



Branching Out Together

VT Urban &
Community
Forestry Program

Welcome





Goals

- Define tree equity & provide context
- Facilitate dialogue
- Encourage self reflection
- Think outside the box!

Group Agreement

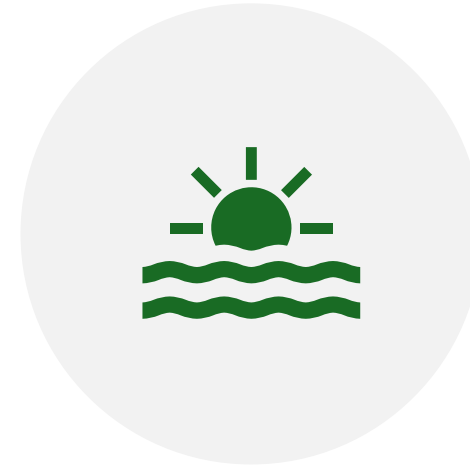
- Speak personally, for yourself as an individual.
- Make room for everyone to be heard.
- Assume positive intent.



What is Tree Equity?



Communities of color and lower income communities have **36-45% less tree cover.**



And are **6-9°F hotter** than wealthier and whiter communities

\$1.5 billion for the U.S. Forest Service's Urban & Community Forestry Program to help communities plant & care for urban trees.



IMPACT:

This funding will enable the planting & protection of more than **23 million trees**, advancing environmental justice, health, and quality of life for communities nationwide.



BENEFITS INCLUDE:



Contribute to carbon emissions removal



Create new urban forestry jobs



Reduce heat-related illnesses & utility costs & consumption



Increase tree canopy in BIPOC communities

Disadvantaged Communities

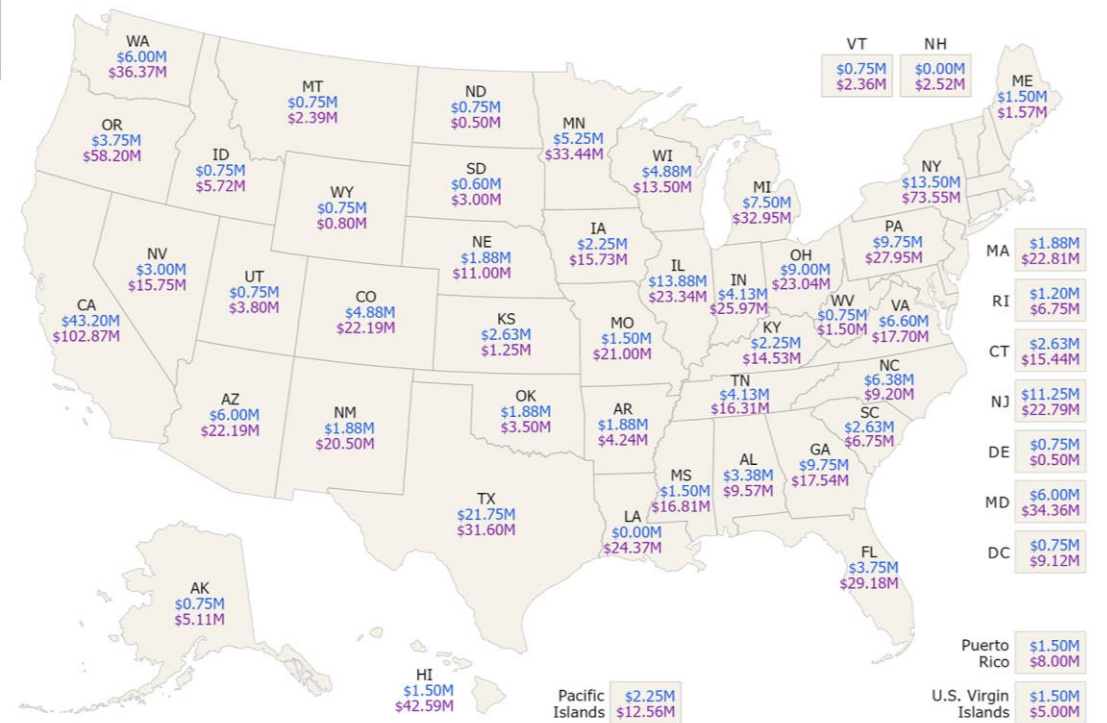
- Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
 - Opportunity zones
 - Low-moderate income areas.

URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANTS

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

The USDA Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program awarded more than \$1 billion to fund projects that support urban communities through equitable access to trees and the benefits they provide. The funding was made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act.

