



Alliance for Community Trees Day





ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TREES DAY

PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY
CONFERENCE 2025

November 2025



ARBORDAY.ORG

Agenda



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Denver

Overview

02

The Park People

In a nutshell

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Infinite Need

Finite resources

04

**Community
Hub**

Competition vs
collaboration

05

The Four R's

Stay afloat

06

**Gals Who
Garden**

A case study

THE PARK PEOPLE

Working with communities to plant trees and improve parks for a healthy, resilient future



Community Engagement/Gals Who Garden



PRESENTED BY

LINDSAY CUTLER & EVON LOPEZ

Program Director and Community Connector

The Park People

History of the Land

We Acknowledge... In 1851, the federal government recognized Arapaho and Cheyenne claims to northwest Colorado (including the area that would become Louisville). But in 1858, settlers discovered and started mining gold and coal south of Boulder. These were criminal endeavors because this was Indian land, according to US Treaty. Instead of siding with the Arapaho and Cheyenne whose land was being illegally mined, the federal government coerced native leaders to give up their land claims in the 1861 Fort Wise Treaty. This made it possible for homesteaders to purchase land and settle in the Front Range area, and for the town of Louisville to be established in 1878. Today, [Denver] sits on land that has been home to the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho and has benefited from the forced removal and violence done to these peoples.



Denver's climate

The Intermountain West

- Arid
- High altitude
- Shortgrass prairie





Denver Today

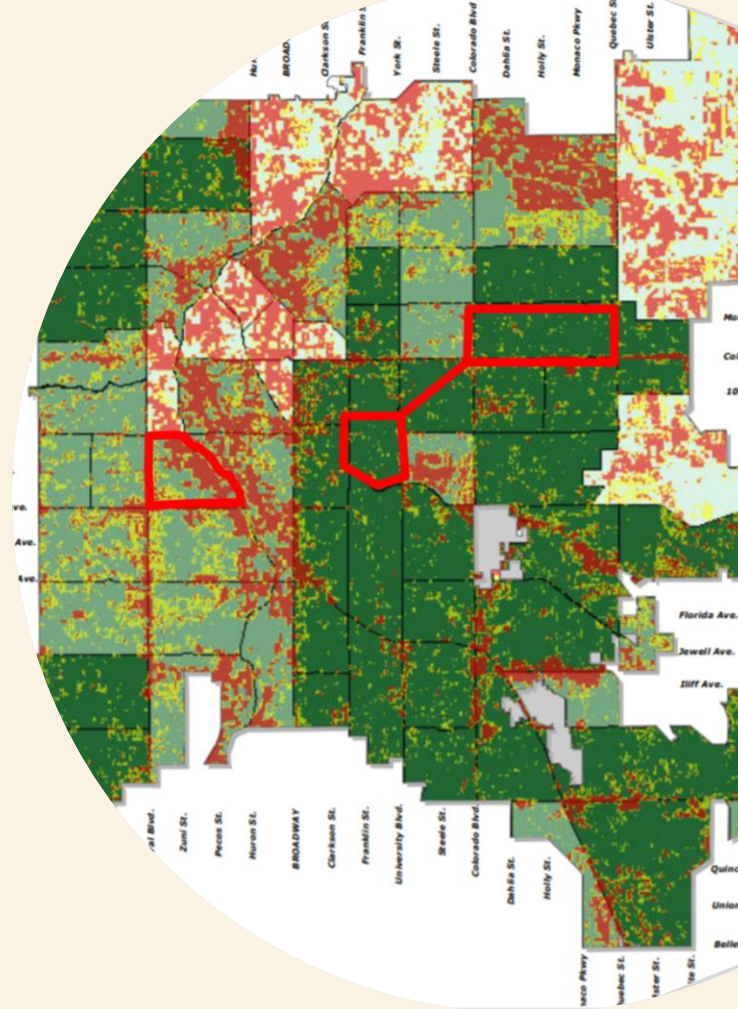
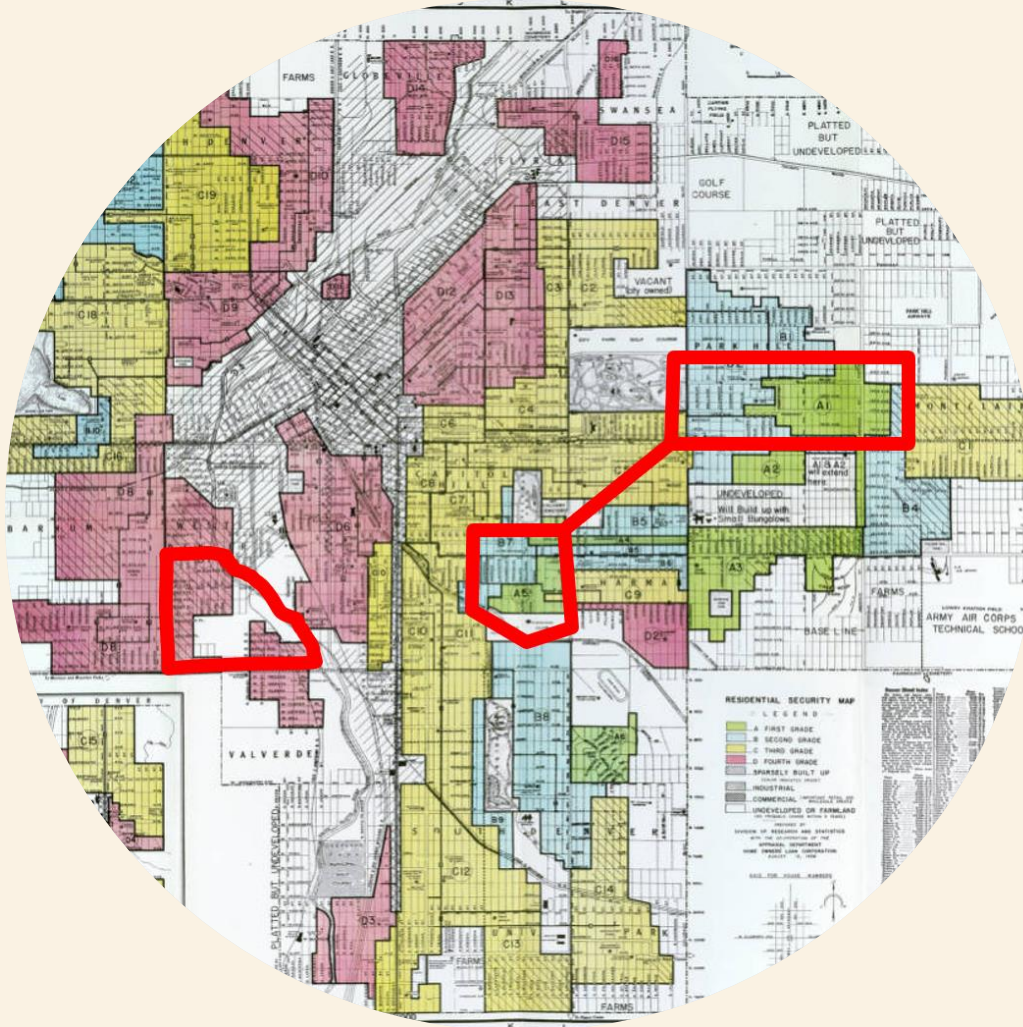
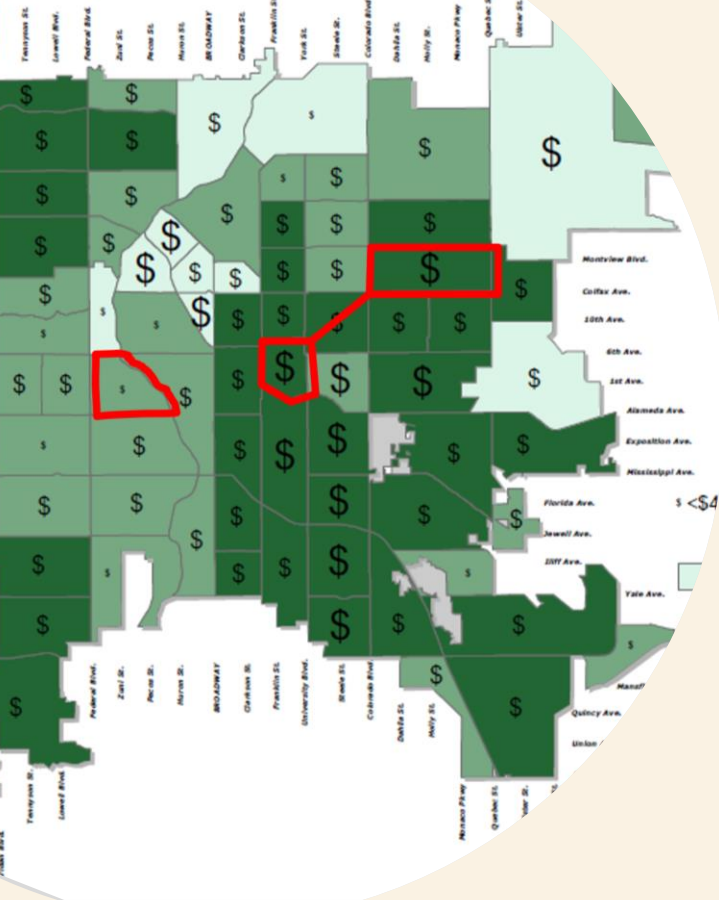
State of the Urban Forest

