TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN REGION, MINNESOTA, USA

DECEMBER 2021

Growing Shade - Tree Planting & Maintenance Tool

BACKGROUND

The project provides data and resources to inform tree planting and canopy maintenance for the Twin Cities region. The project is a collaboration between the Metropolitan Council, The Nature Conservancy, and Tree Trust. Through working with our advisory team, we heard a desire for a resource that helps city planners, non-profits, and other groups understand the intersection between trees, climate change, environmental justice, public health, and natural resource conservation.

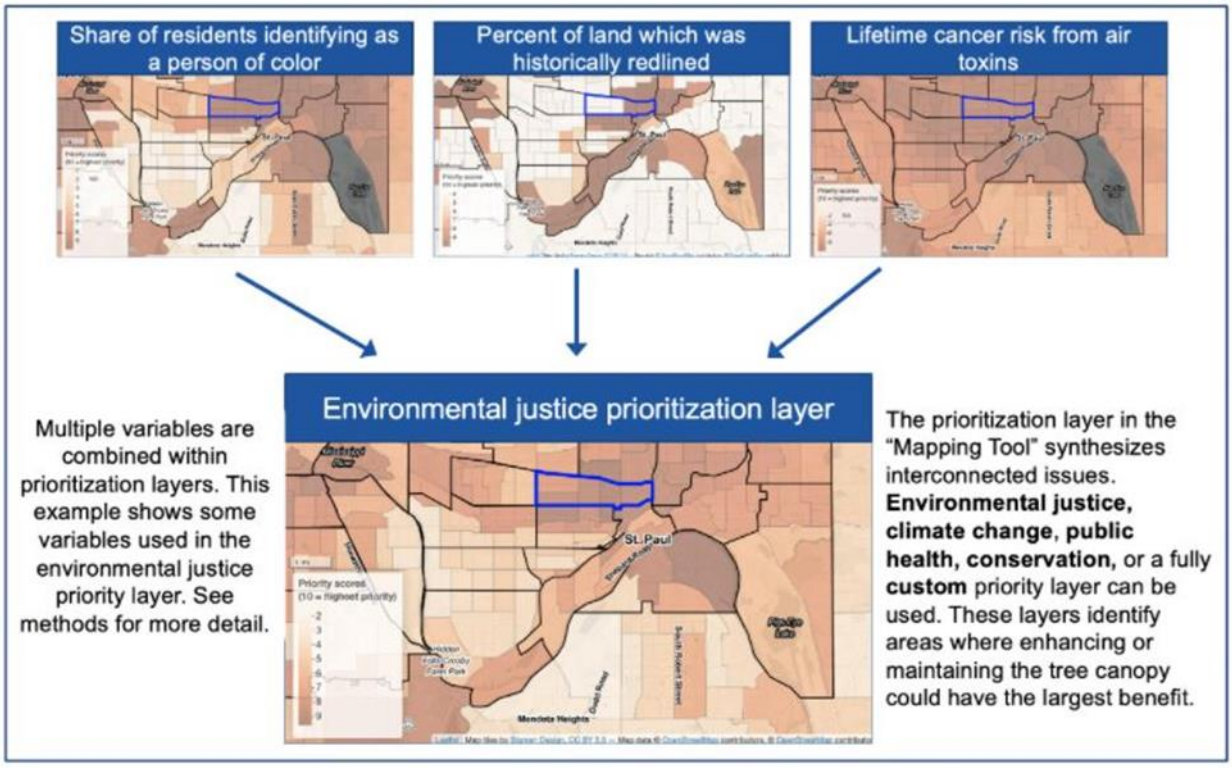
Project description

The Growing Shade project takes data from multiple sources and combines it in an online application. Non-profits, cities, and communities can then take that data to target the best places to plant. The tool combines demographic information about neighborhoods, locations of businesses, schools, bus stops, parks and other data that will create a complete picture of a city down to the neighborhood level.

The online tool is available here: Growing Shade Tool (shinyapps.io).

Fast Facts

- **Chair:** Charles A. Zelle
- **Population:** 3,280,000
- **GCoM member since:** 2020
- **Project name:** Growing Shade - Tree Planting & Maintenance Tool
- **Year implemented:** 2022
- **Cost:** Labor Costs
- **Finance/funding:** Staff Time



An overview of how the Growing Shade project synthesizes interconnected issues to create a prioritization layer.

Implementation and finance

The Growing Shade project was directed through regional policy to address invasive species and the multijurisdictional issue of climate change. Trees offer multiple benefits and often cities are ill-equipped to deal with tree planting and maintenance. We have heard from partners that a tool that considers the intersection of climate, environmental justice, public health, and conservation is needed for our region. We responded to that need.

The project did not generate any direct costs, but staff time was used in research and development.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Key lessons

We learned that it was vital to engage with stakeholders from the public, non-profit, private, and advocacy sectors to ensure that we addressed their needs in terms of what the tool can and should achieve/address.

The advisory group really directed the tool creation and need for both data and stories of tree planting efforts in our region.

"A city could look at tree canopy through a public health lens, identifying areas where asthma rates are higher and plant trees to filter particulates out of the air," said, Planning Analyst Eric Wojchik. "They could benefit young people, targeting areas where families with younger children are living and planting trees in that area. You can look at almost any socio-economic criteria and use it to determine the best place to plant a tree."

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Twin Cities Metropolitan Region for sharing this case study.

At GCoM we like to encourage our signatories to share their climate action. If you have any case studies or interesting project, get in contact through email or other channels.

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