

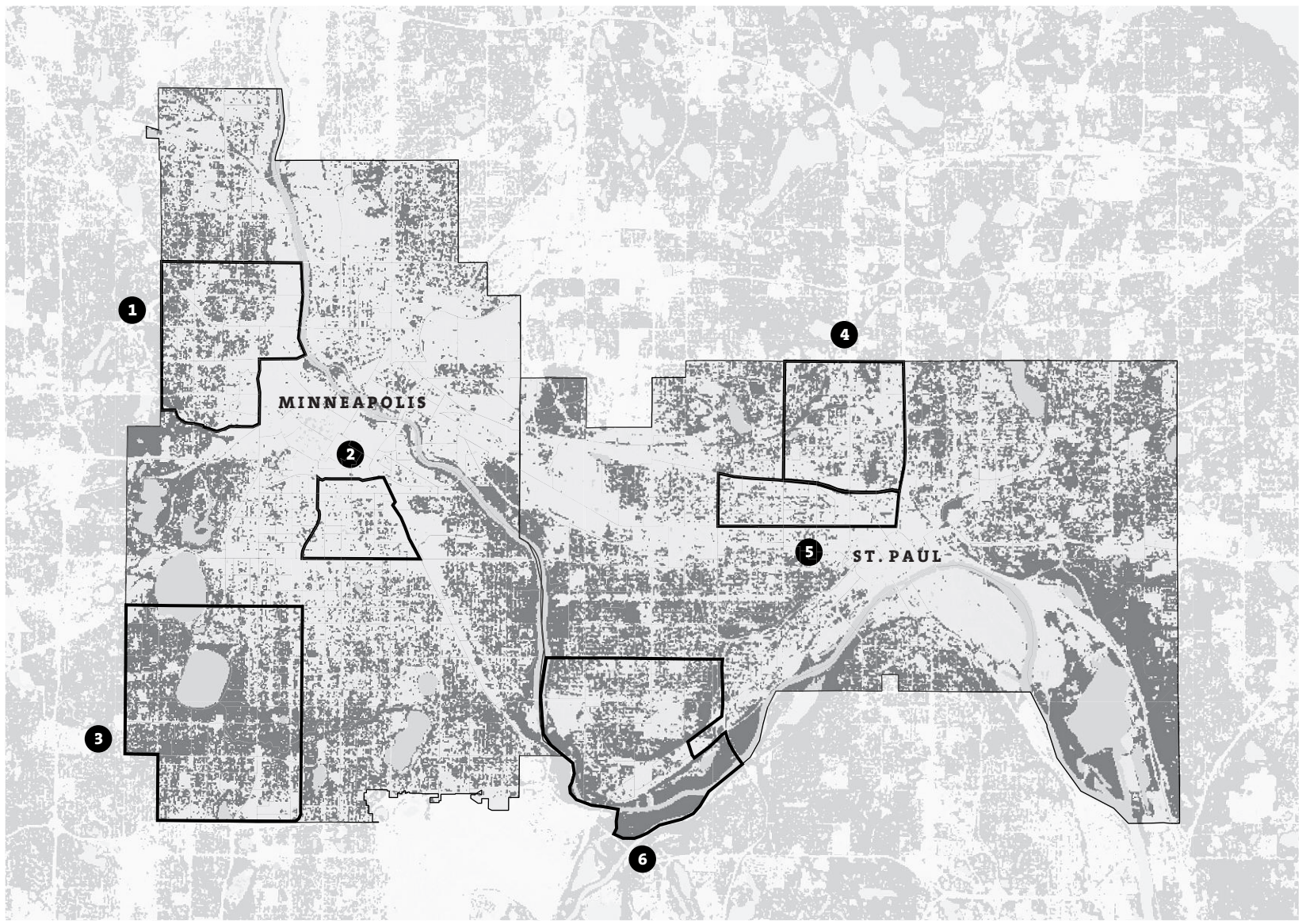
RESTORING OUR TREE CANOPY

A patchwork of lush shade, barren blocks

Graphic by YUQING LIU • Star Tribune

Every spring, as the Twin Cities' beloved trees leaf out into a green canopy, some neighborhoods look like an unbroken forest, with branches arching over houses and streets. But others are a harder landscape of rooftops, yards and concrete. Trees are few, scrawny or non-existent. "Trees are not distributed evenly around the region. There are real inequities," said Met Council data scientist Ellen Esch. "That has major consequences ... not only on individuals, but on the livability, on the prosperity and on everything in our region."

