

University of Connecticut Technical Assistance for  
Brownfields EPA Region 1

# Unraveling Environmental Justice in New England

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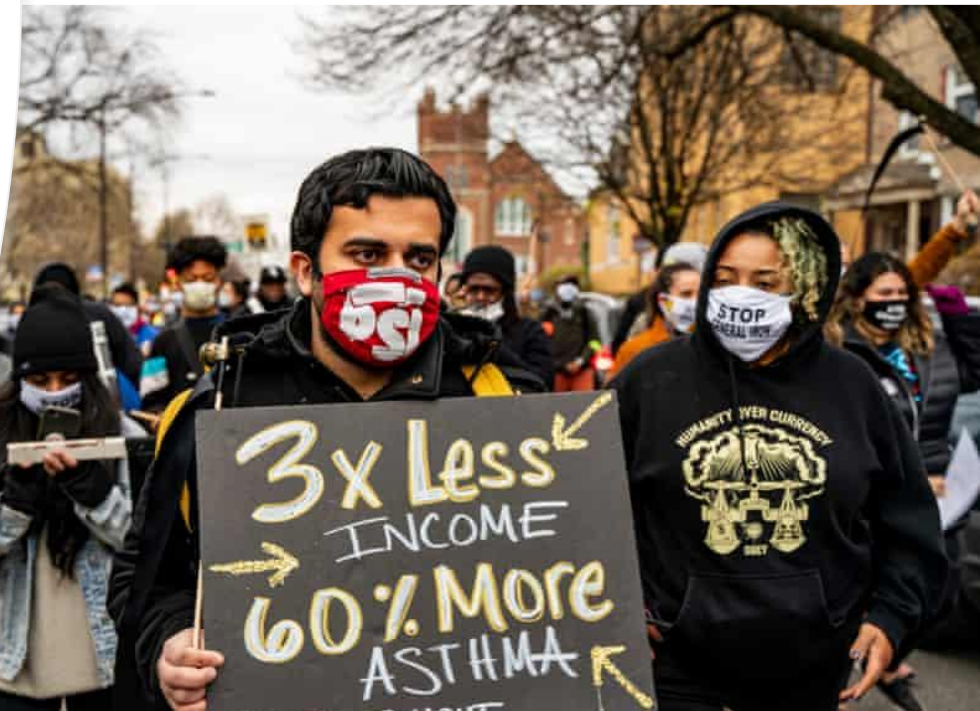
## Environmental Justice

*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.*

# Unequal Burdens

Communities of color, indigenous, and low-income populations may be disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards due to:

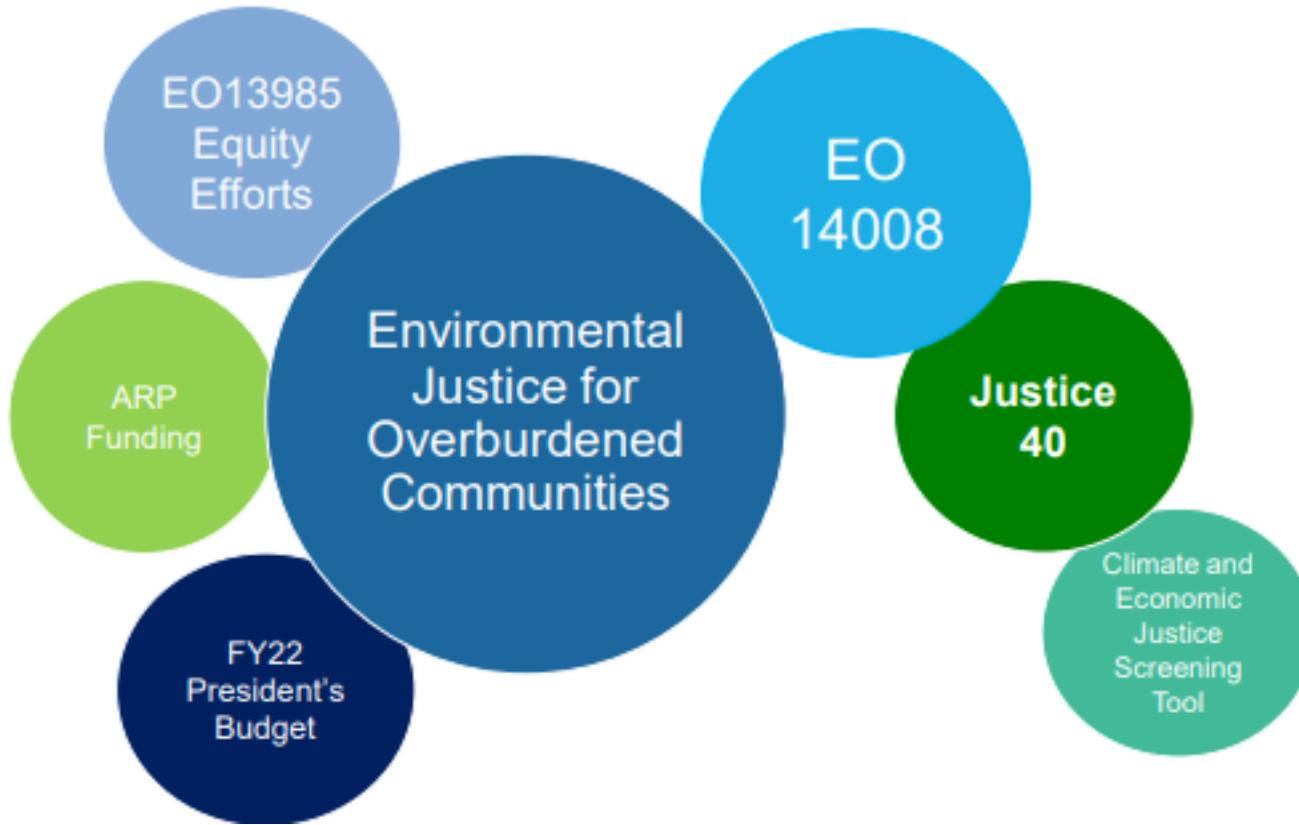
- **Proximity to sources of pollution**
- **Vulnerable populations**
- **Exclusion from participation in the decision-making process**









