Planting Money.

Exploring the Implications of Federal & State Environmental Justice Policy in Relation to Funding for Green Space Projects in Baltimore Neighborhoods

Molly Finch

Thesis presentation

4/12/24

Planting Money.

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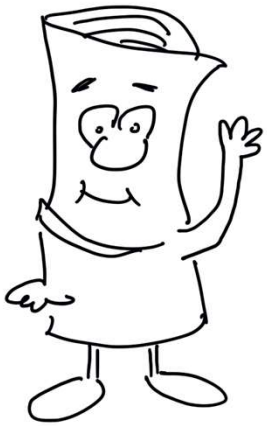
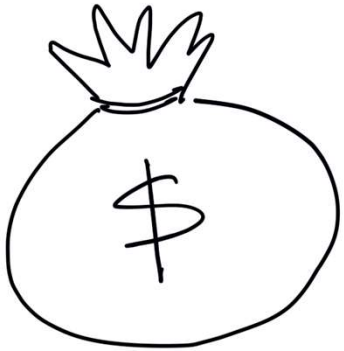
Planting Money.

Federal & State Environmental Justice Policy



Funding



Green Space Projects in Baltimore

Photo: M. Finch, 2023

Presentation Outline

- Positionality
- Research motivation

1. How research can be guided by community engagement
2. How urban greening presents in cities
3. How policies seek environmental justice

- Full circle

Positionality

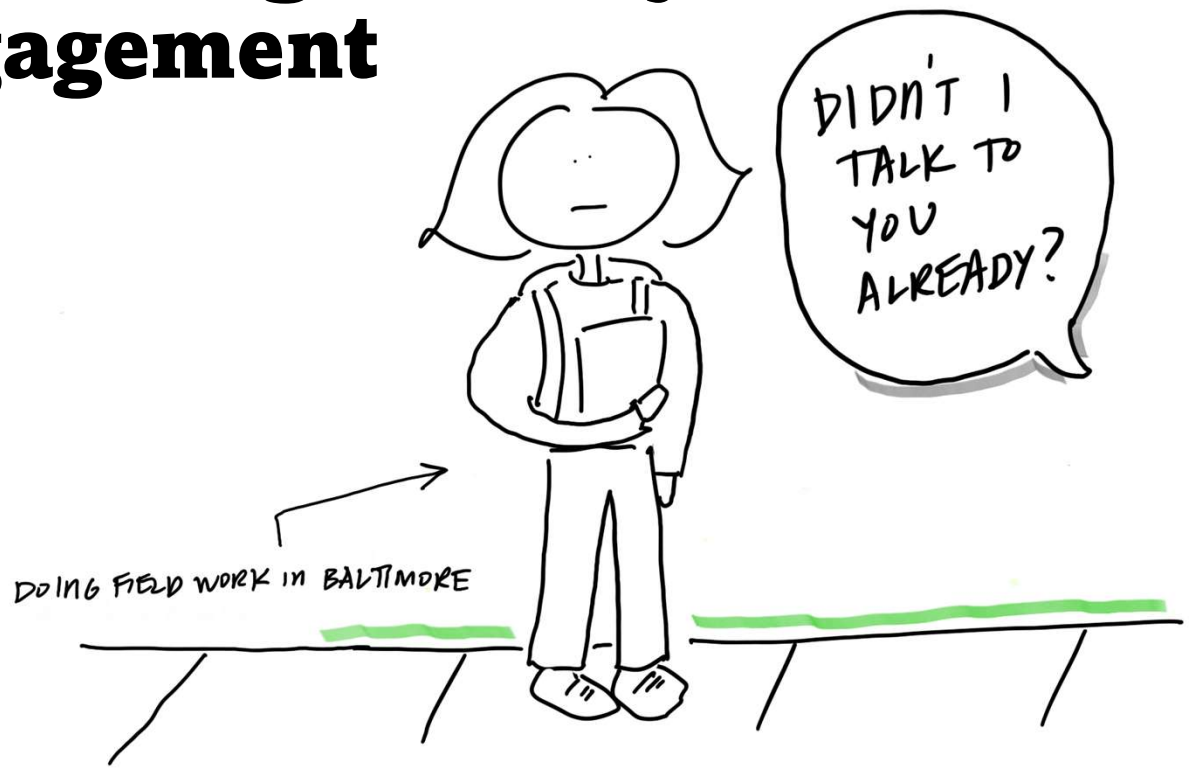
Photo: M. Finch, 2022

Research motivation

Photo: M. Finch, 2023

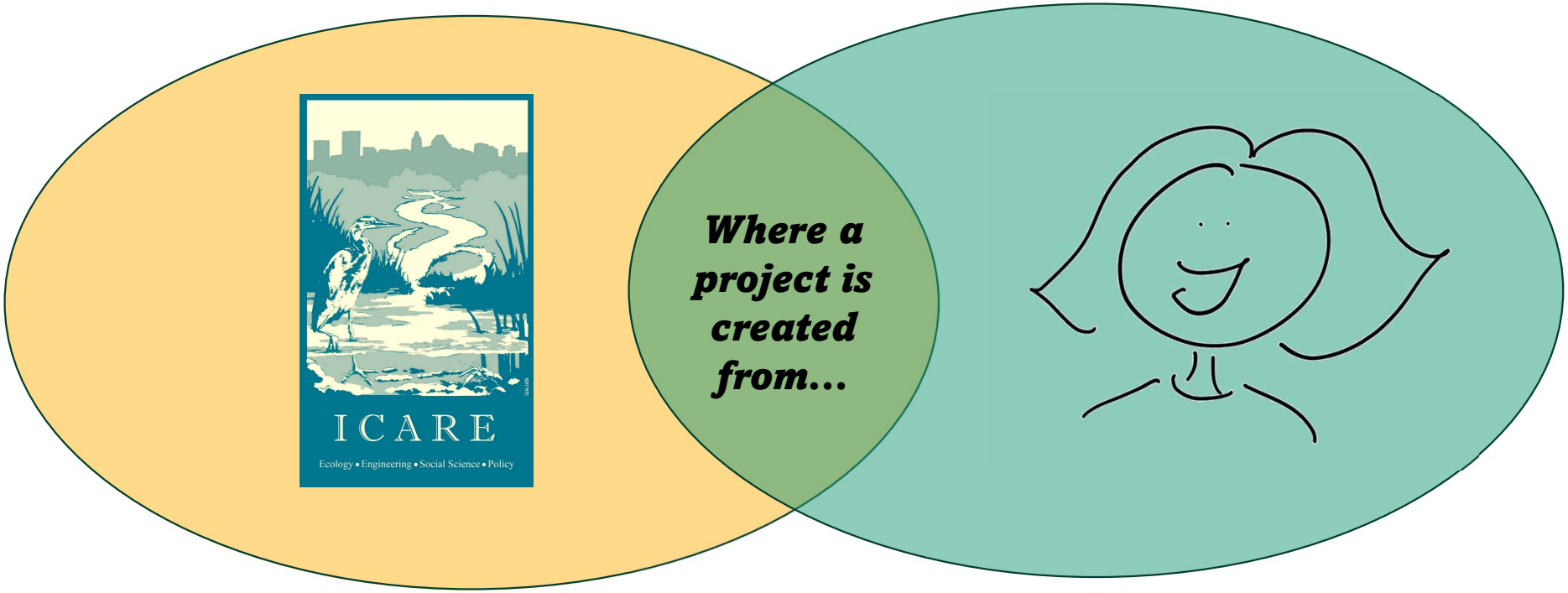
Photo: M. Finch, 2023

Part 1.
How research can be guided by community engagement



ICARE Goals

Personal Goals



Community-Engaged Research?

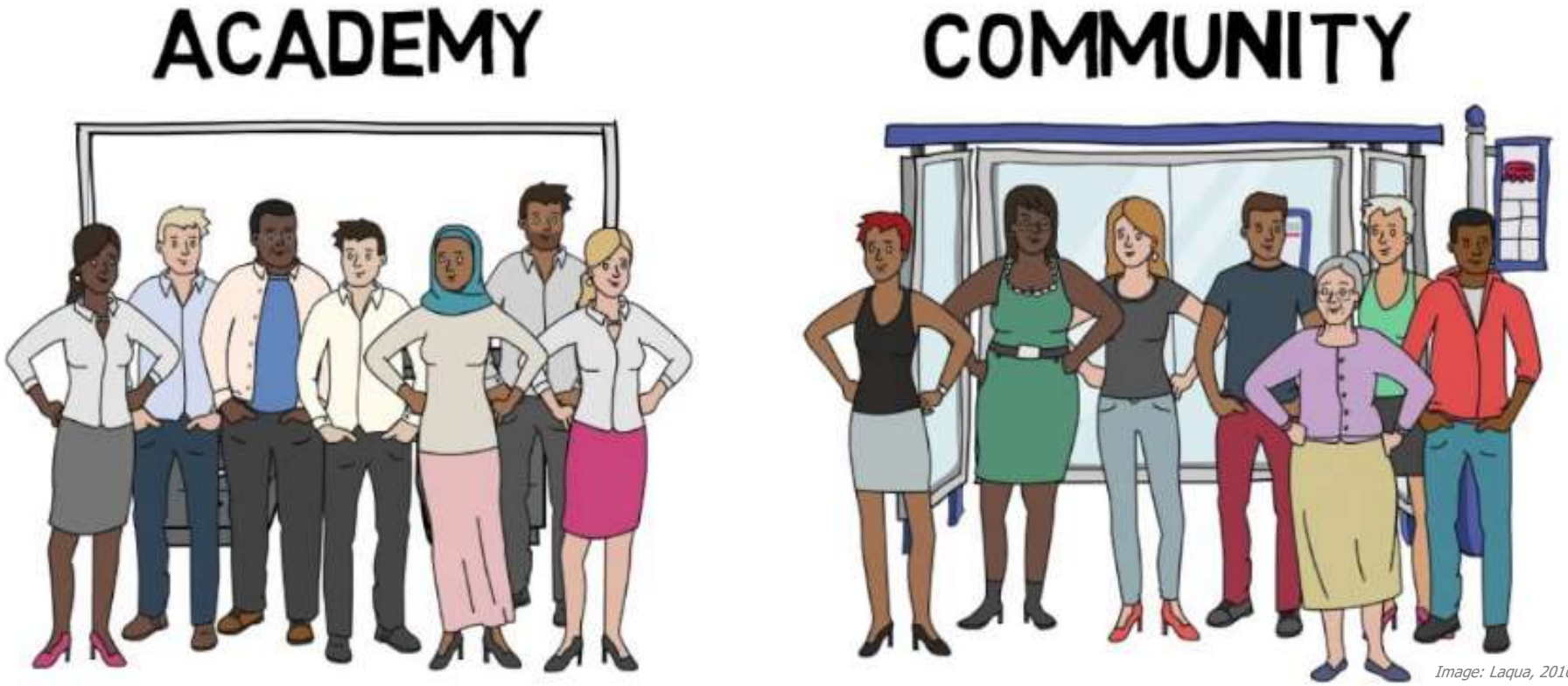


Image: Laqua, 2016

Community-Engaged Research Continuum

Community Involvement/Activity						
Community is not included in any aspect of the research	Community informs the research and may or may not be informed or included (or know they're informing)	Community provides input and feedback to researchers to inform the research	Community has some active role in the research	Community initiates the research agenda/priorities	Community shared equally in decision-making and ownership	Community leads and owns the research
No Community Involvement	**Community Informed**	**Community Consultation**	**Community Participation**	**Community Initiated**	**Community Based Participatory Research**	**Community Driven/Lead**
Researcher works independent of community	Information is gleaned from the community which informs the research 'ear hustling'	Researcher consults with community and includes community in the research (front end or back end)	Researcher includes community in the research in a define role	Researcher responds to specific needs or asks from community	Researcher shares equally in decision-making and ownership with community	Researcher supports community identified research efforts or serves no role
Researcher Involvement/Activity						

(Key et al. 2019)

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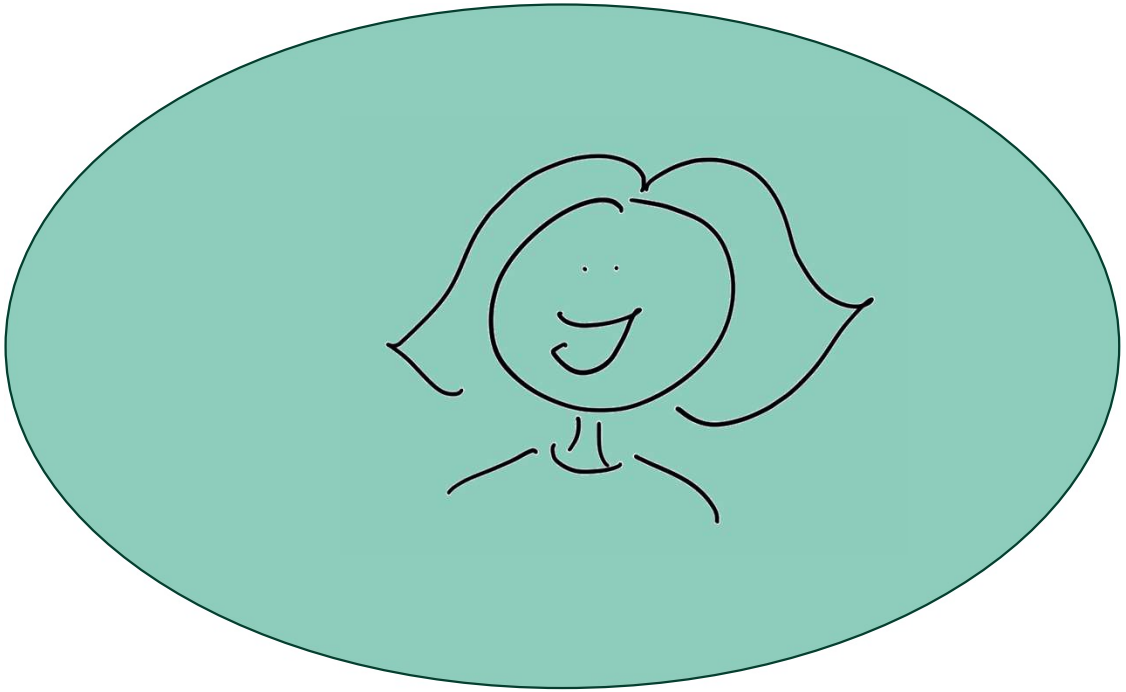
(Key et al. 2019)

Personal Goals

- Baltimore City
- Make environmental justice connection
- Neighborhood-level organizing



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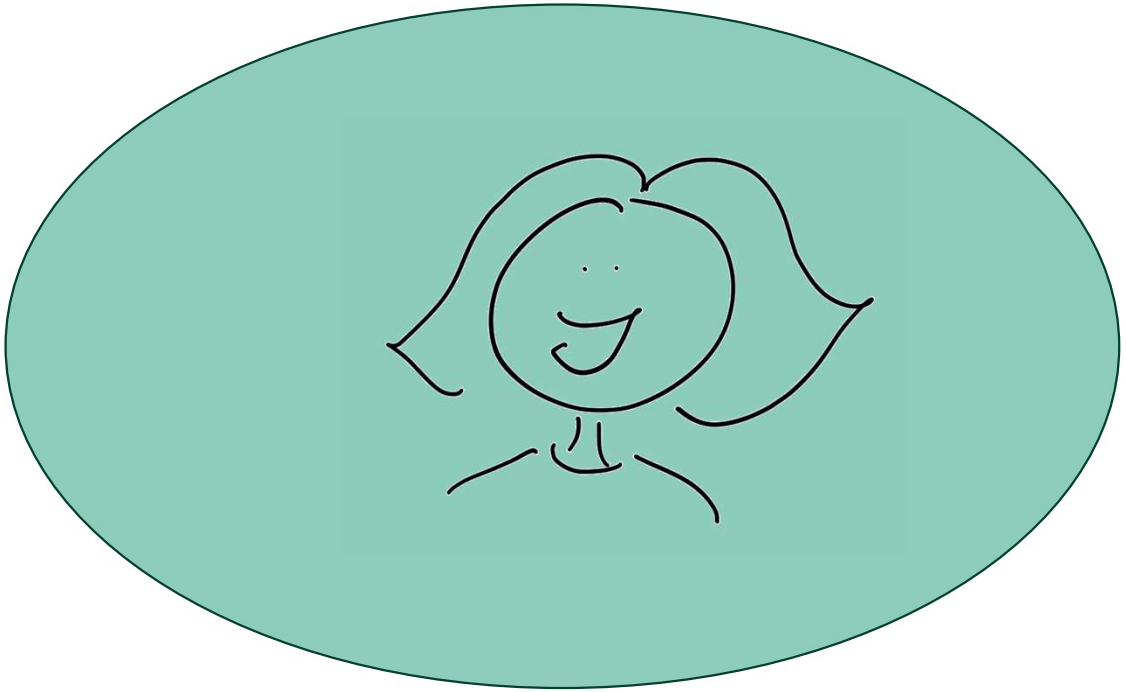
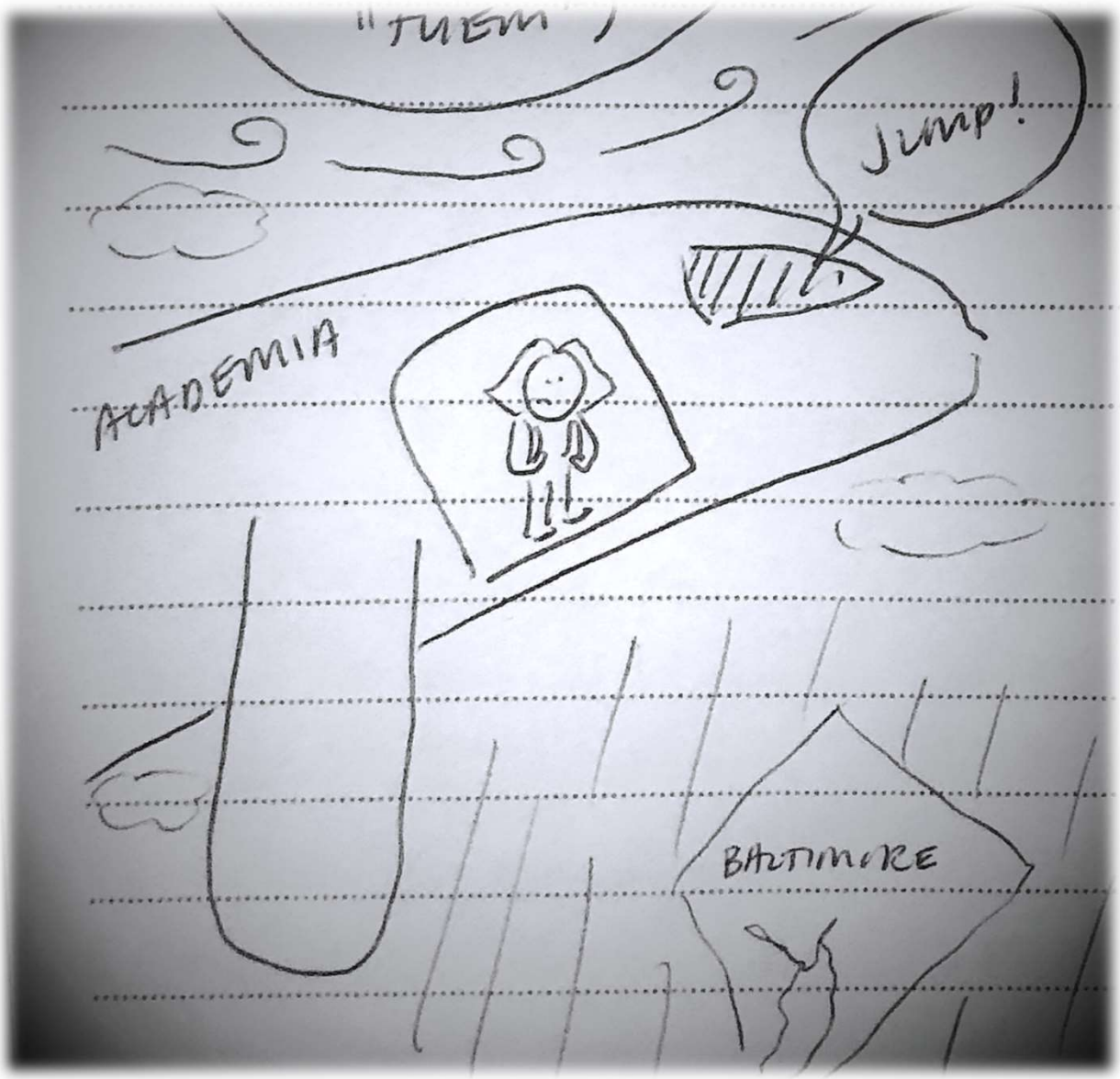
- Baltimore City
- Make environmental justice connection
- Neighborhood-level organizing
- **New-to-me space**





