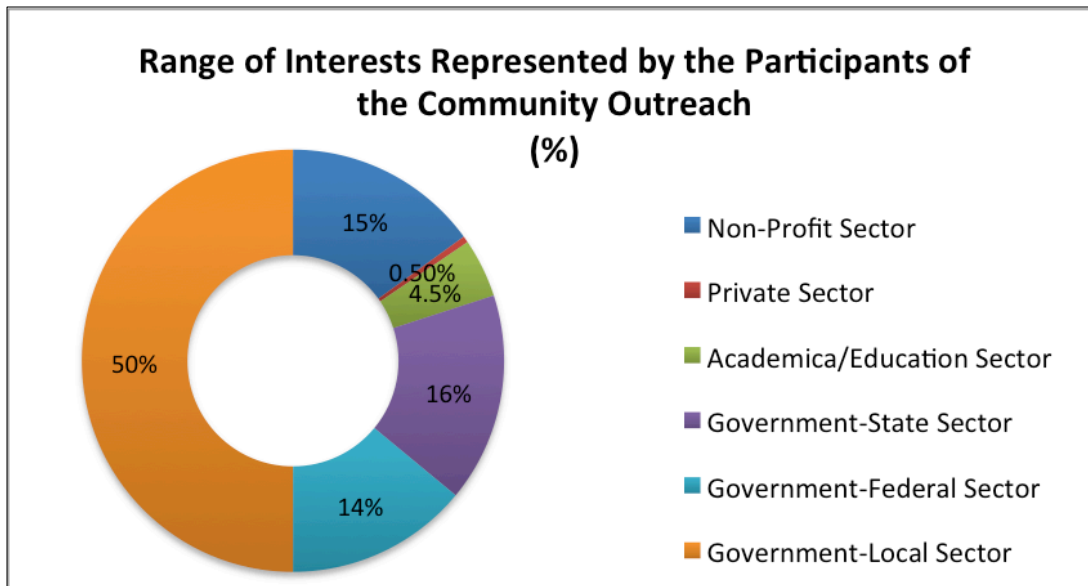
Section A: Quantitative Analysis

1) In Depth Interviews: During the summer of 2014, the facilitation team conducted 26 interviews of thought leaders from the urban forestry community. They were asked to share their perspective and insights about progress made in the last ten years, as well as to highlight specific progress in the realm of programs, activities, tools, and resources.

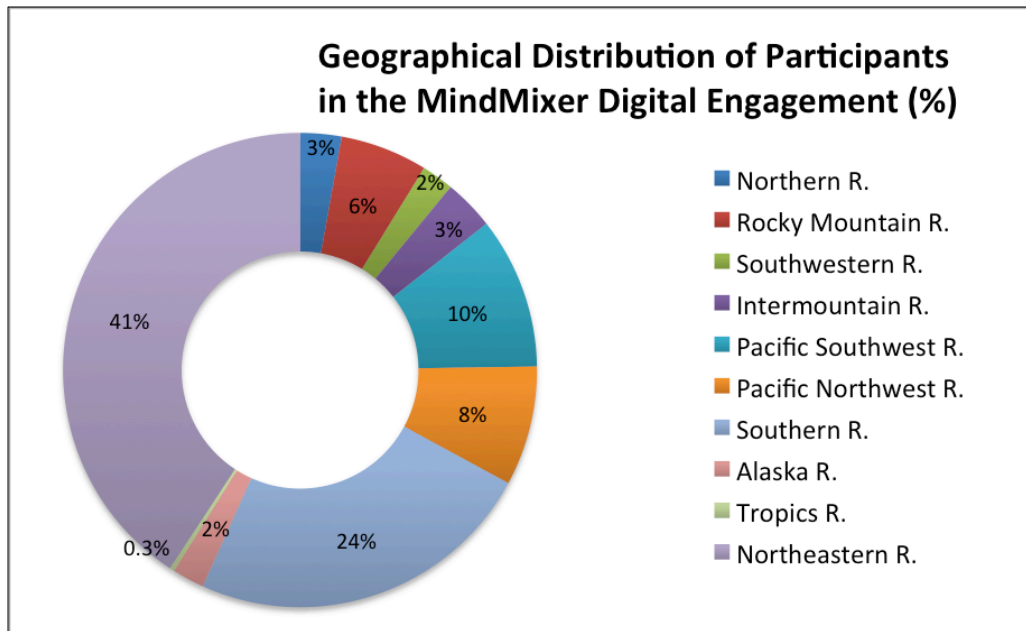


2) Community Outreach: More than 1000 participants contributed to the Action Plan through various face-to-face and on-line community outreach efforts, which included:

- Federal/State Urban Forestry Coordinators – consultation via emails from USFS- (Summer-Fall 2015)
- Personal Interviews – 26 in-depth thought leader interview (Summer 2014)
- Scientist Interviews (Spring 2015)
- MindMixer online engagement – prioritization of 14 key issues, to identify priority Action Plan goals; prioritization of strategies; suggesting actions to implement the strategies (November-December 2014).
- Conferences (e.g., 2014 November - Partners in Community Forestry and ACTrees National Meeting; January 2015 - Washington D.C. Sustainable Urban Forest Coalition, January 2015 - Mobile, Southern Group of State Foresters).
- Focus Group participants – to develop discuss and develop targets for implementing each Action Plan goal (April 2015)



3) Urban Forestry Community Stakeholder Engagement: A national stakeholder engagement using the MindMixer Platform, elicited urban forestry community feedback during November and December 2014. Participants prioritized the 14 Key Issues and developed ideas for implementation strategies. Nearly 3,000 unique individuals visited the site, about 550 people answered one or more questions, and there were more than 15,000 page views. The average age of participation was 47, and more than half of the participants have ten or more years of experience in the urban forestry field. While nearly every state had someone participating in the engagement, most participants were from coastal and metropolitan regions. Numerous comments were received by email and phone as well. Finally, hundreds of participants were engaged in person at the Partners in Community Forestry conference in November of 2014, at the Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition meeting in February 2015, at three NUCFAC meetings (two of which were in-person meetings; the facilitators joined one meeting by tele-conference), and the Southern Group of Foresters meeting.



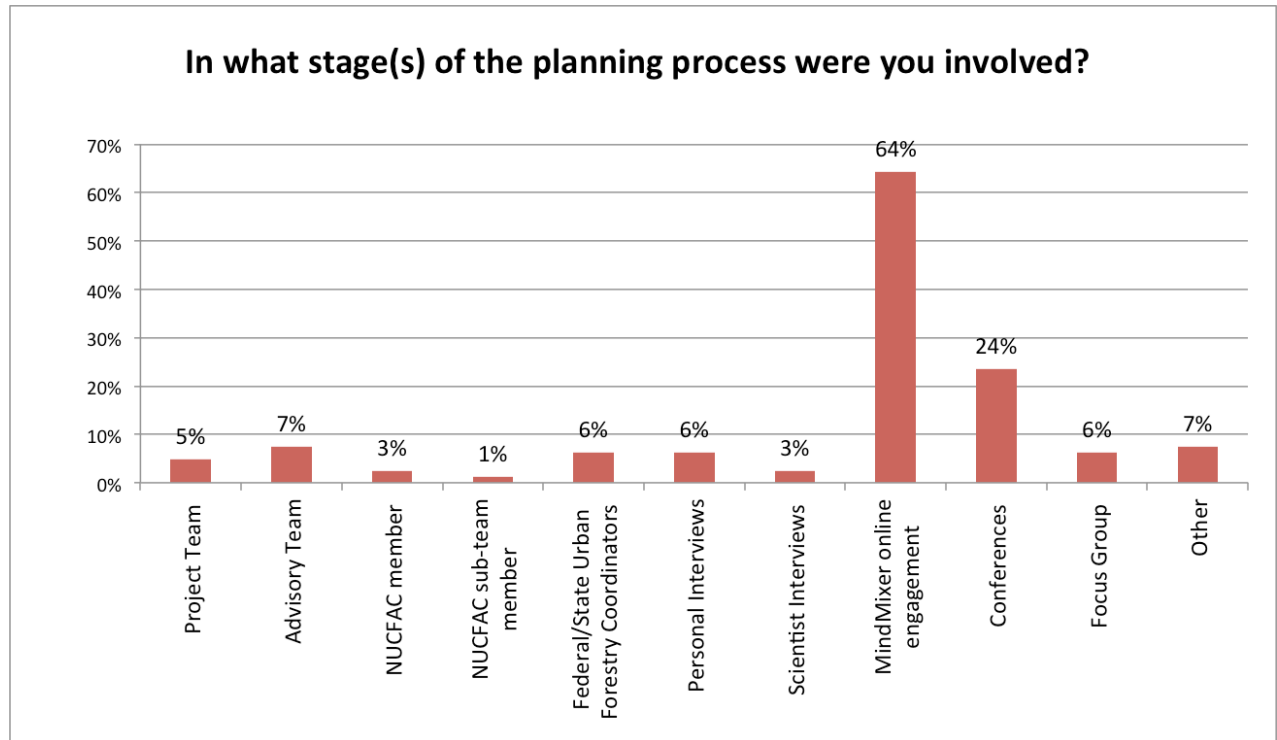
Note: Not all MindMixer participants answered the demographic question

