



Colorado Safe Routes to School Webinar Series

Celebrating Earth Day and Beyond – Environmental Justice in Safe Routes to School

Kori Johnson, Safe Routes Partnership

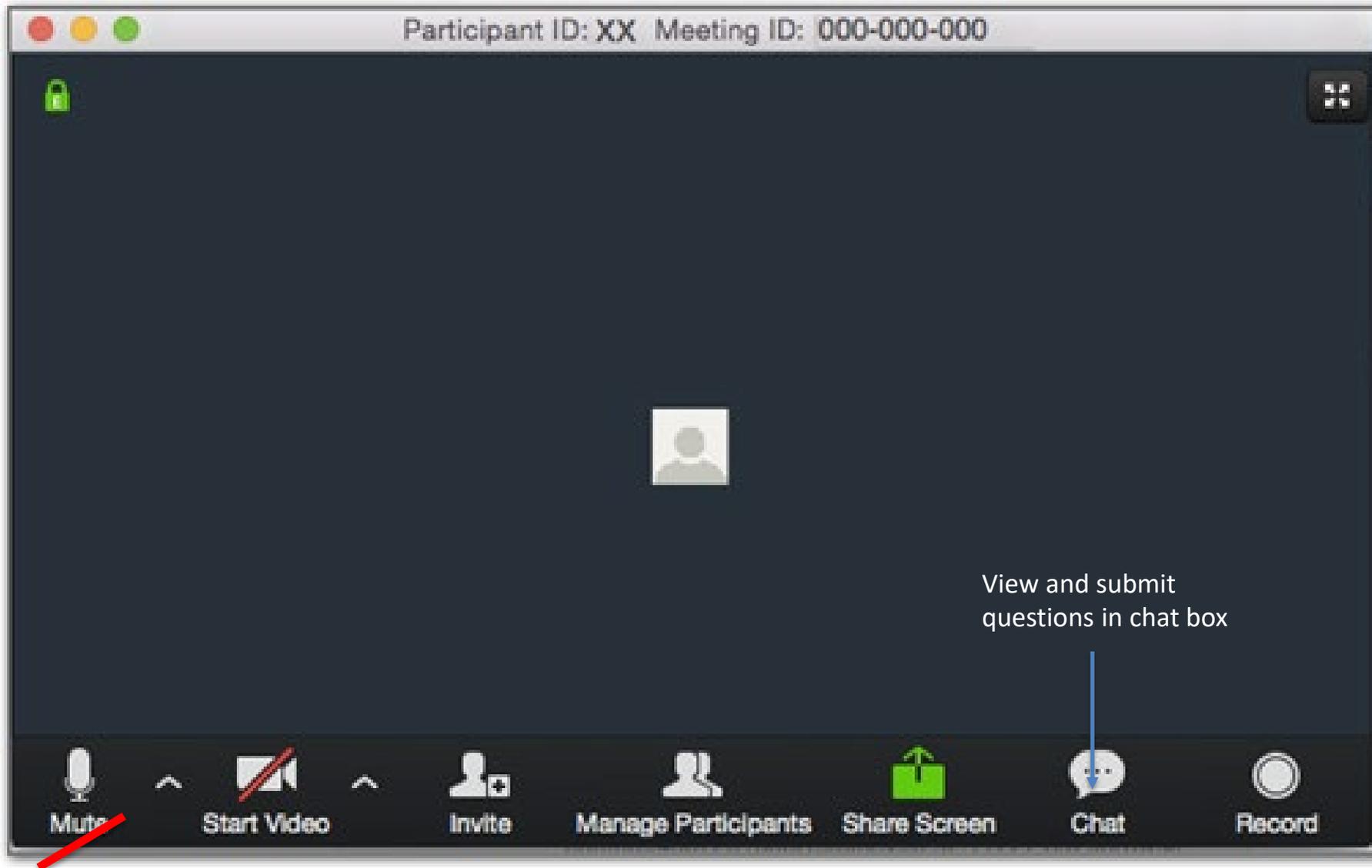
April 19, 2022



MISSION

The mission of the Safe Routes Partnership is to advance safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in everyday life, improving the health and well-being of people of all races, income levels, and abilities, and building healthy, thriving communities for everyone.





