

CULTIVATING JUSTICE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE:

*A collection of stories and art
rooted in Multnomah County's communities of color*



July 2023

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Art cover by Jax Ko

A COLLABORATION WITH:



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Multnomah
County

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Jax Ko

Jax Ko is a first-gen Korean-American non-binary femme artist based in Portland, Oregon. They're a freelance illustrator, graphic designer, muralist, stylist, & professional crybaby.

@yojaxko

Nia Musiba

Nia Musiba is an ant loving, asparagus hating multidisciplinary creative that lives and eats and sleeps and creates work and makes new friends in Portland. Nia has a lifelong commitment to diversifying art and design spaces which has manifested in community-based projects, public art, and taking up space within her personal practice in an attempt to inspire others who hold marginalized identities to do the same.



@niamusiba



Paola De La Cruz

Paola interweaves digital and analog media, patterns, stitching and shape-based illustrations to evoke intimacy while challenging the themes of cultural identity, coming of age, and interpersonal growth.

@happynappystudio

Ree Artemisa

Ree Artemisa is a self taught chicana artist. Her work focuses on themes of community, her heritage, BIPOC enjoying nature and LGBTQIA representation. They currently live and work in Portland, Oregon.

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INTRODUCTION

Black, Indigenous, and People of color (BIPOC), due to systemic racism, colonialism, and other long-standing injustices, have been disproportionately burdened by climate change and have lower household wealth when compared to their white neighbors. BIPOC communities tend to reside in areas with higher levels of pollution and environmental hazards, which increases exposure to extreme weather events, air pollution, and other climate-related risks.

Moreover, BIPOC often lack sufficient access to essential resources and infrastructure, such as clean water, green spaces, and reliable transportation systems, which exacerbates exposure to environmental hazards.

By pairing of community stories and maps in this zine, our goal is to create a fuller and more detailed picture of the ways that climate change impacts Multnomah County's communities of color. Data isn't often displayed in a way that is accessible for most people. For this reason, we created this zine to make climate justice data more accessible for community members who are on the frontlines of this issue. Data is a powerful resource and we believe that frontline communities should be empowered to use it to drive our work and influence policy.

This zine focuses on hardships faced by real people since the onset of Covid-19 in 2020. We've included a list of resources (energy bill assistance, cooling centers) that we learned through surveying that BIPOC community members would like more access to and information on.

Finally, we hope that the art included in this zine brings light to the connection we have with nature, the strength of communities of color, and our hope for a just future.

This project wouldn't have been possible without the many community members that participated in our Environmental Justice Indicators Survey. Thank you to those who take the time to read this zine.



UNLESS YOU CANNOT CHANGE ANY SOCIETY
UNLESS YOU TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT,
UNLESS YOU SEE YOURSELF AS BELONGING TO IT
AND RESPONSIBLE FOR CHANGING IT.

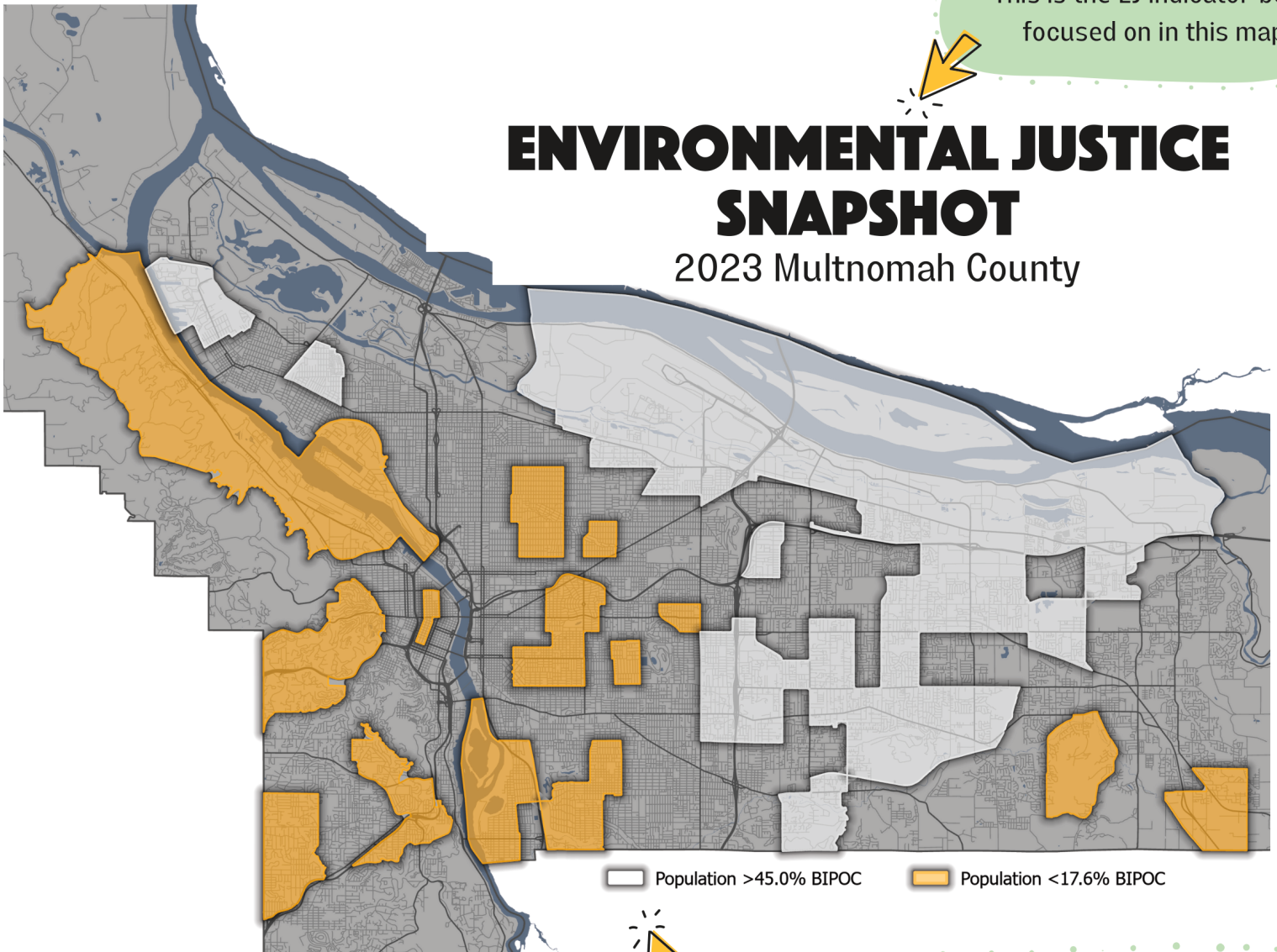
✿ GRACE LEE BOGGS

UNDERSTANDING THE MAP LEGENDS

For example:

This is the EJ indicator being
focused on in this map

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SNAPSHOT 2023 Multnomah County



This indicates areas in Multnomah County with higher numbers of POC residents. Areas outlined in WHITE have populations over 45% BIPOC and areas outlined in YELLOW have populations with less than 17% BIPOC

WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

The map shows areas in Multnomah County with higher numbers of people of color versus parts of the county with less than 17%. You will see throughout the zine that MultCo's communities are impacted by climate change differently with communities of color being disproportionately impacted.

