MEETING MINUTES

Shade Tree Committee
City Hall – 280 Grove Street, Jersey City NJ 07302
Councilmember Mira Prinz-Arey, Chair

Meeting: Jersey City Shade Tree Committee Meeting

Date / Location: 17 August 2020 – 6:30 p.m.
Videoconference remote meeting via Zoom

Attendees: **Voting Committee Members**
Councilwoman Mira Prinz-Arey, Chair
Denise Bailey
David Hurtle
Matthew Trump
Marc Wesson

Non-Voting Committee Members/City Representatives
Cameron Black, Senior Planner, Jersey City Division of Planning
Kate Lawrence (Secretary), Director, Jersey City Office of Sustainability
John McKinney, Jersey City Department of Law
Adam Cohen, alternate voting member

Special Guests
Debra Italiano
Nanette Jacobs
Caroline Katz-Mount
Laura Skolar
Tom Zinckgraf

Prepared By: Kate Lawrence

Date Prepared: August 21, 2020
Date Approved October 19, 2020

ROLL CALL
The Committee meeting commenced at 6:35 PM. Five of six voting committee members were present. Three members are needed to meet quorum.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION
Meeting notice was sent to the City Clerk's Office, Jersey Journal, and Hudson Reporter on August 14, 2020.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Draft minutes for both the February and July Shade Tree Committee Meetings were distributed before the meeting.
- February Minutes - Committee Member Denise Bailey asked why her edits for the draft

meeting minutes had not been fully incorporated into the latest draft minutes that the Committee received.
- o Secretary Lawrence replied that they had been taken into consideration but that not all the edits seemed necessary.
- o Chair Mira Prinz-Arey stated that the minutes are meant to convey a summary of what happened and that only proposed edits that add value to the minutes will be included.
- o Ms. Bailey stated that she felt that her edits should have been incorporated.
- o Committee member Marc Wesson stated that the first proposed edit from Ms. Bailey added value to the minutes and he thought it made sense to include it.
- o Chair Prinz-Arey pointed out that Committee members can provide comments on the minutes before the meeting.
- o John McKinney stated that either someone should make a motion to approve the minutes as is or they would not be approved.
- o No one made a motion to approve the February minutes.
- July Minutes - Ms. Bailey stated that she had comments on the July minutes as well. She asked if the presentation by the Montclair State University could be included in the minutes. Ms. Bailey also suggested a minor comment on a section of the minutes.
- o Secretary Lawrence stated that the presentation could be included.
- o Committee Member Matt Trump made a motion to approve the minutes with the addition of the presentation but not with the additional correction. The motion carried. The July minutes were then approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Special Guest – Debra Italiano and Tom Zinckgraf of SJC – Open Tree Map Update

- Debra Italiano of Sustainable Jersey City (SJC) recapped the presentation that she had given to the Shade Tree Committee at the February meeting.
- o She asked that her presentation be included in the February minutes when they were published.
- o The February presentation was given in advance of the spring launch of Sustainable Jersey City's tree mapping initiative using Open Tree Map.
- o The Open Tree Map was customized by Sustainable Jersey City for Jersey City
- o The iNaturalist program is integrated into Open Tree Map platform to assist with tree species identification
- o Sustainable Jersey City started hosting the Jersey City Open Tree Map in fall 2019 after the City's subscription had lapsed with DPW.
- o Sustainable Jersey City reached out to the University of Vermont Spatial Analytics Lab for updated estimates of canopy. According to their calculations, Jersey City's tree canopy has deteriorated >5% since 2015.
- o Sustainable Jersey City saw opportunity to engage the public on the importance of properly caring for trees.
- o Open Tree Map automatically calculates climate and economic benefits of trees that have been mapped.
- Ms. Italiano also noted some updates to the Open Tree Map initiative since February. *[Her*

full presentation is attached to these meeting minutes.]