SESSION IS BEING RECORDED
PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN THE CHAT!

TODAY'S PRESENTERS

Kori Johnson

Safe Routes Partnership, Washington, DC

Michelle Lieberman (Tech Support)

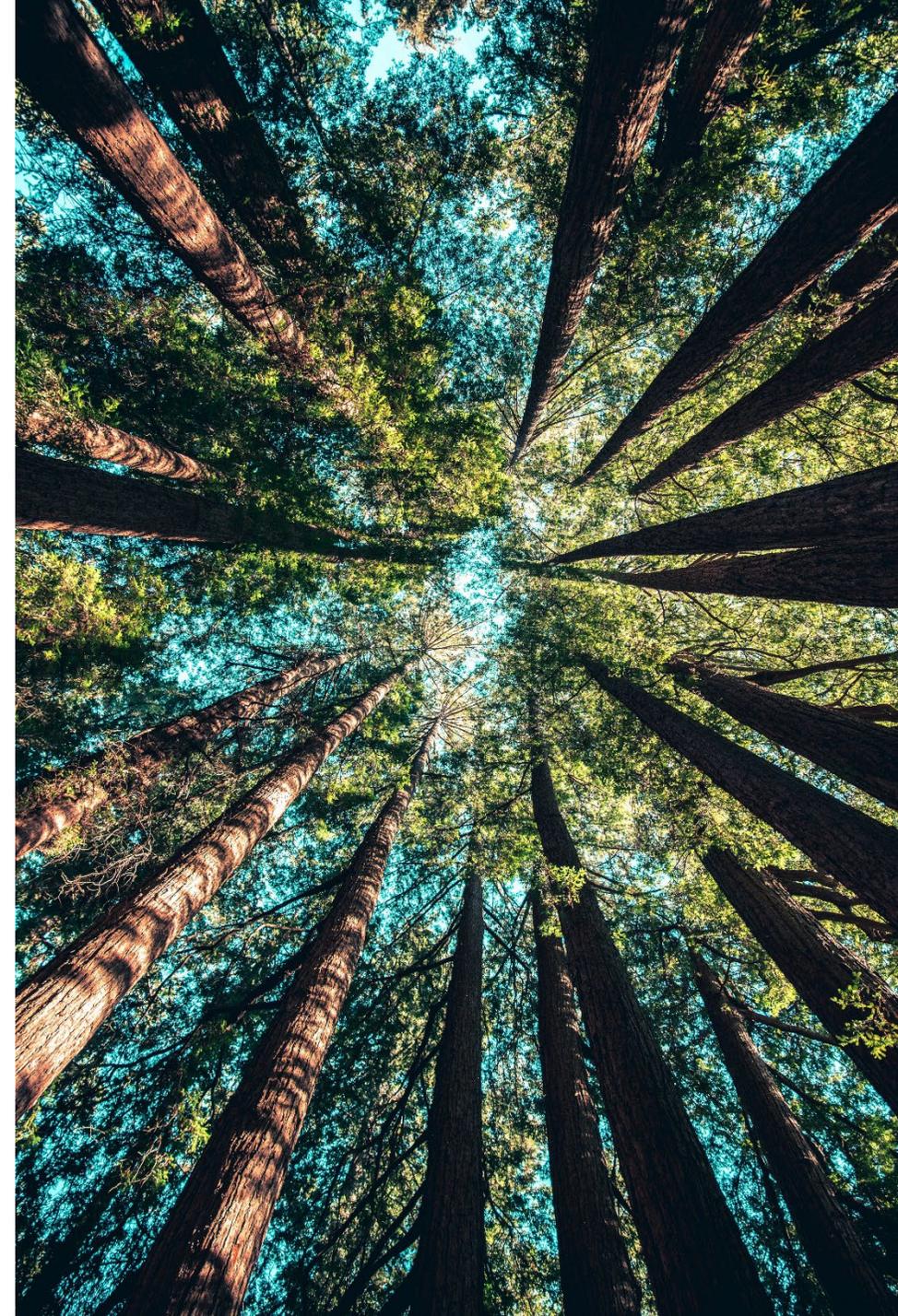
Safe Routes Partnership, Orange County, CA

