



# The Coalition for Environment, Equity, and Resilience

**CEER Houston**

# Coalition for Environment, Equity, and Resilience

## CEER

is a collaboration that raises awareness of the connection between pollution, place, and the public's health.

# Coalition for Environment, Equity, and Resilience



CITIZENS' ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION



# Why do we need CEER?

## During Hurricane Harvey

- **Hazardous chemicals** were released in every county
- **Toxic chemicals** leaked from more than 15 superfund sites
- Spills led to harmful **air pollution**

## Today

- **No funding** for environmental clean-up in budget proposals
- **No discussion** of enforcing protection of hazardous materials
- **No prioritization** of communities hit the hardest

# Why do we need CEER?



**Residents washed away by Harvey wait for answers about pollution**



**Most homes damaged by Harvey were outside flood plain**



**Harvey exposes another gap between rich and poor**



**Arkema documents: Planning, mechanical failures led to fires**



**2 more chemical containers explode at Crosby chemical plant**

## **Our Vision:**

**A region that is environmentally sustainable and economically strong where residents have the opportunity to live, work, learn, play, and pray free from environmental hazards.**

## **Our Purpose:**

- **Raise awareness of the connection between environment and community well-being**
- **Bring community voice to the table**
- **Work with decision makers to promote community, environmental health and resilience**

# Coalition for Environment, Equity, and Resilience

Hurricane Harvey did **unprecedented damage**, but it also offers us an **unprecedented opportunity**

to ensure that **equity** and **resilience** are the foundation upon which we rebuild to better protect the public's health from environmental hazards where we live, work, learn, play, and pray.

# CEER's Vision

We call on our elected leaders, industry, and other decision makers to adopt **eight critical priorities**:

1. Focus on **Equity**
2. Focus on **Air**
3. Focus on **Water**
4. Focus on **Land**
5. Focus on **Waste & Recycling**
6. Focus on **Transparency**
7. Focus on **Displaced People**
8. Focus on **Resiliency**



# Coalition for Environment, Equity, and Resilience

**Equity** means all communities have access to the resources they need to thrive.

This includes access to and visibility in decision making that impacts their communities.

# Observed Challenges

- Inconsistent communication from officials with the public and organizations about public health threats posed by environmental hazards
- Insufficient deployment of resources to adequately sample air, water, and soil
- Questions of accountability due to state waiving environmental laws
- Health risks to local residents due to the siting of hazardous facilities near their homes
- Communities of color and low-income disproportionately impacted by environmental and public health burdens from the storm
- Insufficient communication of health and environmental risks to renters and buyers

