



Alliance for Community Trees Day





ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TREES DAY

PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY
CONFERENCE 2025

Depaving Nashville to Create Urban Tree Canopy

11-18-20225



ARBORDAY.ORG

Depaving Nashville to Create Urban Tree Canopy



PRESENTED BY

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Our Work



**Education &
Engagement**

**Stream
Restoration**

Urban Waters

Working Lands

What is Depave?

Depave strives to remove unnecessary asphalt and convert it into thriving, aesthetic green space that provides shade, reduces flooding, and improves water quality.

Depave is a transformative, community-driven program that helps people reimagine paved spaces as living, functional landscapes.

Every project tells a different story that is shaped by local priorities and context.



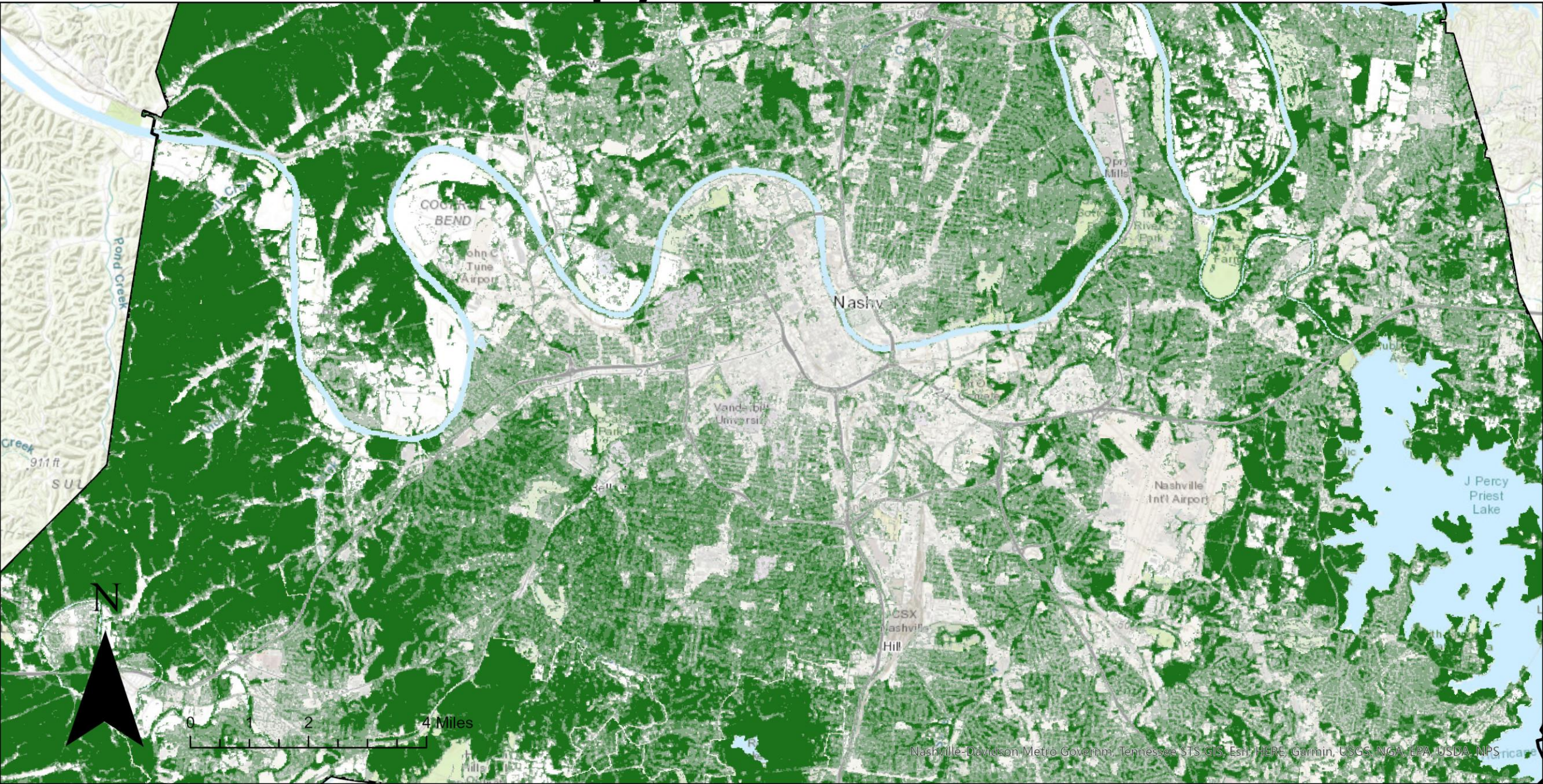
“Paving this whole parking lot was the best decision at the time...but you know, it’s ok for that to change”



