

# Benefits of trees to building Climate Resilient Communities

## 1. Build Climate Resilience

- a. Improve air quality
- b. Reduce heat island impact
- c. Improve soil quality/reduce erosion & sedimentation
- d. Increase biodiversity and habitat (native)

[Benefits of Trees and Vegetation](#)

## 2. Improve Physical and Mental Health

- a. Improve heart rate, blood pressure, cortisol levels
- b. Reduce burn out and symptoms of anxiety and depression
- c. Increase attention/creativity
- d. Improve healing time and pain management

[Nature is Medicine, But What is the Right Dose](#)

[Health Benefits from Forests](#)

## 3. Create Community Identity and Cohesion

- a. Provide community identity/place
- b. Improve sense of safety
- c. Reduce selfishness, increase happiness

[Place Attachment and Meaning](#)

[People and Trees: An intimate connection](#)

Trees in well cared for landscapes are super powers:

- [Parks have social superpowers. Let's make more of them](#)
- [Parks: The Public Health Super Power Hiding in Plain Sight](#)

## Trees and Historically underserved and under resourced communities

Disinvestment looks like this:

1. Less trees/greenpace/biodiversity/habitats
2. More built environment
3. Hotter, poorer air quality, flood prone

## Impacts

1. Significantly less tree canopy
2. Average temperatures are 10 - 20 degrees hotter (day and night)

3. Medical emergencies are higher
4. Utility costs are higher
5. Flash flooding

Learn more:

- [Increasing Urban Green Spaces to Reduce Urban Heat Island Effect in Richmond](#)
- [Urban Greening for a More Resilient Richmond](#)
- [Let's talk about Urban Heat Island Impact](#)
- [The Temperature of Disinvestment: Examining Urban Heat Islands and Historically Redlined Communities](#)
- [Heat Islands and Equity](#)

What you can do:

Trees are a scalable and affordable solution.

1. Be community focused/led/driven (collaborate):
  - a. Learn, meet, listen, engage, partner with neighbors impacted
  - b. [Urban Tree Planting is Booming, Just Not In Low-Income and Minority Neighborhoods](#)
  - c. Learn: why are trees not wanted
    - i. [Low-income areas lack trees, yet they often turn them down. Here's why.](#)
  - d. Partner with Communities, Nonprofits
2. Advocate: prioritize retaining trees/tree canopy before, during, after development, advocate for policies to retain trees
3. Replant: replacing when necessary with native trees
  - a. Tree selection help: Dept of Forestry, University/College Forestry Program, Office of Sustainability
4. Prioritize: get trees in the hands of those who actually need them look for heat island/low canopy locations
5. Provide: Plant on church site: Be the 10-minute walk destination
6. Manage: Budget and plan for establishment care and training on best practices
7. Draw in: Way to raise awareness, draw people into conversation about larger initiatives

Examples of tools to assess where most impact can be made

- [RVA Green 2050 \(explanation\)](#)
- [Tree Equity Score](#)
- [EJ Mapper](#)
- <https://dsl.richmond.edu/redliningrichmond/>