- o As part of Sustainable Jersey City's efforts, 4,600 trees have been mapped so far, there are 28 neighborhood captains organizing tree mapping city-wide, and the organization is also working with interns from Saint Peter's University on this initiative.
  - o Ms. Italiano noted that people have really embraced this initiative as an activity during the Covid-19 lockdown.
  - o Initially there had been plans for utilizing volunteers from corporate training programs in the spring but due to the pandemic this was not feasible.
  - o This initiative is happening in partnership with the Jersey City Parks Coalition.
  - o Sustainable Jersey City submitted a grant proposal for USFS NYC Field Station.
- Tom Zinckgraf – a software developer and member of SJC – discussed the mapping tool and the app's analysis capabilities
  - o Open Tree Map is a data management platform
    - ▪ You can input any data source
    - ▪ For example, they have imported information on recently-planted trees that they got from the Forester.
  - o What happens when a user identifies a tree?
    - ▪ Must upload picture of tree bark and tree leaves
    - ▪ Once a user submits a tree they then get information on the tree
- Active community of volunteers that comment on each other's questions and comments.
- Ms. Italiano added that creating maps from the program has helped the group start asking smart questions about public health.
- Ms. Italiano stated that she had solicited a proposal for updating the 2015 Shade Tree Canopy study and sent it to the MUA for review.
- Mr. Wesson asked what specifically Sustainable Jersey City was looking for from the Shade Tree Committee and the City.
  - o Ms. Italiano stated they were asking the Shade Tree Committee to support the Open Tree Map platform and they were requesting an annual support stipend for managing the program.
- Mr. Wesson noted that it didn't make sense to have two simultaneous tree mapping initiatives being done.
  - o Ms. Italiano noted that the two programs could complement each other.
- Mr. Wesson asked Ms. Italiano and Secretary Lawrence how each mapping initiative was planning on collecting data on felled trees.
  - o Ms. Italiano – we have a living breathing group of volunteers.
  - o Secretary Lawrence – we would receive that information from the Forester.
- Dave Hurtle asked about estimated tree loss.
  - o Ms. Italiano said their research showed it as being over 6%.
  - o Mr. Wesson said that didn't seem accurate.
  - o Ms. Italiano disagreed. She said tree loss can be ascribed to saplings replacing older trees.
- Ms. Italiano noted that the UIC study was not done to U.S. Forestry Service standards.

Special Guests – Caroline Katz-Mount and Nanette Jacobs of PFNA, Deb Italiano of SJC, and Laura Skolar of JCPC – Chapter 321 Suggestions

- Caroline Katz-Mount from the Pershing Field Neighborhood Association (PFNA) noted that she is very excited about this committee existing.
  - She noted that years ago the city had a shade tree commission but it was never linked into government.
- Ms. Katz-Mount gave an overview of her involvement with trees in Jersey City.
  - In March 2001 people on Summit Ave. came home from work to find that twenty large sycamores had been removed. The City had apparently received a grant to put in a new sidewalk. The community was shocked. The Mayor at the time was Bret Schundler.
  - Ms. Katz-Mount was part of a group of people who drafted the tree ordinance in response to that event. It was passed unanimously.
  - Ms. Katz-Mount noted that she and others naïvely assumed that there would be enforcement and serious carrying out of ordinance. After the ordinance passed a group was formed to protect trees.
  - Ms. Katz-Mount stated that everyone was here tonight because protections in the initial tree ordinance were seriously weakened by the ordinance that was passed in 2017.
  - Enforcement of the original tree ordinance was sporadic but it did work sometimes. Someone noticed tree was to be removed and called the Mayor and removal was stopped.
  - Caroline Katz-Mount and Nanette Jacobs were approached by Debra Italiano to provide feedback on changes to ordinance.
  - Ms. Katz-Mount stated that she had two requests:
    - Reinstate criteria for when a tree can be removed
      - Removal should only be allowed if a tree is diseased, dead, or causes significant danger and it cannot be remediated. This would stop removal of old growth trees.
    - Reinstate notice and hearing requirements for tree removals, including notice to people living within 200 feet radius of a tree that is to be removed.
  - Ms. Katz-Mount stated that she was very pleased that there is a committee working on protecting trees now.
- Ms. Italiano of Sustainable Jersey City (SJC) noted that the cutting down of trees at Society Hill was beginning of her effort to proposed changes to Chapter 321.
  - Councilwoman Denise Ridley was inexperienced and made the wrong decision in supporting the removal of the trees along the Society Hill walkway. Late Councilman Michael Yun was supportive of changes being made to Chapter 321 with input from SIDs – very important because they have a unique set of needs.
  - Ms. Italiano said that she wanted to open up a conversation on the tree ordinance.
  - Ms. Italiano noted that it is a U.S. Forest Service best practice to include a Community Forestry Management Plan.
- Laura Skolar, the President of the Jersey City Parks Coalition (JCPC), stated that the Parks Coalition thought it was a good idea to get involved in the tree canopy issue after the shade tree study was done in 2015.
  - Debra Italiano approached Parks Coalition about the Open Tree Map. The Parks

