



Tree Canopy Cover in Madison, WI

Redlining's Long Legacy

1. Title page
2. Green spaces aren't evenly spread through Madison, WI. Some places have more trees than others.
3. This photo is from Google Maps. It is from the Vera Court Neighborhood on the North Side of Madison.
4. This photo is from the Spring Harbor Neighborhood, south of Lake Mendota. Which one has more trees? This one, or Vera Court? (Spring Harbor!)
5. This photo is from the Burr Oaks Neighborhood on the South Side of Madison.
6. This photo is from the South Midvale Neighborhood, on the near West Side. Which has more trees? Midvale!
7. Ask kids- why would some neighborhoods have so many trees and others hardly have any? See what kinds of answers they give.
8. The answer is in this map. It was created in 1937 - almost 100 years ago.
9. This map is what it looks like when Redlining happens.
 - a. Point out places in Madison that the kids will recognize so they can orient themselves (or use a redlining map from your own city if you don't live in Madison).
10. Explain getting a home loan from a bank: When people buy a house, usually they don't have ALL of the money for the house at once. They talk to people at a bank and the bank decides if they'll give them a loan for the house. The bank lends the people money to buy the house, and each month the people pay the bank some money to keep living there. This happens until the people have paid back all of the money they borrowed from the bank.
 - a. Banks would send people out to look at neighborhoods. They created maps of places they wanted to give people home loans and places they did not.
 - b. If a person of color, especially Black people, lived on a block, that block was made red on the map.
 - c. Red areas were "undesirable" for the banks, and loans were denied.
 - d. PAUSE and ask kids how they feel about that. Share your feelings too. This was unfair and wrong.
11. Redlining only officially happened for 34 years. People still face housing discrimination today, but it's technically illegal.
 - a. Even though it was only happening for 34 years, there are a lot of neighborhoods that are still showing the effects of Redlining.



- b. Many of the neighborhoods that were once “red” are now largely communities of color.
12. This is a map of Madison. It shows the percent of people who are White in a neighborhood. Red is almost all White people. Lighter colors are more People of Color.
13. Let’s look at this map next to the map of the redlined neighborhoods from the 1930s.
14. These Neighborhoods were once redlined and were Communities of Color. They now still have a higher percentage of People of Color than other areas in Madison.
15. That is just one effect of Redlining. Let’s talk about more!
 - a. Read through the list, talk about some if you want to. This is mostly just to show that there are MANY ways that Redlining affects neighborhoods.
 - b. We could talk a LOT about each of these. They could all be their own lesson. For now, just listen to the list.
 - c. Emphasize fewer trees!
16. Now, let’s take a look at neighborhood photos from this area!
 - a. This photo is from the Burr Oaks Neighborhood. It used to be redlined.
17. This photo is from the Spring Harbor Neighborhood. It was not redlined.
18. We know trees are important. Why is it important to know where trees are in a neighborhood? Or to know if trees are spread out evenly around a city? Pause for kids to brainstorm!
19. Trees are SO important! They do a lot to make cities better for people and wildlife!
20. Read through these benefits!
 - a. Emphasize keeping cities cooler = important as Climate Change progresses
 - b. Emphasize Reduce stress & improve mental health = nature helps keep us calm.
21. This picture helps explain that trees help keep a city cooler. Urban trees help provide shade, which keeps pavement, buildings, and people cooler. Cities without many trees are hotter.
22. This picture shows the temperatures of different parts of a city street. Go through and point out the different places and their temperatures.
 - a. Do you think the house in the shade is warmer or cooler inside than the ones in the sun?
 - b. Which house do you think has to pay more money to keep their air conditioning running? What if the AC breaks? Which house would you rather be in?
23. Trees also provide lots of habitat for animals! They give shelter. They provide food for animals if they are fruiting trees, and bugs that live in trees can be food too. People really enjoy watching wildlife that uses the trees and other green spaces in a city.
24. We know that it’s a problem that some places don’t have enough trees. The biggest part of the problem is that Communities of Color have fewer trees than communities with mostly White people. What can we do to fix it?
25. We can plant more trees!
 - a. There are lots of programs in Madison working to get trees into places that need them. Some are planting fruit trees in places where there isn’t enough food.