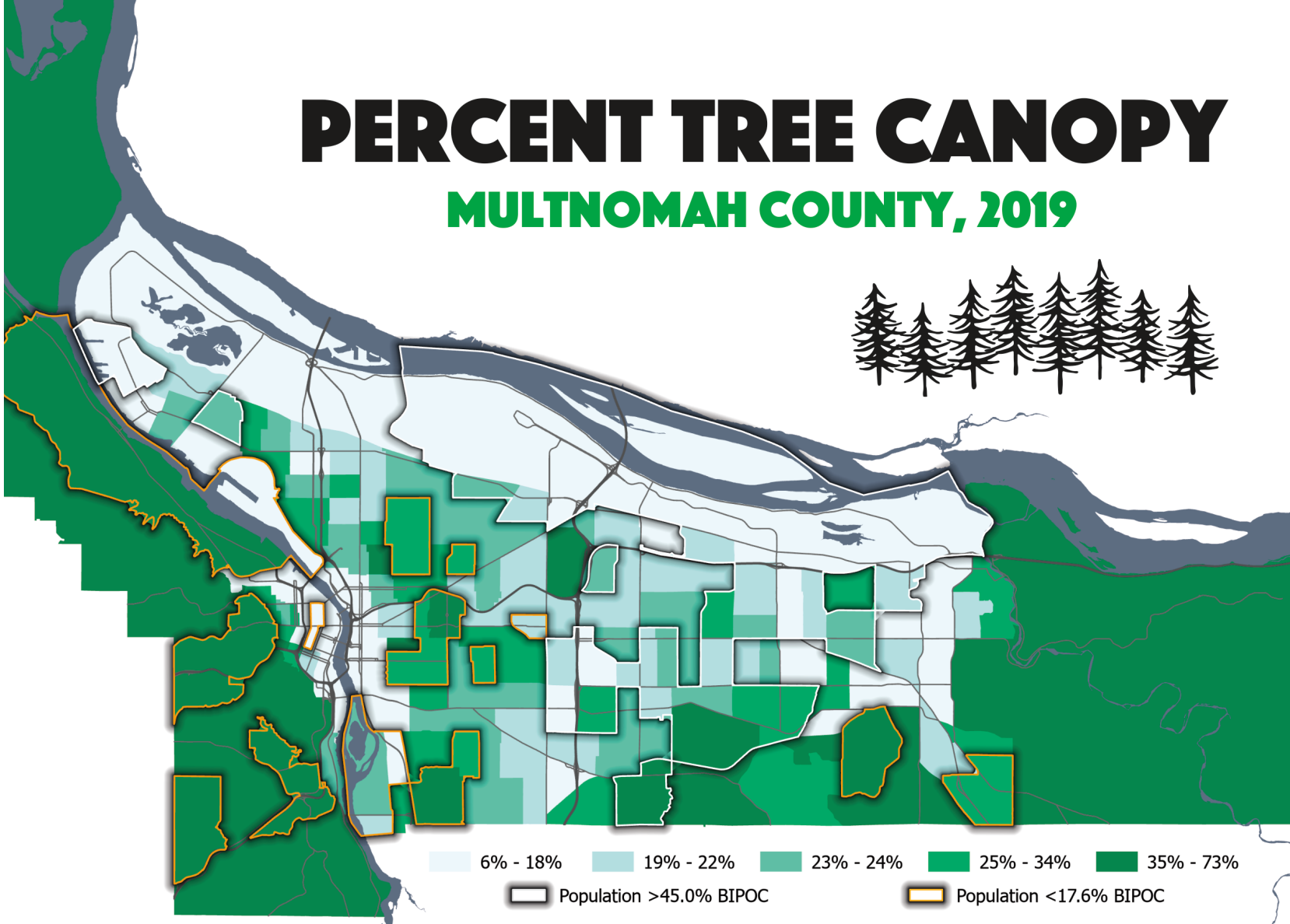
This breaks down what you are seeing in the map and the importance of it for communities of color





PERCENT TREE CANOPY

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2019



WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

In Multnomah County, average tree canopy cover is significantly greater in areas home to primarily white people than in areas primarily home to BIPOC. Tree canopy cover in the areas home to the largest share of BIPOC is also significantly lower than the county average.

“I’m new to the city. The trees don’t really help. It’s hard to build community and to be able to drive out to someone else’s house for a few weeks while I wait for the heat wave to pass. I don’t even have a car. Or, emergency funds to book a hotel that has AC and accepts pets.”