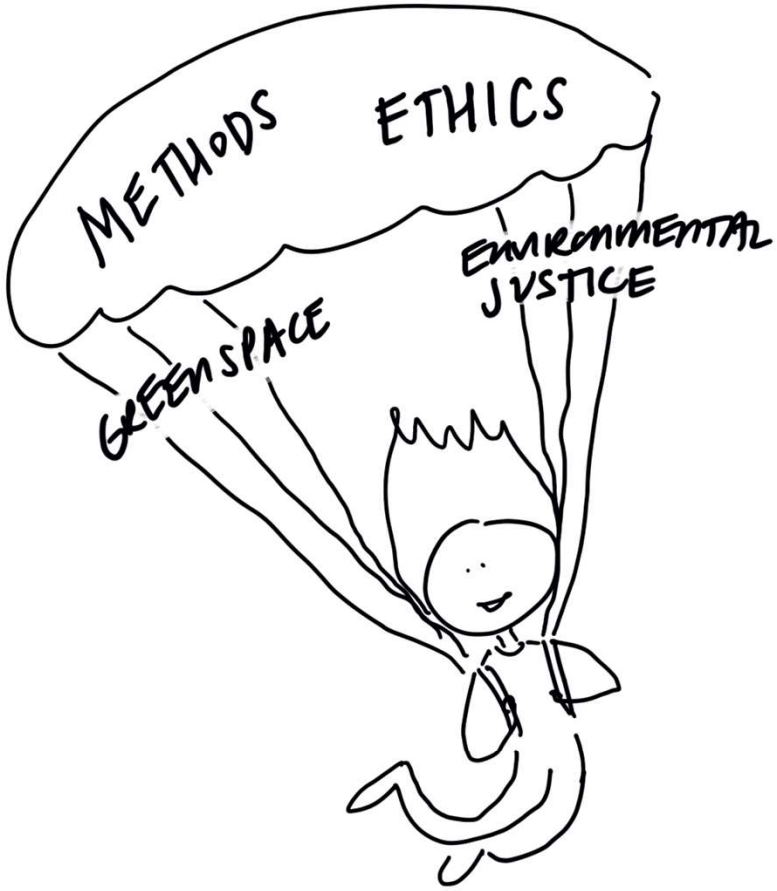
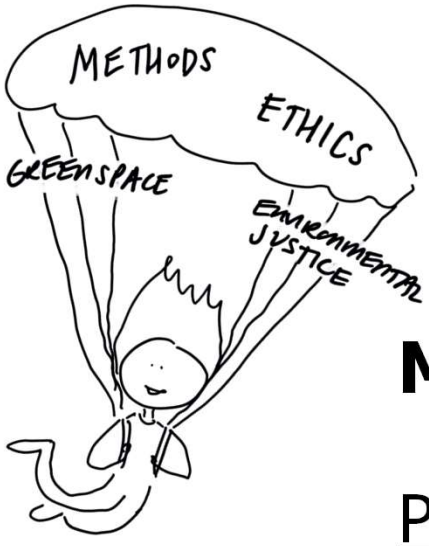


Image: M. Finch, 2022



Methods:

Participant observation: Engaging and participating with activities related to my research themes.

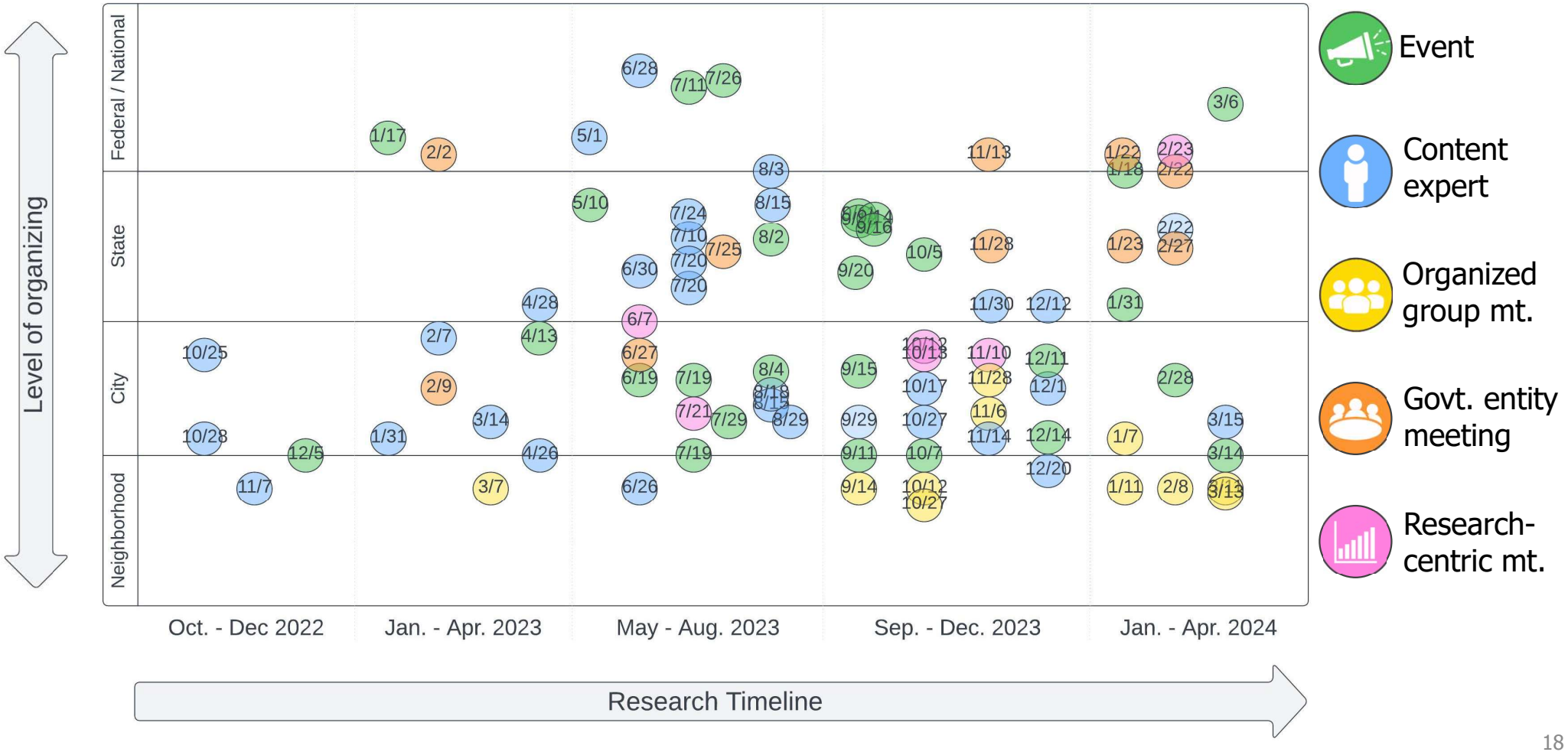
Informational interviews: Semi-structured interviews with content experts.

Document review: Policies, reports, planning documents, news media, grants.

Research Activities List

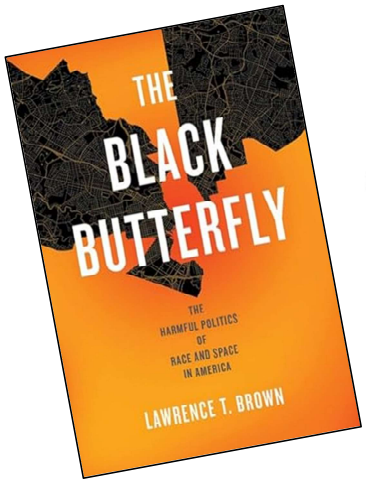
Activity categories	# of occurrences	Examples of activity topics
Event	35	Public information sessions; funding information sessions; symposiums or talks; green space volunteer events
Content expert conversation	30	Expertise in environmental justice policy, green space implementation, community development, and city-wide organizing
Organized group meeting	10	Neighborhood association meetings; housing-focused working groups
Government entity meeting	8	State commissions; City Council committees; federal partnerships
Research-centric meeting	3	Federally funded research programs based in Baltimore
TOTAL	**86**	*Total # of unique activities.*

Type of Activity Over Research Timeline



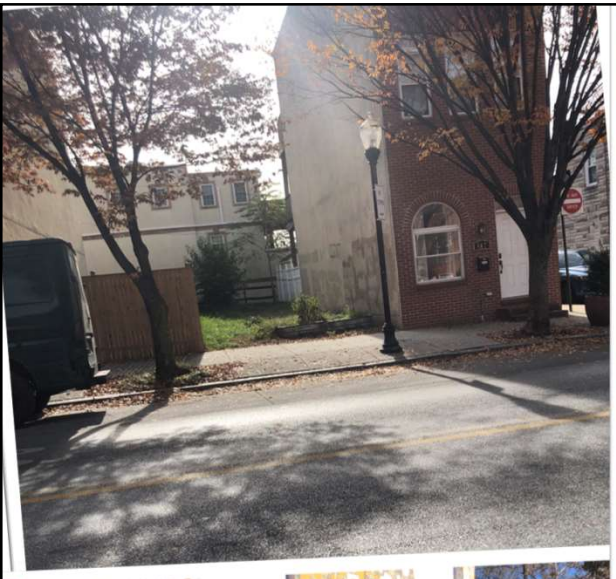
Photos: MCCC; BUILD; SBCLT

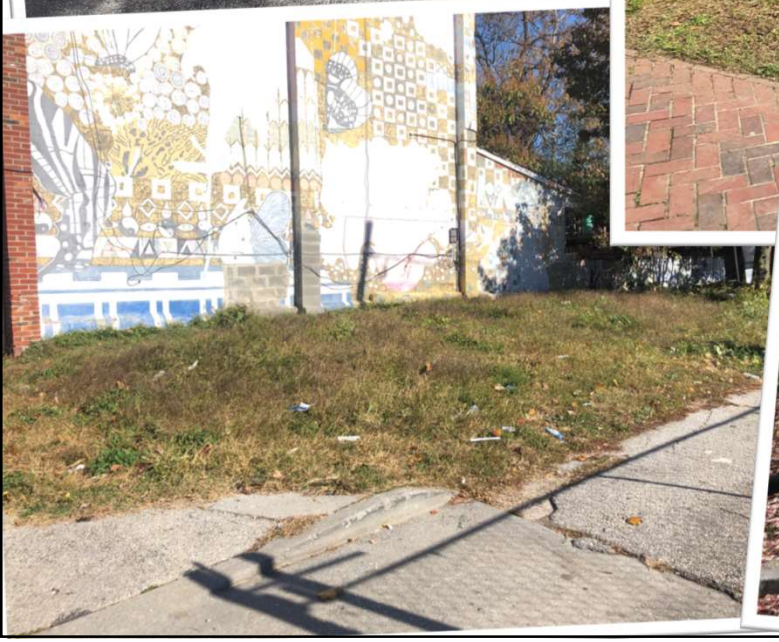
Part 2.
How urban greening presents in cities

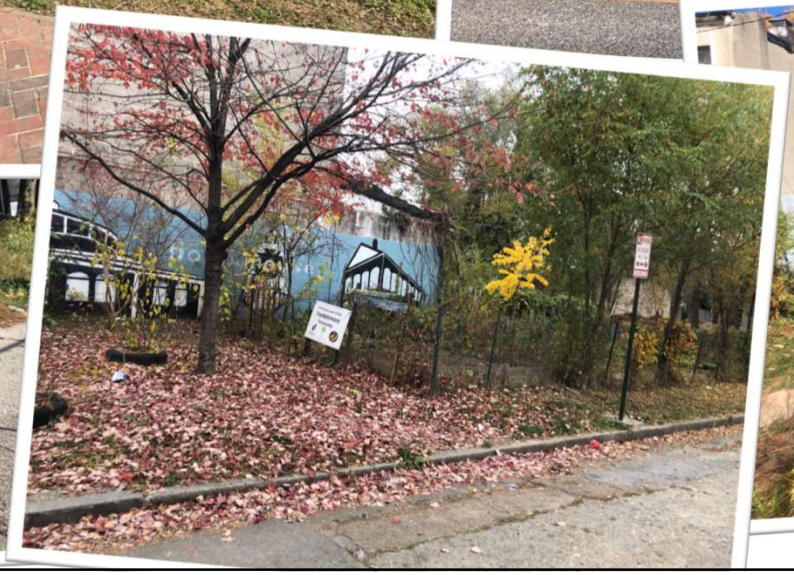


Brown, 2021

urban greening?



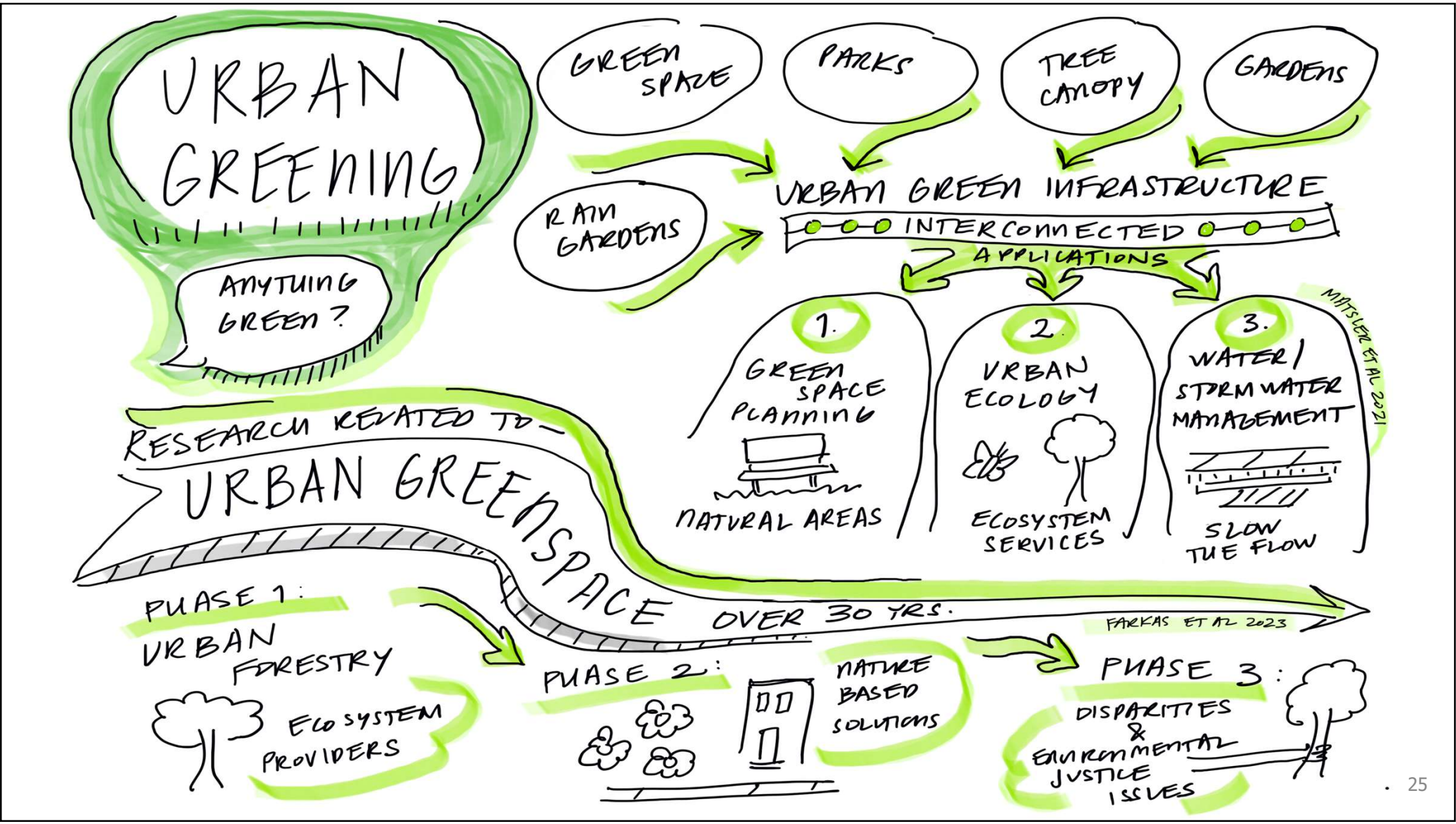


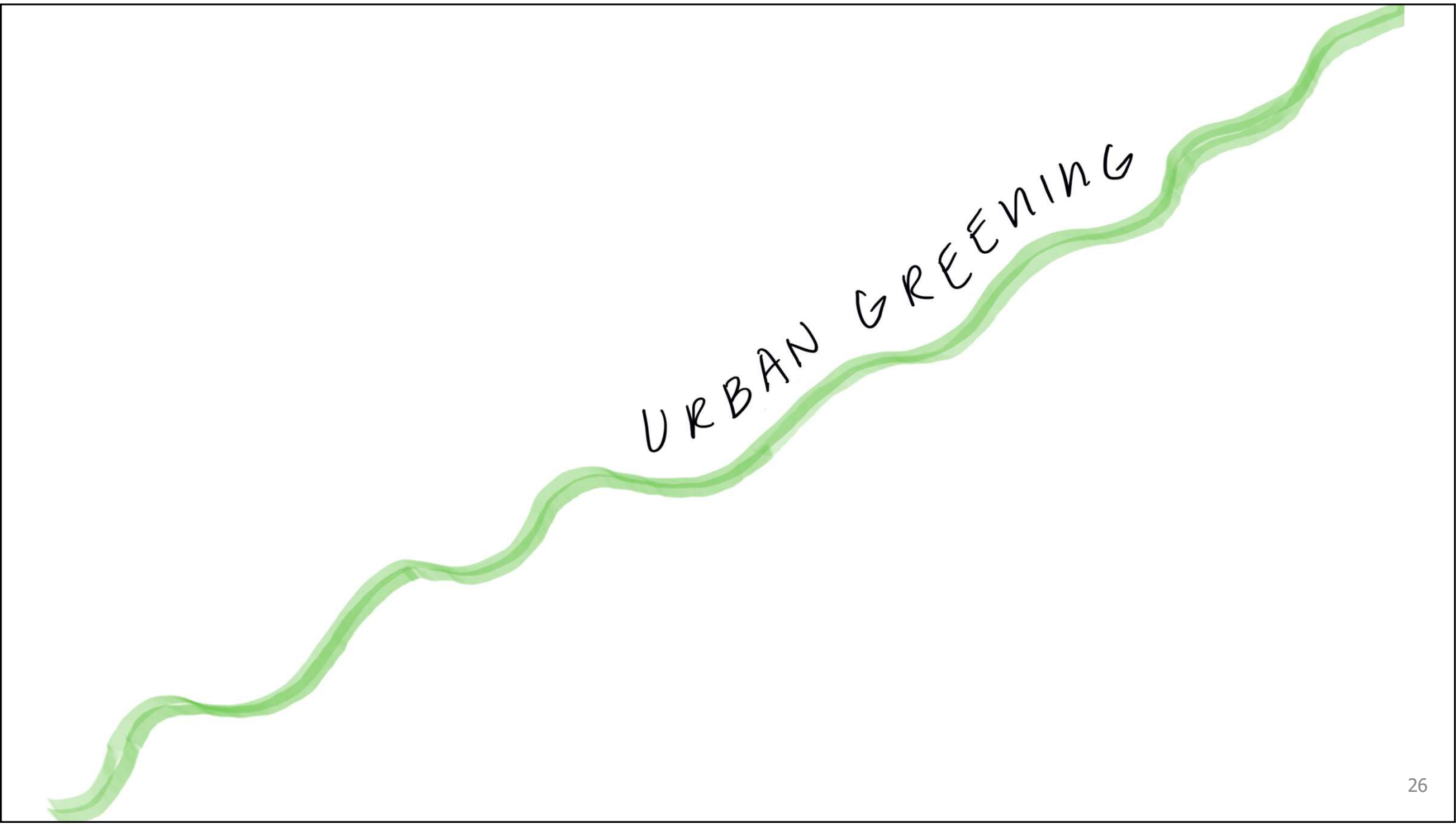


Photos: M. Finch, 2023

RESEARCH QUESTIONS...
HOW HAVE URBAN GREENING INITIATIVES IN BALTIMORE CITY BEEN ALIGNED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACTION?
WHAT IS CONSIDERED "URBAN GREENING"
&
HOW HAS IT BEEN DEFINED TO BENEFIT PEOPLE?
HOW ARE NEIGUBORHOOD URBAN GREENING PROJECTS FUNDED?
WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES & CHALLENGES OF FUNDING?

