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Tree Canopy Coverage & Environmental Health
CCE-Monroe Receives Funding to Plant Trees

CCE-Monroe has received funding through the University of Rochester Environmental Health Sciences Center to address environmental health disparities in greater Rochester. CCE-Monroe's proposal focuses on the relation between Urban Tree Canopy Coverage and environmental health effects.

Tree Canopy Coverage is the layer of leaves, branches and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above. Studies have found that when tree canopy coverage is increased, environmental health risk factors are decreased. This includes reduced urban heat island effect, improved air quality, and less energy usage to regulate building temperatures. As climates continue to trend towards warming, we can expect an increase in heat related deaths in U.S. cities. The average temperature can vary up to 10 degrees between places with trees and those without. Urban trees also offer aesthetic benefits, provide wildlife habitat, and may enhance property values.

On average, low and moderate income (LMI) dominated neighborhoods have 25% less tree canopy than non-LMI dominated neighborhoods. This is according to an analysis of income, employment, age, ethnicity, health and surface temperature with tree canopy data in 486 metro areas. Typically, redlined communities have less access to resources, less investment, and minimal green infrastructure. This holds true for Rochester's MarketView Heights neighborhood, a redlined community that displays less tree canopy coverage. This initiative will help address this disparity.

To implement this, CCE-Monroe will create educational materials to share information related to Environmental Health with residents of the MarketView Heights Neighborhood of Rochester. We will then conduct a canvass in a section of MarketView Heights Neighborhood reaching about 600 households. The canvass allows CCE-Monroe to connect with residents, discuss Environmental Health topics, and receive community input about the trees to be planted (species, location, etc.). During the summer of 2022, we will host a series of meetings in partnership with MarketView Heights community groups that will go more in-depth on the topics listed for the canvass. In fall, we will plant about 30 trees across 600 households with guidance from the City of Rochester Forestry Department.

For more information on this initiative, please contact Christina Das, 585-753-2564 or cmd325@cornell.edu

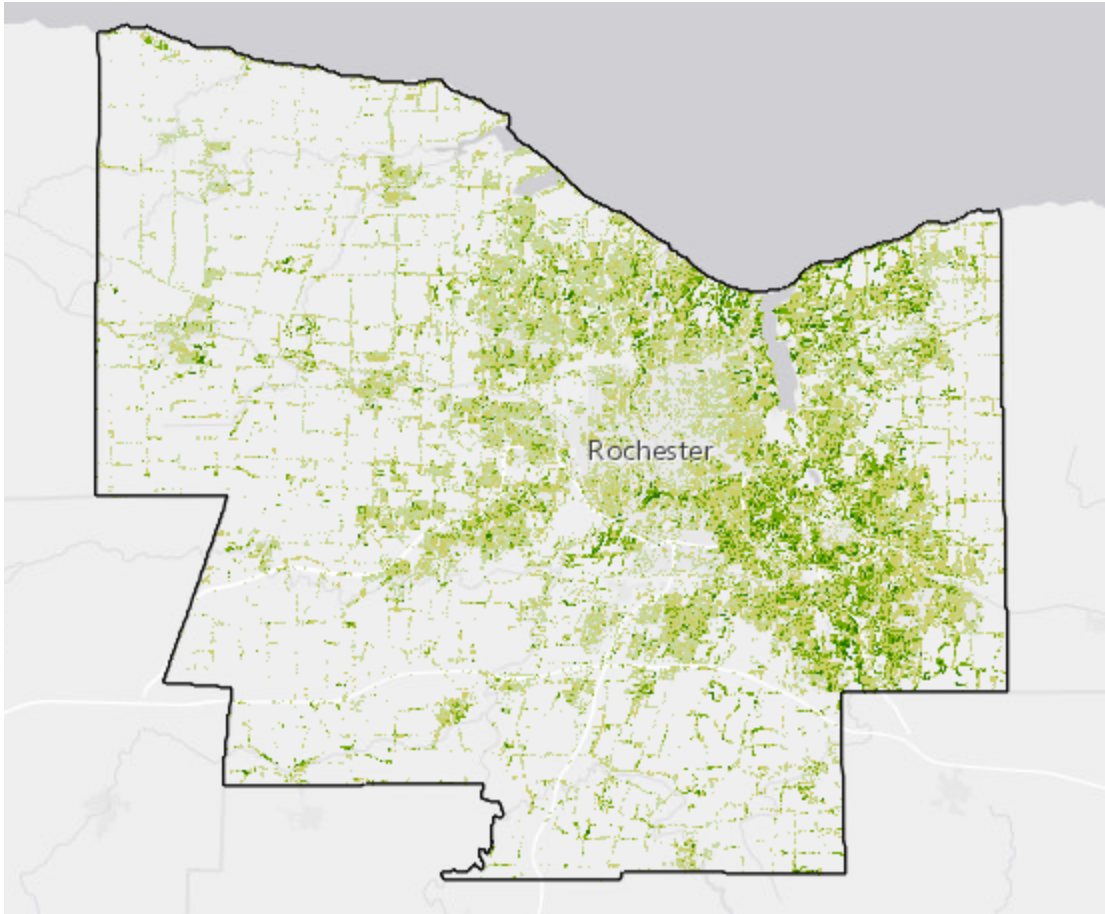Image Source: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/35cb51e361d5432bb9e85219fd134187

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