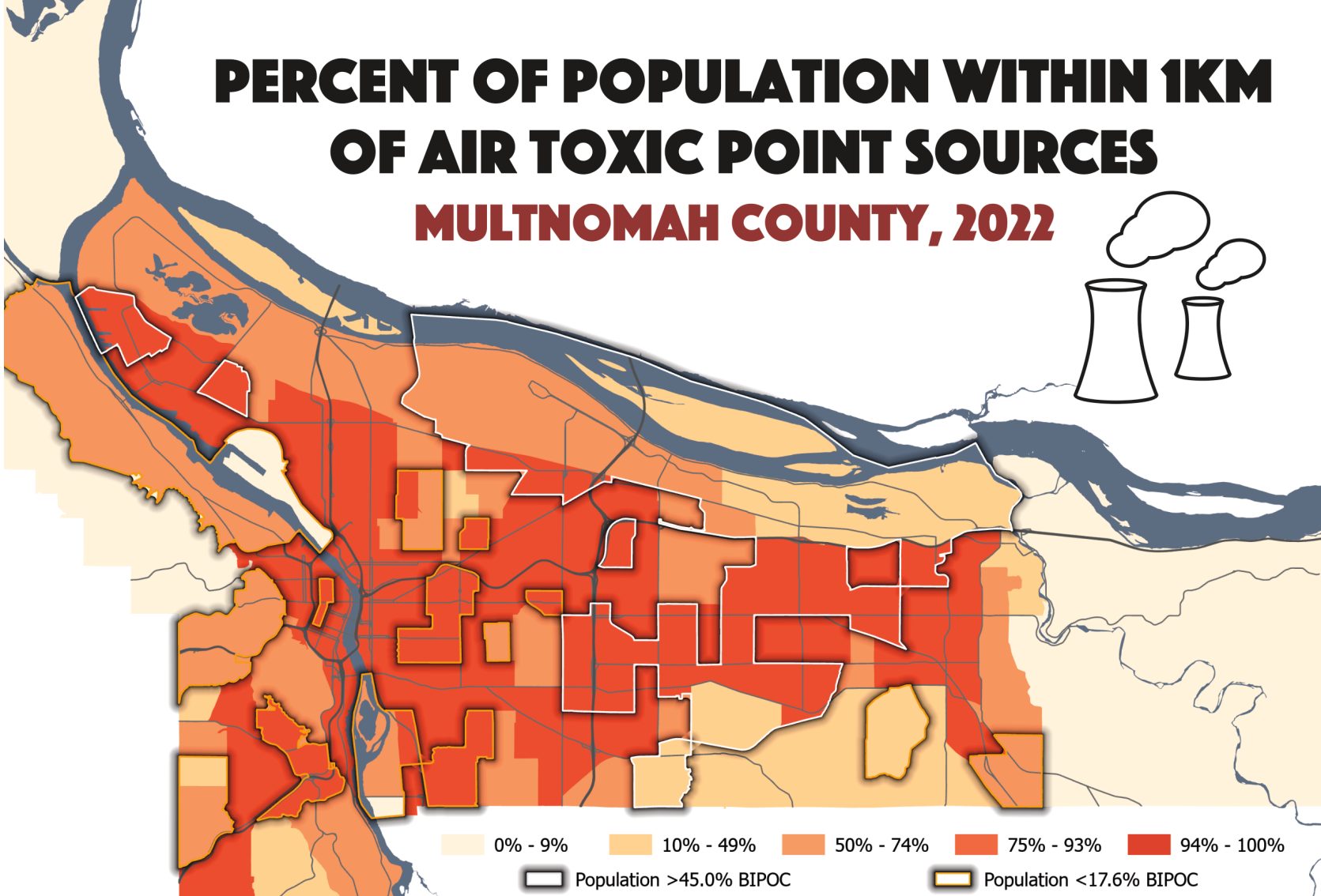
➤ **NORTHWEST DISTRICT RESIDENT**

“Trees provide a lot of shade for the houses and cars. However, I’ve seen a lot of trees being cut down to build more buildings/lots. This makes the area even warmer when it is a heat wave.”

➤ **POWELLHURST-GILBERT RESIDENT**



PERCENT OF POPULATION WITHIN 1KM OF AIR TOXIC POINT SOURCES MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2022



WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

BIPOC in Multnomah County experience significantly greater residential proximity to facilities emitting air toxics and therefore experience more substantial health impacts from poor air quality and exposure to hazardous materials.

“ I do worry about the long term affects of exposure to pollution and the toxins. I live in close proximity to two main freeways (I-84 and I- 205), and countless gas stations. It would be interesting to know about the overall health of the community, in terms of medical conditions associated with exposure to the pollution and poor air quality related to the highways, gas stations, and manufacturing businesses in our area. ”

➤ **PARKROSE RESIDENT**

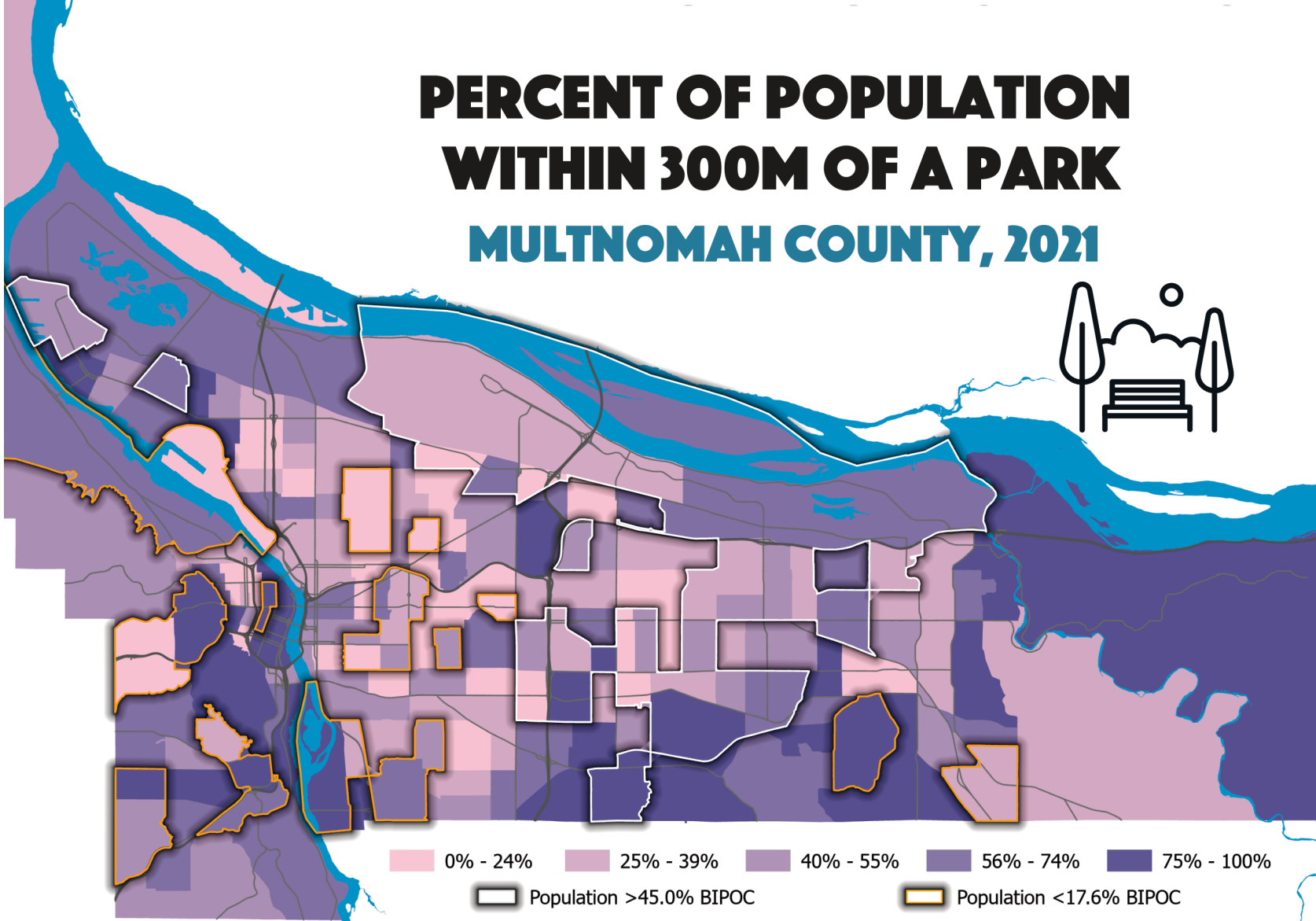
“ My biggest concern is that my lungs are being affected in ways in which I have yet to find out. As well as with my allergies. Not only is it air quality that affects my community but the noise pollution as well. Cars have no business being that loud. ”

➤ **NORTHWEST DISTRICT RESIDENT**



PERCENT OF POPULATION WITHIN 300M OF A PARK

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2021



WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

The map shows the percentage of population in Multnomah County who live within 300 meters of a park.

