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NAUGATUCK VALLEY
COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS



NVISION
2022

Justice Isn't Just Us

Pursuing an Equitable Environment

**Desira Blanchard, NVCOG
Community Engagement Manager**

Audience Trivia

Which of the following is the most potent predictor of an individual's health?

- A. Race
- B. Zip code
- C. Income
- D. Education level

Audience Trivia

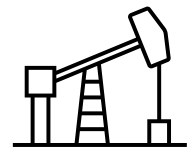
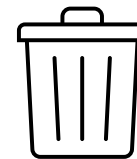
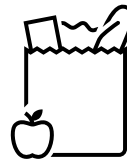
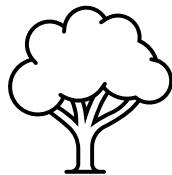
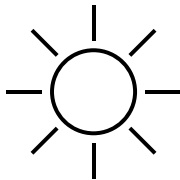
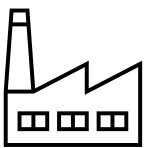
"Today, zip code is still the most potent predictor of an individual's health and well-being."

– Dr. Robert Bullard, Father of Environmental Justice

Let's Talk

"Environmental Justice."

- Environmental Justice: ensuring that no one faces disproportionate consequences of environmental pollution or is denied access to environmental benefits.
- The spaces we work, live, and play should be healthy for everyone.
- EJ issues may center around...



Brownfields – Climate Change – Access to Green Spaces – Food Deserts –
Water Quality/Access – Industrial Land Uses (Air Pollution) – Landfills & Trash

EJ is a Real Problem



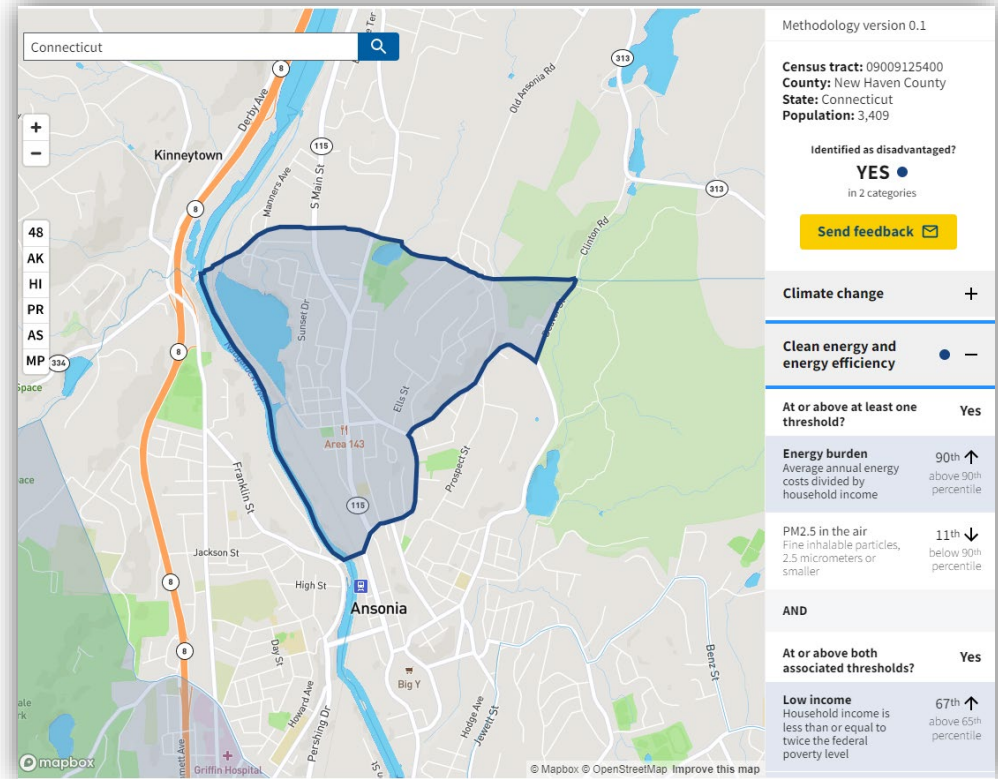
"Infinite Hope" Mural, Bristol
Artist: Micaela Levesque

Compared to their white peers, Black Connecticut children and teens are nearly 5½ times more likely to go to the ER because of asthma, while Hispanic children and teens are 4½ times as likely.



