MAPPING TREE EQUITY

PROVIDENCE, RI

AN INFORMATIONAL ZINE BY THE PVD TREE PLAN TEAM

Environmental racism has woven white supremacy into the fabric of our city. The 8 maps in this zine illustrate the strong spatial correlations between whiteness, wealth, and environmental privilege in Providence. They testify to ongoing violence and harm done to Black, brown, and working class communities. The fact that these communities have fewer trees, hotter summers, higher asthma rates, and lower environmental privilege isn't a coincidence —it's the result of systemic disinvestment and racist policy, from "redlining" policies that denied loans to those in "high risk" neighborhoods to "urban renewal" projects that marked entire communities of color as "blighted" and in need of clearance. The movement for tree equity is part of a struggle to repair this harm.

WHAT IS TREE EQUITY?

In Providence, as in most cities, our tree canopy and the benefits it provides are not distributed evenly across neighborhoods. We envision a city where this has changed—and all residents have equal access to trees where they live, work, and play. We call this vision "tree equity."

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Tree equity is about people...not just trees. Trees in our neighborhoods provide us with countless benefits, including:
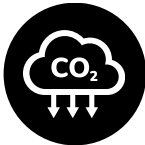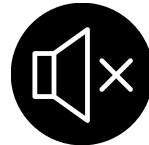
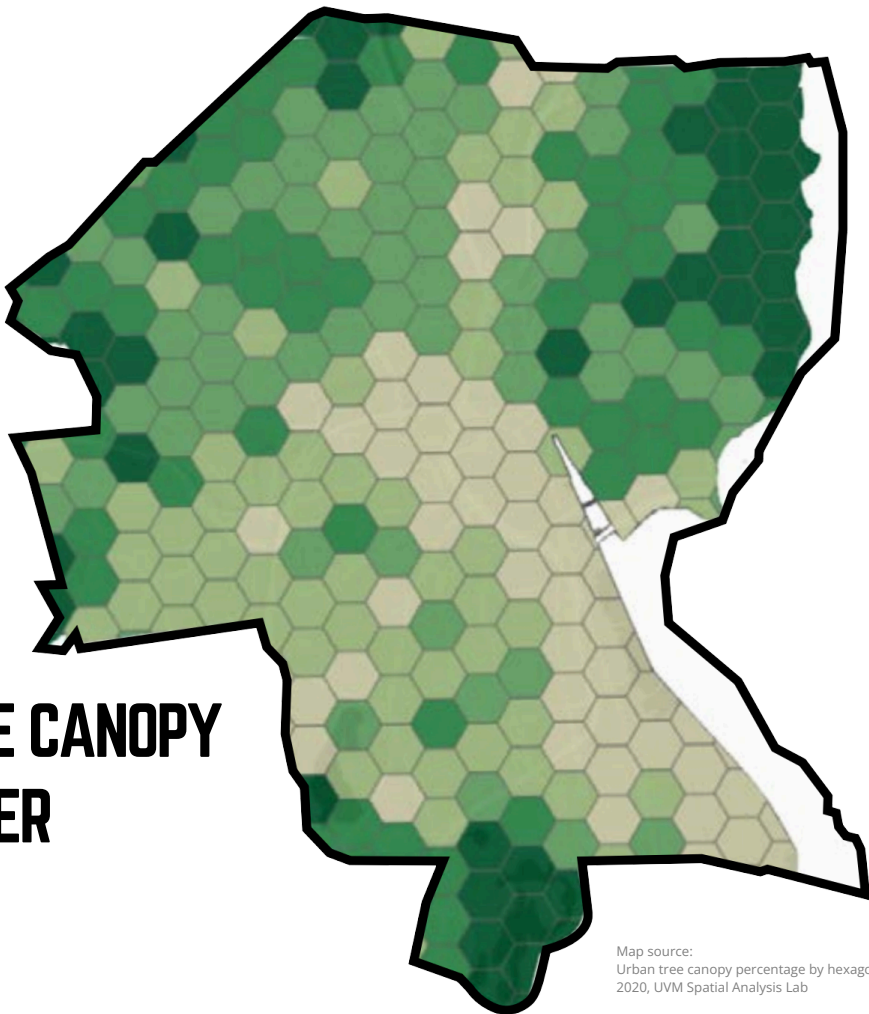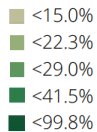| Improved Health	Flood Management	Better Air Quality
Carbon Sequestration	Temperature Control	Noise Reduction