## REGION 1 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACTION PLAN

# A Historic Moment for EJ



-   
**Strengthen Compliance with Environmental Laws in Communities Overburdened by Pollution**
-   
**Incorporate EJ Considerations into all of Region 1's Work**
-   
**Engage in Overburdened and Underserved Communities**
-   
**Invest in Overburdened and Underserved Communities**

*From EPA's Office of Environmental Justice*



# Environmental Justice in New England

## Massachusetts

### Demographics

- $\geq 40\%$  Minorities

### Income

- Median household income  $\leq 65\%$  of statewide

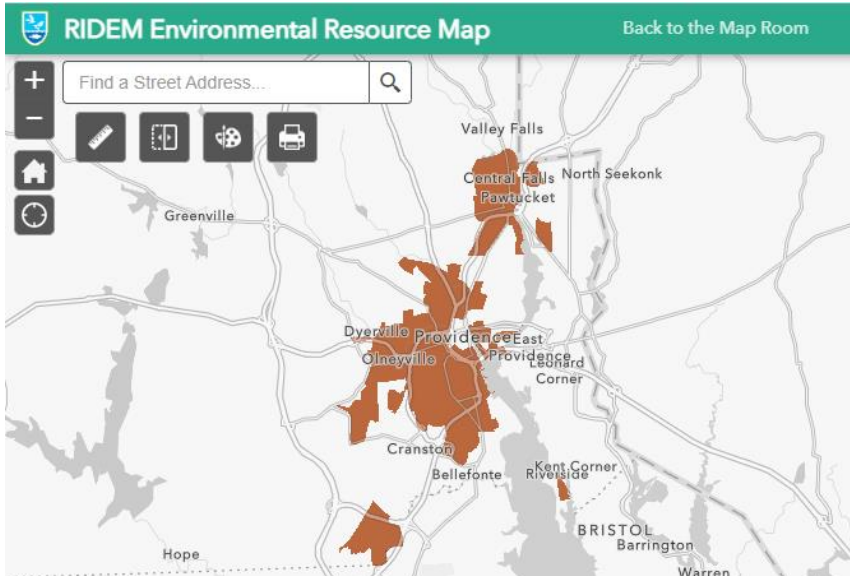
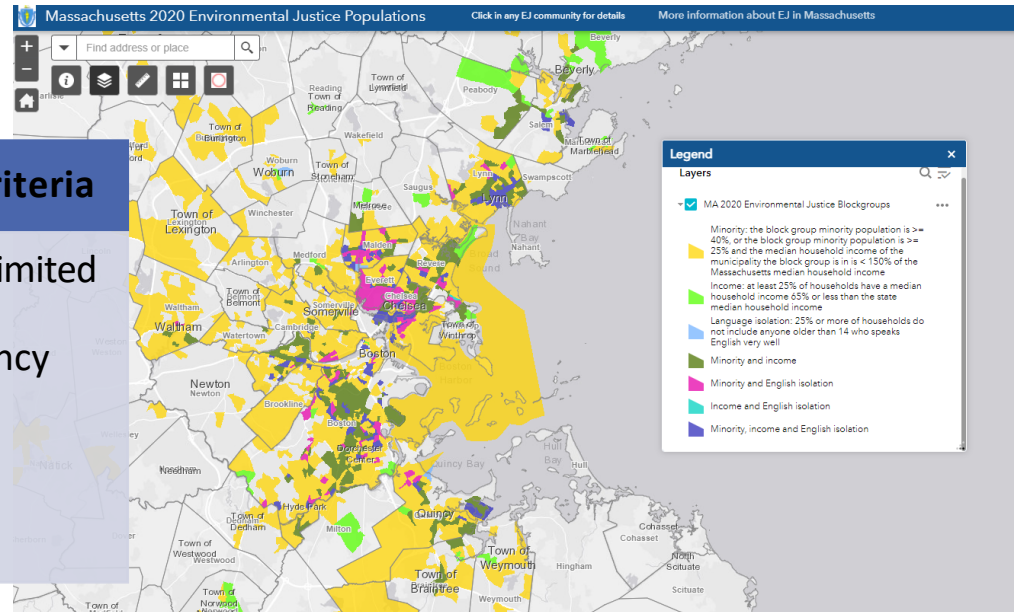
### Other Criteria

