

# 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

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*Groundwork USA  
envisions 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**

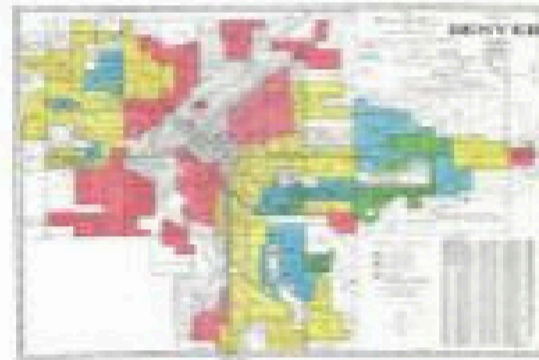


# CLIMATE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS





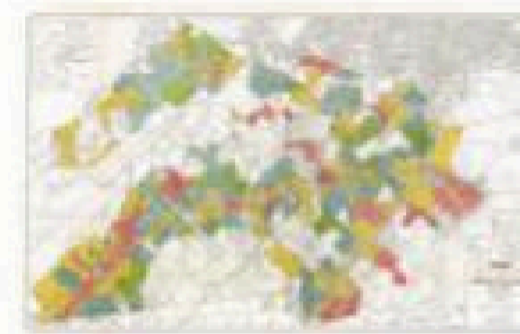
# CLIMATE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS



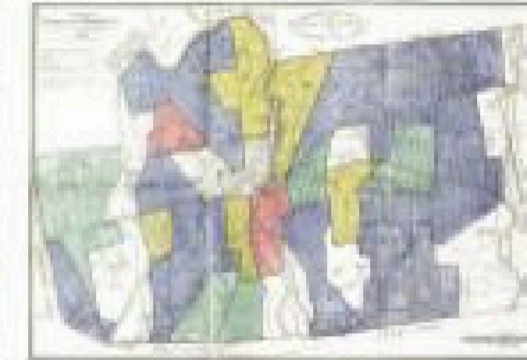
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**Richmond, VA**