The movement for tree equity is a movement for a city that prioritizes the health and wellbeing of Black, brown, and working-class bodies and communities.
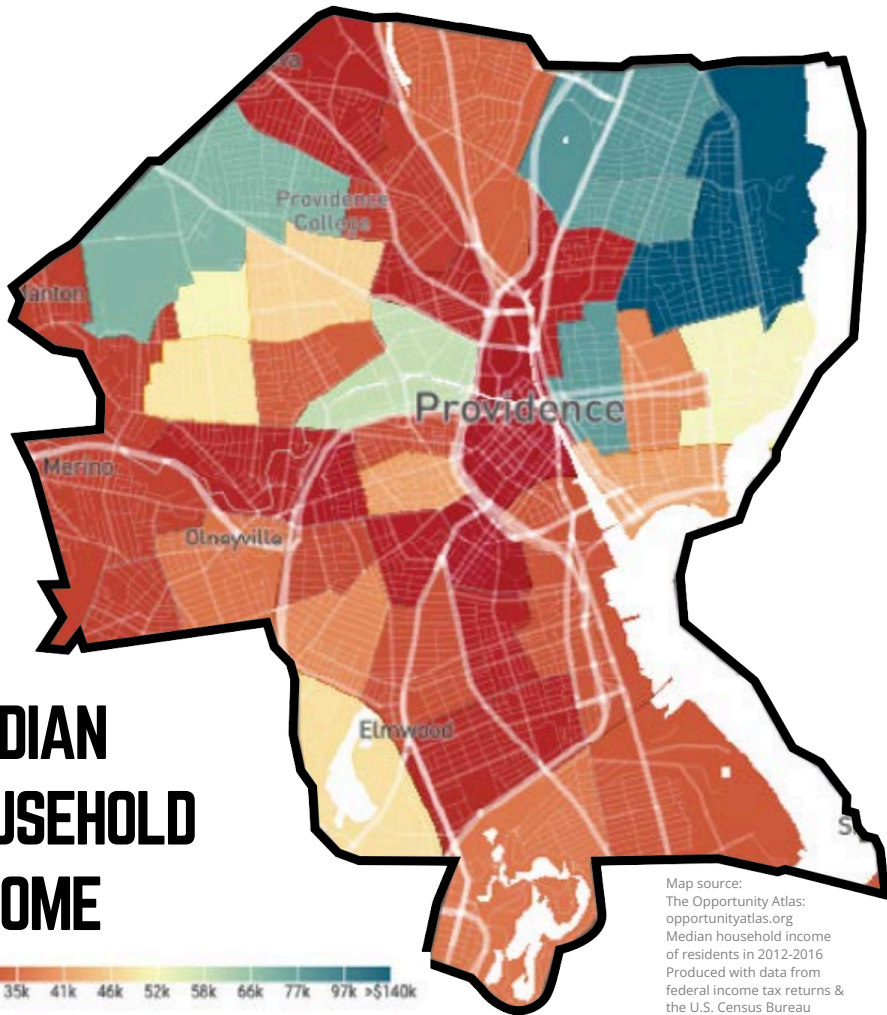
TREE CANOPY COVER

- <15.0%
- <22.3%
- <29.0%
- <41.5%
- <99.8%

Map source:
Urban tree canopy percentage by hexagon
2020, UVM Spatial Analysis Lab

COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

% identifying as non-white

| 0% | 4.7 | 8.5 | 13 | 19 | 27 | 36 | 50 | 69 | 90 | 100% |

MEDIAN
HOUSEHOLD
INCOME

Providence College

Providence

Vanton

Merino

Olneyville

Elmwood

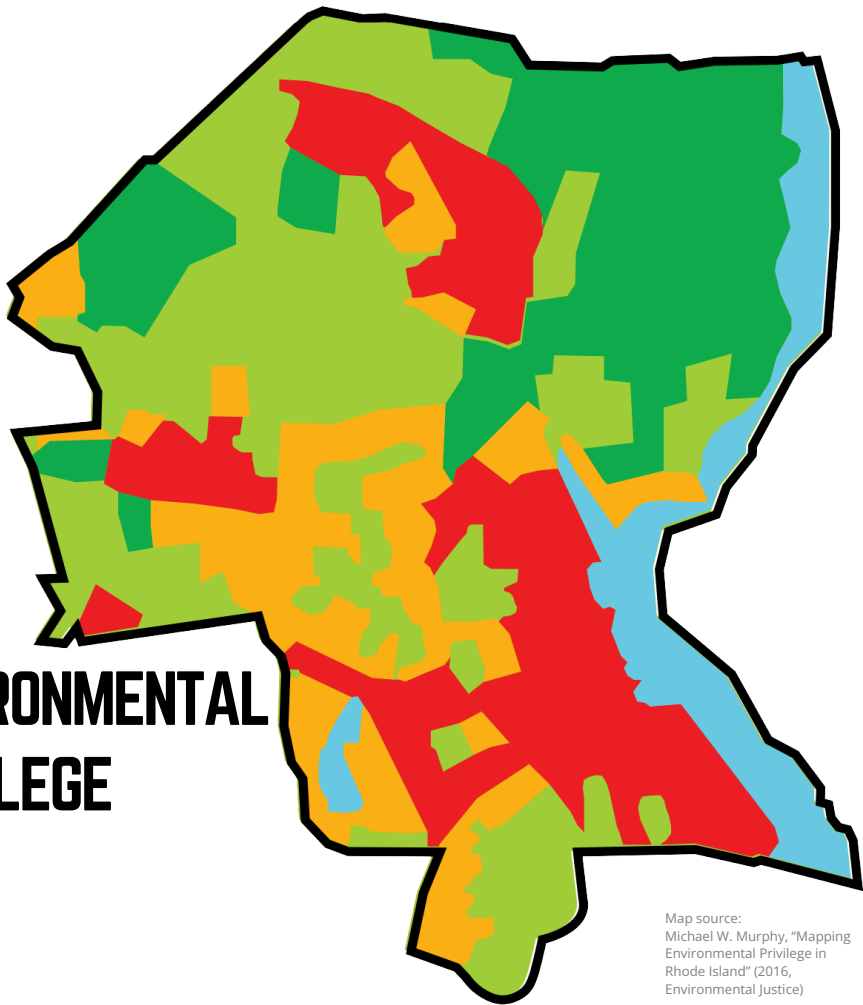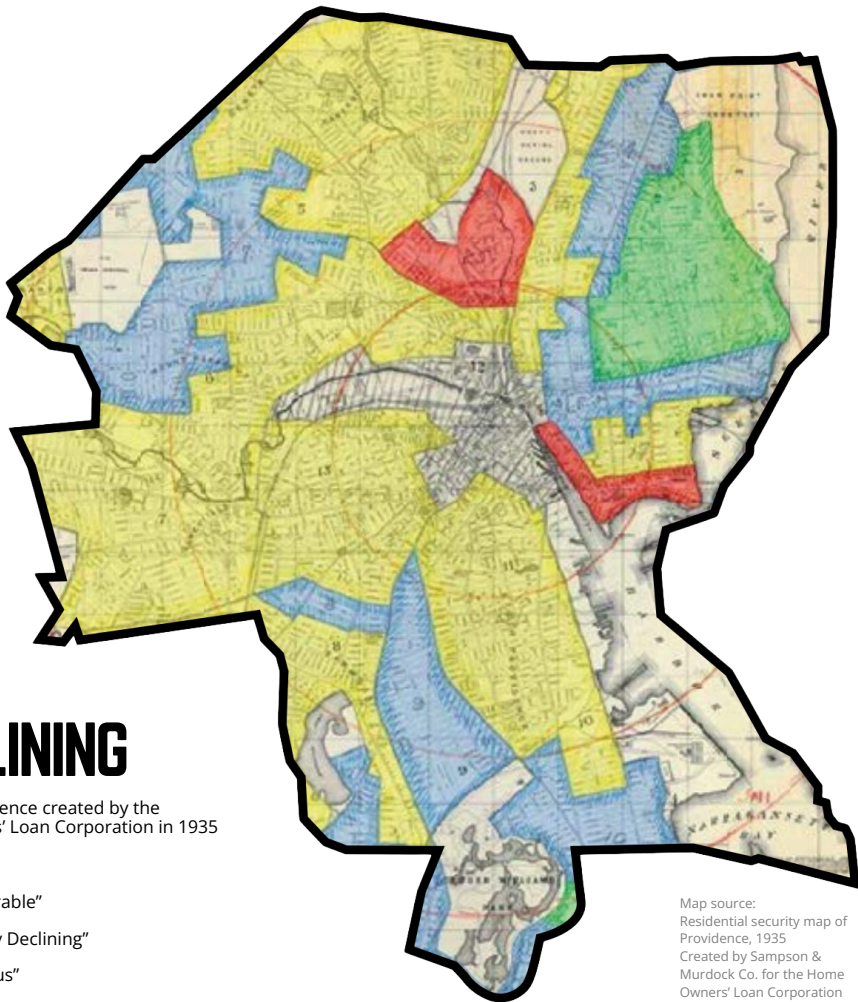| $0 | 28k | 35k | 41k | 46k | 52k | 58k | 66k | 77k | 97k | >$140k |