Justice 40 Initiative

- Executive Order (E.O.) 14008
- Directs 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments to flow to disadvantaged communities
- Emphasis area in federal grants
- Effective Stakeholder Consultation



The **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)** is a mapping tool that identifies disadvantaged communities based on multiple factors.

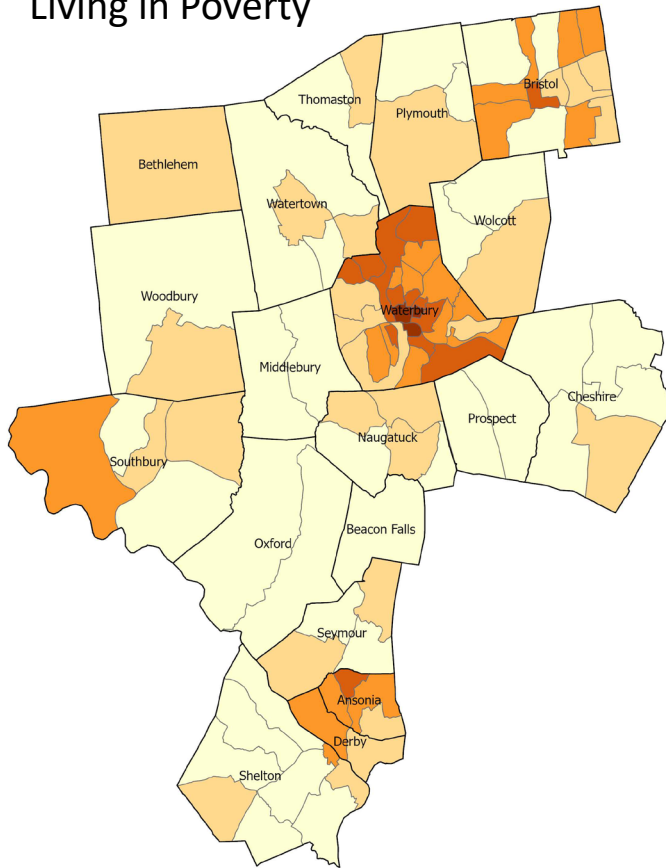
So how do we achieve justice?

- Historically disadvantaged populations must be central to decision-making
- EJ requires significant and meaningful **community-driven partnerships**.

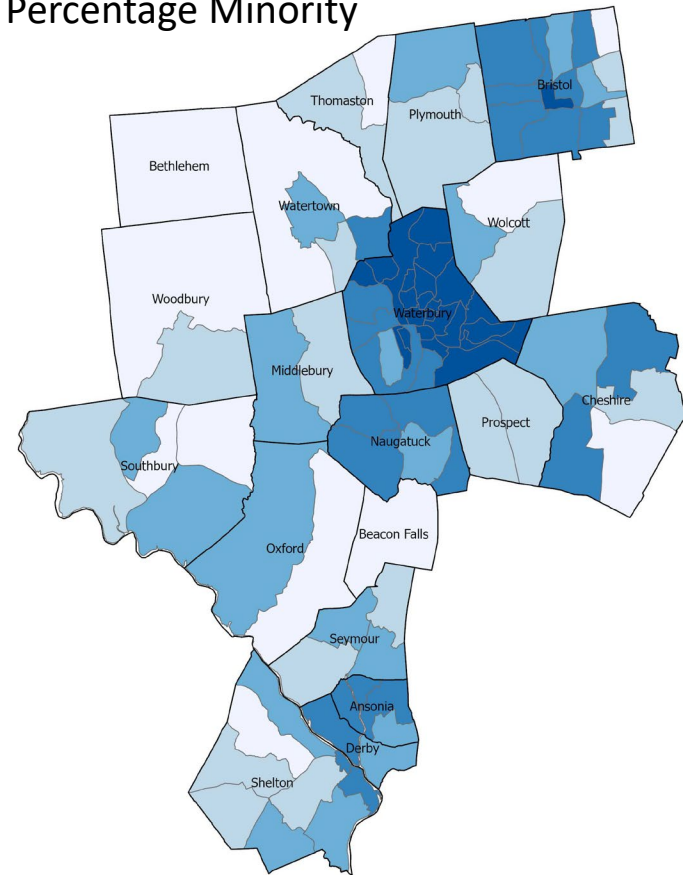


What do these maps say to you?