**Elizabeth, NJ**



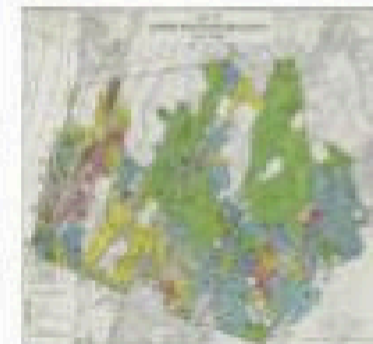
**Pawtucket & Central Falls, RI**



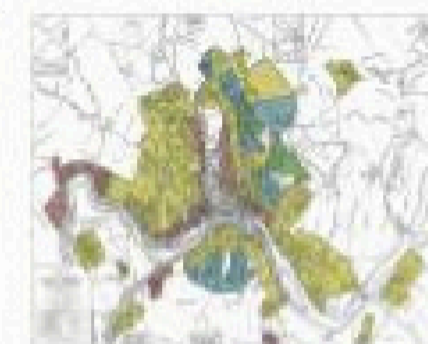
**Cincinnati, OH**



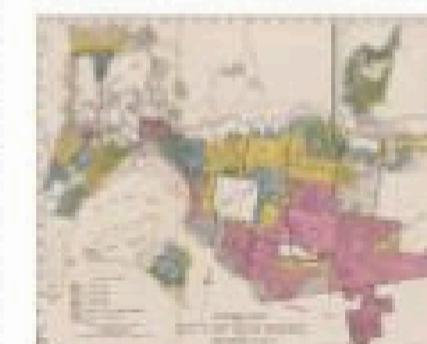
**Richmond, CA**



**Yonkers, NY**



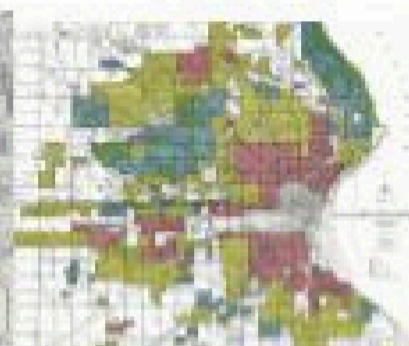
**Lawrence &  
Haverhill, MA**



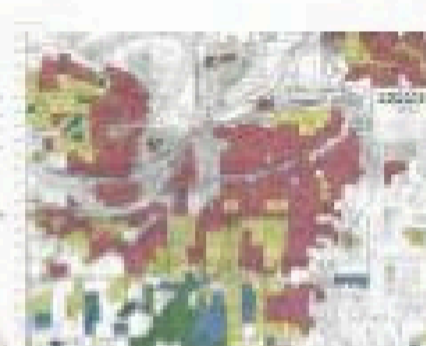
**San Diego, CA**



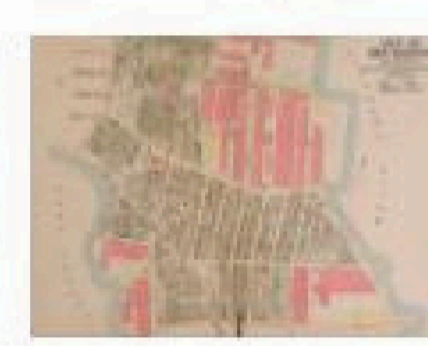
**New Orleans, LA**



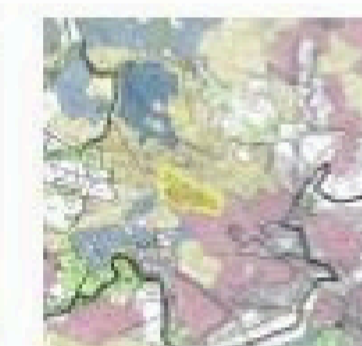
**Milwaukee, WI**



**Kansas City, KS**



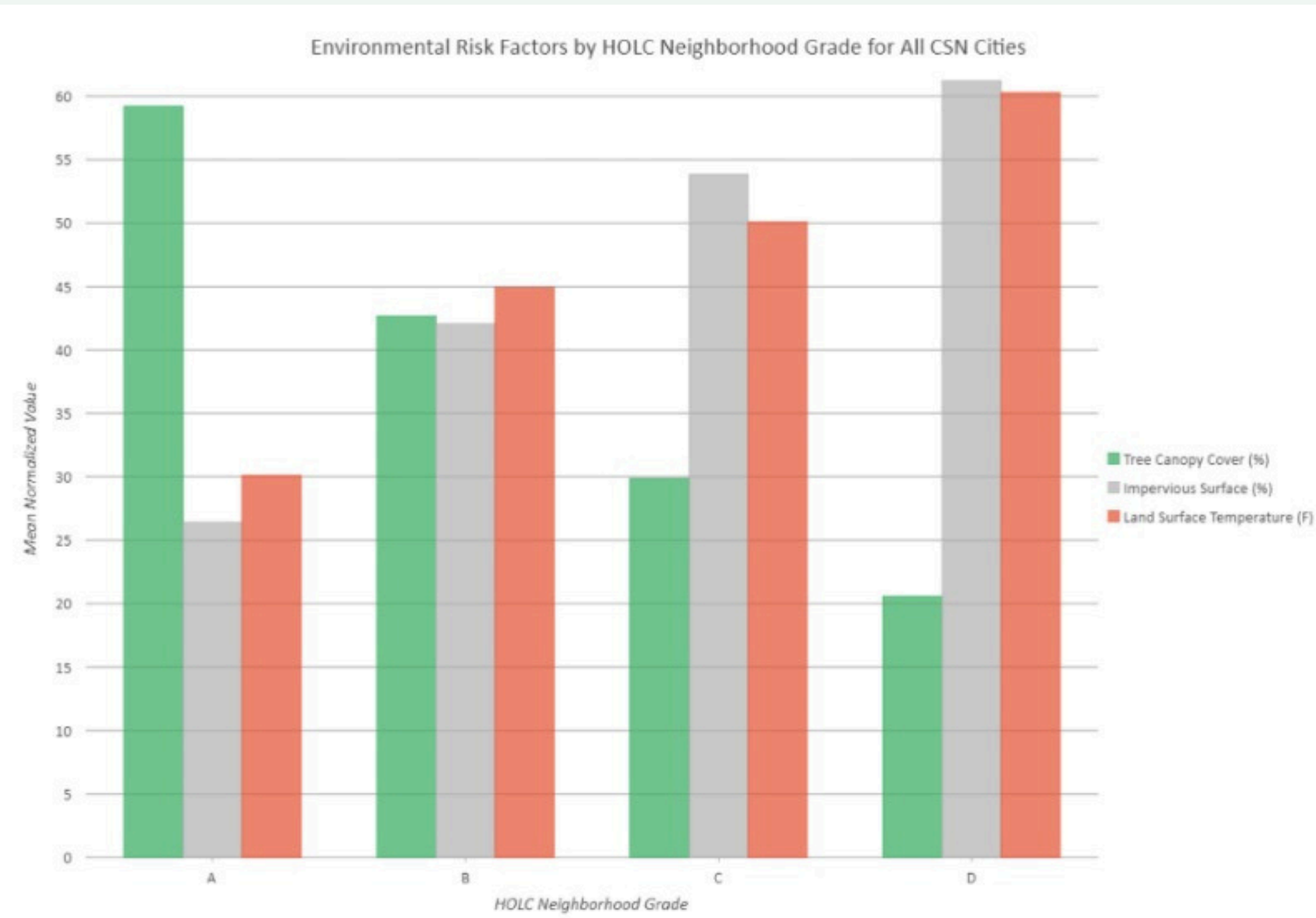
**New Bedford &  
Fall River, MA**



**Somerville, MA**



# LAND USE, REDLINING, & EXTREME WEATHER



Formerly redlined neighborhoods have

