



# Philly Tree Plan

Growing Our Urban Forest



# Philly Tree Plan

## Seattle Urban Forestry Commission

### September 2023



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Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

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# 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...

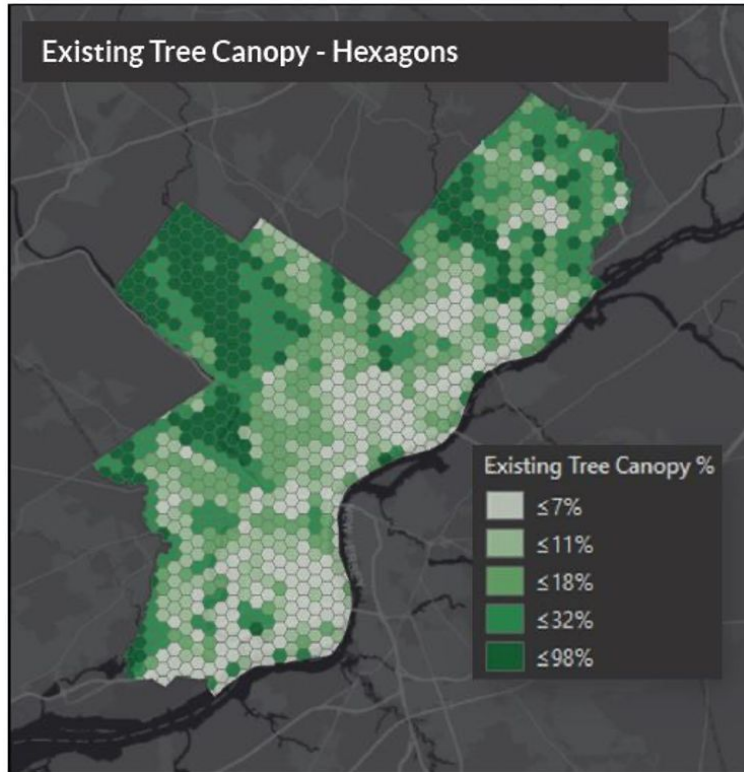


# Unfair urban forest



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

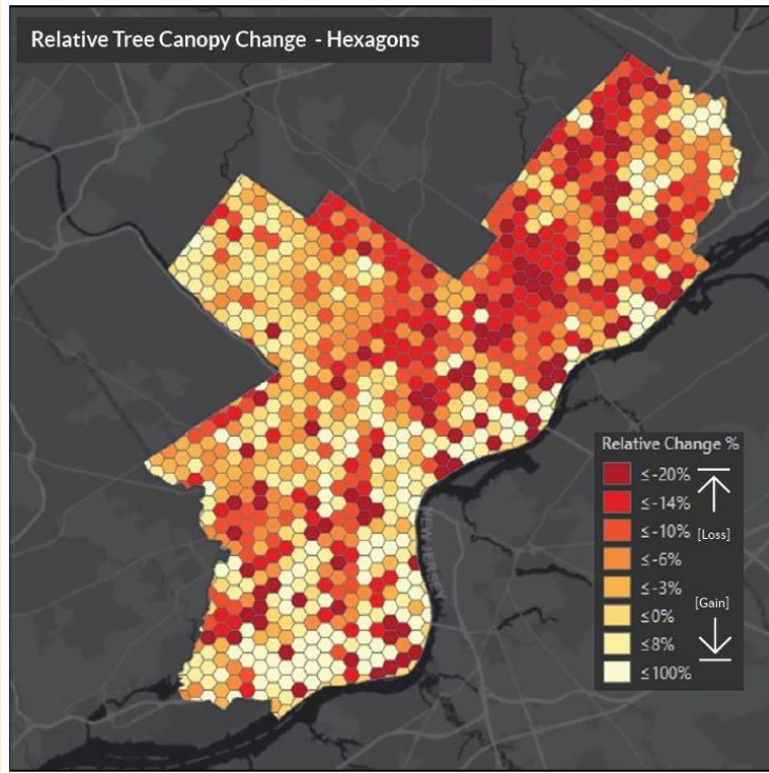
# Tree Canopy Assessment



20%

of Philadelphia is covered by tree canopy

# Tree Canopy Assessment



↓ 6%

Loss of existing canopy since  
2008

# Tree Canopy Assessment

- “[Preserve] existing tree canopy . . . as loss in an event but gain is a process.”
- “The City’s residents are crucial if tree canopy is to be maintained over time.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS



Preserving existing tree canopy is the most effective means for securing future tree canopy, as loss is an event but gain is a process.