- 2.2 million trees
- Shading and cooling 700,000 people
- \$122 million in community benefits
- 3.8 trees per capita
- \$2.9 billion asset value



Photo by Carol M. Highsmith

Household Income & Tree Canopy







Denver Digs Trees

affordable trees for all

Community Forester

training volunteer foresters,
engaging resident leadership

TreeForce

growing a green workforce



Mile High Tree Champions

group planting projects



Park Legacy Program

commemorative tree plantings



70,000

Trees planted in last 40 years

1,109

Years

Infinite Work

Aridity

Altitude

Development

Infestation

Extreme weather



The Denver Foundation



The Park People



ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TREES DAY

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Resilience

The Four R's of Organizational Resilience

- Robustness
- Redundancy
- Resourcefulness
- Rapidity



THE GALS WHO GARDEN PROJECT

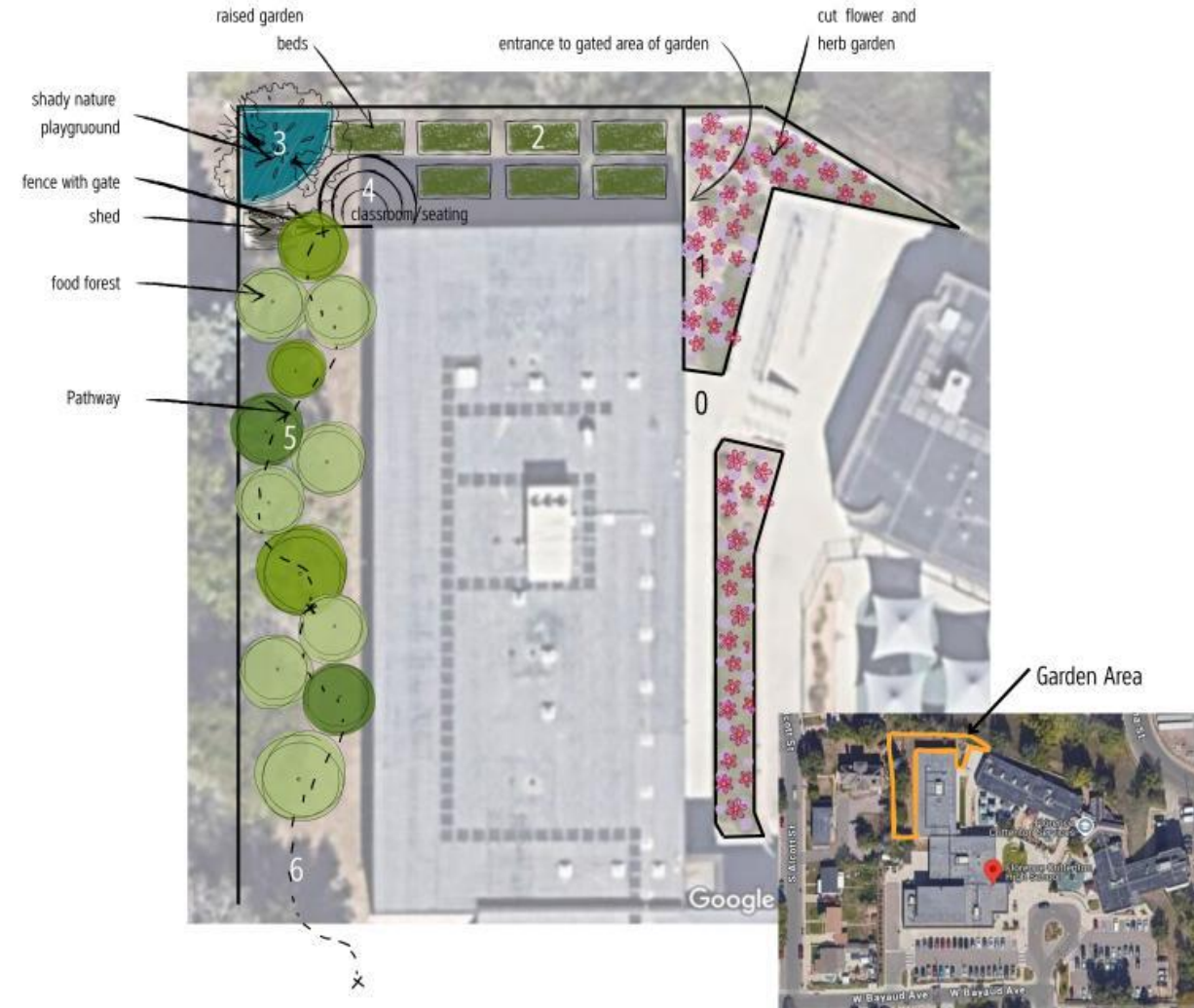
A case study in resilience



Gals Who Garden

Vision and Strategies

- Good, Green Jobs
- Food Security
- Tree Equity
- Water Conservation & Turf Reduction
- Habitat



Gals Who Garden

Year 1: Visioning and Coalition Building

- Evon becomes TPP first community connector and brings vision to us
- Initial coalition between University of Denver, The Park People, and Valverde Neighborhood Association formed





Gals Who Garden

Year 2: Community Building and Fundraising

- SustainEd brought on as lead organization
- IRA, EPA, and large city grants in the works
- Main contact at school retires
- Coalition budgeting process
- Student and community engagement





Gals Who Garden

Year 3: Persistence and Groundbreaking

- Several funding sources disappear
- Leverage creativity, connections, and talent to persevere
- Food forest planted
- Garden Fiesta





RESILIENCE AT THE PROJECT SCALE

How did the Gals Who Garden project exemplify the four R's of organizational resilience?

 Center for Community Engagement
to advance Scholarship & Learning
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

 SustainEd
Farms



 The Park People

 VALVERDE
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION

 University of Colorado
Denver



Gals Who Garden

Redundancy

- Back-up plans to back-up plans
- Multiple staff at meetings
- Regular meeting schedule
- Extra materials





Gals Who Garden

Rapidity

- Trust amongst partners
- Established budget, ready to go
- Actionable plans at the ready



“People get connected to the earth, and they get connected to their neighborhood, and they get connected to each other. And it’s that community building process that strengthens the neighborhoods, and strengthens the city.”

– *Gertie Grant, founder of the
Denver Digs Trees program*





Thank you.

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ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TREES DAY

PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY
CONFERENCE 2025

Tree Pittsburgh | November 8, 2025



ARBORDAY.ORG

ENGAGING FAITH COMMUNITIES IN FORESTRY

An early look at congregation forestry in
Pittsburgh.



Agenda



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Tree Pittsburgh &
Presenter

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Pittsburgh Background

Community
Forestry in
Pittsburgh

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Faith Landscape

Pittsburgh Faith
Landscape

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Multi-Faith Summit

Planning, Content,
and Format

05

Sacred Groves

Our Work so Far

06

Takeaways

Reflections &
Recommendations

Engaging Faith Communities in Forestry



PRESENTED BY

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Who Is Tree Pittsburgh?

Our Mission

Our mission is to protect and restore the city's urban forest through community tree planting and tree care, education, advocacy, and land conservation.

Our Beliefs

We believe that all people have the right to benefit from the many health, environmental, and social benefits that trees provide.

Our Vision

Our vision is to support a more resilient urban forest for all by inspiring and engaging people to maintain, plant, and protect trees. A greener region will create more vital communities for generations to come.