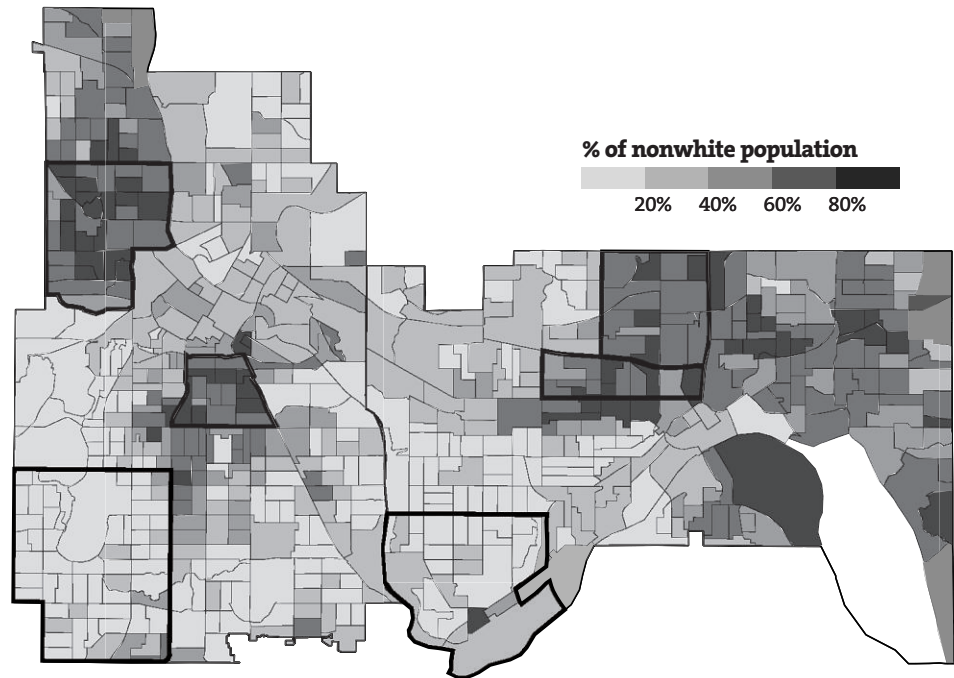
- 1 Near North:** Most areas have tree coverage of 30% or less, some due to massive tree loss in a 2011 tornado. It's more likely to reach 100 degrees here in the summer.
- 2 Phillips:** Even the greenest parts of this neighborhood only have 28% of land covered by tree canopy. Some areas have less than 8% coverage.
- 3 Southwest:** Nearly 38% of land is protected from the summer sun by tree canopy — in some areas it's more than half. This helps limit high surface temperatures to around 80 or 90 degrees.
- 4 North End:** About a third of this neighborhood, where 70% of residents are people of color, has tree canopy.
- 5 Frogtown:** With a tree canopy of only 23%, the neighborhood feels "exposed" to the sun, one former resident remarked.
- 6 Highland Park:** With 43% tree canopy, this neighborhood is well above St. Paul's average.



