

Information Item

Date: Dec. 9, 2024

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Dr. Shaleen Miller, Director of Sustainability & Intergovernmental Relations
Sharon Wojda, Assistant City Manager

Subject: 2024 Environmental Justice Report

Strategic Focus Area: Healthy Environment

Strategic Objective: N/A

Strategic Plan Action Item: N/A

Key Work Item: N/A



Sustainability staff prepared the attached DRAFT 2024 Environmental Justice Report. The history of segregation has led to many of the inequities and injustices that Winston-Salem still faces today. Many black and brown neighborhoods, without as much historic access to resources and community power, have fewer positive environmental amenities such as trees, and are faced with more environmental risks including air pollution. In addition, the impacts of climate change are likely to be felt unevenly due to inequalities of race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. Those with fewer resources are less able to adapt and cope with abrupt changes, and in many cases, they face increased risks due to structural inequities that have created unequal environmental effects.

This report explores the environmental justice issues within Winston-Salem, highlighting the geography of affected communities and environmental impacts. Indicators include impacts of air pollution, areas of food insecurity, the percent of household income spent on energy and transportation, and tree inventory data across the city. The report aims to provide insights in order to foster further discussion for a more equitable environmental situation. It also provides a basis to apply for grants and other funding for applicable projects.

Staff's recommendation is that the findings and recommendations included in the report will be considered for the environmental scan that will be conducted as part of the upcoming strategic planning development process.