ENVIRONMENTAL
PRIVILEGE

EPI Score
- -1 to 5
- 6 to 9
- 10 to 12
- 13 to 17

Map source:
Michael W. Murphy, "Mapping
Environmental Privilege in
Rhode Island" (2016,
Environmental Justice)

REDLINING

Map of Providence created by the
Home Owners' Loan Corporation in 1935

- 🟩 "Best"
- 🟦 "Still Desirable"
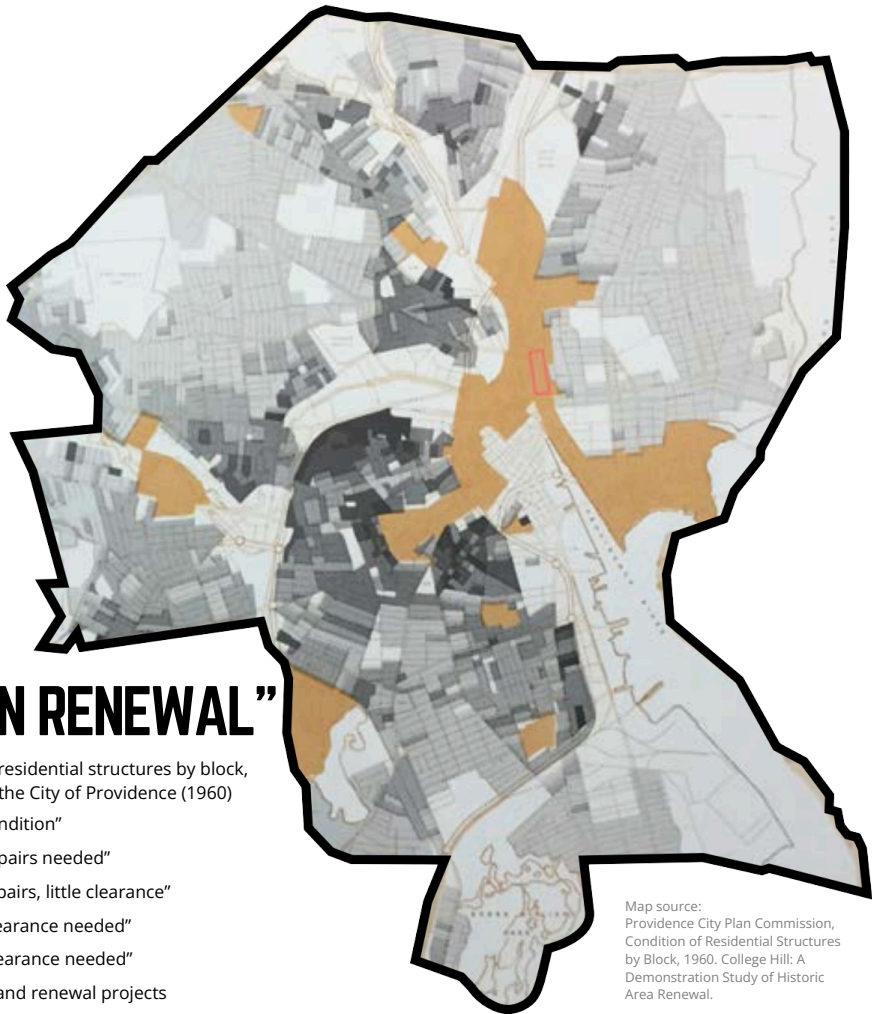- 🟨 "Definitely Declining"
- 🟥 "Hazardous"