Coalition thought it would be good to bring everyone together to discuss concerns.
- o The Parks Coalition was privy to 2017 changes to the tree ordinance, but the removal of trees at Society Hill showed that there were loopholes in the ordinance that needed to be addressed.
- Mr. Wesson stated it was very difficult to interpret the proposed changes within the document.
  - o Chair Prinz-Arey discussed with Mr. McKinney how the proposed changes could be transferred to standard formatting.
- There was a discussion regarding where the Community Forestry Management Plan should "live."
  - o Ms. Italiano stated that other cities' Community Forestry Management Plans are operationalized and therefore it should be part of 321.
  - o Caroline Katz-Mount stated that her understanding was that the Community Forestry Management Plan was explicitly created to receive funding and therefore had not been a part of 321.
  - o Marc Wesson said that all of the plans needed to reference each other.
  - o Secretary Lawrence clarified the importance of each of the documents that were in discussion:
    1. The Community Forestry Management was created as a prerequisite for CSIP tree funding through the state. It is an overview of the City's goals related to trees.
    2. The Tree Ordinance (Chapter 321 of the City Code) lays out the basic requirements for tree management and care in Jersey City.
    3. Tree-related requirements for developers are part of the Zoning Code (Chapter 345, sections 65, 66, and 70 of the City Code).
    4. The Forestry Standards, which were also codified by Council through Ordinance 18-019, includes detailed standards for how trees must be planted and managed and how much a developer must pay if they can proved that they cannot plant a required tree. The Forestry Standards includes references to all the related ordinances and includes copies of the ordinances.
  - o John McKinney further clarified by stating that the basic rules go in the ordinance. Day-to-day minutia go in the standards.
  - o Secretary Lawrence added that one of the duties of the Shade Tree Committee was to do an annual review of the Forestry Standards and recommend changes.
- Secretary Lawrence asked Mr. McKinney if he could give a brief review of what happened with Society Hill.
  - o Mr. McKinney stated that the Neighborhood Association in charge of the maintenance of the trees along the walkway claimed that the trees there were creating a tripping hazard. The City's insurance company said they would no longer insure to protect against trip and falls and the decision was made to remove trees.
  - o Secretary Lawrence asked about the ownership and management arrangement of the walkway.
  - o Mr. McKinney stated that it was very complicated. The walkway was put in place in partnership with the City and County with maintenance by Society Hill.
  - o Secretary Lawrence pointed out that this particular issue was not entirely dependent on the ordinance or Forestry Standards because the ownership structure for the walkway

was so unique.

Proposed Timeline for 2020 Goals

- Chair Prinz-Arey proposed a rough timeline for the rest of 2020
  - All edits to Chapter 321 should be decided by October.
  - The Committee needs to recommend changes to the Forestry Standards by the end of the year.
  - The required update to the Community Forestry Management Plan FMP was extended by the state. We should wait to discuss this with Forester Ed O'Malley.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ms. Italiano asked about follow up to the Open Tree Map discussion
  - Chair Prinz-Arey said Debra can send over the presentation
  - Ms. Italiano asked if she should send over a formal request
  - Chair Prinz-Arey requested all comments and requests to go through SJC representative Denise Bailey and that this same request applied to all other groups with a representative on the Shade Tree Committee.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- Chair Prinz-Arey noted that the Open Space Trust Fund has been suspended for this year because of Covid-19.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

NEXT MEETING
The next meeting of the Jersey City Shade Tree Committee is scheduled for Monday, September 21, at 6:30 p.m. This meeting will be held remotely as a videoconference. Virtual access information will be distributed before the meeting.