Population Percentage
Living in Poverty



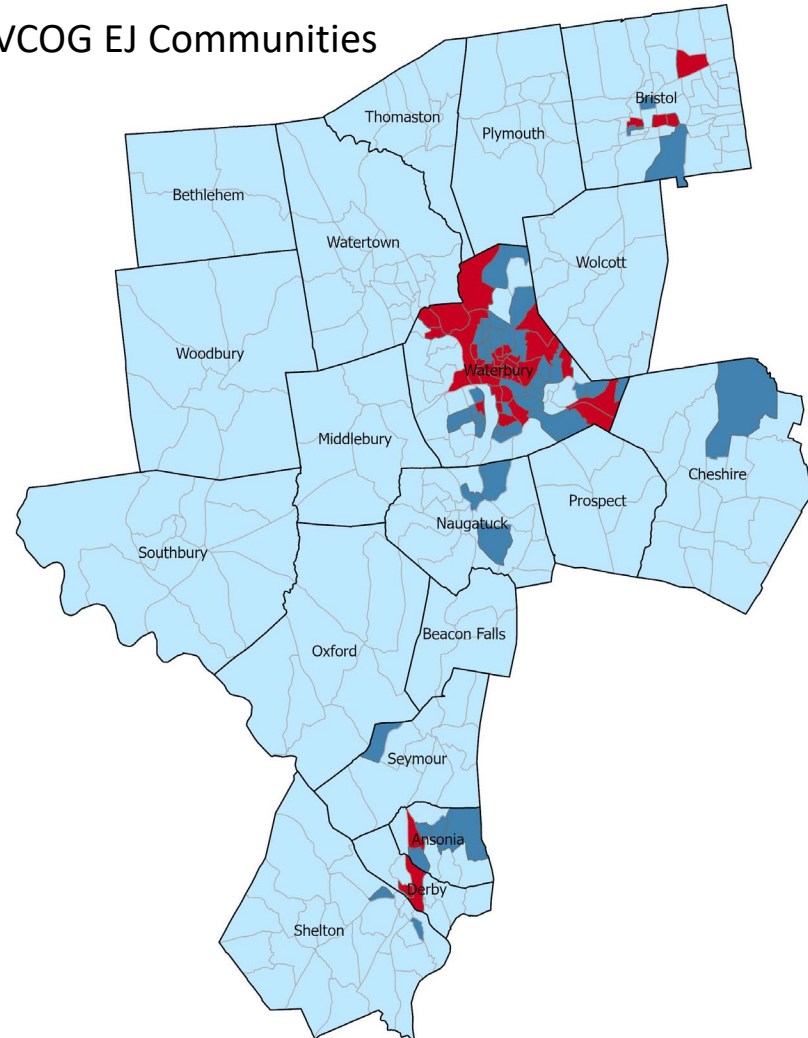
Population
Percentage Minority



EJ Analysis

- Review NVCOG programs and projects
- Identify disproportionate burdens or disparate Impacts
- Ensure equitable distribution of benefits of transportation investments
- Ensure greater public participation