“ It needs to provide a feeling of safety. Like the place being bright and well lit in the day time. Like the trees are not making shade that makes certain areas too dark or certain areas are hidden away or off in a corner that people can hardly notice or see. Also, making enough seating areas like benches are nice. Some of these qualities are found in parks near me. ”

➤ **POWELLHURST-GILBERT RESIDENT**

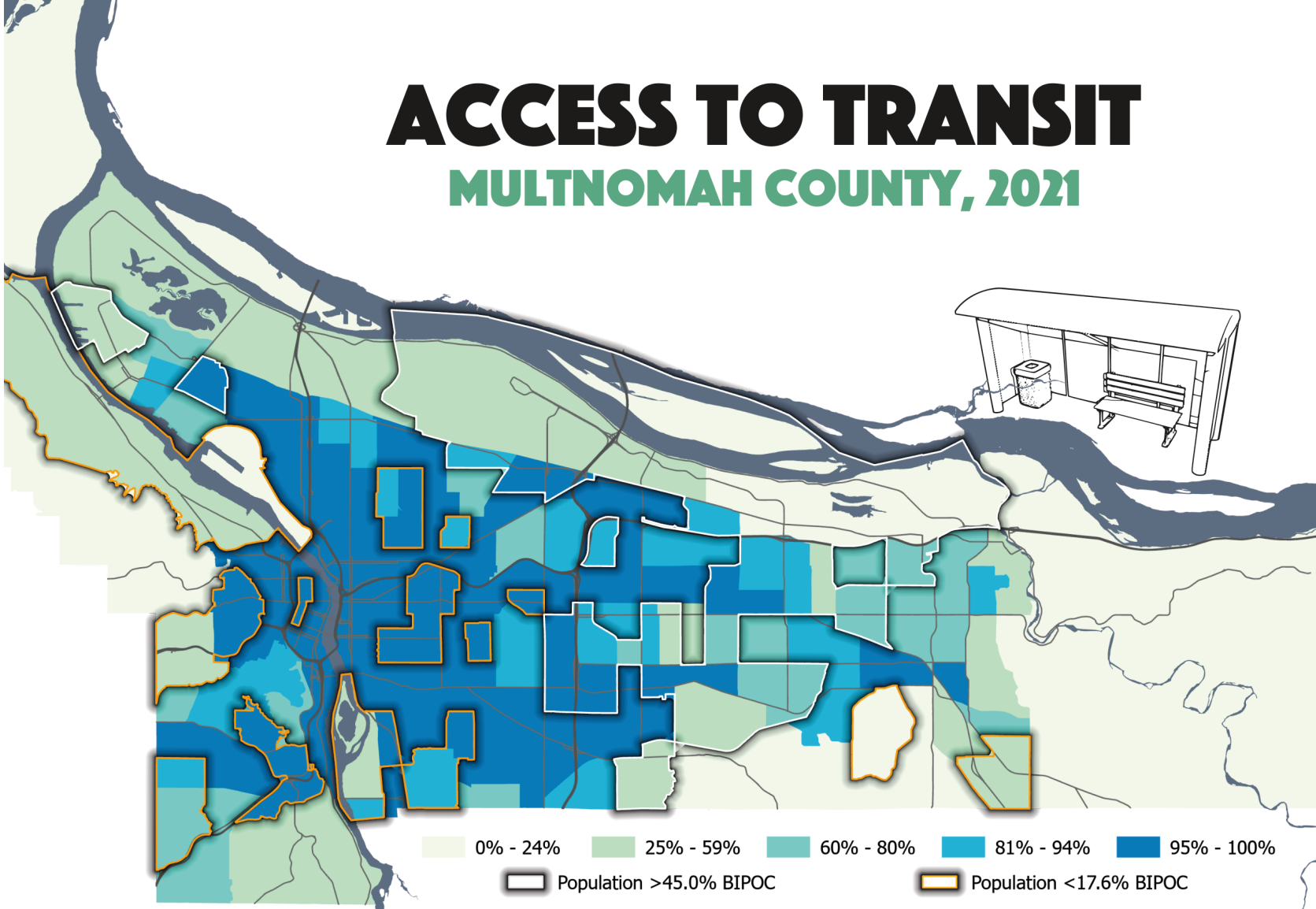
“ Place for kids to play, water fountains and plenty of shade. Yes, I am lucky to have moved recently to a neighborhood close to these parks. Where I was living before in outer east Portland, there weren't — and that was hard because my babies were even littler then. ”

➤ **ANA DEL ROCIO, MONTAVILLA RESIDENT**



ACCESS TO TRANSIT

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2021



WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

The map shows the percent of population in Multnomah County with access to public transportation.

“ First of all, some buses aren’t even available out here. They have cancelled the route or the bus only stops at certain places. It would be nice to have a bus run out here again, otherwise you have to walk a quarter of a mile to the max station, on a relatively unsafe street. ”

➤ **PARKROSE RESIDENT**

“ Not too easy and not too hard. We are near several bus lines, but not close to Max which is our preferred mode. I would change the ease of stroller and car seat access on both light rail and bus. I also desperately need the public school busing system to improve — because the constant route delays and cancellations frequently mean I have to miss work to get the kids. ”

➤ **ANA DEL ROCIO, MONTAVILLA RESIDENT**

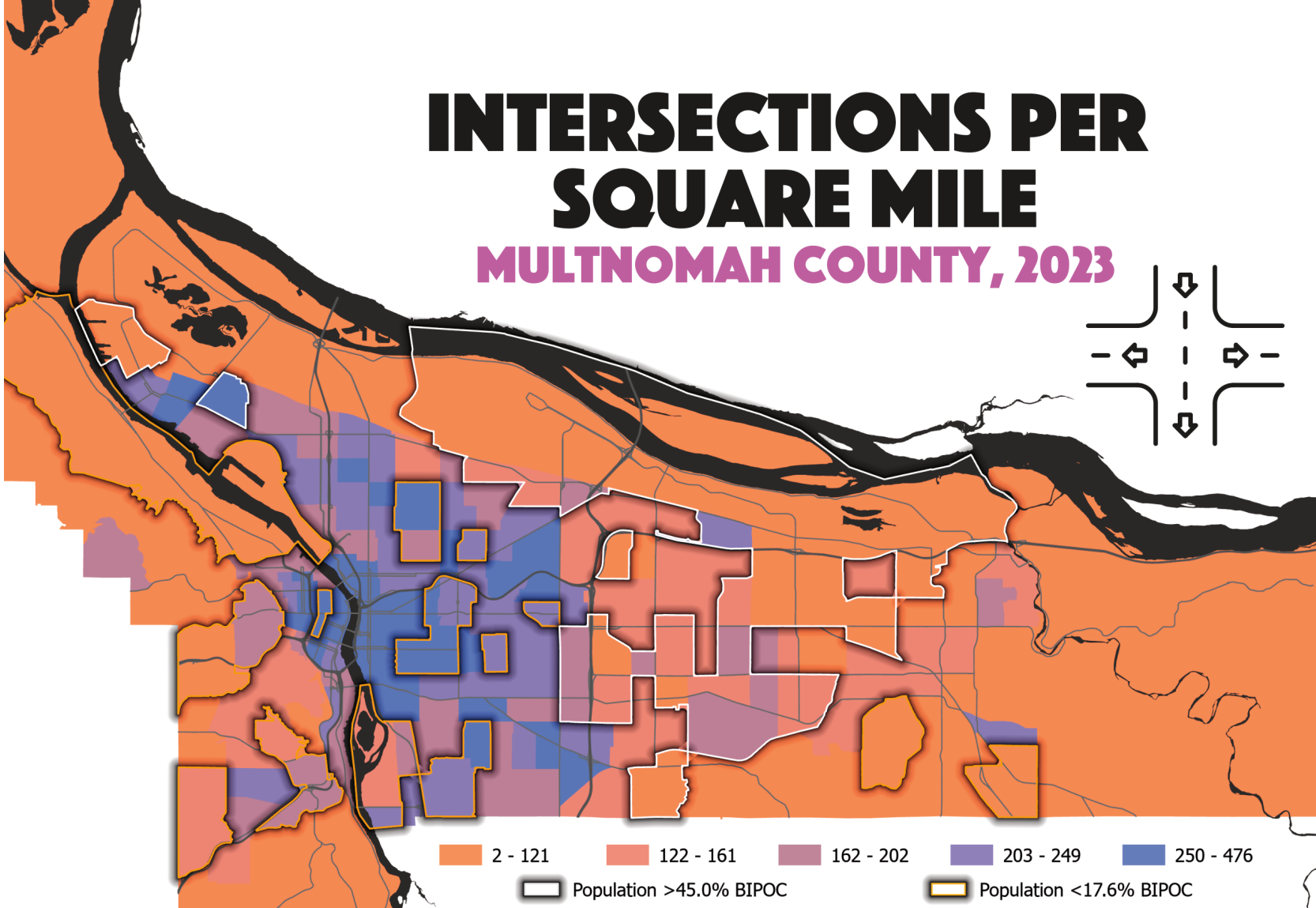
“ Its easy to access but it is not easy to arrive to my destination. It’s ridiculous to me that to get from nw to ne, which would only take about a 9minute drive, will take me 30 plus minutes AND 2 busses! ”