Planting new trees in areas where tree canopy is low or in locations where there has been tree canopy removed will help the City to recover its recent losses.



Having trees with a broad age distribution and a variety of species will ensure that a robust and healthy tree canopy is maintained over time.



The City’s residents are crucial if tree canopy is to be maintained over time. Having a populace that is knowledgeable about the value and services trees provide will help the City stay green for years to come.



Integrate the tree canopy change assessment data into planning decisions at all levels of government.



Reassess the tree canopy at 5-10 year intervals to monitor change.



# Stakeholder Engagement

PHILADELPHIA



TREE SUMMIT



# 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

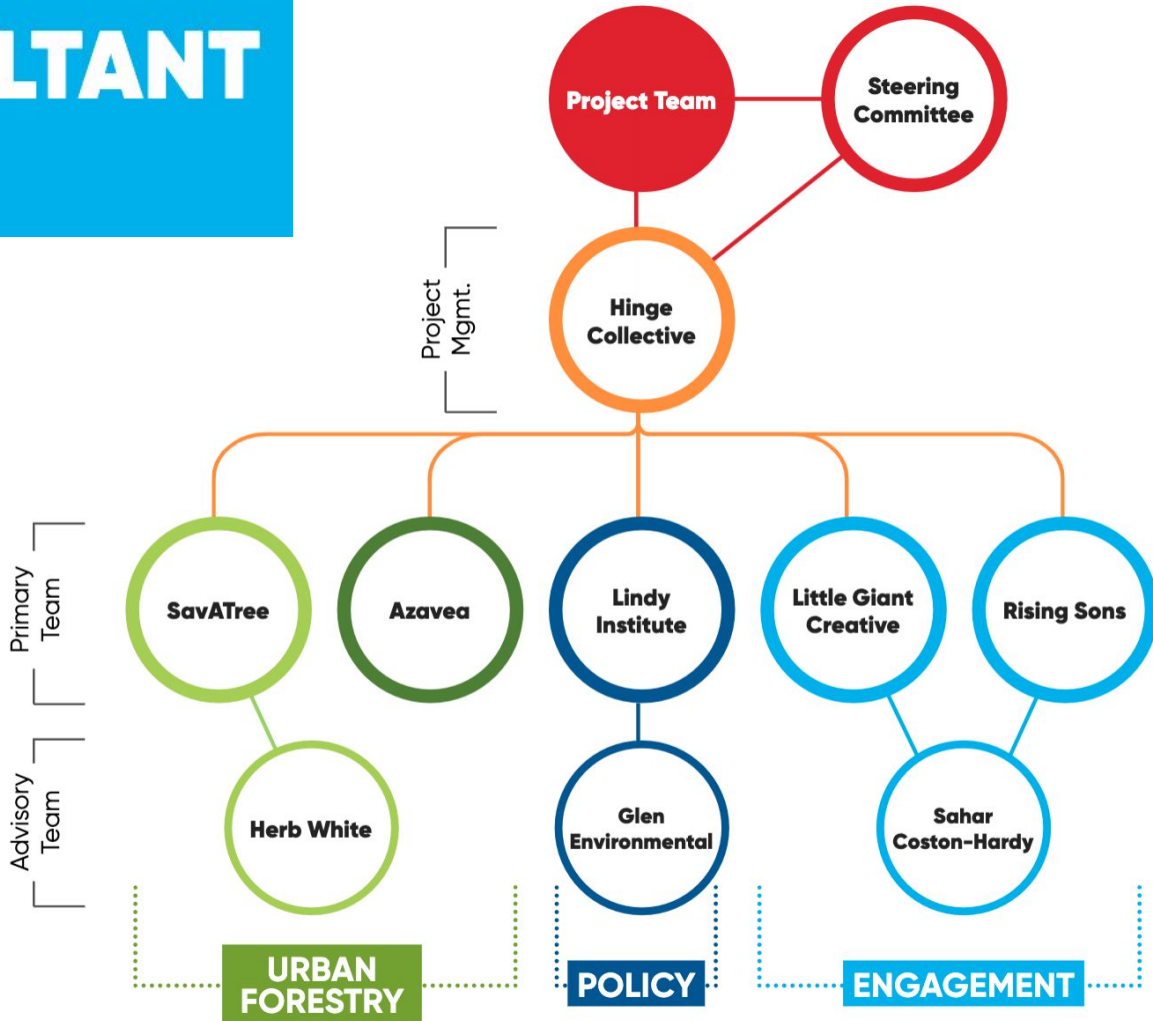
## **Community Voices Steering Committee (31)**

