

Chapter Two: Organizing for a Green and Equitable Future





Yo quiero aprender a conectarme con mi comunidad y hablarles acerca del proyecto de plantar los árboles

I look forward to exploring new level of bonds with my community

Know whether there are any permits involved with planting trees

community organizing/engagement skills so that I can get involved in other communities and in other environmental justice projects

Community engagement skills Community planning

Sembrar arboles para respirar mas aire puro y estar mas cerca en comincacion con las personas de mi comundiad .

tree planting and tree care How we can all work together across the city to engage as many ppl as possible to

The differences between trees. What types of trees are appropriate for certain areas. How I can plant more trees in the area

care abt trees and clear up misinformation we hear a lot of people who live

tree maintenance skills

Comunicacion asertiva y liderazgo comunitario. here love

How to build community relationships

I look forward to exploring new about this

I hope to learn communication skills that will allow me engage with my community and get them involved in climate advocacy and other social justice issues.

level of bonds with my community place, Learning the different kind of and they want to

I want to learn and uplift the views of the community - how can we best empower them!

To gain Organizing skills and management and leadership skills within my community. see it change in the future

Like a community activist and leader. How to best serve the urban greening needs of my community and protect my community against green

gentrification

How to get a full time position in the field of environmental justice



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Responses from our first training

Pre-Training Activity: What Makes Your Community Unique?

Your experience as a member of your community is important. With this in mind, let's explore what makes your corner of Los Angeles unique!

Create a short presentation about your community or neighborhood. Use the websites and resources provided below or use resources of your own. In your presentation, think about the following:

- Who lives there?
- Who are the Indigenous communities of the land you live on?
- Who are the local and state representatives in your area?
- Where's the place you'd take someone in your community if they came to visit?
- What do you love or take pride in about your community?
- What would you like to see change about your community?
- What are the resources and barriers to healthy trees in your community?
- Is there a park within walking distance from where you live?
- How does climate change impact your community? How might these impacts be addressed?

In your presentation, feel free to speak from personal experience and the experiences of others in your communities. You may also want to reach out to other community members to include diverse opinions and feedback.

Create your presentation using whatever medium feels most comfortable (e.g. PowerPoint slides, photos, just speaking, etc.). The goal is to share about your community and learn from one another. Presentations should be 5 - 10 minutes long. Be prepared to present at the next workshop. Reach out to your workshop leaders for any questions or support with your presentation and/or technology.

Helpful Resources:

- US Census Bureau QuickFacts (search your zip code)
- Find Your CA Representative
- Los Angeles Times Mapping L.A. Project
- Los Angeles Public Library Photo Archives
- Native-Land.ca | Our home on native land



SETTING ROOTS

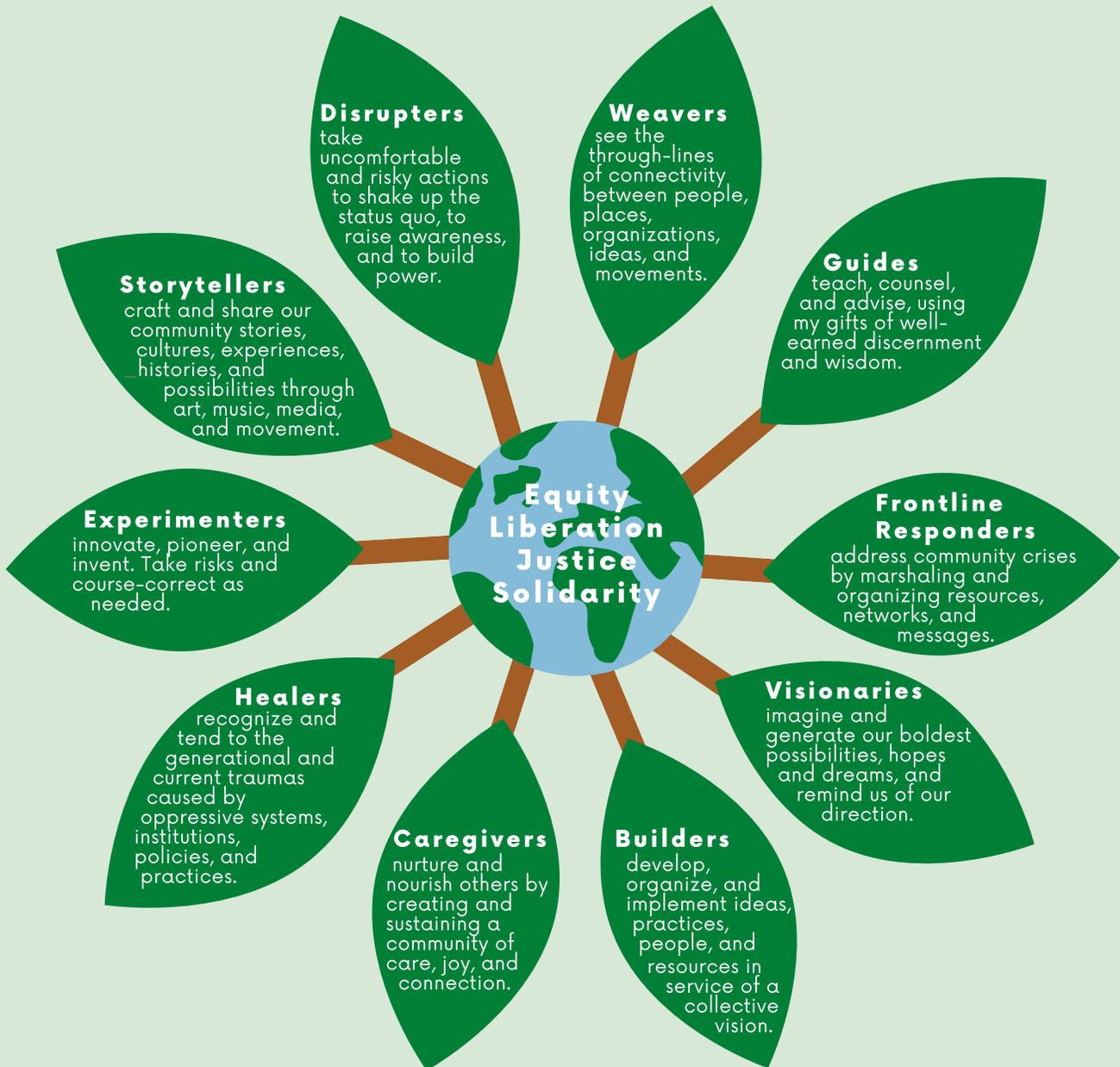
Trees can build safer, healthier, and more **equitable**¹ communities in Los Angeles. All communities have unique challenges and strengths that shape how we can engage with our shared urban forest. Our goal is not only to support successful tree planting and care projects but also to support community leaders and advocates like you in growing healthier communities.