- $\geq 25\%$  Limited English Proficiency

AND/OR

AND/OR

Minorities  $\geq 25\%$  AND median household income  $\leq 150\%$  of statewide



## Rhode Island

### Demographics

- Minorities in the top 15% of State

### Income

- Low-income residents in the top 15% of State

AND/OR

# Environmental Justice in New England

## Connecticut

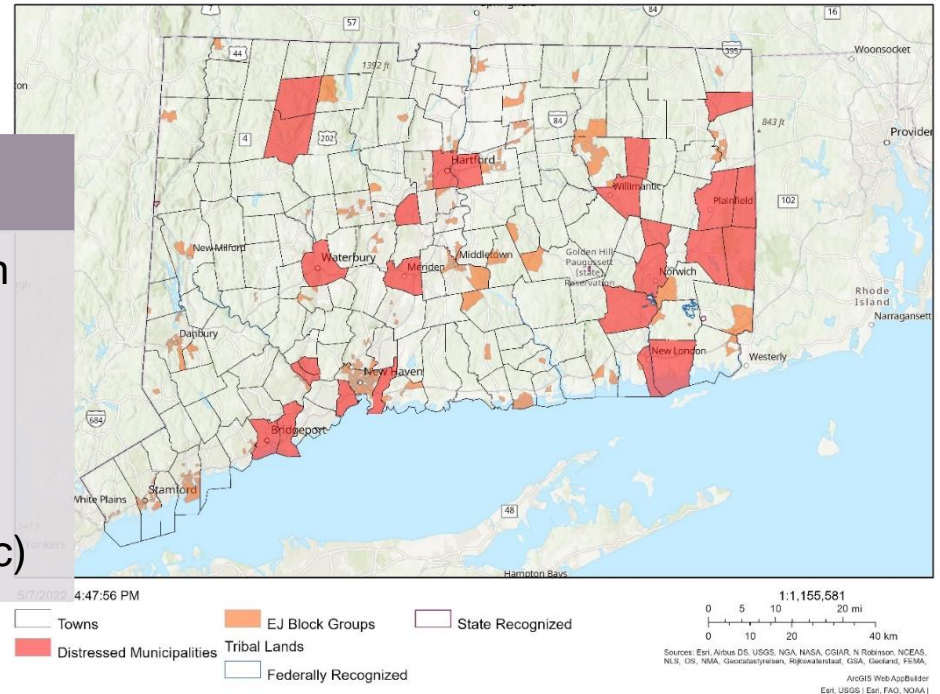
### Income & Other factors

- Block groups with  $\geq 30\%$  of the population living below 200% of the federal poverty level

AND/OR

- Distressed Municipality (criteria: income, poverty, unemployment, change in population, age of housing, education, etc)

2021 Environmental Justice Communities in Connecticut

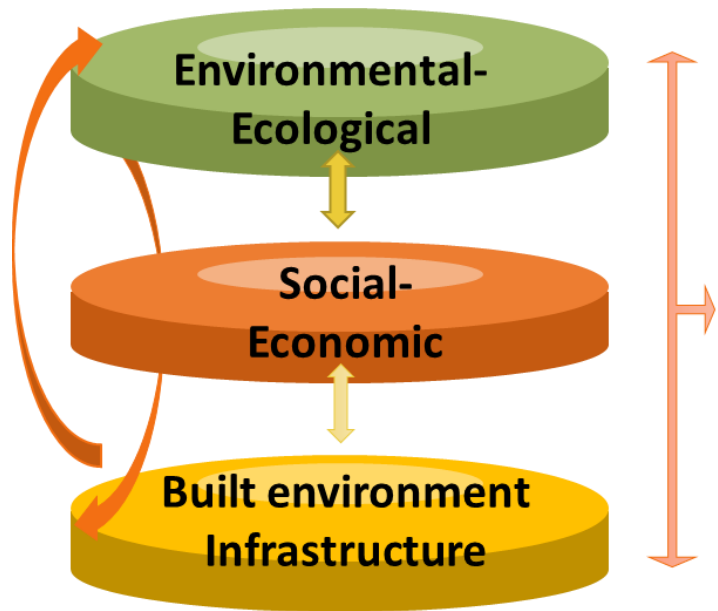


## In Progress

**Maine** – “...define EJ communities by taking into consideration, at a minimum, median household income, race, ethnicity, and English language proficiency” (H.P. 1500, 130<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature)

**Vermont** – “...categorize environmental justice communities based upon census tract data for median household income, minority percentage, and limited English proficiency percentage (H.P. of Amendment S.148, 2021-2022 Regular Session, Vermont Legislature)