Map source:
Residential security map of
Providence, 1935
Created by Sampson &
Murdock Co. for the Home
Owners' Loan Corporation

"URBAN RENEWAL"

Condition of residential structures by block,
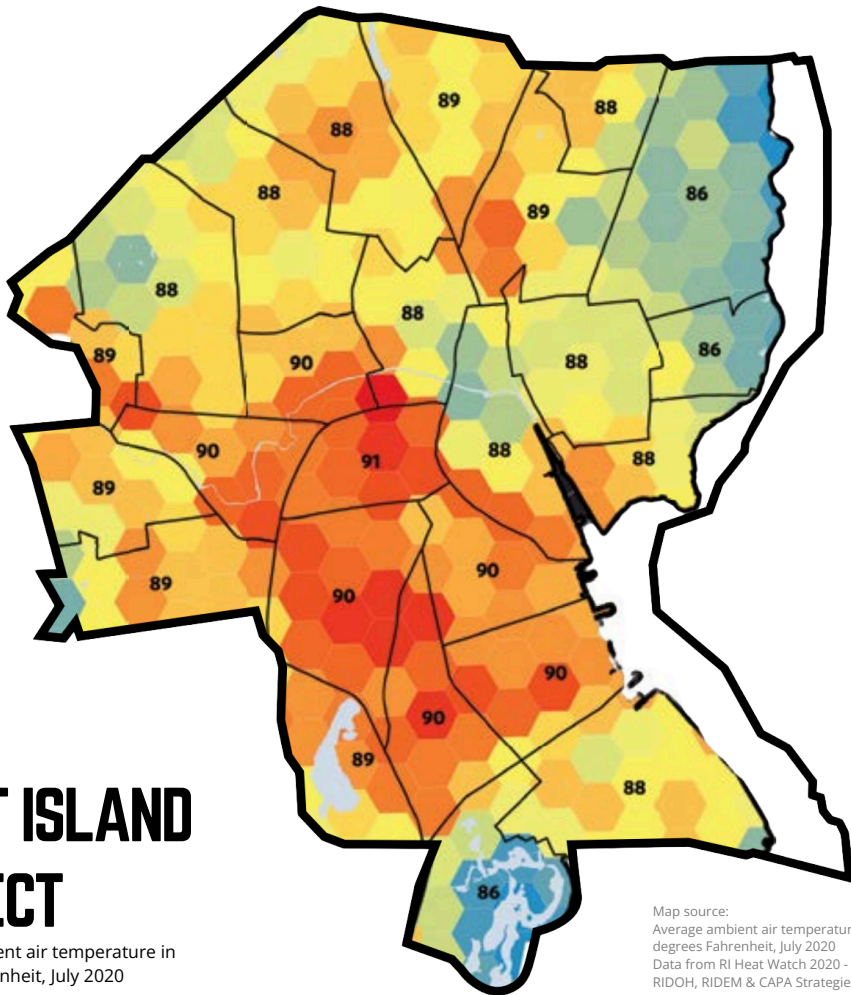according to the City of Providence (1960)

- "Good condition"
- "Some repairs needed"
- "Many repairs, little clearance"
- "Some clearance needed"
- "Major clearance needed"
- Housing and renewal projects

Map source:
Providence City Plan Commission,
Condition of Residential Structures
by Block, 1960. College Hill: A
Demonstration Study of Historic
Area Renewal.