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

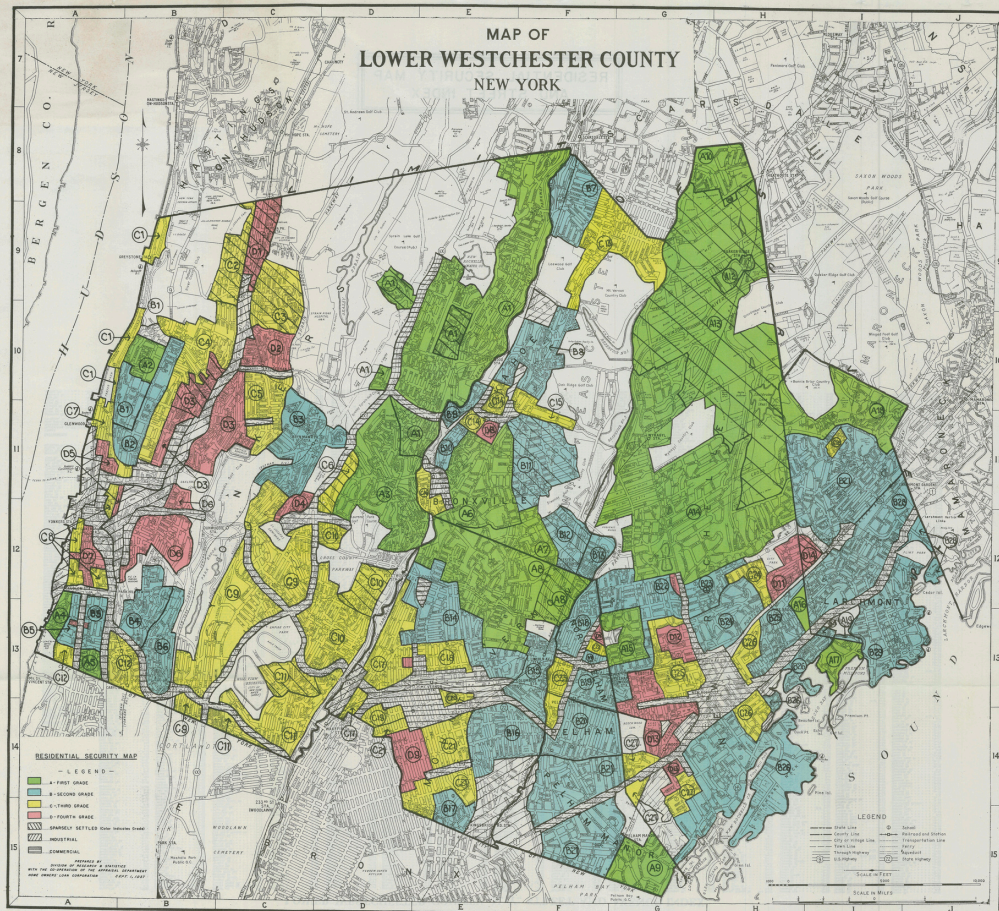
**FORMERLY REDLINED NEIGHBORHOODS ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO THE IMPACTS OF EXTREME HEAT AND FLOODING.**



# CLIMATE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS STRATEGY

## PHASE 1: UNPACK HISTORY

Understand why our neighborhoods look the way the 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

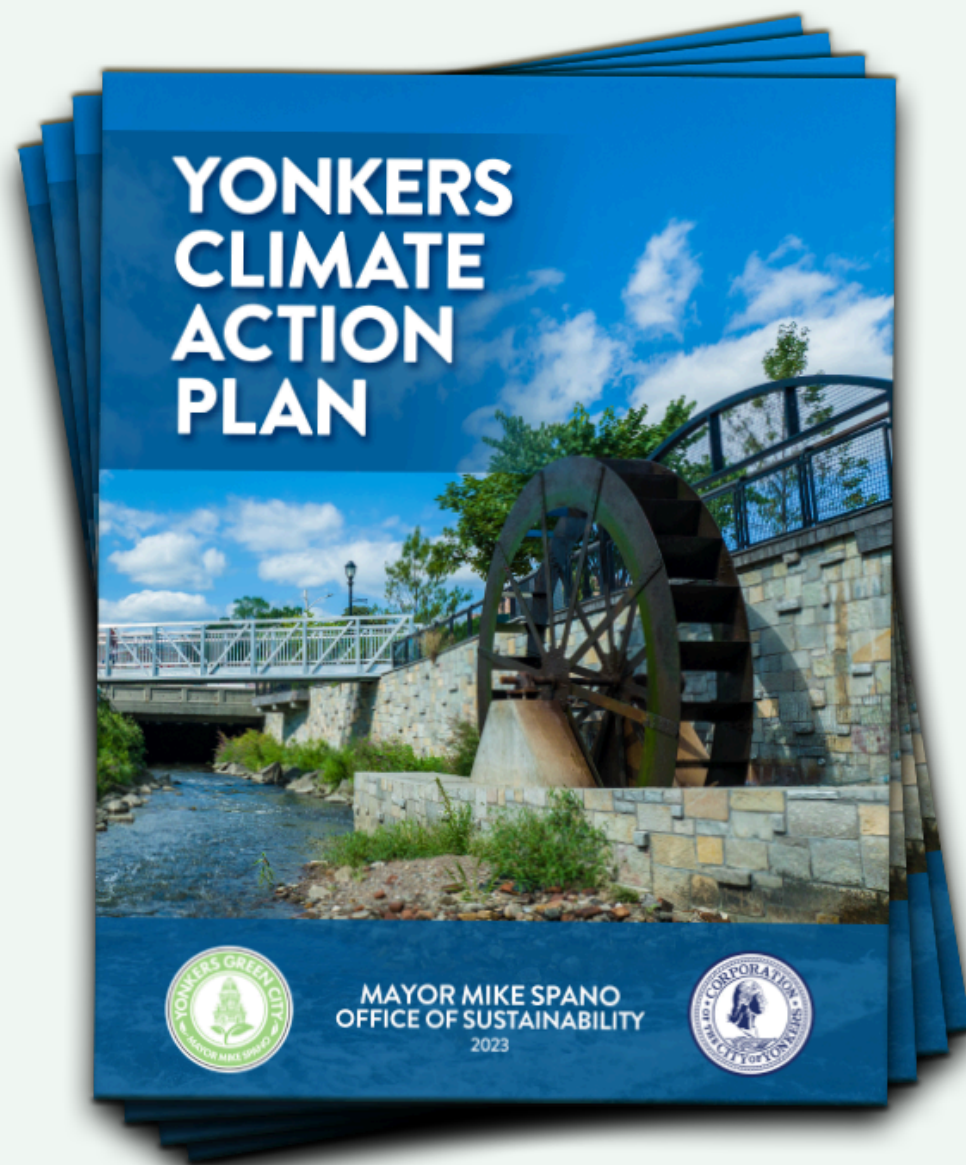




# CLIMATE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS STRATEGY

## **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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**Director of Community Planning  
Groundwork USA**



