



Philly Tree Plan

Growing Our Urban Forest

An aerial photograph of a lush green park with a winding river. In the background, a city skyline with several skyscrapers is visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The foreground shows a large green lawn and a paved path.

Philly Tree Plan

NASA CMS Policy Speaker Series

June 2023

Philly Tree Plan

Released February 2023

10 year strategic plan for the planting and care of the urban forest, guided by values of environmental justice, community engagement, and sustainability.



The urban forest includes trees:

- On our streets
- In our yards
- In our parks
- In our natural areas
- On our river edges
- On campuses
- In alley ways
- In vacant lots
- And more...



Unfair urban forest



The dark green areas represent where there are the most trees.

Pre-Planning Work

- Tree Canopy Assessment
- Stakeholder Engagement

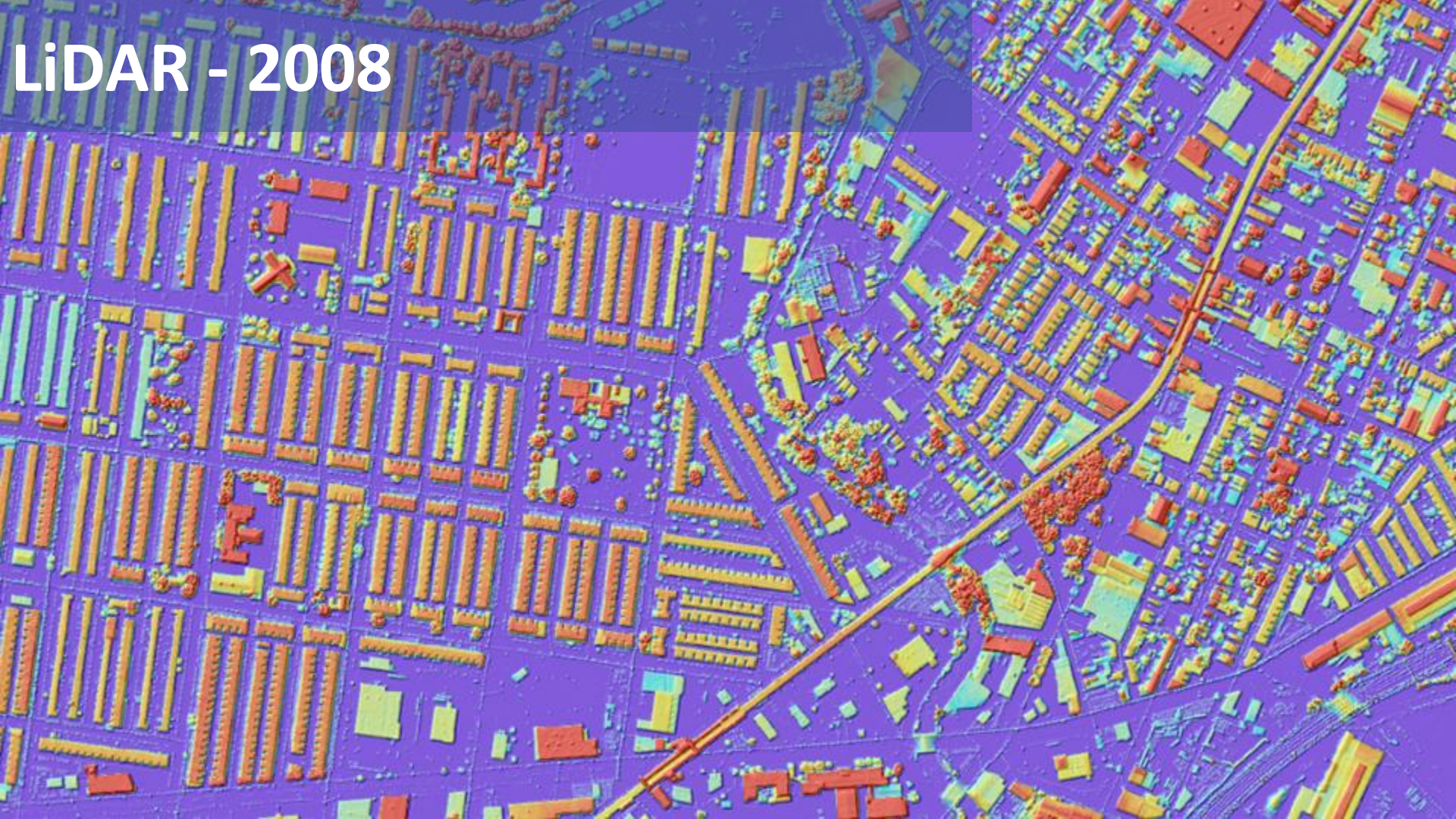


Philadelphia

Tree Canopy Assessment

Jarlath O'Neil-Dunne
joneildu@uvm.edu

LiDAR - 2008



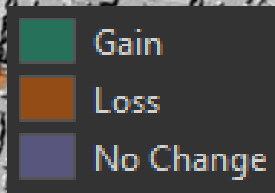
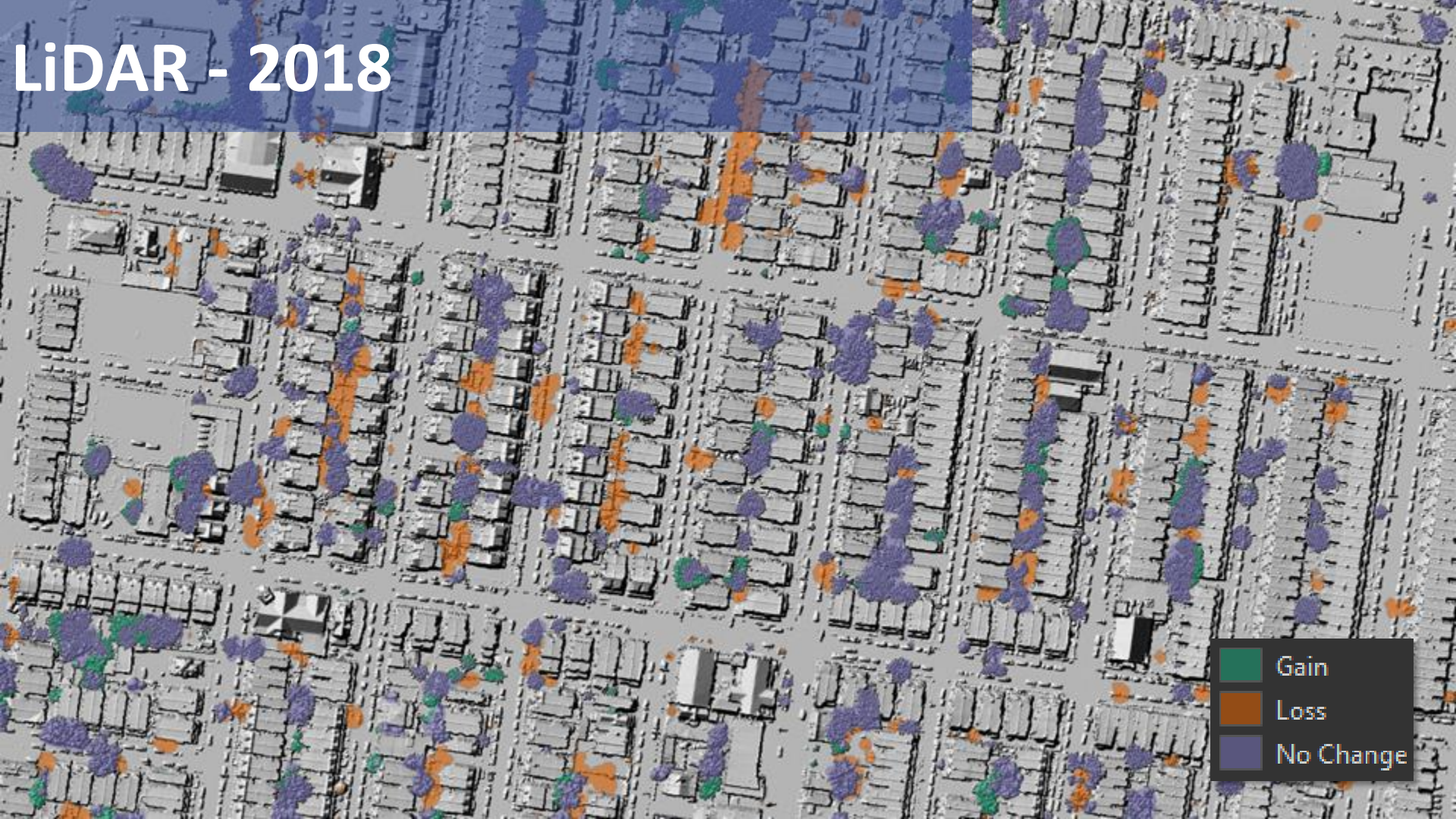
LiDAR - 2018