As residents and members of your neighborhood, your lived experiences and understanding of your community are essential to the work of Tree Ambassadors. You and your neighbors are the ones who best understand where trees are most needed, which barriers prevent you from planting or having healthy trees, and more. Your established relationships within your community make you more approachable and personable than City Officials or nonprofit organizations. Your leadership role will encourage the participation of community members who might feel uncomfortable otherwise so that every voice can be heard. Through welcoming, encouraging, and listening to the voices in your community, you will amplify the needs of your friends, family, and neighbors and empower them with the tools to grow a healthier future for generations to come.

Equitable: distributing resources based on the needs of the recipients (vs. equality: giving everyone the exact same resources).

MAPPING ROLES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

By the Deepa Iyer, SolidarityIs, and Building Movement Project



To be a leader, you don't have to be well-connected or know all of the answers — all you need is a willingness to engage with and listen deeply to others. After all, community organizing happens when people come together to create change. Let's explore different roles in community organizing and tap into your strengths as a leader. Sometimes, your role as a Tree Ambassador will ask you to do work that stretches you outside of your comfort zone, and we hope to support you through that.

Conversation Starters:

Mapping Roles in Social Change

Self Reflection: How do you align yourself with social change values and the broader social change ecosystem? How does your own personality impact the roles you take on in groups? The social change ecosystem framework is a tool to help you identify how you participate in movements.

1

What role(s) do you feel comfortable playing?

Locate yourself on the map and identify the role(s) you find yourself playing most frequently. Recognize that you can be playing multiple roles and that these roles can even shift depending on the context.

What role(s) make you come alive? Are there any differences between these two responses for you?

2

Where can you take bolder risks?

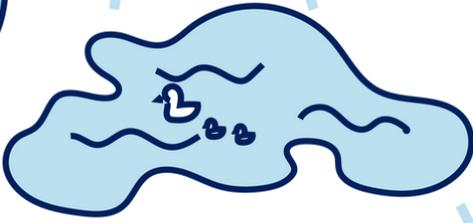
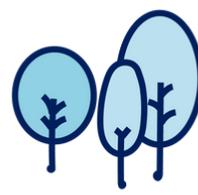
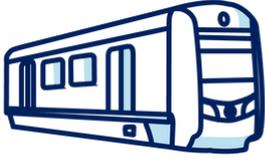
Are there any roles on the social change ecosystem map that you hope to grow into? What steps can you take to push for that growth? How would growing into these role(s) serve you and your community?