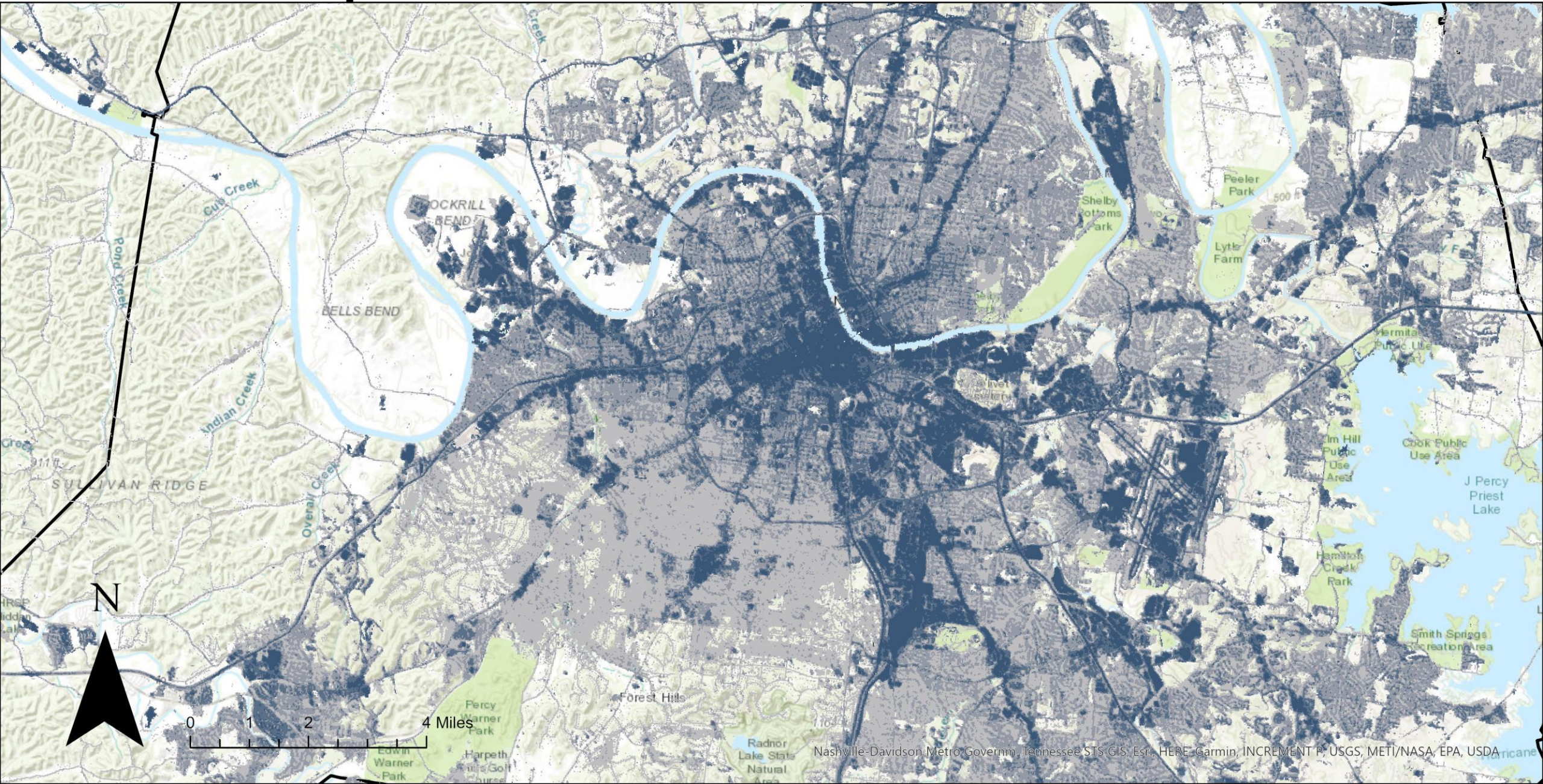
David Low, Facilities Manager at Calvary United Methodist Church, spearheaded the Depave project to save on costly upkeep as well as beautify the grounds of the church.



