

THE NASHVILLE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Teaching Nashvillians how to make more inclusive
decisions that strengthen our people, profit, & planet

October 7, 2020



Goal

Grow a culture of environmental justice learning that empowers Nashville's most-marginalized communities.





Environmental Justice

“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.”

Environmental Protection Agency (4)



Marginalized Community

Groups of people who are excluded, neglected, or discriminated against for social, economic, political, and other reasons, and as a result, have unequal access to services and representation.

National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health &
Technologies for Digital Inclusion: Good Practices Dealing with Diversity (1,2)



Sustainability & EJ

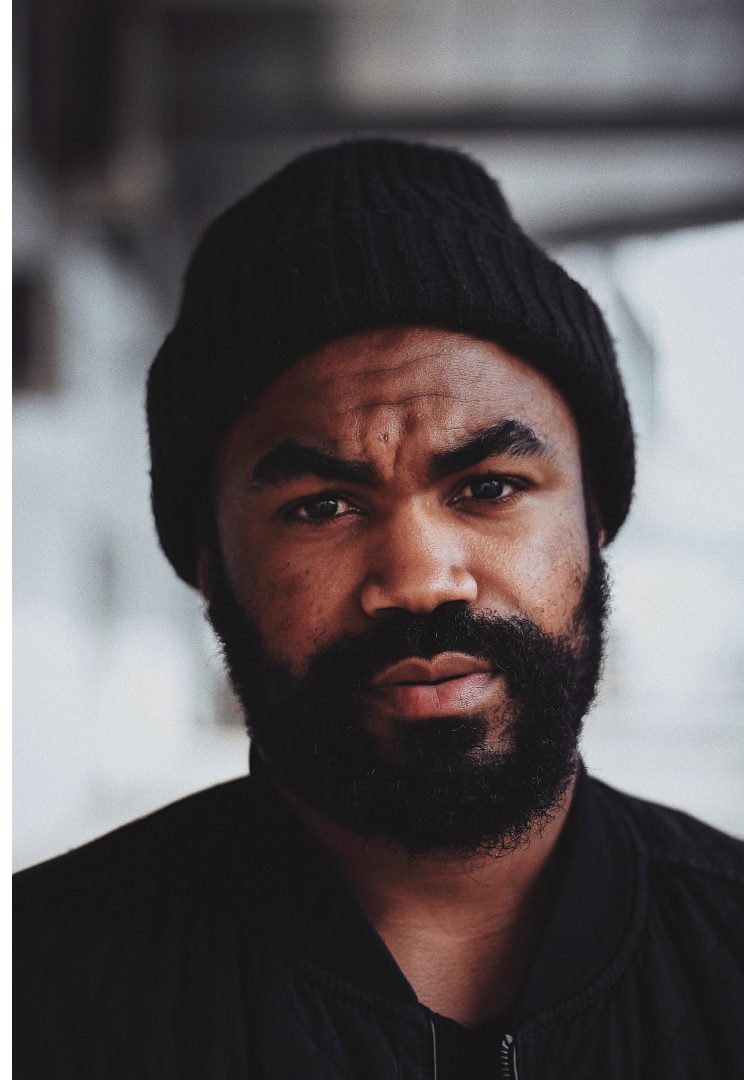
Sustainability takes people, profit, and planet into account. The social equity “pillar” ensures we make choices that protect our planet and our economy, while empowering marginalized communities too.

Research Gate (3)



Nashville's Challenge

Marginalized Nashvillians have less voice in the city's development, in part because environmental justice learning is not yet a systemic priority. As a result, many remain disproportionately exposed to health and environmental hazards.



