



Lexington Park Equity Accelerator

Community Workshop



In this workshop we will:

- 1. Learn about why parks and green spaces are important to our communities**
- 2. Learn about the past and present of planning for parks**
- 3. Learn about the present-day tools for change**
- 4. Discuss more accessible ways for residents to get involved in parks planning**



Introductions:

Our Team: **LFUCG** Division of Parks and Recreation

**Laura Hatfield,
Superintendent for
Community Engagement**



**Michelle Kosieniak,
Superintendent of
Planning & Design**



**Adrienne Thakur,
Deputy Director of
Recreation**



Introductions:

Our Team: **LFUCG** Division of Planning

Hannah Crepps, Planner
Senior — Transportation
Planning



Valerie Friedmann,
Senior Long Range
Planner & Greenspace
Planner



Boyd Sewe,
Senior Planner, Long
Range



**Lexington Park
Equity Accelerator**

Introductions:

Our Team: **Seedleaf**

**Lindsay Funke,
Farm Manager**



**Christine Smith,
Executive Director**



Introductions:

Our Team: CivicLex

Megan Gulla,
Director of Programs



Haley Wartell,
CivicLex
Communications &
Graphic Design VISTA



Introductions:

You!

Attendees

1. What's your name?
2. What's your neighborhood park?
3. Why do you visit parks?



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Background:

What is the Park Equity Accelerator and how was it created?

2017: The Trust for Public Land establishes the 10-Minute Walk Campaign

- Goal is for every resident to have access to a park within a 10-minute walk
- Includes over 300 cities in 48 states



Resources

www.tpl.org

www.tpl.org/10minutewalk

www.tpl.org/national-walk-to-a-park-day



**Lexington Park
Equity Accelerator**

Background:

What is the Park Equity Accelerator and how was it created?

2018:

- Lexington Division of Parks and Recreation releases its updated Parks Master Plan
- LFUCG and the Division of Planning releases the updated Comprehensive Plan, Imagine Lexington



Both of these plans recognized broad support from residents for parks and green spaces in Lexington

Resources

- Parks Master Plan: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/index.php/about-parks-and-recreation-master-plan>
- Imagine Lexington: <https://imaginelexington.com>



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Background:

What is the Park Equity Accelerator and how was it created?

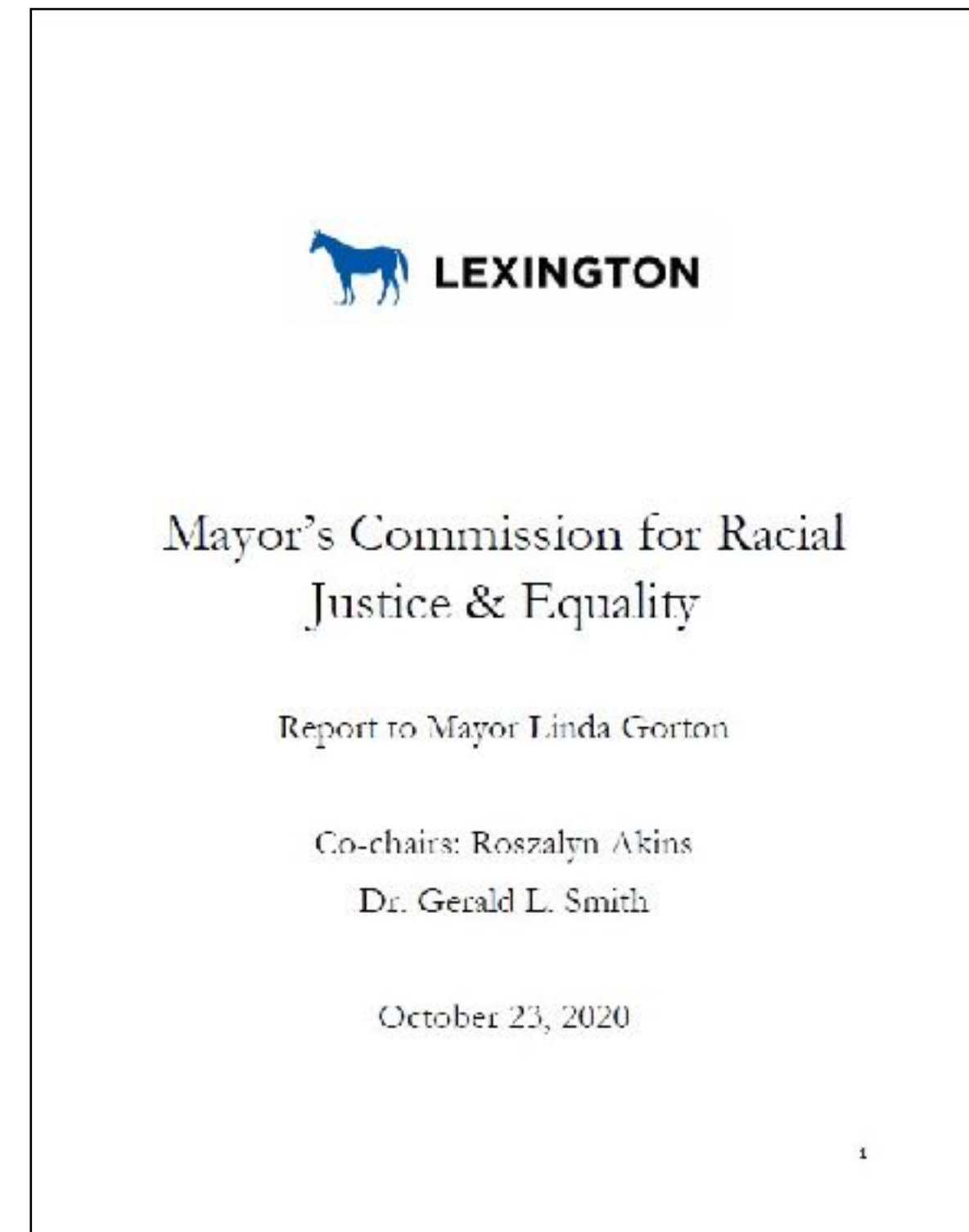
2020:

- The report from the Mayor's Commission for Racial Justice and Equality is released

This report included calls for green space equity in Lexington

Resources

- The Mayor's Commission for Racial Justice and Equality: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/boards/commission-racial-justice-and-equality>



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What is the Park Equity Accelerator and how was it created?

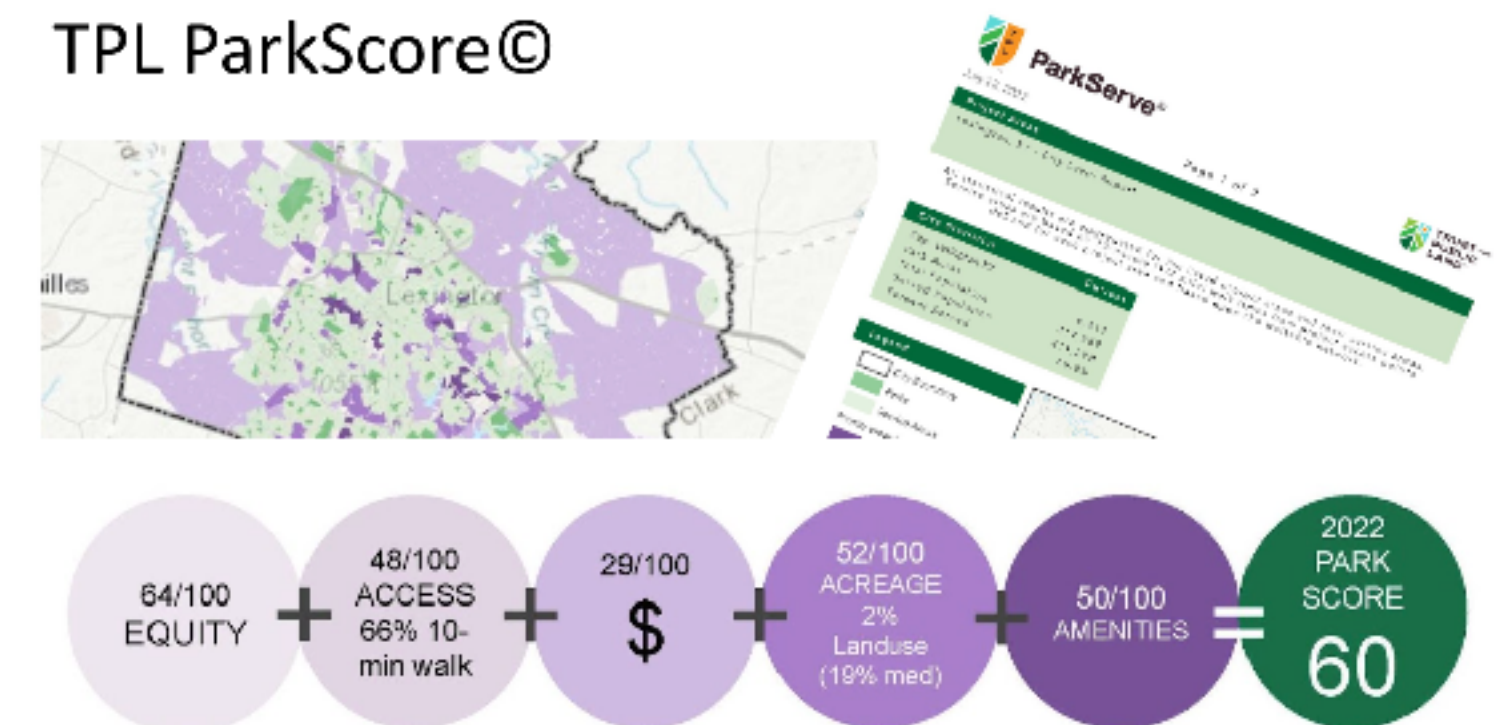
December 13th, 2021

- Lexington signs on to the 10-Minute Walk Campaign
- Pledges to make sure 100% of residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park or green space by 2050
- Goal of expanding safe and equitable access to parks and green spaces

Stats

- Currently 64% of Lexingtonians live within a 10-minute walk of a park
- A Parks Master Plan goal is to increase to 65% by 2030 by developing existing parkland, establishing new parks in growing areas, and improving access to existing parks

TPL ParkScore©



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Background:

What is the Park Equity Accelerator and how was it created?