Pittsburgh Background

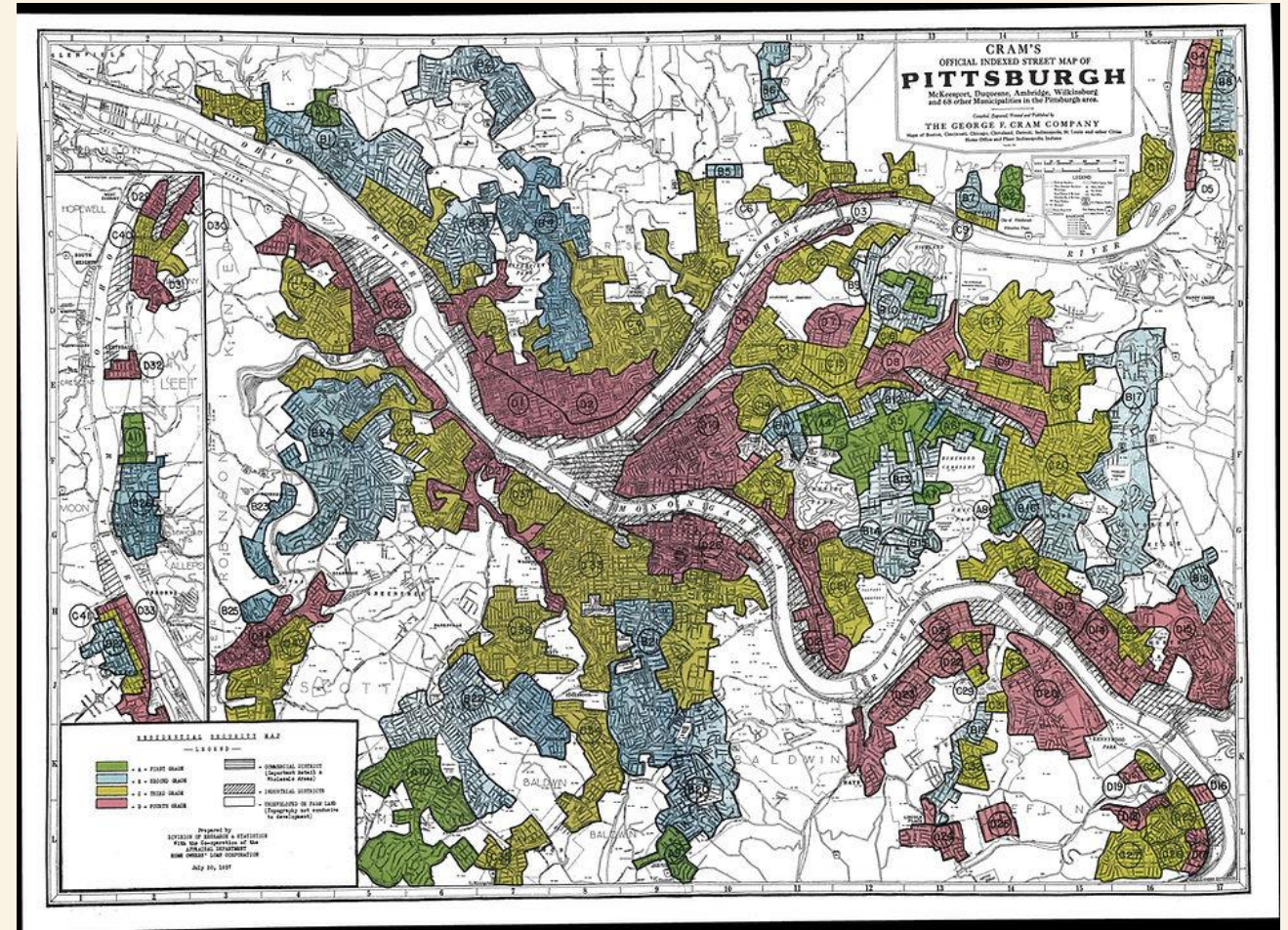
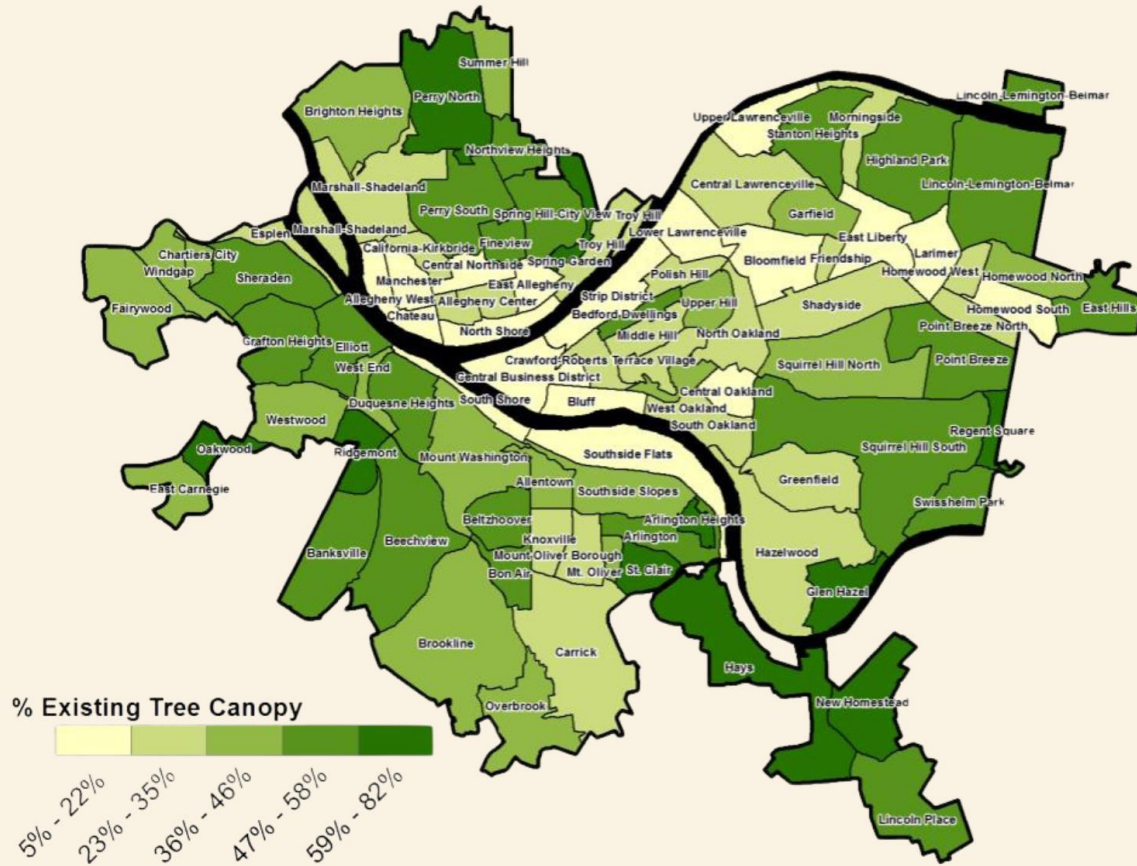
Community Forestry in Pittsburgh

- A group of 20+ organizations and government agencies formed The Alliance in 2020
- The Alliance works together to increase equitable access to tree canopy through:
 - Street tree planting
 - Neighborhood greening
 - Stormwater management
 - Municipal support
 - Site preparation
- Together we have planted over 26K trees since 2020



Pittsburgh Background

Pittsburgh Tree Canopy vs. Historical Pittsburgh Redlining



Pittsburgh Background

- Tree canopy is correlated with race and socioeconomics.
- Steel industry collapse.
- Complicated history with trees creates a lack of trust in some communities.
- Limited public planting sites within communities.
- Sustainable tree care and workforce development.
- Trust takes time, working with community organizations.
- Much of the available land is private property.