Ean Tafoya

Colorado State Director, GreenLatinos

Audience: Introduce yourselves in the chat!

- *Name/Location*
- *Connection to Safe Routes to School*
- *Respond in the chat: How have environmental factors/climate change impacted the community where you live and/or work?*



Agenda

- Environmental Justice History & Overview
- Environmental Justice in Colorado
- Environmental Justice in Safe Routes to School
- A Conversation with Ean Tafoya – Colorado State Director, GreenLatinos
- Q & A
- Reminders & Next Steps

What is
Environmental Justice?



Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- The same degree of protection from environmental health hazards.
- Equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

- **United States Environmental Protective Agency**



Environmental justice connects to...

- Food
- Transportation
- Housing
- Labor
- Energy
- Climate
- Built Environment



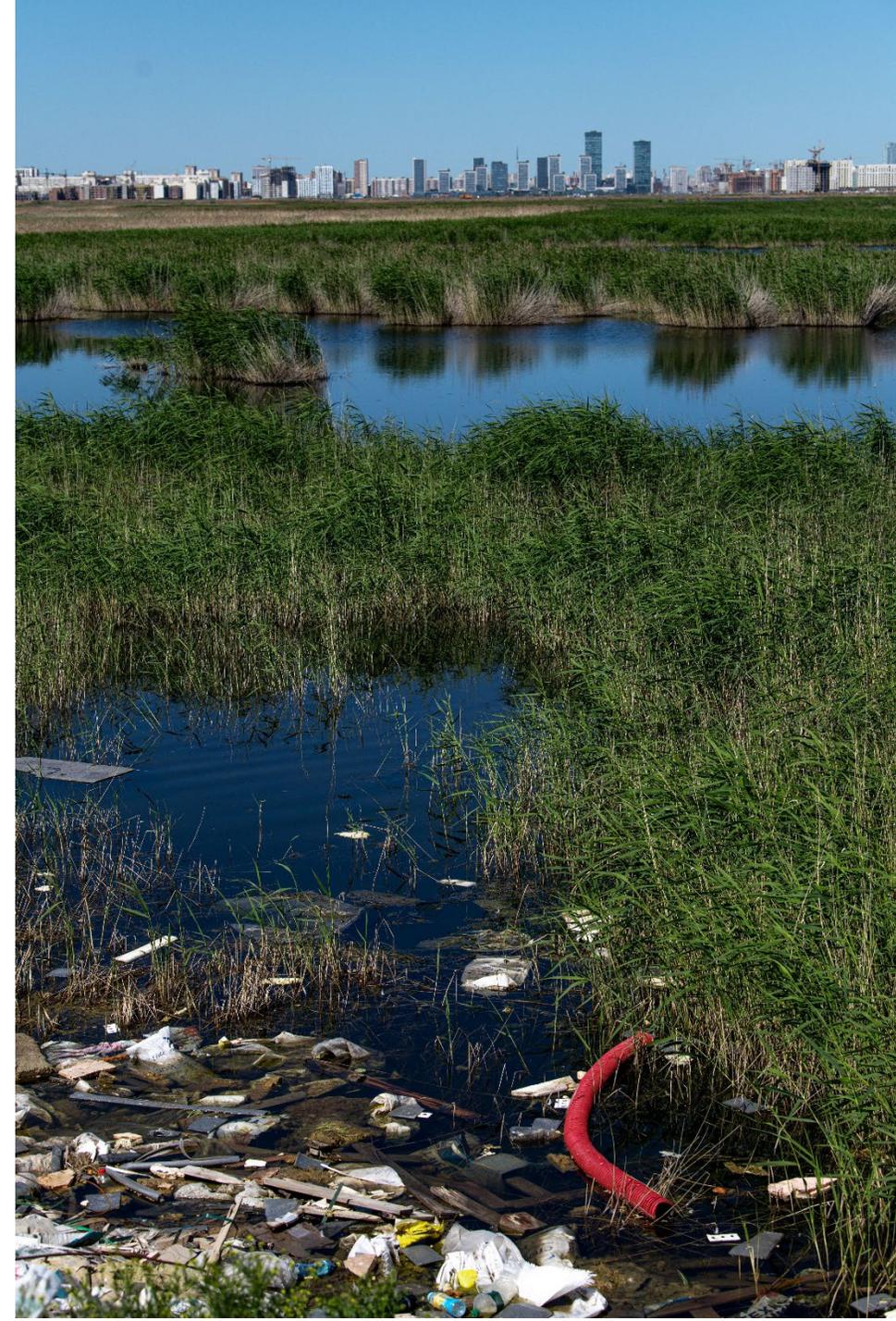
History of Environmental Justice Movement