July 7th, 2022

- The TPL Park Equity Accelerator program and inaugural cohort is announced
- The 6 selected cities receive support from TPL to address long-standing barriers to outdoor equity
- The program is the first of its kind, addressing the root causes of inequity shared by many of the 10-Minute Walk cities

Lexington

- Goal is to integrate community priorities into the parks and green space planning process and connect residents most impacted by parks inequities with resources and capacity to advocate for policy change



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Questions?



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Benefits of parks and green spaces

- **Physical:** lower rates of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes, and better mental health outcomes
- **Environmental:** Parks keep cities cooler and clean the air; trees reduce heat by 6–10 degrees, and large, shady parks reduce heat by 10–20 degrees
- **Financial:** Parks attract residents and business, increase property values, and property tax revenues

What does Lexington offer?

- Over 100 Parks
- 4,500 Acres of Green Space
- 62.1 Miles of Trails
- 6 Pools
- 5 Golf Courses
- 4 Community Centers
- 7 Dog Parks
- 4 Disc Golf Courses
- 3 Cultural Arts Facilities
- Special Events and Rentals
- Extended School Programs
- Find Your Park: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/list-of-all-city-parks>



A Brief History of Parks in Lexington

- **1902:** Woodland Park built and dedicated
- **1966:** First purchase of Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- **1968:** Jacobson Park opens (largest park at this point)
- **1970:** First Purchase of land at Shillito Park
- **1972:** Masterson Station Park acquired (largest park at this point)
- **1989:** Hisle Farm Park added
- **1990s:** Veterans Park, Coldstream Park, Cardinal Run North
- **2000s:** Park acquisition decreases — only 4.5 acres added across entire decade
- **2010s:** Kelly Property (30 acres), Town Branch Commons — focus is more on trails, connectivity, and linear parks



A Brief History of Parks in Lexington: Segregation

- Woodland Park was originally meant to only be used by White residents
- **1916**: Douglass Park (25 acres) was opened specifically for Black residents
- **1930s**: Douglass Park Pool constructed
- Many more parks for White residents developed during the years of segregation:
Clifton Park, Stoll Field, Castlewood Park, Gratz Park, Burley Park, Bluegrass park, and
the Lincoln Community Center
- **1934-35**: The second main facility for Black residents, Charles Young Center, was built



A Brief History of Parks in Lexington: Segregation

- Boards and Commissions, including those for Parks, were racially separate through the **1930s**
- **1931**: Lexington's first Comprehensive Plan shows a map of 19 parks, of which four are labeled with a "C" — a label that designated a park for the "colored" population
- **1940**: KY law required racially separate park boards
- **1955**: Supreme Court strikes down segregation in public parks
- **1956**: KY law disbanded separate parks boards

The effects of strictly-enforced residential segregation continued and continues to contribute to inequities in nearly every facet of life, including access to parks and public spaces



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A Brief History of Parks in Lexington: Segregation

Despite decades-long inequities in parks funding and facilities, Black residents created a rich cultural life in the parks they had access to. The records that survive to today show and describe immensely popular events like concerts, pet shows, soap box derbies, sports tournaments, and social gatherings happening regularly at Douglass Park and the Charles Young Center.



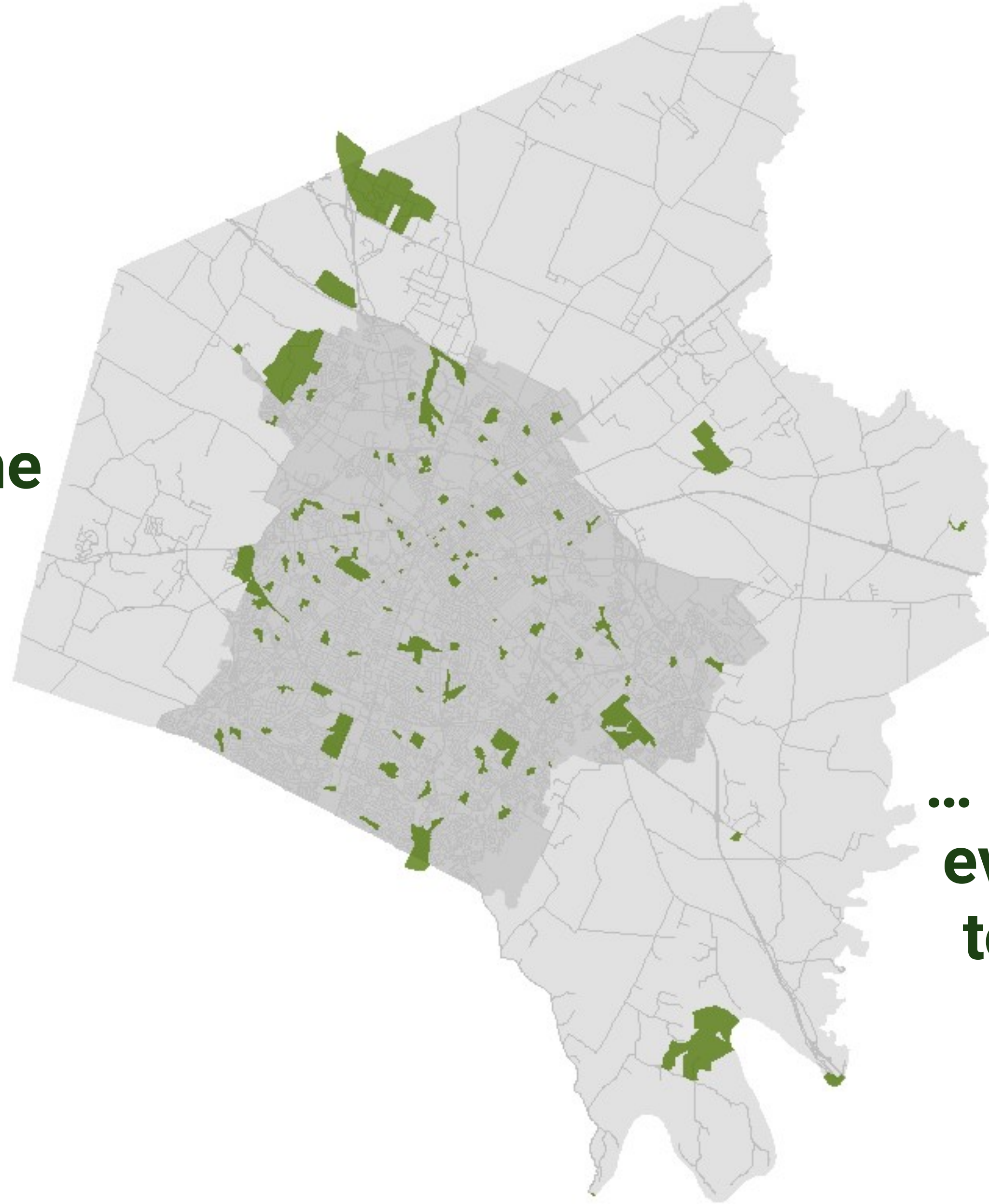
Questions?



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Today

Today we have large parks spread around the edges of town ...