4) Evaluation Survey:

A Project Evaluation survey was designed with input from the Project Team. The Survey was sent out to all participants – the Project Team, Strategic Advisory Team, individual interviewees, all focus group participants, and all MindMixer participants. Of the 611 people who received this survey, 81 answered, representing a rate of 13.2 percent. Below you will find different graphics and the comments summarizing the responses for each of the eight evaluation questions.

Note: The national average from email surveys is 24.8%, which suggests that these results may not be representative or statistically valid.

Question 1:

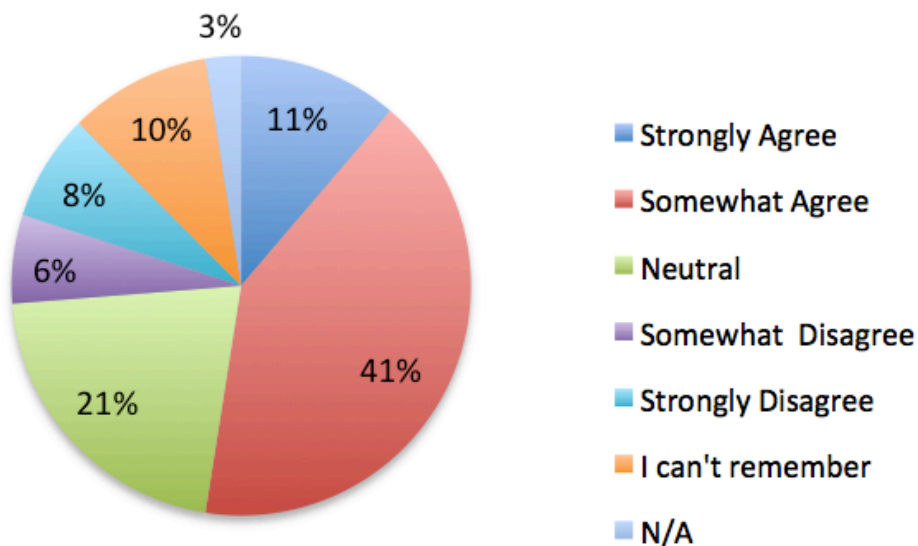


Individual Comments

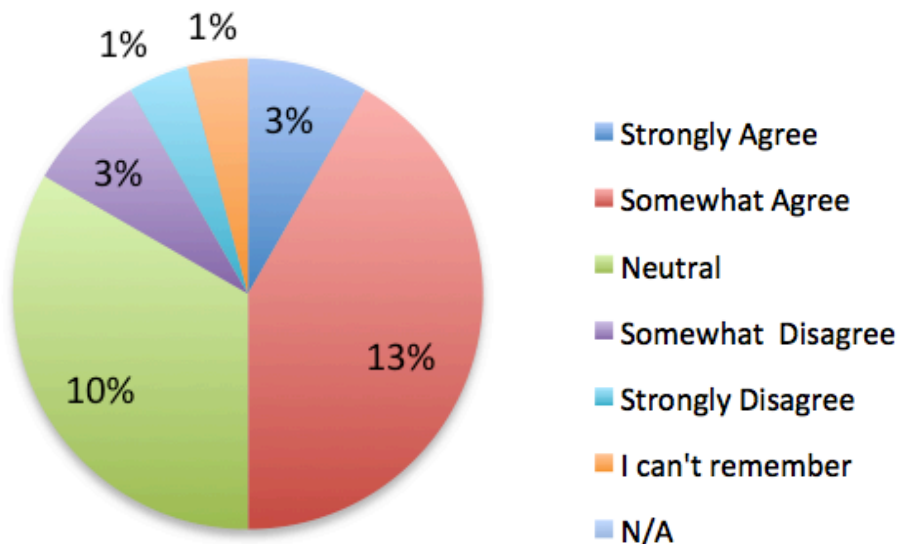
- Responded to online tool
- Have not really been involved
- I provided input during the open review of the draft
- Web participation about what I thought was important for the ten-year plan
- E-mail requests for input
- This survey would have been relevant if it was given within four weeks of the original survey. Beyond that it is in no way a good measure of what individuals remember about their initial survey. Answers or experience. Good luck.