# Implications of definition for EJ Communities

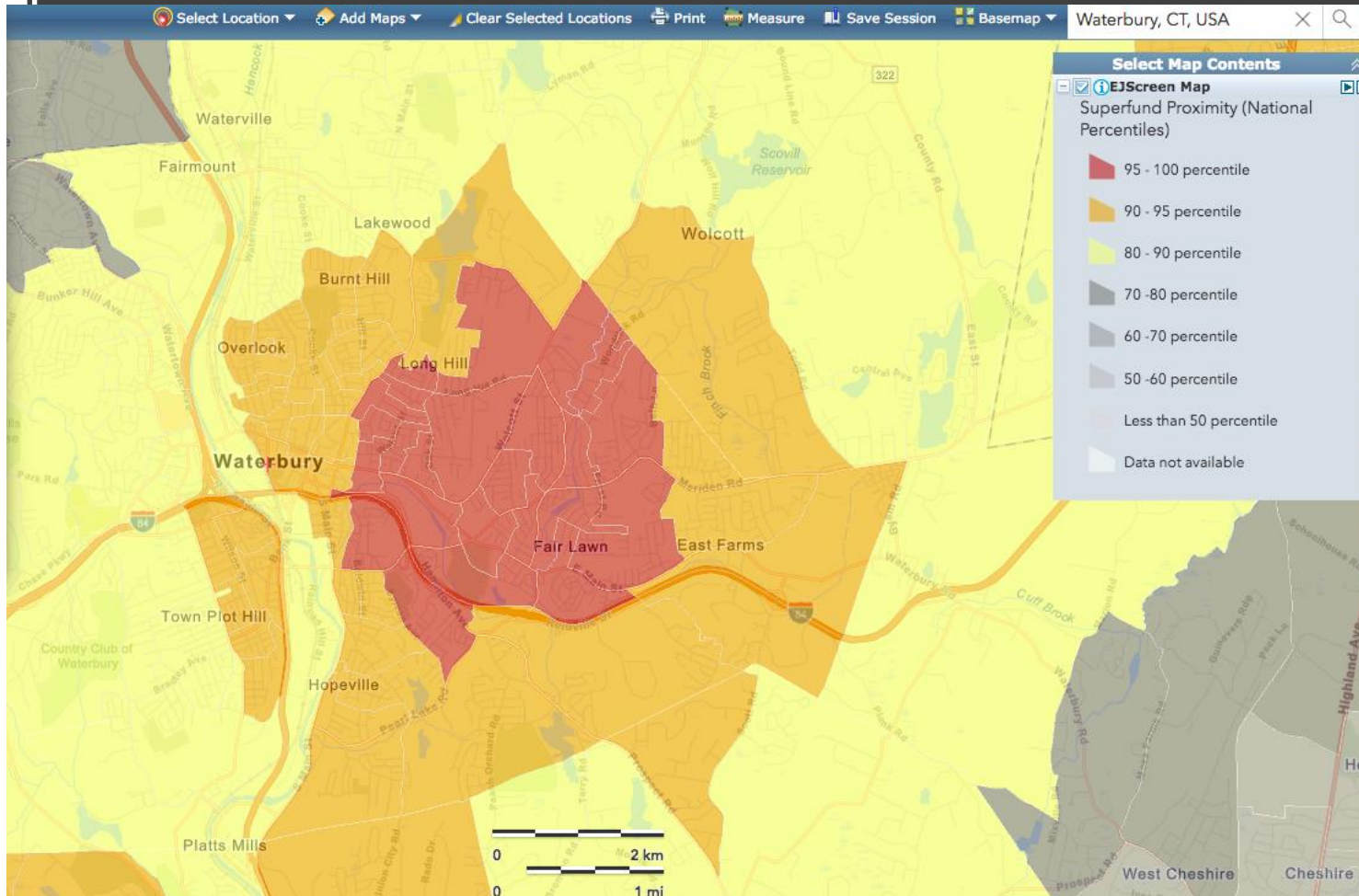


To what extent the EJ definition captures communities impacted by environmental burdens



# Research Methodology

## EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool





# Hypothesis Testing Results

Statistically Significant Differences between EJ Communities and State Average

## Socio Economic Indicators

- **People of Color Population %**
- **Low Income Population %**
- **Less Than High School Education %**
- **Linguistically Isolated Population %**
- **Under 5-years-old Population %**
- **Over 64-years-old Population %**
- **Unemployment %**

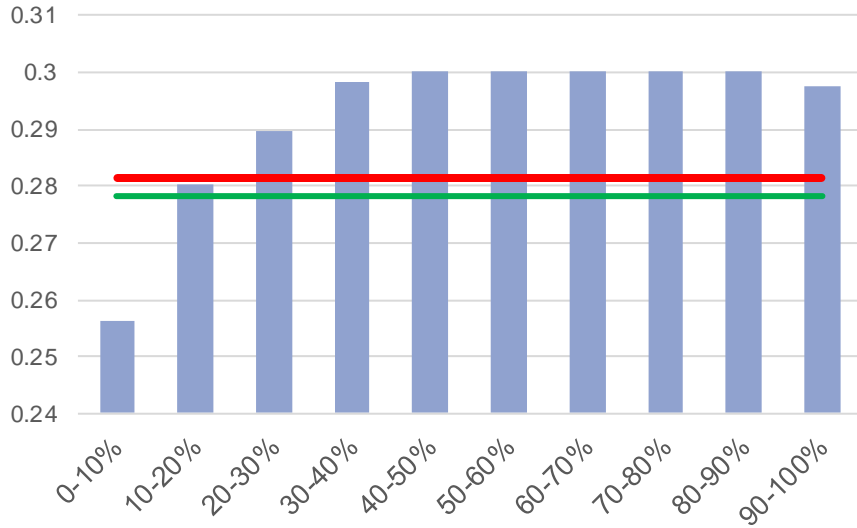
## Environmental Indicators

- **Diesel Particulate Matter**
- **Pre-1960 Housing Stock %**
- **NATA Lifetime Cancer Risk**
- **Respiratory Risk**
- **Proximity to Traffic**
- **Wastewater Discharge**
- **Proximity to SUPERFUND**
- **Proximity to Facility With Risk Management Plan**
- **Proximity to Hazardous Waste**
- **Ozone**
- **Particulate Matter 2.5**

