



Environmental Commission Equity Report-Out

November 2023





Overview



- **About me**
- **Current Equity infrastructure and network**
- **Equity overview and strategic approach**
- **Community concerns**
- **Concerns around environmental justice**
- **Disaster response and Emergency Preparedness**
- **Current Efforts**
- **Points of intersection and awareness**

Contributors- Equity Office, Housing, Planning, Resilience, Sustainability, Watershed Protection, and most importantly Community



Kye Tavernier

Equity and Inclusion Program Manager



- On-boarded with WPD in March 2022
- Worked with Austin Public Health for 5 ½ years before coming to WPD
- Background in Social Work and human services for the last 14 years
- My lens and my why: I have a 94-year-old Grandfather and an almost 4-year-old toddler niece and nephew
- I love to travel, cook, read, and spend time with family!



Current Infrastructure

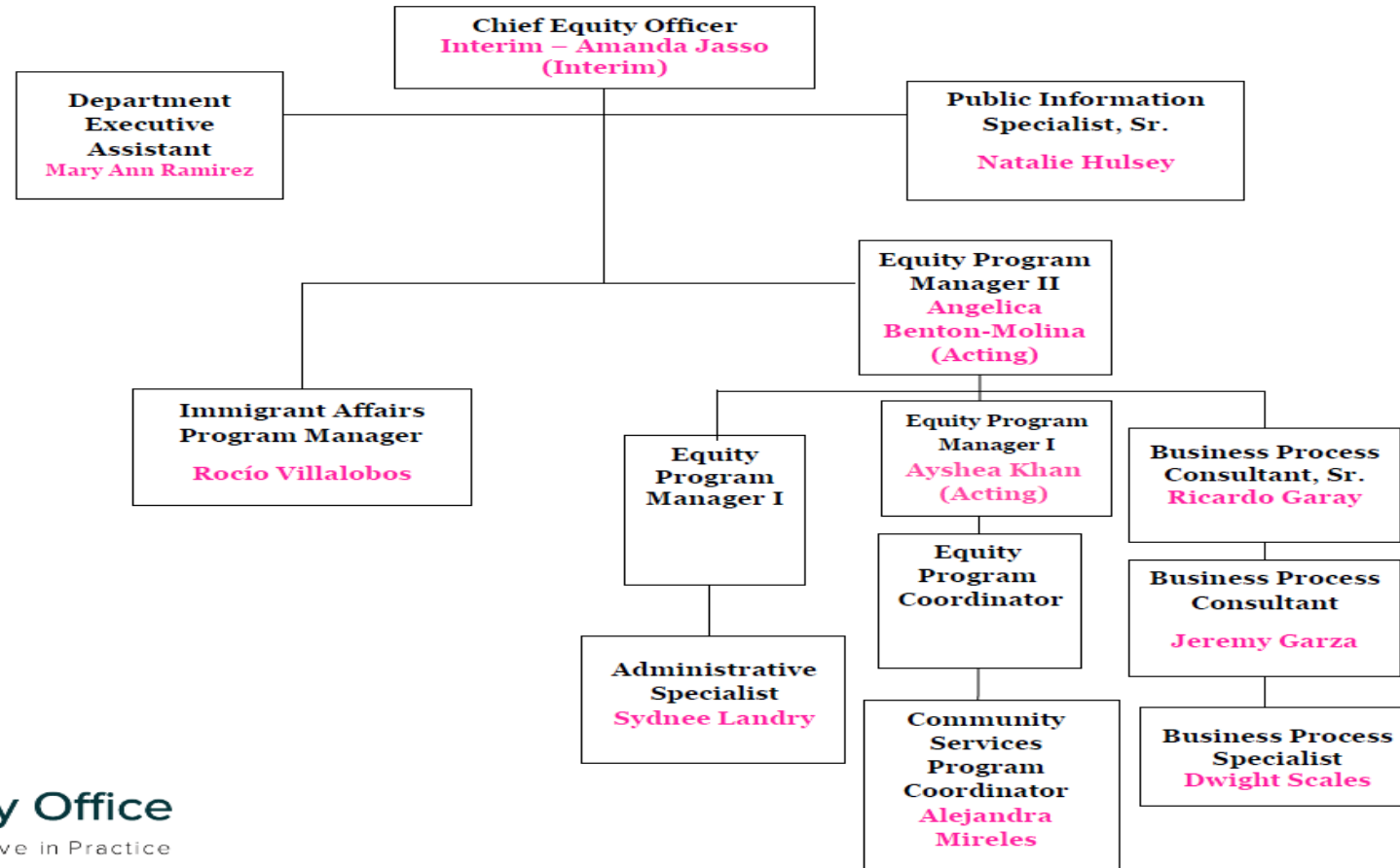
- **Equity Office**
- **Equity Program Manager Network**
- **Equity Work groups**
 - ACCC
 - Connecting Children to Nature
 - Departmental workgroups/Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA)
- **Equity Action Team (EAT) Meetings**
 - Monthly meetings centered around community