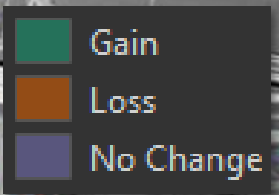
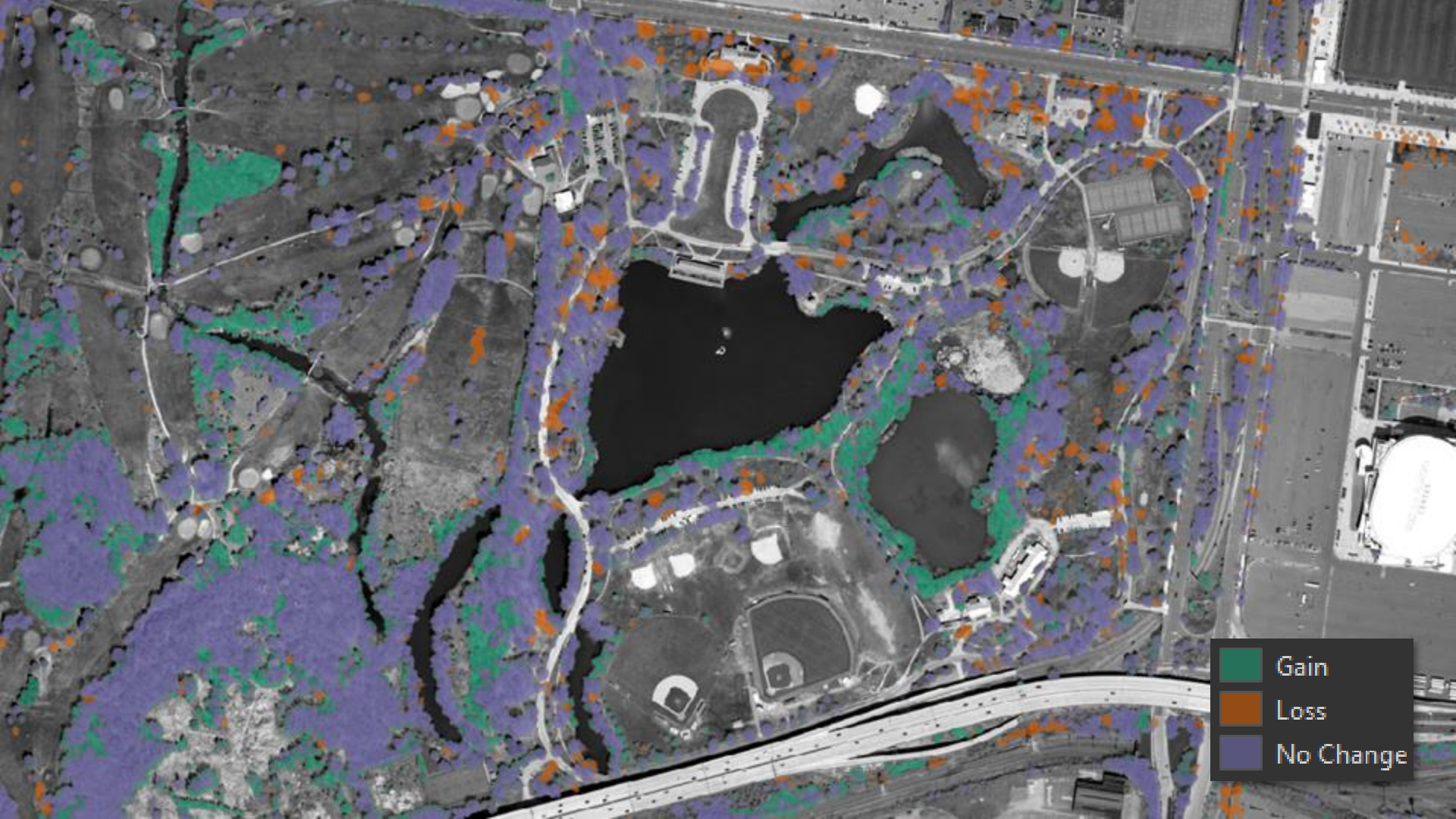


