

Stronger Together: Creative Partnerships between Community Organizations & Local Government for Extreme Weather Preparedness

June 10, 2025



URBAN WATERS
LEARNING NETWORK



URBAN WATERS LEARNING NETWORK

LEARNING SERIES – FROM SILOS TO SYNERGY: INTEGRATING LAND AND WATER PROGRAMS FOR HOLISTIC ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

- Land, air, and water systems are deeply interconnected – and our approach to healing past harms and creating a more just future needs to be as well.
- Silos to Synergy series, is designed to help land and water equity practitioners think beyond traditional program silos



UWLN is a peer-to-peer network of people and organizations working to conserve, restore and revitalize America's urban waterways, supporting our members' work through tools, training, mentoring and financial assistance.

GROUNDWORK USA



*Groundwork USA
envision a world in
which everyone lives in
a community that is
healthy, green, just, and
resilient.*

TODAY'S SPEAKERS



Genea Foster

Director of Community Planning
Groundwork USA



Thad Winkle

Deputy Director
Groundwork San Diego



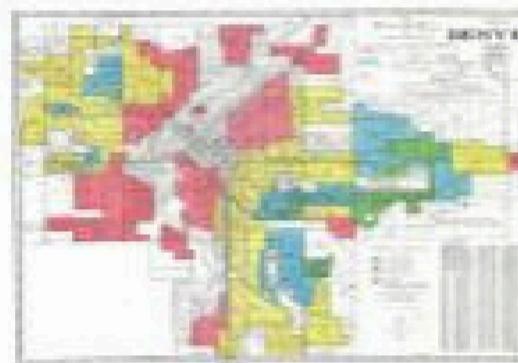
Harrison Nesbit

Community Adaptation Manager
Groundwork Hudson Valley

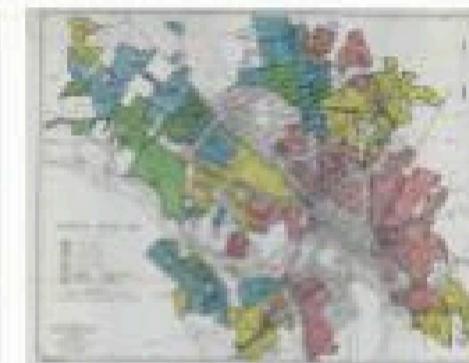
CLIMATE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS



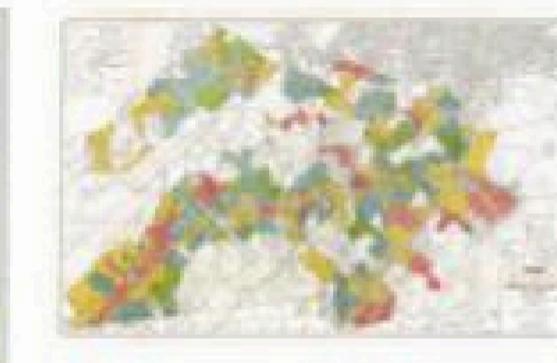
CLIMATE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS



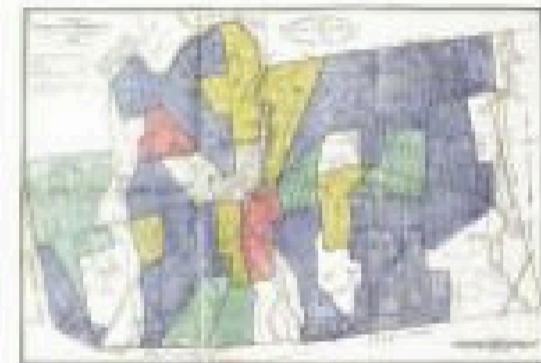
Denver, CO



Richmond, VA



Elizabeth, NJ



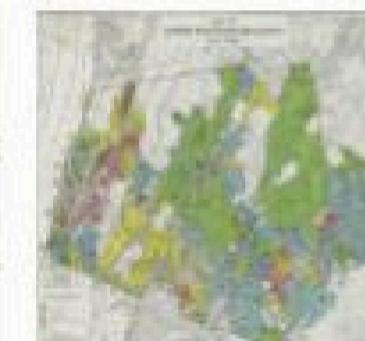
Pawtucket & Central Falls, RI



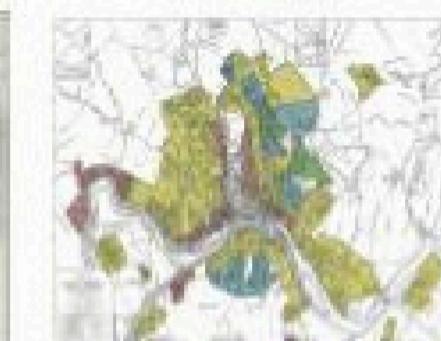
Cincinnati, OH



Richmond, CA



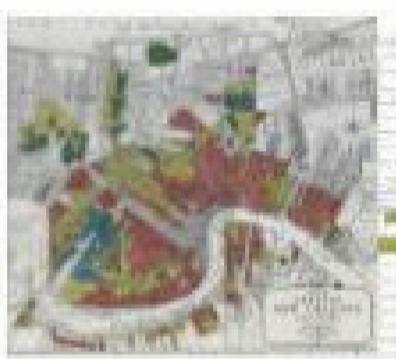
Yonkers, NY



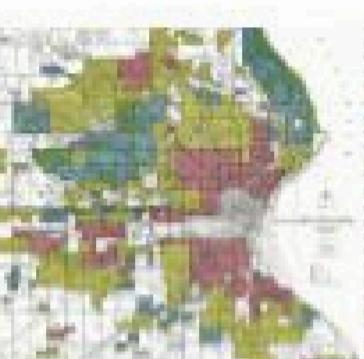
Lawrence & Haverhill, MA



San Diego, CA



New Orleans, LA



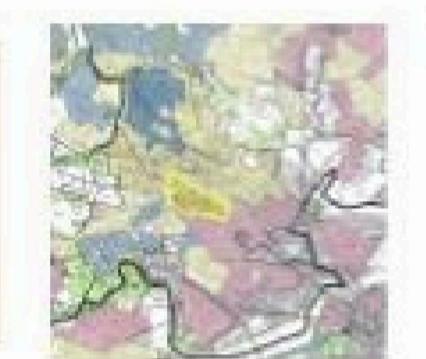
Milwaukee, WI



Kansas City, KS

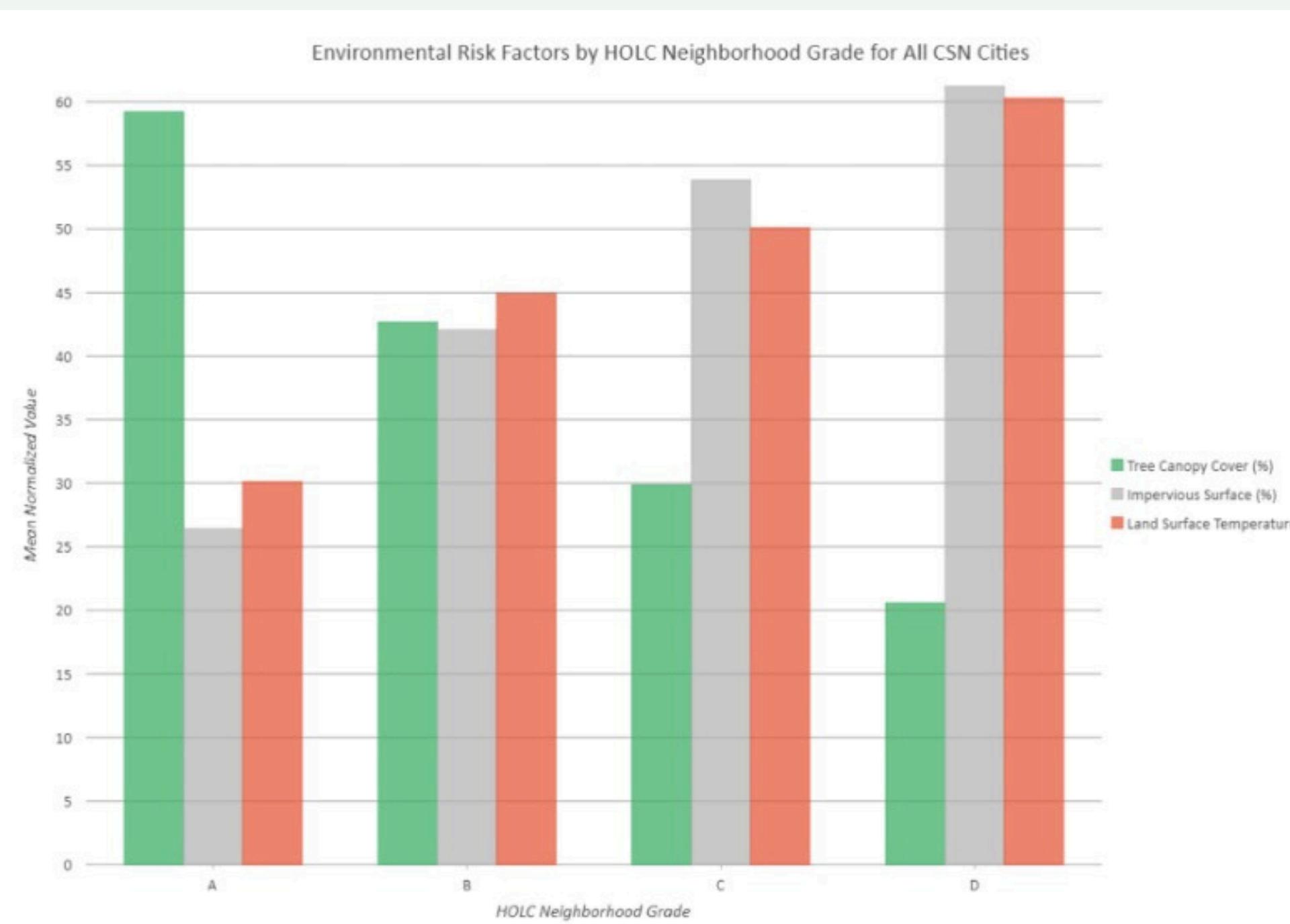


New Bedford & Fall River, MA



Somerville, MA

LAND USE, REDLINING, & EXTREME WEATHER

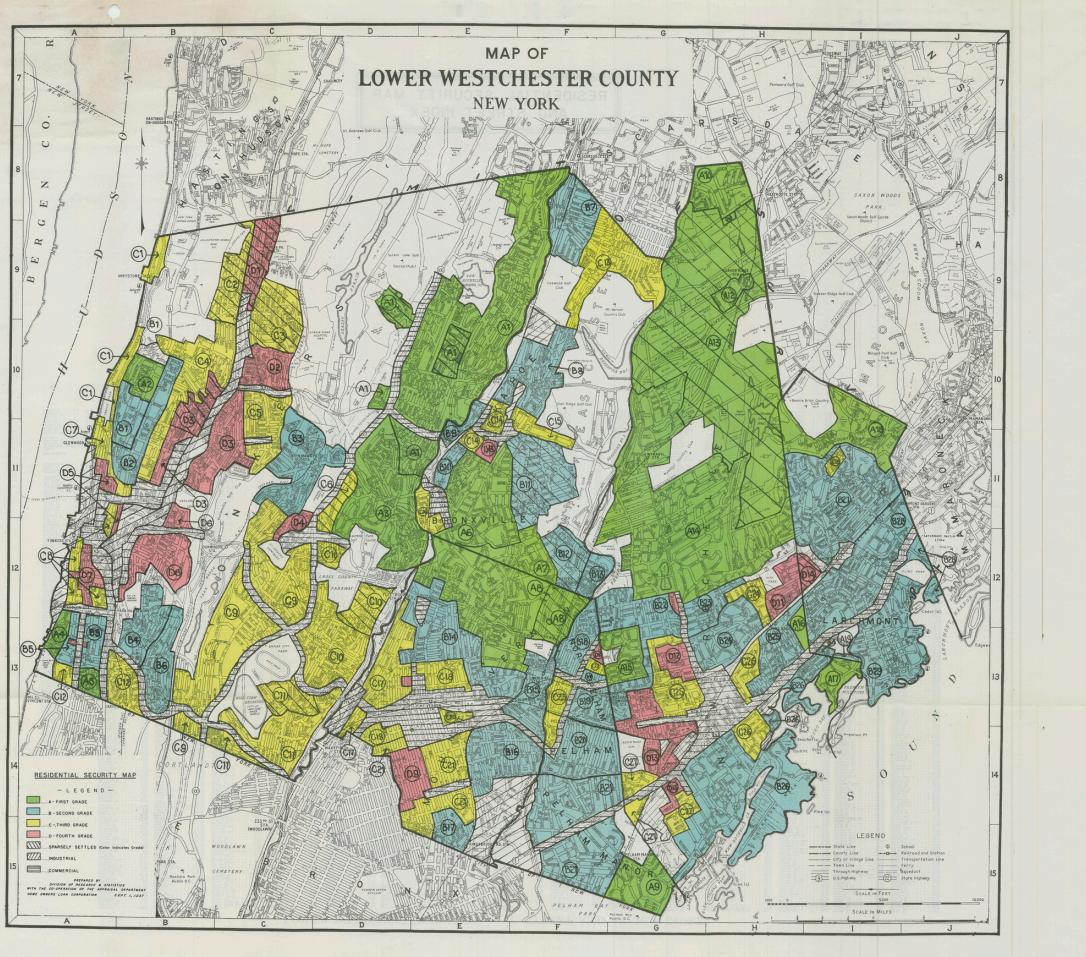


Formerly redlined neighborhoods have

- less tree canopy cover
- more impervious surfaces
- have higher land surface temperatures