Equity Office



City of Austin Equity Office





Equity Network



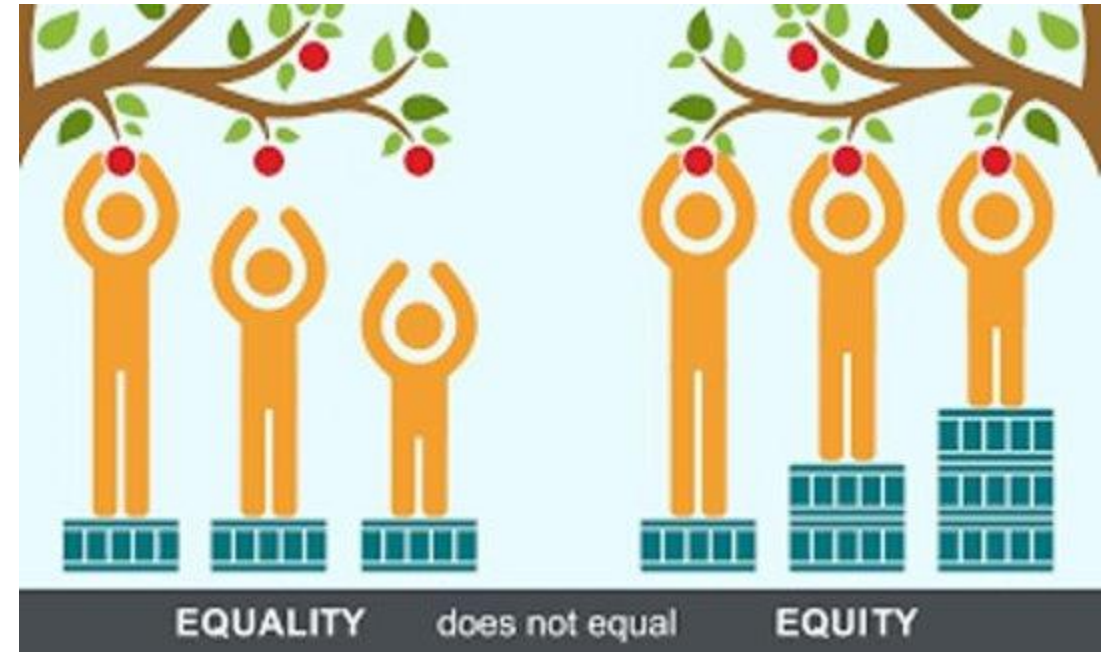
- **Equity Program Manager or Program Coordinators**
 - Austin Energy
 - Austin Police Department
 - Austin Public Health
 - Austin Public Library
 - Austin Resource Recovery- Coming Soon
 - Austin Water
 - Development Services Department/Austin Code
 - Economic Development Department
 - Human Resources Department
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Transportation Public Works
 - Watershed Protection Department



What is Equity



- Racial equity is the condition when race is no longer predictor of quality of life outcomes in our community.
- The City of Austin recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of these wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.