3

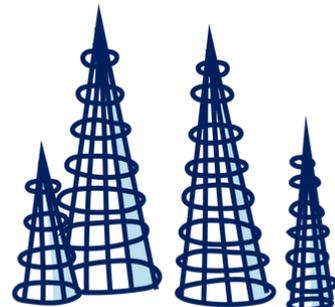
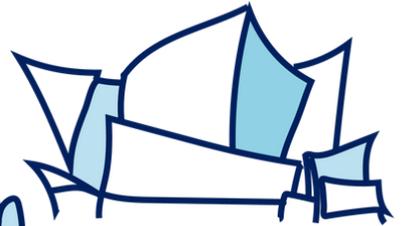
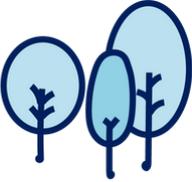
Who/what sustains you?

What is the impact of playing these roles on you - physically, energetically, emotionally, or spiritually? Who or what sustains you in moments where the roles you take on are challenging or draining?

In asking these questions, we hope to help you align and get in right relationship with social change values, individual roles, and the broader ecosystem.



HOLLYWOOD





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WE BUY HOUSES
93-616-1977
FOR RENT

PULGARITO

TORTILLERIA ACAPULCO

RICHARDSON CARNITAS MASA PARATAMALE

24 HOURS FIRST AID

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Modelo Especial

ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

- The Environmental Protection Agency

As we've previously discussed, vibrant urban forests help create healthy and connected communities. Unfortunately, access to resources has never been equitable in this country. We must always acknowledge that our country is built on stolen Indigenous land, and Los Angeles in particular is built on stolen Kizh-Gabrielino and Tongva land. To start, let's explore how a historic, racist housing policy called **redlining** led to lasting **disinvestment** in communities of color. These practices were prevalent in Los Angeles County and their effects can still be seen today.

Redlining: a discriminatory practice where banks, insurance companies, and other money-holding institutions, refuse or limit loans, mortgages, insurance, etc., to specific communities based on their racial makeup.

Disinvestment: purposefully withdrawing investment from communities, meaning developers and builders no longer spend their money to improve neighborhoods, businesses, or public spaces in the community.

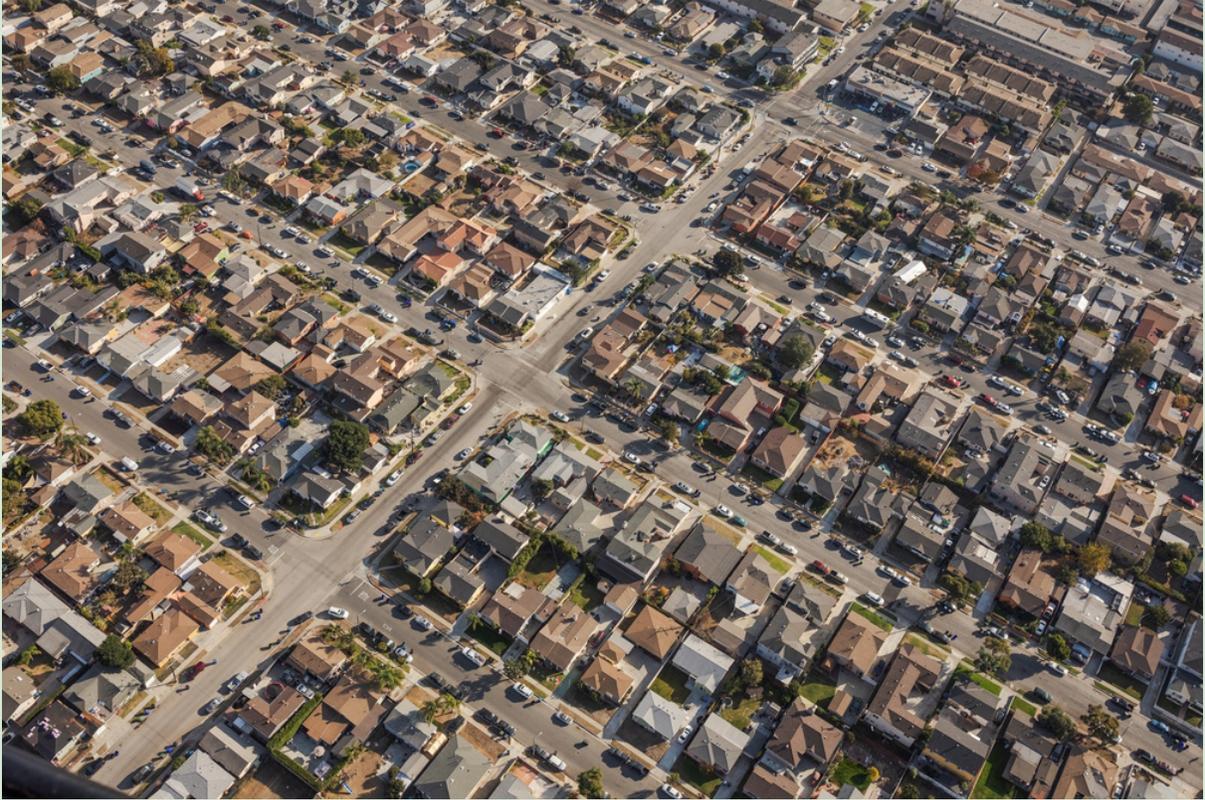


Photo Credits: Champine et al., "How L.A.'s Urban Tree Canopy Reveals Hidden Inequities."