**Thad Winkle**

**Deputy Director  
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# Growing BGI from the Ground Up

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Resident Empowerment for Advocacy Impact

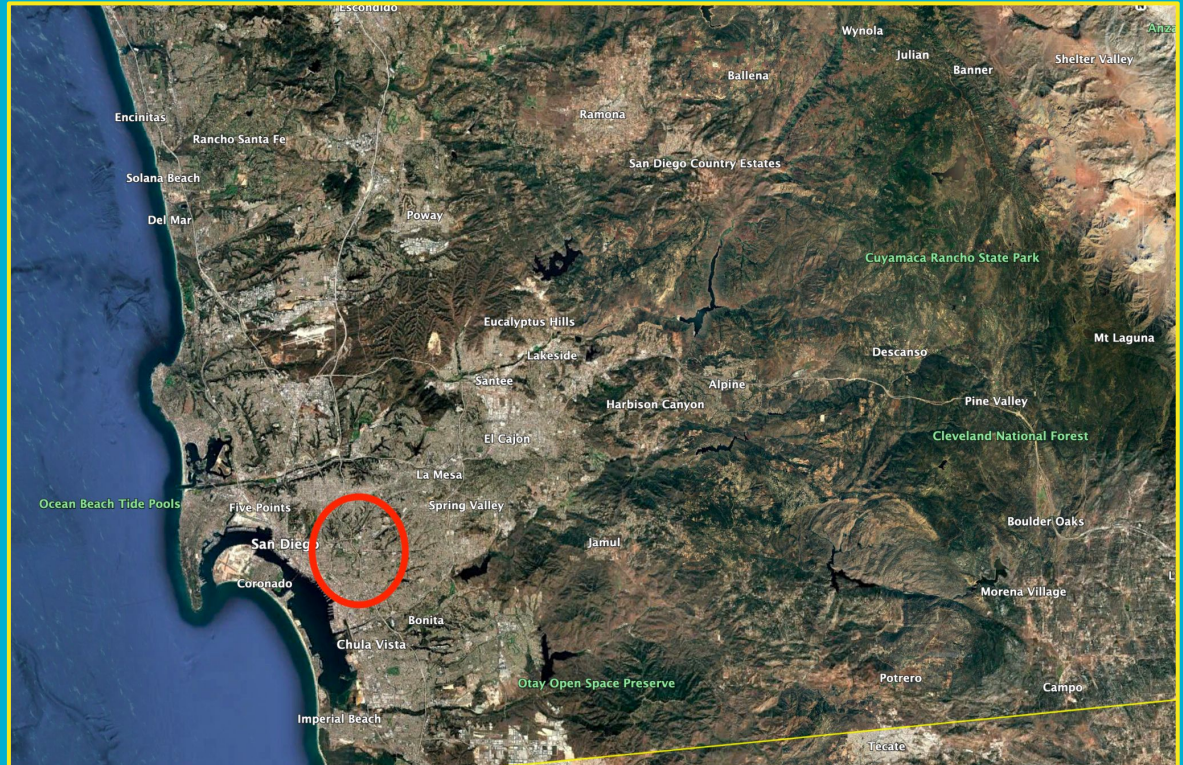
Thad Winkle, Deputy Director

Groundwork San Diego - Chollas Creek



# Chollas Creek Watershed

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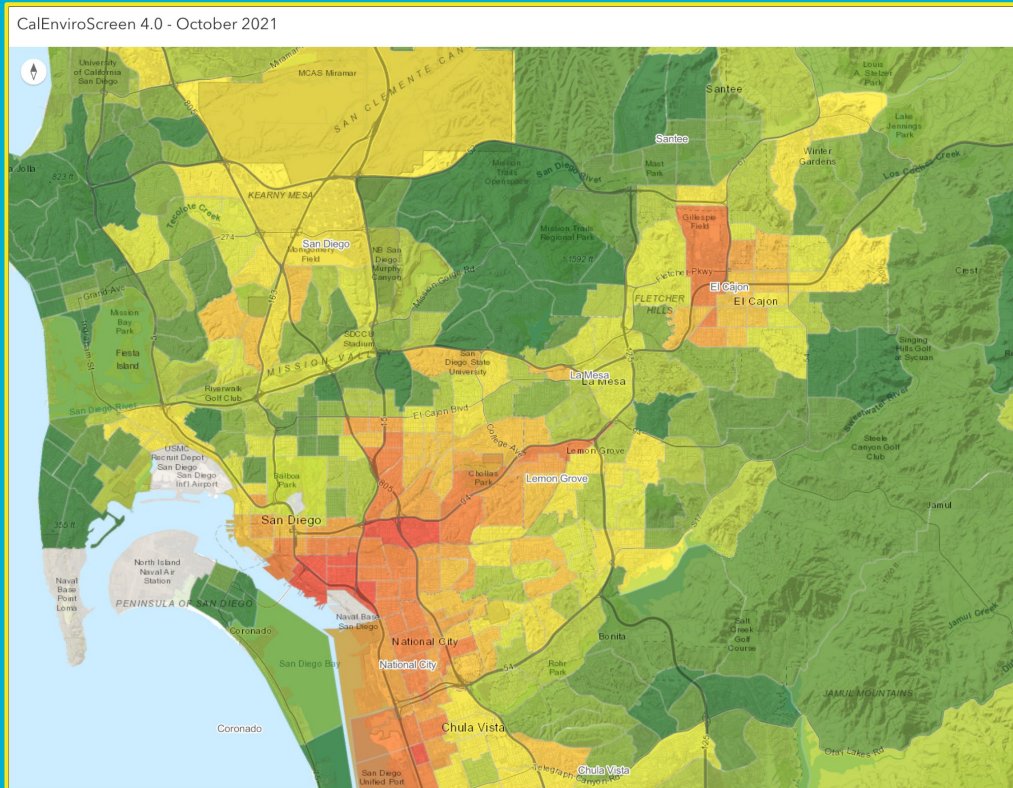
# Chollas Creek Watershed