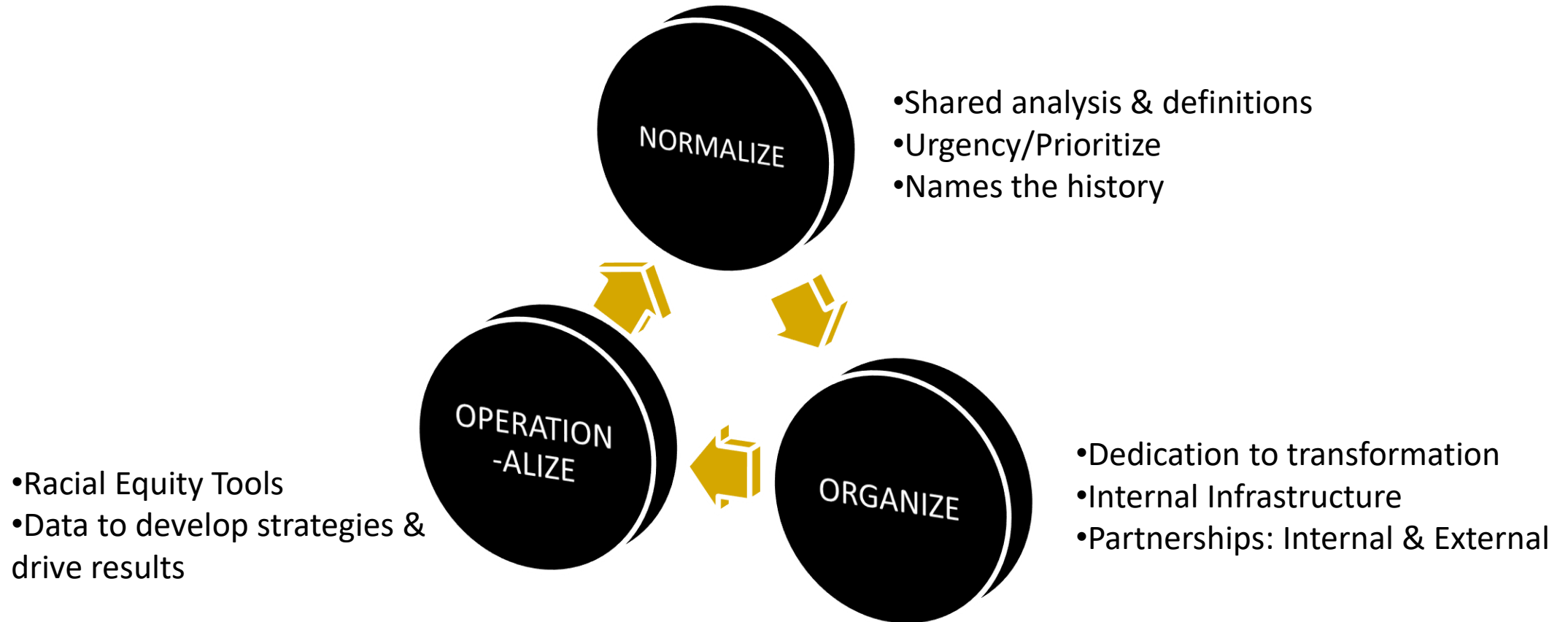
Why lead with Race?

- Race is the #1 predictor of quality-of-life outcomes, so how you live, how long you live, and how you may die
- Historically it has also determined where can live, work, your access to education, and play
- Research has shown when effort and intention is put in investing in our most vulnerable communities, outcomes for all improve
- So arguably... what do we have to lose?

“A high tide raises all boats”



Strategic Approach





Guiding Principles

- **Equity Office: Critical Love in Practice**
- **Keep history in the forefront**
 - https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf
- **Assess in our decision making:**
 - **Who is our customer**
 - **Who carries the untended benefit/burden of our actions**
- **Nothing about us, without us**