... and smaller parks more evenly distributed closer to the center of the city



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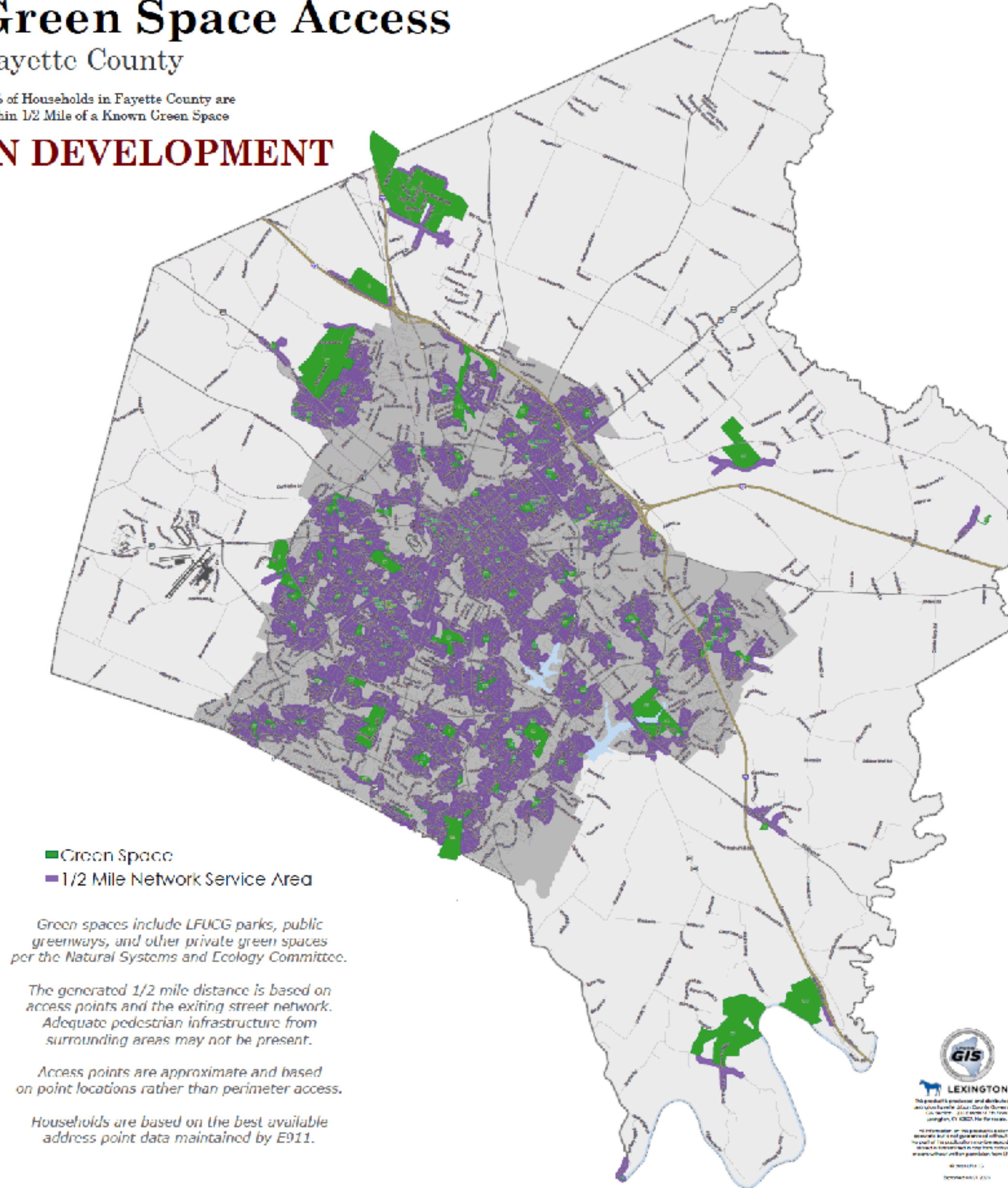
Today

Green Space Access

Fayette County

58% of Households in Fayette County are within 1/2 Mile of a Known Green Space

IN DEVELOPMENT

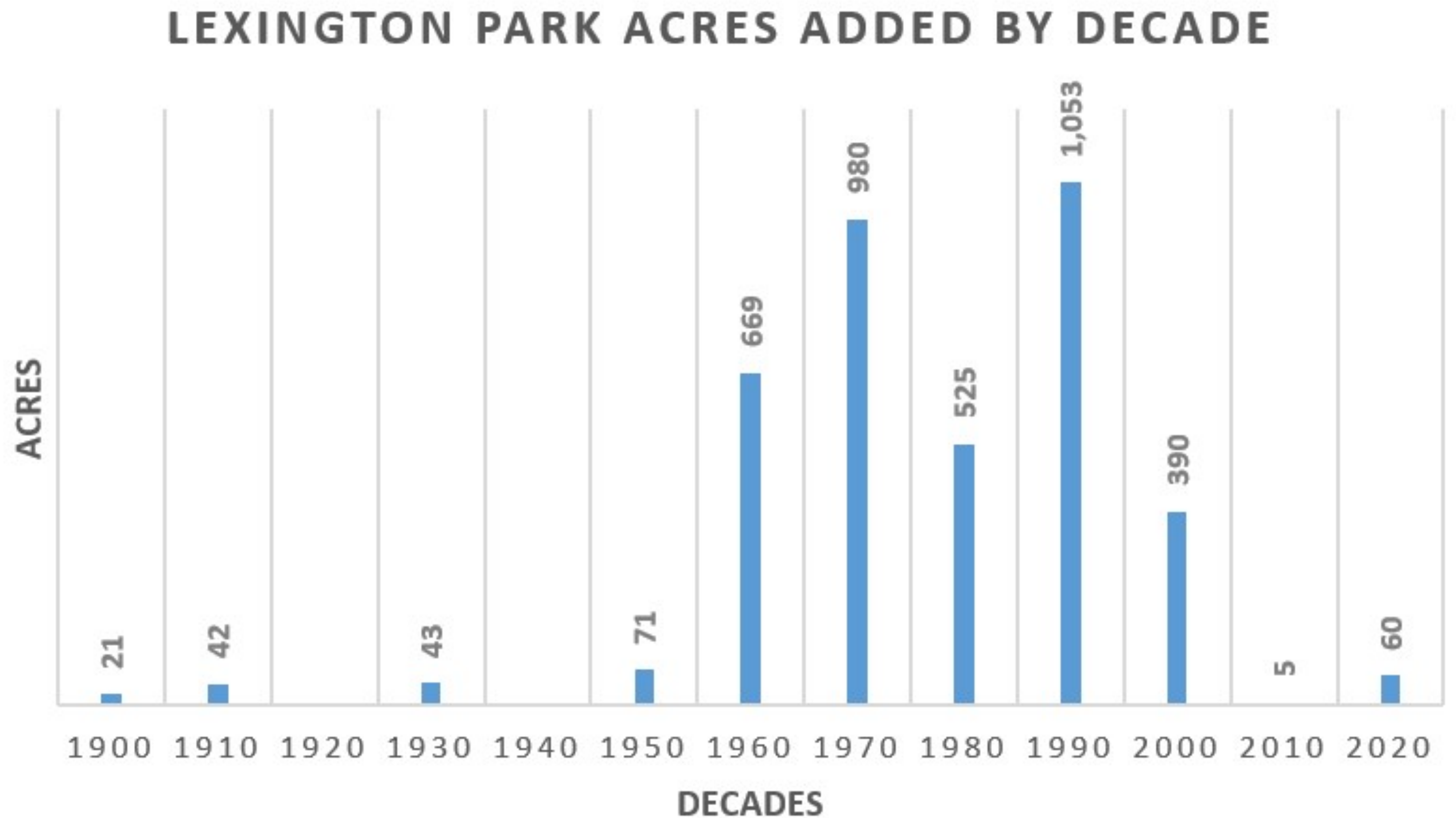


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How did we get here?

Community Park and Recreational Area - Zoning Ordinance (1965)

- The Planning Commission could require park land to be dedicated to the city during development project
- Developers could decrease residential lot sizes and add an equal amount of land into a separate parcel that would become a city park
- 1960s - 70s: a period of steady population growth and a large increase in the amount of park land the city acquired



How did we get here?

Park Acquisition Fund (1983)

- Replaced the Community Park and Recreational Area requirement
- Used exclusively for land acquisition
- Not used for existing park maintenance

Park Acquisition Fund Actual Collections



Total PAF collected since 1983: \$13,110,700



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How did we get here?

Open Space Zoning Regulation Update (2023)

- Requires developers to provide intentionally designed, visible, and useable open space within a 10-minute walk of new development
- Not a requirement for land to be dedicated to the city for public use; open space to be managed by private ownership (owners association, land trust, etc.)
- Open space zoning requirements lessened near existing public park land
- Incentivizes developer to build near or provide new public park land

Resource

- https://imaginelexington.com/ZOTA_open-space



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Planning

What, Why, and Who?

As population grows and changes, land is always a limited resource:

- Development impacts the local economy, community connections, the environment, and residents' physical and mental health

American city planning developed as a response to urban city crowding:

- Regulating land use was seen as crucial for improving public health to ensure access to light, air and nature, and slow the spread of disease
- To ensure future needs are met, proactive decisions must be made

Who makes these proactive decisions?



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Planning

What happens when Parks aren't Proactively Planned?