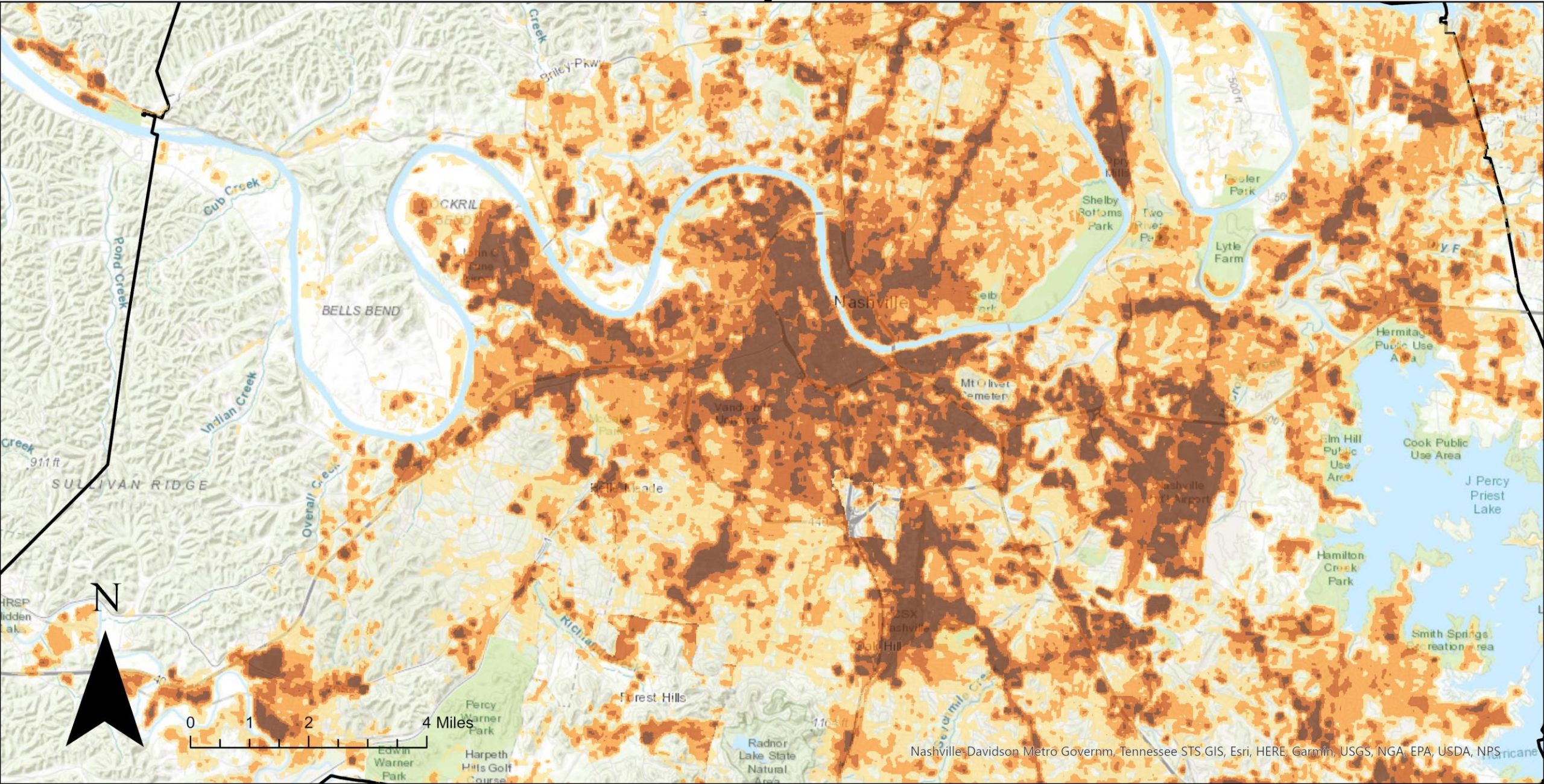
The Calvary site after the asphalt was removed

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Impervious Cover in Nashville