- [EPA Environmental Justice Timeline](#)
- Intersection of environmentalism and social justice
- Inspired by the 1960s United States Civil Rights Movement; emerged in the 1980s
- Public health concerns for Black communities and during Civil Rights Movement
 - Poor working conditions
 - Poor sanitation
 - Neighborhood landfills
- Warren County Sit-In (1962)
 - Non-violent protest of PCB landfill construction in Warren County, NC



Toxic Waste and Race Report (1987)

- [Toxic Waste and Race Report](#)
- Exposed environmental and health disparities in low income communities and communities of color
- Over 15 million African Americans, 8 million Latinos, and half of all Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans were living in communities with at least one abandoned or uncontrolled toxic waste site (EPA Environmental Justice Timeline)
- First National People of Color Summit (1991) – [The Principles of Environmental Justice](#)



Environmental Justice Today

- Racial and ethnic minorities more likely to live in areas experiencing environmental degradation
 - Live closer to environmental hazards – industrial parks, highways
 - Lack of access to green space
 - Lack of access to supermarkets
- Low-income communities more likely to be exposed to climate change threats (fires, storms, floods, tornados)

[- Center for Sustainable Systems, University of Michigan](#)



What people are advocating for...

- Clean and toxin free air
- Clean and toxin free water
- Clean and toxin free housing and dwellings
- Clean and toxin free workplaces
- Adequate access to transportation
- Clean and energy efficient transportation
- Adequate access to housing
- Adequate access to food
- Protected public lands and waterways



Environmental Justice in Colorado





Environmental justice recognizes that all people have a right to breathe clean air, drink clean water, participate freely in decisions that affect their environment, live free of dangerous levels of toxic pollution, experience equal protection of environmental policies, and share the benefits of a prosperous and vibrant pollution-free economy.

[- Colorado Environmental Justice Act](#)



Disproportionately Impacted Communities

- Low-income households
- People of color households
- Housing cost-burdened households
- Communities with a history of environmental racism due to exclusionary laws (like redlining)
 - Black
 - Latino/Hispanic
 - Indigenous
 - Immigrants
 - Unhoused