## HARRIS COUNTY

# Life Expectancy In Houston Can Vary Up To 20 Years Depending On Where You Live

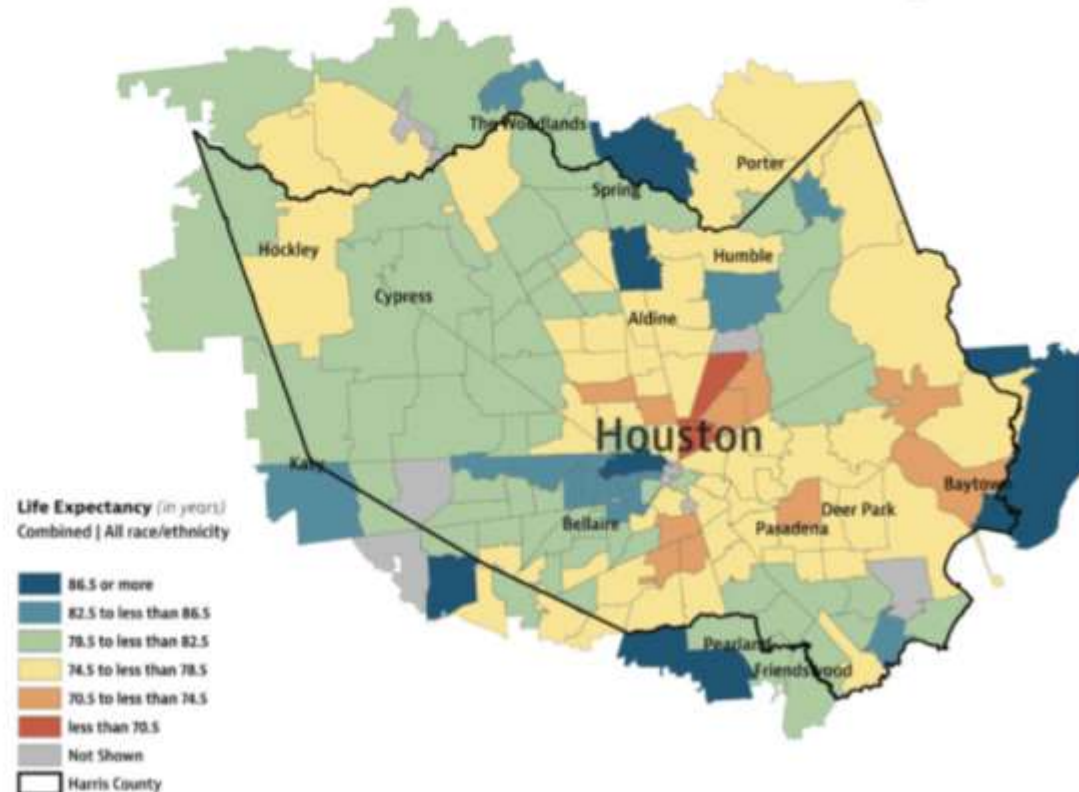
In Texas, life expectancy varies even more – up to 30 years between some ZIP codes.