➤ **NORTHWEST DISTRICT RESIDENT**



INTERSECTIONS PER SQUARE MILE

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2023



WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

The map shows intersections per square mile within Multnomah County. Intersections relate to traffic safety and the increasing pedestrian fatalities in Multnomah County. Intersection density is an indicator of how walkable a place is and higher intersection density can be associated with walkability and slower traffic. Deeper analysis of this data shows the areas with the highest shares of BIPOC have significantly lower intersection density, indicating that these areas are less walkable and that the BIPOC living in them likely experience greater traffic safety concerns.

“ I use my personal car and walk. I typically use my car to get around because it's available and I have anxiety around using public transportation especially because of my concerns over Covid-19. I also don't feel safe walking around in downtown Portland in the night. ”

➤ **MARITZA GALVAN, BUCKMAN RESIDENT**

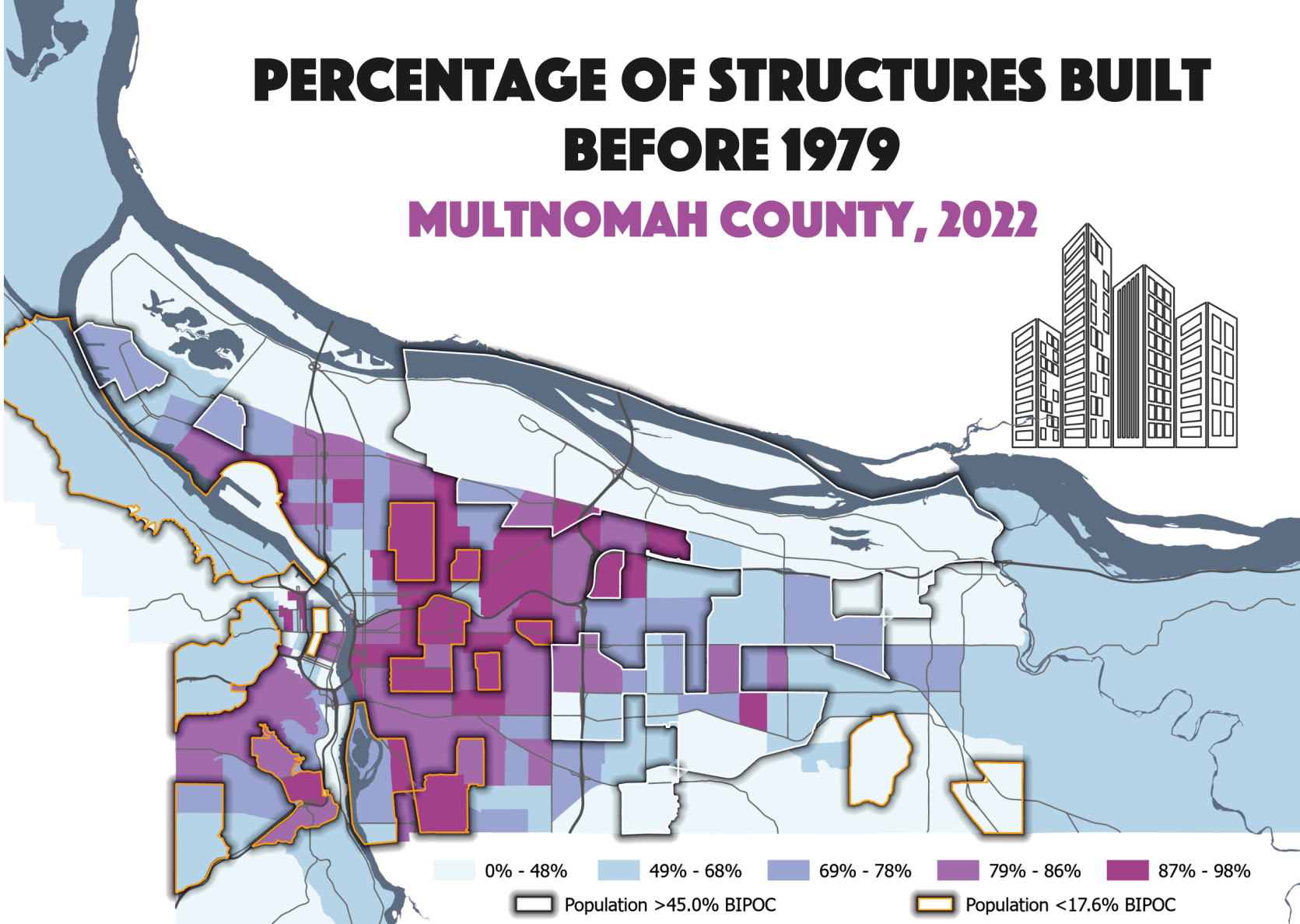
“ I use my car for safety reasons. I used to ride the max. but getting home in the evening when it is dark and there is no good lighting on the street or sidewalks made it unsafe. ”

➤ **GRESHAM RESIDENT**



PERCENTAGE OF STRUCTURES BUILT BEFORE 1979

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2022



WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

The map shows that many homes built before 1979 are located in primarily white neighborhoods in Multnomah County. This is significant because neighborhoods with older structures have a greater risk of lead exposure. Moreover, these neighborhoods receive more funding for historic preservation projects, which may contribute to a rise in property value and the overall gentrification and displacement of BIPOC communities in Portland.