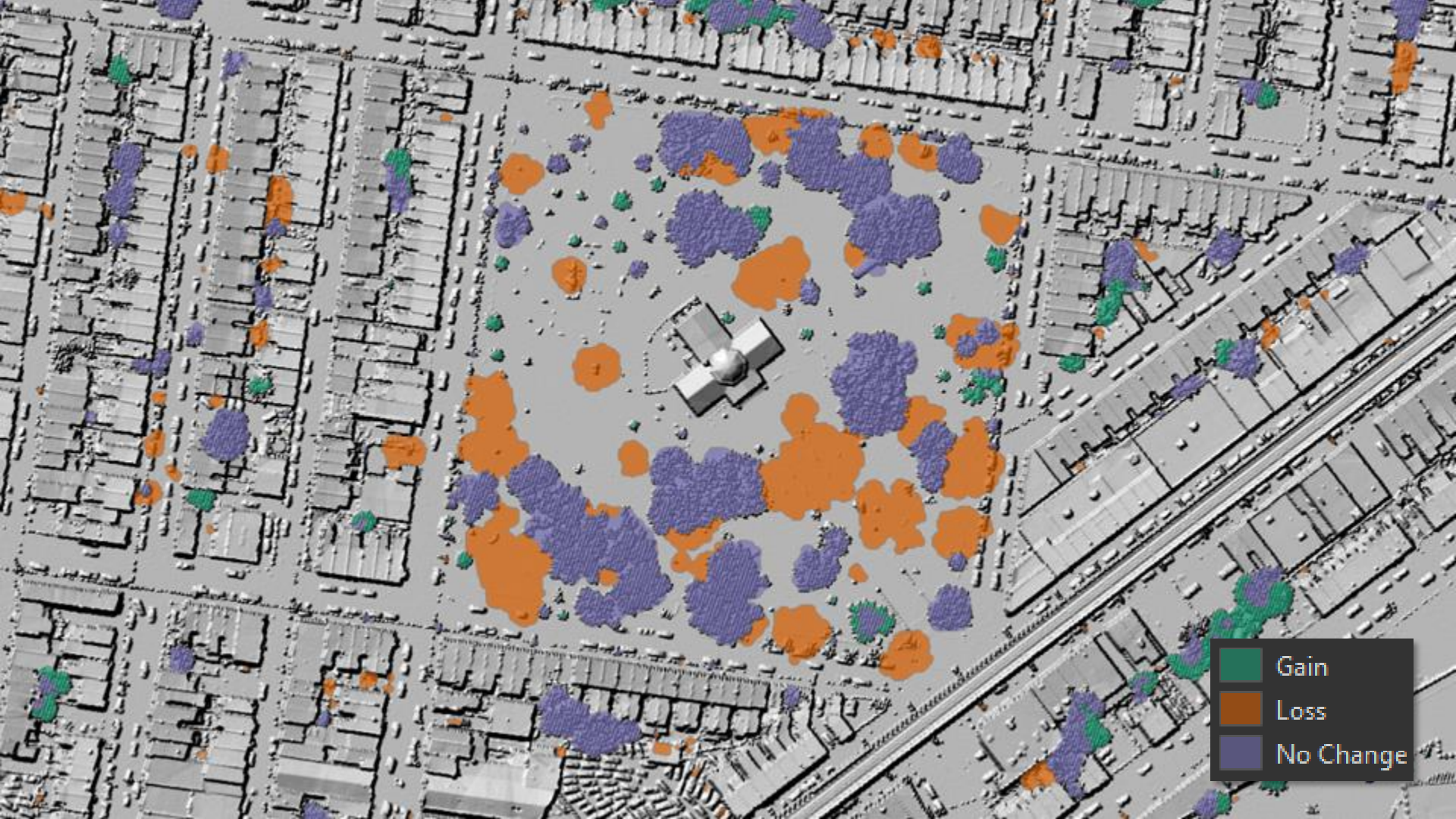
LiDAR - 2018



LiDAR - 2018

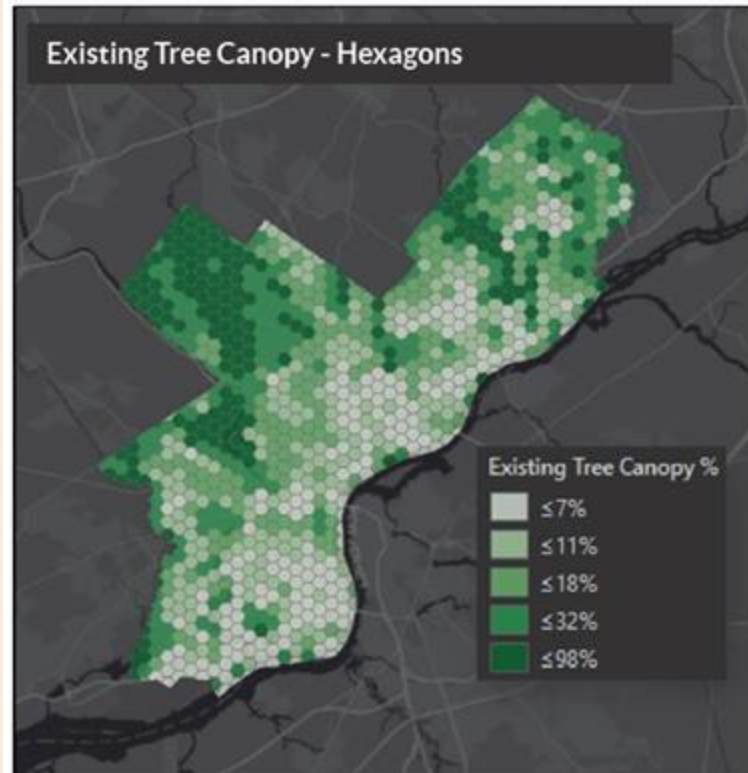








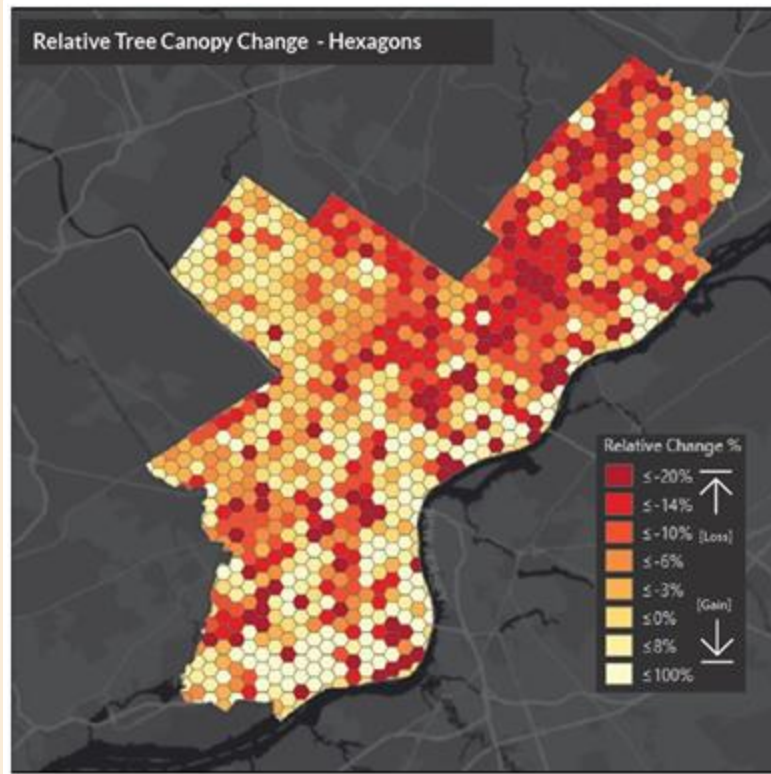
Philadelphia's 2019 Tree Canopy Assessment