KATIE WATKINS | MARCH 4, 2019, 6:00 AM

Share

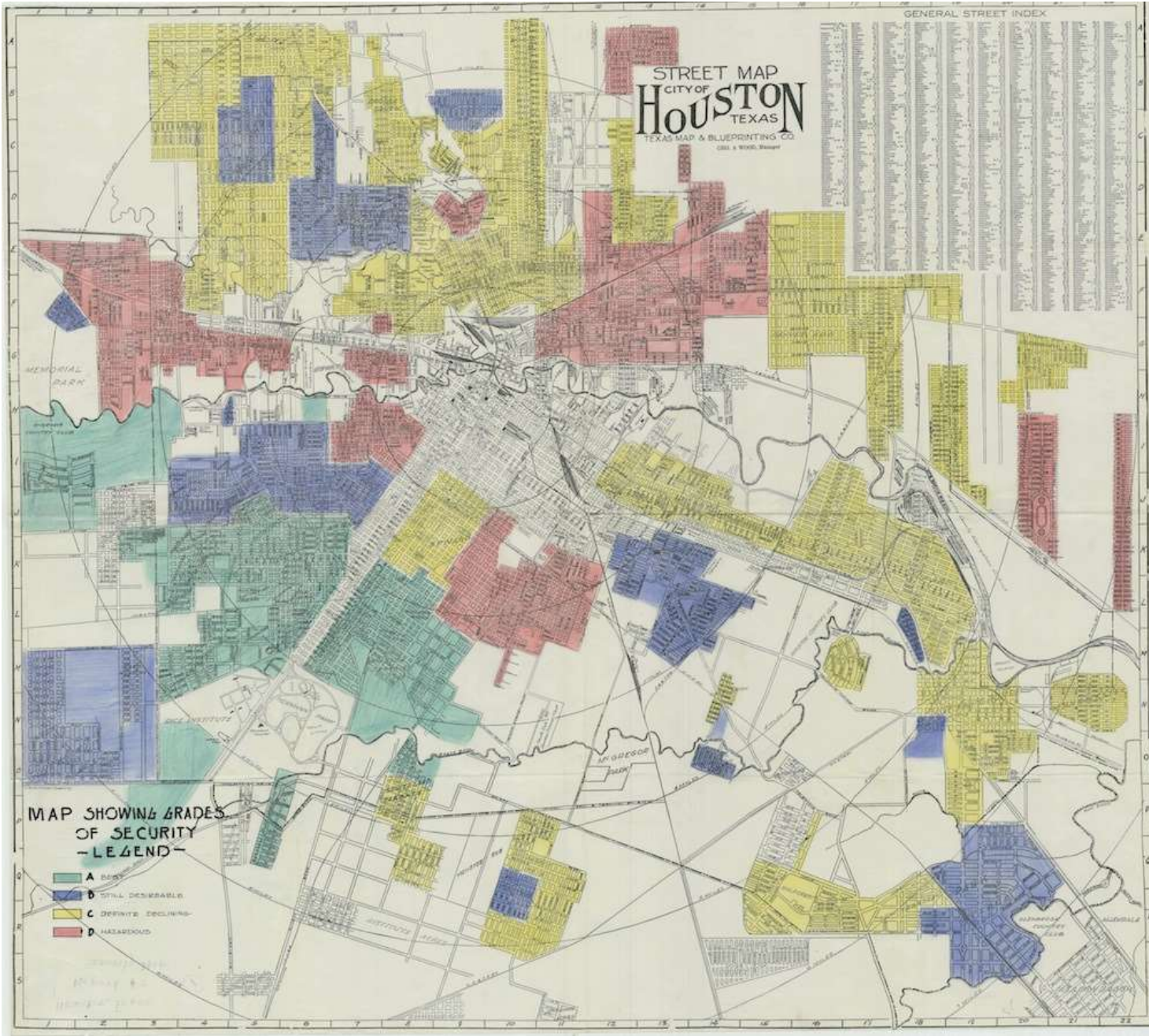


 stamenhealthmaps.com/tx



# How do equity challenges show up in Houston?

- Health
- Disaster Recovery
- Spending on construction and maintenance of infrastructure
- Policy



STREET MAP  
CITY OF  
**HOUSTON**  
TEXAS  
TEXAS MAP & BLUEPRINTING CO.  
GEO. & WOOD, Houston

GENERAL STREET INDEX

MAP SHOWING GRADES  
OF SECURITY  
-LEGEND-

- A BEST
- B STILL DESIRABLE
- C DEPRIVTY DECLINING
- D HAZARDOUS

# Redlining & its connection to Climate Equity



## RISING TOGETHER

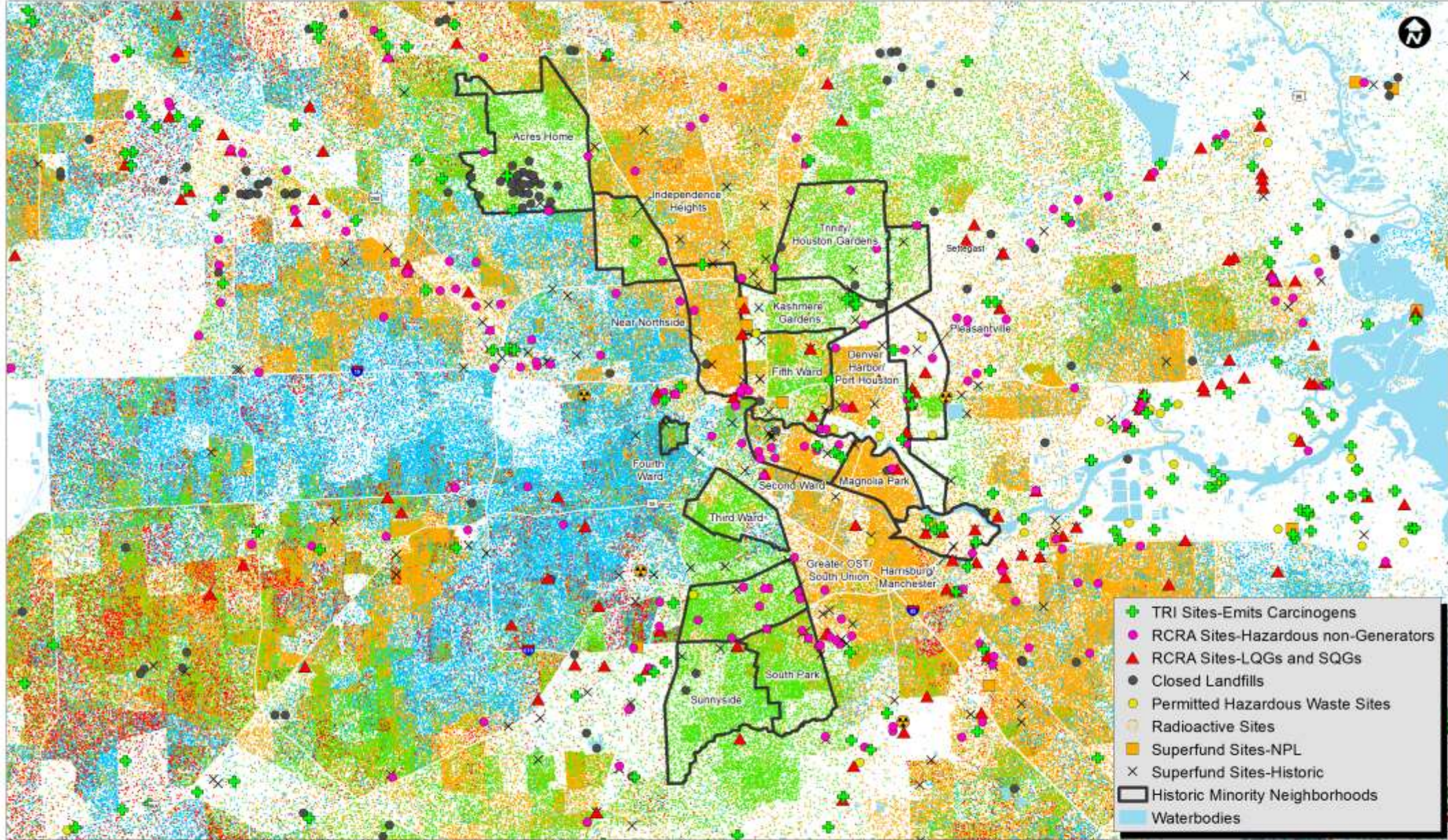
A Roadmap to Confront  
Inequality in Houston