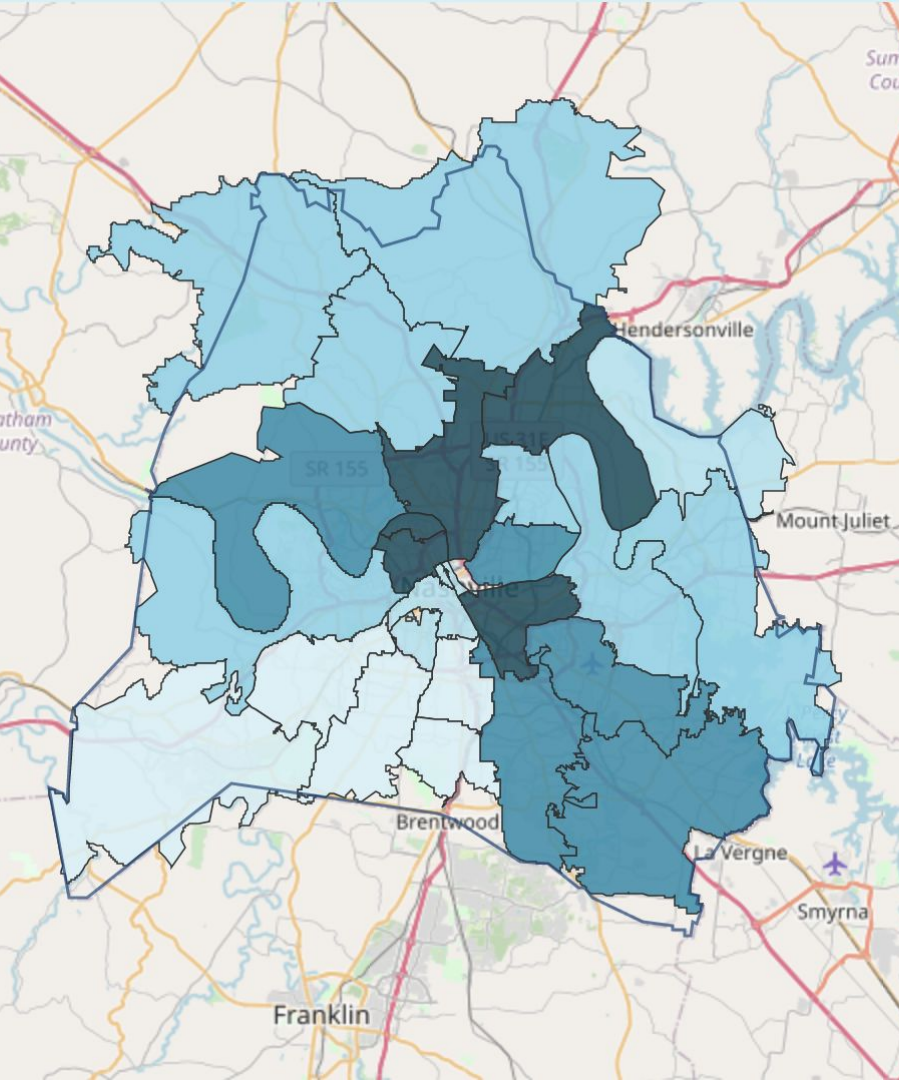


History of Disparity

While not an industrial city, Nashville grows rapidly and has its own history of environmental injustice.

1. North Nashville & Interstate 40
2. The Bordeaux landfills & mining
3. Edgehill & green gentrification
4. 2010 Flood & extreme weather
5. Asthma & Cayce Homes
6. Urban tree cover density





Socioeconomic Need

Poor health and environmental outcomes often intersect with higher economic need and communities of color. Dark blue areas represent some of the highest economic need in Davidson County.