Source: USFS Landscape Change Monitoring System

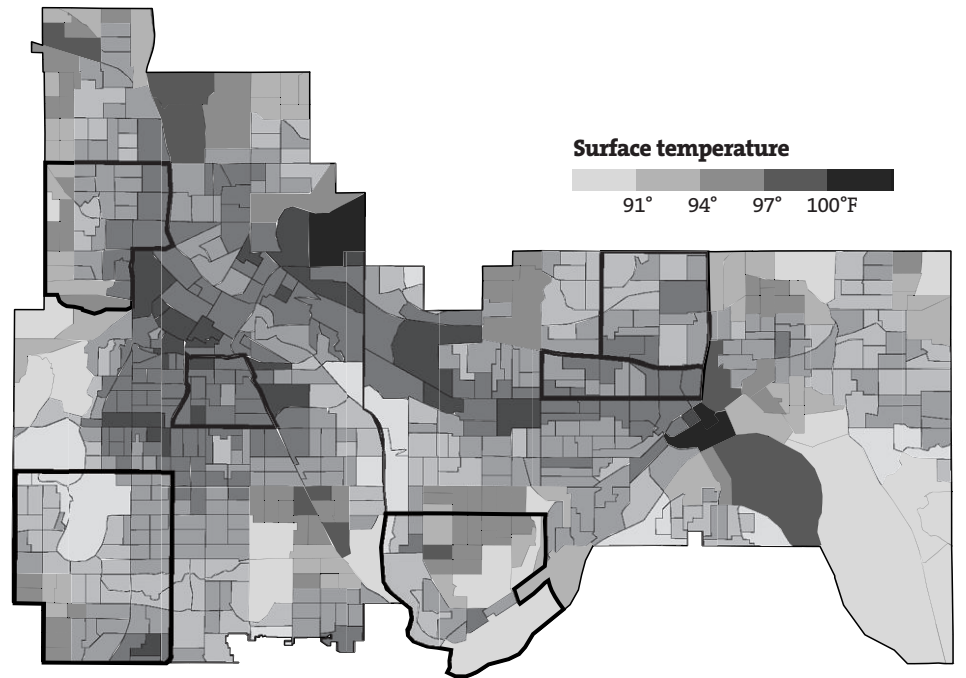
PEOPLE OF COLOR AFFECTED MORE

Neighborhoods with the lowest tree canopy levels — such as Near North, Phillips, North End and Frogtown — are disproportionately populated by people of color, while areas with the thickest tree canopy tend to have the lowest share of people of color.



HIGHER TEMPS WITHOUT TREES

Temperature differences between moderate and high amounts of green space can be up to 10 degrees. Areas that are more likely to reach 100 degrees at the peak of summer also have higher cooling costs and more risk for heat stroke and other illnesses.



Sources: Metropolitan Council; Growing Shade

FORECLOSURE CRISIS, ASH BORER HAVE KEPT SOME LOTS BARE

◀ **TREES** from A10
 activities that aim to bring young people closer to the environment.
 Coach Mike Tate leads a group of volunteers on an hourlong hike through the neighborhood, scooping litter out of storm drains. They learn about polluted runoff and the stormwater-catching power of trees, which reduce flooding. At the end, the group breaks into a relay race to water a stand of saplings they planted that Arbor Day.
 "When we're watering them, we want to give them love and energy," said Erika Schlaeger dos Santos of Sunnyside Peace and Prayer Project, who distributes seedlings throughout north Minneapolis to anyone who will take them.
 One sapling is dedicated to Deshaun Hill, the North High quarterback slain in February.
 "Look at that field over there with no trees," environmentalist Kristel Porter told the group afterward, gesturing at the pale yellow lawn of the school across the street. "I bet you could put your bare foot on it and it would hurt your foot because

it's so crunchy. Now look here." She pointed down at the cool turf of North Commons.
 Porter challenged the water racers to push for trees on their school and church grounds — anywhere with space — and to imagine forests in place of manicured lawns.
Competing land uses
 Money and reluctant landowners are not the only factors impeding tree canopy recovery in north Minneapolis. There are competing dreams for limited space, in addition to the continuing loss of trees to emerald ash borer.
 Since the 2011 tornado, a string of urban gardens popped up in its path. Some are now five to 10 years old and serve as outdoor classrooms where Project Sweetie Pie founder Michael Chaney teaches North Side students agriculture and business sense.
 Growing food in the wake of catastrophe is what he calls "making lemonade out of lemons."

Minneapolis Public Schools, one of the largest property owners in the city, is losing half its 600 trees across 76 sites to emerald ash borer. The removals will leave ash-heavy schools like Lucy Laney and Olson starkly changed, said Curt Hartog, district facilities director.
 The school district has more surplus land and underutilized sites in north Minneapolis than anywhere else — such as Cooper and Victory Memorial Ice Arena, both used for storage. But the idea of filling their fields with trees is touchy because those spaces still get rented out for sports, he said.
 "There has to be a lot of input from the community before we try to convert something like that," Hartog said.
 The tension between growing the urban forest and reserving spaces for social activity is also playing out at the Upper Harbor Terminal, a redevelopment of 48 acres of industrial riverfront. More than 19 acres will become a new park guided by the community's needs as it reconnects to the river for the first time since Interstate 94 severed that relationship.
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