Redlined LA

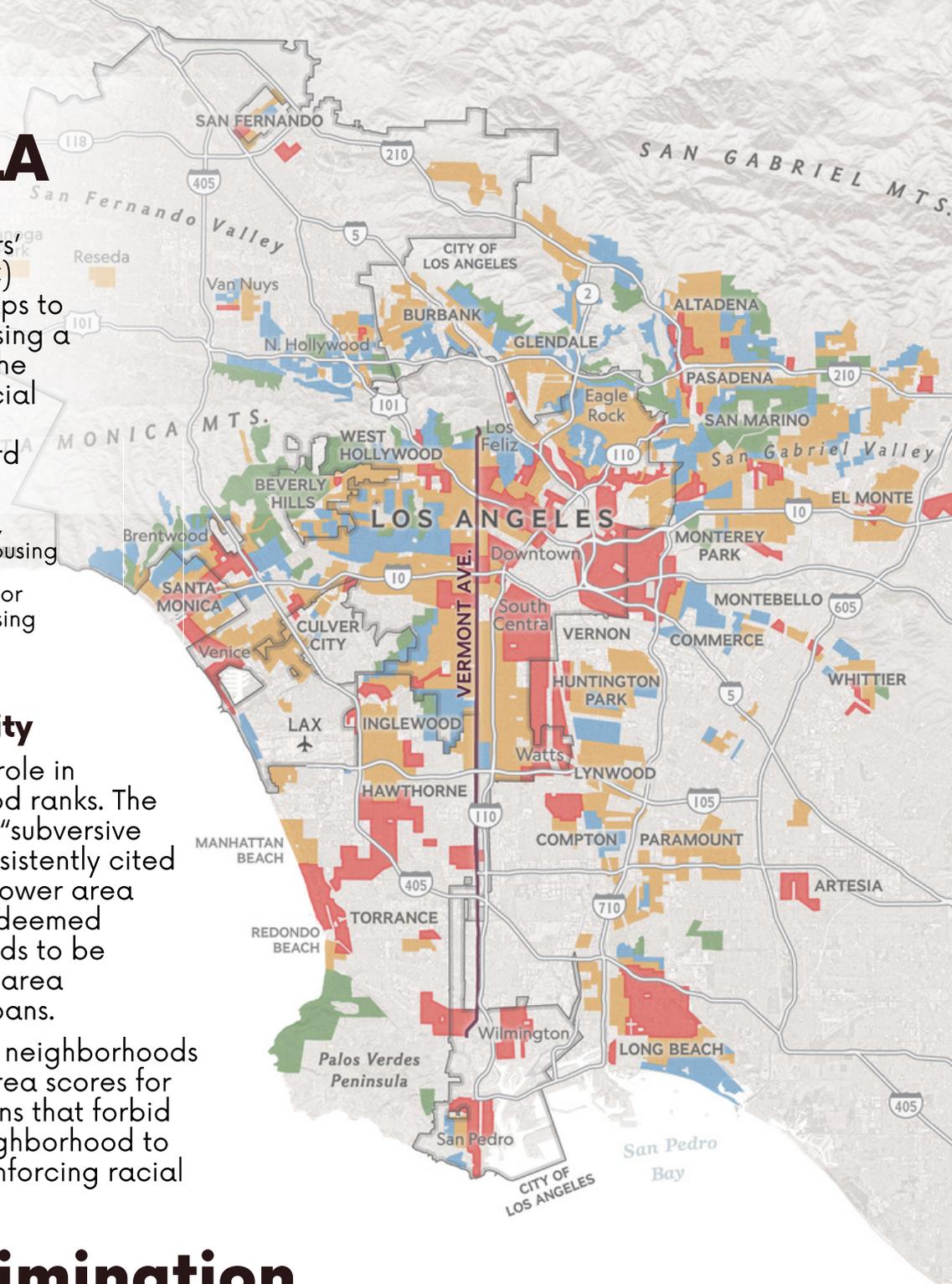
As part of the New Deal (1930s), the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) created color-coded maps to assess home loan risks. Using a system called redlining, the HOLC helped impose racial segregation and direct financial resources toward white Americans.

- More white residents, more single-family housing
- More residents of color, more multifamily housing
- Redlined areas

Downgrading Diversity

Race played an explicit role in determining neighborhood ranks. The presence or proximity of "subversive racial elements" was consistently cited as a reason for giving a lower area grade. Bureaucrats also deemed mixed-race neighborhoods to be "hazardous" - leading to area residents being denied loans.

