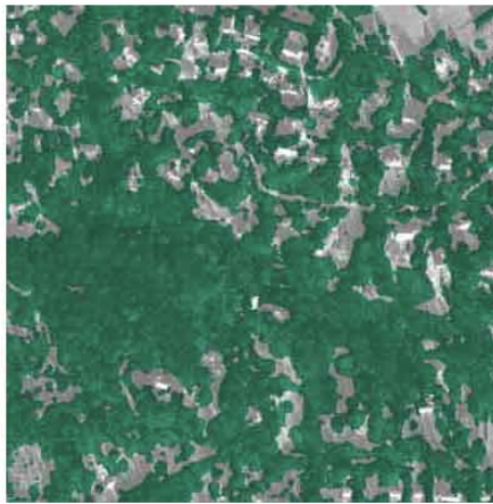# TREES AND EQUITY

Why do low-income blocks have fewer trees
and hotter average temperatures?

Baltimore

Median income: $31K   Median income: $154K

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF TREES

- Boost our immune systems
- Reduce heart rate and blood pressure
- Improve mood
- Provide shade from UV rays
- Clean pollutants out of the air
- Patients recover from surgery faster and better when they have a "green" view.

D.C. heat map | the D.C. Policy Center
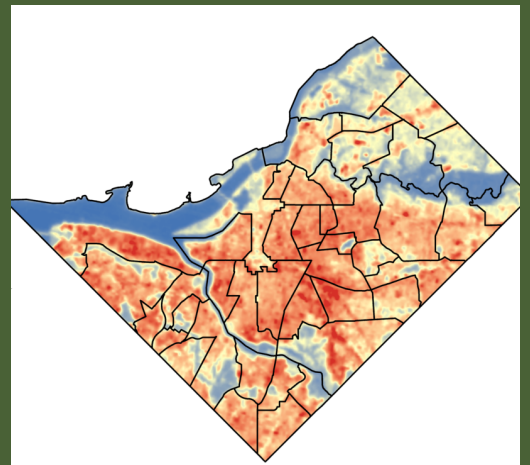*Can you see the income inequality?*

TREE COVER INEQUALITY

Last month, we put out a newsletter on the many essential benefits of trees in urban spaces. Unfortunately, it will come as no surprise that like most things, trees are not distributed equitably. Recently, American Forest published findings that "confirm a disturbing pattern of inequitable distribution of trees that has deprived many communities of color of the health and other benefits that sufficient tree cover can deliver." The study found that "communities of color have 33% less tree canopy on average than majority white communities," and that "neighborhoods with 90% or more of their residents living in poverty have 41% less tree canopy than communities with only 10% or less of the population in poverty. In other words: environmental racism and classism permeates even *tree distribution*.

Racist policies have made homeownership less attainable for people of color, displacing them into more polluted and densely populated neighborhoods where trees have more trouble growing and don't receive public investment. It's time to start viewing trees as *critical infrastructure*—as essential as running water. No tree planting program is worthwhile unless it works against the centuries of racist urban planning that has left people of color without shade.

CAMPAIGNS TO SUPPORT

- treesny.org
- onetreeplanted.org
- urbantree.org
- weforest.org
- nationalforests.org
- reforestationworld.org

SUPPORT OUR MISSION:
keepersofthewaters.org/donate