- 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

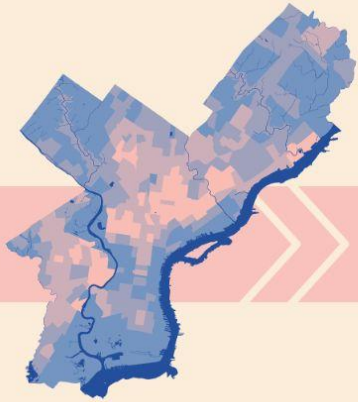
# CONSULTANT TEAM



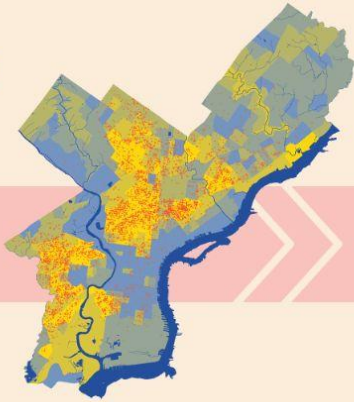
# The Community Voices Steering Committee



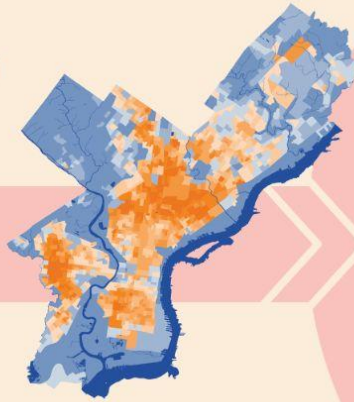