**FORMERLY REDLINED NEIGHBORHOODS
ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO THE
IMPACTS OF EXTREME HEAT AND
FLOODING.**

CLIMATE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS STRATEGY



PHASE 1: UNPACK HISTORY

Understand why our neighborhoods look the way they do by exploring the relationship between historical land use practices and the climate crisis

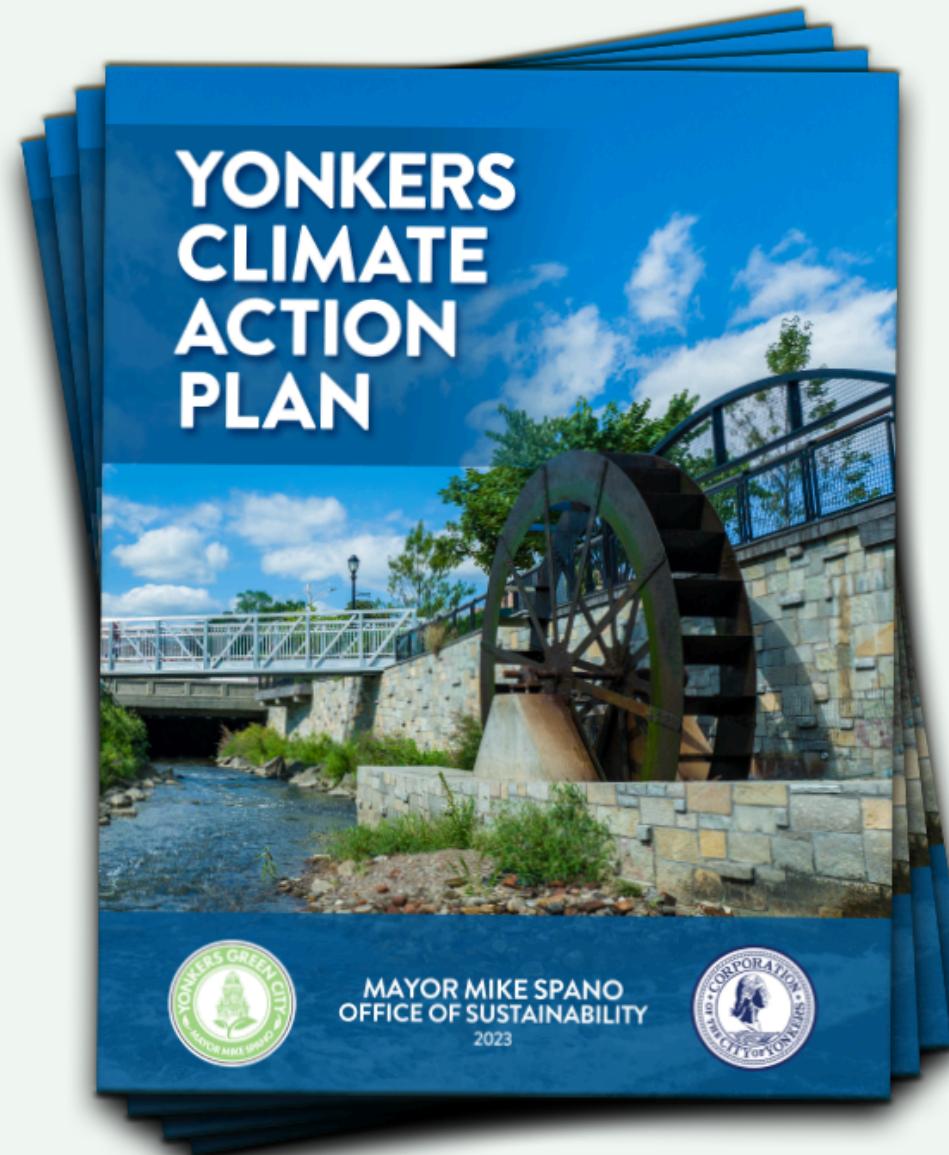
CLIMATE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS STRATEGY

PHASE 2: PRIORITIZE CHANGES



Work with communities to identify their priorities and implement data-informed, resident-led changes in the built environment that advance local resilience

CLIMATE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS STRATEGY



PHASE 3: INTERVENE IN SYSTEMS

Organize and build the capacity of residents to self-advocate for a more equitable distribution of resources by intervening in policy, planning, and local systems