Urban and Community Forestry FY 2023 IRA Grant Allocations in Millions of Dollars



FY 2023 IRA State Allocation - \$250 Million Total
 FY 2023 IRA Notice of Funding Opportunity Grants - \$1.13 Billion Total

3+30+300

Three Rules for Better Cities



3 trees from every home



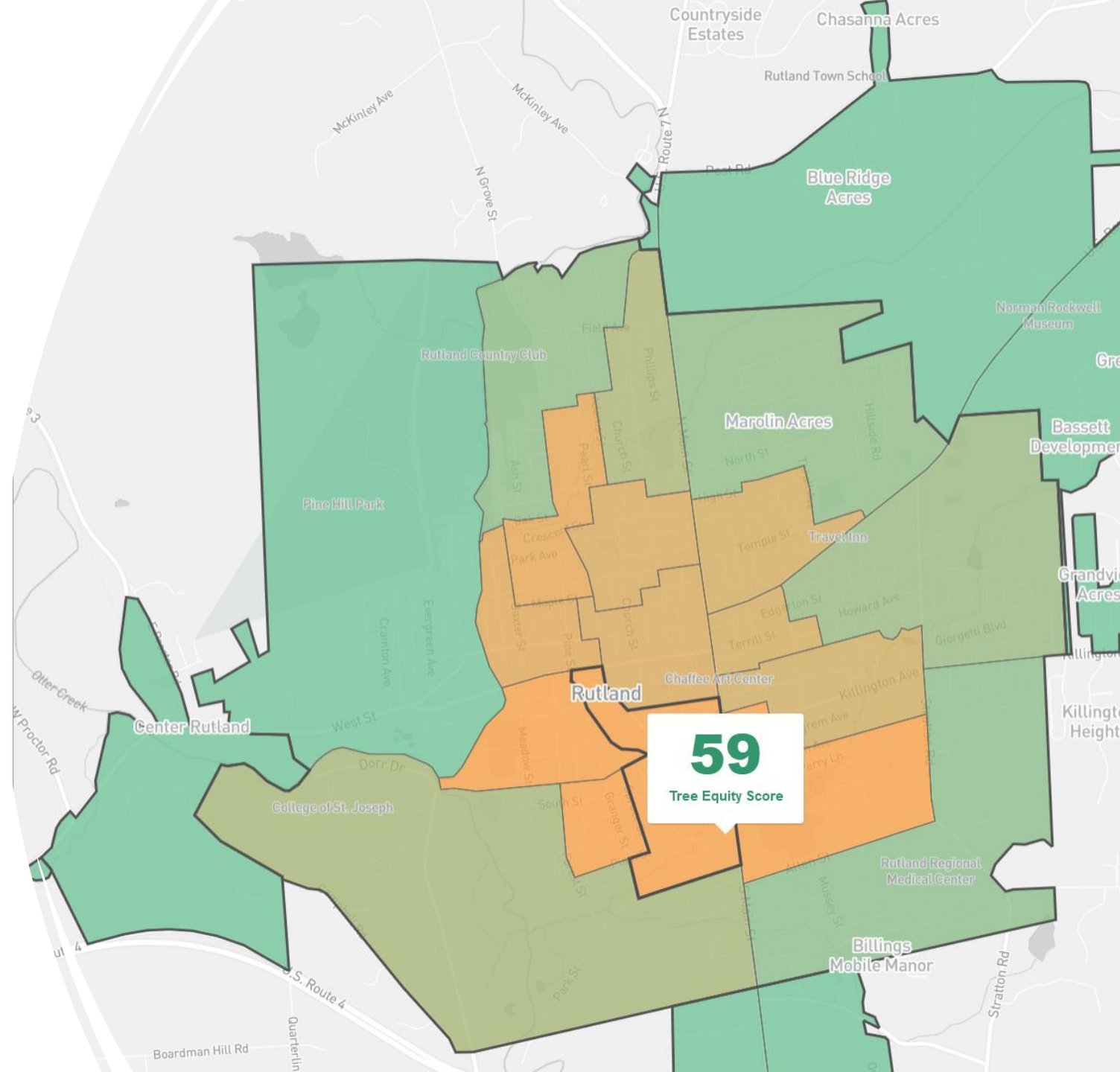
**30 percent tree canopy cover
in every neighborhood**