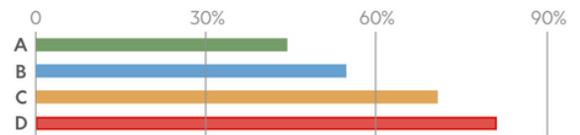
On the other hand, white neighborhoods were rewarded higher area scores for enacting racial restrictions that forbid selling homes in their neighborhood to minority communities, reinforcing racial segregation.



How Discrimination Shaped Los Angeles

Today, we can still see how redlining concentrated poverty and people of color in some areas, and wealthy whites in others. It is vital that we acknowledge these histories so that we can redress harms caused and center equity in our program.

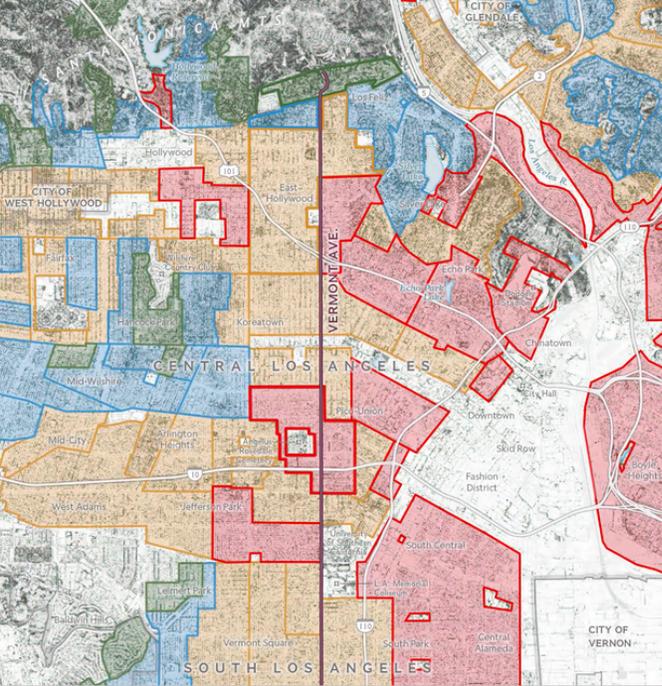
Nonwhite population in HOLC-graded areas, 2019



Median household income, 2019 (USD)



Graphics Source: Champine et al., "How L.A.'s Urban Tree Canopy Reveals Hidden Inequities."

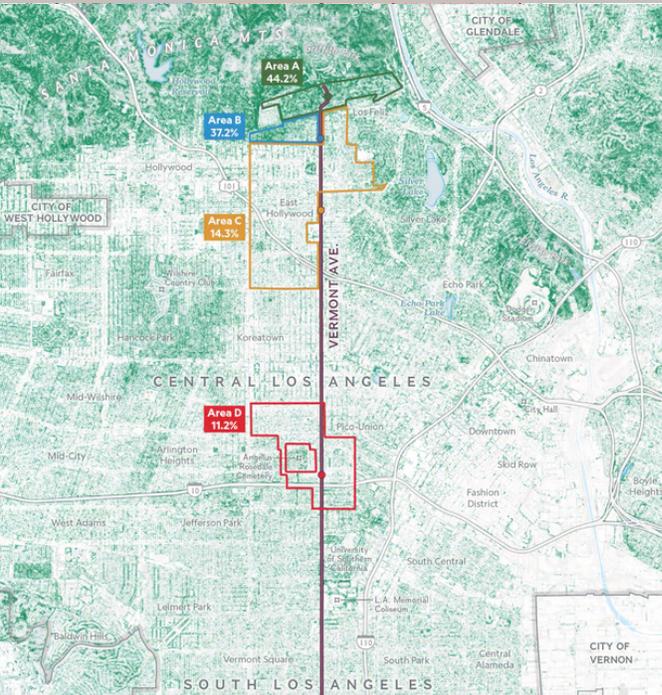


Racist Housing Policies

Today, broad patterns of trees, urban heat, and wealth are influenced by redlining policies from 1939.