# Mapping priority areas



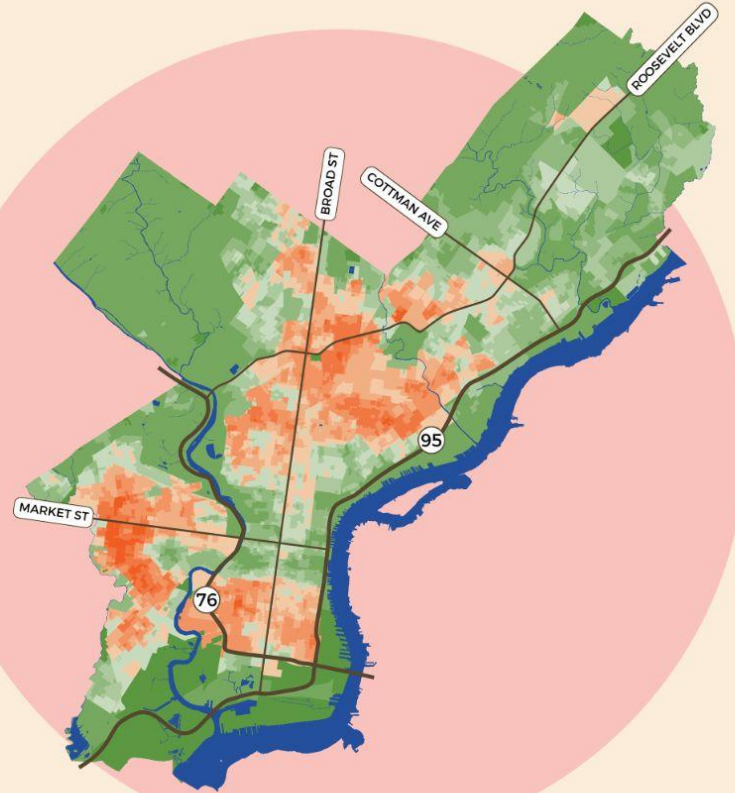
Poverty



Health



Heat



# Getting Input and Earning Trust

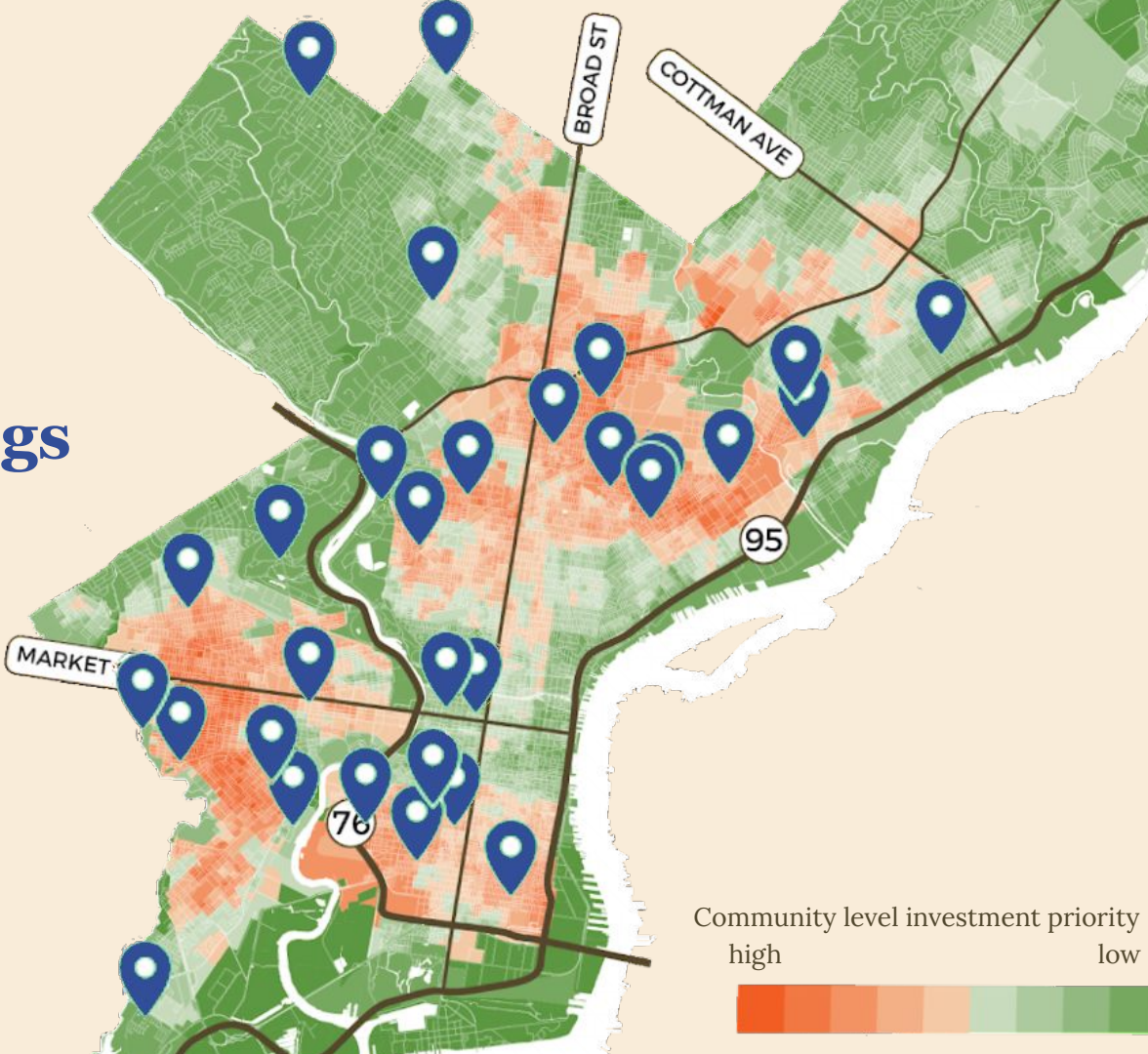
- Truth telling
- Plain language
- Honor expertise
- Listen without ego