URBAN
GREENING
ANYTHING
GREEN?


URBAN GREENING
ANYTHING GREEN?
GREEN SPACE
PARKS
TREE CANOPY
GARDENS
RAIN GARDENS
URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
INTERCONNECTED
APPLICATIONS
1.
GREEN SPACE PLANNING
NATURAL AREAS
2.
URBAN ECOLOGY
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
3.
WATER/ STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
SLOW THE FLOW
MATSLER ET AL 2021
RESEARCH RELATED TO—
URBAN GREENSPACE OVER 30 YRS.
FARKAS ET AL 2023
PHASE 1:
URBAN FORESTRY
ECOSYSTEM PROVIDERS
PHASE 2:
NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS
PHASE 3:
DISPARITIES & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUES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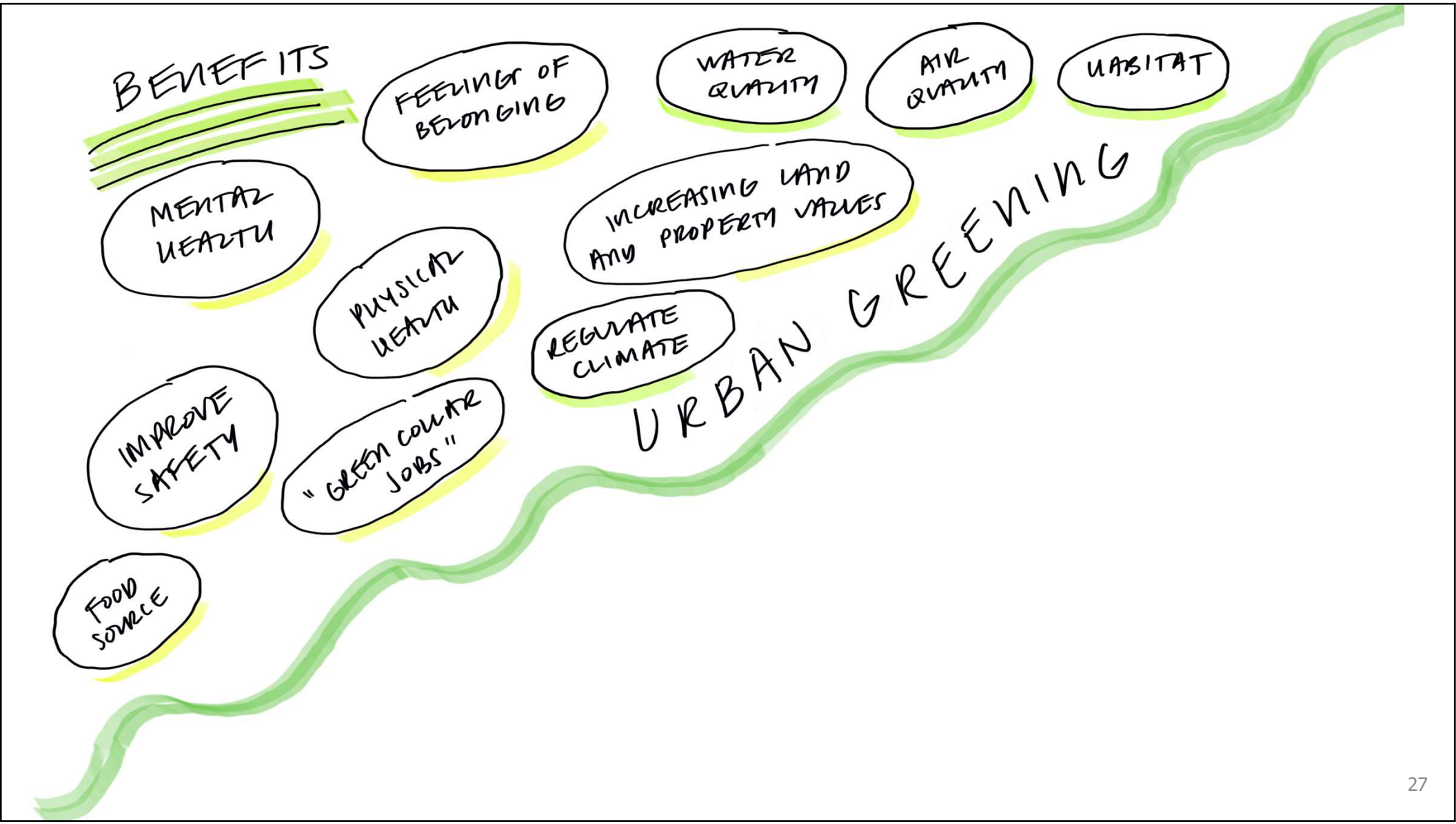
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HABITAT
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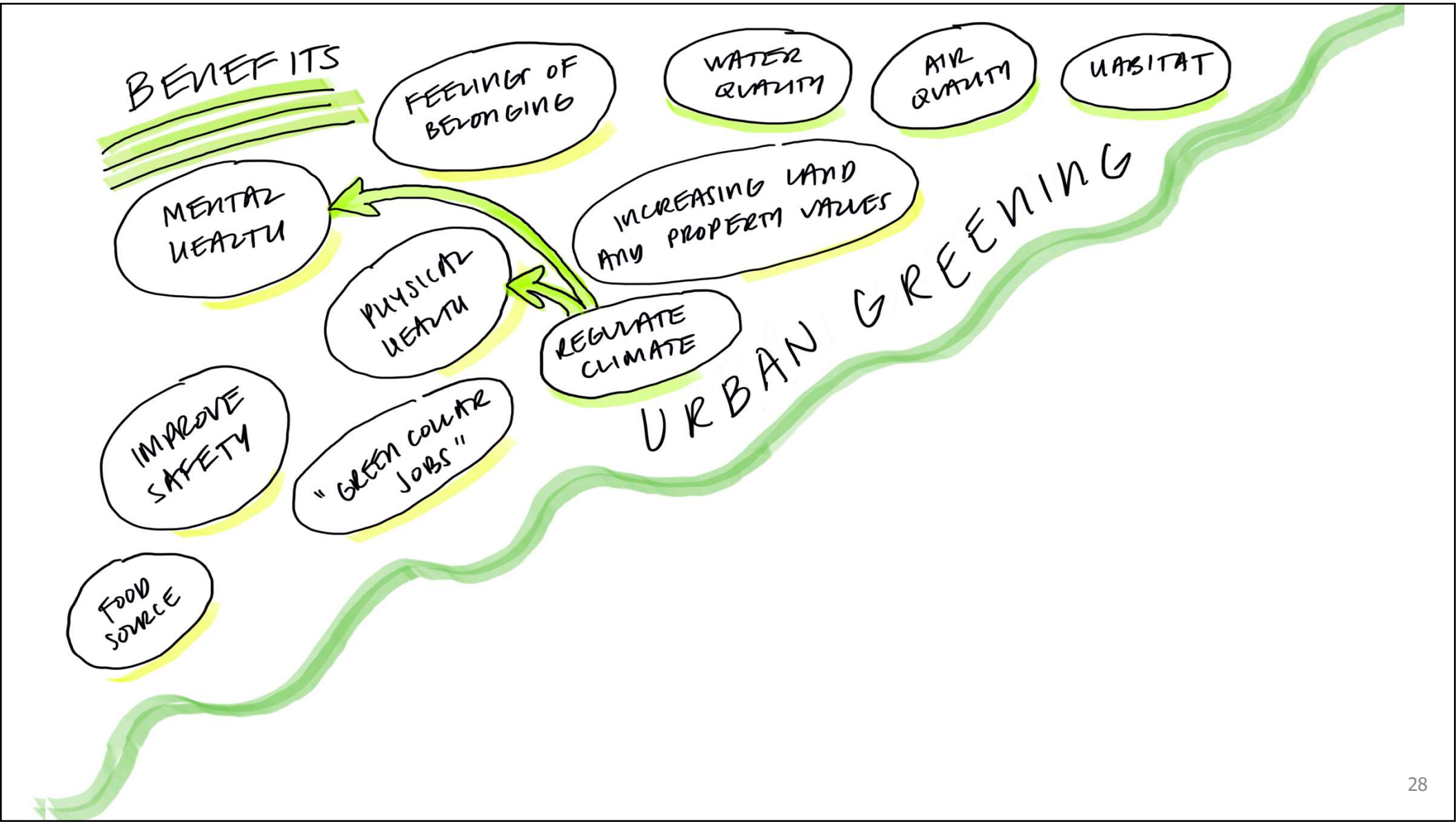
INCREASING LAND AND PROPERTY VALUES
PHYSICAL HEALTH
REGULATE CLIMATE
URBAN GREENING
IMPROVE SAFETY
"GREEN COLLAR JOBS"
FOOD SOURCE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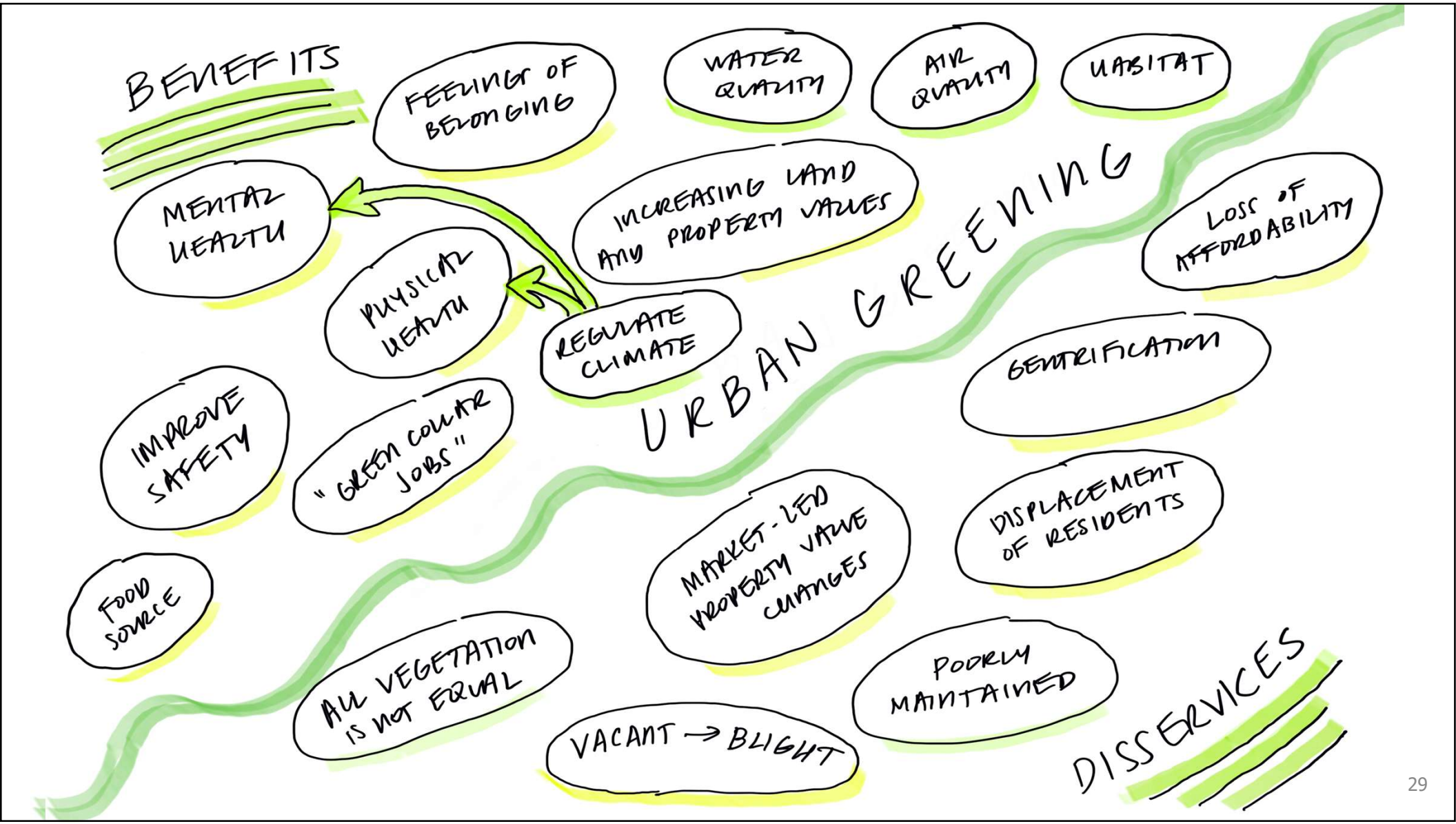
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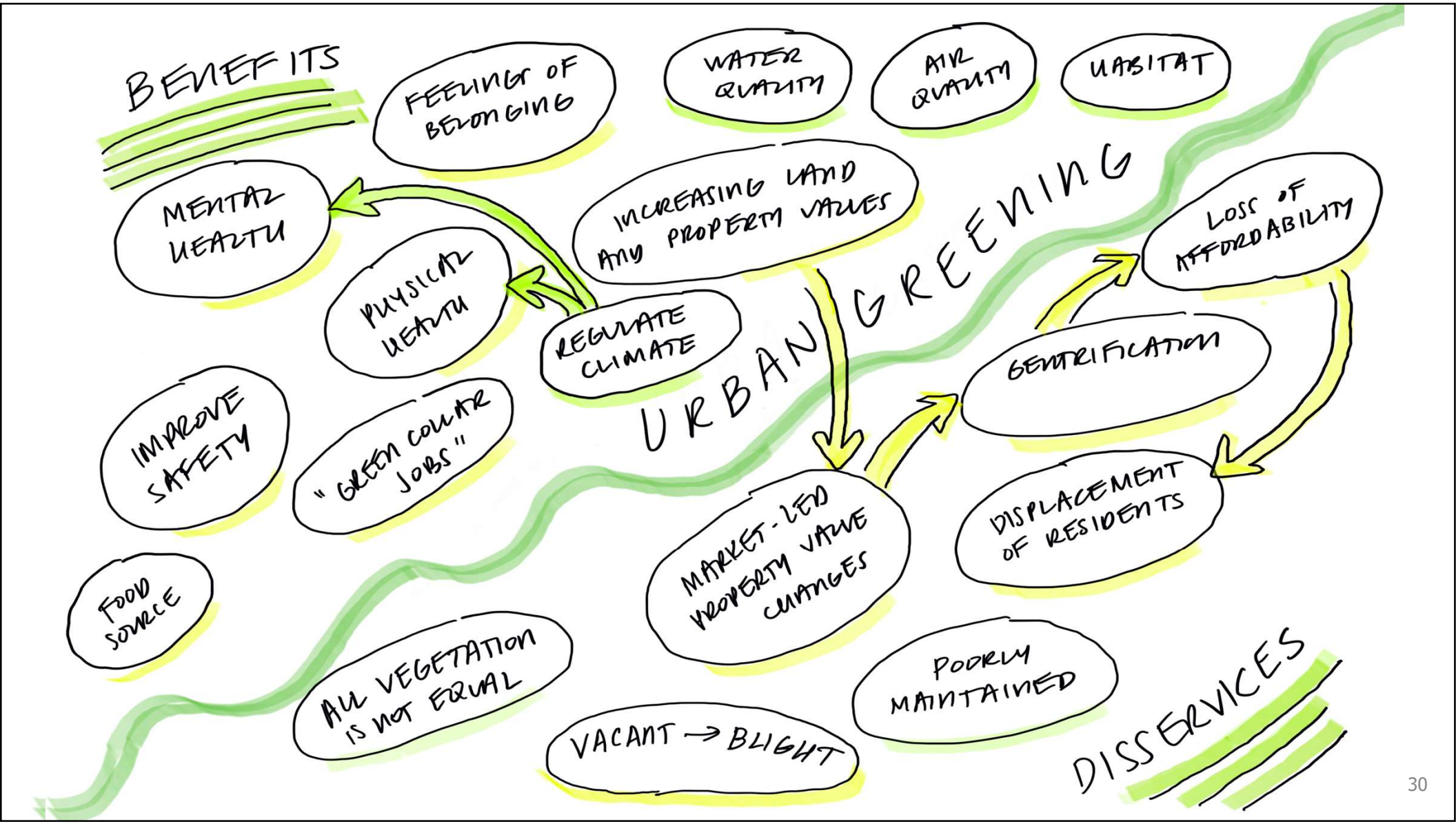
FOOD SOURCE
MARKET-LED PROPERTY VALUE CHANGES
DISPLACEMENT OF RESIDENTS
ALL VEGETATION IS NOT EQUAL
POORLY MAINTAINED
VACANT → BLIGHT
DISSERVICES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News Coverage of "Urban Greening"

April 17, 1996 – St. Louis, MO

From Enterprise Zones, More Hope Than Progress

By Tim Poor and Genaro C. Armas
Post-Dispatch Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON

Fifteen months after winning a $2.95 million federal grant, St. Louisans are just beginning, literally, to sow the first seeds of the urban renewal it promises.