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# Urbanization & Channelization

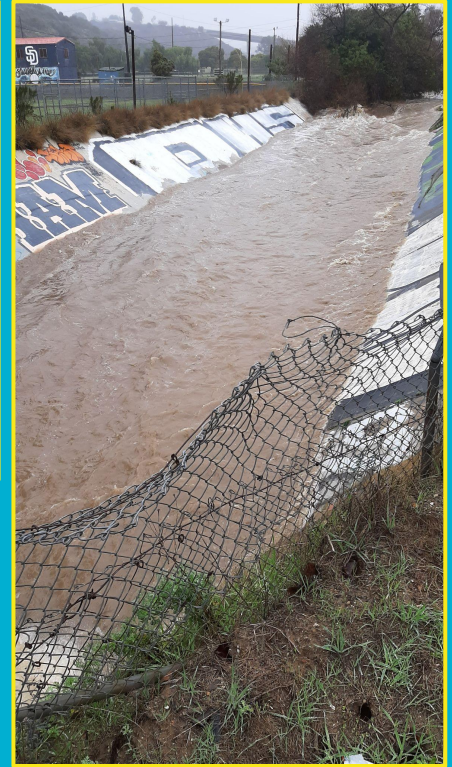
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# January 22, 2024

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# January 22, 2024

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# Chollas Creek Watershed

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# 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





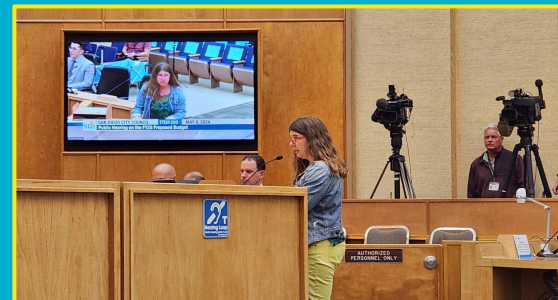




# Partnerships & Collaboration

## 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



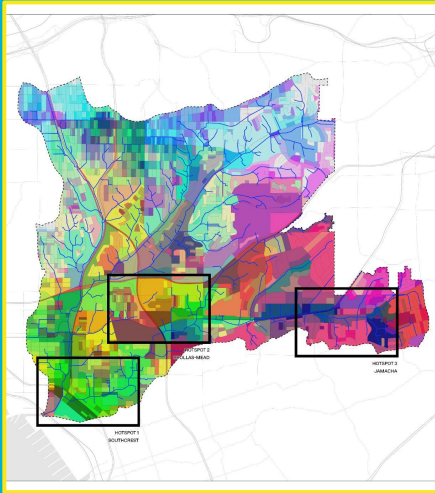
## 3 | Chollas Blue Green Collaborative

- 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](http://www.GroundworkSanDiego.org)  
[thad@groundworksandiego.org](mailto:thad@groundworksandiego.org)



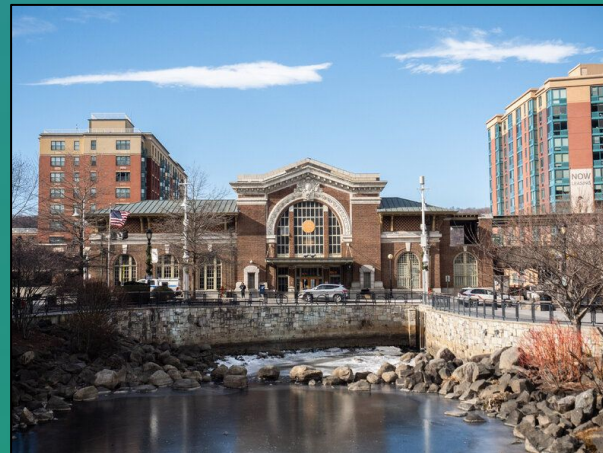
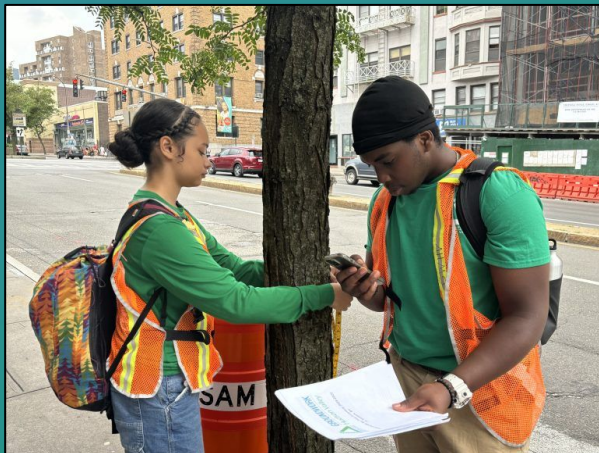