# Engagement Tools

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



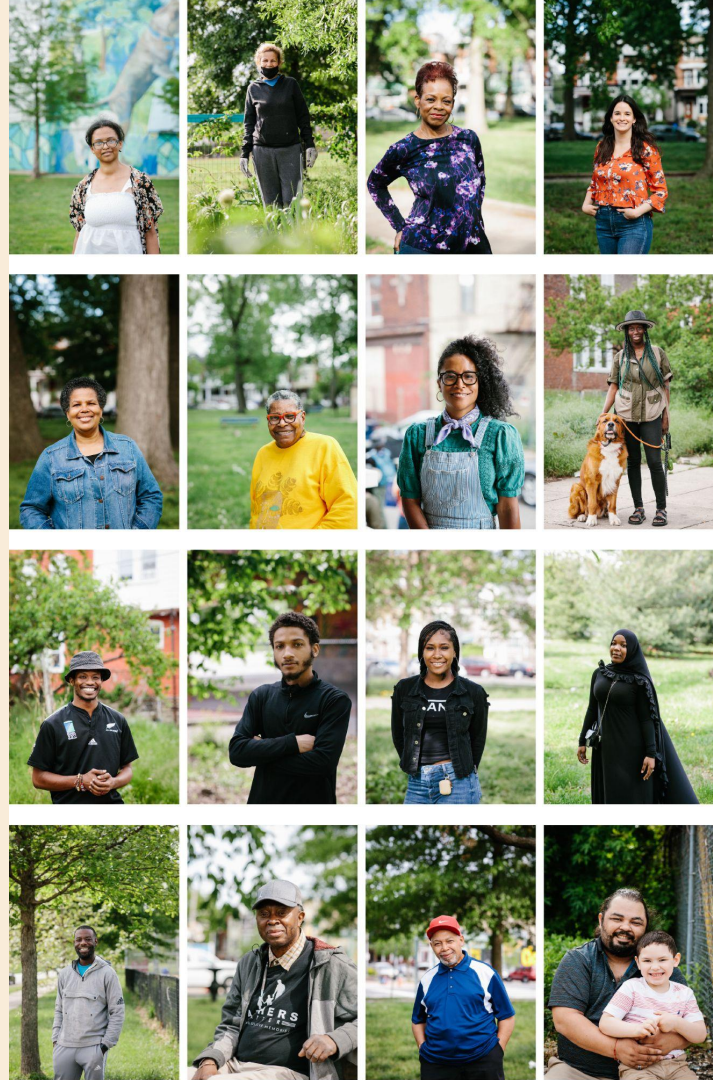
# Community Meetings



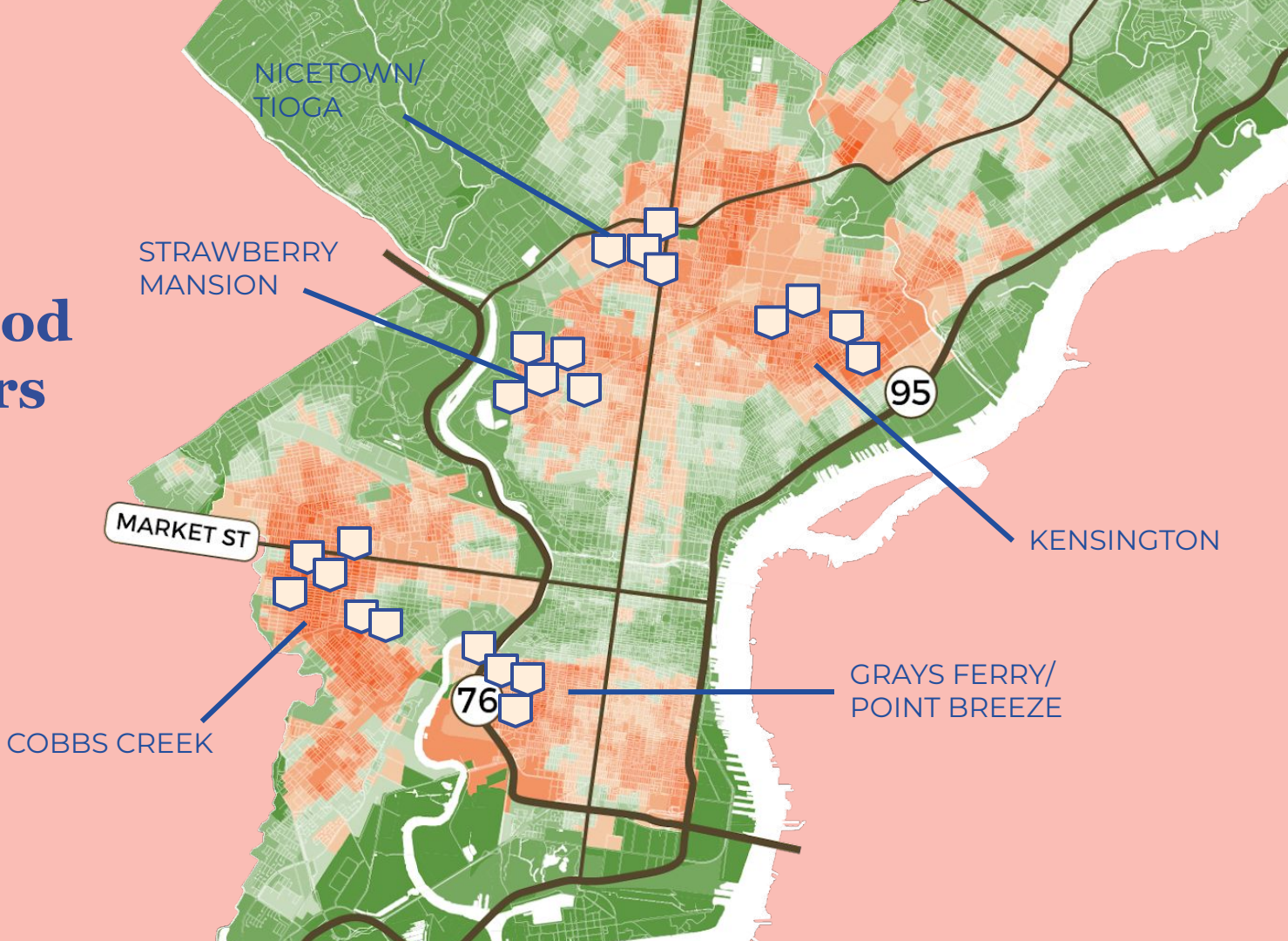


# Neighborhood Ambassadors

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



# Neighborhood Ambassadors





# 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



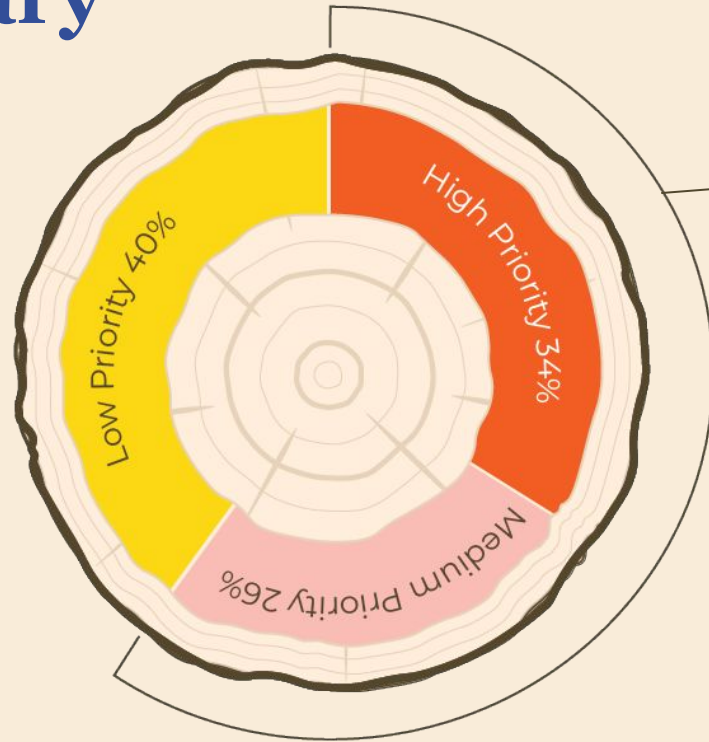
**7,046** survey responses  
**8** different languages



**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

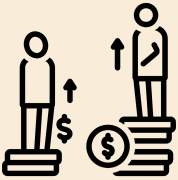
# Key Takeaways:



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



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



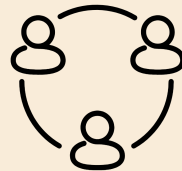
There is a **disparity in tree canopy** by neighborhood (and it feels personal)