This week, 12 neighborhood groups began planting trees, shrubs and perennials to beautify eyesores that dot the city's economically depressed areas. The results will be visible almost immediately — something that can't be said for most other projects in President Bill Clinton's "enterprise community" program.

Republicans, including Missouri Sen. Christopher S. Bond and Rep. James Talent, say Clinton's approach is bogged down in bureaucracy and governed by politics rather than need. The critics want to shift emphasis toward tax credits and other incentives for private action.

Administration officials and some urban experts counsel patience. Private incentives are important but not sufficient, they contend. Federal money for job training, more police officers and projects like "urban greening" will pay off in time, they say.

Old North St. Louis

Gloria Bratkowski has heard it all before — the big plans to lure businesses, build housing and create jobs. So far, none of it has made much difference in her Old North St. Louis neighborhood, just north of downtown, where she has lived for 20 years. She's watched people move out and absen-

See RENEWAL, Page 7

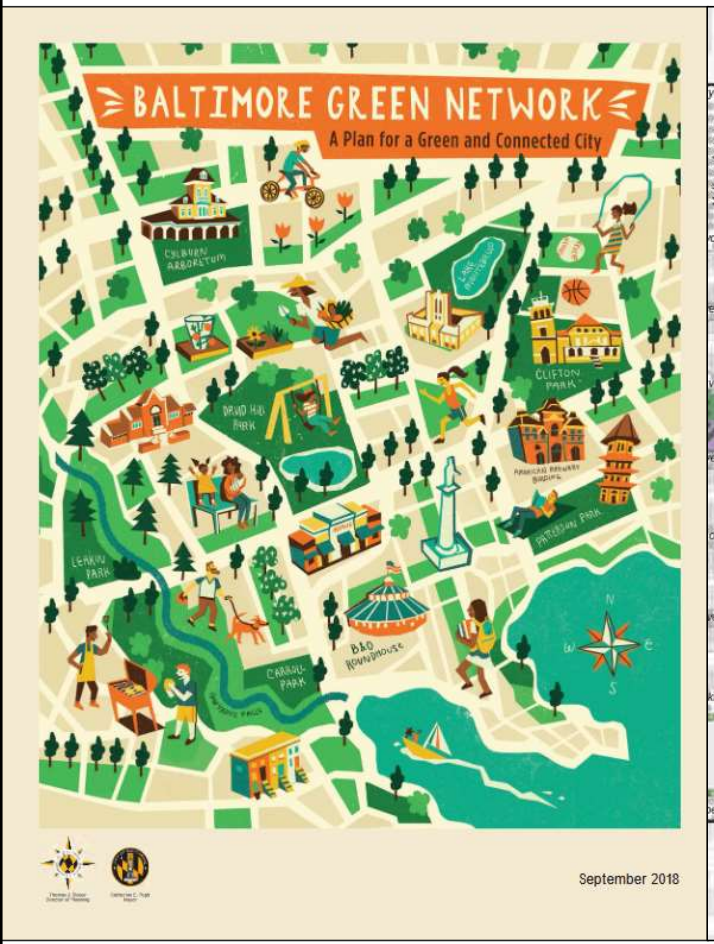
Sam Leone/Post-Dispatch

Gloria Bratkowski stands in a vacant lot that will become part of an "urban greening" project promoted by the administration of President Bill Clinton. The lot is in the Old North St. Louis neighborhood, just north of downtown.

Bratkowski is the first to admit that trees and flowers are a tiny step toward fixing the problems.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 17, 1996

City-wide plans



City of Baltimore Depart. of Planning

Neighborhood plans

Harlem Park Neighborhood Master Plan

Community effort

Photo: M. Finch, 2023

Neighborhood and green space development in Baltimore

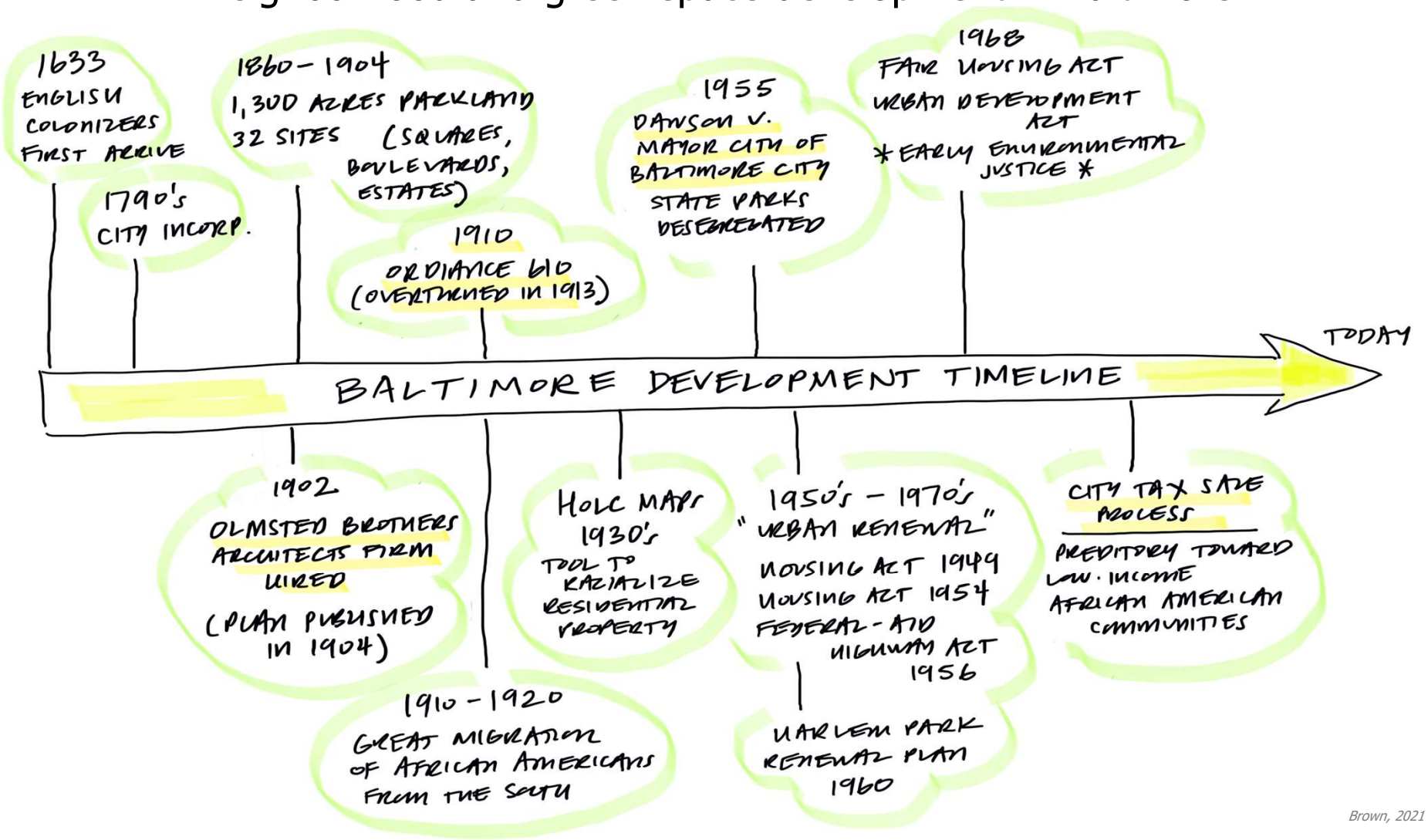


Photo: M. Finch, 2023

Questions for "Urban Greening Actors" (aka Implementors)

1.

Who mainly provides funding for your greening projects and has this changed over the past 5-10 years?

3.

What concerns, challenges, or limitations have you encountered related to funding and/or urban greening projects?

2.

Are you aware of any database for Baltimore greening projects that would include information on type of project, location, and funding source?

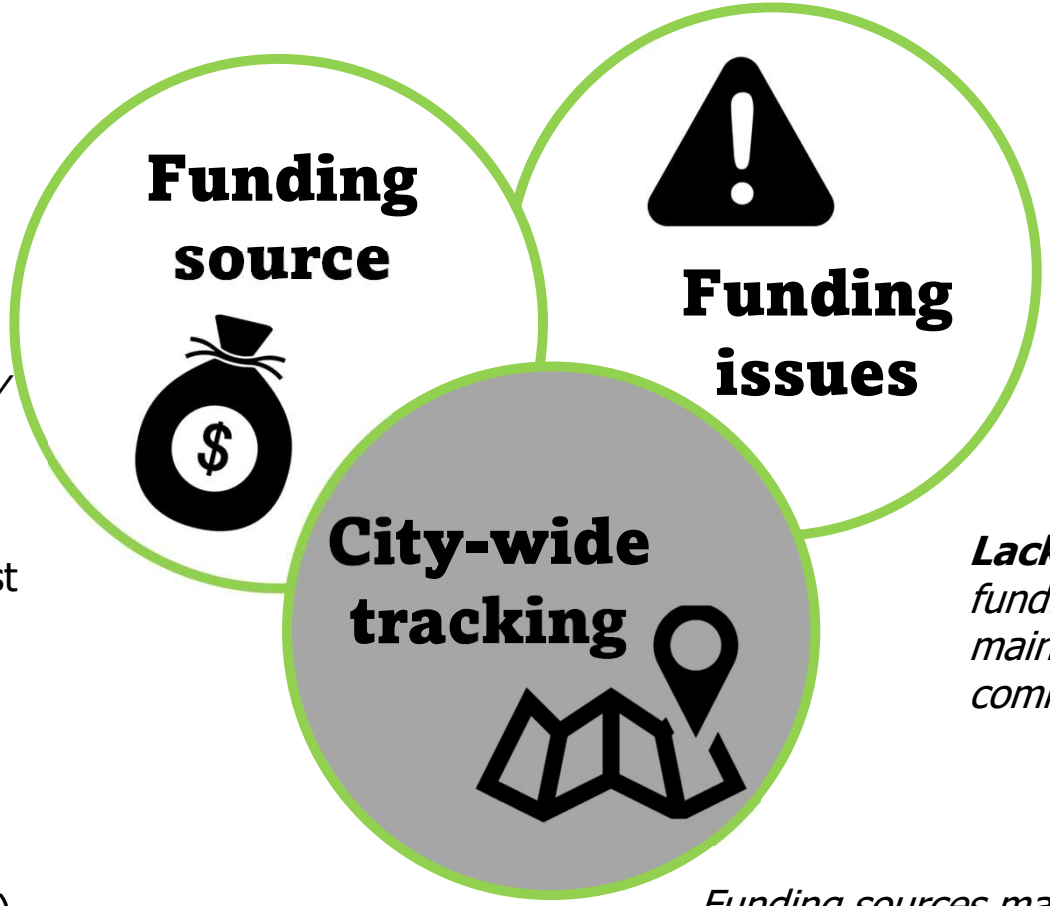
Responses from "Urban Greening Actors"

Staff influenced: *Related to staff capacity, expertise, and organization scale.*

Mix of sources: *Funding source diversity balances burden.*

Funders mentioned:

- Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT)
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- Chesapeake & Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund (MD-DNR)



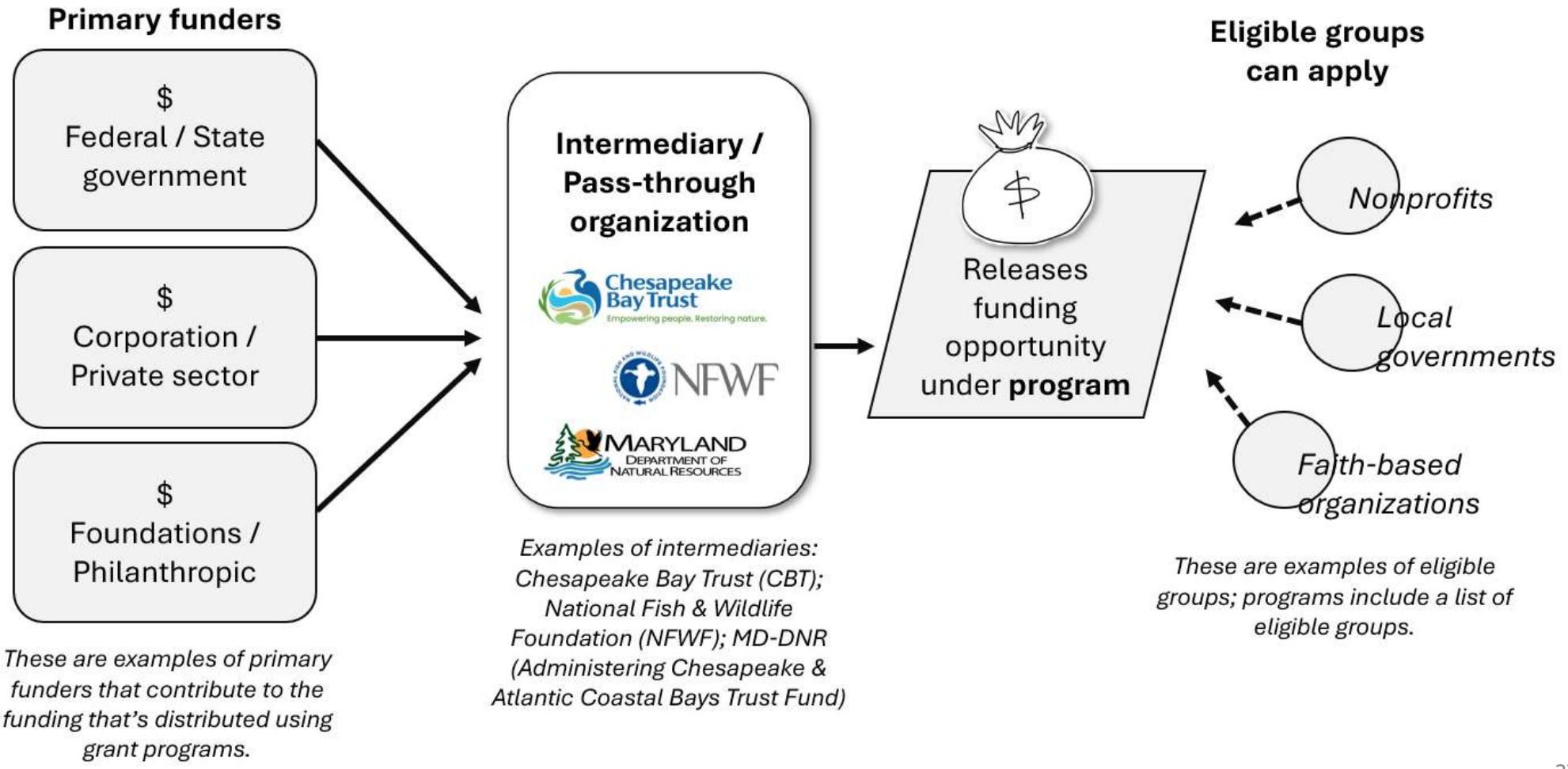
Federal concern: *Experience having to front money and wait for reimbursement.*

"Not environmental enough": *Project ranking prioritizes environmental metrics that don't meet neighborhood needs.*

Lacks sustainability: *Lack of funding for long-term maintenance; depends on community for sustaining care.*

Funding sources may have information.

How Funding Flows through Intermediary Organizations



Logos: CBTrust.org; FWS.gov; DNR.Maryland.gov

Specific Funding Programs Mentioned by "Urban Greening Actors"

Funder	Program	Program metrics mentioned in Request for Proposal (RFP)	Award amount *Projects of interest*
Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT)	Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns Grant	# of trees planted; amount of area being replanted or impervious being removed	Up to $50,000
	Outreach and Restoration Grant	*No stated metric; has a list of criteria including impact on water quality, natural resources, and community needs.*	Up to $125,000
	Urban Tree Grant	# of trees planted (key metric as part of state-wide 5 million trees by 2031 goal)	Up to $45,000 *Depending on size of planting*
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)	Small Watershed Grant	# of trees planted; annual nitrogen, phosphorous, and/or sediment load reductions from projects.	$150,000 - $1M *Depending on project type*

Logos: cbt.org; fws.gov

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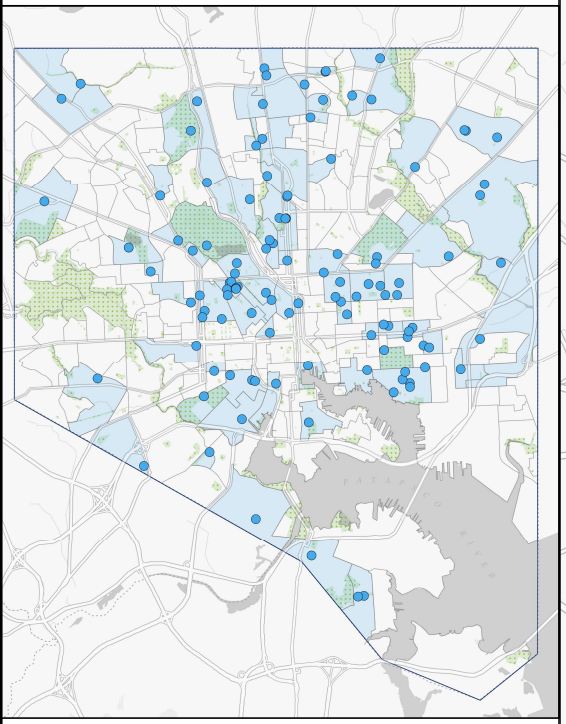
Logos: cbt.org; fws.gov