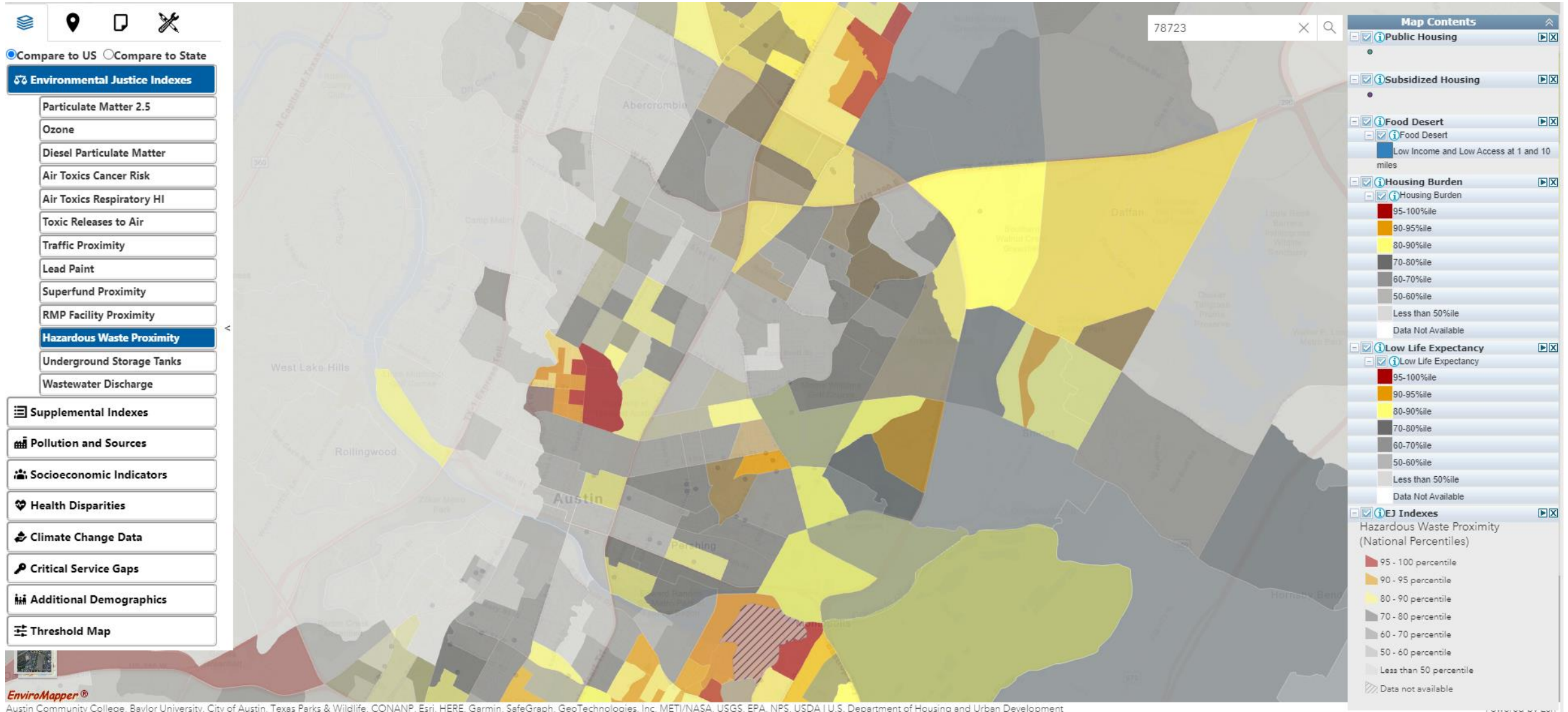
Community Concerns

- **Understanding History**
- **Communication**
 - **Response times to identified concerns**
 - **Accuracy in scheduling and availability of services particularly during emergency response**
- **Emergency Response**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Gentrification, development, and displacement**
- **Accountability of Leadership**
 - **Pollution**
- **Leverage of Commission**
 - **Opportunities to collaborate, advocate and challenge, if decisions have risk of disparate outcomes or public health risks how can boards and commission leverage their influence**



Environmental Justice

- Many neighborhoods that have been historically negatively impacted by pollution and lack of environmental protections are still fighting
- Unfortunately, mistrust between community and systems and institutions
- Concerns about developing for density without assessment of long-term impacts to public health especially near highways
- Protecting the Colorado River
- Many organizations and community members want to understand how to advocate for continued accountability
- Point of Awareness
 - <https://www.epa.gov/trinationalanalysis/where-you-live>
 - <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>
 - <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>