**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**

# Goals

## 1 | Coordinate

support for trees

## 2 | Protect

the existing and  
future urban forest

## 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

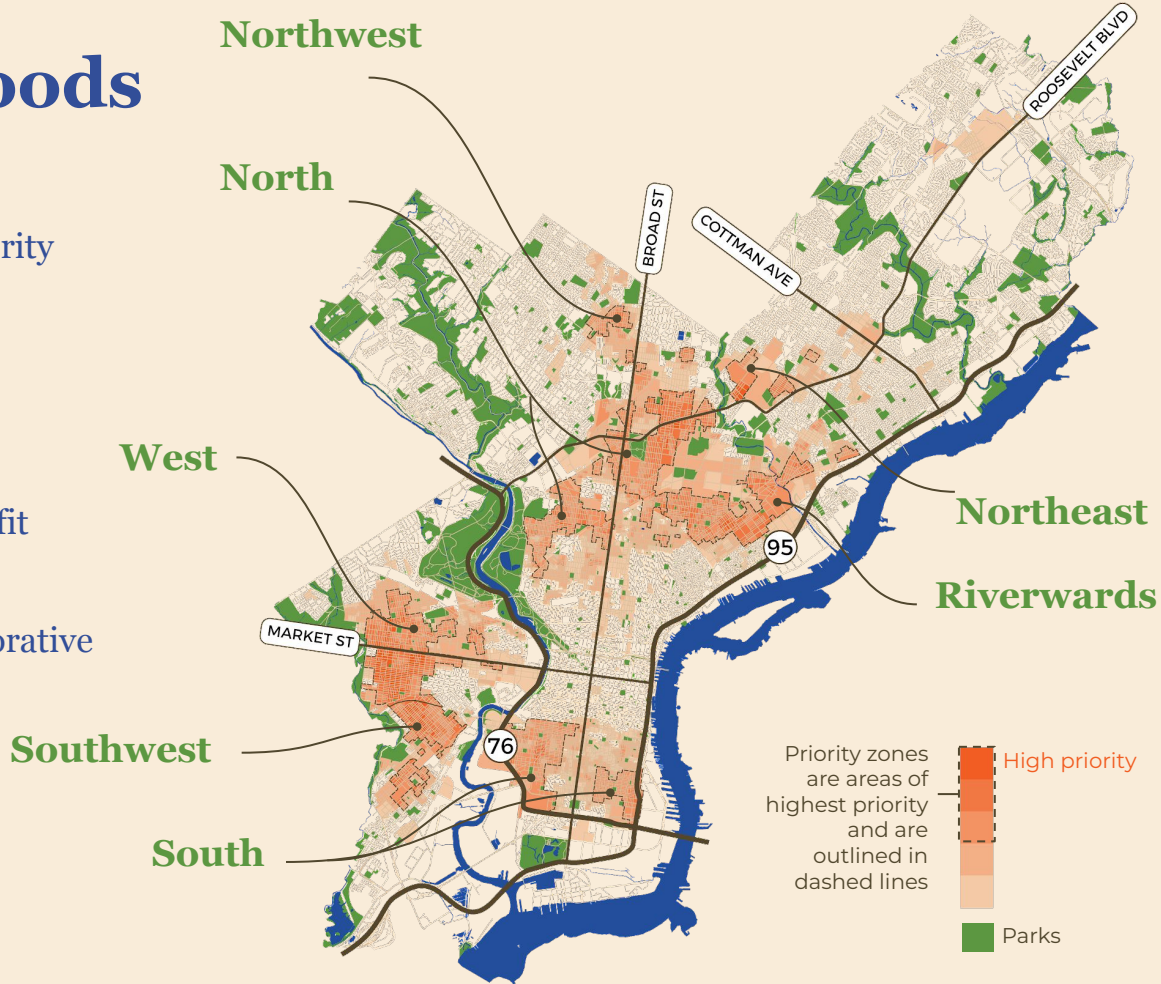
## 8 | Celebrate

and 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

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, progress as of  
September 2023

# Policy

## Update to Philadelphia Zoning Code, section 14-705: Landscape and Trees

- Increased requirements for planting in buffers, parking lots
- New yard tree requirement
- New fee-in-lieu charged for removed trees that are not replaced
- Removed exceptions for open space, single and two-family developments

Sponsored by CM Gilmore Richardson

Signed by Mayor Kenney in Fall 2022

# Staffing

## Added in 2023

- **3 new full time community organizers - Community Forestry Team (TreePhilly)**
- **2 new full time customer service representatives - Street Tree Management Office**
- **1 new office clerk - Urban Forestry Unit operations**

## Coming soon

- **City Forester position**