# Fostering Partnerships and Resident Working Groups in Yonkers, NY



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

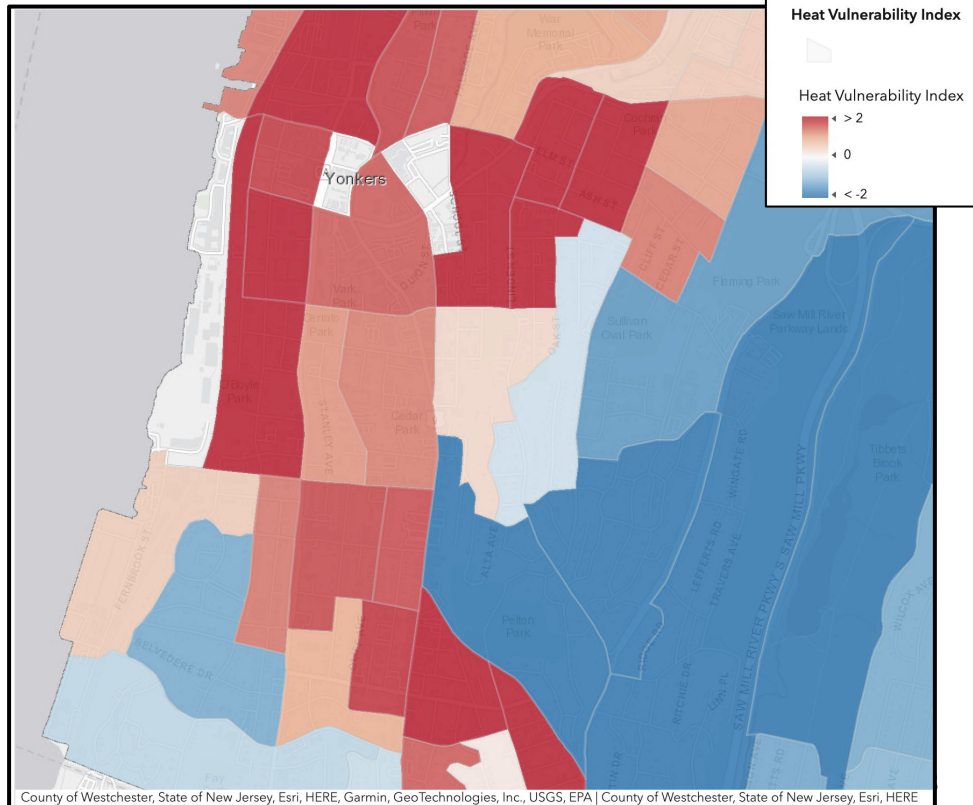
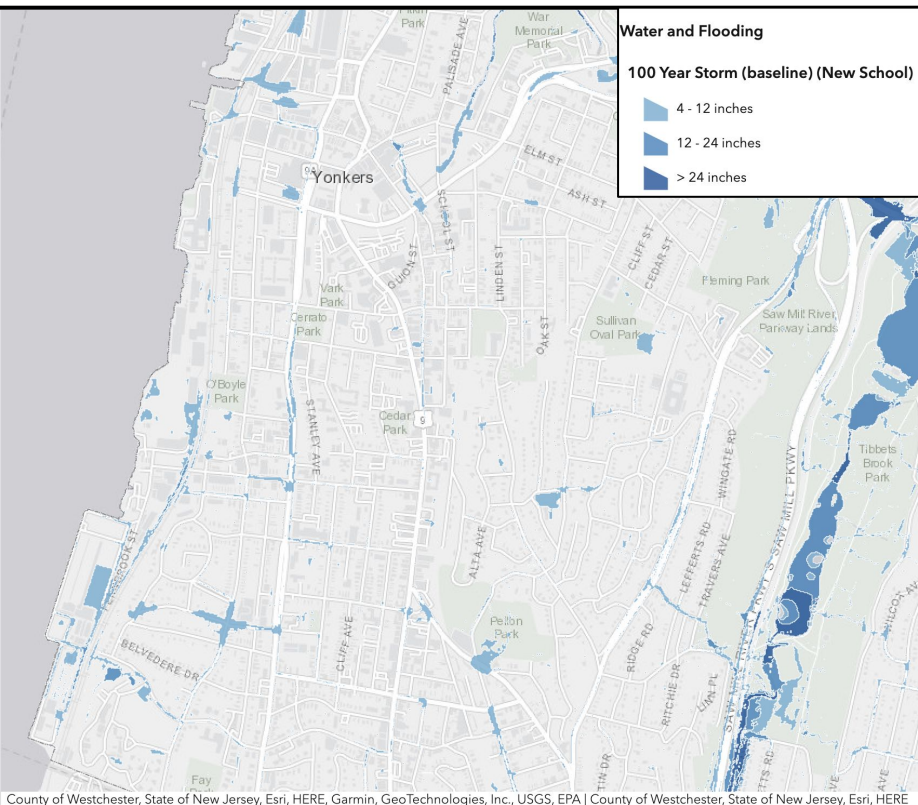




Groundwork Hudson Valley creates change in urban neighborhoods through community-based partnerships that promote resilience infrastructure, youth leadership, and economic opportunity.