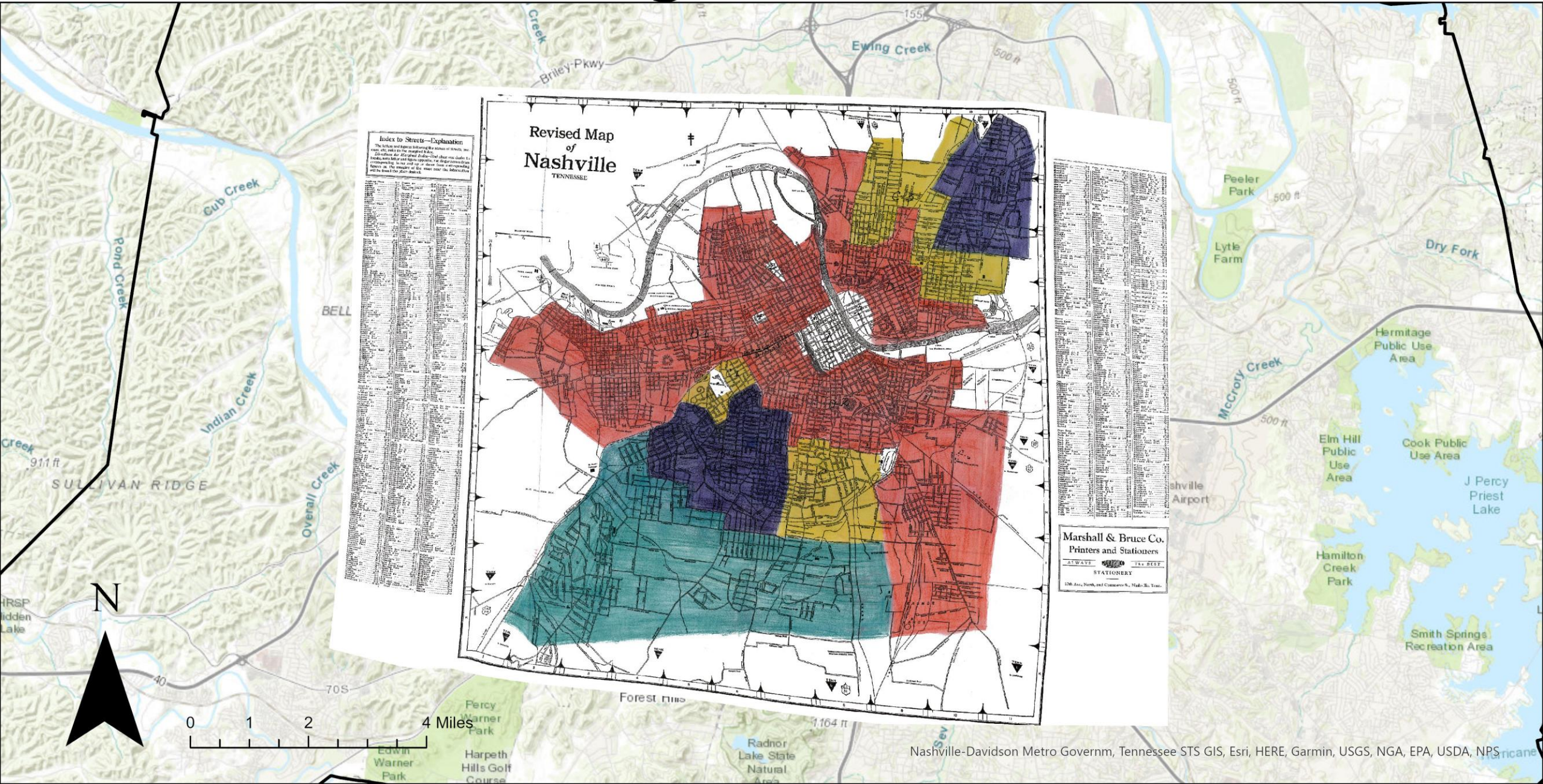


Heat Severity in Nashville



Nashville-Davidson Metro Governm, Tennessee STS GIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, NGA, EPA, USDA, NPS

Redlining in Nashville



Characterizing Nashville's Urban Forest

A City and County in One

Urban vs. General Services Districts:

- Urban: 36% of Davidson County's land area
- General: 61% of land area

Tree Canopy Coverage (UTC):

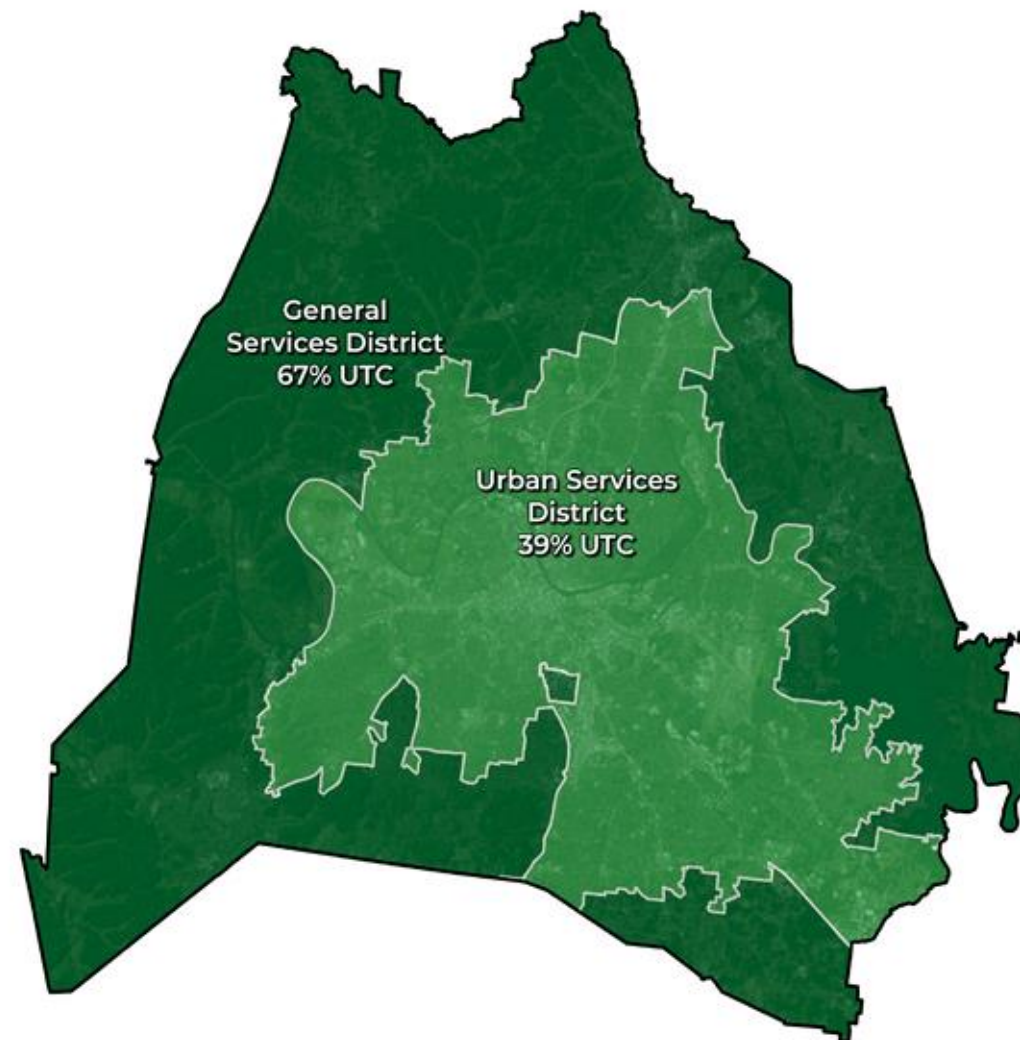
- Urban: 39% (48,803 acres)
- General: 67% (131,623 acres)