20%

of Philadelphia is covered by tree canopy

Philadelphia's 2019 Tree Canopy Assessment

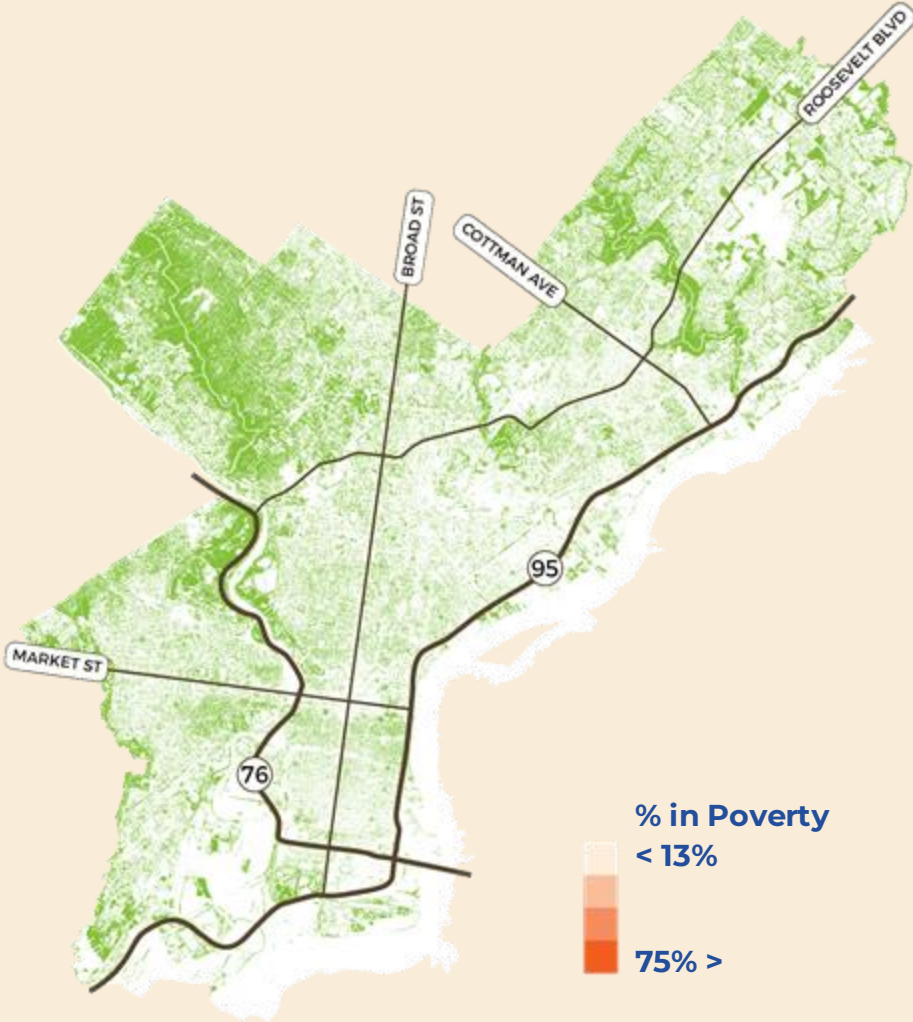


↓ 6%

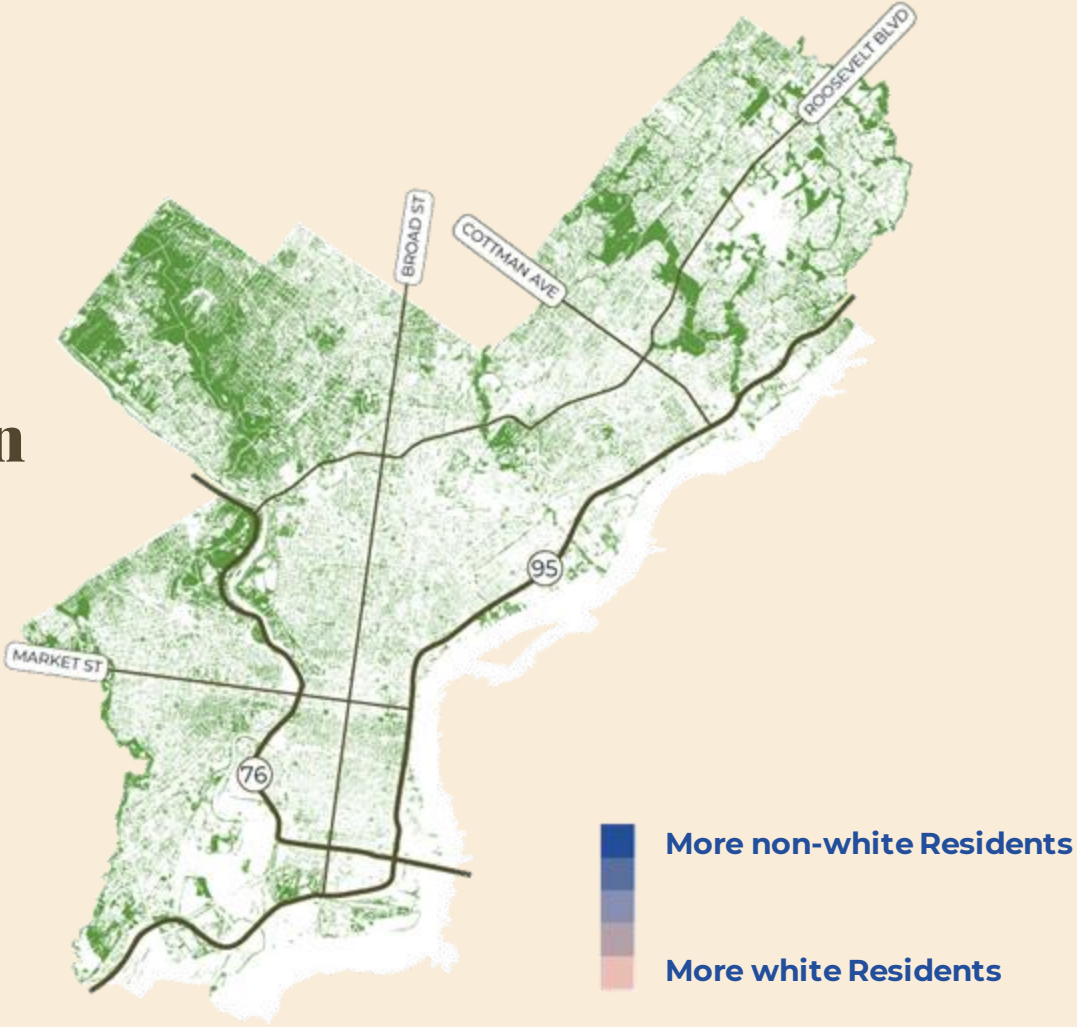
Loss of existing canopy since
2008

Most of this loss occurred on
residential land.