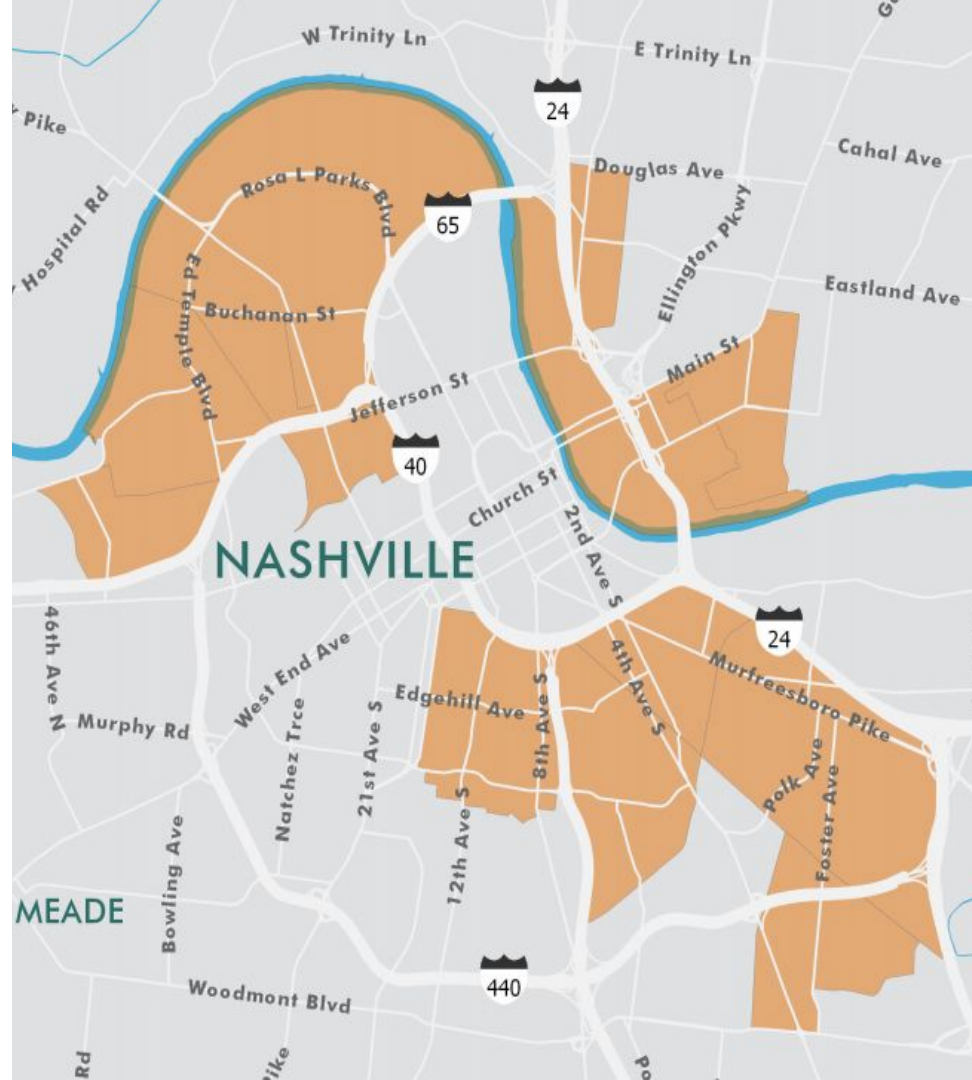
Map: Conduent Healthy Communities Institute