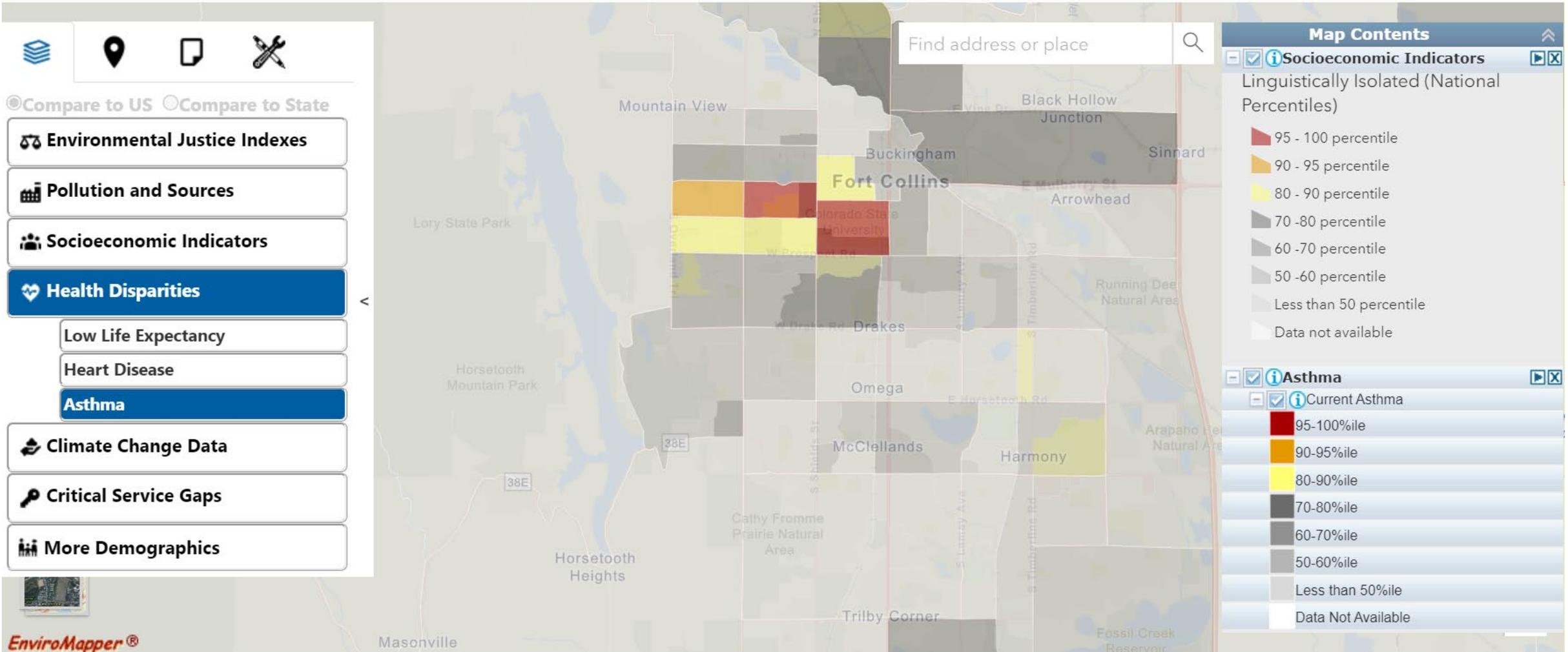
[- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#)



Mapping Environmental Justice

- [EPA EJScreen](#)
- Environmental justice mapping and screening tool
- Combines environmental and demographic indicators
- Created using data from across the country
- Compares national and statewide data

EPA EJScreen





How to Use EJScreen Data

- Conduct community research
- Inform outreach and community engagement strategies
- Prioritize programs and initiatives
- Enhance existing data sets (ex. compare student travel data to local asthma rates)



Going Deeper with EJScreen

- What stories does this map tell?
- What stories do you want to know more about?
- Where can you find these stories?
- How can you uplift these stories in your work?

Environmental Justice in Safe Routes to School





Environmental justice is about people.