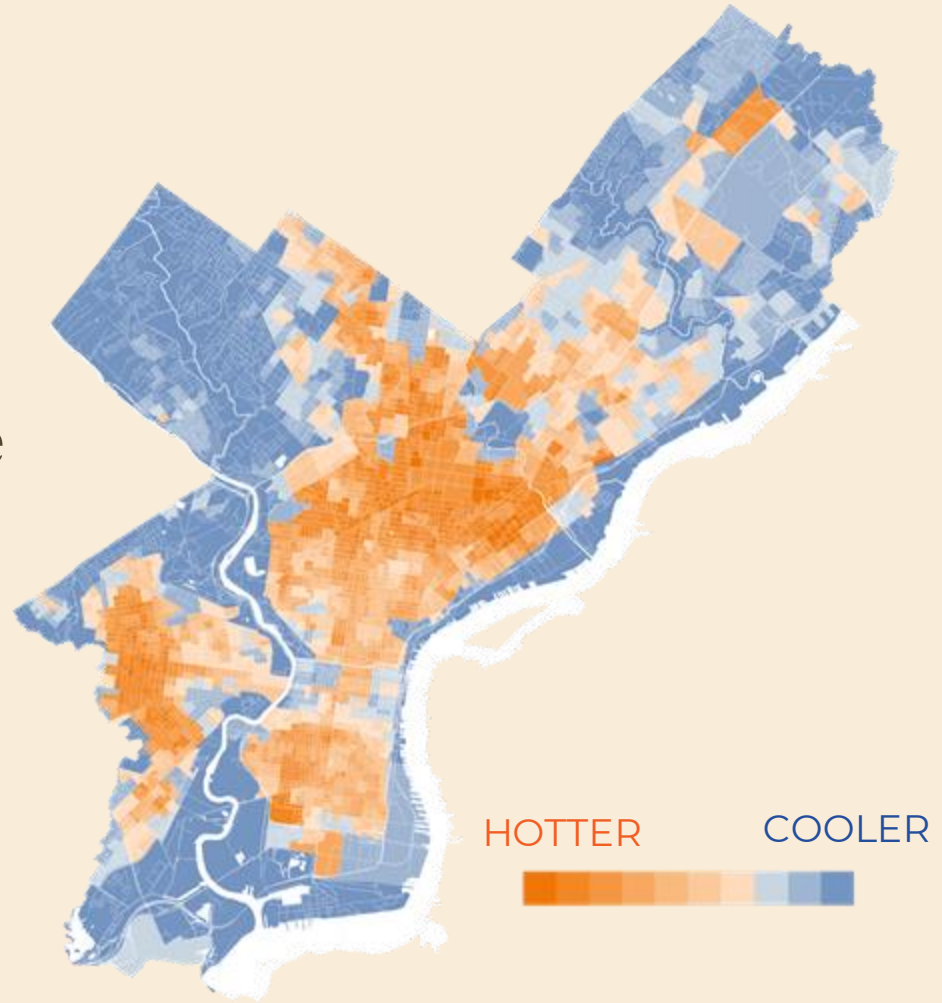
There are fewer trees where there is more poverty.



**There are fewer trees in
Black and Brown
neighborhoods**



**There is a 22 degree
difference between the
hottest places and the
coolest in Philly.**



Stakeholder Engagement



Getting Input

- Who Was Involved
- Mapping Priority Areas
- Engagement Tools

Who was involved:

Project Team (31)

- Role: Do the groundwork to support the planning process, commit to implementation
- Who: City departments, non-profit partners, and state and federal agencies

Steering Committee (20)

- Role: Guide the Planning process
- Who: Public and private stakeholders

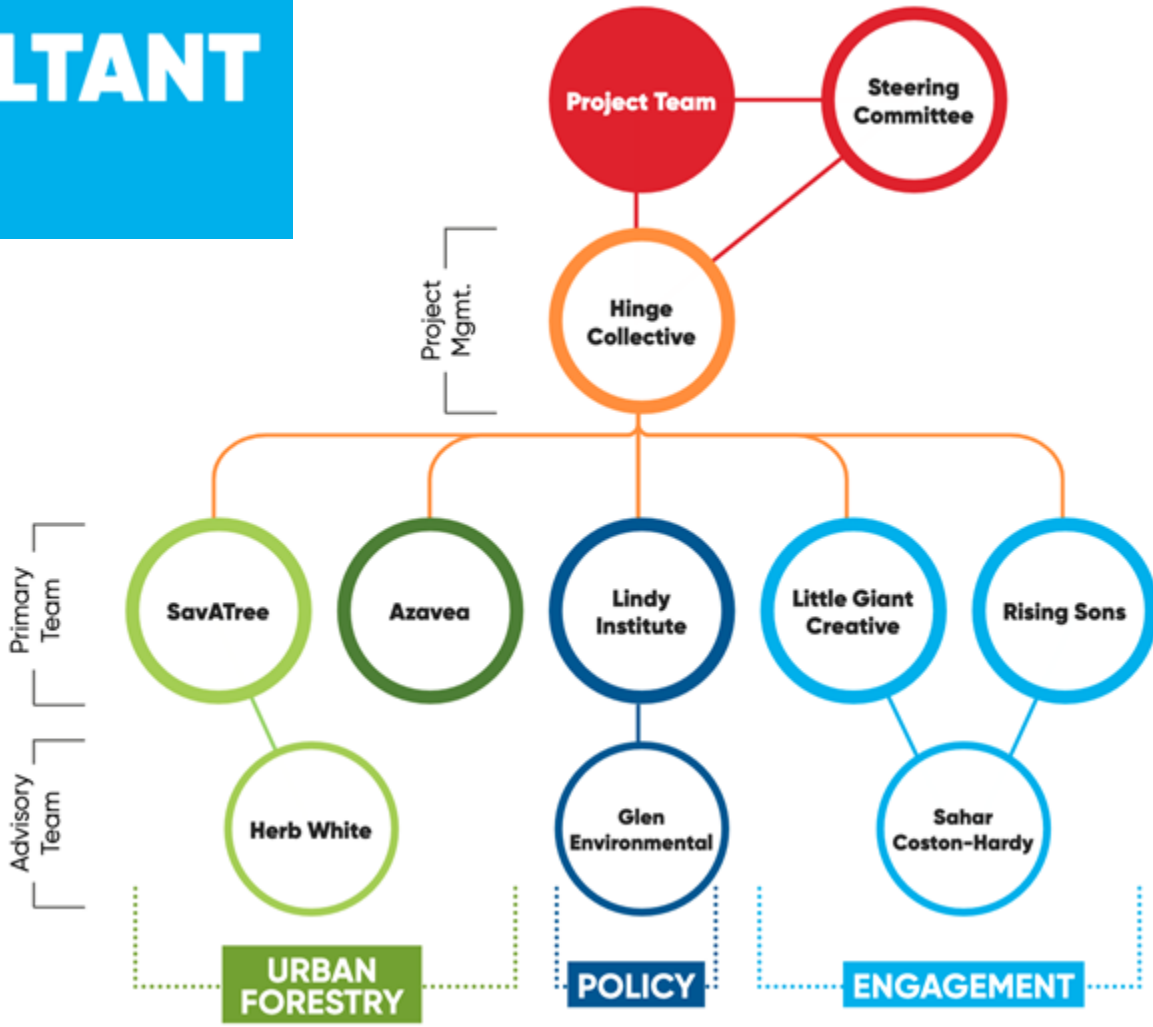
Community Voices Steering Committee (31)

