

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE February 5, 2024

TO Honorable Chair Stewart and Members of the Parks, Trails, and the Environment Committee

SUBJECT **2023 Equity Indicators Report: Environmental Justice Measures Update**

On June 14, 2023, the Environmental Commission (EVC) received a memo SUBJECT: 2023 Equity Indicators Report Update and Environmental Justice Indicators. The Office of Environmental Quality and Sustainability (OEQS) engaged the EVC Environmental Justice Subcommittee to solicit recommendations for new environmental equity indicators. The Offices of Environmental Quality and Sustainability, Equity and Inclusion, and EveryTexan have been working on finalizing the 2023 Equity Indicators Report. Consistent with feedback from the mentioned recommendations, residents, community partners and the Environmental Commission feedback, the updated report now includes a sixth theme - Environmental Justice.

As the City of Dallas continues to center equity, it is critical to note the ways that Historically Disadvantaged Communities (HDCs) and Equity Priority Areas have been disproportionately impacted by environmental injustices. Through collaborative efforts, the 2023 Equity Indicators Report has leveraged both formal and informal feedback to support in identifying the Environmental Justice Indicators- Screening Tool, Canopy Coverage, Energy Efficiency, and Healthy Food.

To underscore the importance of monitoring and addressing environmental issues, each of the indicators, in the 2023 report also aligns with Comprehensive Environmental Climate Action Plan (CECAP) Action Items. This alignment demonstrates a cohesive and effective framework for tackling environmental concerns as well as increasing consistency and promoting internal collaboration.

Equity Indicators Methodology and Analysis

The selected vendor, EveryTexan, uses the City University of New York Institute for State and Local Governance (CUNY ISGL) Methodology to analyze and generate the Equity Indicators report. CUNY ISGL Methodology is an adaptable approach to creating Equity Indicator tools for cities that want to measure and improve equity in local communities. Equity Indicators are a set of metrics that capture the extent of disparities faced by different groups across various domains, such as economic opportunity, education, neighborhood and infrastructure, public health, justice and government, and environmental justice.

Environmental Justice Equity Indicators

The Equity Indicators report includes four environmental justice equity indicators: Environmental Justice Screen; Tree Canopy; Solar Accessibility; and Food Access.

Environmental Justice Screen

This indicator tracks the ratio between the average EJ Screen score in majority-people of color (POC) and non-majority-people of color (POC) census block groups. Historically disadvantaged communities are often disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards. The Dallas EJ Mapping tool combines local, state, and national environmental and demographic data into EJ scores to better screen for community-level environmental justice concerns. The tool is used as a screening tool to identify areas with potential environmental justice concerns. The City is focused on identifying environmental and health disparities between communities and engaging with disproportionately impacted communities to implement policies that eliminate those disparities.

Tree Canopy Coverage

This indicator tracks the ratio between the average Tree Equity Score in non-majority-people of color and majority-people of color neighborhoods. An adequate tree canopy helps promote cleaner air and reduces the heat island effect produced by cities. Urban heat is especially harmful for historically disadvantaged communities, children and older adults.

Solar Accessibility

This indicator tracks the ratio between the average number of residential solar panel permits per 1,000 people in majority-Black* and majority-White census tracts. Energy insecurity can lead to negative physical and mental health outcomes, especially for older adults and children.¹⁴⁹ Increasing access to solar energy can help ease high energy burdens for some populations.

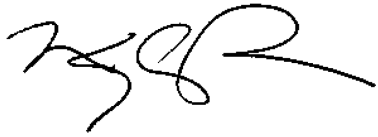
Food Access

This indicator tracks the ratio between the percentage of Black residents living in food deserts to the percentage of Asian residents living in food deserts. Food access measures how difficult it is for residents to access healthy, fresh food within their neighborhoods. In 2015, 36% of Dallas residents lived in areas defined as “food deserts” by the USDA — areas with lower incomes, low vehicle access, and no grocery stores located within one mile.¹⁵¹ Data from this indicator may help inform and enhance current strategies, including those outlined in the City of Dallas’ Comprehensive Urban Agriculture (CUAP) plan, to increase access to healthy foods.

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Conclusion

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or Dr. Lindsey Wilson, Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion, at lindsey.wilson@dallas.gov



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