Potential Planting Area (PPA):

- Urban: 26% (32,000+ acres)
- General: 23%

Takeaway: Urban areas have lower canopy and higher impervious cover (32%) — creating major opportunity for tree planting and cooling benefits.

URBAN TREE CANOPY



Credit: TreePlotter, Metro Nashville

Characterizing Nashville's Urban Forest

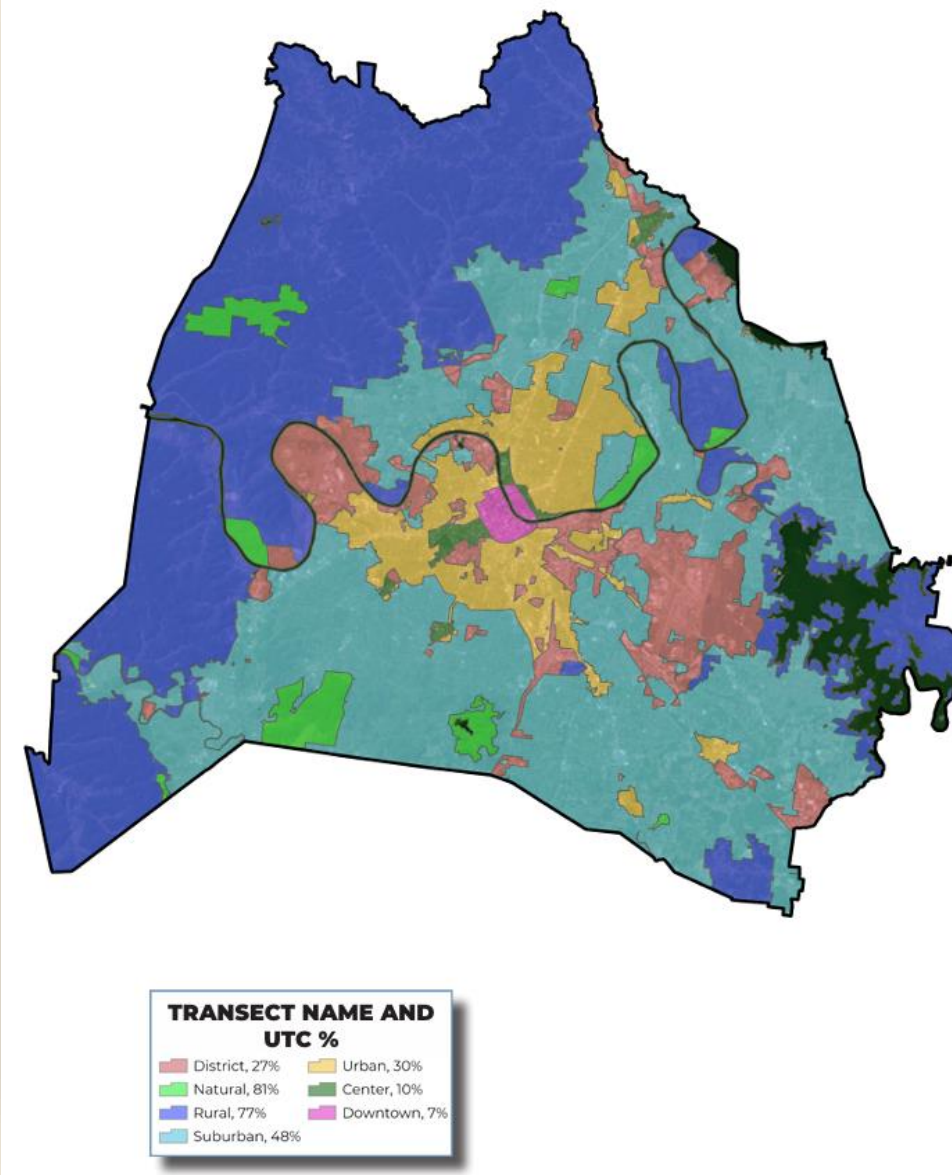
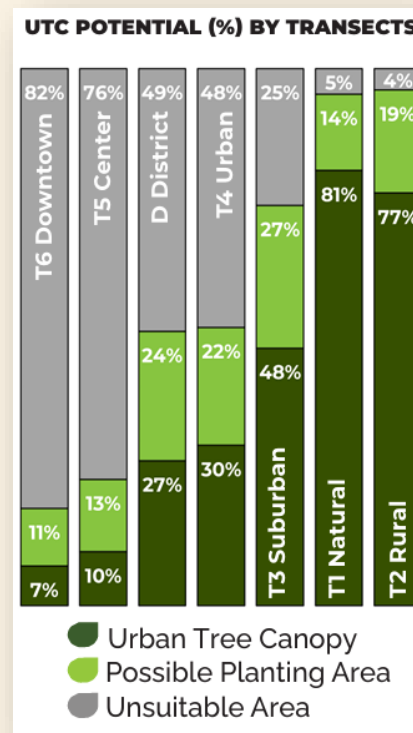
Nashville by Transects