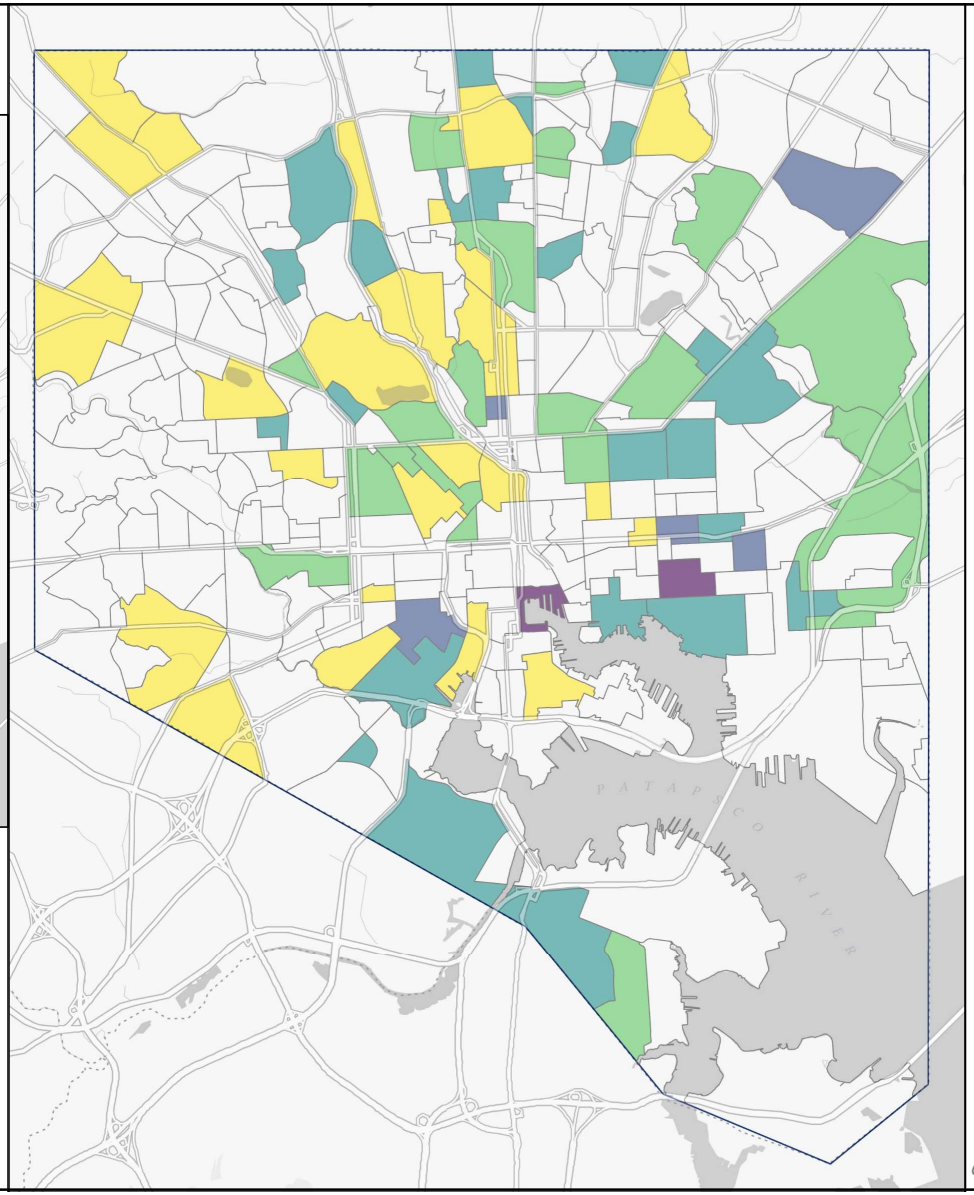
n = 118 projects



Project location

Neighborhood awarded funding

City parks



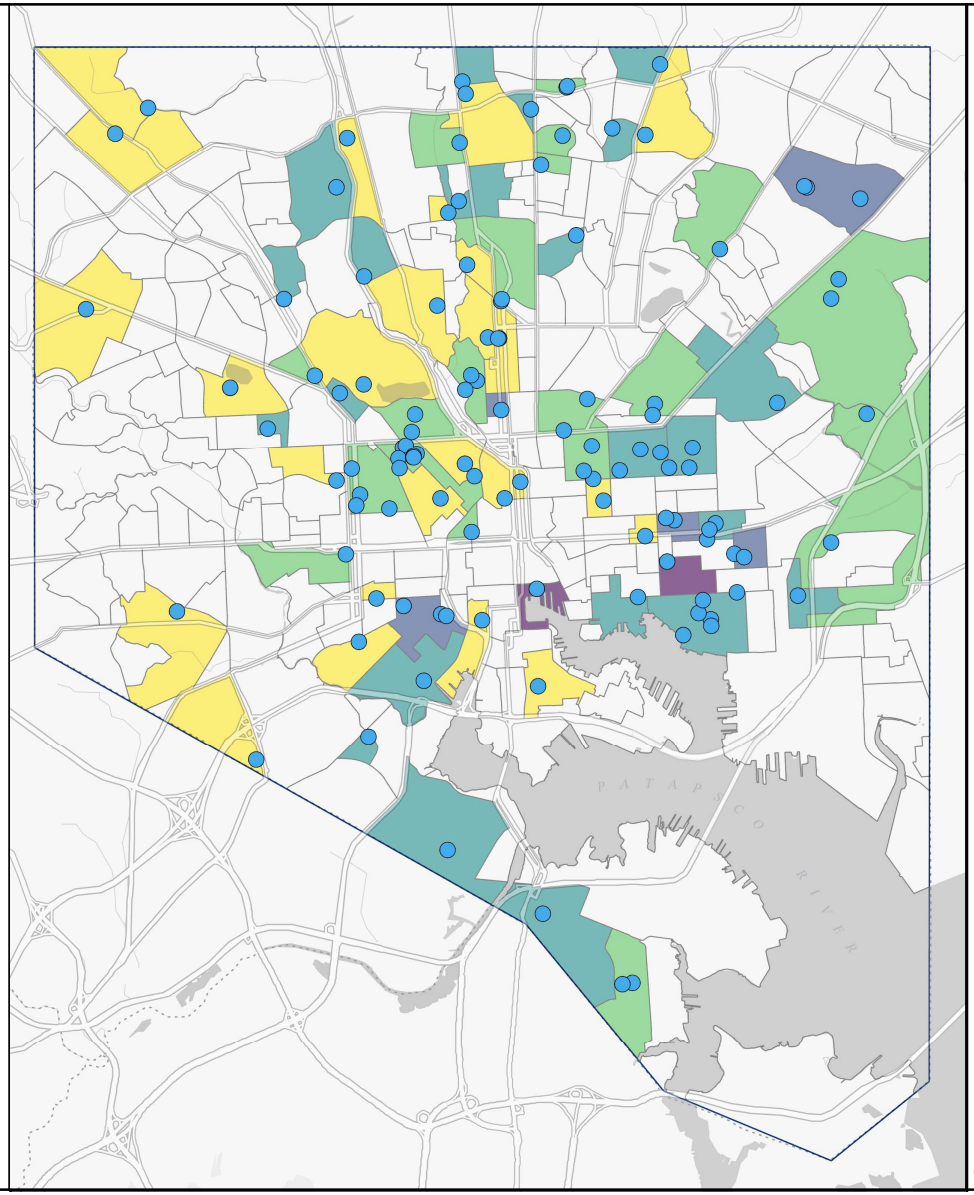
Chesapeake Bay Trust Programs for Green Space (2012-2023)

Neighborhood funding / # of projects

- $1,032 – 11,560
- $11,570 – 41,400
- $41,410 – 75,000
- $75,010 – 124,800
- $124,900 – 250,000

Created by: M. Finch, 2024 / Data sources: Open Data Baltimore; CBT

n = 118 projects



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- $75,010 – 124,800
- $124,900 – 250,000

Created by: M. Finch, 2024 / Data sources: Open Data Baltimore; CBT

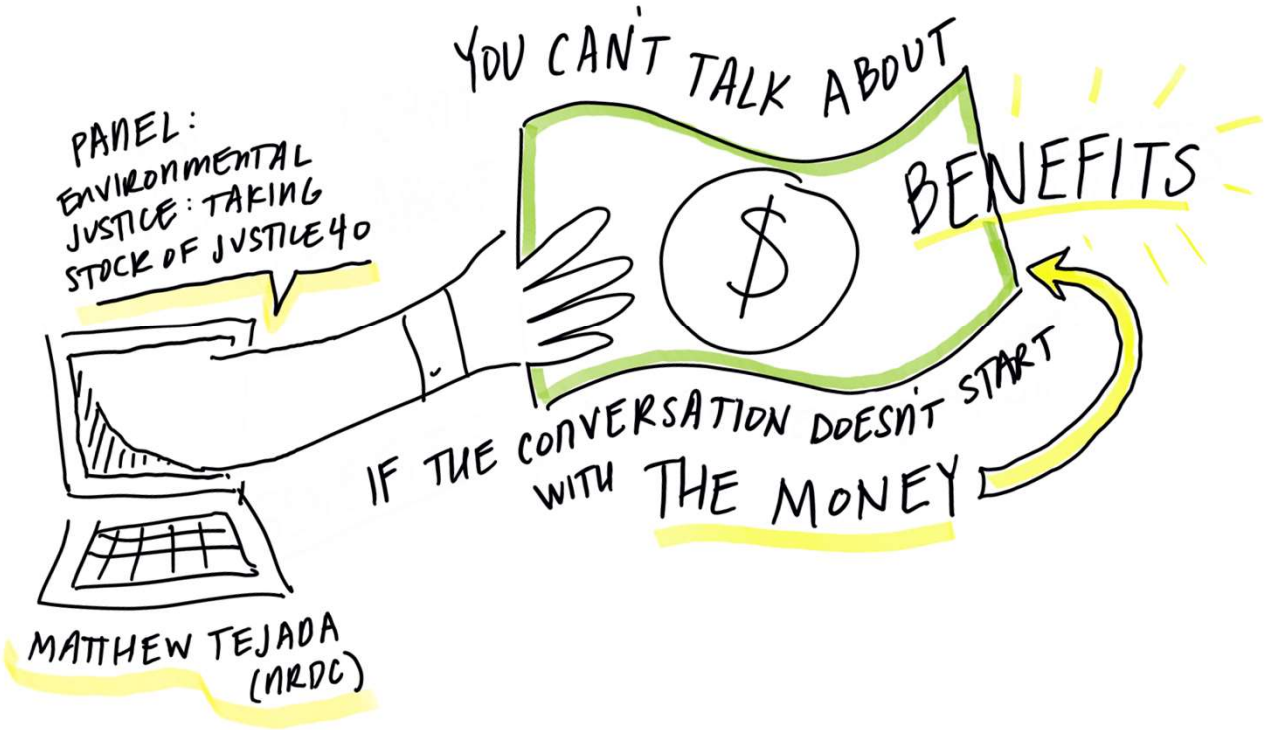
End of Part 2

Urban greening

Benefits for people

Funding and limits

Part 3.
How policies seek environmental justice



RESEARCH QUESTIONS...
HOW DO DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF "ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY" COME TOGETHER FOR WHO AND WHERE FUNDING SHOULD BE INVESTED IN THE CITY?
FEDERAL GOVT.
EJ POLICY
$
$
EJ SCREENING TOOL
HOW ARE EJ SCREENING TOOLS USED TO IMPLEMENT POLICY?
HOW DO TOOLS DIFFER IN AREAS THEY IDENTIFY?
HOW HAS FEDERAL POLICY INFLUENCED STATE LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY?
HOW DO THESE TOOLS INCORPORATE GREENING?

Warren County PCB Landfill Protest (1982)

Image: HMdb.org

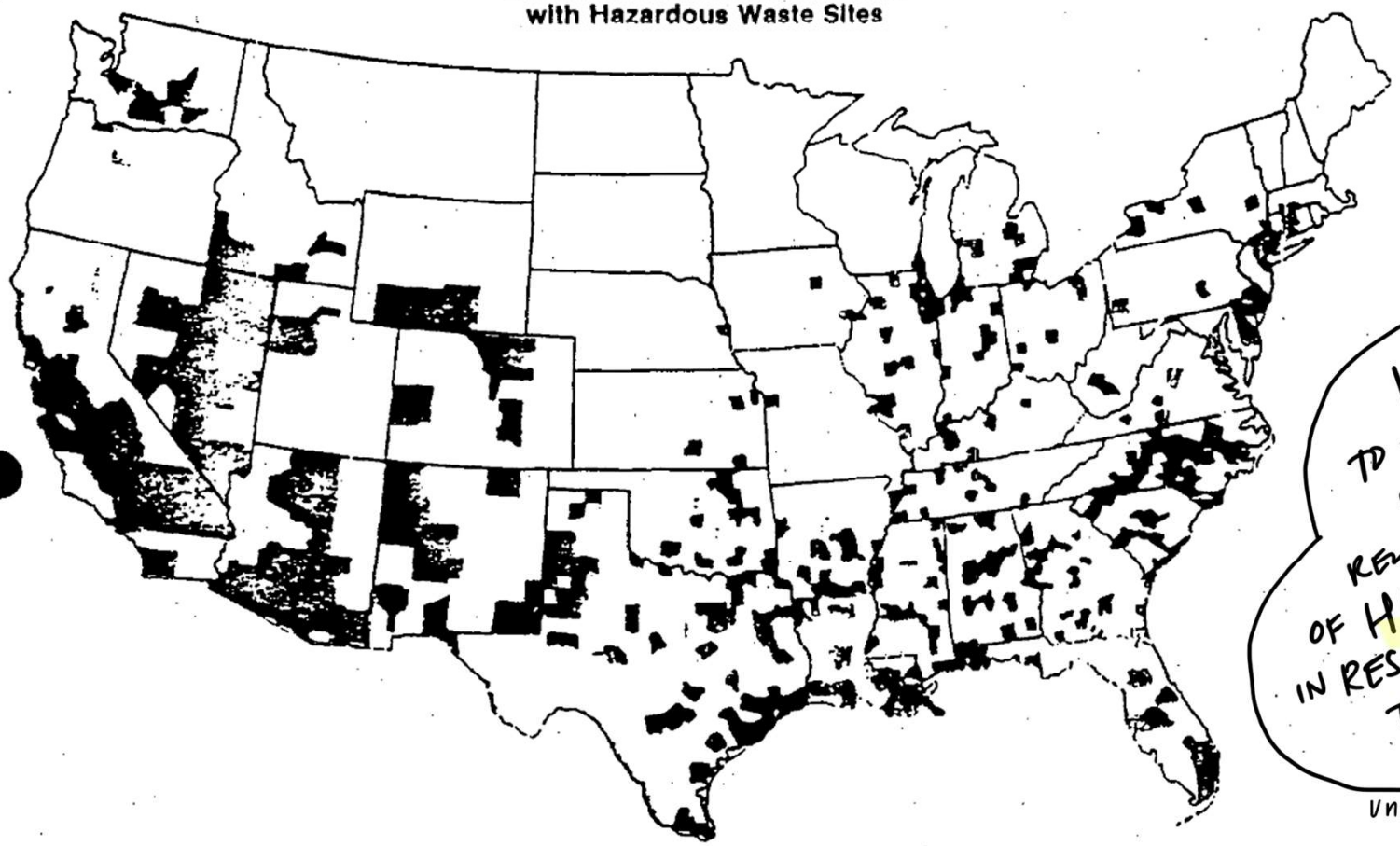
< Protesters from Afton, NC laying in street to block dump-trucks.

Source: Blackpast.org

Image: BFA Environmental Consultants, Loka Ashwood

TOXIC WASTES AND RACE
In The United States

A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites



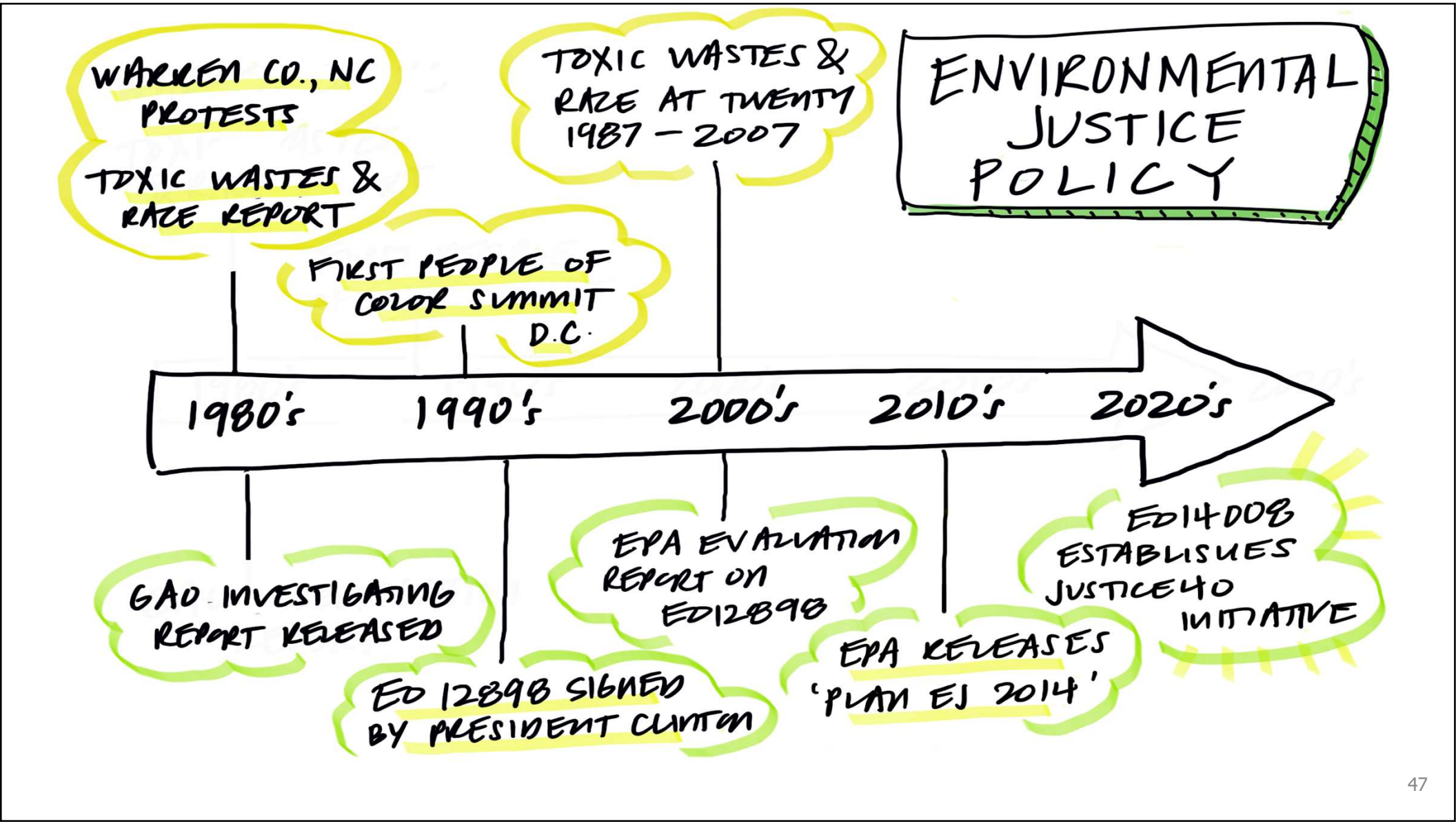
Counties where Black and/or Hispanic % of population is greater than their national percentages.

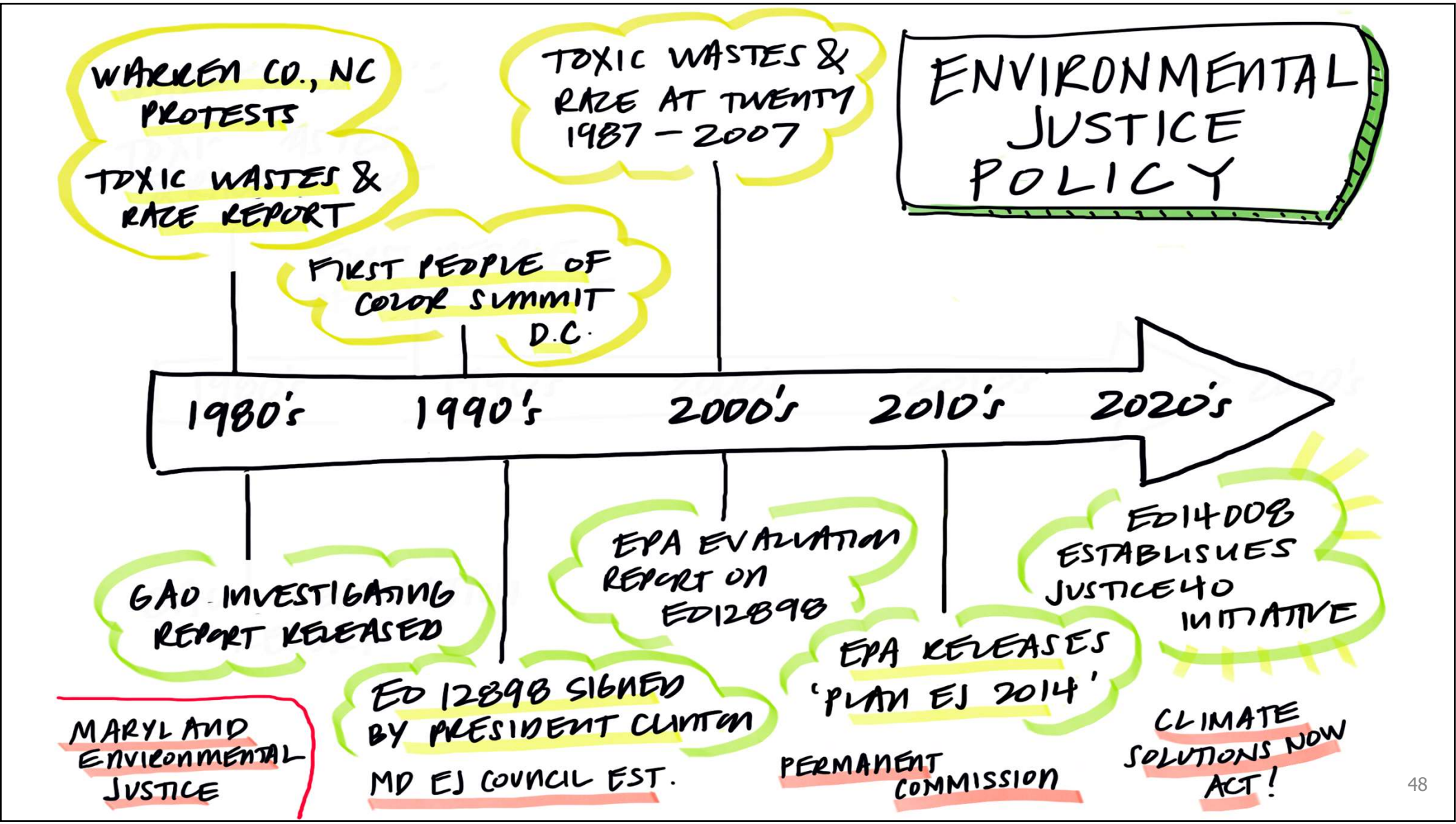
Counties where Black and/or Hispanic % of population is greater than their national percentages AND 5+ uncontrolled toxic waste sites are located.