We don't get public parks in new neighborhoods:

- Forces people to drive to parks, or not use them at all
- Creates pressure on neighborhoods that do have parks, risking displacement of vulnerable populations

The neighborhoods/city are given left-over pieces of land:

- Low visibility in park creates an unsafe-feeling condition
- Reduces the ability to walk to a park



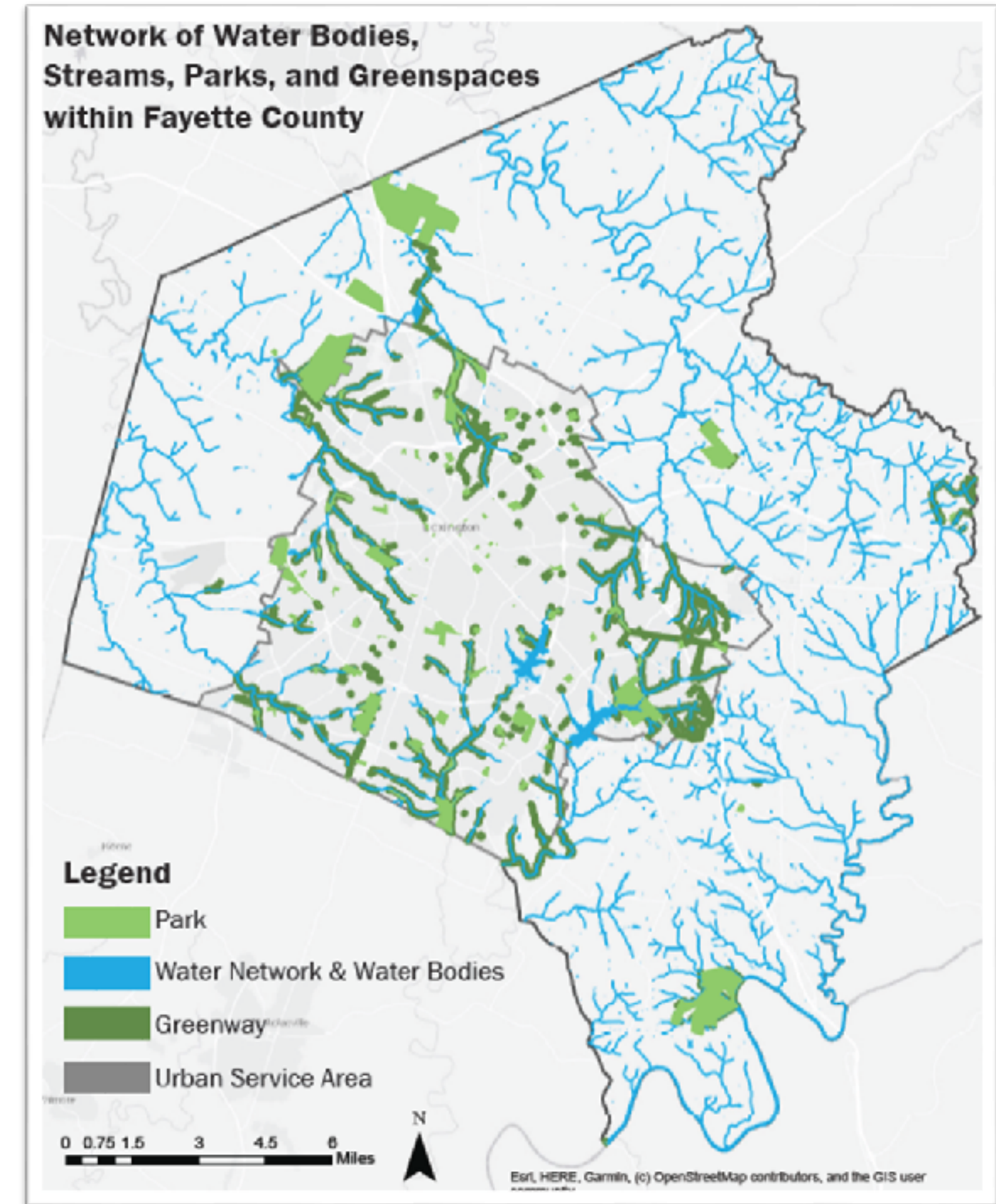
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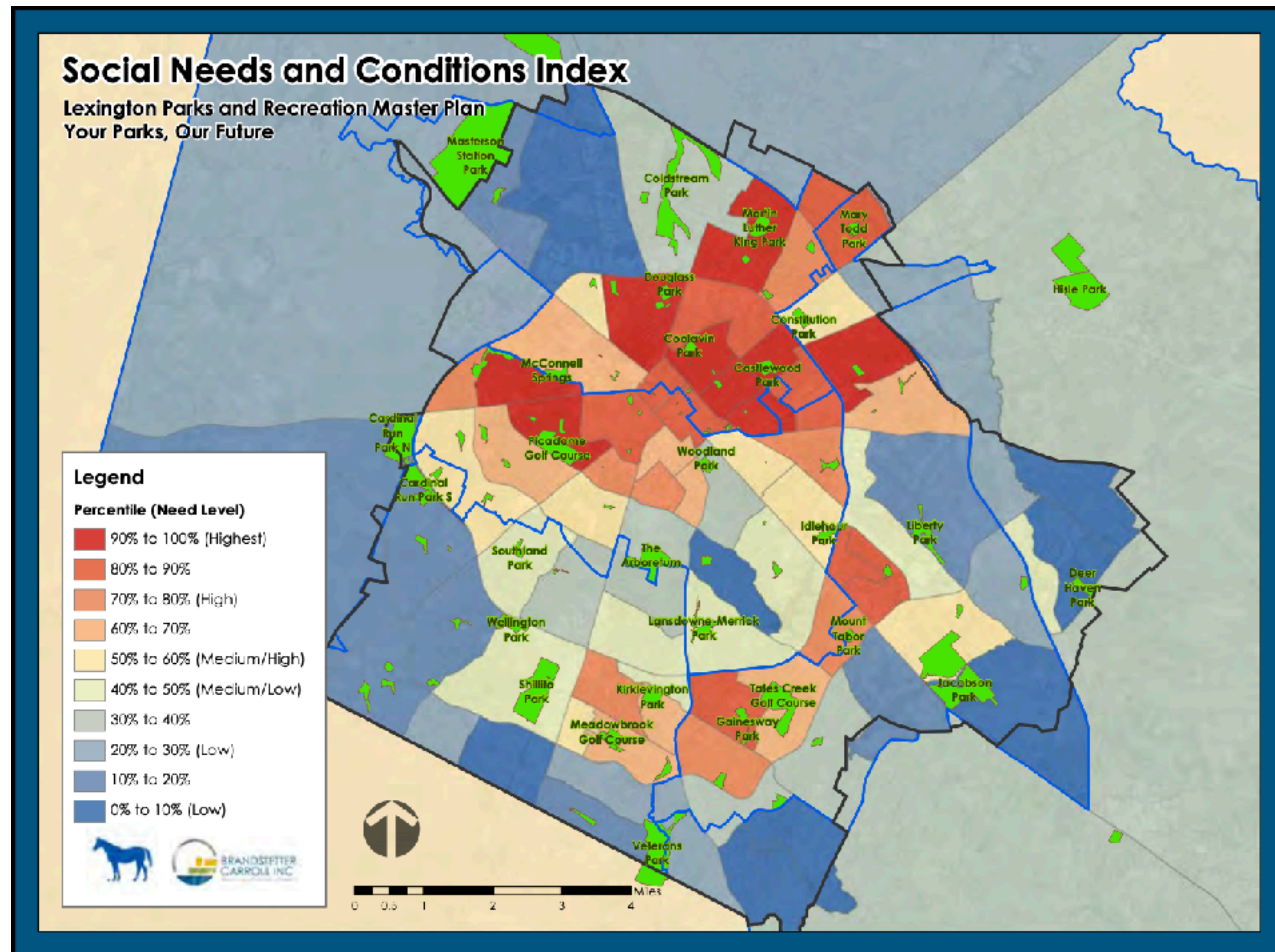
Greenspace Equity

Greenspace equity is not only equitable distribution of resources but equitable access to decision-making.