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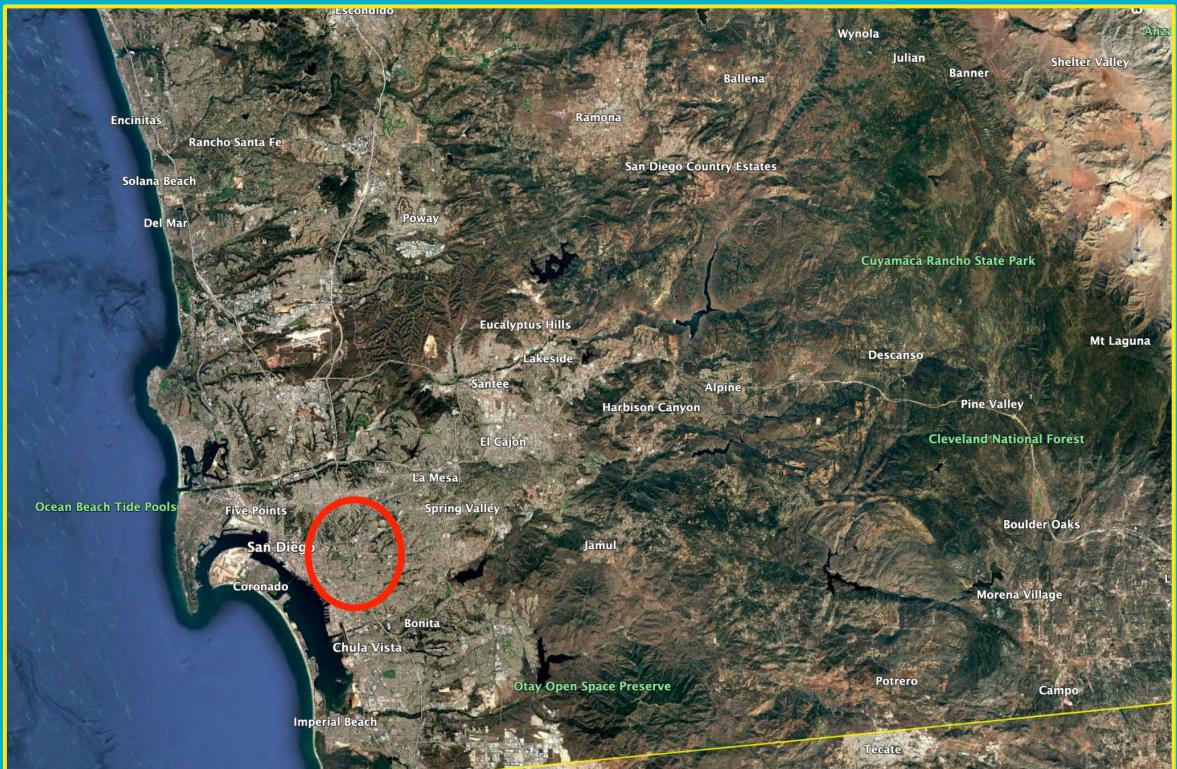
Community Adaptation Manager
Groundwork Hudson Valley