WE CALL ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT RACE IS A MAJOR FACTOR RELATED TO THE PRESENCE OF HAZARDOUS WASTES IN RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE U.S.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, 1987

Image: United Church of Christ, 1987


ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY
WARREN CO., NC PROTESTS
TOXIC WASTES & RACE REPORT
FIRST PEOPLE OF COLOR SUMMIT D.C.
TOXIC WASTES & RACE AT TWENTY 1987 – 2007
1980's
1990's
2000's
2010's
2020's
GAO INVESTIGATING REPORT RELEASED
ED 12898 SIGNED BY PRESIDENT CLINTON
EPA EVALUATION REPORT ON ED12898
EPA RELEASES 'PLAN EJ 2014'
ED14008 ESTABLISHES JUSTICE40 INITIATIVE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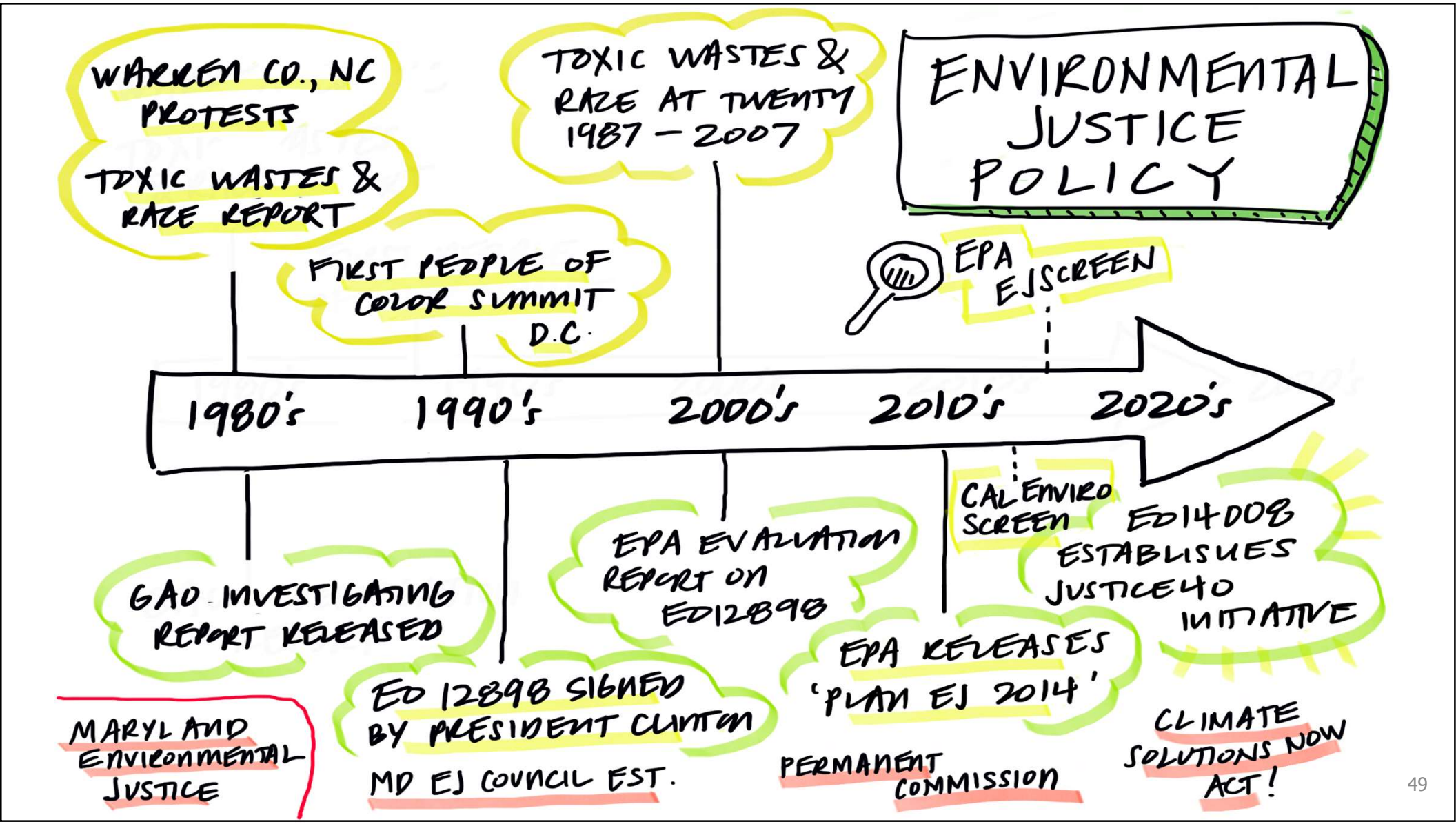
CLIMATE SOLUTIONS NOW ACT!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ED14008 ESTABLISHES JUSTICE40 INITIATIVE
CLIMATE SOLUTIONS NOW ACT!

Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (EO 14008)

EO 14008
1/27/21

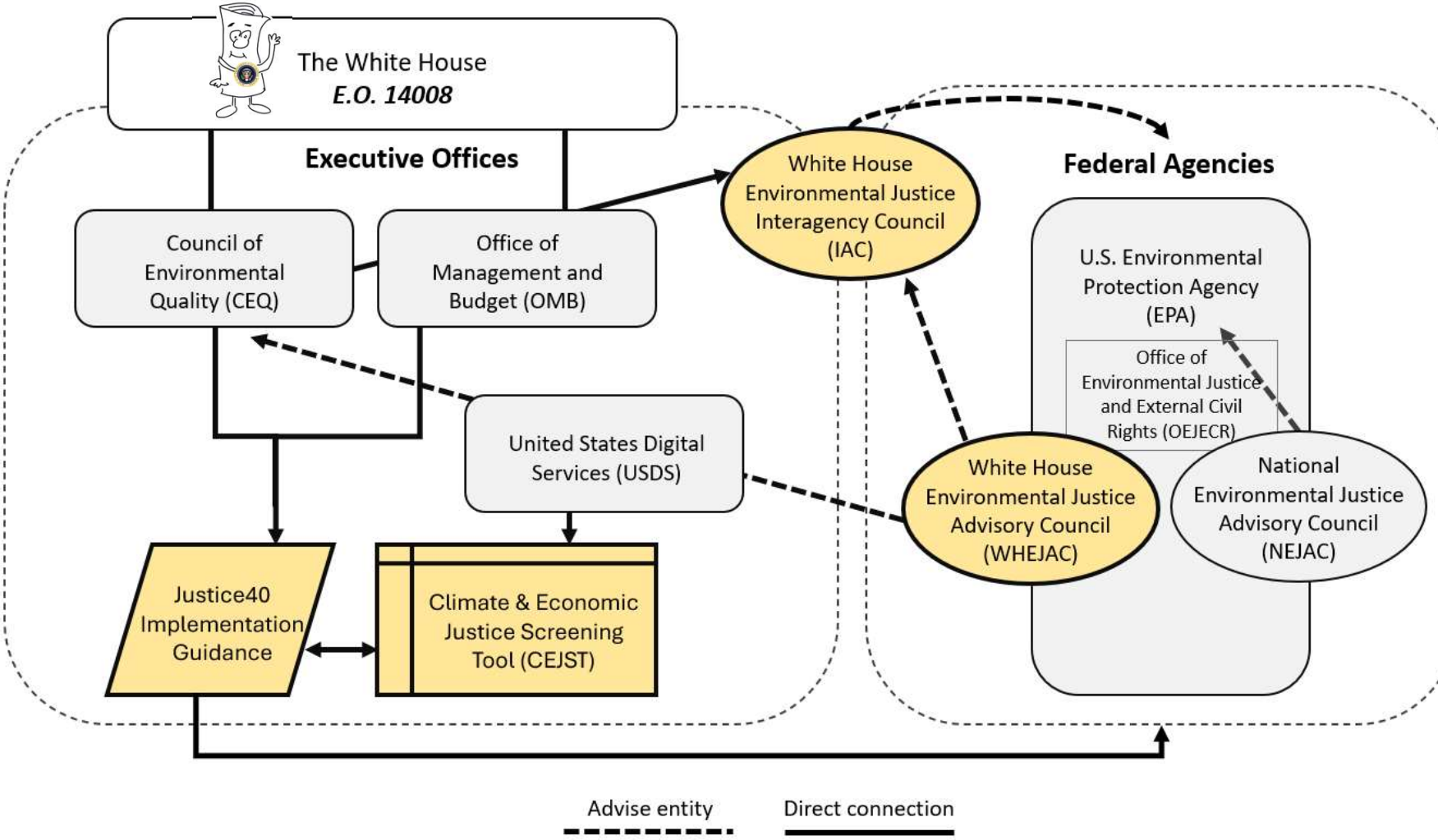
New initiative: Justice40

*Goal that **40 percent of the overall benefit** from **certain Federal investments** flow **to disadvantaged communities**; focus **investment areas include**: clean energy, clean transit, affordable & sustainable housing, workforce development, legacy pollution, clean water infrastructure, and **climate change***

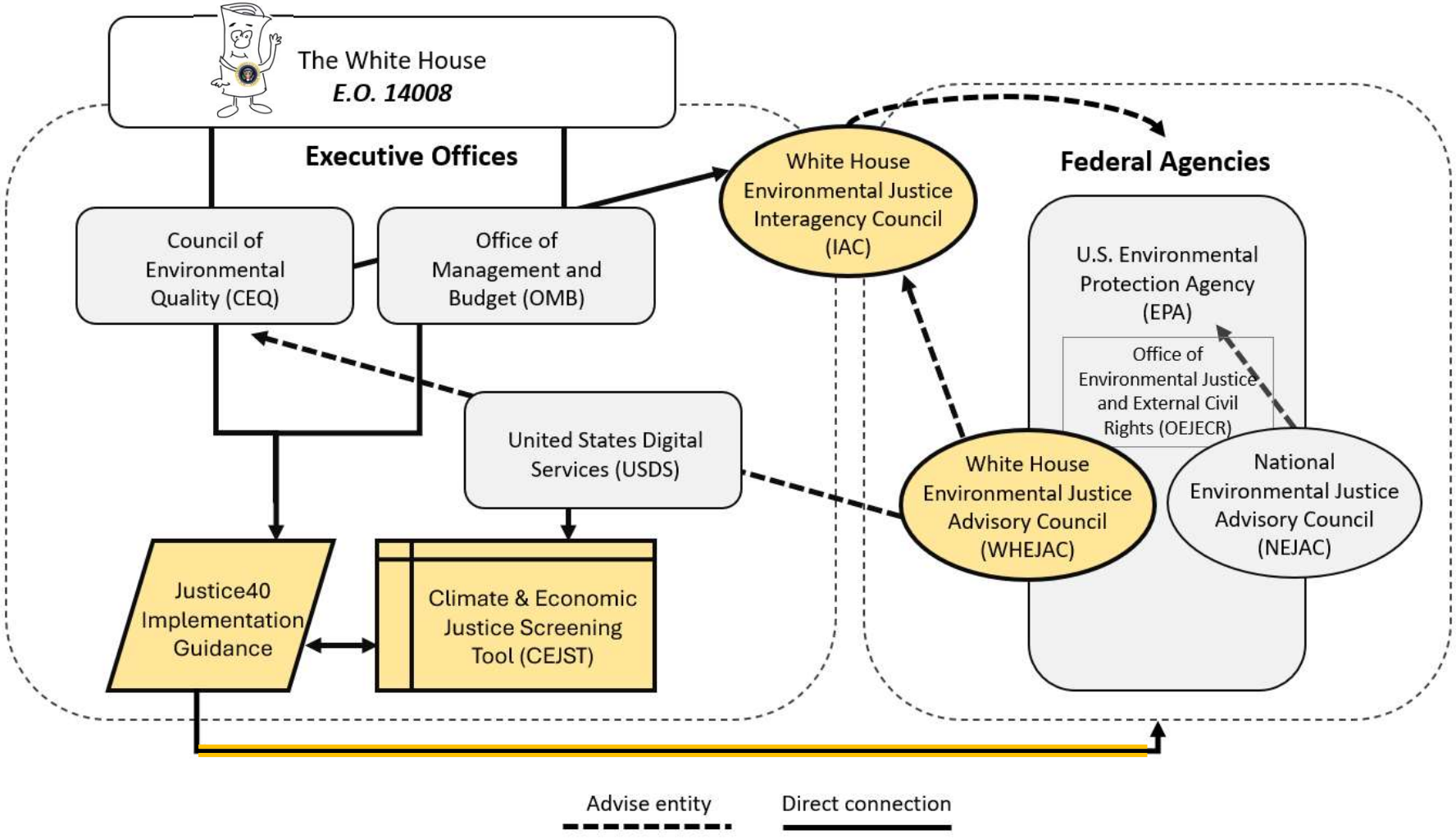
New & updated advisory groups:
White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC); Interagency Council (IAC)

New tool:
Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

Environmental Justice Governance – Implementing Justice40



Environmental Justice Governance – Implementing Justice40



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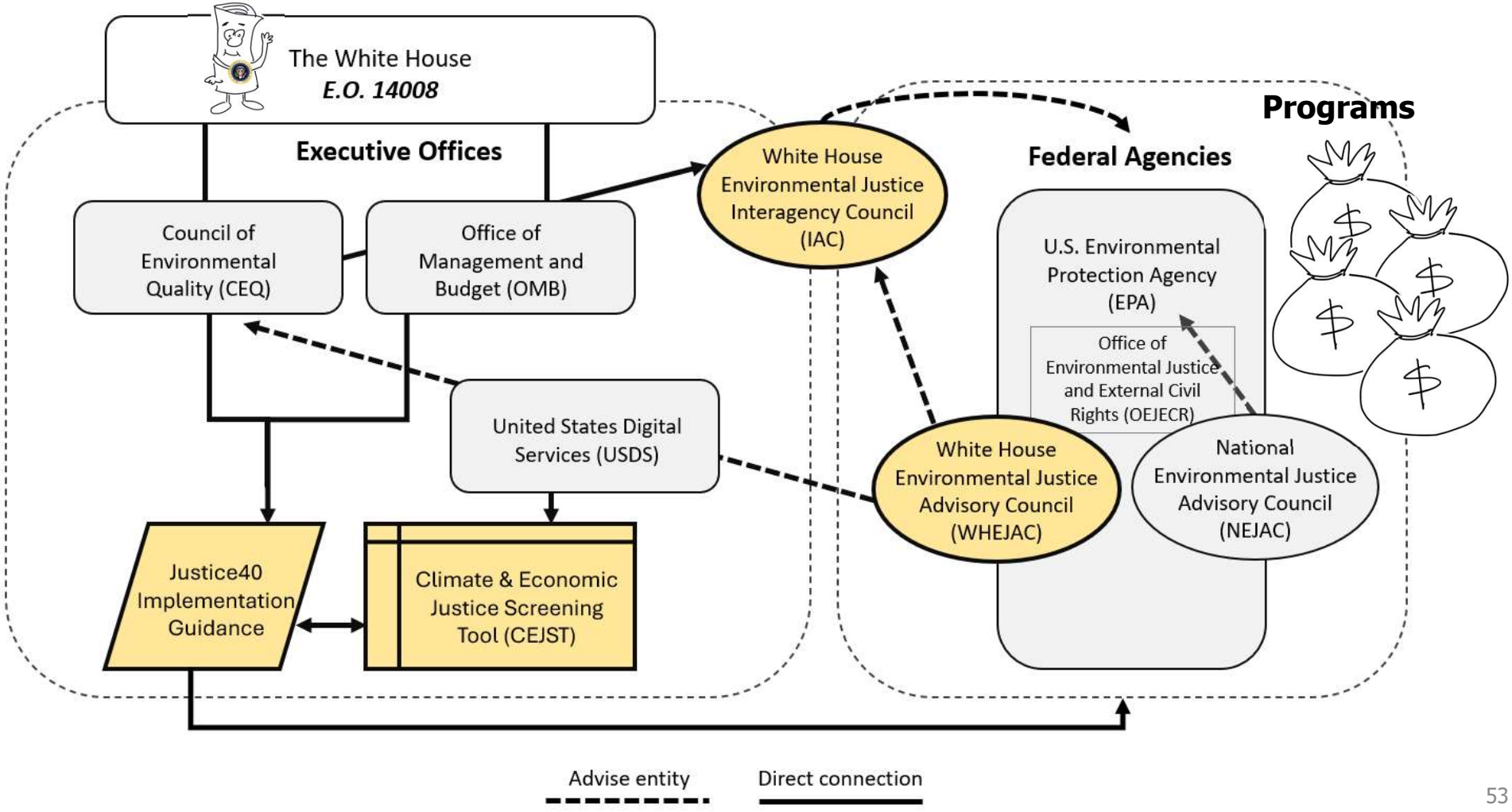