Why Urban Greenspace Equity Matters

The 2018 Parks Master Plan Social Needs and Conditions Index



Factors of Social Needs

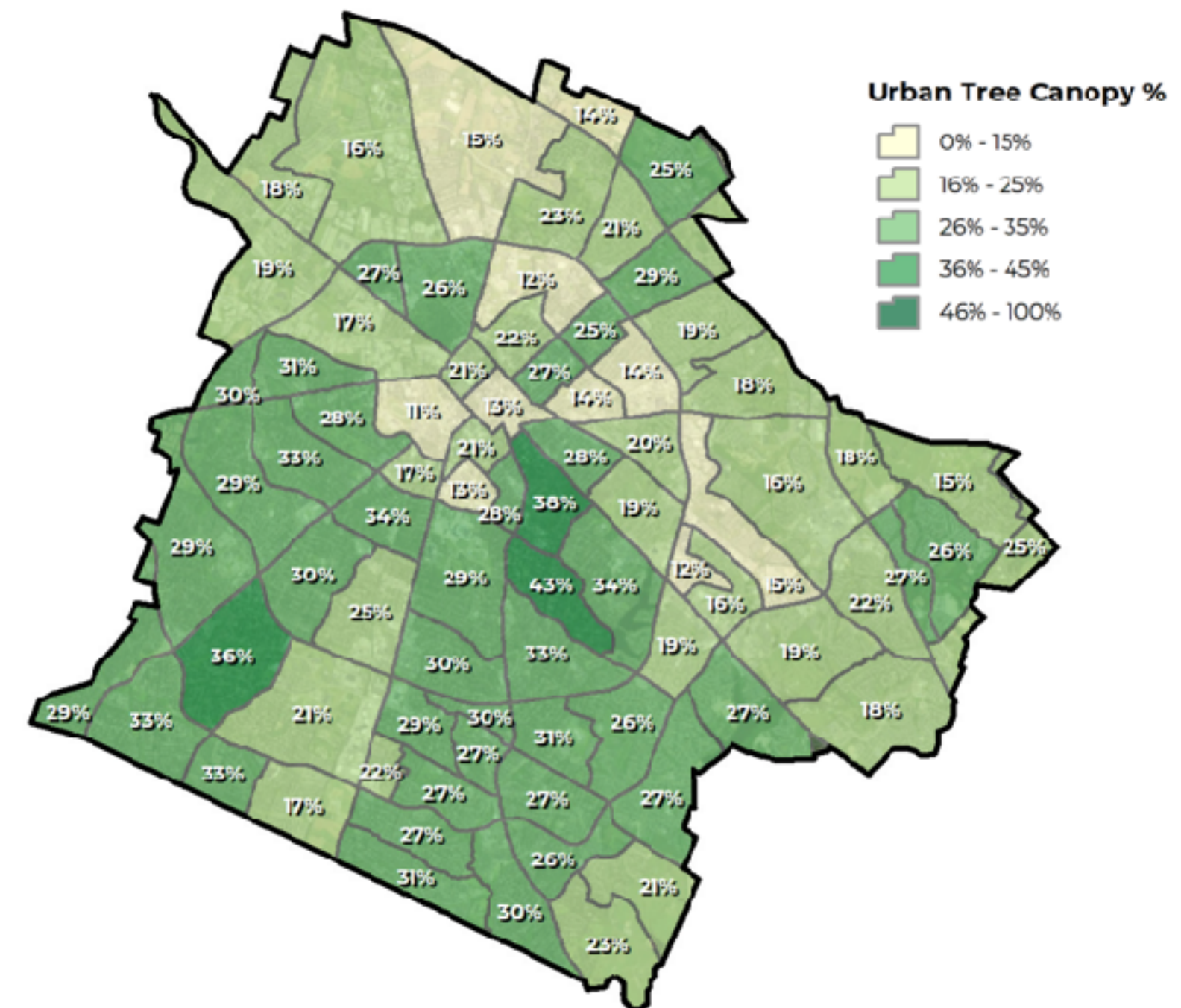
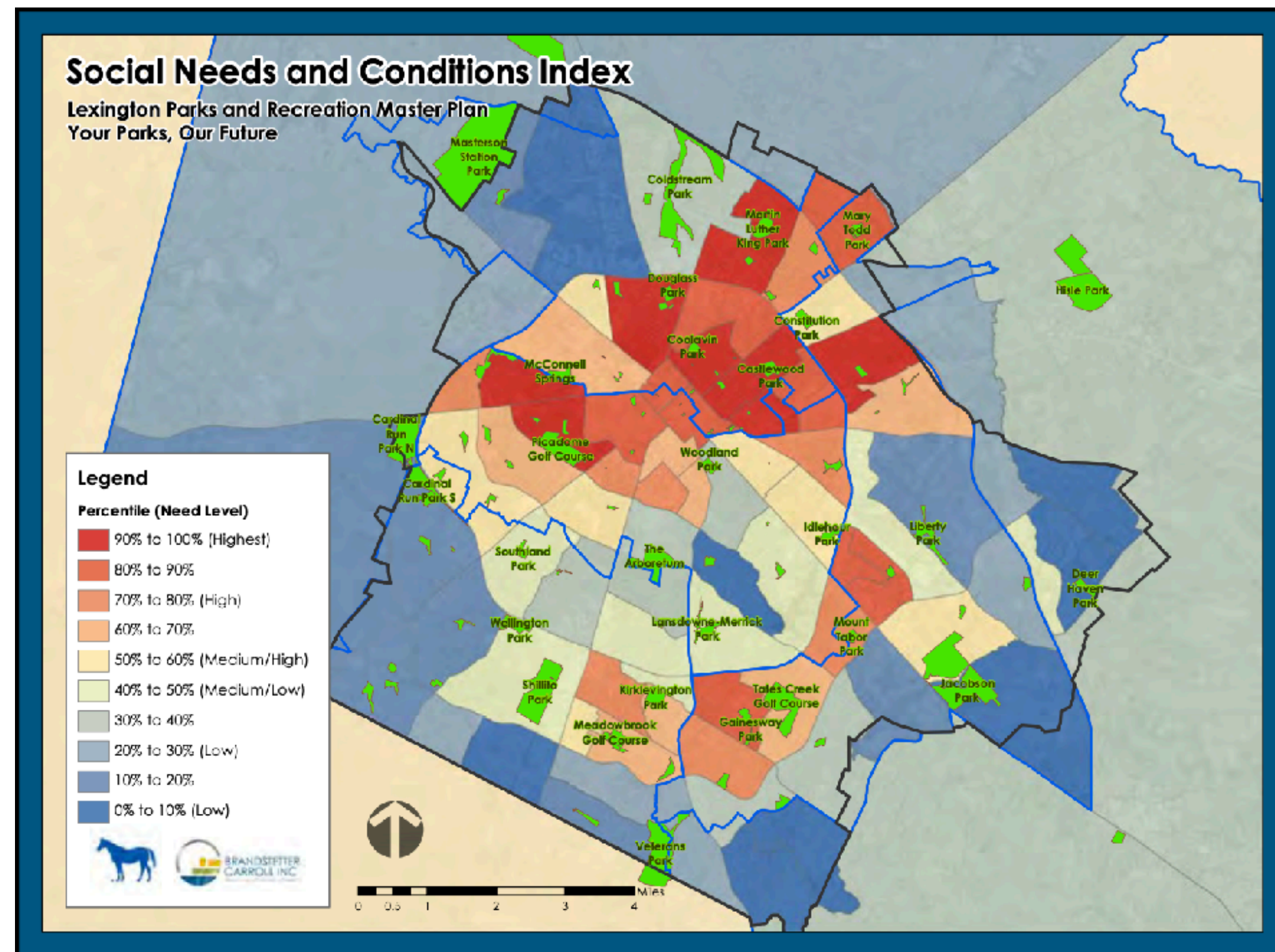
- Median Household Income
- Education Level
- Unemployment
- Single Parent Households
- Crime
- Residents Under Age 18
- Residents 65+
- Residents with Disabilities
- Poverty (weighted x 2)
- Population Density (weighted x 2)



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Why Urban Greenspace Equity Matters