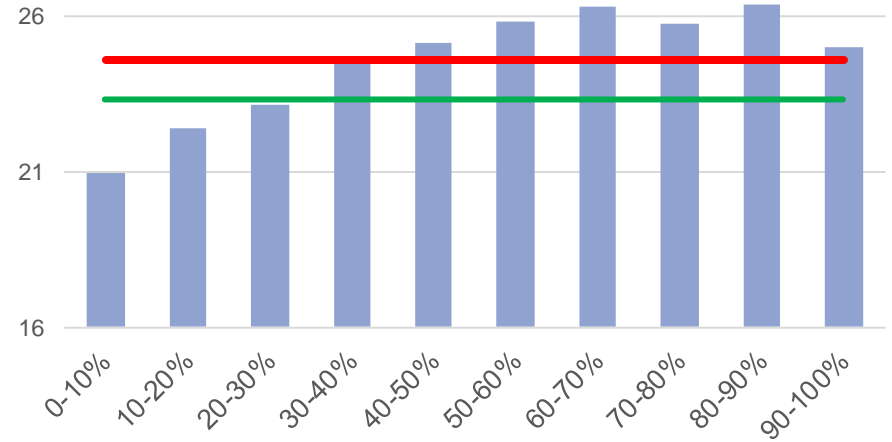


# Minority Population Groups outside of EJ Community Data

## Respiratory Risk (RESP)

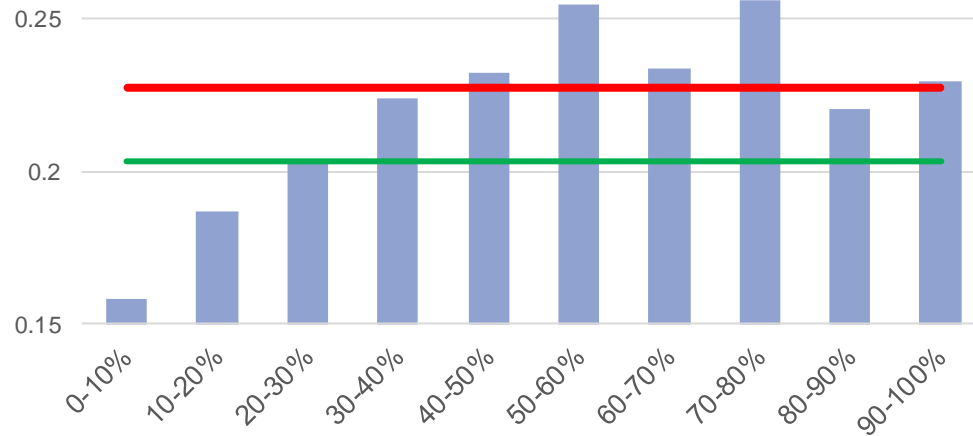


## NATA Lifetime Cancer Risk (CANCER)



Blue bars represent Minority Population % of communities with Low Income Population less than 30%.

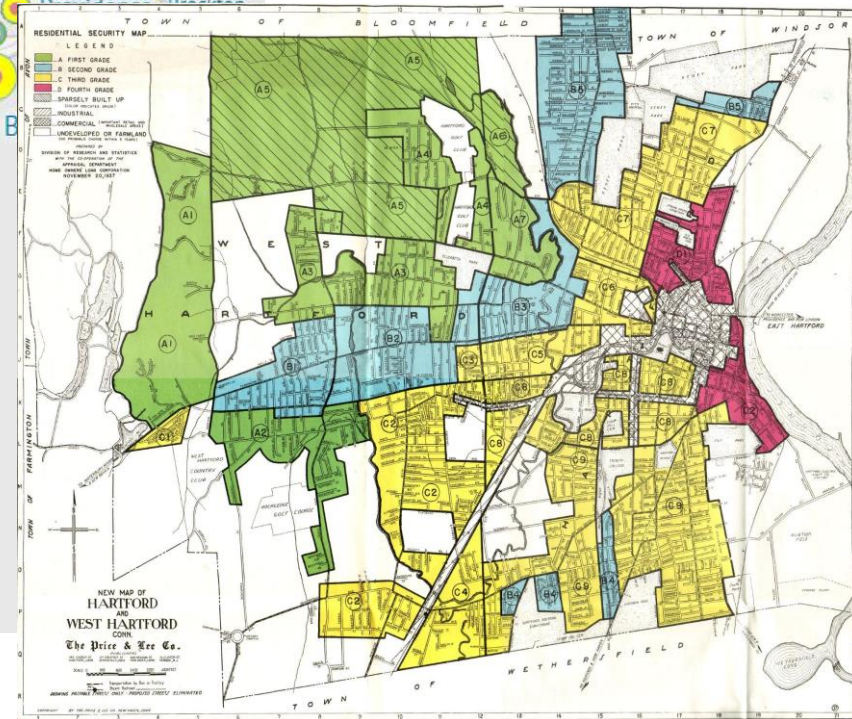
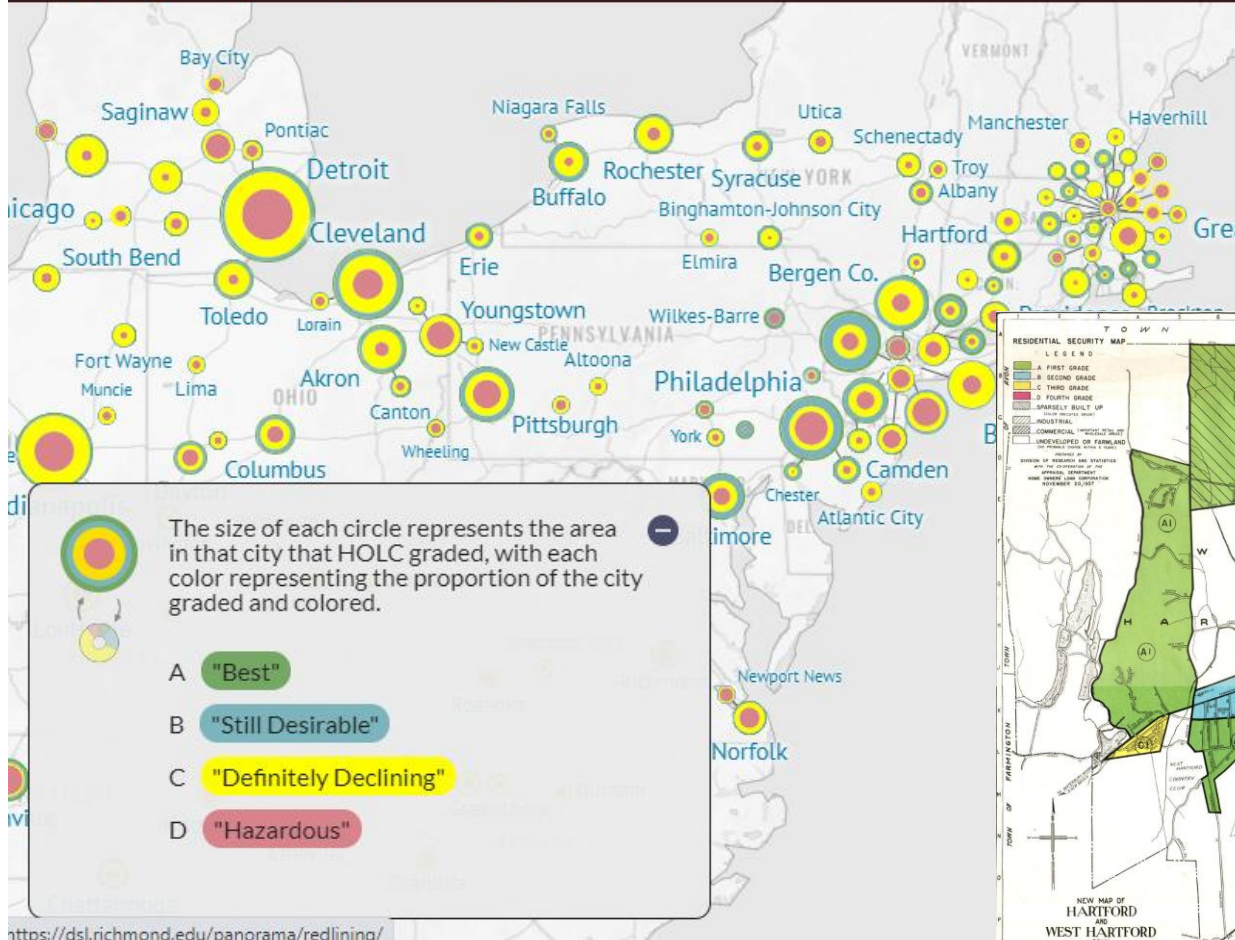
## Diesel Particulate Matter (DSLPM)