clear

Drop a Pin

Draw an Area

Add a Path

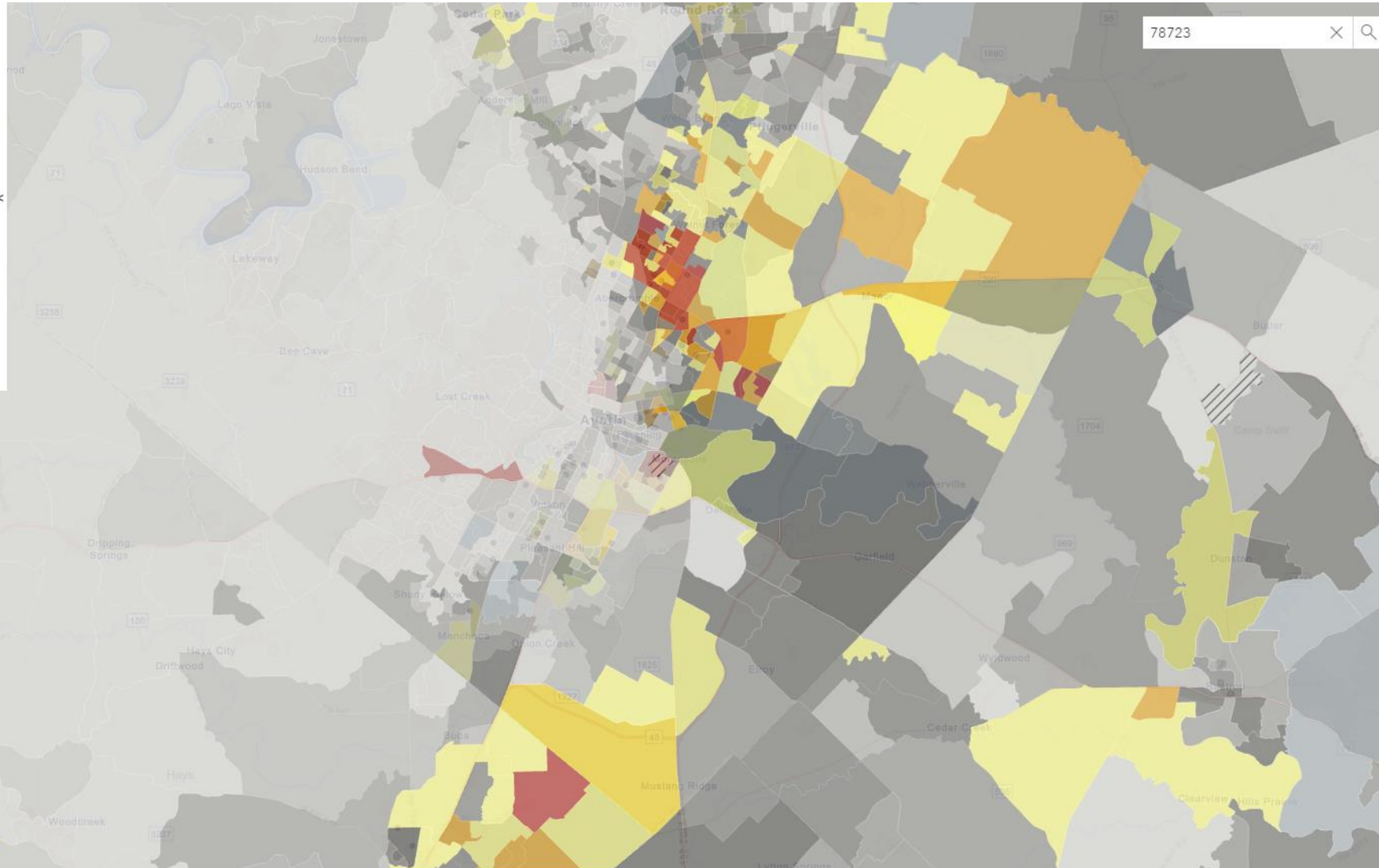
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Select City

Select County

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Map Contents

- ☒ **Public Housing**
- ☒ **Subsidized Housing**
- ☒ **Food Desert**
 - ☒ Food Desert
 - Low Income and Low Access at 1 and 10 miles
- ☒ **Housing Burden**
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 - 90-95%ile
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- ☒ **EJ Indexes**
 - Wastewater Discharge (National Percentiles)
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clear