Comparing the Social Needs Index and the Urban Tree Canopy Study



Resource

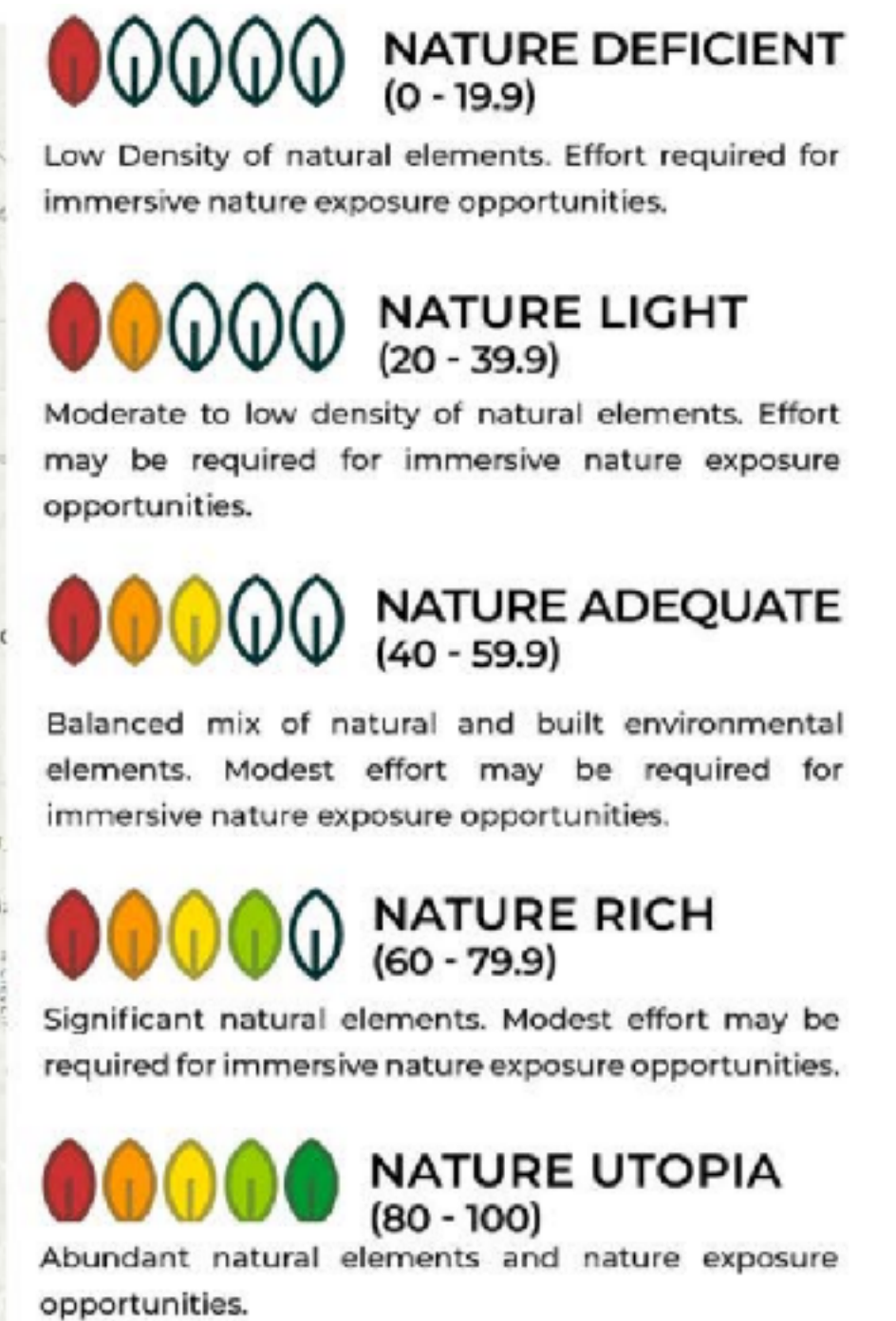
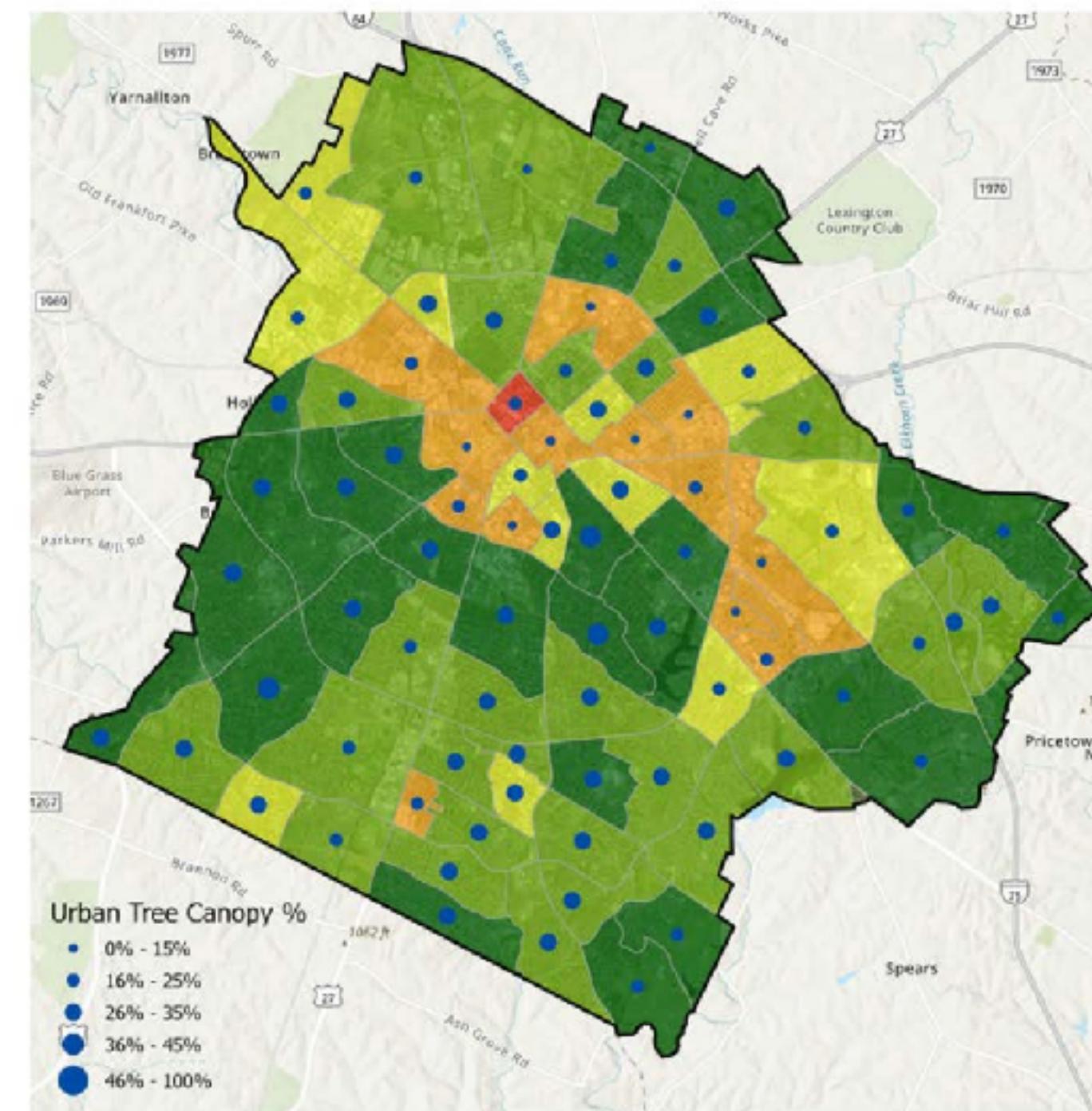
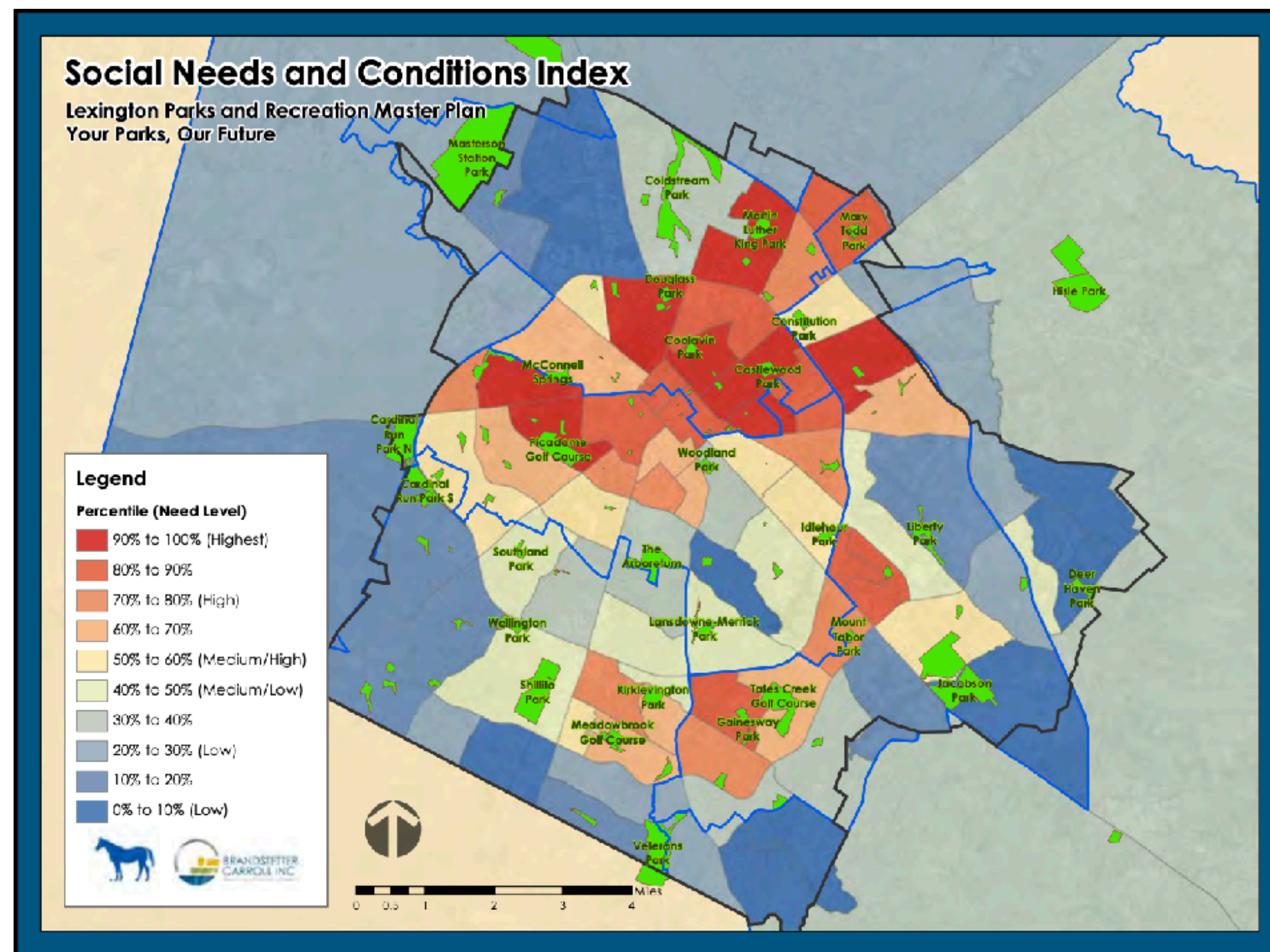
Urban Tree Canopy Study (2022): <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/lexingtons-tree-canopy>