Pittsburgh Faith Landscape

- 85% of adults in the Pittsburgh Metro Area identify as people of faith.
- Strong Christian and Catholic community
- One of the largest Jewish communities in the country
- Growing Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist communities
- Faith groups connect community members to social services and basic needs.
- Faith groups hold much of the publicly-accessible privately-owned land.



Volunteers caring for the Food Forest at the Bible Center Church, a close partner.

Congregations for Canopy

Inaugural Multi-Faith Summit

- Initiated by the National Religious Partnership for The Environment at the 2024 Partners conference!
- Existing enriching partnerships with a few congregations in the area.
- Had been seeking more engagement with Faith Communities.



Congregations for Canopy

Summit Promotion and Design

- Partnered with Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light
- Promotion Strategies
 - Partner networks
 - Door-knocking and flyering
 - Social media
 - Phone calling
 - Affinity group advertising
- Pre-Summit Survey to address congregation needs and goals
- NRPE conducted focus groups to understand congregational needs

CONGREGATIONS FOR CANOPY

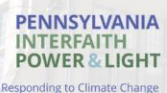
Pittsburgh's Inaugural Multi-Faith Community Forestry Summit

- Discover opportunities to plant and care for trees, including community orchards.
- Hear from faith leaders already working with the Pittsburgh Canopy Alliance in their communities.
- Learn about existing resources and funding!

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2025
8:30 A.M.- 3:00 P.M.

PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
616 N. HIGHLAND AVE
PITTSBURGH, PA 15206

To register, scan the QR
code to the right or visit
treepittsburgh.org/interfaith-summit



TO LEARN MORE, EMAIL SURYA LEE AT SURYA@TREEPITTSBURGH.ORG.

Funding for this project was provided by the Inflation Reduction Act and the USDA Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program.
USDA and Tree Pittsburgh are equal opportunity providers.

Congregations for Canopy

Summit Goals

- Expand Canopy Alliance work to include faith communities.
- Access available land for tree planting projects.
- Diversify impact and relationships in environmental justice communities.
- Build trust with environmental justice communities.
- Co-create projects that can benefit communities.
- Honor the history of faith-based environmental work.
- Equitably distribute available resources
- Connect congregations with technical support for environmental management.
- Help faith leaders see themselves in community forestry work.

Congregations for Canopy

Summit Content

- Held at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
- 49 attendees
 - Christian, Catholic, Jewish, and Buddhist faiths
- Pre-Summit survey to understand needs
- The Summit included:
 - Land Acknowledgement
 - Food and networking
 - Keynote speaker
 - Faith leader panel
 - Breakout rooms



Breakout Room Content & Format

Presentation

Site Planning &
Preparation

Resource Tabling

Education,
Engagement, &
Events

Small Discussion

Faith Values In
Nature

Presentation

Tree Care Through
The Life Cycle

Resource Tabling

Land Stewardship &
Conservation

Small Discussion

Food & Foraging

Sacred Groves

Fall 2025 Tree Planting Cohort

- NRPE approached us with this project
- Evangelical Environmental Network and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources working on Evangelical congregations
- Project creation and structure



Sacred Groves

Site Selection and Design

- Initial congregation meetings
- Site designs
- Site visits
- Surveying congregations



Key

- | | | |
|---|--|----------------|
| 1 | | Shade Tree |
| 2 | | Flowering tree |
| 3 | | Shade Tree |
| 4 | | Flowering tree |
| 5 | | Flowering tree |
| 6 | | Shade tree |
| 7 | | Shade Tree |

Sacred Groves

Planting Logistics

- Tree Tender engagement
- Site flagging and painting
- Landforce support for site preparation
- Tree and tool organization and deliveries









Reflections & Recommendations

- Remember your positionality and the history of forestry/environmentalism.
- Partner with faith/environmental groups.
- Building trust takes time.
- Highlight how trees can help community priorities in outreach.
- Consider multi-faith calendars & customs.
- Faith groups are often seeking technical support.
- Create an iterative planning process to factor in congregation- specific needs and ideas.
- Strategize long-term tree care needs & community workforce development.
- Trees are an opportunity to bring everyone together!



Thank you.

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ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TREES DAY

PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY
CONFERENCE 2025

November 18, 2025



Cultivating Communities: Bringing Residents into the Urban Forest



PRESENTED BY

TYRAH COBB-DAVIS

Outreach Manager, Baltimore Tree Trust

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For Baltimore. ⚡

Since 2008, Baltimore Tree Trust (BTT) has been on a mission to grow and protect Baltimore City's urban forest through increased tree planting, community engagement, and stewardship of city trees.

⚡ By Baltimore.