**300 meters from the nearest
public park or green space**

Tree Equity Score

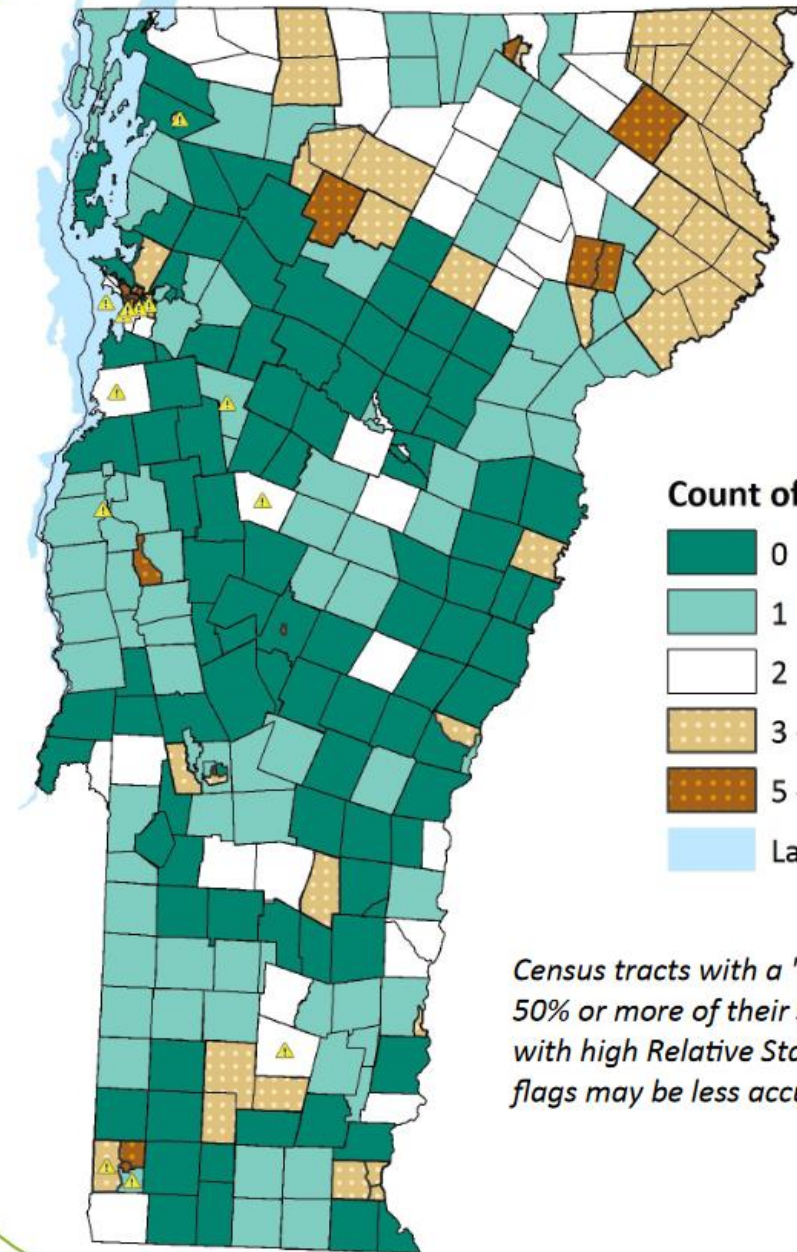
- Score: 0- 100.
- Lower the score, the greater the need for investment.
- 7 climate and socioeconomic characteristics:
 - children/seniors
 - linguistic isolation
 - health burden index
 - heat disparity
 - people in poverty
 - unemployment
 - people of color



Vermont Social Vulnerability Index

But it's Vermont..

- Environmental Justice Law (Act 154, passed in 2022)
- Social Vulnerability Index
- Municipal Vulnerability Index



Census tracts with a "caution" symbol have 50% or more of their SVI flags from values with high Relative Standard Errors. These flags may be less accurate than the others.



Community- Driven Process

Community Action Guide, Vibrant Cities Lab

VT UCF's Role

Guiding Principles

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graph TD; A[Guiding Principles] --> B[Monthly learning & discussion]; B --> C[Proactive approach];
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Monthly learning & discussion

Proactive approach

VT UCF's Role



Community Canopy
Outreach



Resilient Urban
Forests for All



Black Ash Project

VT UCF's Role



State Urban Forest
Resilience Grant



Community Tree
Planting Grants



Gift Fund



Summary

- Data informed decisions
- Reducing financial and administrative barriers
- Partnerships & community driven process

Group Agreement

- Speak personally, for yourself as an individual.
- Make room for everyone to be heard.
- Assume positive intent.



Dialogue

- In your community tree groups, conservation commissions, and other volunteer work, **who missing from the conversation?**
- What would it look like for everyone to have **equal access to the benefits trees in your community?**
- What are the **most pressing needs in your community** and how do trees relate?

Branching out

- How can the Urban & Community Forestry Program support this work?
- What else do you want to learn?
- Is there anything else that you would like to share?