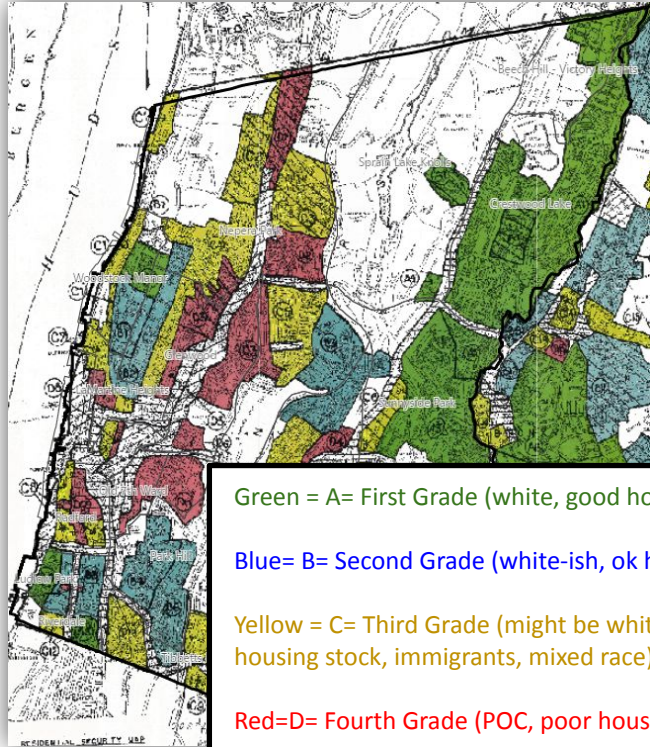


# Climate Vulnerability Mapping





## HOLC Map of Yonkers



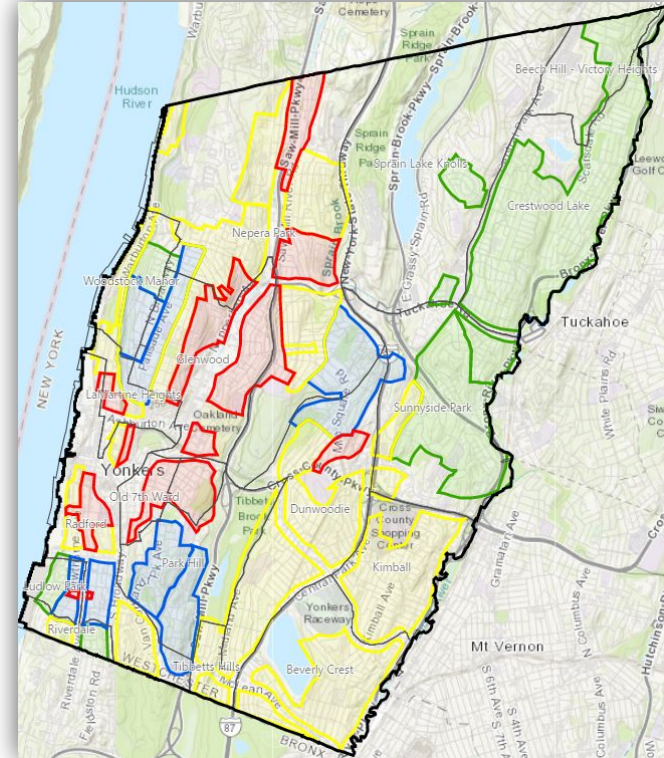
Green = A= First Grade (white, good housings stock)

Blue= B= Second Grade (white-ish, ok housing stock)

Yellow = C= Third Grade (might be white now, poor housing stock, immigrants, mixed race)

Red=D= Fourth Grade (POC, poor housing stock)

## Digitizing HOLC Map



# Climate Safe Yonkers Task Force

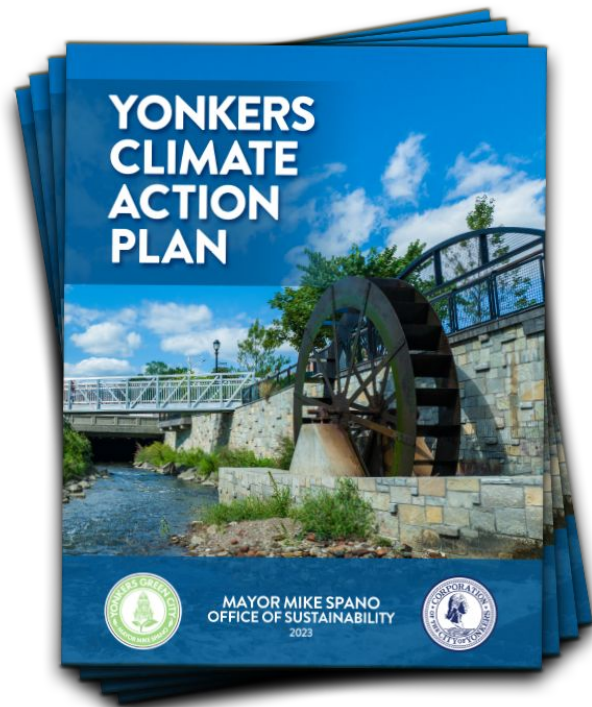
- Diverse group of Yonkers residents
- Met monthly for a year to increase residents' knowledge about relevant climate themes