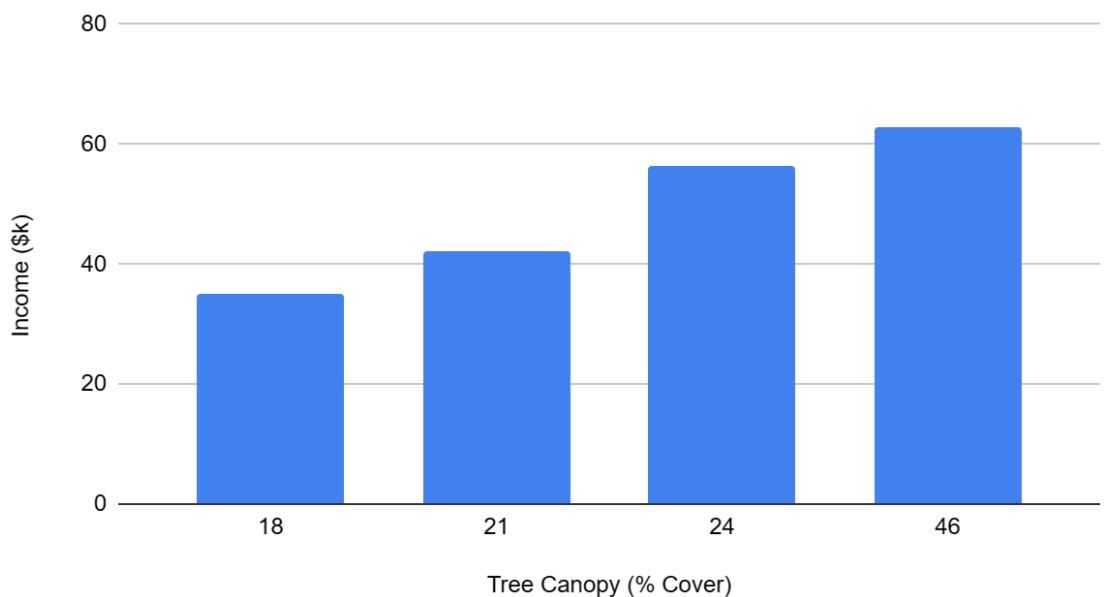


- b. It's also good to take care of the trees that ARE in our neighborhoods. Only climb on branches that are strong enough to hold you. Try not to pull living leaves off of trees - they need them!

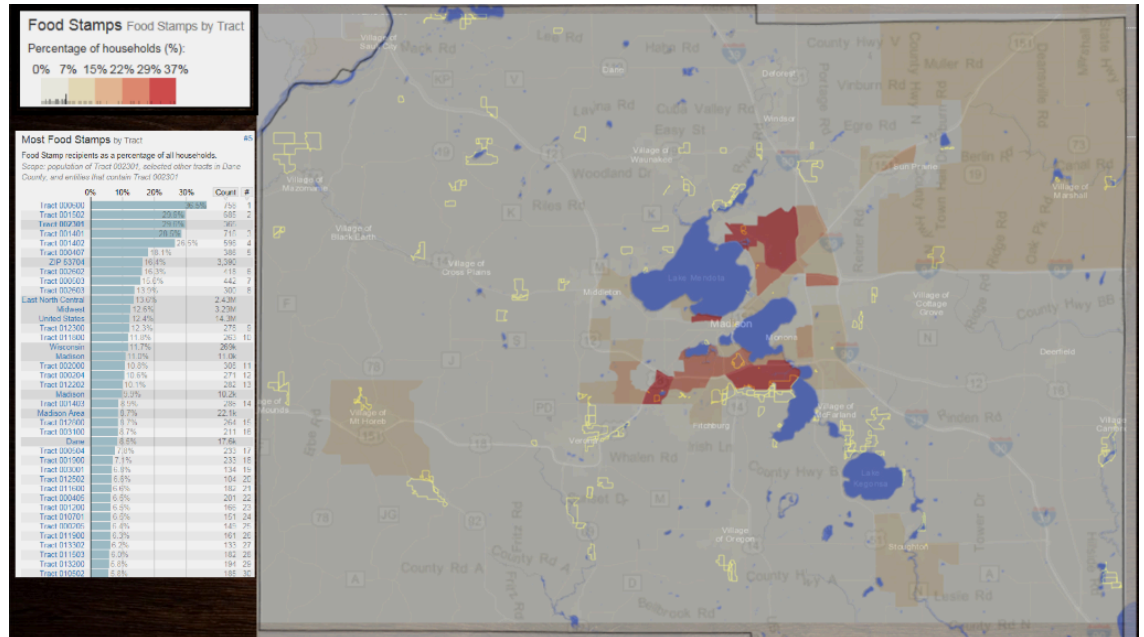
Optional Next Steps for the lesson:

1. Go plant trees!
 - a. You can have kids start trees from seeds they collect (maple, hickory, walnut, and oak are all easy). Collect seeds in the fall, start them over winter, and plant tiny trees in the spring. Kids can take starts home with them to plant in their neighborhoods, you can plant them on school grounds, or work with your city/town to find a spot that needs trees.
 - i. Please note that trees will need regular watering throughout the summer and protection against nibbling creatures if they are to have a good chance at survival. This may or may not be feasible for your group.
 - b. You can partner with a local organization or Friend's Group to source trees and get volunteers to help plant.
2. Use online maps to find examples of neighborhoods with lots of trees or few trees. Check to see if historic Redlining maps exist and see if the areas found by kids were Redlined or not. You can do this for your city/town or pick one that does have Redlining maps.
3. Discuss information on income and tree canopy cover.
 - a. Discuss ways in which systemic racism impacts income and Redlining's Legacy.

Income Affects Canopy Cover



b.



C.

Lesson References:

1. [Gold Merry Newman.pdf \(wisconsin.edu\)](#)
2. [50 years after being outlawed, redlining still drives neighborhood health inequities \(berkeley.edu\)](#)
3. [Nature and mental health: An ecosystem service perspective | Science Advances](#)
4. [Relief From the Heat: In Rapidly Warming Cities, Trees Can Save Lives - Chesapeake Tree Canopy Network \(chesapeaketrees.net\)](#)