The **T3 Suburban** transect had the most PPA in terms of size (34,679 acres) and in proportion to its land area (27% PPA). **T2 Rural** and **T3 Suburban** together contain 87% of total canopy.

T5 Center and **T6 Downtown**: $\leq 10\%$ canopy

T4 Urban was the transect that experienced the largest net loss in canopy between 2010 and 2021 (-869 acres).

T5 Center and **T6 Downtown** have relatively low UTC cover and relatively high unsuitable areas for planting trees (76% and 82% respectively)



Credit: TreePlotter, Metro Nashville

Root Nashville

A public-private campaign to plant 500,000 1"-caliper trees in Davidson County by 2050

The Root Nashville campaign launched in October 2018.

The Campaign is a collaboration between the Cumberland River Compact and Metro Nashville. Metro Water Services is the lead campaign partner from Metro.

64,000 trees planted city-wide since 2018

In 2024-2025 planting season, the Compact planted **9,456** 1"-caliper trees



Root Nashville

Planting Captains

Launched in 2020 after Nashville's tornadoes to rebuild alongside communities.

Neighborhood ambassadors connecting us to private property owners.

Helped scale Root Nashville from public to private planting.

Many are identifying sites where canopy needs significant land-use modification — building organic support for Depaving.



Depave Program

2018 - 2023

Licensed and trained by Depave Portland in 2018

Projects done with volunteer support and/or contractual labor

Since 2018, the Compact has removed over **100,000 sq ft** across Davidson County

Even modest sized projects can have outsized benefits!



Depave Program

2024 - Current

Compact has scaled workforce to complete large-scale projects within 2-3 weeks.

Reserves volunteer engagement for low-impact activities that are meaningful, rewarding, and open to a wider variety of age groups and abilities.

3 staff are completed OSHA training courses (1926.602(a)) to operate the excavators.

Between 2024-2025 planting season, Compact staff removed **12,401 square feet** of asphalt.

52 trees were planted and **1,560,475 gallons** of H2O diverted from storm drain infrastructure annually



Scoping New Projects

Socio-Economic/Demographics

- EJ designation
- Community support

Hydrology

- Amount of contributing drainage area
- Combined Sewer Areas
- Local stream quality and impairments

Site History and Usage

- Brownfields
- Asphalt Depth and fill material
- Utilities

Support legacy sites in approaching current LID stormwater codes



Project Highlight – Jones Avenue Slip Lane Depave

Before Depave:



After Depave:



Project Highlight – Jones Avenue Slip Lane Depave

Overview:

Size: 4,835 square foot slip lane

Community led by Root Nashville Planting Captain Tranyce Parmer. Tranyce worked with the Compact's field team and served as an NDOT Beautification Commissioner

Partnership between the Compact, Nashville Department of Transportation (NDOT), and Metro Water Services

- Supports NDOT's **Vision Zero** initiative by simplifying intersections, calming traffic, and creating safer pedestrian environments.



Project Highlight – Jones Avenue Slip Lane Depave

JONES AVENUE DEPAVE PROJECT

LEGEND:

TREES

- Serviceberry (7)
- American Basswood (5)
- Shagbark Hickory (3)
- Tulip Poplar (3)
- Dogwood (2)
- Paw Paw (2)
- Persimmon (2)
- Bald Cypress (1)
- Swamp White Oak (1)

SLIP LANE

- Depaved Area



Project Highlight – Tio Fun! Depave

.22-acre lot – 100% impervious

21.4% tree canopy at the census block group

CJEST-designated

Project initiated by Planting Captain – Chris Fairbank

1,650 square feet of Depaved in October 2025.