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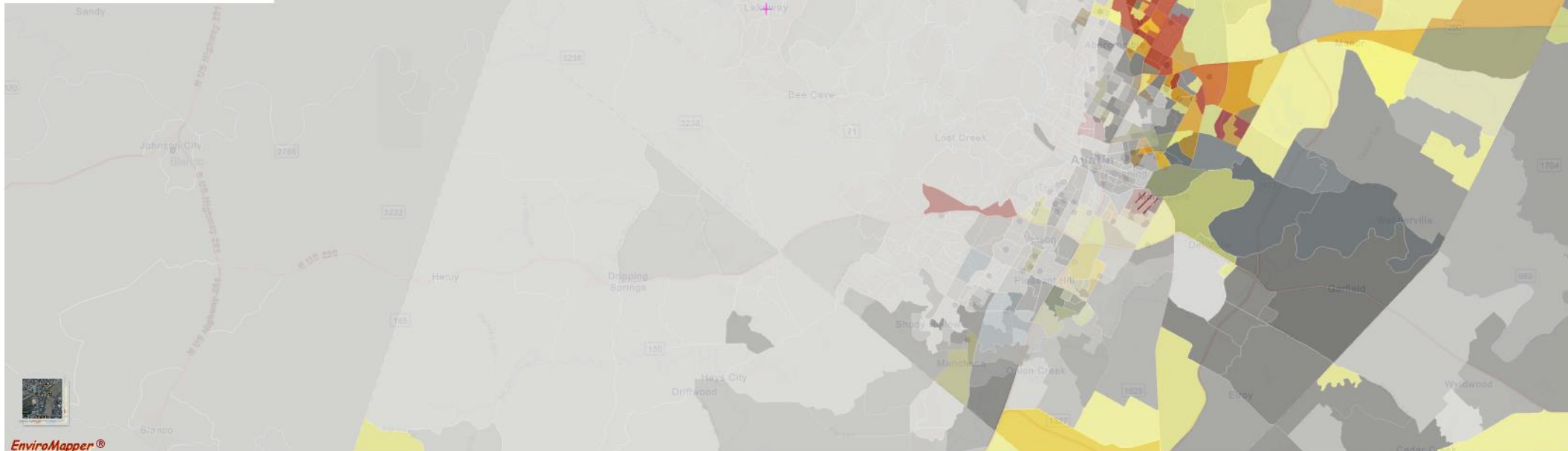
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Lakeway, TX, USA

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Emergency Preparedness

- **Equity Office and Network members make every effort to bring equity operationalization into spaces to aid in resilience of all community members particularly in disaster response.**
- **WPD has added equity in the Incident Command Structure to create space to identify operational blind spots should they be identified.**
- **There is a pending City Council work session that will discuss Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Preparedness activities and plan for winter response on November 28, 2023.**



Intersections

- **This Commission, and a lot of Commissions, intersect with so many priorities and impacts on equity.**
 - Land use, homelessness, climate recovery, food access, housing and displacement, green space and waterways
 - Across every one of these areas, people of color have the worst outcomes.
- **When considering variances or code amendments**
 - Are we considering whether these changes are impacting only certain neighborhoods or areas of the city
- **Point of Discussion**
 - Can Commissions challenge more if community concerns are identified
 - What other instruments can be used to advocate for our most vulnerable
 - Are there opportunities for pro-active engagement with community organizers and advocates.



Points of Awareness

- **Choosing intentional solutions over quick fixes**
 - We need more housing, but for whom and are we building or making housing actually affordable for people who continue to feel displacement pressures the most.
 - Where are we building affordable housing
 - Density may not always be the solution and are we exploring other options
- **Racial Equity Anti-Displacement Tool**
 - Recommended tool that could help commissioners and staff make recommendations on certain policies and programs. It was originally designed to help navigate the Project Connect anti-displacement funds



Current Efforts- Normalize

- **The Equity Office hosts trainings led by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond and Cambio Integral consistently throughout the year**
 - **Undoing Racism**
 - **Latinx Challenge**
 - **Equity 101**
 - **Equity Newsletter**
- <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=9hleXKumRUux0L5GCKm-mf4SZGV5PK-FHgrqQrSYSaHxUNzQ4SkRVRUxFQVIRSkTXTDkzMFJJMFZPVy4u>