Growing BGI from the Ground Up

Resident Empowerment for Advocacy Impact

Thad Winkle, Deputy Director
Groundwork San Diego - Chollas Creek

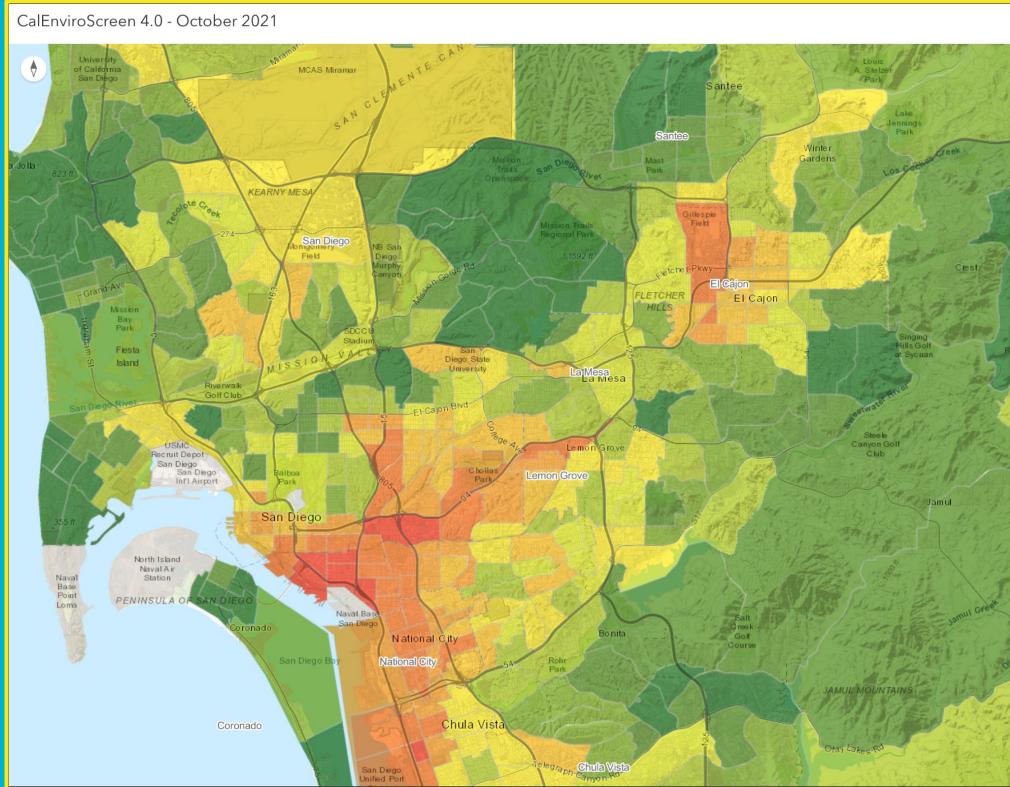
Chollas Creek Watershed



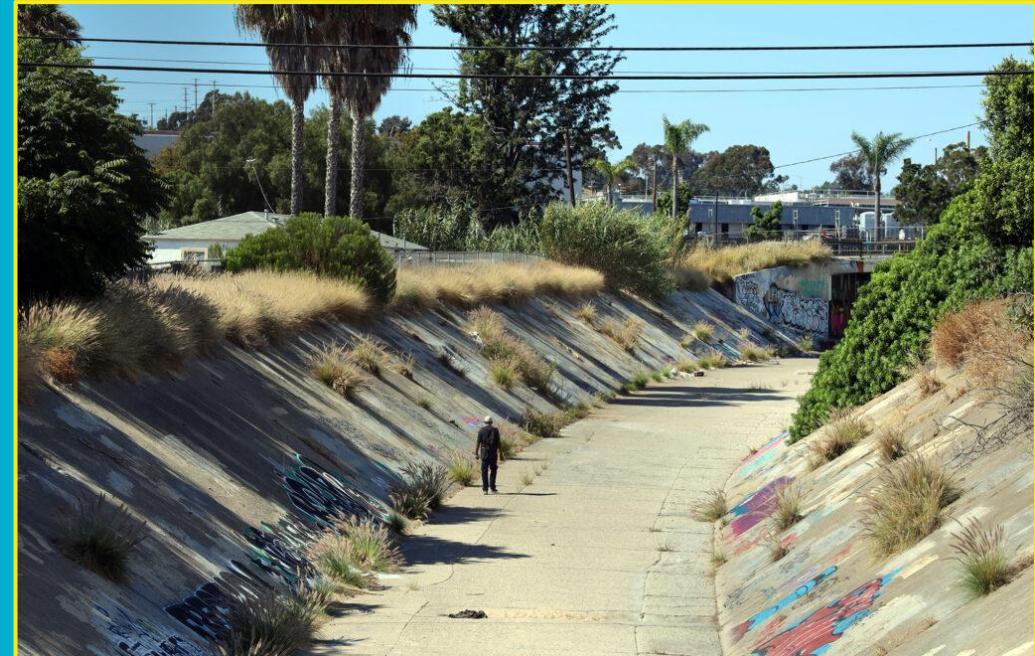
Chollas Creek Watershed



Chollas Creek Watershed



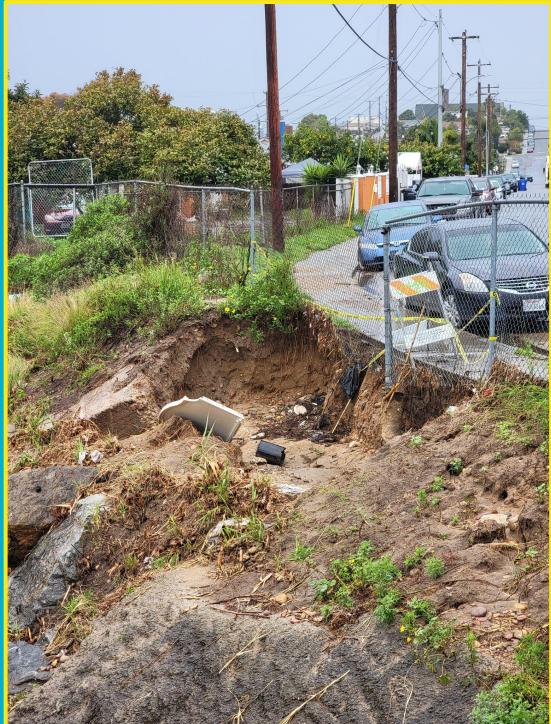
Urbanization & Channelization



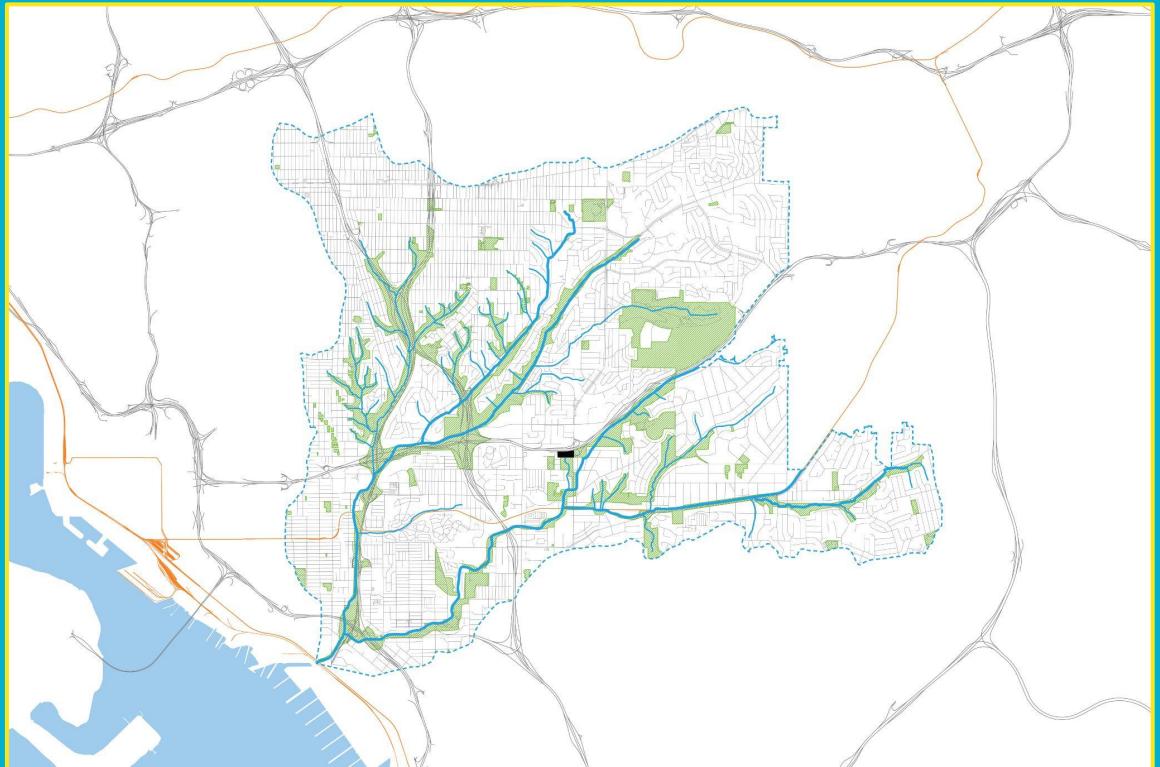
January 22, 2024



January 22, 2024



Chollas Creek Watershed



Partnerships & Collaboration

1 Resident Empowerment Training

- 20 Resident (compensated)
- 8 Sessions
- Topics: BGI, local government, community organizing, local projects
- 5 neighborhood-specific BGI concept plans





Partnerships & Collaboration



2 | Resident Empowerment Fellowship

- 5 Trainees (Compensated)
- Community Advisory Board
- BGI "Micro-Campaigns"
- Chollas Blue-Green Collaborative Leaders



Success on Ocean View Blvd.



Partnerships & Collaboration

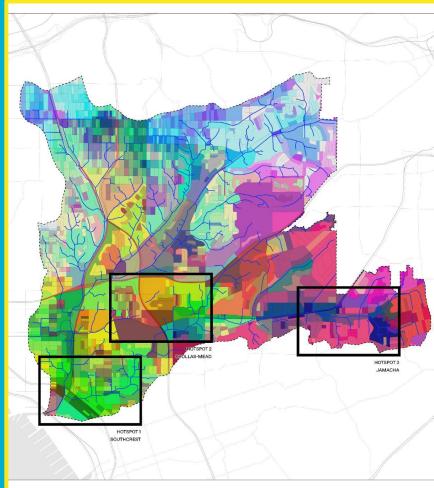


3 | Chollas Blue Green Collaborative

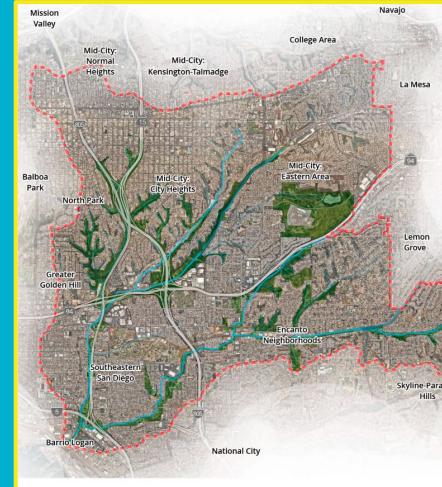
- Quarterly Convenings
- Representative Stakeholders (residents, government, regional agencies, compliance agencies, private sector, CBOs, technical experts)
- Shared vision casting