Question 2: To what extent do you Agree or Disagree with the following statements:

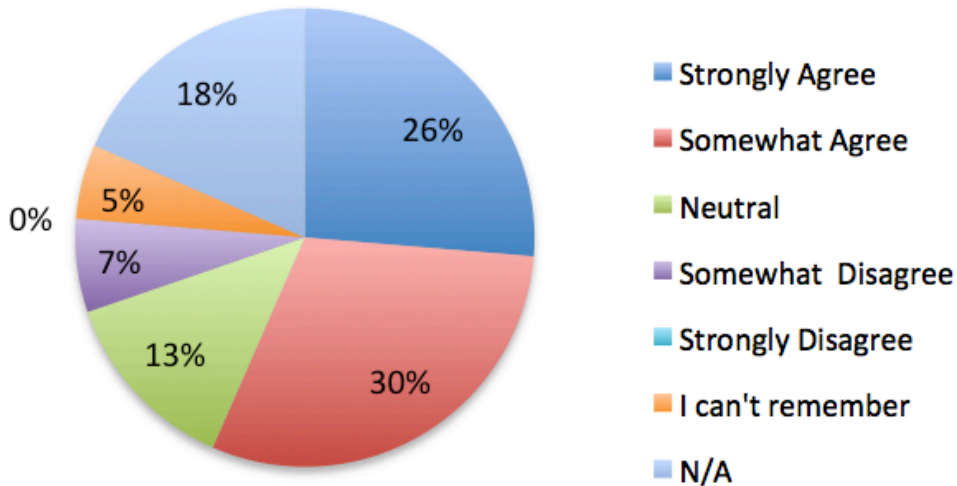
A). When you became engaged, the different engagement opportunities were clearly explained:



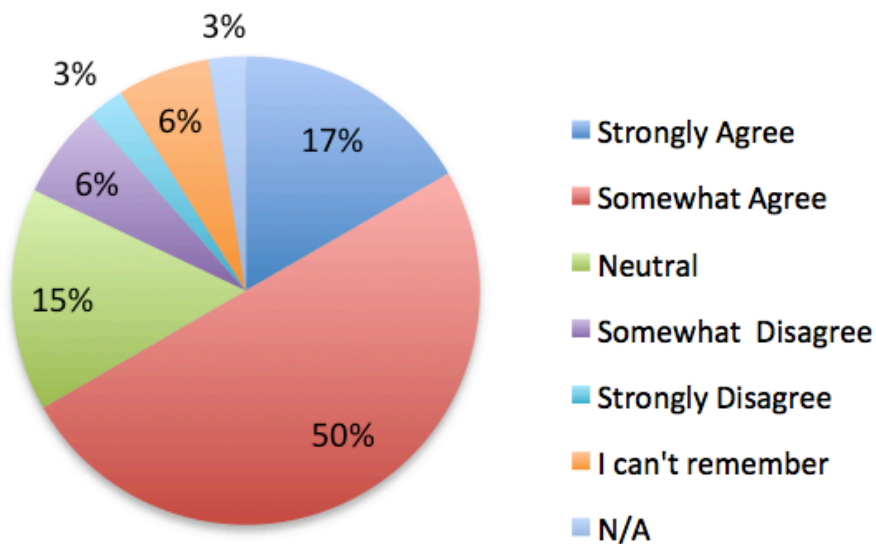
B) If you were a participant in the Project Team, Advisory Team, or NUCFAC, you were able to help shape the actual action planning process. (Note: 65% of participants participated in MindMixer)



