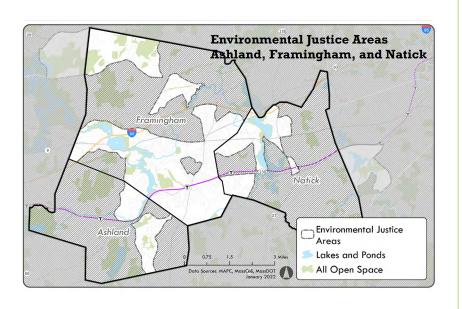
# **Climate Equity in Metro West**

# **Environmental Justice Communities**



Ashland, Natick, and Framingham are working together on a project with two important goals:

- Learning from the people who live and work in Environmental Justice (EJ) neighborhoods about how they experience climate change and how we can help people bounce back from climate events
- Building relationships with residents in these neighborhoods and community based organizations so we can work together on actions to stop climate change from getting worse.

They're calling this work the MetroWest Climate Equity Project.

EJ neighborhoods are more likely to be home to people of color, lowerincome households, and people who speak English less than very well.

# Why are we focusing on environmental justice communities?

Residents of communities predominantly home to people of color and low-income individuals experience the worse effects from climate change, including poor air and water quality, extreme weather, and the rising cost of essential resources. Their experience and the strategies that they have developed to cope with these impacts can lead to more effective long-term solutions.

That EJ communities face higher exposure to the harms of pollution and climate change is not by accident.

Forcing indigenous communities to leave their homes, weak workplace protections for jobs held mostly by immigrants and people of color, residential discrimination, and the siting of low-income housing near toxic facilities, highways, and within wetlands all represent decisions by institutions and government that have threatened the safety and wellbeing of these communities.

Prioritizing climate action in EJ communities and the solutions identified by those most impacted is critical to achieving a future where all people are protected from environmental harm and benefit from the transition to a greener future.











To learn more about the project, visit:

www.mapc.org/resource-library/metro-west-climate-equity/

# Metro West's climate is already changing and not everyone is equally at affected



### Flooding

All neighborhoods have experienced flooding in the past. The region can expect more extreme storms and more rainfall year round, resulting in more frequent and severe flooding in the future.



#### Culture

19 to 28% of residents across the three Metro West communities were born outside of the United States. Cultural knowledge and language fluency are local strengths that can be used to help a broader group of community members understand and plan for climate risks.

# Age

Both older adults and young children are more likely to experience health impacts from heat and flooding. Each town and city have neighborhoods with many children. A high share of northern Framingham and western Natick residents are older than 65.



#### Health

Climate change increases the risk of disease and can worsen existing health conditions. Heart disease, diabetes, and asthma are all more common in EJ neighborhoods south of I-90.





#### Heat

As our climate warms, we can expect hotter summers and more frequent and severe heat waves. Much of South Framingham experiences higher temperatures than surrounding neighborhoods, but there are smaller pockets of extreme heat clustered around transit stations, major roads, and retail areas.



## Housing

Older homes and high energy costs make it hard for people to cope with extreme temperatures. A large share of homes were built before 1960—before air conditioning and insulation were common.

# What have we done to advance climate equity?

Ashland, Natick, and Framingham have been working to prevent and prepare for climate change for almost a decade. Each has also taken steps to become a more inclusive and equitable community.

2014	2015-2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	beyond	
Natick hires a sustainability coordinator		Natick adopts greenhouse gas reduction goal	Ashland hires a sustainability program manager	Natick Creates an Equity Task Force	Framingham hires a diversity, equity, and inclusion office		
		Framingham hires a sustainability coordinator			Ashland completes an equity study	5	

#### Want to get involved?

Let us know how you think we can make Ashland, Natick, and Framingham healthier and stronger in the face of climate change:

- In Spring 2022, a team of resident researchers—the Community Climate Liaisons—will be talking with residents to learn about their experiences and ideas for actions.
- This summer, we will also be holding Climate Conversation public events to engage even more residents around the topic of potential climate solutions.

Email us at MWClimateEquity@mapc.org.