Emerging Opportunities

1 Multibenefit Watershed Mapping



2 Regional Park Master Planning



3 Conducting Outreach for & with the City



Let's be in touch

www.GroundworkSanDiego.org
thad@groundworksandiego.org



Fostering Partnerships and Resident Working Groups in Yonkers, NY

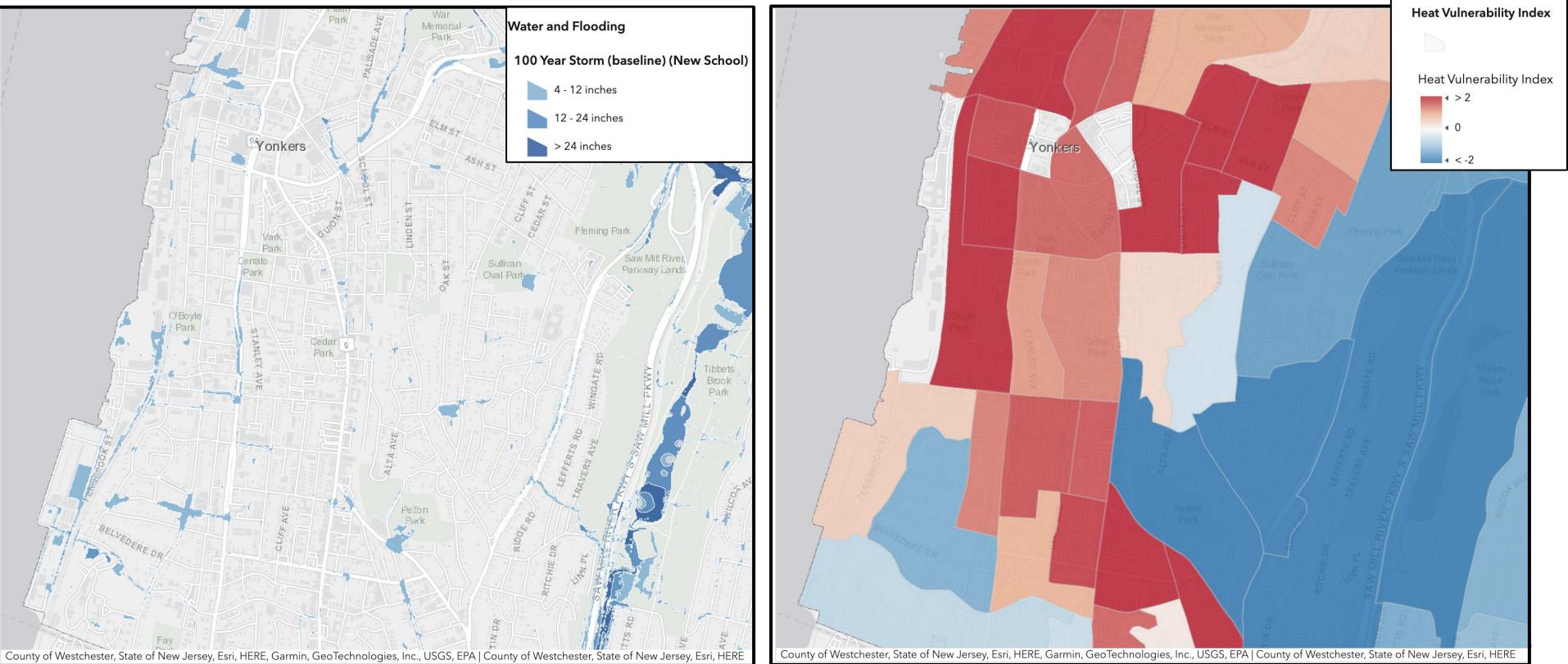


Stronger Together Webinar,
Urban Waters Learning Network
June 10, 2025

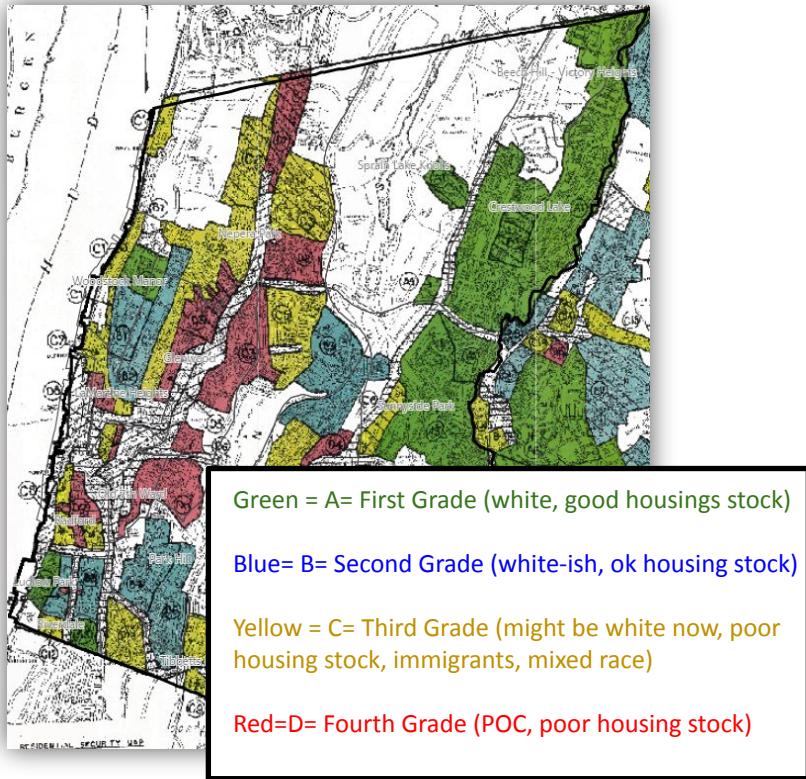


Groundwork Hudson Valley creates change in urban neighborhoods through community-based partnerships that promote resilience infrastructure, youth leadership, and economic opportunity.