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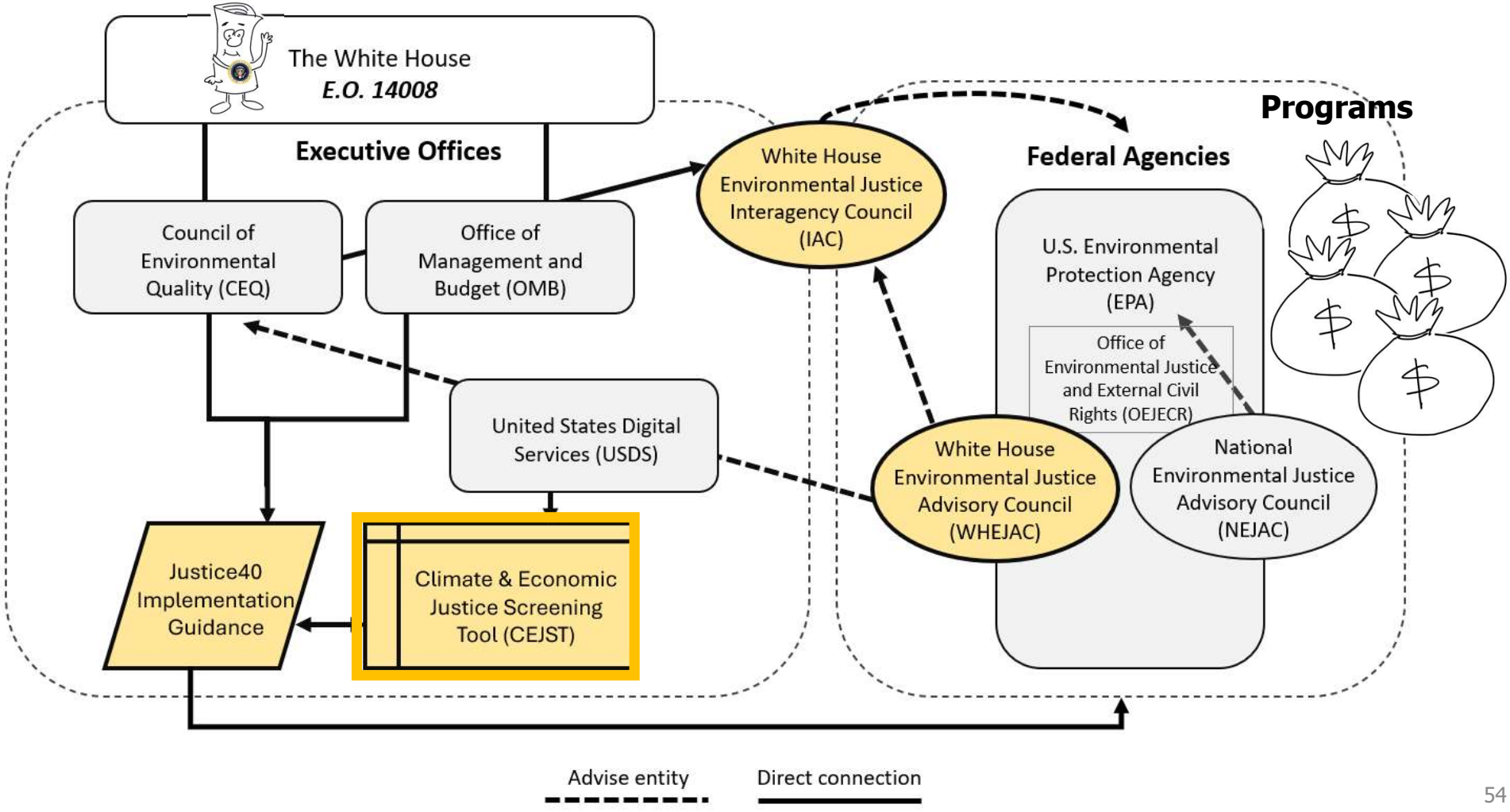
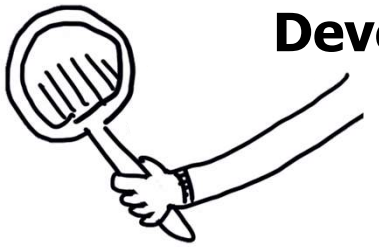
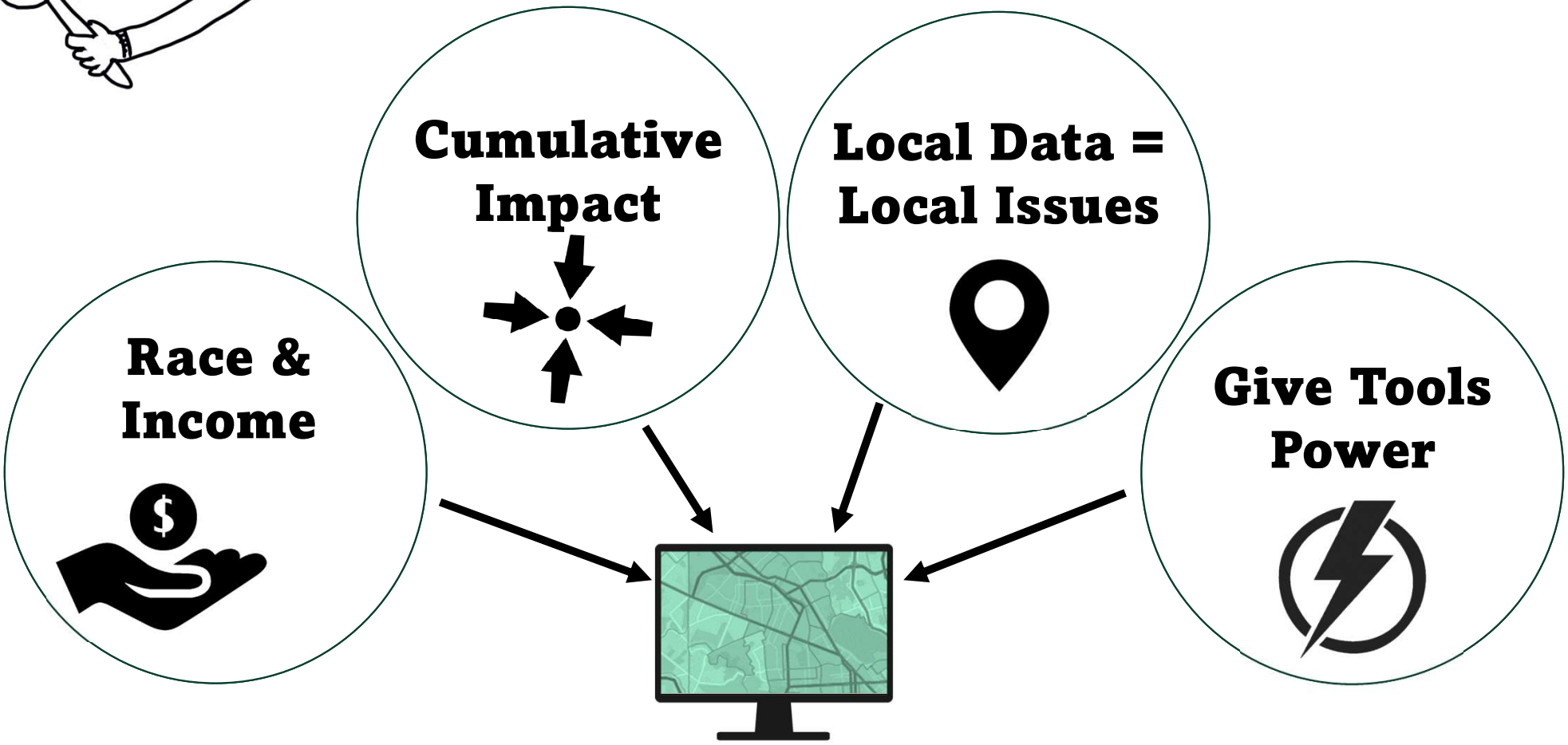
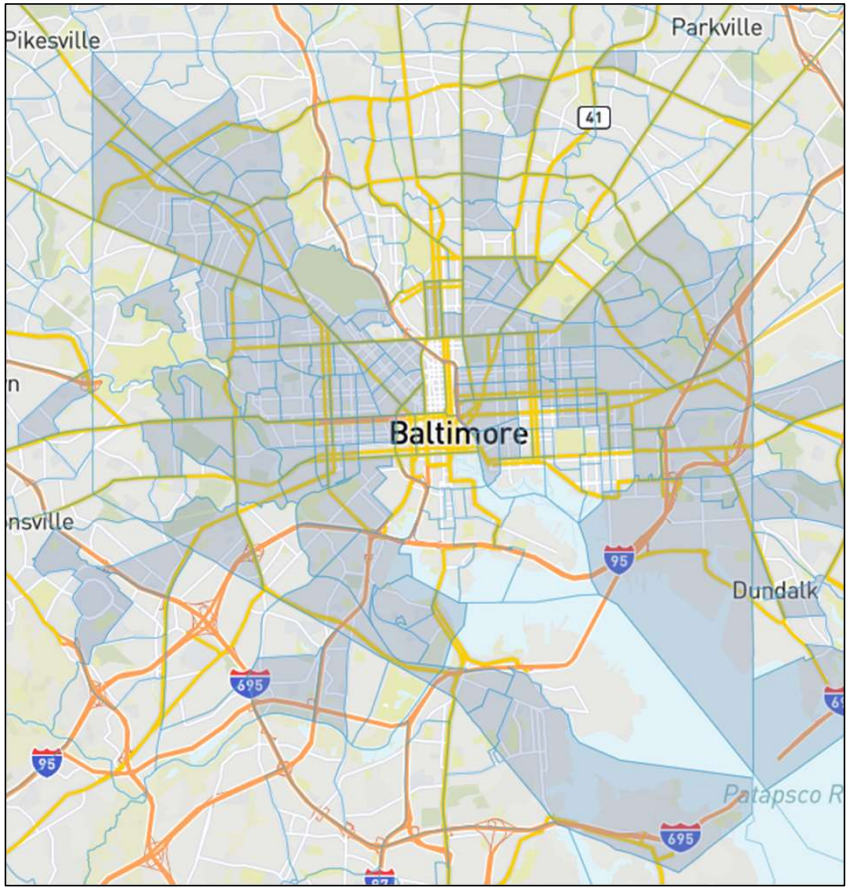


Developing Environmental Justice (EJ) Screening Tools





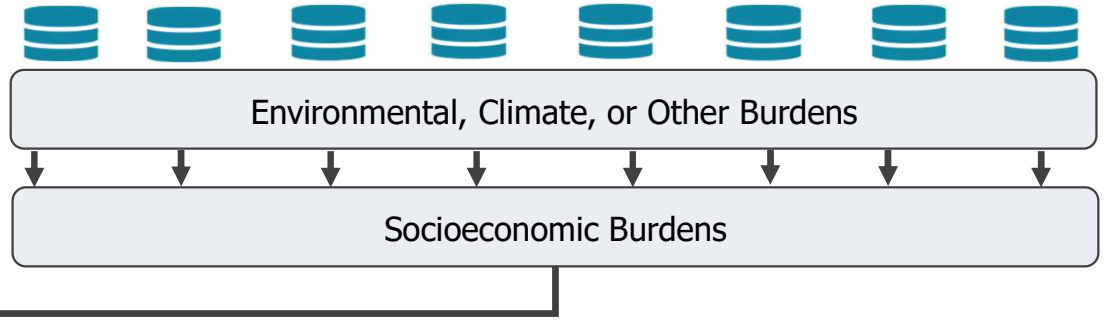
Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool *Version 1.1*



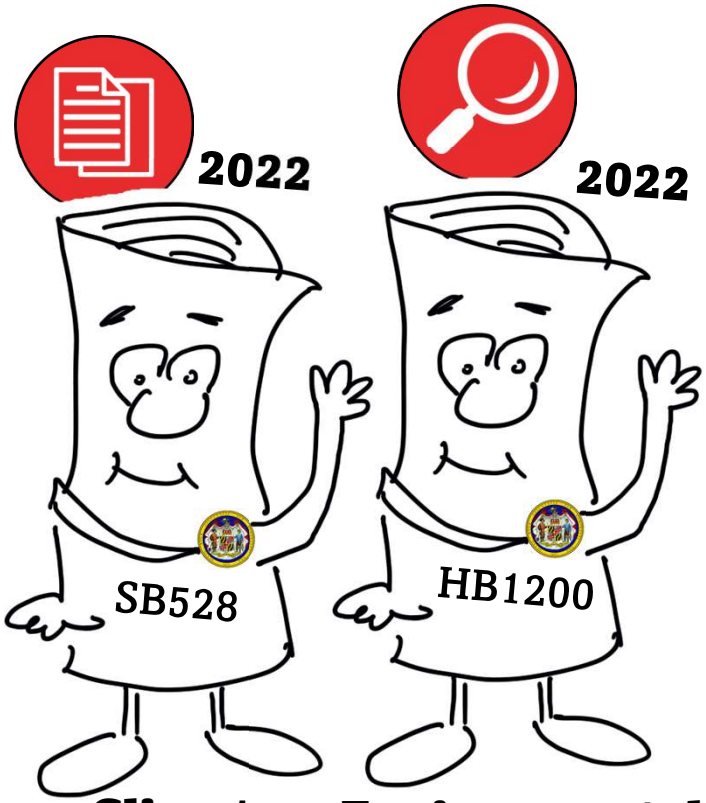
"Disadvantaged community"
Census tracts (2010)

Scale	U.S. states & territories
Environmental Justice Definition	*Communities are **"disadvantaged"** if they exceed thresholds within categories of "burden"; categories combine (1) environmental, climate, or other burdens, AND (2) socioeconomic burdens.*
Concern for Environmental Justice	Does not include race. Does not include cumulative impact.

Method for Identifying Communities



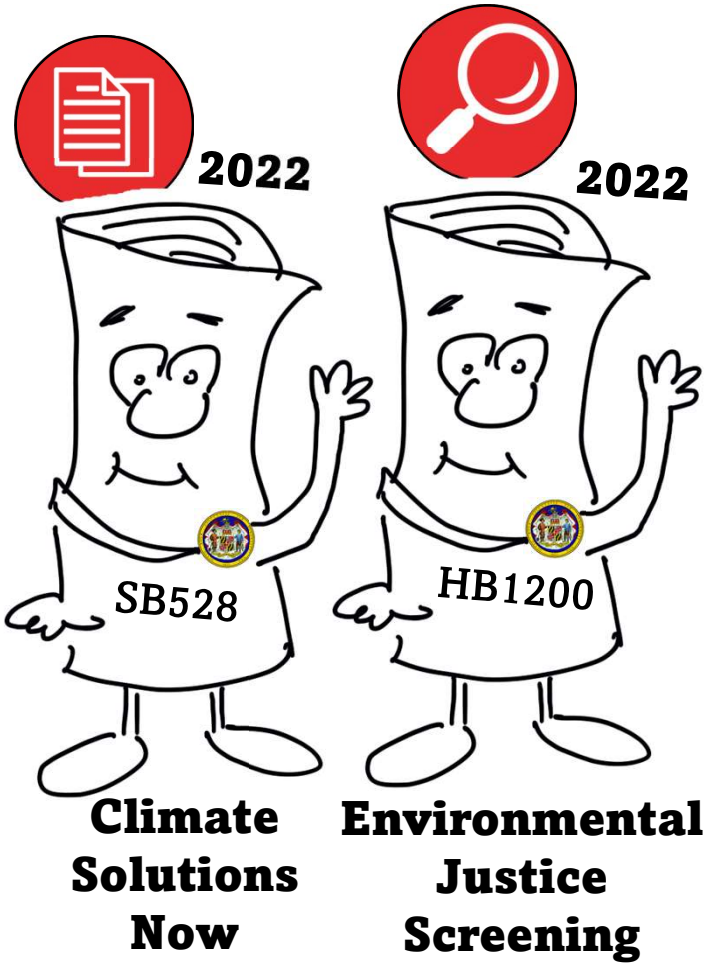
Environmental Justice Policy in Maryland



Climate Solutions Now

Environmental Justice Screening

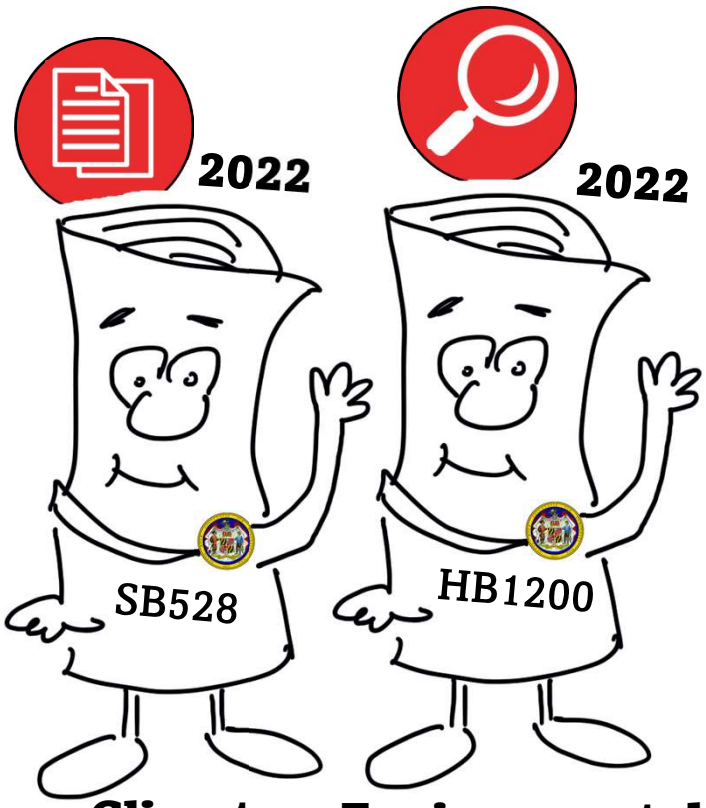
Environmental Justice Policy in Maryland



Sets definition:
Defines "overburdened" and "underserved" communities.

Requires a tool:
Defines 'EJ Scores' and requires score for specific MDE permit applications; requires developing screening tool.