- Role: Guide the planning process and hold it accountable to the concerns of their community
- Who: Residents from across the city who represent grassroots neighborhood greening efforts

Consultant Team (6 orgs plus advisory team)

- Role: Manage community engagement, planning, and produce the strategic plan
- Who: Hinge Collective, Azavea, Little Giant Creative, Rising Sons, Lindy Institute, SavATree, and others

CONSULTANT TEAM



The Community Voices Steering Committee



Mapping priority areas



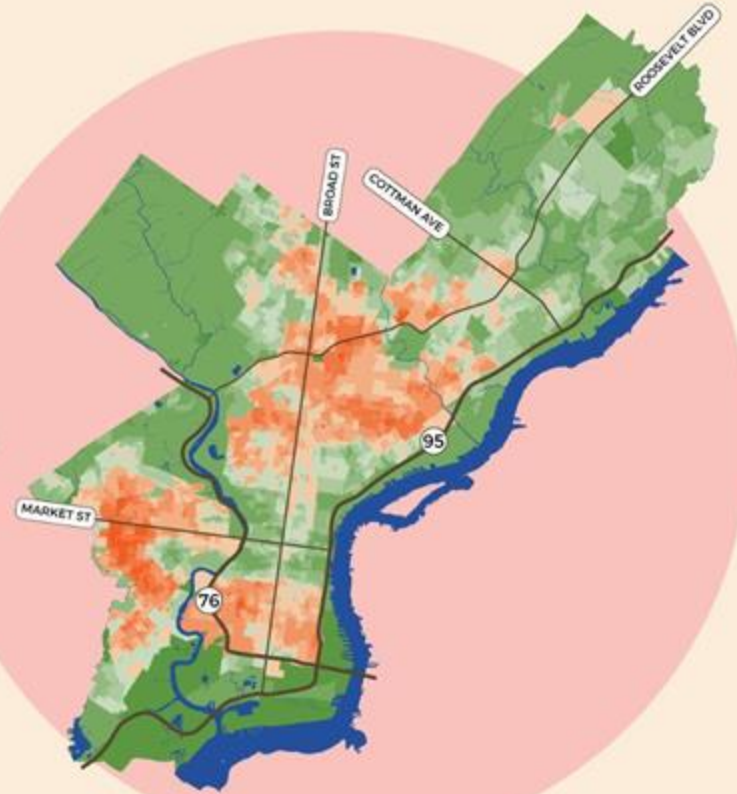
Poverty



Health



Heat



Engagement Tools

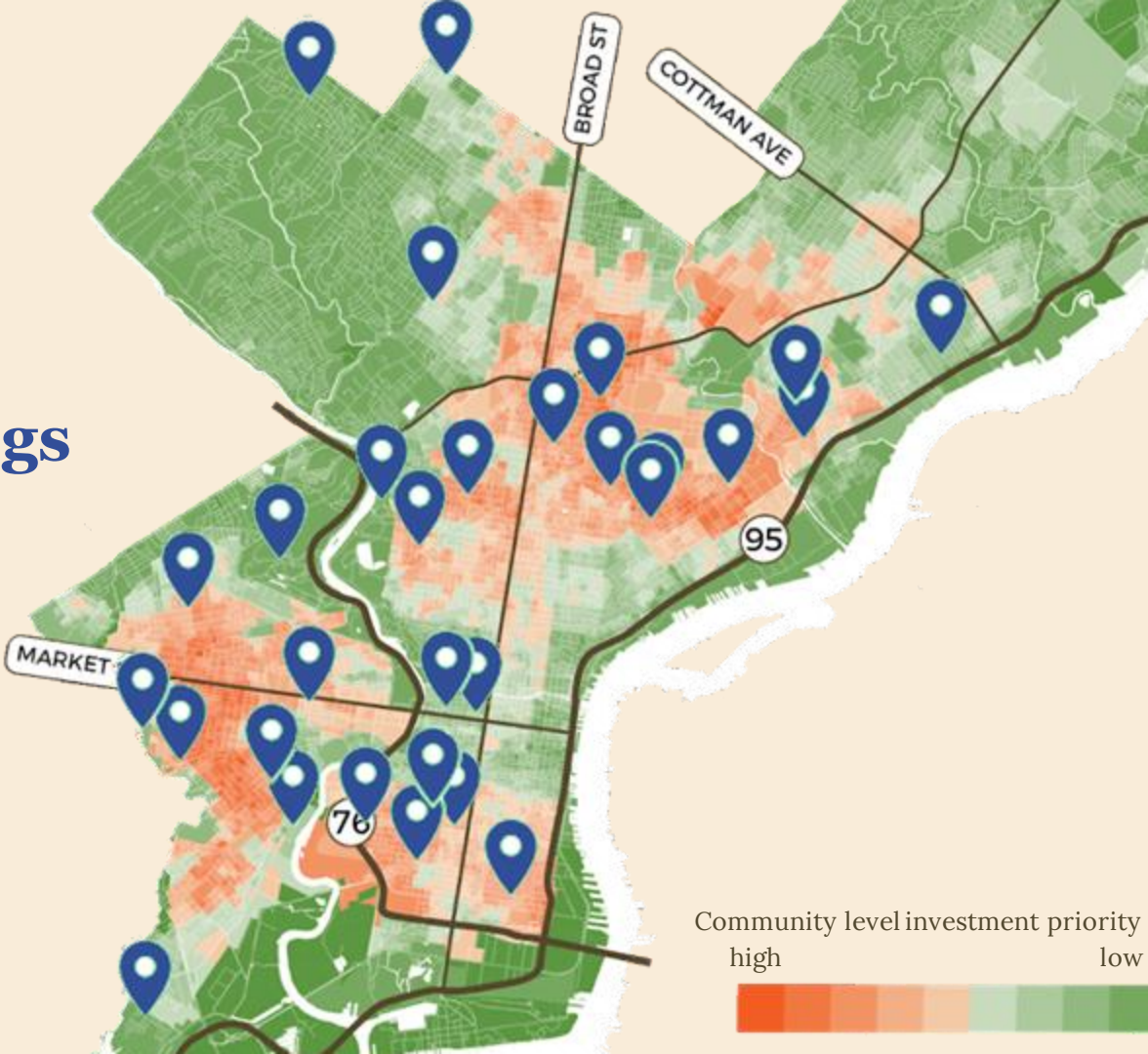
- **City-wide Survey**
- **Community Meeting Tour**
- **Neighborhood Ambassadors**
- Stakeholder Workshops
- Virtual Open House
- Instagram Photo Challenge