Home Owners' Loan Corporation
1939 grading system

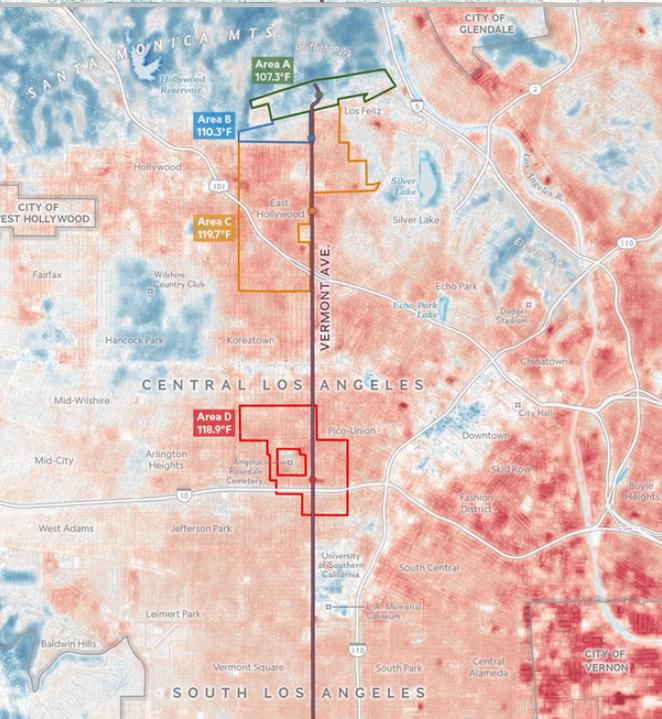
Grade: A B C D - Redlined Areas



Urban Tree Canopy

Typically, higher-rated neighborhoods have higher tree canopy cover than redlined counterparts. In 2019 the **canopy cover percentage** of **Area A** was nearly four times greater than **Area D**. Throughout the City of Los Angeles, experiences with urban heat are mainly determined by the number of trees in each neighborhood.

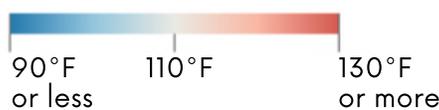
Tree Canopy in 2019
Canopy cover percentage: percentage (%) of the ground area that is directly covered with tree crowns



Urban Heat

Satellite imagery shows the disparities in the urban heat island effect. On July 3rd, 2020, the average surface temperature of **Area A** was 11.6°F cooler than **Area D**. This temperature difference could be a matter of life or death.

July 3, 2020
Land-surface temperature



Urban Heat Island: an urban area or metropolitan area that is significantly warmer than its surrounding rural areas due to human activities.

Graphics Source: Champine et al, "How L.A.'s Urban Tree Canopy Reveals Hidden Inequities."

Case Study

The following Case Study text and images are sourced from Champine et al., "How L.A.'s Urban Tree Canopy Reveals Hidden Inequities."

A six-mile drive from north to south down Vermont Ave reveals how trees on the city's streets change with the income level of each neighborhood. Four areas (graded **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D**) exemplify these urban forestry differences.



Grade A: Los Feliz At the north end of the avenue, wide-spreading fig trees provide ample shade for single-family homes in this affluent neighborhood. **\$135,000** median household income, 2019



Grade B: Los Feliz Downhill and half a mile south on Vermont Avenue, small apartment buildings line the street, but there's still room for plenty of trees. **\$103,000** median household income, 2019



Grade C: East Hollywood About a mile south of Area B, larger commercial buildings and more parking lots begin to appear on Vermont Avenue, with space on the streets for only a few trees. **\$41,500** median household income, 2019