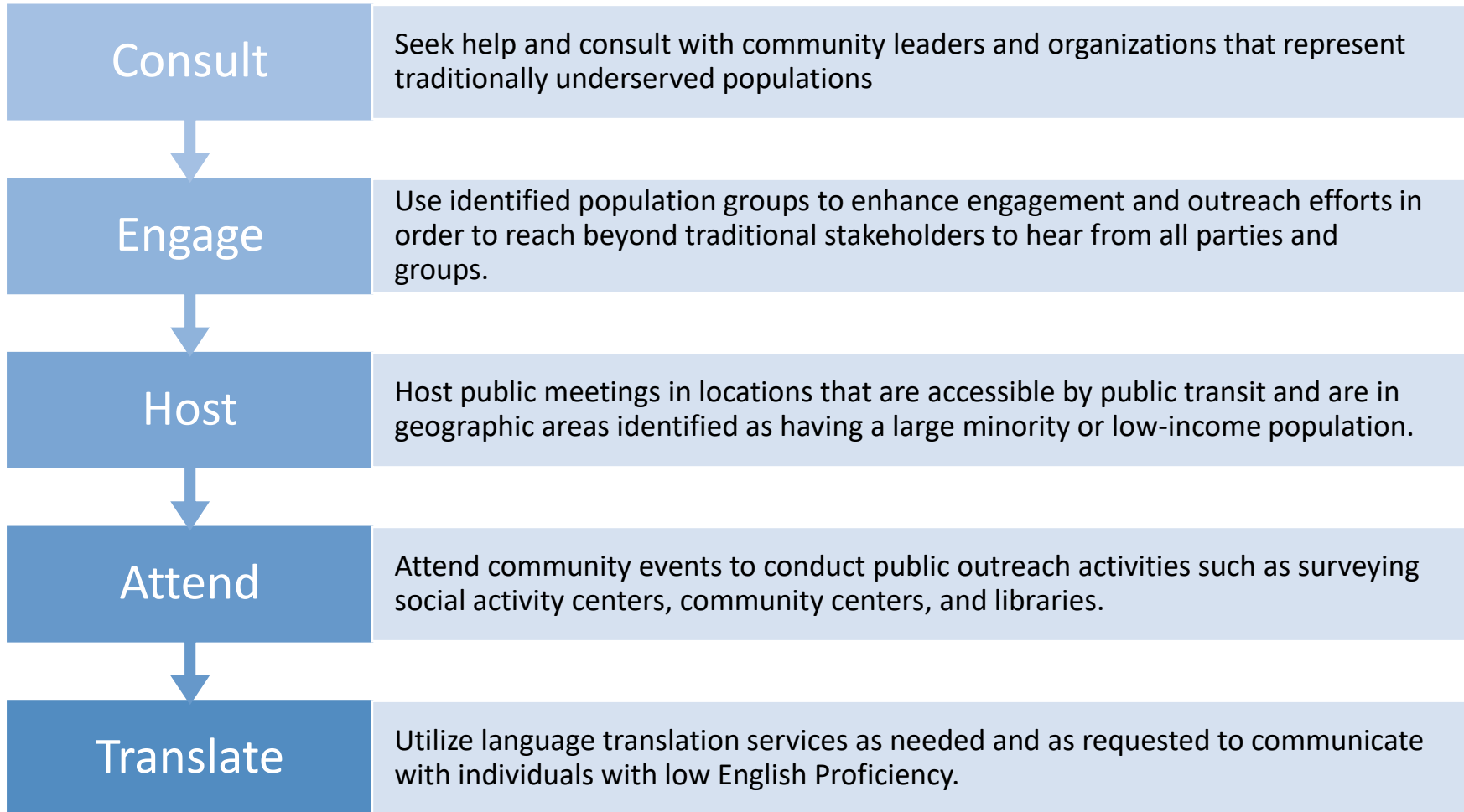
NVCOG EJ Communities





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Our Community Involvement Strategies





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909 Bank Street Park Waterbury

- .4-acre lot in the Brooklyn Neighborhood of Waterbury
- Onsite building burned (2012)
- Community leaders advocated for neighborhood park
- Public input meeting held
- Lot was transformed into neighborhood park with new amenities



Panel Discussion

Justice Isn't "Just Us": Pursuing an Equitable Environment



Brent Peterkin

Executive Director
Gather New Haven



Jayson Velazquez

MES Candidate
Yale School of the
Environment



Charlotte Gray

Community Involvement
Coordinator
Environmental Protection Agency

Q1.

What are ways that we can increase levels of community involvement, trust and communication to better plan for/ create places that are healthy and vibrant for all?

Q2.

Where have we as a community, region, or state failed when addressing environmental justice? What can we learn from these shortcomings?

Q3.

What is at stake if decision-makers fail to reach all demographics and meaningfully incorporate their input?

Q4.

What is a misconception about
environmental justice that you would like to
dispel?

Justice Isn't Just Us: Pursuing an Equitable Environment

Audience Q&A



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