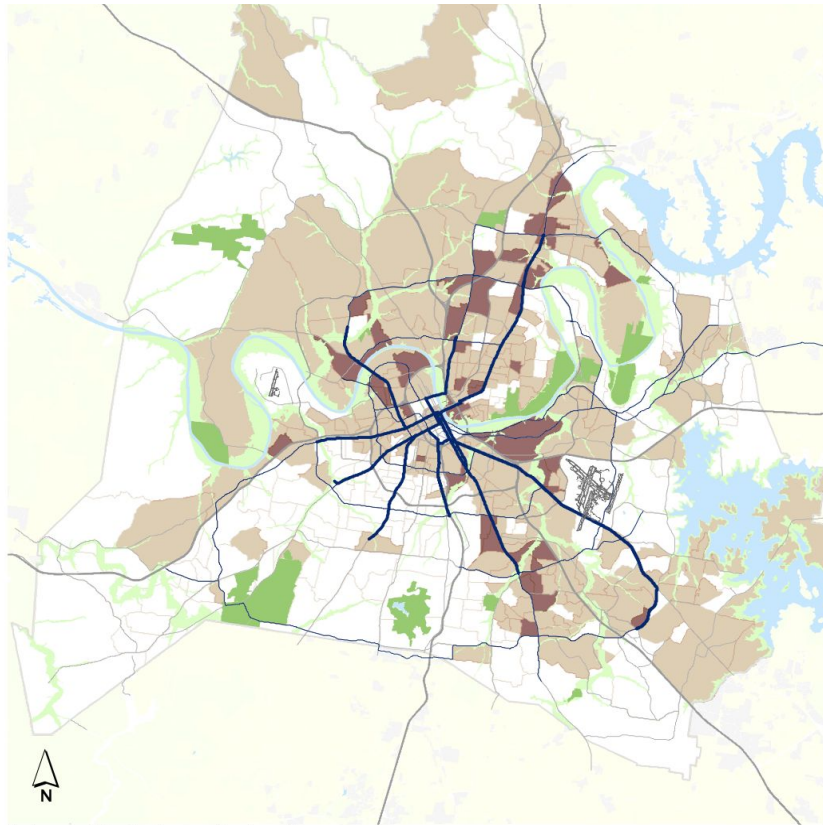


Opportunity Zones

Some of Nashville's marginalized census tracts are federally-designated "opportunity zones" which, by design, are attracting blooming development from investors living outside the zones themselves.

Map: CBRE





Environmental Justice Communities Legend

- Water Bodies
- Anchor Parks
- Floodplain Areas

**Environmental Justice Communities
of Factors**

- 0 - 2
- 3 - 5
- 6 - 8

Concept Map Features

- High Capacity Transit Corridor
- High Capacity Transit Corridor (long term need)

Affected Communities

From gentrification and redlining to disproportionate access to basic services, certain communities in Davidson County experience more (often multiple) environmental inequities at the same time, especially at the urban core.

The NashvilleNext Plan



Year 1 Baseline Assessment

**What is the need for environmental
justice learning in Nashville?**





Baseline Assessment

Led by Tennessee State University, the Year 1 baseline assessment will result in a final report on these elements.

1. Literature review
2. Stakeholder survey
3. Key informant interviews
4. Competencies identification
5. Review of best practices
6. Data compilation



Timeline

To make sure we get it right, the NEJI will begin slow, growing stakeholder relationships and collecting data first.



YEAR 1

Assessment

Citywide baseline assessment by TSU to determine need for environmental justice training and report.



YEAR 2

Pilot

Based on assessment, create and pilot learning modules for institutions affecting 1-2 sample communities.



YEAR 3

Expansion

Depending on pilot outcomes, deepen and expand educational offerings to new communities.



Assessment Results

Rather than create something new, weave EJ training into existing city trainings.





Future Strategies

The NEJI will be integrated into Urban Green Lab's existing community educational framework.