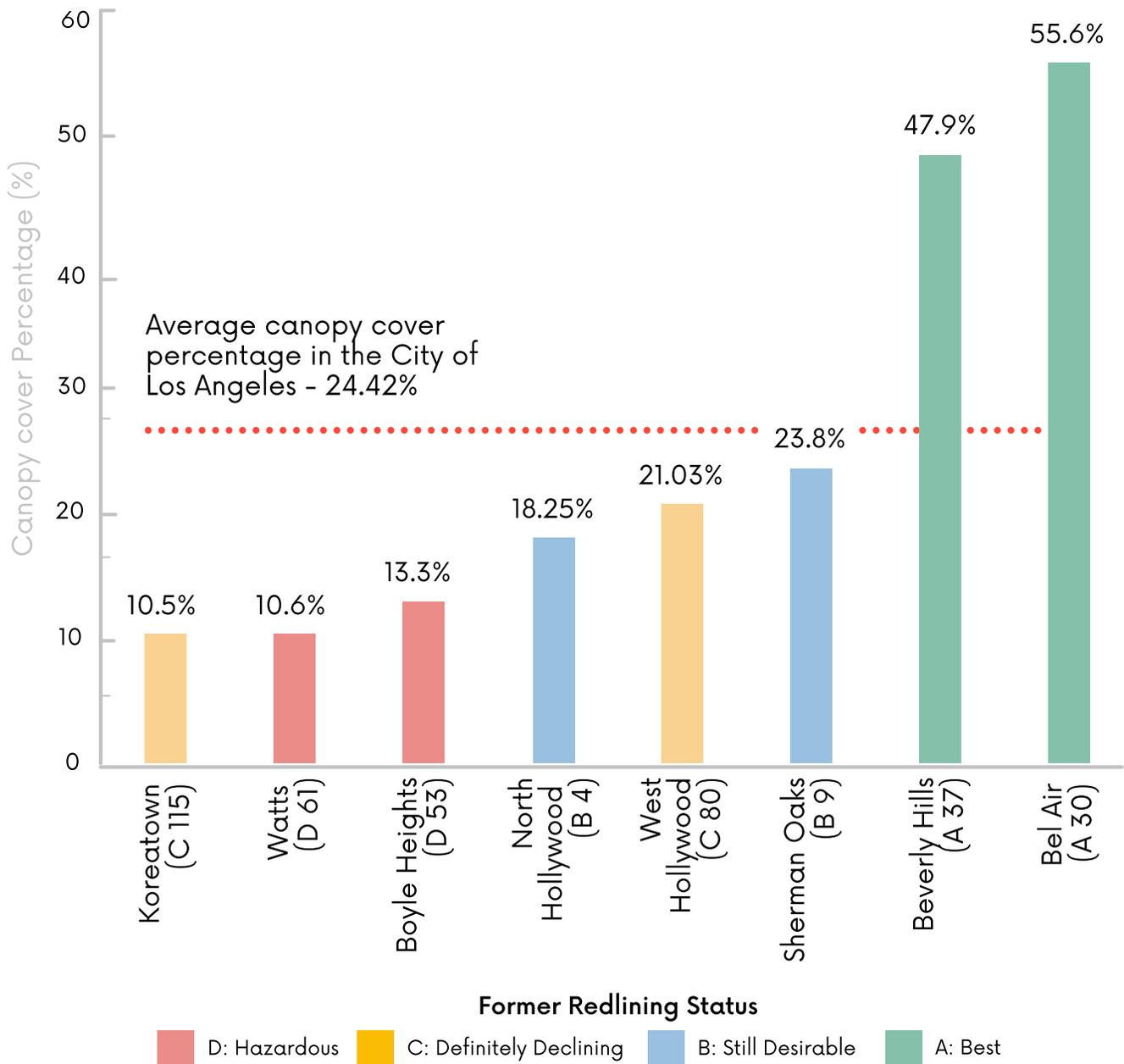


Grade D: Pico Union Roughly six miles south of shady Area A, trees are all but absent. The Vermont Avenue streetscape is dominated by pavement in this neighborhood. **\$35,500** median household income, 2019



Photo Credits: Champine et al., "How L.A.'s Urban Tree Canopy Reveals Hidden Inequities."

Redlining & Tree Canopy Cover



Canopy Coverage Percentage (%)

This bar graph shows canopy coverage percentage (%) in formerly redlined and un-redlined areas within various cities of Los Angeles. These numbers are approximations based on information provided by the LA Tree Canopy tool and the Mapping Inequality Project.

LONG TERM EFFECTS

Redlining helped reinforce the racial wealth gap and maintain residential segregation in different neighborhoods based on race. In the United States, it's estimated that for whites to end Black-White residential segregation, whites would have to move to end Black-White residential segregation. The disparities that come with it, continue to show.

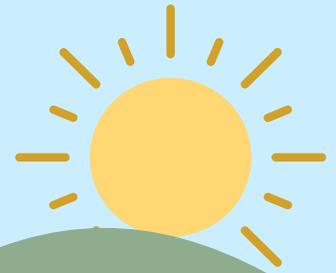


Racial Opportunity Gap

Residential segregation matters because where we live can determine our access to education, transportation, employment opportunities, and more. Folks living in wealthier areas can more easily access well-funded schools because public schools are funded through property taxes. Furthermore, employment opportunities tend to concentrate in whiter and wealthier areas (Quick and Kalenberg 2019).

EFFECTS OF REDLINING

Residential segregation, the physical separation of groups into neighborhoods, is estimated that on average, 52.6% of African Americans or other racial/ethnic groups live in segregated neighborhoods (Quick and Kalenberg 2019). This separation, and the resulting health and life outcomes today.



Environmental Racism

Redlined communities being seen as “less valuable” led to cheaper land prices, which made it more cost-effective for polluting industries and freeways to buy the rights to build through these neighborhoods. This, in turn, exposed redlined communities to greater amounts of environmental and health hazards.

Public Health Inequities

Zip code is one of the most reliable determinants of U.S. health outcomes (Ducharme and Wolfson 2019). This is because where you live can determine your access to healthy foods, outdoor spaces, and quality healthcare.



Crunching the Numbers

If math wasn't your favorite subject in school, then you might dread seeing the word data in this workbook. But the truth is you don't need to love math or data to appreciate the important role that it plays. In addition to speaking with others, data can be a great way to better understand the conditions facing your community.

The two main types of data you'll be working with are environmental and community data. Environmental data will answer questions like "How many trees does my city have?" and "Where can we plant trees?" Community data will focus on factors that impact how vulnerable a community is to environmental pollutants. In the activity below, use the tools provided to explore data for your community.