August 17, 2020

Shade Tree Committee Meeting

DEBRA ITALIANO

SJC A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK

Recap
February 20, 2020 STC Meeting – SJC Presentation Overview

- SJC OpenTreeMap (OTM) - iNaturalist Platforms Linked

  - New Customized Features + Connected Volunteer Smartphone Users

- "We Can't Manage What We Don't Measure!"

  - Historic Tree Mapping Census for Jersey City launched on Earth Day 2020 - Ongoing Campaign

- 2020 Upgraded OTM Data Management Platform an opportunity for City of JC

  - Integrated Reporting Capabilities

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JC Tree Canopy Assessment
Commissioned Report by University of Vermont Spatial Analytics Lab (UVM SAL) Updated August, 2020

- JC Canopy cover now at 10.9% reflecting > 6% deterioration from the 17% canopy cover assessed by the 2015 JCEC Study

City Wide Tree Canopy Cover
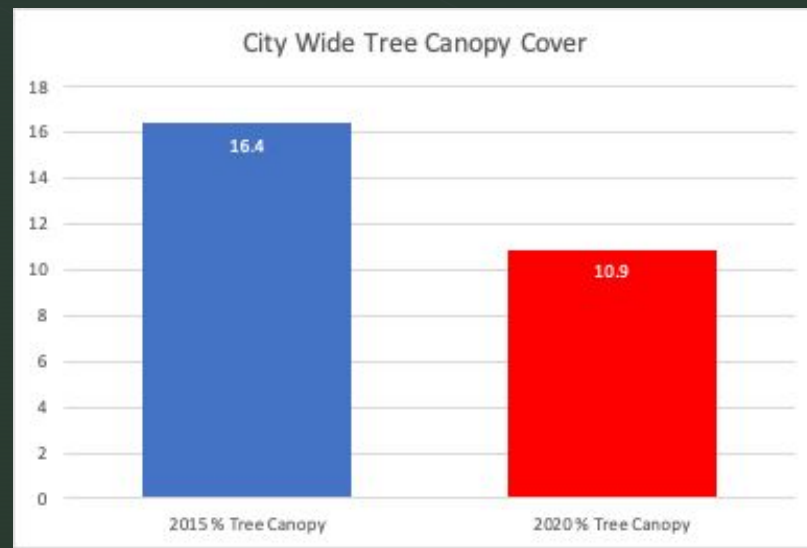
Estimated using USDA Forest Service i-Tree Canopy protocols for the time period 2015-2020

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SJC OTM + Citizen Science
Tree Mapping Census 35 Neighborhood Strategy

- Neighborhood Captains + Tree Mappers

  - ~ 300 volunteers across 35 Neighborhoods

  - St. Peter's University Internship Program

  - Community Engagement & Training for Tree Stewardship in JC

- JCPC Coordination for Parks

  - County Parks (under discussion)

  - Private Property, e.g., NJCU + St. Peter's University

- Current OTM Results: 4600+ Trees / ~$300K Annual Cost Savings in Eco Benefits

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USFS Partnership
SJC + USFS NYC Field Station Partnership - Grant Proposal