NO loss in surface parking





Build strategic partnerships with public agencies that already manage impervious areas

- ## Connect projects to city-adopted frameworks

- Volunteers, faith groups, or neighborhood associations can open doors to private lands
- They bring legitimacy and local trust that can't be replicated

Celebrate Visibly



The site of a former trailer park located within a FEMA floodplain that was bought by Metro Water Services and Depaved in 2019.



Obstacles to Depaving:

Site Feasibility

- Variable Asphalt Depth/Fill Material
- Utilities

Land Ownership

- Fragmented ownership slows progress

Maintenance & Stewardship

- Upkeep is a challenge — mowing, weeding, and trash pickup need local ownership.

Longevity & Legal Access

Community Trust & Expectations



Closing Thoughts:

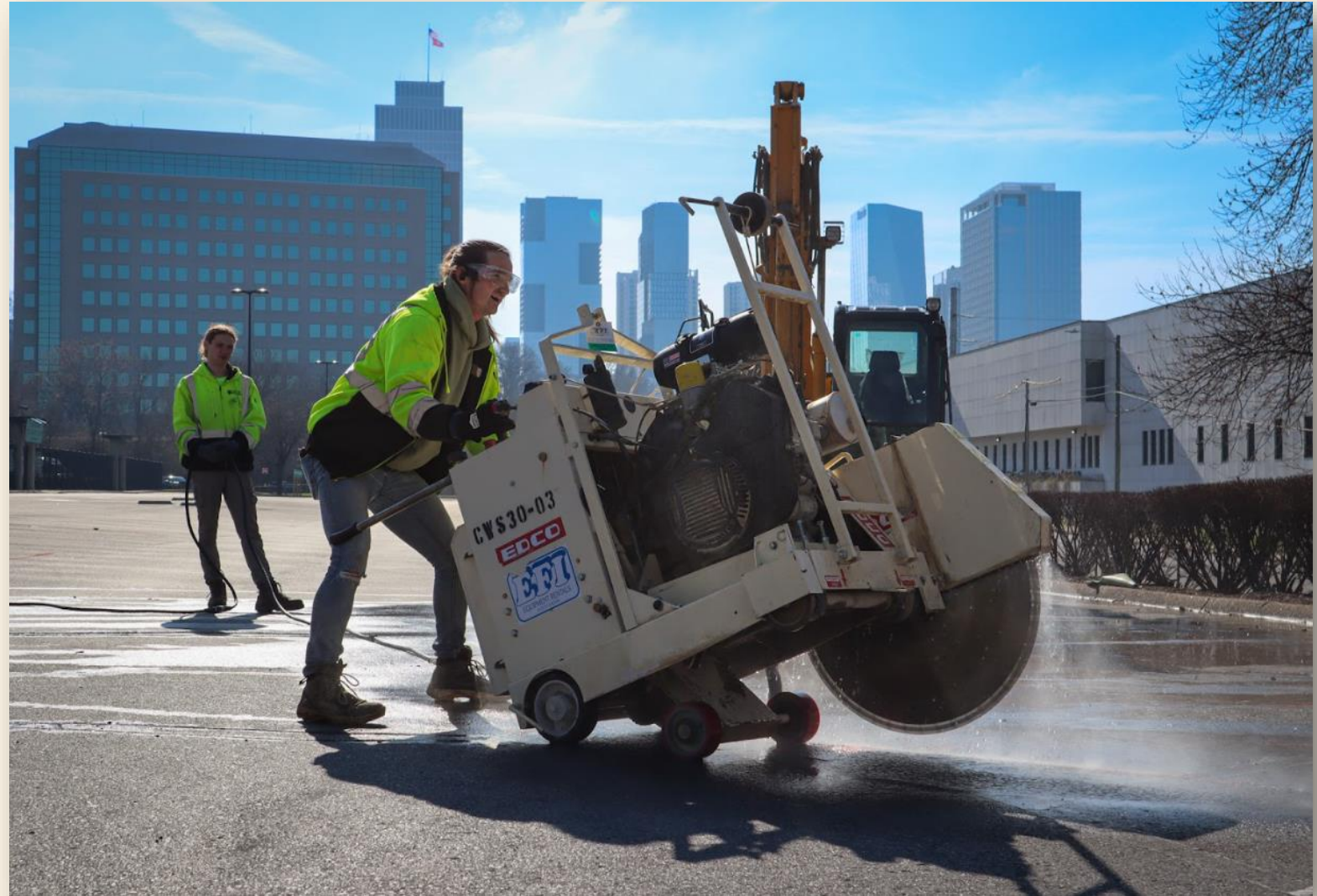
Flexible outcomes shaped by
community priorities and site
conditions

Cost-Effective, High-Impact

Partnerships Multiply Impact

Be fearless!