EJ Community Research

- Take a walk or ride around the neighborhood
- Talk to community members
- Research history of environmental racism and exclusionary laws
 - Redlining
 - Highways/freeway construction
 - Neighborhood planning
 - Toxic waste management
 - Worker's rights
- Talk with local public health department
- EJScreen mapping tool



EJ Community Research

- Learn about the history of the land
 - Indigenous community partners
 - Archival research
 - [Native land mapping](#)
 - [Native land acknowledgements](#)
- Connect with EJ groups and advocates
- Review state and local policies around EJ and climate change
- Attend state and local meetings about EJ issues
- Include EJ questions on SRTS surveys



EJ Concerns for Students and Families

- Poor air quality
- Inadequate infrastructure on school routes
- Trash and debris
- Asthma
- School siting
 - Industrial parks
 - Warehouse facilities
 - Highways





Collaborate with environmental justice partners.



Potential Partnerships

- Local health department
- Community organizations
 - Housing
 - Food and nutrition
 - Transportation
 - Labor
 - Agriculture
- Tribal communities
- Local elected officials
- Artists and cultural organizations
- *Others?*

Opportunities for Action

- Health and safety demonstrations
- Outreach events
- Joint grant applications
- Public testimonies
- Walk and roll audits
- Walk/Bike & Roll to School Day
- Press coverage