- "Stewardship Matters to Our Urban Forest"
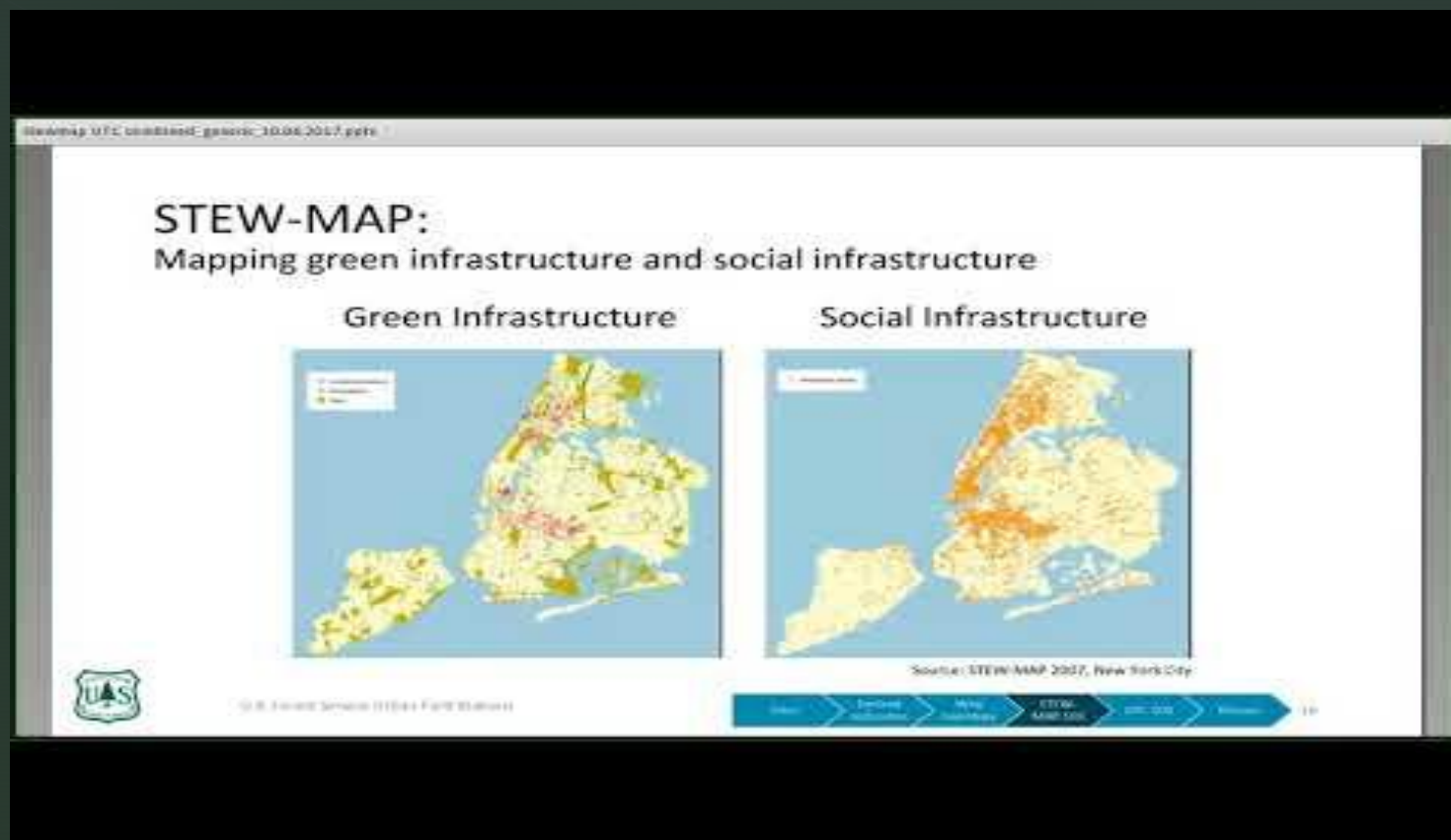