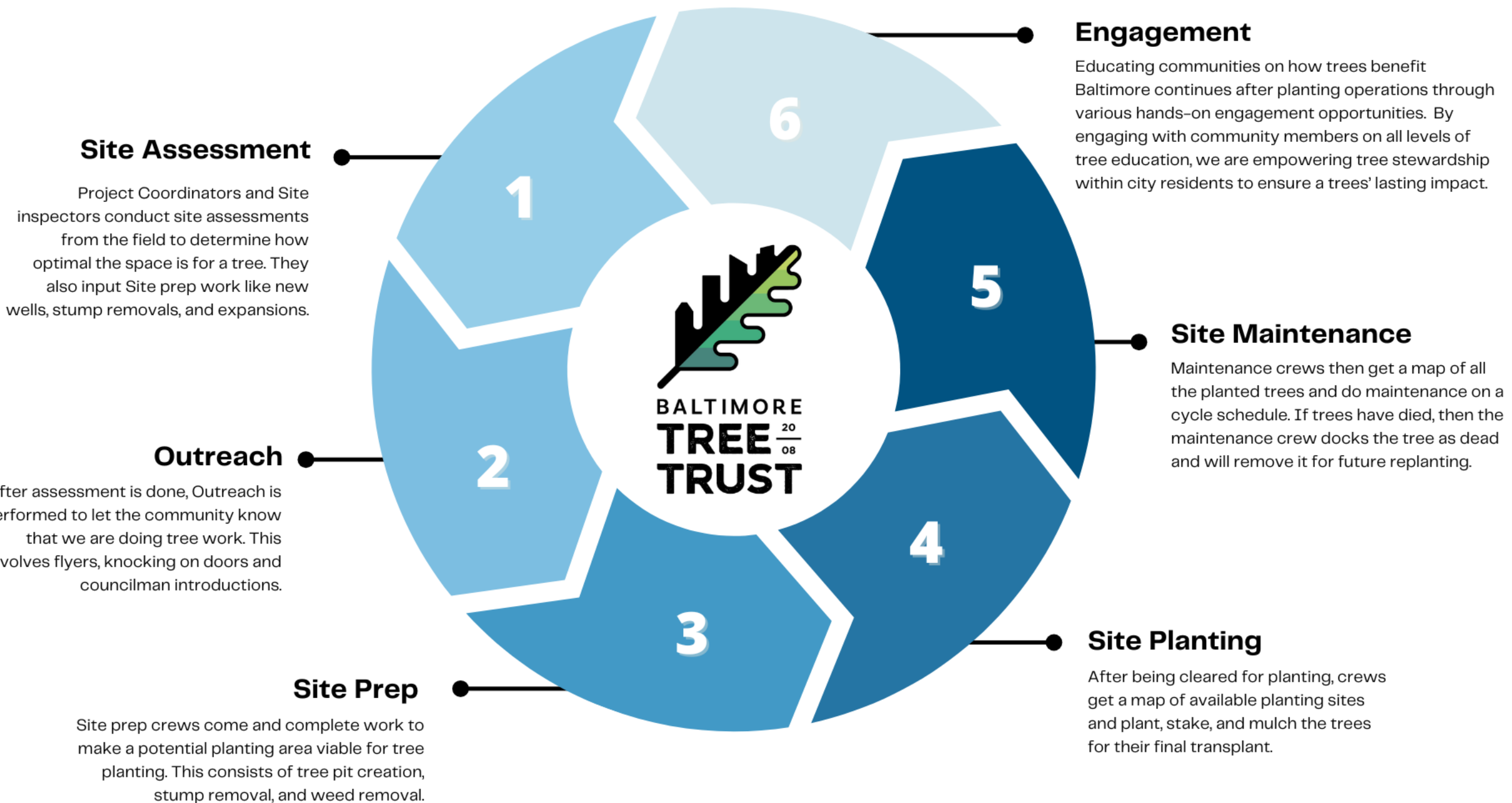


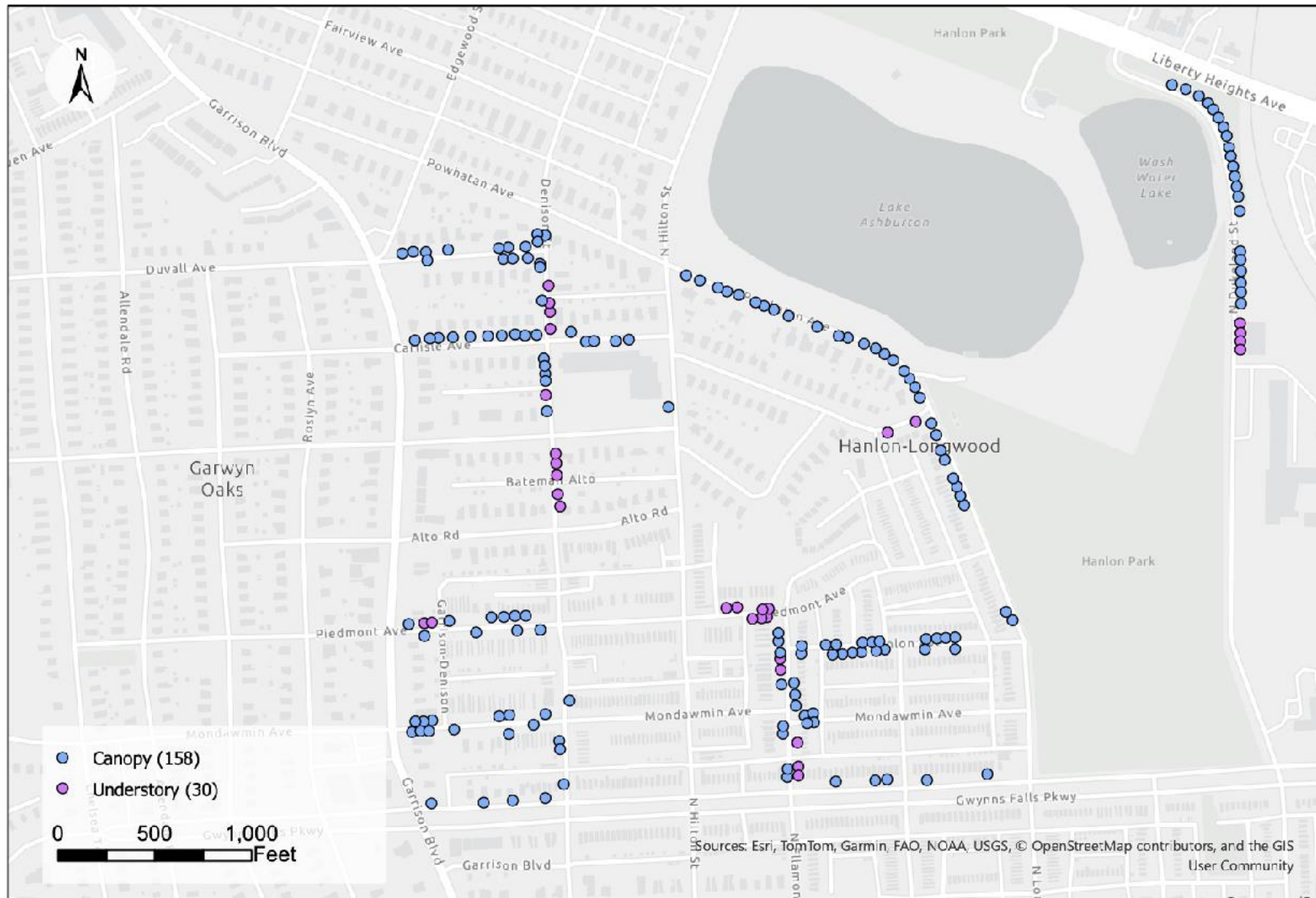
40%

Tree canopy goal in Baltimore
by 2037

Our Why

- Give people the opportunity to have trees planted
- Contribute to Baltimore canopy goal
- Maryland 5 Million Trees Initiative which aims to plant 500k trees in urban, underserved areas by 2031