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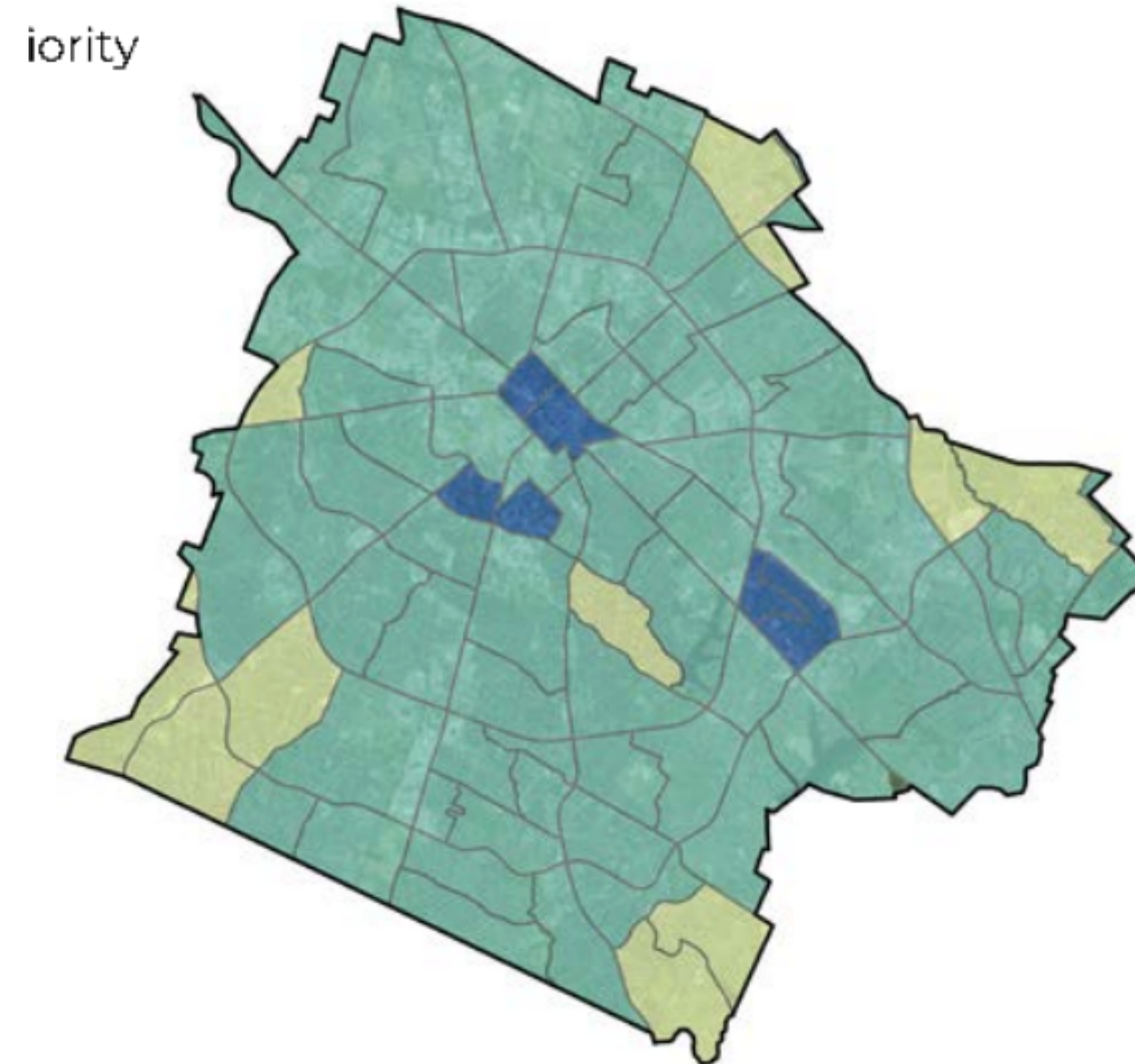
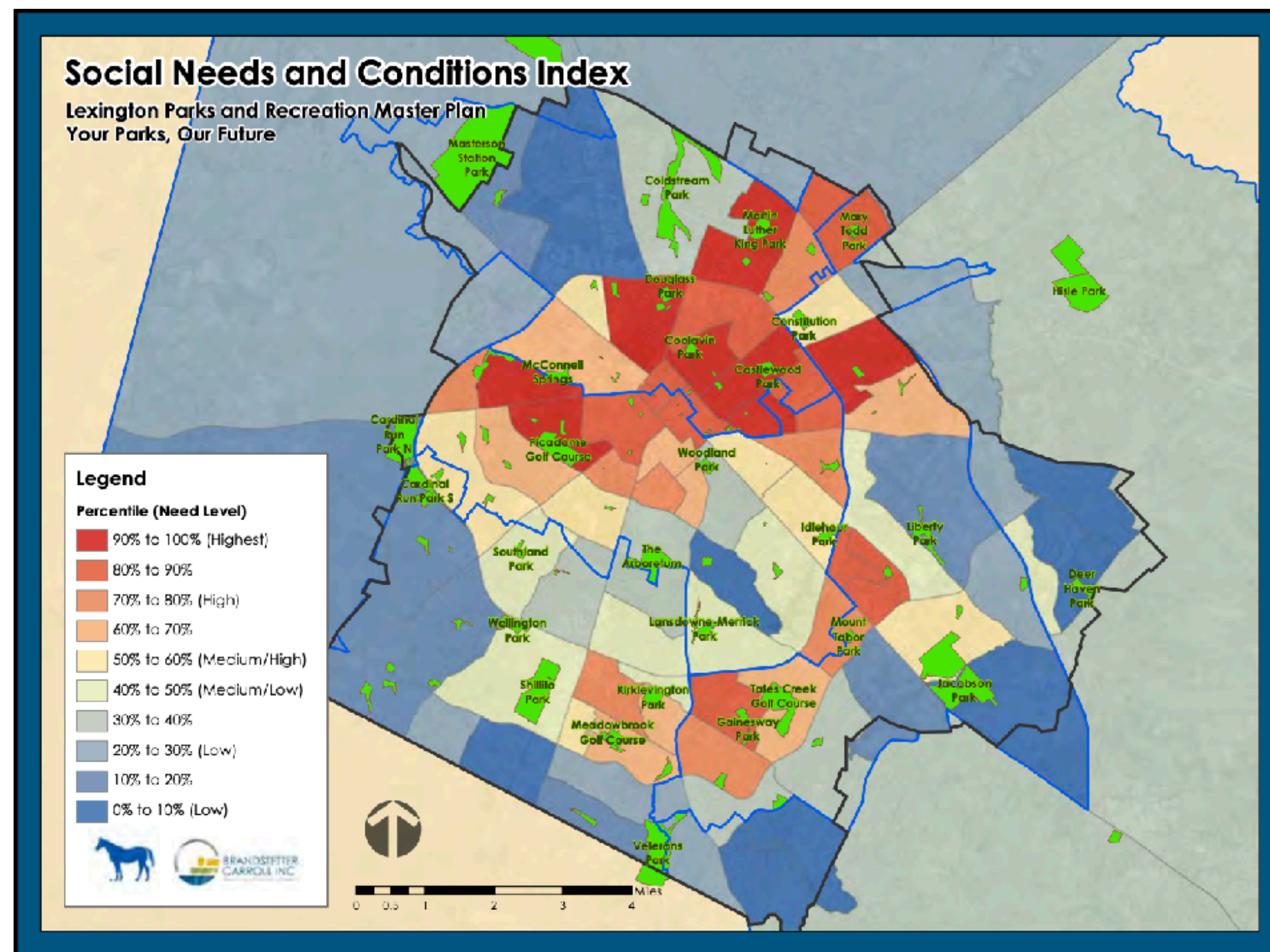
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Why Urban Greenspace Equity Matters