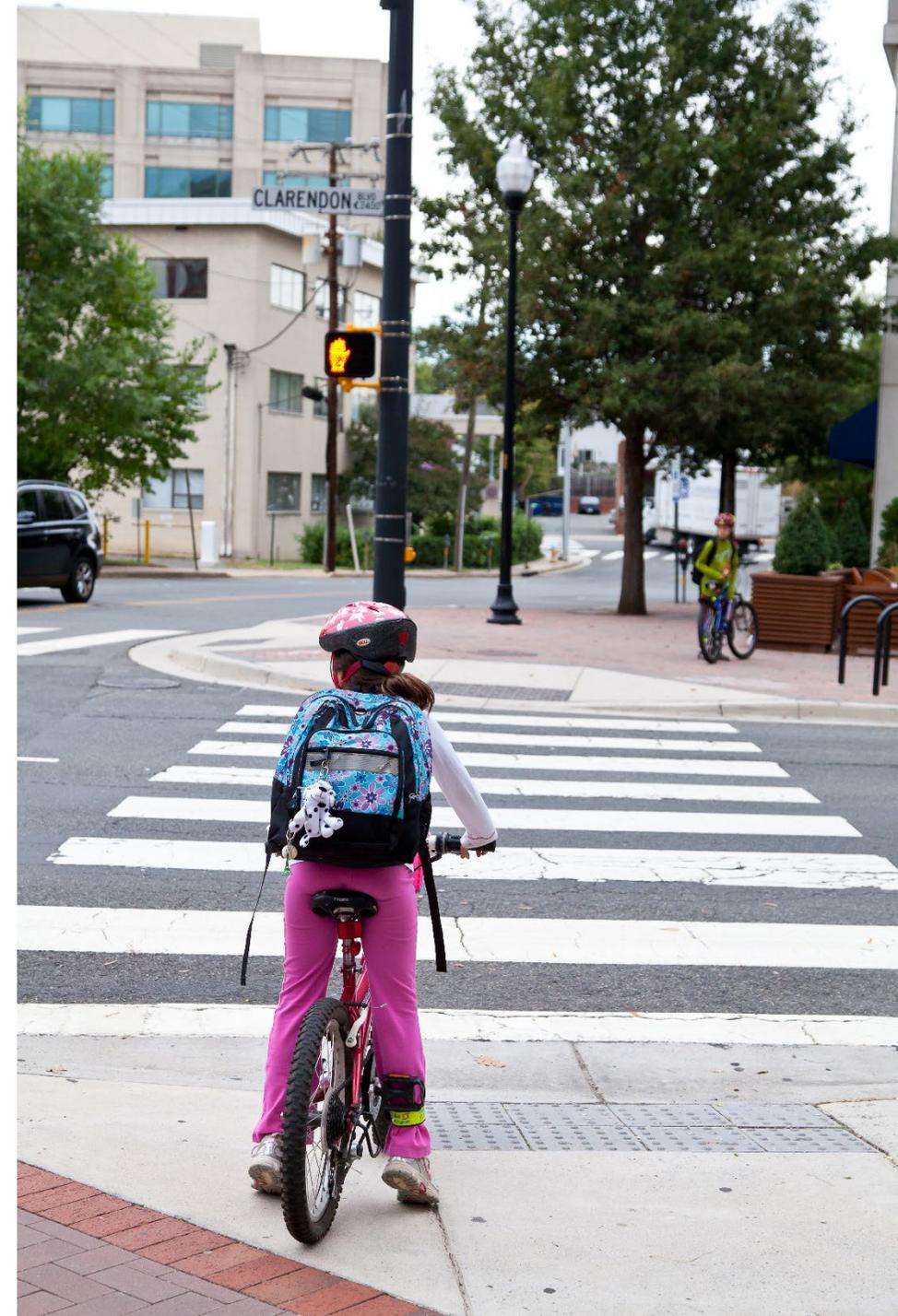




Add environmental justice into Safe Routes to School programming.

Incorporating EJ in Walk & Bike Audits

- Locations of industrial warehouses, power plants, highways, waste management facilities
- Trash and debris
- Drainage
- Location and number of trashcans and recycling bins
- Shade/trees
- Greenspace



EJ in Walk/Bike & Roll to School Day

- Invite EJ partners to participate
- Distribute information about local EJ initiatives
- Survey families about EJ concerns
- Include EJ in marketing materials
- Poster contest
- Transform outdoor environment
 - Temporary planters
 - Decorated trash and recycling bins
 - Artistic sidewalks and crosswalks – nature themes



Air Quality Awareness Week

- May 2 – May 6, 2022
- Corresponds with ozone season, wildfire season, and World Asthma Day
- Bike & Roll to School Day – May 4, 2022
- “No idling” campaigns
- PSAs and poster contests
- Always consider air quality when planning events