HEAT ISLAND EFFECT

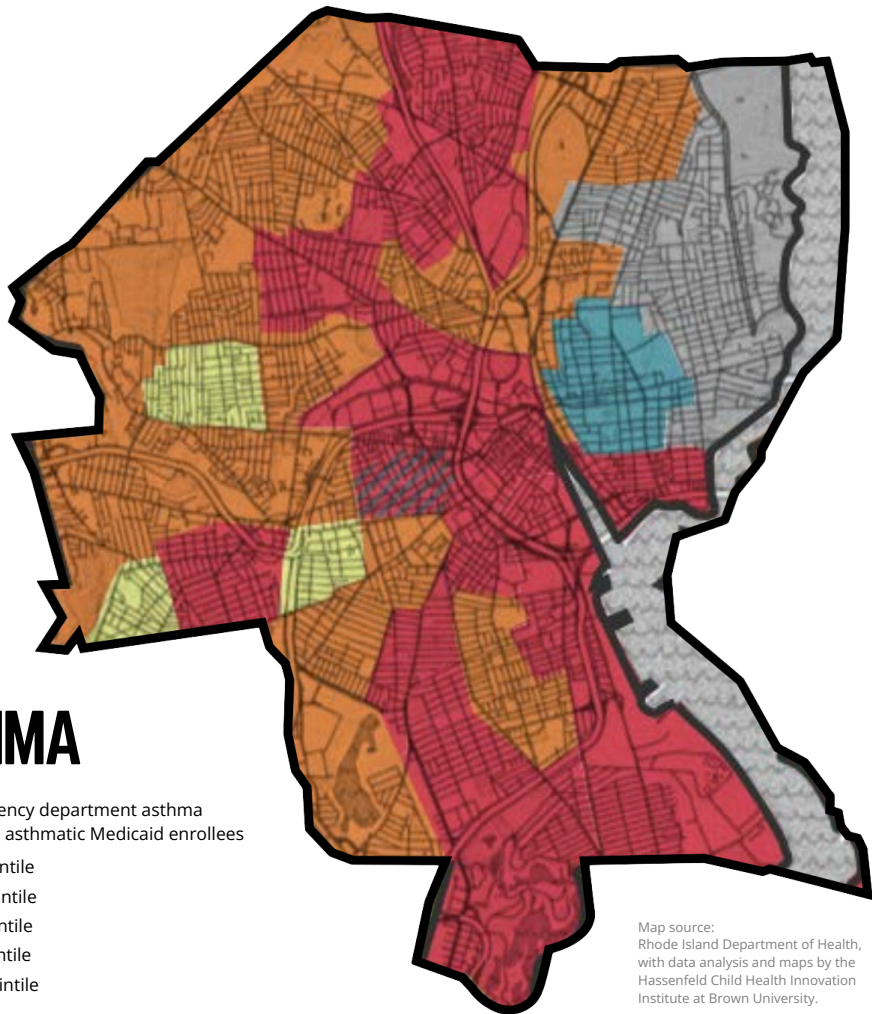Average ambient air temperature in degrees Fahrenheit, July 2020

ASTHMA

Rate of emergency department asthma
claims per 100 asthmatic Medicaid enrollees

- Lowest quintile
- Second quintile
- Middle quintile
- Fourth quintile
- Highest quintile

Map source:
Rhode Island Department of Health,
with data analysis and maps by the
Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation
Institute at Brown University.

WHAT IS THE PVD TREE PLAN?

The PVD Tree Plan is a comprehensive, citywide strategic plan that centers the needs, ideas, and priorities of the people most impacted by tree inequity. This initiative includes and is led by Black and brown folks living in neighborhoods with the fewest trees. It outlines a vision and action plan for creating a healthy and resilient urban forest that equitably distributes the critical infrastructure of trees to all residents!

LEARN MORE:

pvdtreeplan.org

GET INVOLVED:

pvdtreeplan.org/get-involved