- █ INDICATOR
- █ CT State Average
- █ EJ Average

# Redlining in CT

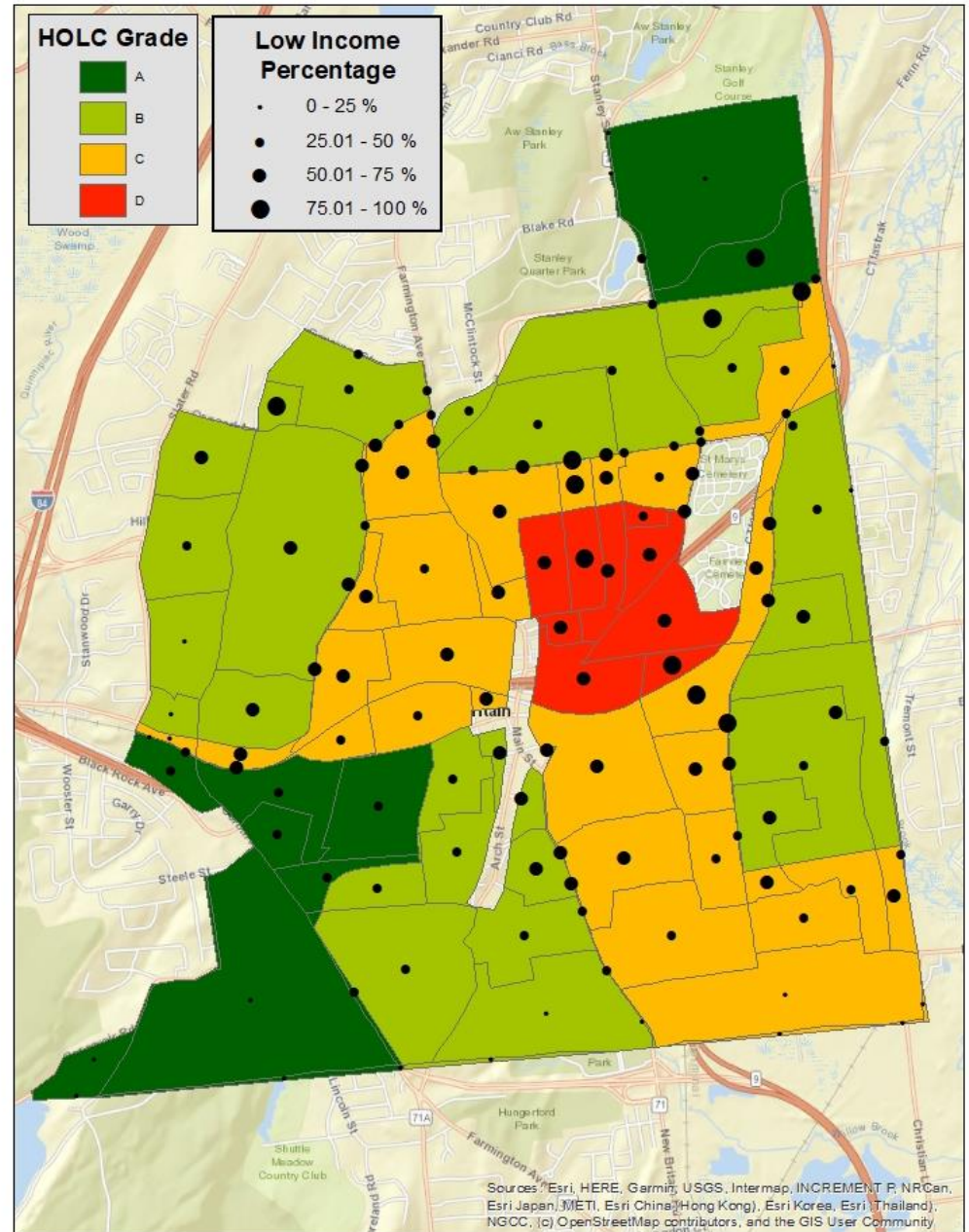
## Mapping Inequality Redlining in New Deal America