# 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

Filters

Search


Category

☐ Arts & Crafts  
☐ Games & Entertainment  
☐ Health Devices  
☐ Hobbies & Exploration  
☐ Technology

Audience

☐ Adults

### 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 Curriculum
  - 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



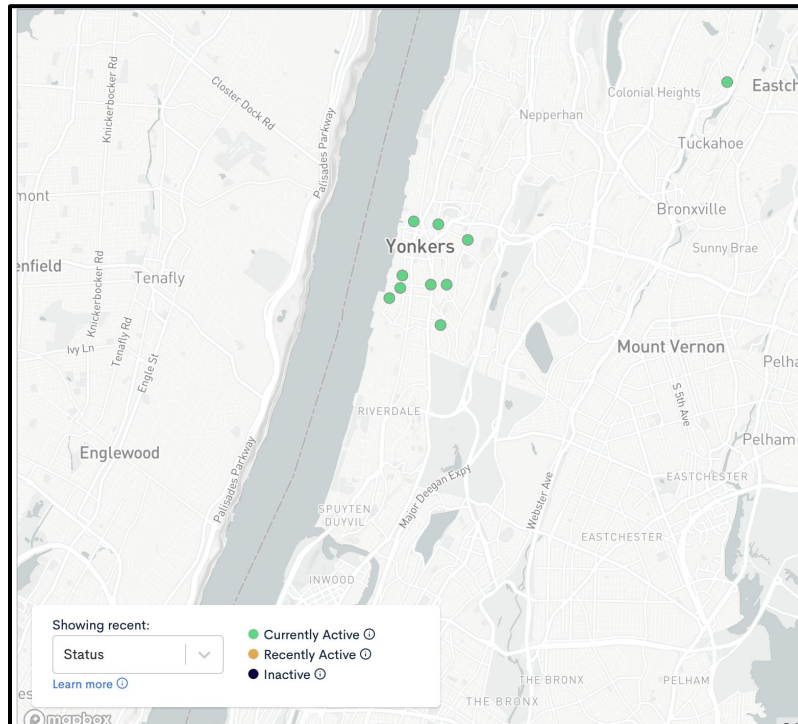
# Air Quality Working Group

- 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



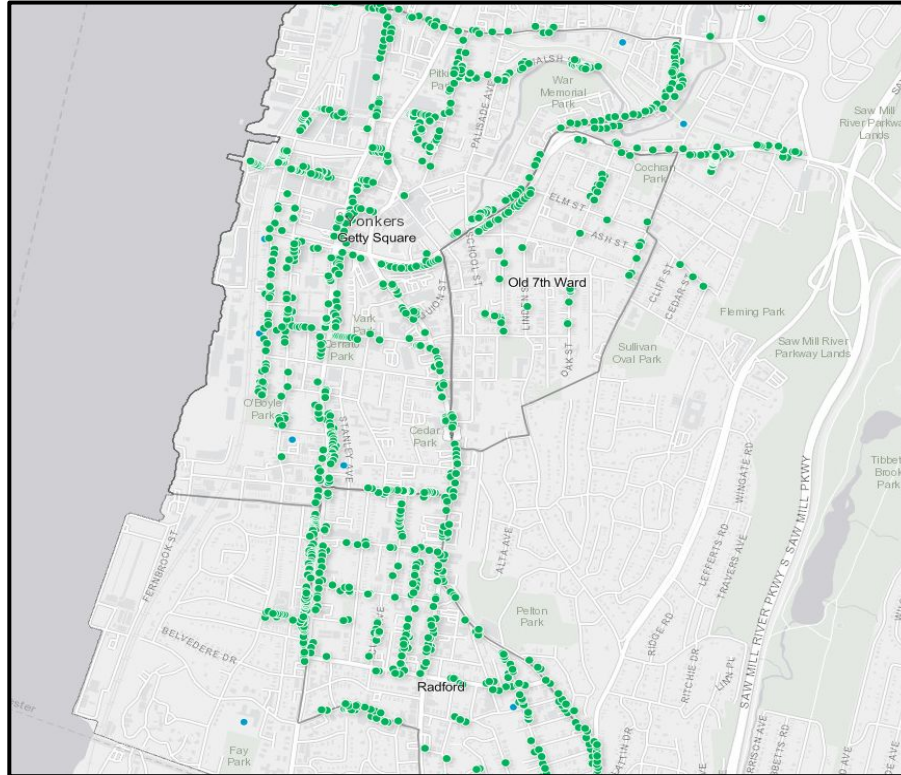
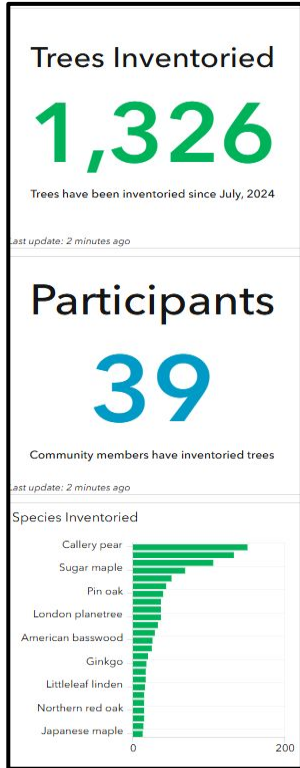
# Tree Canopy Expansion Working Group

- 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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