SJC OTM
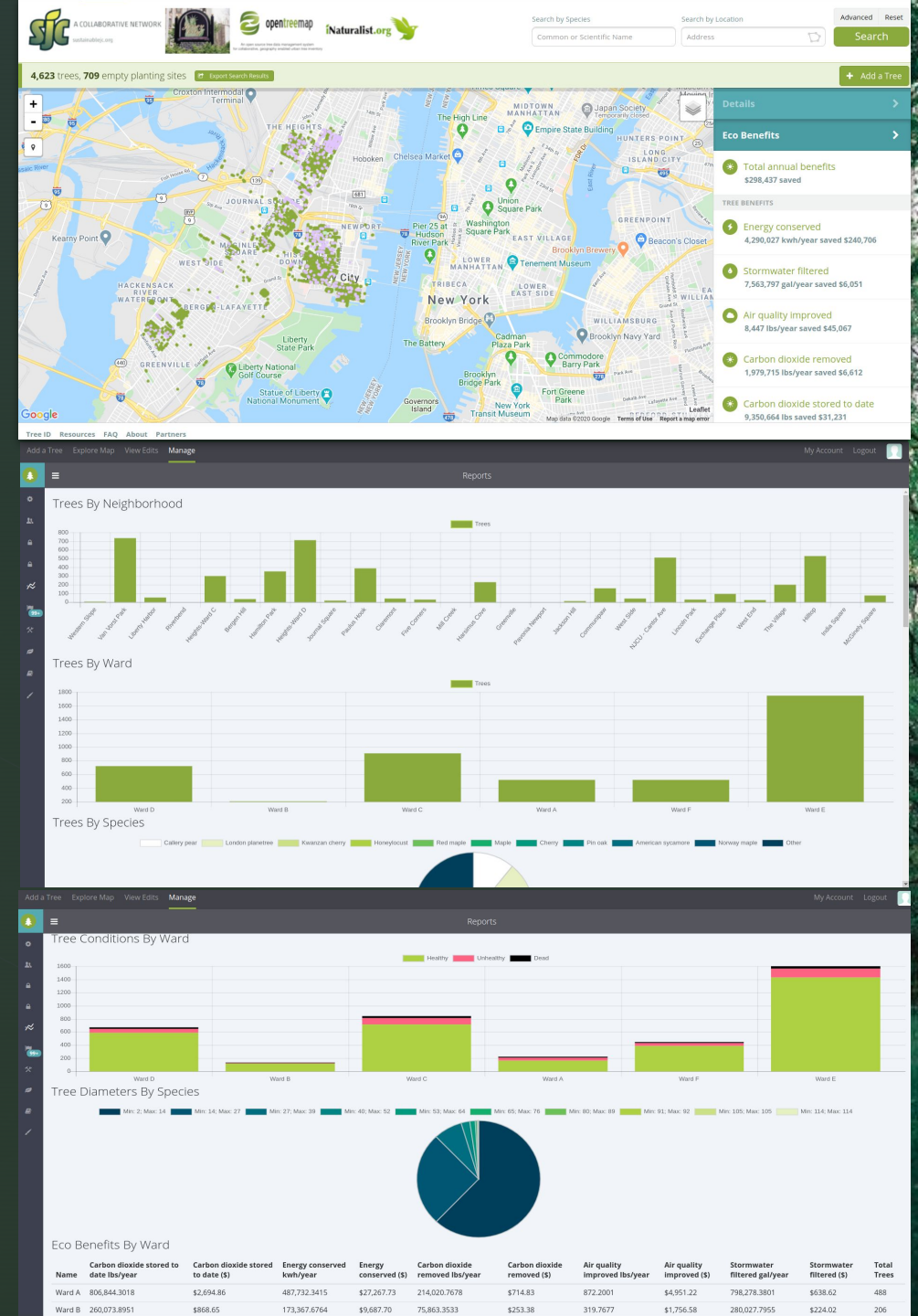Public Reporting Platform