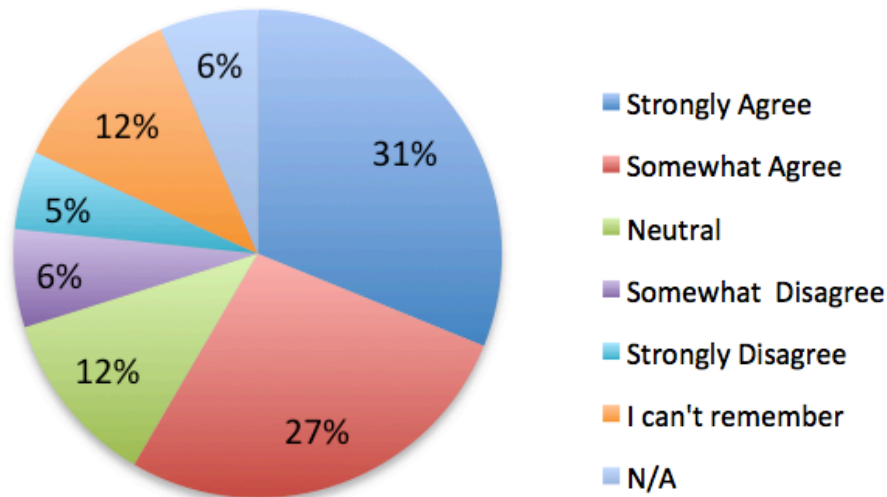
C) You participated in the planning process and had the opportunity to submit ideas for the Action Plan



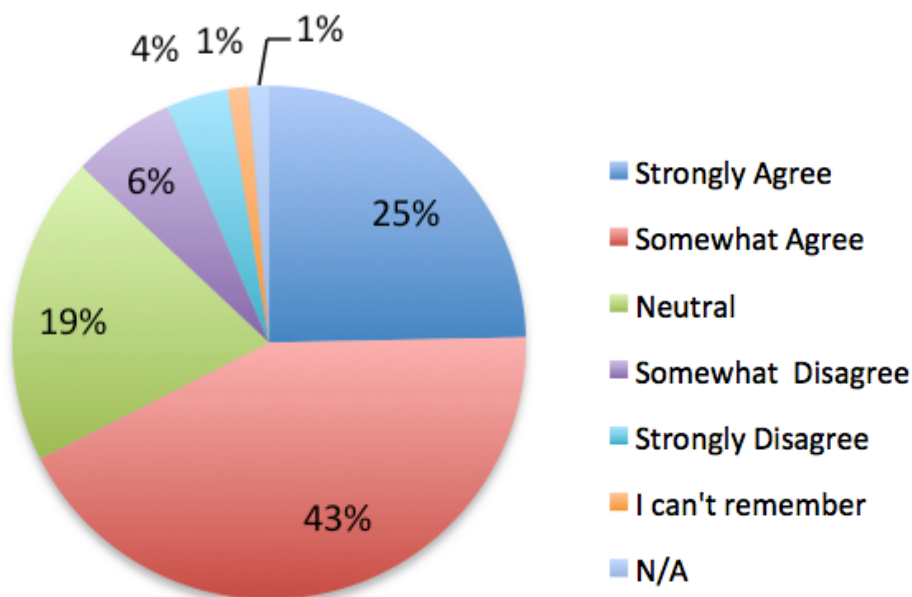
D) You were provided sufficient information to be able to provide meaningful input for the Ten-Year Action Plan



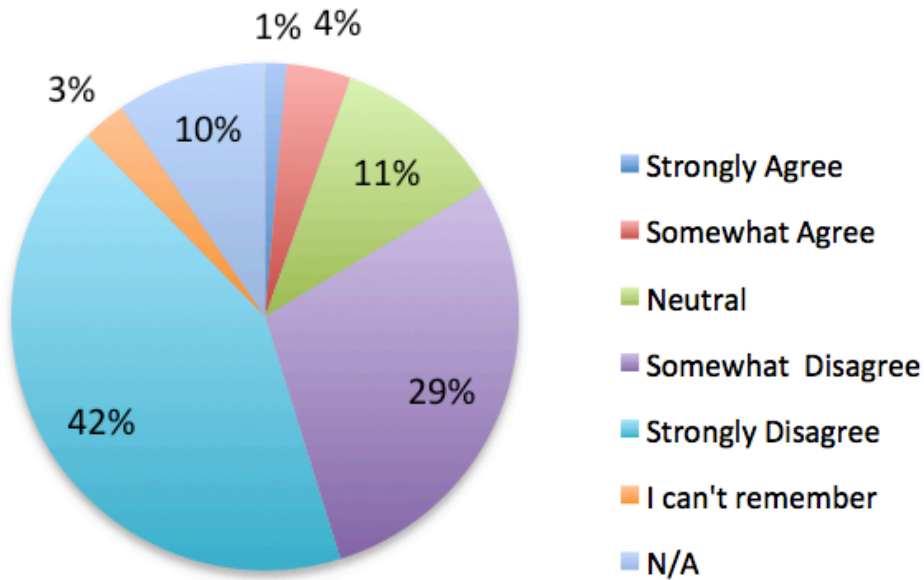
E) Your ideas were acknowledged verbally, in person, or electronically