**Even modest sized projects
can have outsized benefits!**





**CUMBERLAND
RIVER COMPACT**
OUR WATER. OUR FUTURE.

Thank you.

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CONFERENCE 2025

Stewardship as a Safeguarding Strategy

November 18, 2025



Groundwork Hudson Valley
Green Team

Stewardship as a Safeguarding Strategy



PRESENTED BY

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The GROUNDWORK way



Meet people where they are



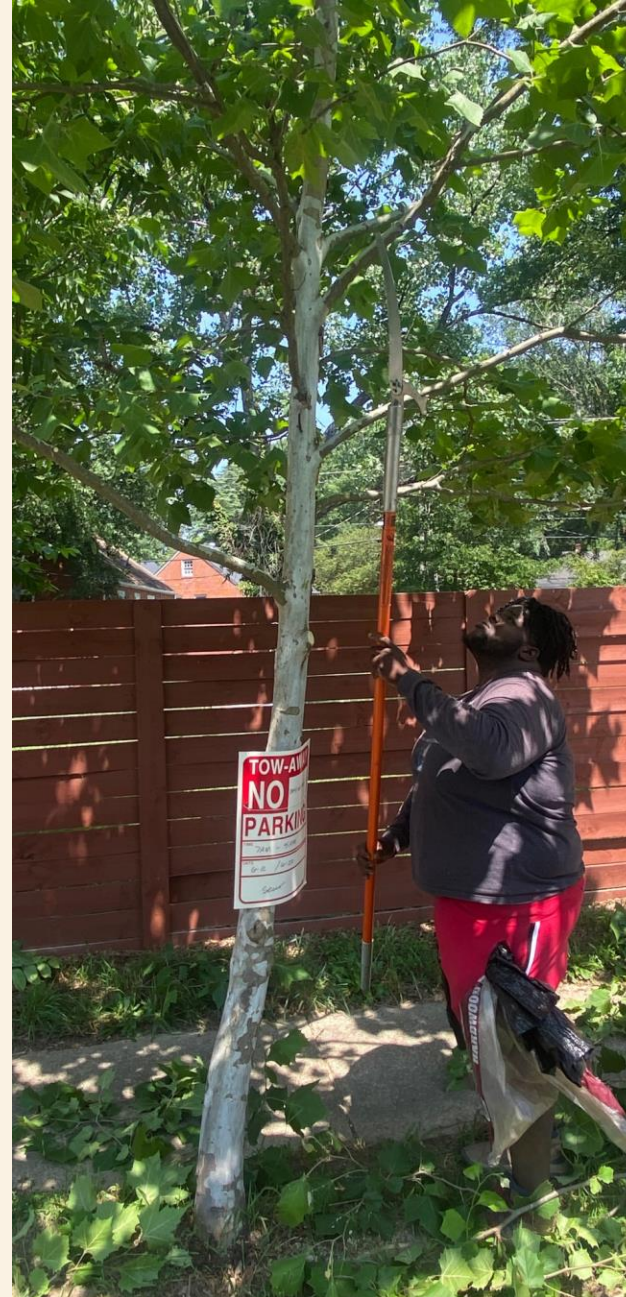
Shared leadership



Compensate people for their time

Maintenance....\$\$\$\$

- Most expensive but least funded.
- Resource intensive but necessary for survival of the urban canopy.
- Integral to the equitable distribution of the benefits of a healthy urban forest.



.... an OPPORTUNITY for Community Stewardship

Invest in the people within our communities ...



to meet our goals.



"Stewardship was essential [for achieving high survivability], both in terms of specific tree care activities and program processes to support those activities. These planting projects were implemented by small nonprofits which enhanced their staffing capacity through intensive volunteer and youth internship programs. Experienced volunteers, including professional arborists and landscape architects, served as leaders and trainers for other volunteers and interns." - Roman et al., 2015

Align ethos with mission to deliver success

Meet people where they are



Shared leadership



Compensate people for their time



"Highest survival and growth *was found among trees planted by groups with more planting experience, greater longevity, and more participants.* Higher tree survival and growth was observed when trees were planted ***by groups working in line with their mission*** (e.g., park groups in parks)." - Jack-Scott et al., 2013

Many forms of *Community Stewardship*



Professional workforce



Adopt at Street tree



Youth employment

"level of engagement by the tree planting group was a stronger predictor of tree stewardship. We also found that tree stewardship correlated positively to heat protection measures, suggesting that environmental engagement may be an effective portal to reducing heat risk." - de Guzman et al., 2023



Thank you.

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Sustaining Urban and Community Forestry

Q&A