DEMO

Tom Zinckgraf

1 RECAP
2 CANOPY REPORT
3 CITIZEN SCIENCE
4 USFS PARTNERSHIP
5 OTM DEMO
6 GIS MAPS
7 CLOSING REMARKS

1

RECAP

2

CANOPY
REPORT

3

CITIZEN
SCIENCE

4

USFS
PARTNERSHIP

5

OTM
DEMO

6

GIS
MAPS

7

CLOSING
REMARKS

Add a Tree   Explore Map   View Edits   **Manage**   My Account   Logout

Reports

Trees By Neighborhood

Trees

800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0

Western Slope, Van Vorst Park, Liberty Harbor, Riverbend, Heights-Ward C, Bergen Hill, Hamilton Park, Heights-Ward D, Journal Square, Paulus Hook, Claremont, Five Corners, Mill Creek, Harsimus Cove, Greenville, Pavonia Newport, Jackson Hill, Communipaw, West Side, NJCU - Cantor Ave, Lincoln Park, Exchange Place, West End, The Village, Hilltop, India Square, McGinely Square

Trees By Ward

Trees

1800
1600
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200

Ward D   Ward B   Ward C   Ward A   Ward F   Ward E

Trees By Species

☐ Callery pear ☐ London planetree ☐ Kwanzan cherry ☐ Honeylocust ☐ Red maple ☐ Maple ☐ Cherry ☐ Pin oak ☐ American sycamore ☐ Norway maple ☐ Other

Add a Tree   Explore Map   View Edits   **Manage**   My Account   Logout

Reports

Tree Conditions By Ward

Healthy   Unhealthy   Dead

1600
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0

Ward D   Ward B   Ward C   Ward A   Ward F   Ward E

Tree Diameters By Species

Min: 2; Max: 14   Min: 14; Max: 27   Min: 27; Max: 39   Min: 40; Max: 52   Min: 53; Max: 64   Min: 65; Max: 76   Min: 80; Max: 89   Min: 91; Max: 92   Min: 105; Max: 105   Min: 114; Max: 114

Eco Benefits By Ward

Name	Carbon dioxide stored to date lbs/year	Carbon dioxide stored to date ($)	Energy conserved kwh/year	Energy conserved ($)	Carbon dioxide removed lbs/year	Carbon dioxide removed ($)	Air quality improved lbs/year	Air quality improved ($)	Stormwater filtered gal/year	Stormwater filtered ($)	Total Trees
Ward A	806,844.3018	$2,694.86	487,732.3415	$27,267.73	214,020.7678	$714.83	872.2001	$4,951.22	798,278.3801	$638.62	488
Ward B	260,073.8951	$868.65	173,367.6764	$9,687.70	75,863.3533	$253.38	319.7677	$1,756.58	280,027.7955	$224.02	206