- **New Development review, inspection, and enforcement team - 4**
- **Natural Lands team - 4 new positions**
- **Communications team - 2 new positions**
- **Grants Manager**

# Fundraising

## Received

- **\$1.8M - FY23 City Operations budget**
- **\$1M - FY23 mid-year transfer of Capital funds for street trees**
- **\$900K - William Penn Foundation**

## Pending

- **\$12M - USDA Forest Service IRA grant**

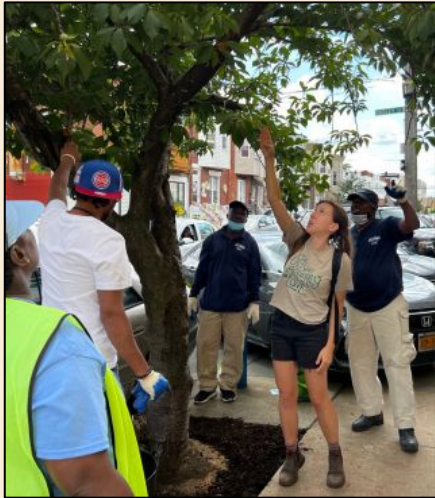
# New Initiatives

- **Comprehensive assessment of the City's natural lands**



# New Initiatives

- **Commercial corridor tree planting and care program**
  - Partnership with Department of Commerce, Taking Care of Business
  - 117 new street trees planted on 8 blocks in Fall 2022
  - 150 new street trees planned for this fall
  - Training and compensation for ambassadors to care for trees for 2 years



# New Initiatives

- **Tree planting and education at PHA sites**
  - Partnership with Philadelphia Housing Authority, Wilson Park Resident Advisory Council





# Thank you!

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