# Segregation, still present?

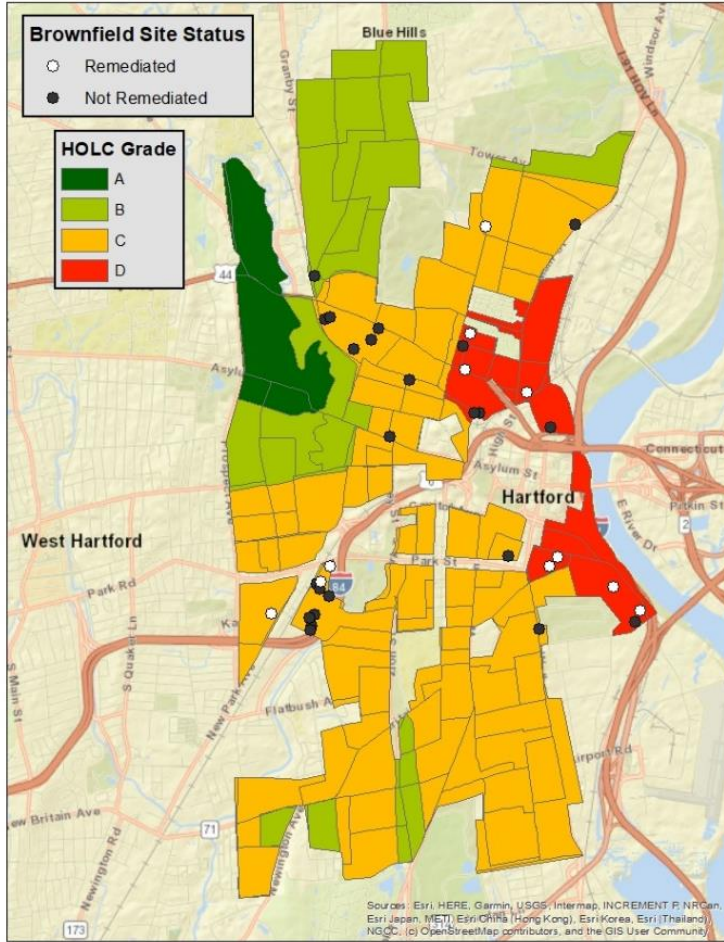
Significant differences between demographic & environmental indicators in areas deemed as high risk (HOLC C & D) compared to areas of low risk (HOLC A & B) for both Hartford and New Britain



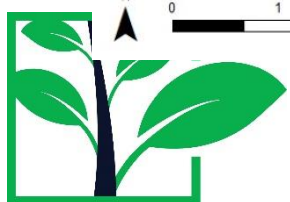
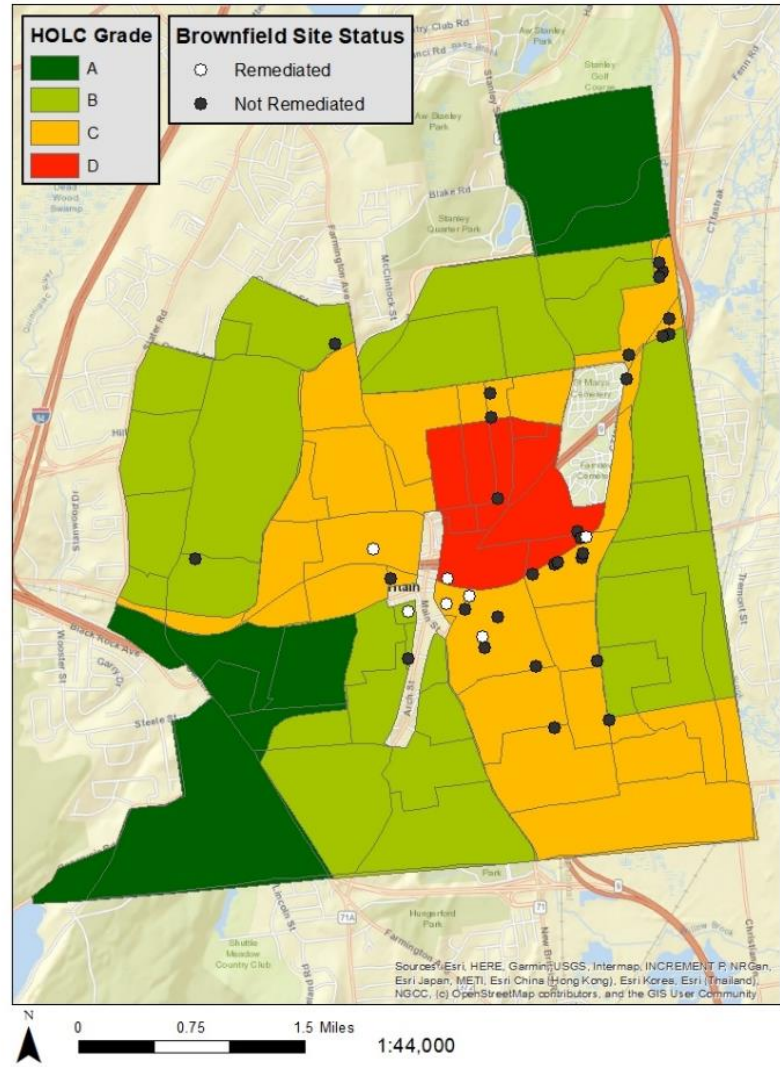


# Brownfields & EJ

Hartford Brownfield Sites and HOLC Rated Areas



New Britain Brownfield Sites and HOLC Rated Areas



Map of 1937 HOLC areas and brownfield site data for Hartford and New Britain CT

Lauren Pawlowski, Honors Thesis



Gentrification,  
is it inevitable?