1 RECAP

2 CANOPY REPORT

3 CITIZEN SCIENCE

4 USFS PARTNERSHIP

5 OTM DEMO

6 GIS MAPS

7 CLOSING REMARKS

Closing Remarks

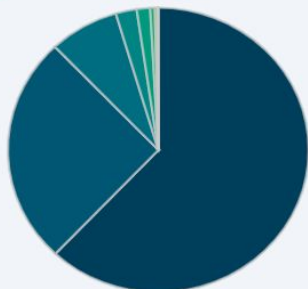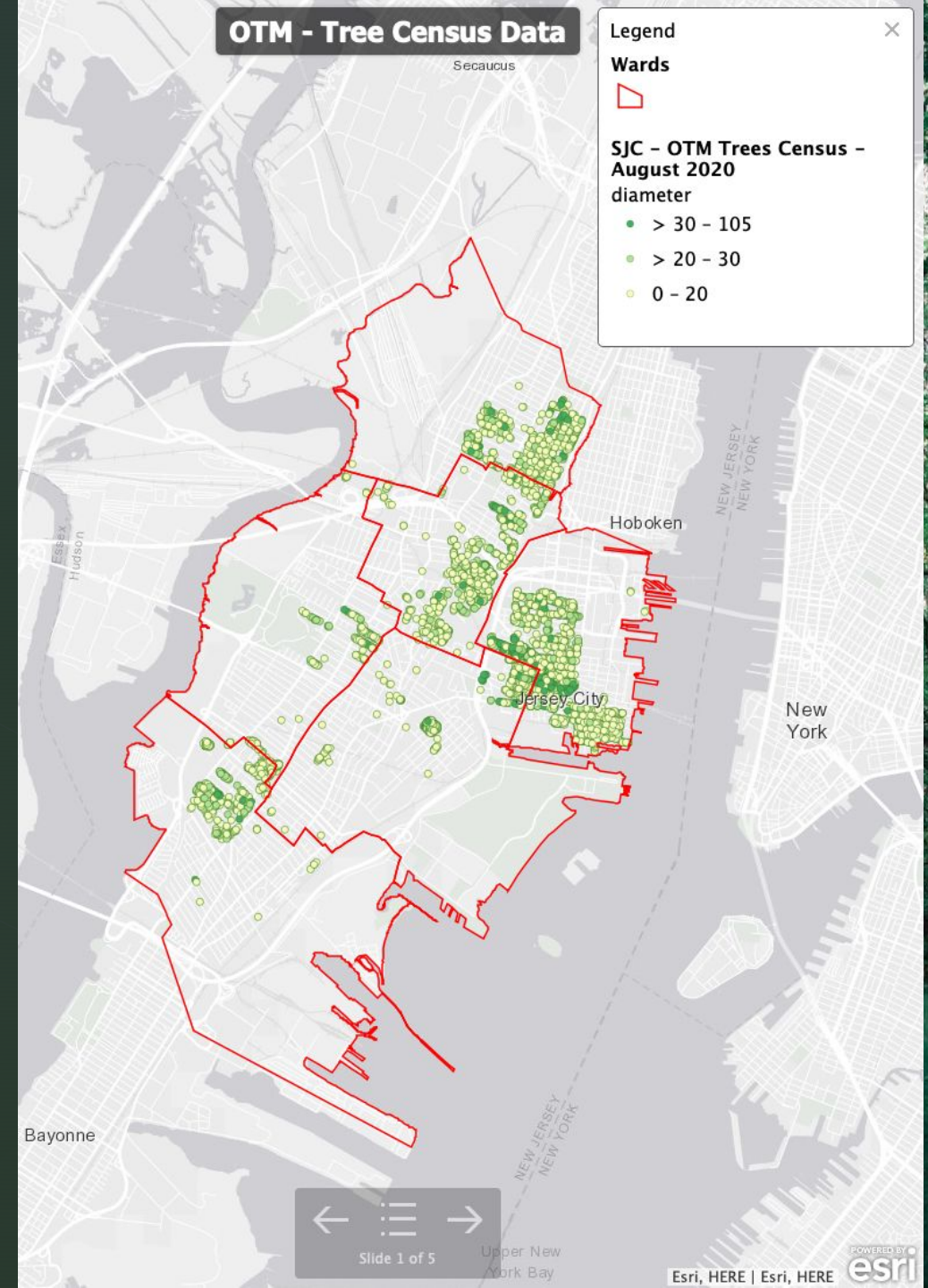- UVM SAL Canopy Assessment Update Proposal to JCEC Canopy Study Now Outdated

  - UVM SAL - Prestigious US Forest Service Research Affiliated GIS Lab - Background and Supporting References

  - SJC requests STC to Co-host September Webinar for UVM SAL to explain their Proposal to City of JC Departments & Community Organizations

- Tree Count Estimates for JC - Analysis / work in progress

JC Canopy Coverage	Source	Area in sqft	Imagery/ Data Vintage/Source	Estimated Count with PPA Tree Ratio (GIC)	Estimated Count with Current Sample Tree Ratio (OTM) - Small Tree DBH≤20"	Estimated Count with Current Sample Tree Ratio (OTM) - Small Tree DBH≤15"	Estimated Tree Count with Current Sample Tree Ratio (OTM) - Small Tree DBH ≤10"
17.00%	GIC 2015 TC Assessment	69,142,788	2013	89,741	120,461	111,895	99,132
3.00%	GIC 2015 TC Assessment	16,750,000	2013	21,740	29,182	27,107	24,015
20.00%	GIC 2015 TC Assessment	85,892,788	2013	111,481	149,643	139,002	123,147
	Rodney Hadley		2005	75,000			
11.50%	USFS UFORE Model Study mentioned in 2010-2014 CFMP			136,040			
16.39%	iTree Canopy	67,745,000	2015				
10.90%	iTree Canopy	44,884,000	2020				

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