“ Living in an old building that doesn’t allow window ac units or that can not sustain the power needed to run a portable ac and any other appliance in the home at the same time is frustrating enough. The windows do not insulate well enough and there no support coming from management. Not even to check in and/or help with resources. ➤ **NORTHWEST RESIDENT** ”

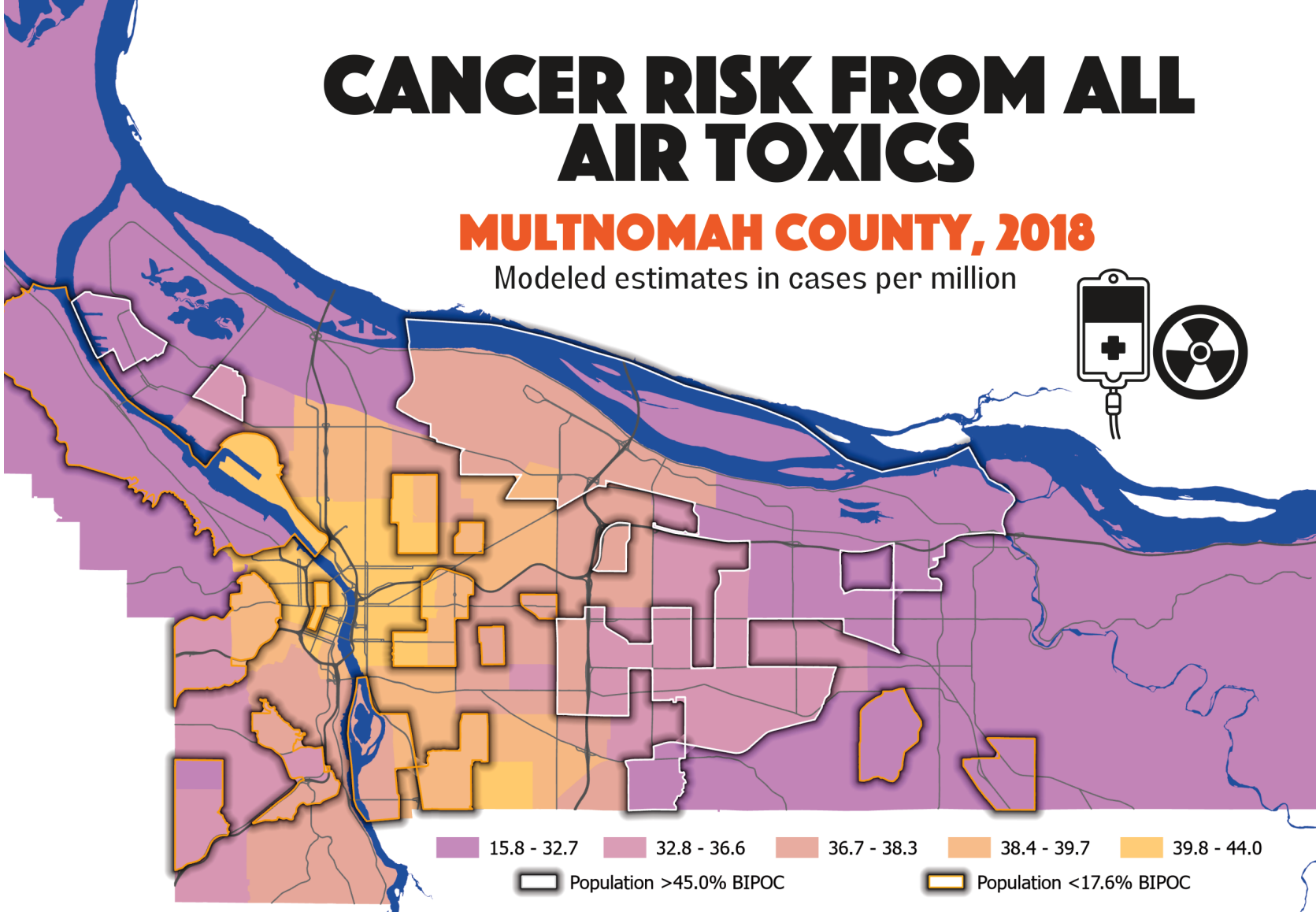
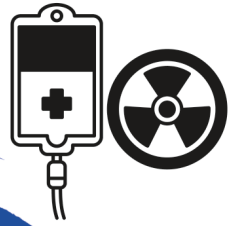
“ Old portland buildings with poor windows and insulation and ventilation means all these xtreme temperatures were felt even if housed, and poor workmanship because of the increased pace to get ‘em up means the new flashy buildings were also dangerous. ➤ **BUCKMAN RESIDENT** ”



CANCER RISK FROM ALL AIR TOXICS

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2018

Modeled estimates in cases per million



WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

The map shows the cancer risks from all air toxics in Multnomah County. In Multnomah County cancer risk from all air toxics appears to be highest around downtown Portland and the large transportation infrastructure surrounding the central city. These high risk areas overlap with areas home to primarily white residents, resulting in a higher average cancer risk from air toxics than experienced by residents in areas home to primarily BIPOC and the county as a whole.

“ Why haven't businesses looked before for ways to use clean energy because clean energy is no stranger and we have been knowing about the ill affects of the fossil fuel industry for a long time. Why is it so hard for businesses to break away from fossil fuel to clean energy options? Many people in my community (especially 50 plus) complain about a lot of physical and congestive problems. some have cancer in many different forms but have no idea where it came from or how they got it. Recent conversations from the clean air community are saying that the diesel fuel particulates may be part of the source of some cancer. ”