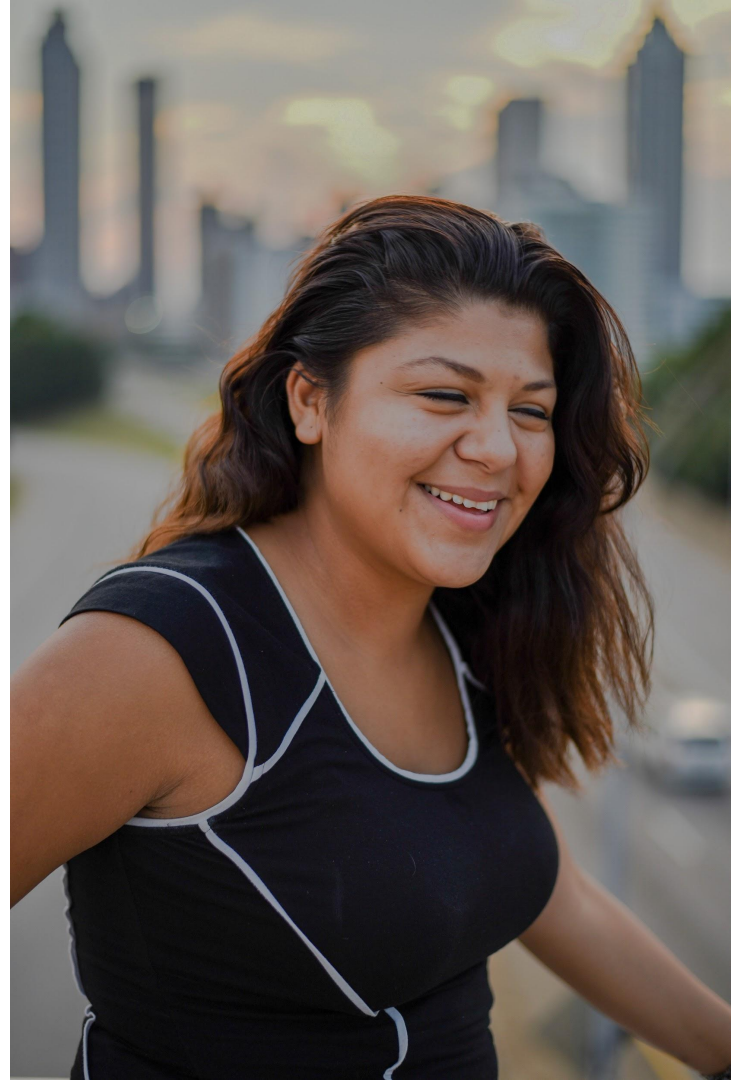
1. Organize stakeholders to exchange best practices and act collectively
2. Train stakeholders about the basics of sustainability and environmental justice
3. Connect stakeholders to local services that make a measurable difference



Potential Trainees

Whether you live or work within marginalized communities, everyone needs to feel empowered by environmental justice.

1. Investors & developers
2. Builders & contractors
3. Policy makers & regulators
4. Foundations & the media
5. Grassroots organizations





Learning Outcomes

Learning could focus on how environmental justice advances sustainability and the art of inclusive decision-making.

1. Defining Sustainability
2. History & principles of EJ
3. Key environmental hazards
4. Social determinants of health
5. Legal frameworks of development
6. Green business planning & equity
7. Inclusive decision-making



Model Programming

Depending on the assessment, methods of teaching could resemble UGL's focus on collective, experiential learning.

1. Professional development integration
2. Roundtable exchange of best practices
3. Lab recognition & SOP development
4. Workplace mentorship for youth
5. Educational toolkit development





Measuring Success

Through pre-and-post testing, qualitative analysis, and others measures, the NEJI might consider these indicators.

1. Institutions represented
2. Participants trained
3. Knowledge gained
4. Next steps taken
5. Data centralized
6. Standards advanced



Reinforcing Commitments

The NEJI is designed to align and reinforce community sustainability agendas.





City Policy Alignment

The NEJI aligns directly with equity goals found in Nashville's current city sustainability plans and goals.

1. The Climate Action Plan
2. Mayor's Sustainability Committee
3. TDEC Materials Management Plan
4. Solid Waste Master Plan
5. NashvilleNext



National Priorities

The NEJI reinforces our national EJ priorities described by the EPA's Environmental Justice Office around these areas.

1. Rule-making & permitting
2. Compliance & enforcement
3. Scientific research & tools
4. Local, state, & federal agencies
5. Community-based work
6. Tribal & Indigenous peoples





Global Commitments

The NEJI builds on the tenets of all 17 U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with emphasis on these.

1. Quality education
2. Reduced inequalities
3. Good health & well-being
4. Sustainable cities & communities
5. Peace, justice, & strong institutions
6. Responsible consumption & production



Partners & Advisors

The NEJI will be led by diverse institutions with a stake in its outcomes for our city.

Urban Green Lab
Tennessee State University
Environmental Protection Agency
Southern Environmental Law Center
TN Dept. of Environment & Conservation
TN Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition
Metro Development & Housing Agency
Greater Nashville Regional Council
Metro Nashville Planning Office
GS&F



Program Supporters

We're grateful for the contribution of
all our sponsors and supporters
toward the mission of the NEJI.



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