# Systems Failure

Figure 10. Per Capita CIP Budget, Income, and Population Change by Council District

Council District	PER CAPITA CIP Budget (2017-2021)	Income by District (2013)	Population Change by District (2000-2013)
A	\$1,338	\$51,567	25%
B	\$2,390	\$35,759	16%
C	\$4,919	\$79,642	0%
D	\$2,895	\$46,738	22%
E	\$831	\$69,710	57%
F	\$2,025	\$53,682	19%
G	\$3,106	\$84,130	-1%
H	\$2,039	\$48,146	-7%
I	\$1,869	\$45,428	-9%
J	\$2,194	\$41,708	-18%
K	\$1,858	\$41,708	8%

Source: Community Design Resource Center, University of Houston



## Distribution of Environmental Hazards & Race in Houston, TX

Source: NHGIS (ACS 2006-2010), H-GAC, TCEQ, EPA  
Created: 04-Nov 2014



1 dot = 5 people





**Then  
Harvey  
happened**



# Coalition for Environment, Equity, and Resilience

**Resilience** means ensuring that all communities have the infrastructure, network and other resources to withstand any kind of catastrophe, including environmental, economic, and other disasters.

# The threats of disaster recovery

- natural disasters exacerbate wealth inequality. White households and those with more education gain wealth after natural disasters, while minority households and renters lose wealth. The findings indicate that the residents of an area are not equally impacted by a natural disaster and that policy-makers need to rethink how assistance to disaster-impacted households is provided.
- <https://nlihc.org/resource/natural-disasters-exacerbate-wealth-inequality>

# Call to Action

- CEER and partners are asking Harris County to commit to a stronger vision for resilience on the 2 year anniversary of Harvey. Call, email, tweet your County Commissioner to tell them you support a broad vision to make Harris County strong and resilient.
- Follow CEER on Facebook (shameless plug) to learn more about what will happen at County Commissioners Court on August 27<sup>th</sup> and how you can be involved.

# The Coalition for Environment, Equity, and Resilience

By focusing on **equity** and **resilience** through the built and natural world, we can ensure that all Houston residents will have the opportunity to lead healthy, productive lives regardless of their zip code.

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