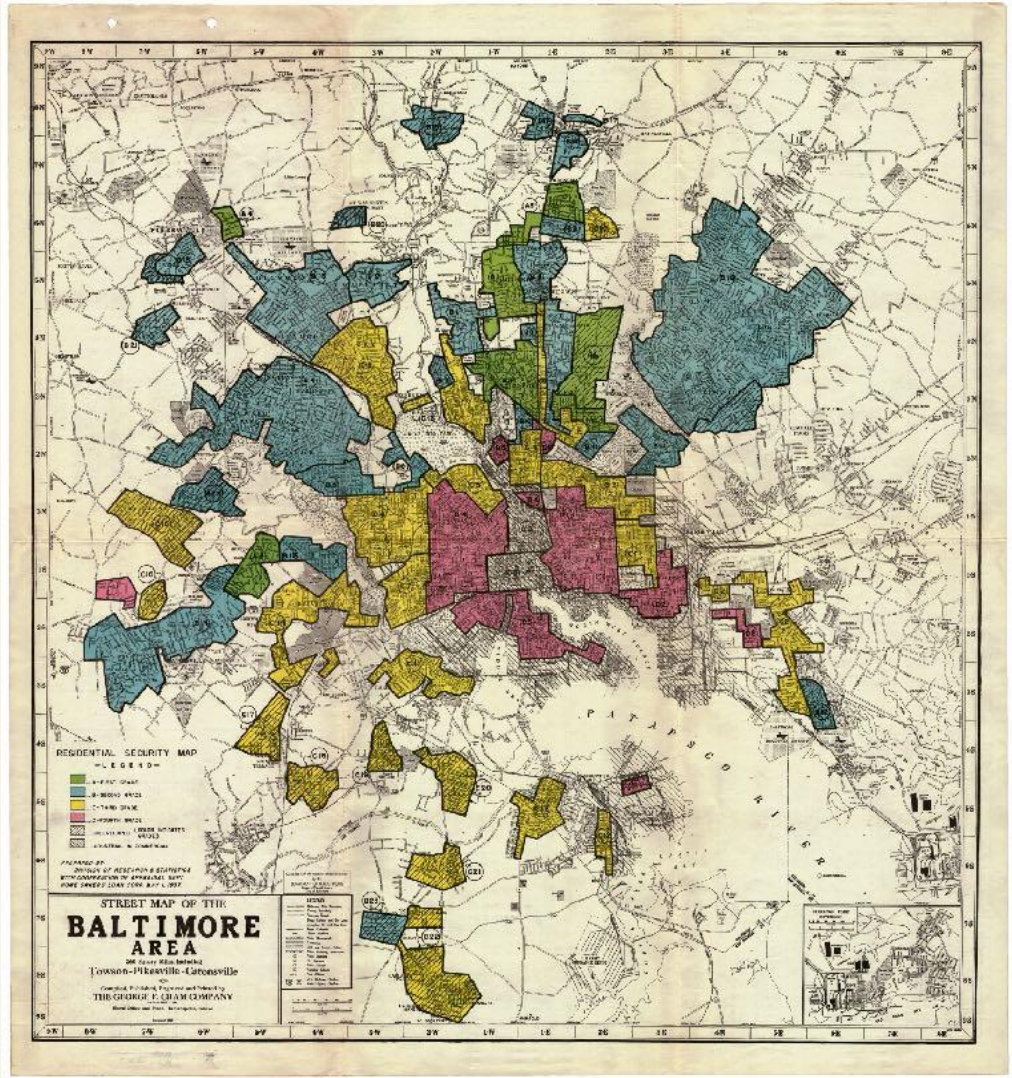


Hanlon-Longwood Proposed Planting

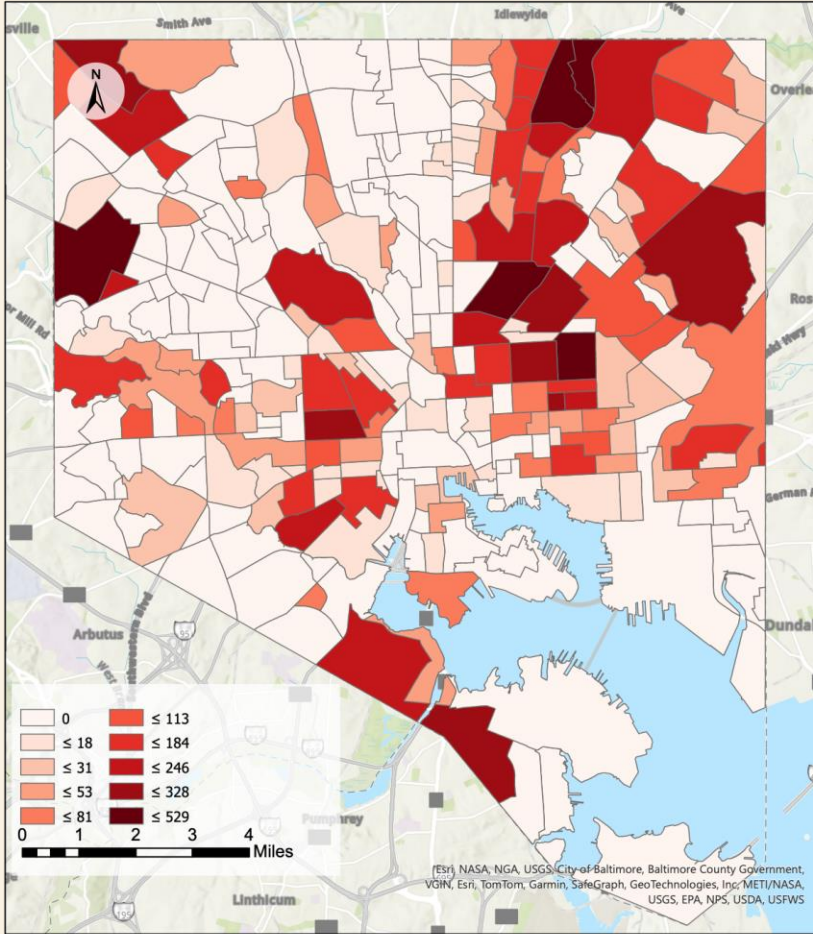
Baltimore, MD



Redlining in Baltimore



BTT Plantings



Baltimore Tree Trust Planted Trees Across Baltimore City Neighborhood
Baltimore, MD



8/5/2024 v.1 BTT's Trees

Outreach Materials

TREES ARE COMING!

This season, new trees will be planted in your neighborhood.

Your home is on our list to receive a free tree in the public right-of-way between the sidewalk and the curb. Our outreach team will be in your neighborhood soon to spread the word about our planting plans and leave door hangers with more information.

Baltimore Tree Trust commits to 2 years of tree care while trees get established, including watering, mulching, staking and pruning.



**FRESH AIR.
CLEAN WATER.
COOLER STREETS.
BEAUTIFUL BLOCKS.
WE'VE GOT A TREE
FOR THAT.**

CONGRATS ON YOUR NEW TREE!

Baltimore Tree Trust has planted new trees in your neighborhood!

Questions or concerns about a tree in your neighborhood? Contact us!

As a reminder, our teams will conduct routine maintenance on the tree for the next 2 years, including watering, mulching, and pruning. Please reach out to the team if there are any questions or concerns regarding your tree, and we will make sure that we address it in a timely manner.