➤ **RICHARD HUNTER, ELIOT RESIDENT**

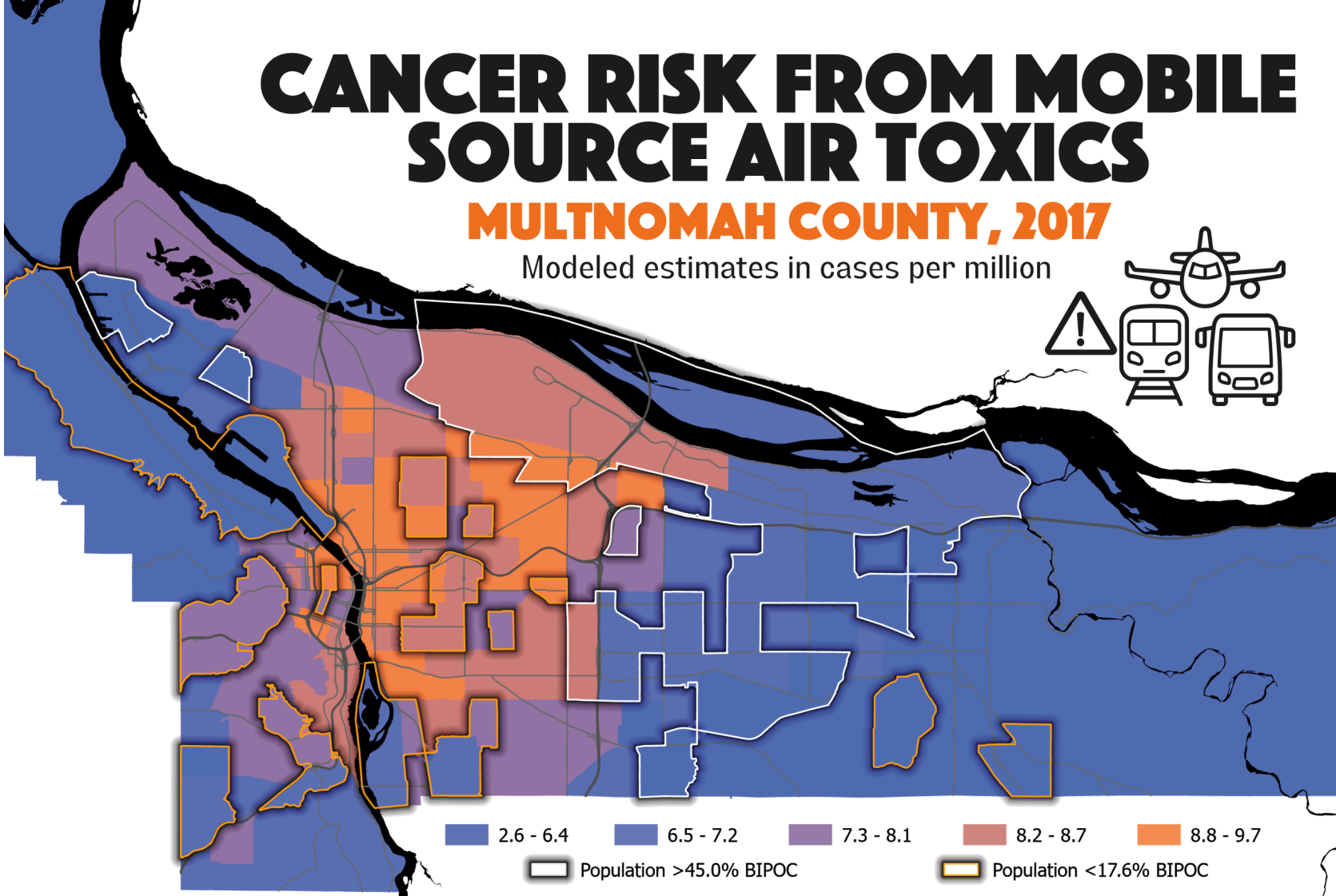




CANCER RISK FROM MOBILE SOURCE AIR TOXICS

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2017

Modeled estimates in cases per million



WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

The map shows the cancer risks from mobile air toxics in Multnomah County. High risk areas from mobile sources of air toxics are located in areas with higher shares of white residents than in areas home to primarily BIPOC. Some of these high-risk areas used to be neighborhoods of communities of color. The findings not only highlight the impact of intense urban development on local air quality but also show how these patterns may contribute to racial/ethnic segregation and displacement in the county.

“Of course I'm concerned about living near these sources of pollution and toxins, especially with the weather changing so extremely due to climate change. I know me and my community are being affected by these sources of pollution and toxins. I know the neighborhood is intentionally built around and in these industrial and high traffic areas because of racism and classism.”

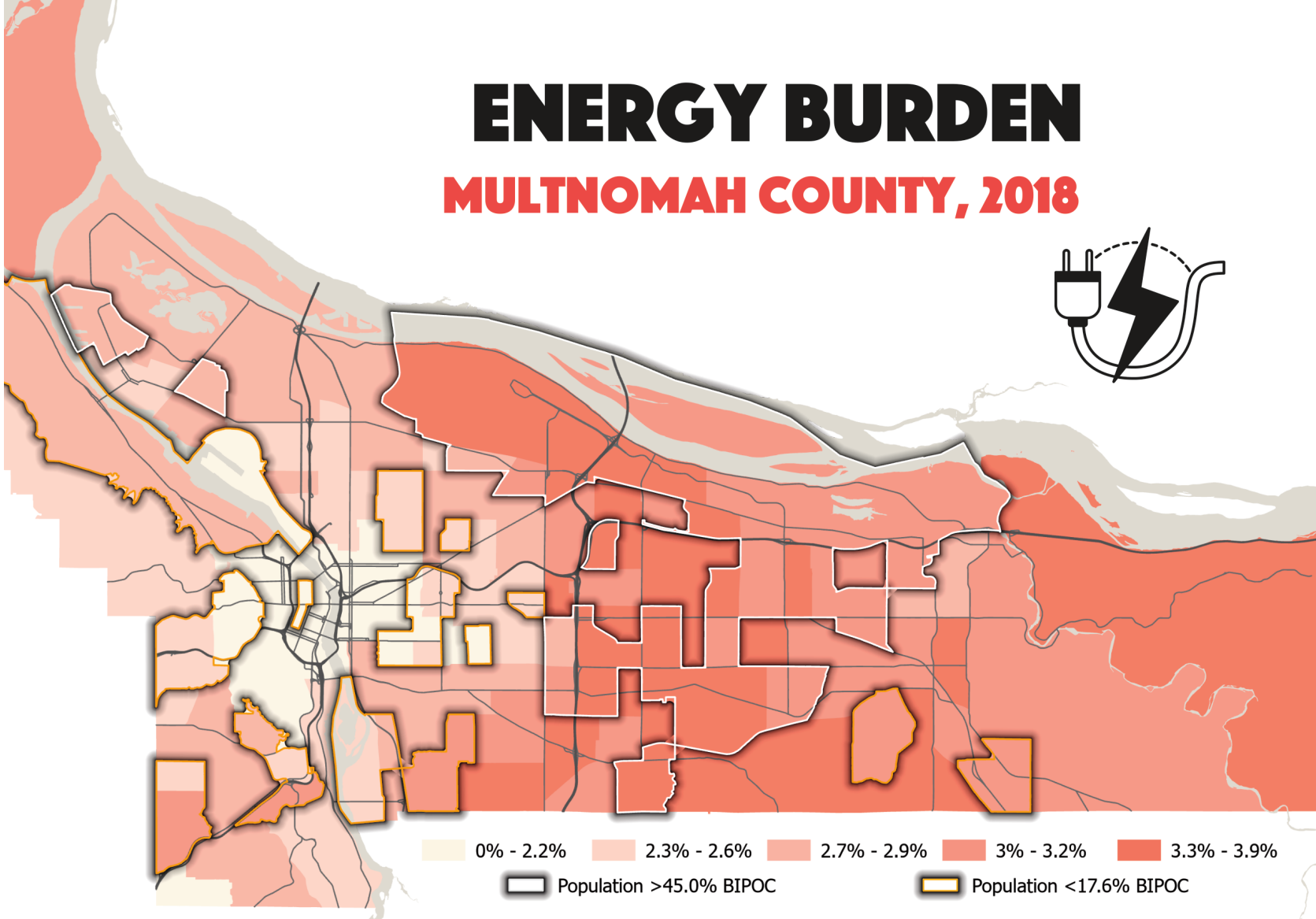
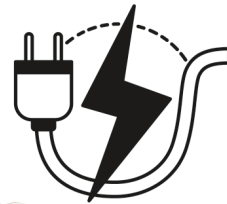
► **PĪKAKE KAHANANUI, BUCKMAN RESIDENT**





ENERGY BURDEN

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, 2018



WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?

The map shows energy burden throughout Multnomah County. In Multnomah County, the percentage of household income spent on energy costs appears to be highest in areas home to primarily BIPOC, indicating a significantly higher degree of energy burden experienced by households in areas primarily home to BIPOC than those located in areas with primarily white residents and on average throughout the county.

“ I would definitely benefit from energy assistance programs since I am a full time student and only work 7 hrs a week as a teaching assistant in graduate school. I'm just not aware of any energy assistance programs and PGE hasn't provided any information about this type of assistance.

➤ **MARITZA GALVAN, BUCKMAN RESIDENT**

“ Energy assistance is one of the big supports that have helped and still currently help. A lot of individuals fear the rise in bills, so that's why they don't turn on the A/C. So, provide assistance that is visible and easily accessible to people are really important.