Getting Input and Earning Trust

- **Truth telling**
- **Plain language**
- **Honor expertise**
- **Listen without ego**

Community Meetings



Neighborhood Ambassadors



Neighborhood Ambassadors

- Paid Program
- Peer-to-peer interviews
- Neighborhood walking workshops
- Skill building





City-wide Survey



- Plain language questions
- Storytelling
- Many distribution networks



Evaluate and Adjust Outreach

- 150 Yard Signs in Parks
- 3,000 Phone Calls
- 10,000 Text Messages
- 2,500 Door Hangers

Engagement Summary



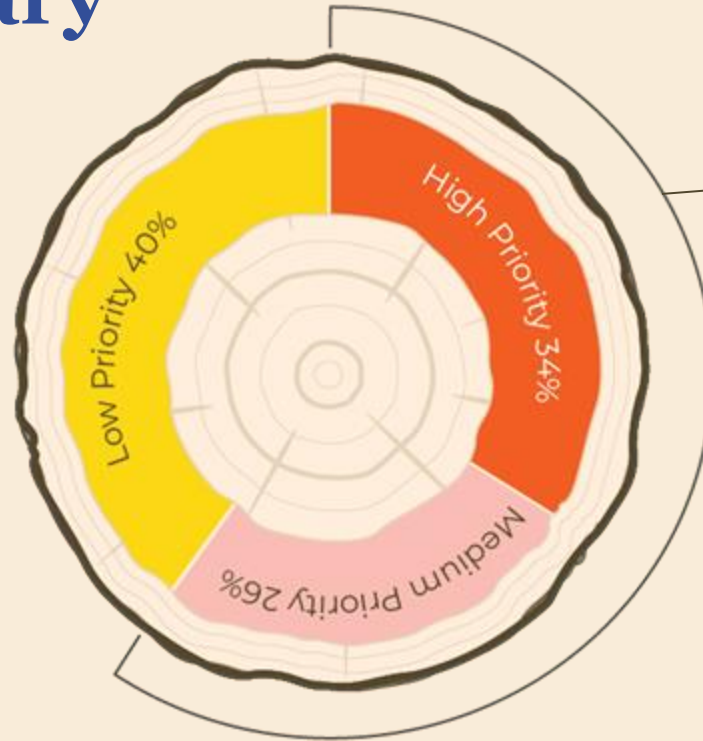
7,046 survey responses
8 different languages



22 ambassadors
5 neighborhoods
62 peer interviews



847 residents
32 community meetings



60% of responses from came from Philadelphia zip codes with high or medium priority cover

Key Takeaways:



Trees have **value** & residents recognize that value



Poor access to programs & services (it's hard to get a tree even if you want one)



There is a **disparity in tree canopy** by neighborhood (and it feels personal)



Maintenance = Trust building (need to manage existing canopy before planting new canopy)



Trees are a **burden to homeowners** (known and surprise costs)



A need for **clarity, consistency, coordination & collaboration**

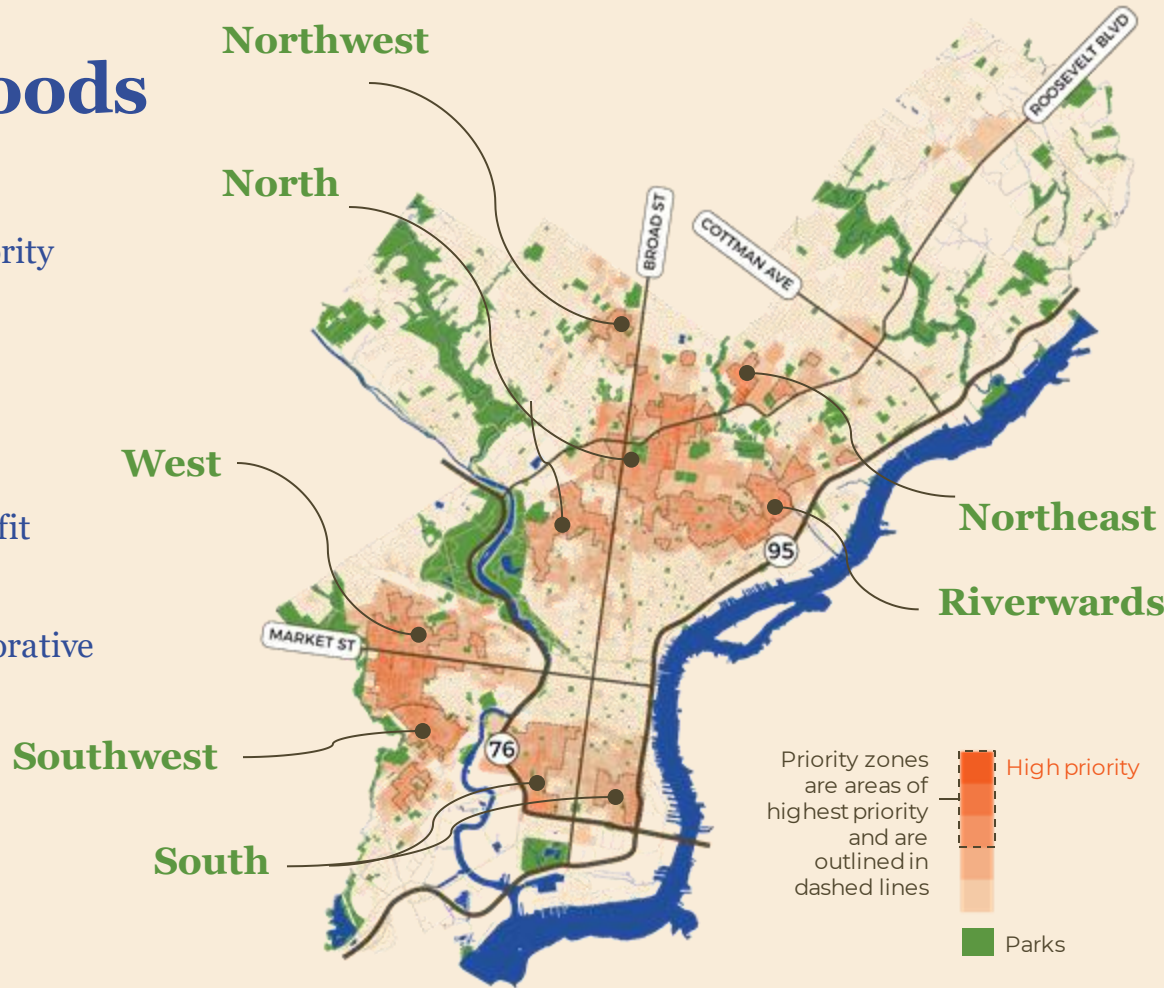
A Plan for Equity

- 1 COORDINATE**
support for trees
- 2 PROTECT**
the existing and future urban
- 3 GROW**
the urban forest equitably
across the city
- 4 REDUCE**
the burden of trees on residents