Site Preparation

Stump grinding

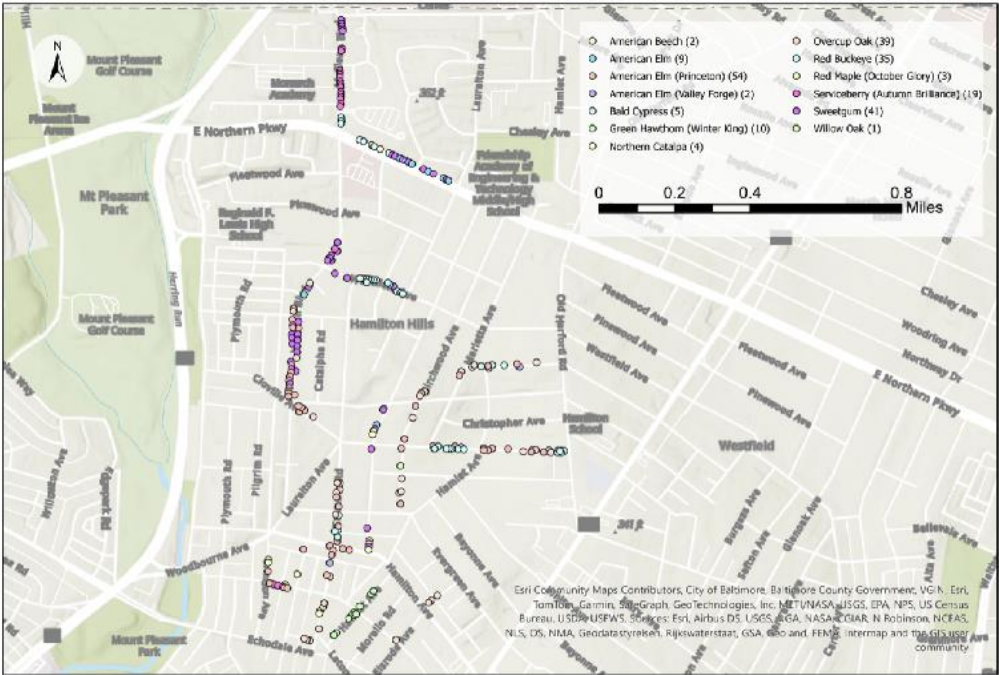


Tree well creation



Planting

1-2" caliper native tree species



Hamilton Hills Planted Trees

Baltimore, MD

5/1/2024 v.1 Planted Trees



Site Maintenance

2 year warranty

- Watering
- Mulching
- Staking
- Tying
- Structural pruning



Engagement

Tree Walks



Engagement

Tabling at community events



Engagement

Schools Programming

- Classroom engagement
- Arts activities
- Planting assistance





Engagement

Community plantings

- Tree Spree
- Community plantings





Engagement

Private property planting

- Community leader led
- 20+ residents engaged
- 13 trees planted
- 4 species offered



Forest Pansy Redbud

Cercis Canadensis

Height: 20-30ft

Spread: 25ft

Light: full sun (6+ hrs of sunlight a day)



American Hornbeam

carpinus caroliniana

Height: 20-30ft

Spread: 20-30ft

Light: full sun or partial sun



Swamp White Oak

Quercus bicolor

Height: >60ft

Spread: 50-60ft

Light: full sun (6+ hrs of sunlight a day)





Thank you.

Our work is supported by:



Cultivating Communities: Bringing Residents into the Urban Forest



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Community Engagement Q&A