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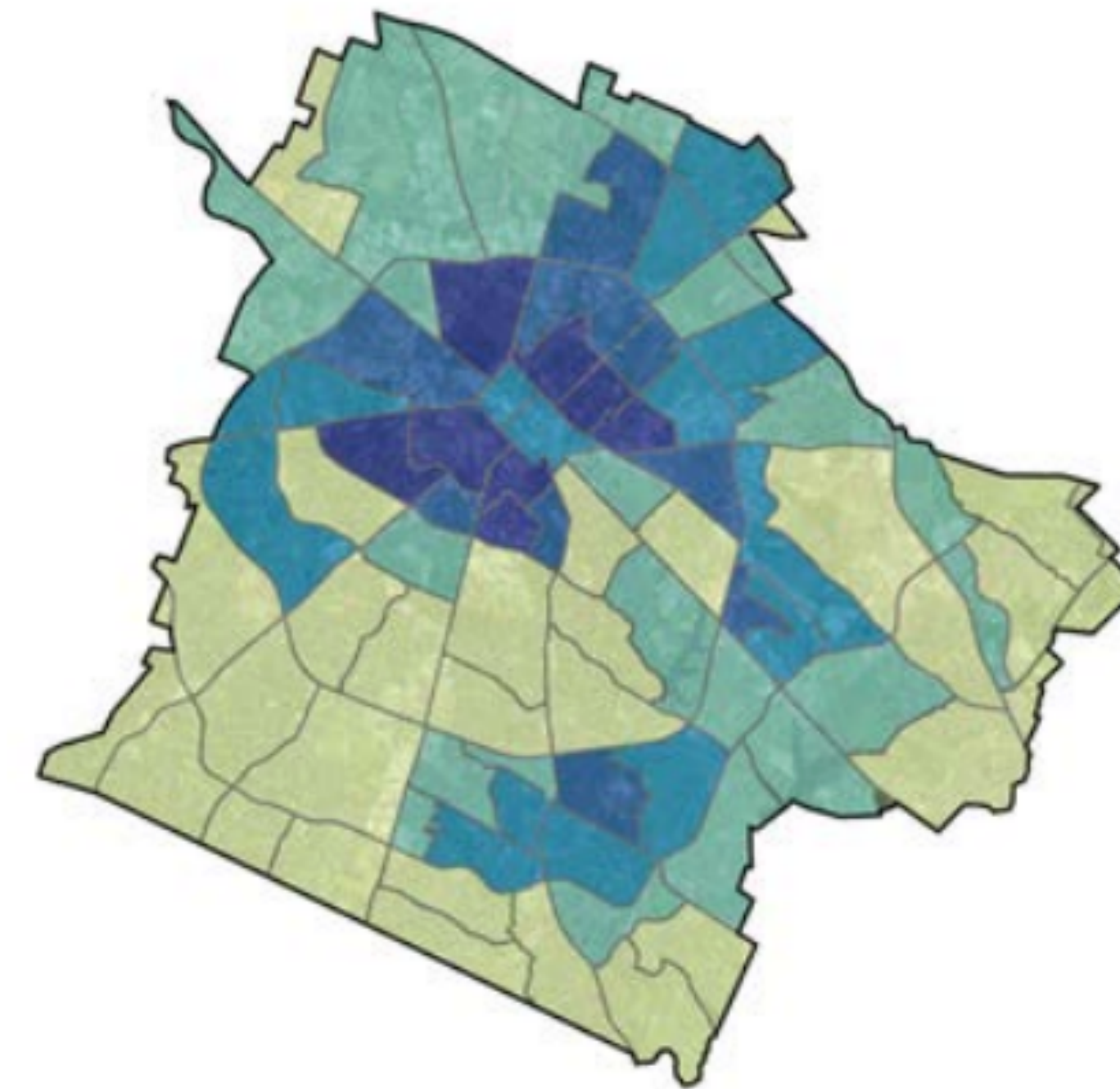
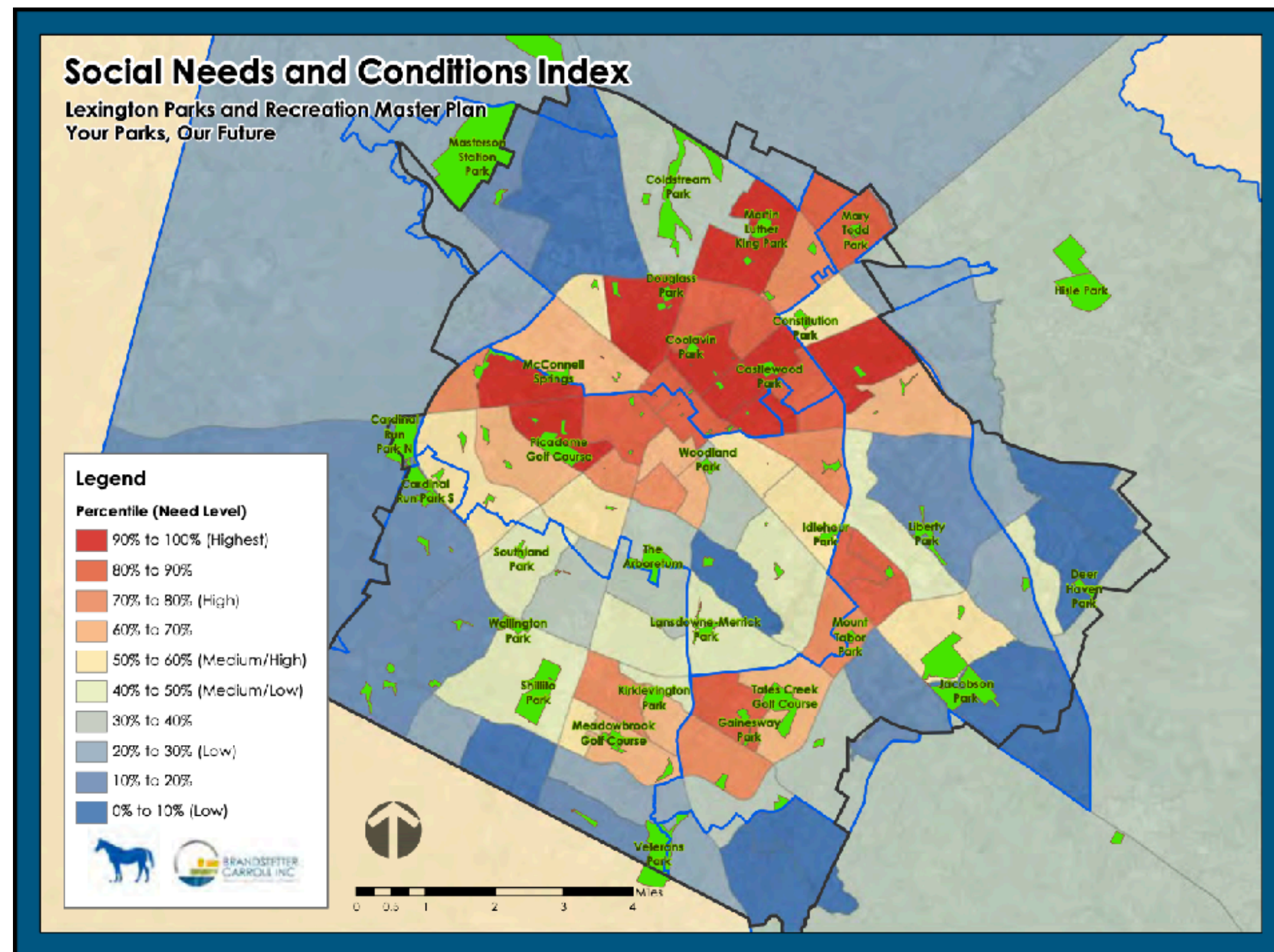
Urban Heat Island by Census Tracts



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Why Urban Greenspace Equity Matters

Comparing the Social Needs Index and the Urban Tree Canopy Study



Asthma by Census Tracts



Questions?



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How can you get involved now?

Division of Planning

When:

- Developer-neighborhood engagement
- Planning Commission public hearings
- On the Table (Comprehensive Plan development)
- Contact Planning Staff

About

- New parks in developing areas
- Neighborhood design (park access)
- Overall connectivity and walkability



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How can you get involved now?

Division of Parks and Recreation

When:

- During the input process for Parks Master Plan updates (every 5 years)
- At Parks Advisory Board meetings
- At Friends of Parks meetings
- Contact Parks and Recreation Staff

About

- New and existing parks
- Park Design
- Park Programming



How can you get involved now?

Resources

Land Development Regulations

- Zoning Ordinance (ZOTAs): <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/zoning-ordinance>
- Land Subdivision Regulations (SRAs): <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/land-subdivision-regulations>



How can you get involved now?

Resources

Advisory Groups

- Parks Advisory Board: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/boards/parks-and-recreation-advisory-board>
- Friends of Parks Groups
- Neighborhood Associations: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/find-your-neighborhood-association>



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How can you get involved now?

Resources

People

- Planning Commission: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/boards/planning-commission>
- Planning Staff: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/departments/planning>
- Urban County Council: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/departments/urban-county-council>
- Parks and Recreation: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/departments/parks-recreation>



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How can you get involved now?

Take our survey!

<https://civiclex.typeform.com/to/RxTlfaqr>



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