- 5 INVEST**
in people and communities
- 6 COMMUNICATE**
with residents and improve
customer service
- 7 ADVOCATE**
for communities to benefit from
the urban forest
- 8 CELEBRATE**
& support the ways communities
are engaging with trees

Priority Neighborhoods

- Planting and funding goals for each priority area
- Developing a plan for trees at the neighborhood level that best supports residents
- Coordinating between City and non-profit partners
- Laying out guiding principles for collaborative community engagement



Implementation

Natural Lands Assessment

ESTIMATED

6,000 acres

60% of parkland

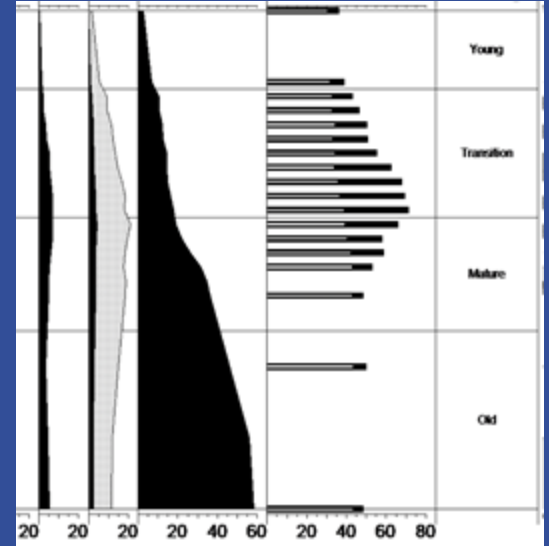
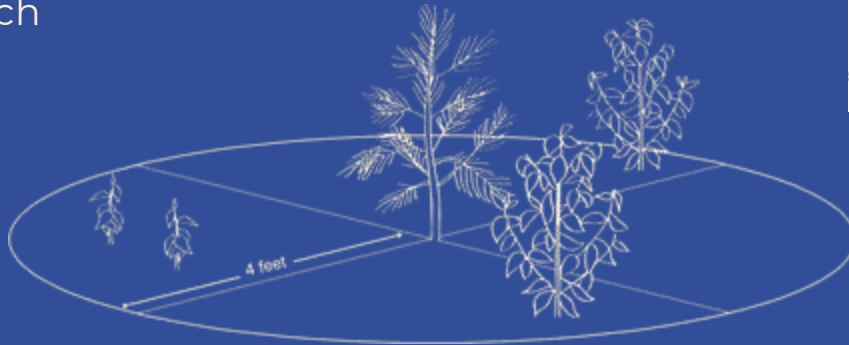
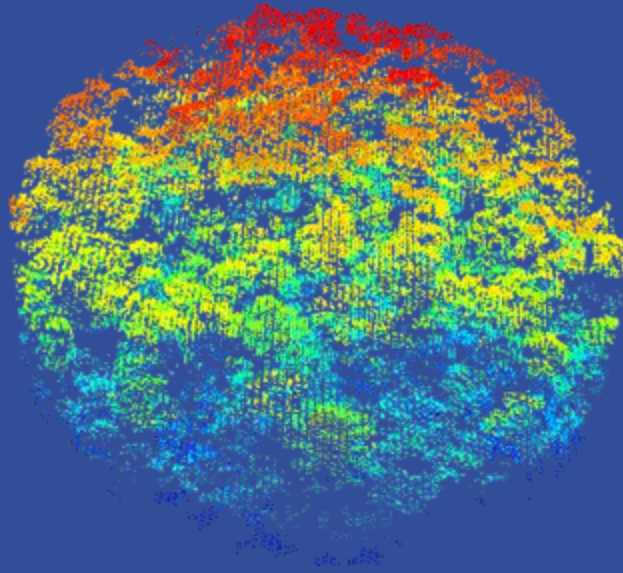
34% of total canopy

Updating a 1998 inventory to understand change over time, assess impacts of management to date, and adapt practices to address current and future challenges.



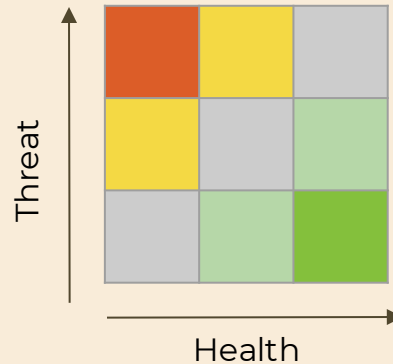
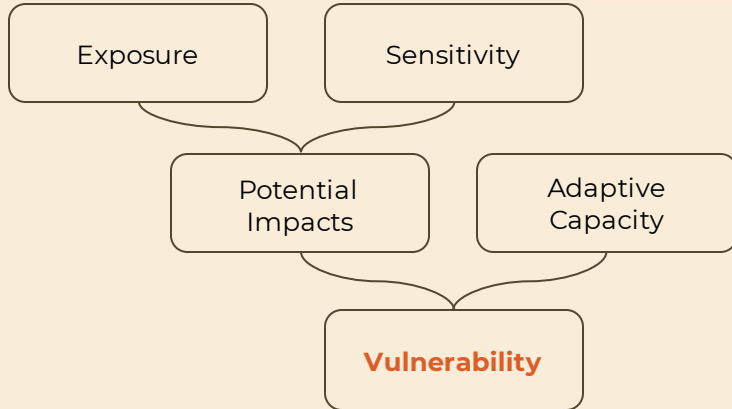
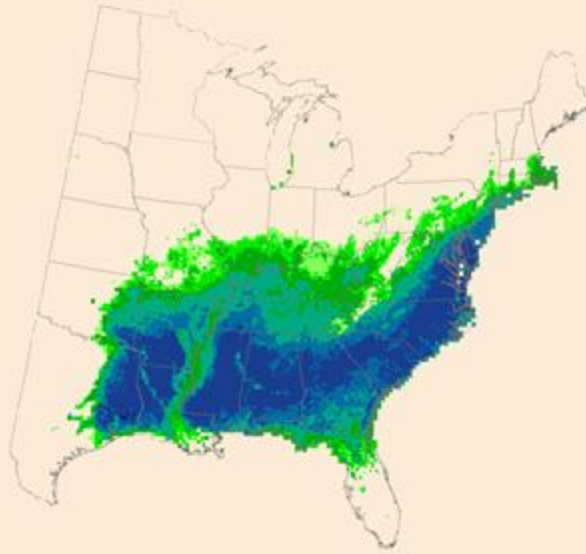
METHODS

Combining remote sensing with traditional field measurements to provide data required for understanding of **DISTRIBUTION, COMPOSITION, & CONDITION** of natural areas, which will inform management and research priorities



APPLICATIONS

Support planning and management at valuable spatial and temporal scales, and develop processes with utility for other managers of urban forested natural areas.



Thank you!

Contact:

Erica Smith Fichman
erica.smith@phila.gov

Max Blaustein
max.blaustein@phila.gov

www.phila.gov/programs/philly-tree-plan