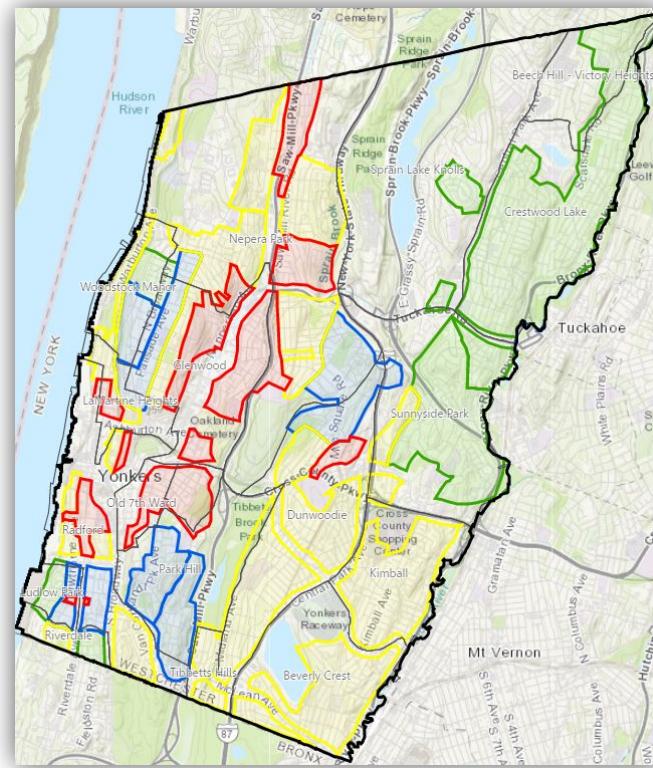
Climate Vulnerability Mapping



HOLC Map of Yonkers



Digitizing HOLC Map



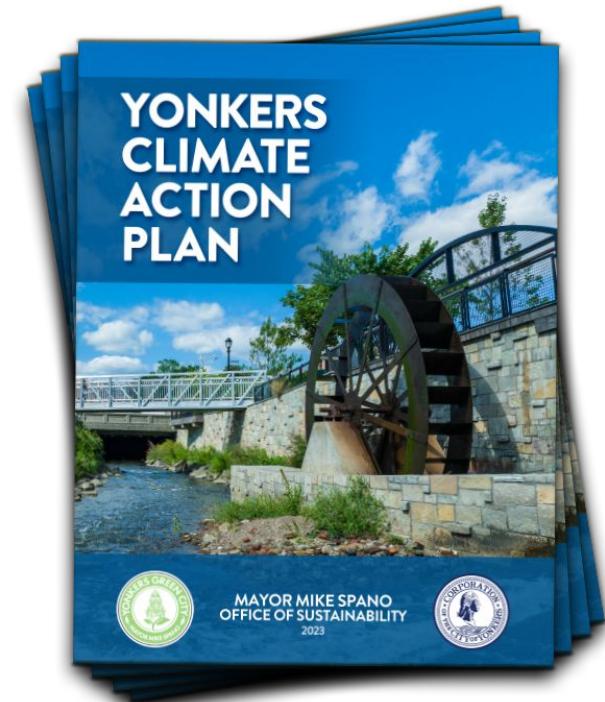
Climate Safe Yonkers Task Force

- Diverse group of Yonkers residents
- Met monthly for a year to increase residents' knowledge about relevant climate themes



Yonkers Climate Action Plan (YCAP)

- Preparation was aligned with GWHV's Climate Safe Neighborhoods (CSN) initiative
- CSYTF provided resident feedback
- Climate actions include:
 - Energy and Buildings
 - Transportation
 - Waste
 - Resilience and Environment
 - Jobs and Economy



Project Partners in Yonkers, NY

- Municipal Housing Authority for City of Yonkers (MHACY)
- Westhab
- Yonkers Public Library
- Yonkers Public Schools
- Downtown BID
- South Broadway BID



Build your own air purifier event at Yonkers Riverfront Library

MHACY & Westhab

- Green infrastructure projects
- Tree plantings
- Air quality monitors
- Air quality awareness campaign



Left to right: Air quality monitor at MHACY, Rain garden at MHACY, air quality awareness campaign at Westhab

Yonkers Public Library

- Air quality monitor
- Library-of-Things partnership
- Build-your-own air purifier event
- Green infrastructure
- Seed bank
- Host for Working Group meetings

Borrow Events Research & Learn Spaces & Services

Library of Things

Air Quality Monitor



You can now check out an **AirBeam Mobile Air Quality Monitor** for free!

Check It Out

More Details

Bird Backpack



Learn more about the birds living near you. Check out a birding backpack to get started!

More Details

Blood Pressure Monitor



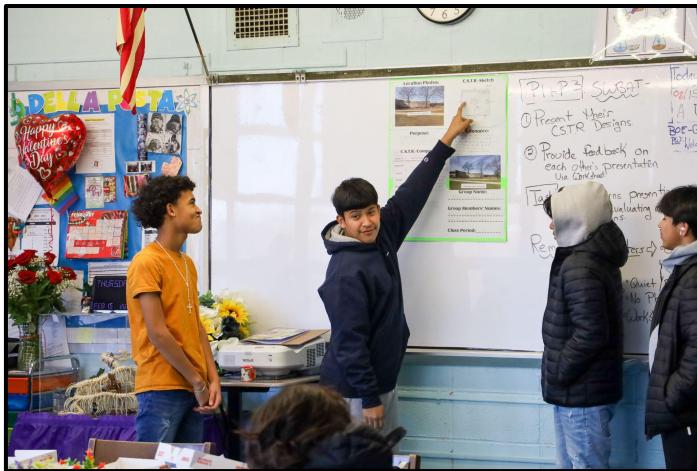
Take your blood pressure readings at home with an upper arm blood pressure monitor.

Check It Out

More Details

Yonkers Public Schools

- STEM Curriculums
 - EPA Connect-the-Drops program
- Tree plantings
- Air quality monitors



Left to right: Connecting-the-drops and microforest planting at the Obama School for Social Justice

Working Group Model

- Following the YCAP, members discussed what they would like to see / do moving forward:
 - Neighborhood-themed
 - Theme-based
 - Policy-themed
 - Demonstration Projects
- Progress actions and strategies for the YCAP
- \$25/hr
- Piloted in summer 2024
 - Air Quality
 - Trees Canopy Expansion