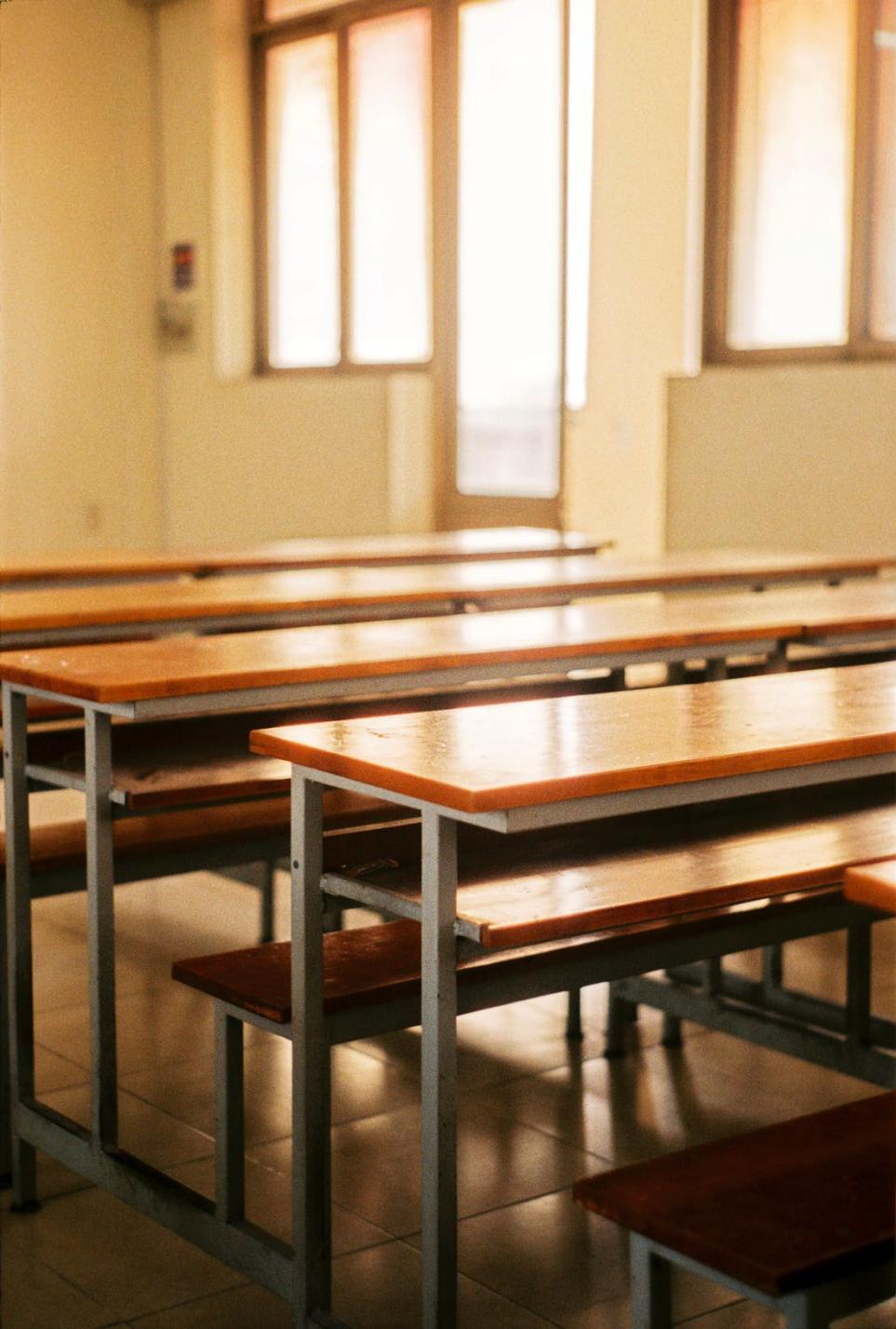


Environmental justice involves policy change.



School Siting

Shorthand for the bundle of decisions that affect where schools end up located.



School Siting Considerations

- Where to build new schools
- Which existing schools will be closed
- Whether to remove a school or start over
- Design and orientation of school site



School Siting & Environmental Justice

- Land is cheaper near industrial parks, freeways, and less environmentally friendly areas
- Schools in low-income areas and communities of color more likely to be located near these areas
- Students, families, and school staff impacted by
 - Air and waste pollution
 - Lack of sidewalks and crosswalks
 - High speed, busy freeways
 - Less comfortable and appealing environment



School District Policies in Colorado

- Many districts use a template and model policies to address school siting
- Limited inclusion of smart school siting principles including:
 - Prioritizing walking or bicycling
 - Supporting schools in denser residential areas
 - Colocation – building schools near parks, libraries, recreation centers
 - Balancing walkability and integration



Best Practices for School Districts

- Incorporate strong language supporting Safe Routes to School into wellness policies
- Adopt strong supportive Safe Routes to School policies
- Develop a statement of goals/principles for school siting, as well as more detailed considerations emphasizing proximity, ability to walk and bike to school, equitable access to school facilities
- Commit to ongoing short and long term data-driven facilities planning

Best Practices for School Districts

- Implement a detailed process involving input and engagement from local communities, the local jurisdiction, and other stakeholders
- Design commitments regarding access for walking and biking, bicycle storage, separation of modes, etc.
- Include considerations regarding student assignment and zones that balance walkability and diversity of student body



SUPPORTING SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL THROUGH SMART SCHOOL SITING



COLORADO
Department of Transportation



Additional School Siting Resources

- [School Siting in Colorado Webinar Recording](#)
- [School Siting in Colorado Factsheet](#)

**A Conversation with Ean Tafoya
Colorado State Director, GreenLatinos**



Contact Information

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*Have an idea for a Safe Routes to School webinar topic?
Email Kori or share in the chat!*