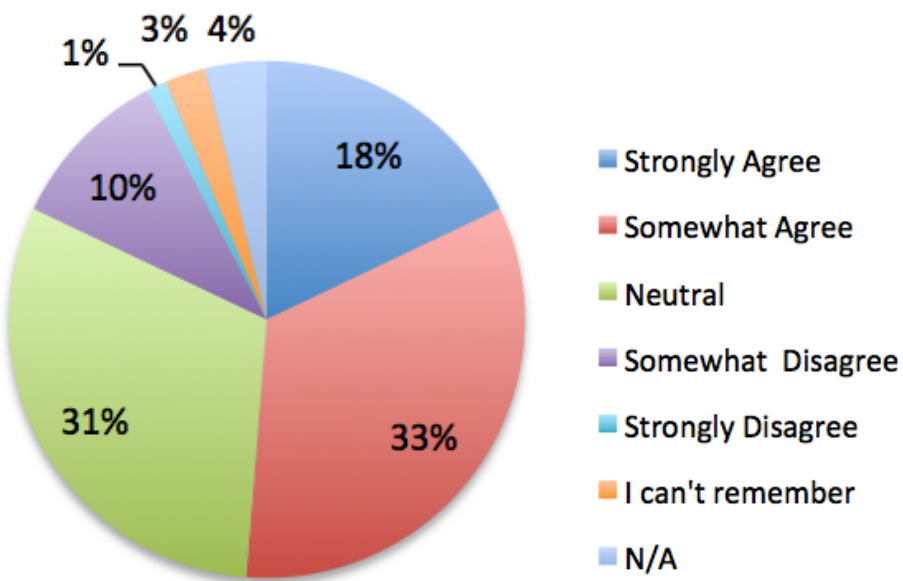
F) You would have liked to participate more and/or provide more input during the Action Planning Process



G) You would have liked to participate less and/or provide less input in the Action Planning Process



H) Overall, you are satisfied with the level of community engagement used to create the Ten-Year Action Plan.



I) Individual Comments:

- I think it is important to provide more background especially to the non-project team participants
- I had a very low level of involvement, which may have been appropriate. I did not have an understanding or even an awareness of the overall process.
- My time was a limiting factor
- I trust the people leading the process and while more engagement is good, decisions must be made to move the process forward
- I did not realize the different levels, and the questions seemed extremely redundant, although basically relevant
- These questions don't get at the tension that I felt as a project team member. I was simultaneously 1) not asked much about the project process, and 2) was asked for an excessive amount of input.

Commentary

- 68% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they would have liked to provide more input during the process.
- 67% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they were provided sufficient information to be able to provide meaningful input.
- 52% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the opportunities for engagement were clearly explained.
- 51% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with the level of community engagement.

The results of this evaluation suggest that, while this stakeholder engagement was the most comprehensive ever attempted for a Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan, it did not successfully satisfy most of the stakeholders in the way that was hoped. The results suggest that the next Ten-Year Action Plan should select engagement methods that systematically include stakeholders throughout the entire planning process, from beginning to end.

We believe one issue reflected in this evaluation is the fact that the MindMixer method of engagement was stopped after phase one, and this resulted in dissatisfaction from those who had successfully participated in it and would have continued to provide input through that method. When stakeholders are dropped out of a process, for whatever reason, it can be expected to lead to this kind of dissatisfaction and the desire for more inclusion.

In the future, whether stakeholders are engaged through smaller representative groups, focus groups, or through a large national digital engagement outreach, the same people who are engaged in the beginning should continue to be included at every subsequent phase. Additional people can be added as the process progresses, of course, but people should never be dropped off the engagement. In short, in future efforts, it is important to establish a clear method of communication and engagement with the stakeholders and continue that method consistently throughout the process.

Question 3:



Individual Comments:

- I wish I could have participated more! But you provided countless opportunities and were very engaging; my lack of participation was due to my busy calendar.
- Because of the number of questions asked, it took a lot of time.
- Opportunities to engage federal and state program managers to make this "our plan" and to promote and implement it with confidence were lacking.
- The satisfaction is more about my time limitations.
- Ten-Tear? Are we talking ripped materials or sad events? One more edit would have improved your outreach effort. *[The project team apologizes for the overlooked spelling error in the survey.]*
- As a project team member I wasn't completely satisfied with the process, it wasn't that I wanted to participate more but that I would have liked more efficient staging of the participation.