Group Activity: Environmental & Community Data

Use CalEnviroScreen 3.0, the Los Angeles Canopy tool, Google's Tree Canopy Lab, and the Mapping Inequalities tool to find the following information about your community. Start by locating your community using your zip code in each of the tools listed above.

Indicator	Statistics
<p>CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Percentile: What is your community's percentage in this tool? What indicators are used to create this percentage?</p> <p>Existing Tree Canopy Percent: What is the % of land that has tree canopy coverage in your community?</p> <p>Redlined: Was your community a formerly redlined community? If so, was it rated a "C - Declining" or "D - Hazardous" neighborhood?</p> <p>Possible Tree Canopy Percent: What is the % of available green space for planting new trees in your community?</p>	

Does the data you found reflect your own experiences as a resident in the community? If so, how? If not, in what ways do they differ?

MEETING COMMUNITY & GROWING RELATIONS

Building connections with folks is the starting point of your work as a Tree Ambassador. That said, one of the biggest challenges when working with a community, even if it is your own, is to understand all members of the community as much as possible. There are some members that are able to communicate more clearly and more often with tree planting organizations, while others are left unheard.

As Tree Ambassadors, how can we make sure that everyone in our community is heard?

Conversation Starters:

Practicing Conversations

Grab a friend, family member, or fellow Tree Ambassador and practice how you might talk with your neighbors about the Tree Ambassador program. This is a sample script for the role play. It is provided here as a guide; make it your own:

Hi, my name is... And I'm a Tree Ambassador trying to get free trees planted in our community because of all of the environmental and health benefits they bring. To do this, we need support from community members to care for and water the trees planted. Do you know anyone who might be interested in taking home some free trees?

Once you're more familiar and comfortable with talking about the program, feel free to ditch the script and say what you think would be most effective.

SAMPLE OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Attend local community meetings

Attend local community meetings: By going to meetings (PTA, local civic group, community association) and sharing your ideas, the group may join in with your efforts or connect you with others who are interested.

Use Social Media

Using local Facebook pages and websites like Nextdoor is wonderful for connecting with others.

Host a Neighborhood Walk

Centering neighborhood walks around the specific interests of your community can help you bring people together.

Hold an informational session

Hold an Informational Session: Informational sessions are a great way to share your ideas and ask others for feedback. This is also a way for you to connect with folks who have or are currently doing similar work.

Attend local events

Local events like fairs and markets are a place where you can identify and connect with others who are active in your neighborhood.

Lead project-related workshops

Workshops like tree-care workshops are a great way to connect with people interested in your project. Be sure to follow-up with attendees to recruit their support.

Connect with churches and other community hubs

Churches and community hubs like libraries and neighborhood recreation centers are public spaces that bring people together. These are wonderful spaces to share your ideas and connect with others.

Host a tree adoption event or "block party"

Partner with us to host a tree adoption event or a "block party" for your neighborhood! These are great in-person ways to raise excitement about your project.

Post-Training Activity: Setting Goals & Starting Conversations

In becoming part of the Tree Ambassadors program, it is important to consider your personal goals and your goals for your community. Why did you sign up to be a Tree Ambassador? What motivated you to join the program? Take time in the following activity to consider your objectives. You will have one-on-one meetings with workshop facilitators to walk through your goals, how you hope to accomplish them, and how we can support you both now and in the future.

Goal-Setting

Consider both a personal goal and a community you'd like to meet during the Tree Ambassador program. Some questions to consider include:

- What do I hope to learn/gain through my time at this program?
- What changes do I hope to see in my community regarding healthy trees?
- What community resources can help me meet my goals?

Personal Goal (broad-vision)

Community Goal (broad-vision)

Personal Objective (specific targets)

Community Objective (specific targets)

Personal Outcome

Community Outcome

Starting Conversations

It can be helpful to think of your long-term goals as a collection of smaller tasks. We encourage you to work with your site supervisors or pair up with other Tree Ambassadors to think through how your long-term goals can break down into short-term tasks. Try to come up with one or two short-term goals to accomplish every month!

For this month, we want you to start engaging with your community. This can be as simple as talking to your neighbors or reaching out to local organizations. Think about who you see regularly in your area as a way to start! Use the space below to plan and brainstorm your short-term goals for this month. Remember to center equity in your outreach planning.

Here's a list with some ideas to get you started:

- List out the names of 5-6 neighbors that you can talk to about the program and try to talk to as many of them as you can!
- List 3-5 organizations that work in your area and try to visit or talk to a representative at 2 of them



CITATIONS

Champine, Riley, Ryan Morris, Theodore Sickley, and Diana Marques. 2021. "How L.A.'s Urban Tree Canopy Reveals Hidden Inequities." National Geographic. July 2021. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/graphics/how-los-angeles-tree-canopy-reveals-hidden-inequities-feature>.

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Your city. Your voice. Your urban forest.
Tu voz. Tu ciudad. Tu bosque urbano.