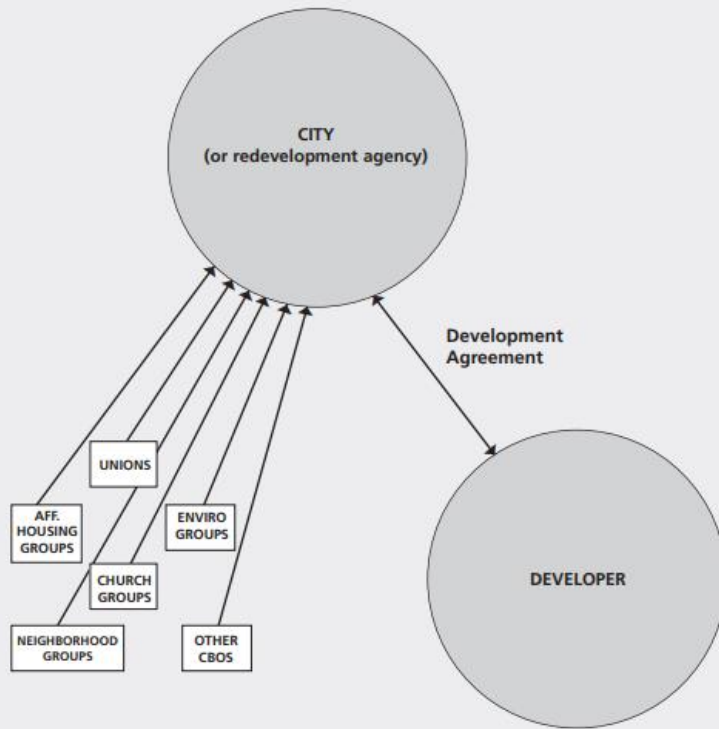
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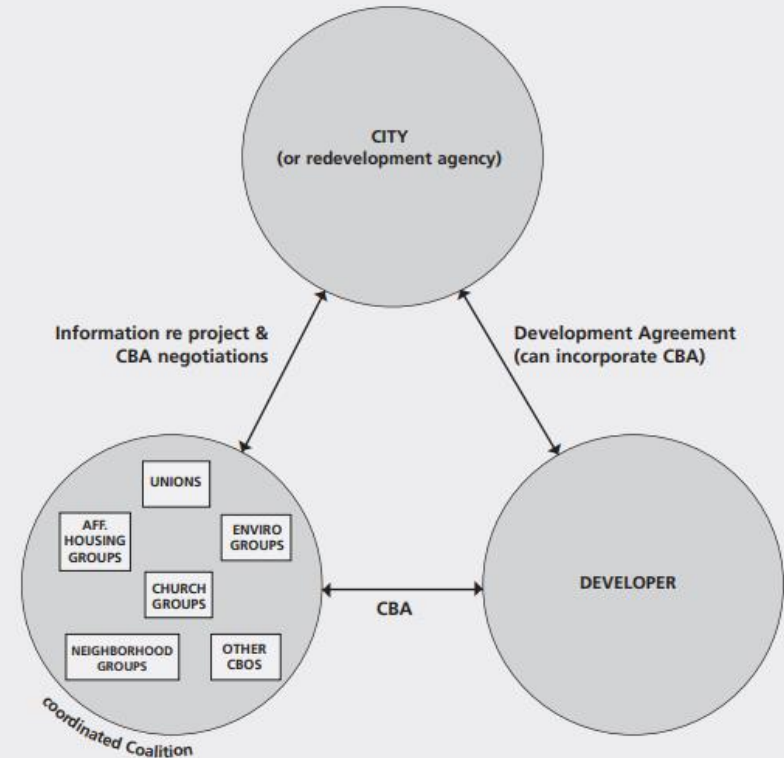


# Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs)

## WITHOUT A CBA



## WITH A CBA



*Community Benefits Agreements Making Development Projects Accountable*, 2005, Good Jobs First and the California Partnership for Working Families

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# Community Development

## How community-centered economic inclusion addresses systemic barriers to opportunity

**A targeted, strategic scale** that invests in select sub-geographies within cities that have the greatest potential to make a transformative impact in building community wealth, reducing economic inequity, and enhancing opportunity city- and region-wide.

**Level of integration:** Mobilizes key holders of institutionalized power at the city and regional level together with communities directly impacted by structural inequities to develop shared priorities for place-based investment and economic development.

COMMUNITY-CENTERED ECONOMIC INCLUSION  
SYSTEMATIC BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY

City and regional policies, practices, and investment structures are often agnostic to—or worse, exacerbate—place-based inequities.

Those closest to place-based inequities are often disconnected from those with the institutionalized power to alleviate them, and vice versa.

**Market forces exacerbate patterns** of racial and economic segregation, withdrawing investment, jobs, and amenities further from already-underinvested communities.

**Status Quo**  
Without systemic action, the number of high-poverty neighborhoods will continue to grow in metro areas nation-wide.

**Discriminatory public policies** and private actions create and reinforce racial and economic segregation—isolating certain neighborhoods from the resources needed to thrive.

**A multidisciplinary, systems-level scope** that increases public, private, and civic sector investments within underinvested communities; integrates efforts in capacity-building as well as community, economic, and workforce development to connect underinvested communities to wealth-building opportunities; and reforms the systems, sectors, and actors that reinforce place-based inequities over the long term.

### Cumulative Solutions

Community, city, and regional leaders can build community wealth within underinvested place, reduce patterns of economic inequity city-wide, and drive more equitable city and regional economic growth.

*Community-centered economic inclusion: A strategic action playbook, Brookings & LISC, 2021*

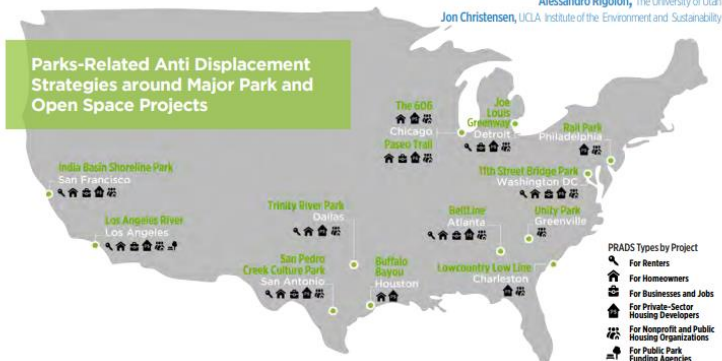
## Greening without Gentrification:

Learning from Parks-Related Anti-Displacement Strategies Nationwide

Alessandro Rigolon, The University of Utah

Jon Christensen, UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability

### Parks-Related Anti Displacement Strategies around Major Park and Open Space Projects



## Anti-Displacement Policies

UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability

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