Environmental Justice Policy in Maryland



Climate Solutions Now

Environmental Justice Screening

Sets definition:
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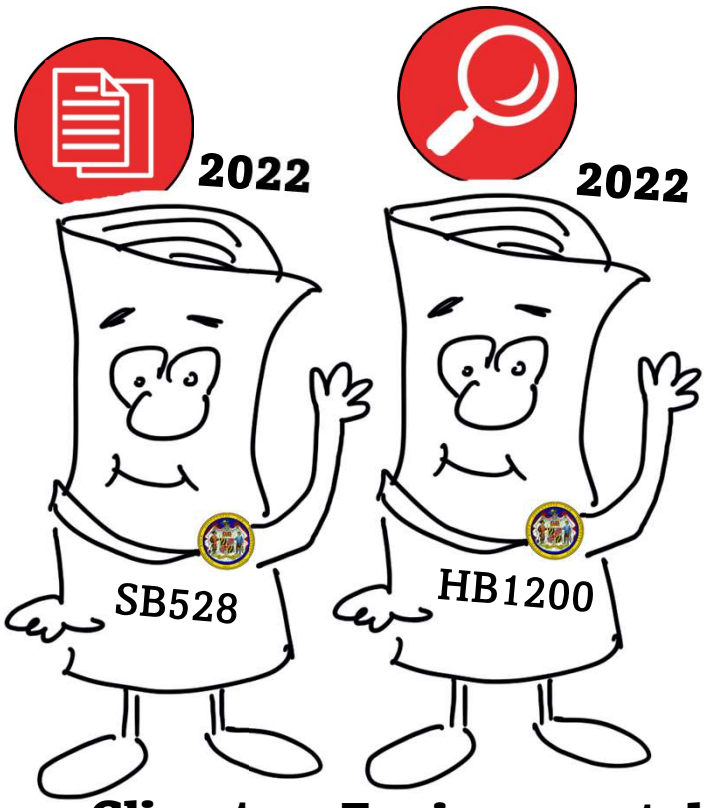
Greenspace Equity Program

Environmental Justice Policy in Maryland



Climate Solutions Now

Environmental Justice Screening

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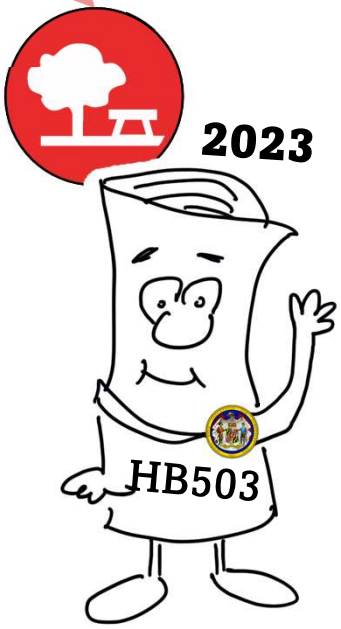
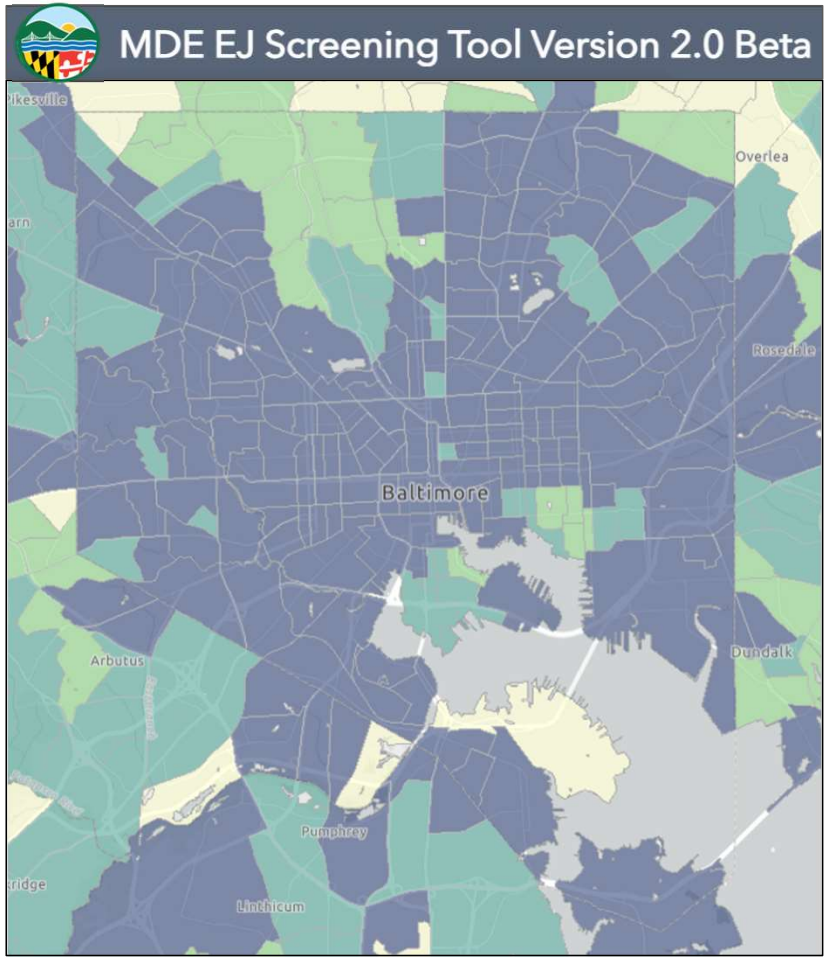


Greenspace Equity Program

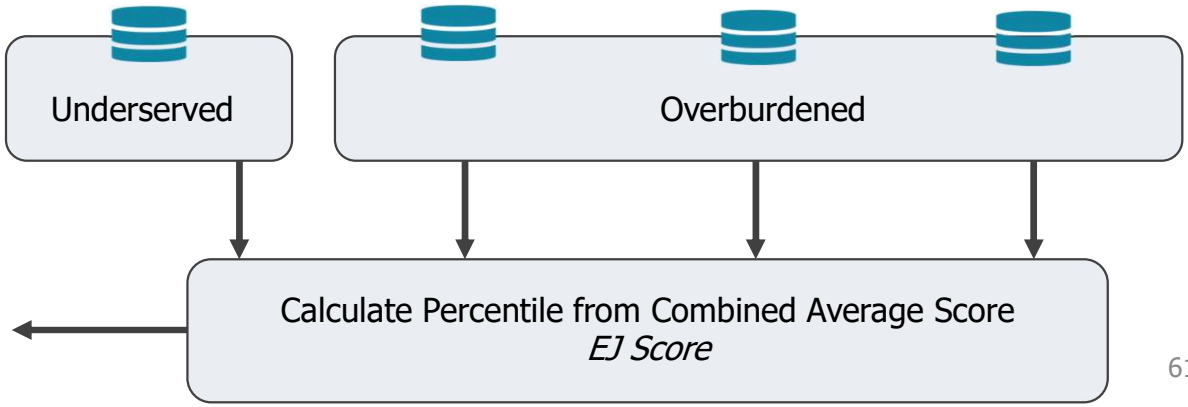


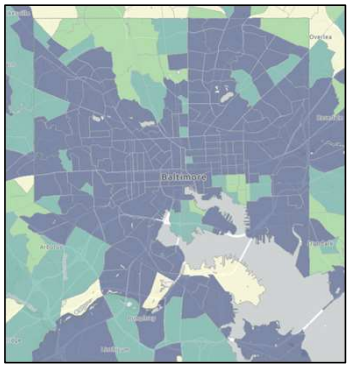
"EJ Score"
Census tracts (2020)

0% - 24.9th %ile
25% - 49.9th %ile
50% - 74.9th %ile
75% - 100th %ile

Scale / Unit of Analysis	State of Maryland
Environmental Justice Definition	***"Underserved"*** *communities – meaning they exceed a socioeconomic threshold;* ***"Overburdened"*** *communities – exceed environmental health indicator threshold.*
Concern for Environmental Justice	EJ Score value not required to incorporate indicator threshold being met.

Method for Calculating EJ Score



Comparing Indicators of Interest for Environmental Justice & Green Space	CEJST	 MDE
Historic disinvestment (Redlining scores)	**YES** *High risk areas used as indicator.*	NO
Race (% People of Color)	NO *Included as context information.*	**YES** *Race included in definition.*
Lack of green space	**YES** *Impervious surface used as indicator.*	NO
Cumulative impact	NO *Includes as context information.*	**YES** *Includes, but does not set threshold.*

Comparing Indicators of Interest for Environmental Justice & Green Space	CEJST	
Historic disinvestment (Redlining scores)	**YES** *High risk areas used as indicator.*	
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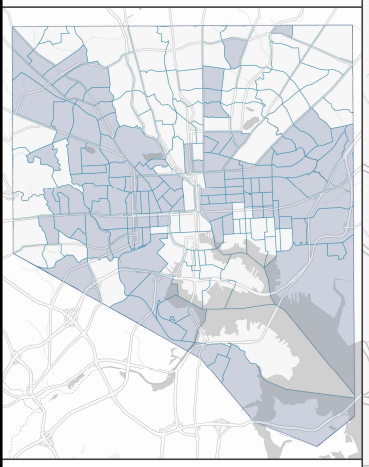
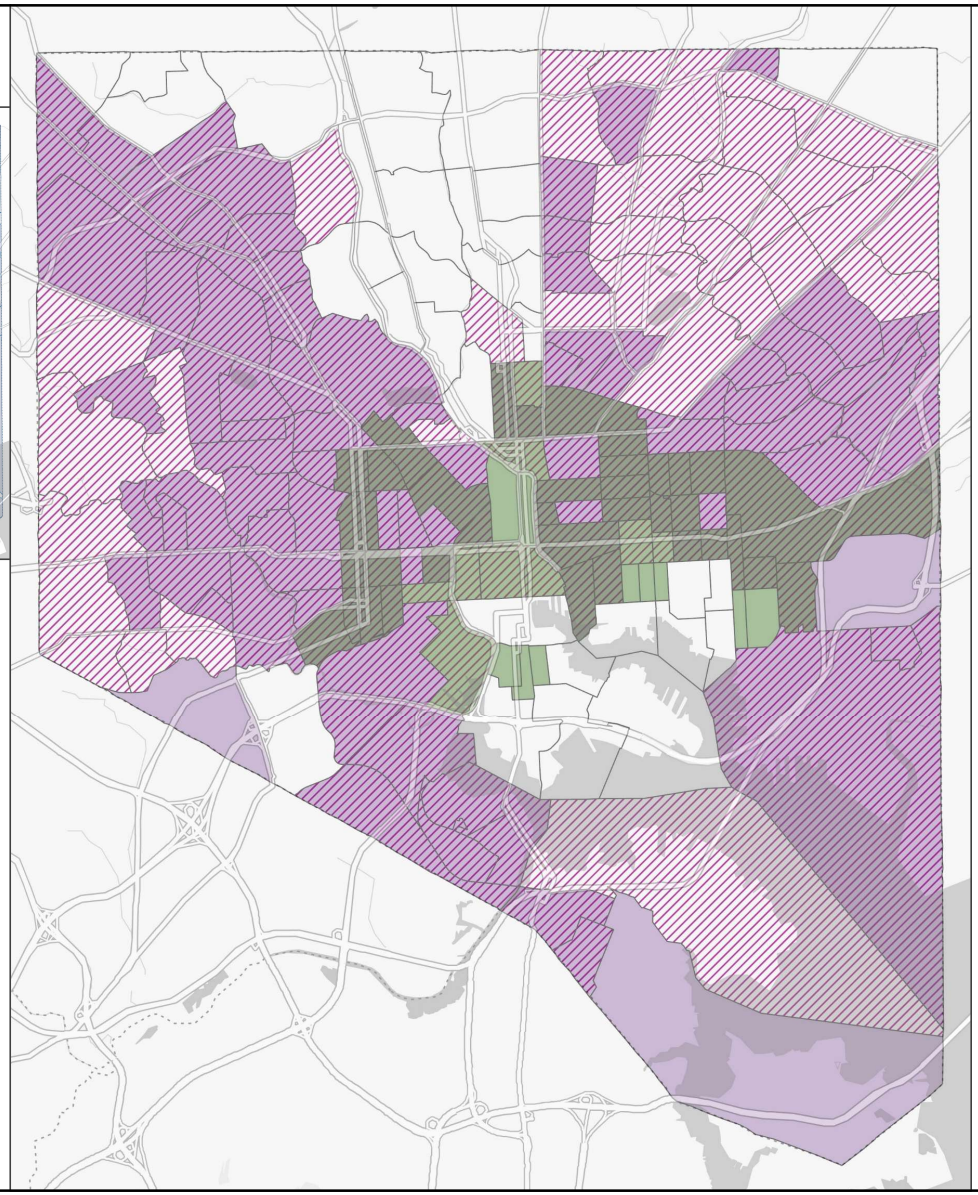


"Disadvantaged community"



Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) Datasets

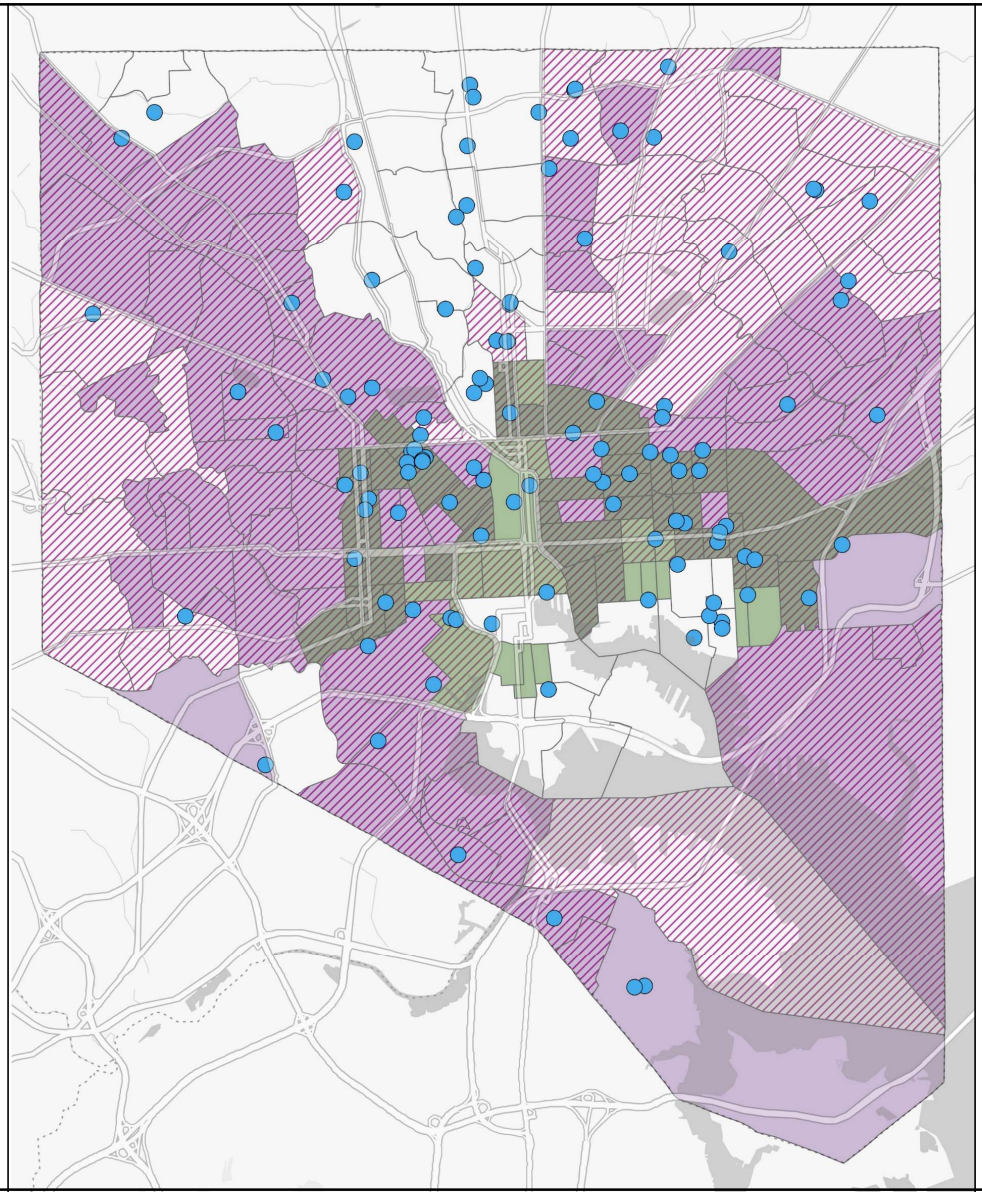
Including multiple indicators of interest:

"Disadvantaged community"

Lacking green space

Majority People of Color & historic disinvestment
>50% people of color (POC);
>50% POC & HOLC grade D (red)

Created by: M. Finch, 2024 / Data sources: CEJST



Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) Datasets

Including multiple indicators of interest:

- "Disadvantaged community"
- Lacking green space
- Majority People of Color & historic disinvestment
  >50% people of color (POC);
  >50% POC & HOLC grade D (red)
- Project location

Created by: M. Finch, 2024 / Data sources: CEJST; CBT

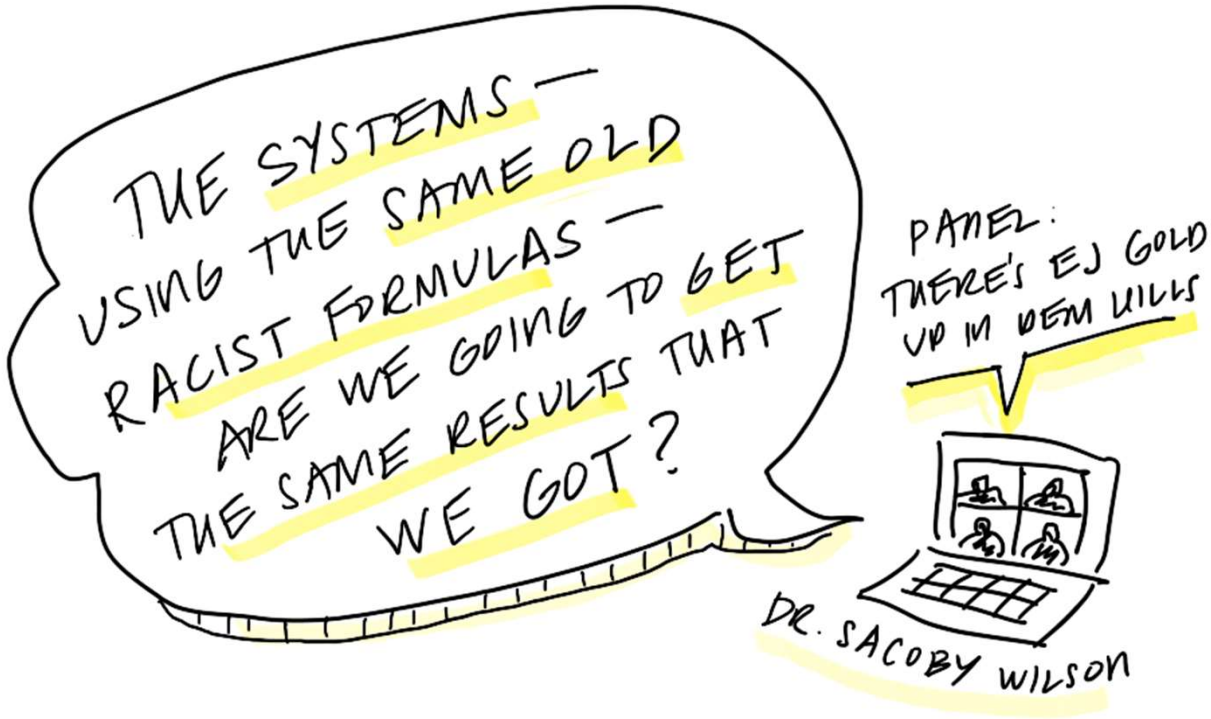
End of Part 3

Environmental Justice Policy

Screening tools

Green space

Conclusion:
Coming full circle



HOT OFF THE PRESSES – MORE MONEY FOR GREENING PROJECTS!

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

Biden-Harris Administration announces $206 million to selectees to protect and restore Chesapeake Bay through community partnerships

March 27, 2024

Contact Information
R3 Press (R3Press@epa.gov)

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has been selected to receive $193 million to administer the Small Watershed Grant and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction programs [over the next four years].

[…] The funding for these grants is provided by a **$83 million** investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law […] Funding for these programs will empower communities to implement local programs to restore the Chesapeake Bay's water quality while advancing President Biden's Justice40 Initiative which set the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

Source: EPA, 2024

Next Steps

Connecting with housing to build a full neighborhood environment.

Image: SBCLT.org

Appreciation

Research team

Margaret Buck Holland, PhD – *Faculty Advisor*
Cheryl Knott – *Partner Mentor*

ICARE program

Tamra Mendelson
Alek Fredriksson
Kristen Markus
ICARE faculty & advisory board members
Cohort 1, 2, and 3
National Science Foundation

Geography & Environmental Systems Department

Dawn Biehler – *Defense Committee Member*
David Lansing – *Graduate Program Director*
Donna Dwayer & Robin Schmidbauer Heckathorn
Officemates in 002, Collab group, & GES GSO

Special thanks to all the individuals who remain anonymous in my research and represent a variety of knowledge and expertise; the information I learned from them expanded my understanding around environmental justice, policy, and green space and informs my advocacy efforts in Baltimore.

NFS DGE: 1922579

UMBC