Current Efforts-Organize

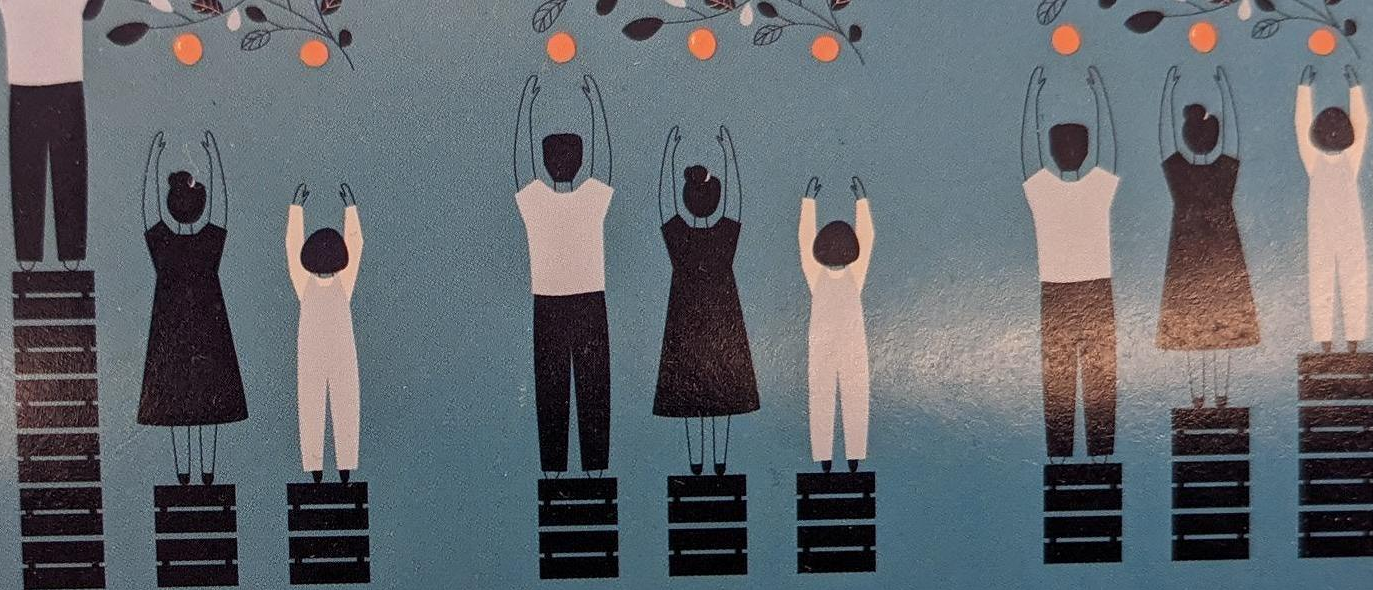
- **Equity Action Team (EAT) Meetings**
 - **Community network meeting**
- **Equity and Inclusion Network Meetings**
- **Joint Inclusion Council meetings and townhalls**
- **Within departments**
 - **IDEA Committee**
 - **Equity Coordination Team**
 - **Equity Workgroups**



Current Efforts- Operationalize

- **Enhanced Library cards**
- **Updating department equity assessments**
- **Citizenship clinic**
- **APH Equity Academy**
- **WPD Equity Charter**
- **12 Equity & Inclusion titled positions**
- **Workforce Development- ACCC**
- **Equity in Long-range strategic planning**
 - **Rain to River**
- **Equity in prioritization**

AUSTIN
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



REALITY

EQUALITY

EQUITY



The Austin Public Library (APL) acknowledges the United States, the State of Texas, and Austin's long history of systemic racism and racial inequity that continues to this day, from the City of Austin's historic "1928 City Plan" to historical barriers in accessing library resources and services. Moving forward, APL aims to use an anti-racist and transformative approach to building a culture of equity and uplifting diversity. The APL invites all voices to co-create impactful policies, practices, programs, collections, and services that embodies "Library for All", rooted in humanity.

Equity: the intentional distribution of resources and tools for everyone to have the opportunity to succeed, especially for individuals and/or groups that have been historically underserved and underrepresented.

Diversity: refers to the wide range of identities, from race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, abilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, language, culture, veteran status, education, and more. Diversity is the quantity of diverse backgrounds, experiences, identities, and cultures.

Inclusion: authentically bringing historically excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, collections, programs, conversations, and policies in a way that shares decision-making power and fosters an environment where everyone feels safe, supported, and accepted. Inclusion is the quality of participation across backgrounds, experiences, identities, and cultures.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion establishes the foundation that frames the Library's Six Priorities. The APL equity statement is a living document that continues to evolve in our ever-changing world.

WORK GROUP: Carmaleta McKinnis-Williams, Doreen Boyd, Kimthu Nguyen, Jeremy Garza, Alanna Graves, and Irene Magana-Naverola - THANK YOU!!



My Motto

“It’s not as much about WHAT we do, but WHY we do it, and HOW we do it”



**Questions? Comments?
Thank You!!**

Contact Information

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Kye.Tavernier@austintexas.gov



Links



Racial Equity Anti-Displacement Tool

<https://www.austintexas.gov/page/nothing-about-us-without-us>

Environmental Justice Resources

<https://www.epa.gov/trinationalanalysis/where-you-live>

<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>

<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>

GARE Racial Equity Toolkit

<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial-Equity-Toolkit.pdf>

Equity Office Training Interest Form

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=9hleXKumRUux0L5GCKmmf4SZGV5PK-FHgrqQrSYSaHxUNzQ4SkRVRUxFQVlRSktXTDkzMfJJMFZPVy4u>