Left to right: community tree planting, air quality monitor installation

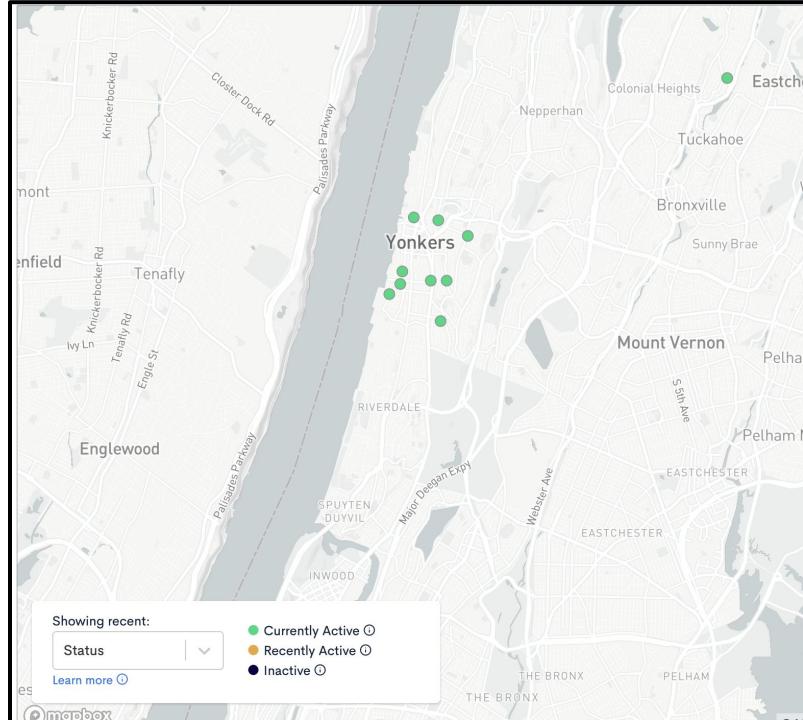
Air Quality Working Group

- Policy and outreach focus
- Determine research questions and locations for air quality monitors
 - Work with air quality data analysts
- Learn how air quality is influenced by warming weather, how air pollution affects humans and what precautions we can take
- Devise strategies to improve air quality in Yonkers



Air Quality Working Group Meeting

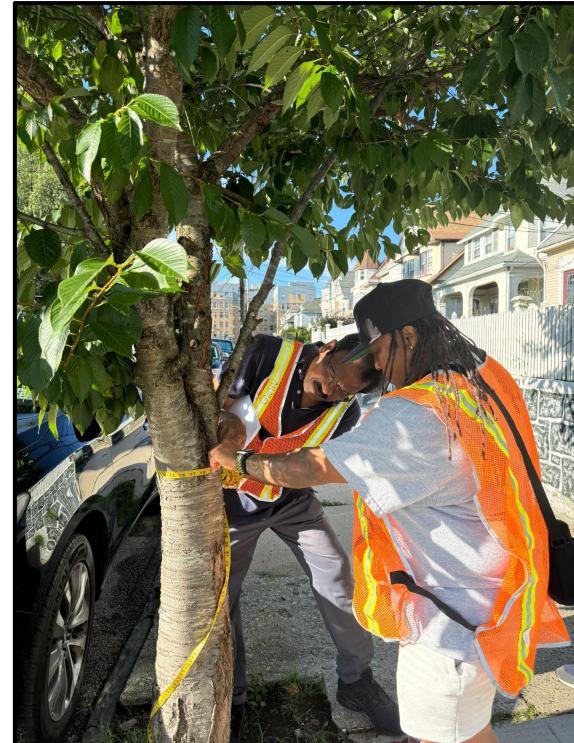
Air Quality Data Collection



Left to right: Installing an air quality monitor in SW Yonkers, QuantAQ air quality map

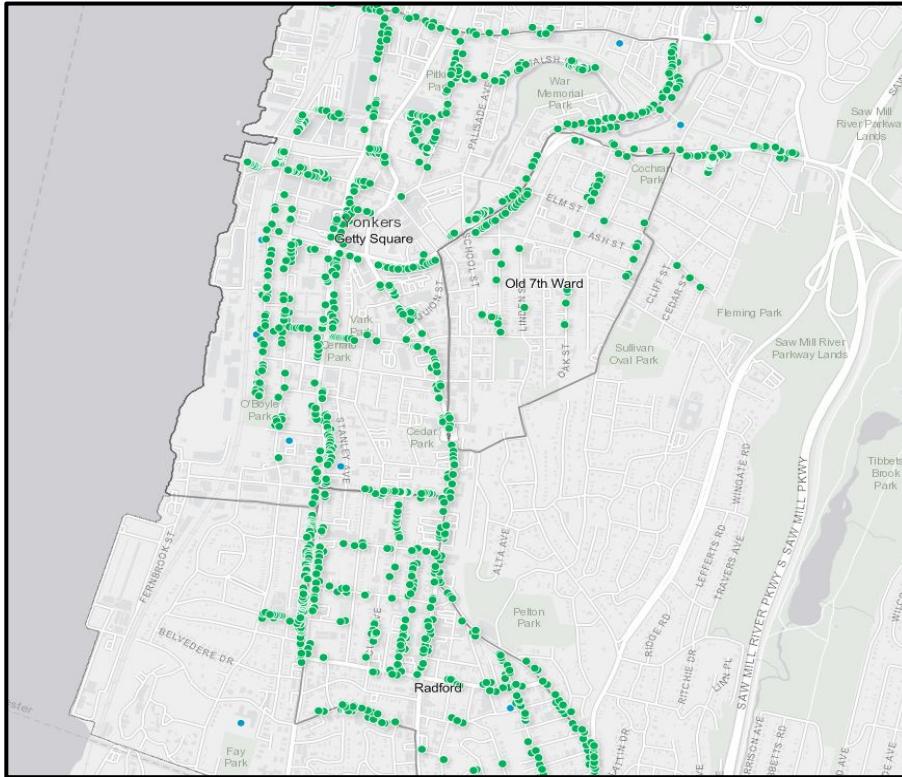
Tree Canopy Expansion Working Group

- Hands-on
- Inventory trees using a mobile app developed by GWUSA
- Identify areas to plant trees, and help plant and maintain trees
- Learn how trees capture stormwater, improve air quality, mitigate urban heat island effect, support biodiversity and other co-benefits



Working Group members inventory a tree

Yonkers Street Tree Inventory



Left to right: GWHV Tree Inventory Dashboard (6/25), Members inventory a tree

Shade Structure Working Group

- Launched April 2025
- Determine locations and designs for shade structures in heat vulnerable communities in Yonkers
- Work closely with landscape architecture firm
- Efforts culminate in an exhibit at the Hudson River Museum



Shade Structure Working Group meeting

Lessons Learned

- Bring partners in early
- Timely updates
- Listen to your members: what do they want to learn and accomplish
- Make sure folks feel comfortable asking questions
- Recognize social opportunities
- Develop an agreement and, when possible, set expectations



Shade Structure Working Group Kick-Off Meeting



Thank you

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