➤ **POWELLHURST-GILBERT RESIDENT**

Protect your Peace

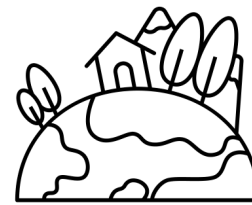


RANKING OF INDICATORS ACROSS RACE AND ETHNICITY GROUPS

Indicator Weighted Averages per Census Race/Ethnicity Group

	White, NH	Black or African American, NH	American Indian or Alaska Native, NH	Asian, NH	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, NH	Hispanic and/or Latino	Two or More Races, NH	Some Other Race, NH
Tree Canopy Cover	27.1%	23.4%	23.4%	26.0%	22.2%	24.1%	26.8%	26.2%
Park Access	47.4%	45.5%	48.6%	48.1%	49.8%	47.7%	46.6%	45.2%
Walkability	184.9	179.2	168.4	180.3	149.1	162.9	182.5	180.1
Access to transit	83.0%	85.2%	79.5%	83.1%	78.6%	80.0%	82.1%	84.6%
Total Air Toxics Cancer Risk	36.1	36	35.5	36.1	34.1	34.7	35.8	36.3
Mobile Source Air Toxics Cancer Risk	7.36	7.46	7.17	7.38	6.76	6.98	7.30	7.76
Structures Built Before 1979	66.9%	68.0%	62.1%	64.7%	61.5%	63.9%	67.1%	69.3%
Proximity to Air Toxics Point Source	85.6%	91.4%	84.4%	86.4%	89.9%	88.8%	86.9%	88.6%
Energy Burden	2.7%	2.8%	2.9%	2.9%	3.1%	2.9%	2.8%	2.7%

WHAT DOES THIS SHOW?



The chart shows the impact of environmental justice indicators across census race/ethnicity groups in Multnomah County with red showing the greatest negative impact. There is a disproportionate negative impact on BIPOC communities in Multnomah County especially people who identify as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, some other race, and American Indian or Alaska Native.

“ Feel like it’s a environmental and social health concern that is rooted in classism and ignorance. It’s a direct reflection of the state of our planets health- people are killing themselves as we kill our planet.

”



BRENTWOOD-DARLINGTON RESIDENT

IMPACT OF EXTREME HEAT



“ Being a household of POC, it is not always easy to find the resources to get help in dealing with these extreme temperatures. Resources are not readily available in our area. Also, a lot of people in this area and community have a “DIY” attitude when it comes to protecting themselves from these extreme temperatures, as asking for assistance has not historically been easy for POC. My husband has resorted to making an air conditioning unit out of a foam ice cooler from dollar tree, and during cold seasons, we will buy fire wood that is only able to heat one room in our home, when we don’t have money for oil. These are not ideal ways to combat the extreme temperatures in our community, but you do what you can with the resources you do have out here. It would be nice to have stipends for air conditioning units, or heating assistance for our homes, that is less conspicuous. ”

➤ **PARKROSE RESIDENT**

“ The program this summer that provided air conditioning units through low income housing programs, etc. was very helpful. But the program should have started just before the summer because many residents like myself did not get an air conditioning unit till the heat wave was about over. So we had to suffer though the most of the summer. ”

➤ **RICHARD HUNTER, ELIOT RESIDENT**





“ I had smoke seeping into my home to where I had to put up wet sheets on the doors and windows to keep the smoke out. I also tried to seal off the bathroom exhaust fans and baseboard heaters to prevent smoke from coming in. I also struggled to find air purifiers, so I was using a humidifier and running water to keep the air moist to help with breathing. I have asthma and struggled during this time, I had to increase my usage of my daily steroid inhaler and rescue inhaler. ”

➤ **GRESHAM RESIDENT**

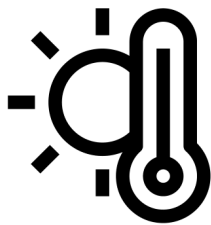
“ My kids and I had to get a hotel, paid for by my employer, during the 2020 heatwave — because my landlord didn’t allow the window AC units, and all other ACS (not fans) were sold out. We needed a safe place to stay where I could work from home. ”

➤ **ANA DEL ROCIO, MONTAVILLA RESIDENT**

“ Unprepared, it (heat) did affect me. I developed a severe rash/hives from the heatwave that took medication and about 10 plus days to clear. I’m high heat sensitive. The ice storm I ran out of food since it took longer to melt. I wound up walking to the neighborhood store, couldn’t rush driving due to parking lot iced over solid. It was pretty difficult. ”

➤ **CULLY RESIDENT**





RESOURCES

HEAT RELIEF

Cooling center locations, resources, first aid guides, and more.



Multnomah County
SCAN ME

multco.us/help-when-its-hot



City of Portland
SCAN ME

portland.gov/united/stay-safe-during-heat



Free Cooling Units
SCAN ME

tinyurl.com/pdxfreecooling



ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Energy assistance programs and information.



Multnomah County
SCAN ME

multco.us/dchs/energy-assistance



Oregon Energy Fund
SCAN ME

oregonenergyfund.org



Heat in MultCo Zine &
Resource Guide
SCAN ME

NETWORK NON-PROFITS

Coalition of Communities of Color
Unite Oregon

Urban League of Portland
Familias en Acción



METHODOLOGY

The Environmental Justice (EJ) Indicators Project is a collaboration between Multnomah County, The Coalition of Communities of Color and J'reyesha Brannon as part of the 2022 Harvard Climate Fellowship. The project addressed the lack of storytelling and narratives that rarely accompany quantitative (maps / data) representation of climate impact. Another goal of the project was to make climate justice data more accessible for frontline community members. We often hear "disproportionate" impacts in everything for Black, brown, and low income community, but the data is usually shared in a vacuum of academia or government. We hope that the 'Canopy of Stories,' EJ Indicator Storytelling Zine, and the County's Community Driven Climate Plan make climate data more accessible. Thank you to everyone who made this project possible!

COMMUNITY STORIES

Community Survey on EJ Indicators - (Oct. 2022)

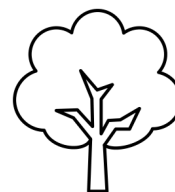
Translated in 5 languages, stipends for participants, routed to BIPOC community organizations and shared directly from Community Leaders

Community Led Interviews - (Feb 2023)

Five Community members interviewed 10 people in their community on the EJ indicator themes. Stipends provided.

Focus Group - (March 2022)

Led a focus group with BIPOC community members on how they would like the County to address climate related needs in the future. Stipends provided.



Canopy of Stories

SCAN ME

<https://canopyofstories.org/>



ROOTED IN VALUES, GUIDED BY VISION: CLIMATE PLANNING IN OUR COUNTY

Multnomah County is partnering with community based organizations and the City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to create our county's first ever climate justice plan. We are using a community-driven climate justice planning model that is different than the usual top-down planning in almost every way. Community-driven climate justice planning requires; collaboration and authentic partnership building, capacity building for frontline communities to engage, and honoring the insights of different disciplines and different ways of knowing.

Through community engagement and the convening of steering committee, we will build a shared climate justice vision and goals for 2030, and strategies to achieve those goals. The aim with this process will be to develop a plan that centers community priorities and serves as a guiding document for local government.

Learn more about the planning process and ways to engage by visiting the Multnomah County's Climate Justice Plan website. We welcome you to read *Rooted In Values, Guided By Vision: A Community Driven Climate Justice Framework for Multnomah County*.



**Multnomah County
Climate Justice Plan Site**

SCAN ME





Nia Musiba

Made Possible by:



Office of Sustainability