

72-R-20

8/17/20

9/1/20

72-R-20
A RESOLUTION
To Support Environmental Justice

WHEREAS, generations of Black Evanstonians, along with Latinx and other communities of color in the City of Evanston have disproportionately experienced environmental injustice in the past, and need an environmental justice policy implemented in the City to address such issues that currently exist and may arise in the future; and

WHEREAS, in order for the City of Evanston to fully embrace the change necessary to move our community forward, it is necessary to recognize, and acknowledge its own history of discrimination and racial injustice; to recognize the disproportionate and negative impacts of redlining and past city policies, institutional racism, social inequities which created an unequal distribution of environmental assets, environmental hazards and health risk; and

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston recognizes that Environmental Justice (EJ) is concerned with the equity and empowerment of all community members such that every resident experiences equitable access to environmental assets, protection from environmental hazards and health risks; and

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston aspires to mitigate negative environmental consequences and health risks resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations in all of its neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston seeks to support the delivery of an equitable share of environmental benefits and community assets in all neighborhoods and wards that enhance the quality of life, such as parks and open spaces, trees, natural areas, community gardens, and the lakefront as well as equal access to the City's environmental and infrastructure investments that support health, well-being and a sense of community; and

WHEREAS, The City of Evanston seeks to foster equity, community engagement, environmental sustainability, community cohesion, and transparent decision-making. The City of Evanston aspires to engage all Evanston residents regardless of race, ethnicity, or language, age, ability, immigration status, and address for equal access to information about, and opportunities for meaningful involvement in, local decision-making that affects their quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston recognizes that addressing racial equity within the climate crisis and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations will result in a more climate resilient Evanston.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EVANSTON, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, THAT:

SECTION 1: For purposes of this Resolution, the following definitions apply:

Environmental Justice (Evanston): Environmental Justice (EJ) is when every resident experiences the same degree of access to environmental assets, protection from environmental hazards and health risks, and an opportunity to play an effective role in making decisions that affect the quality of life in this community.

Public Engagement: Public engagement is any process that meaningfully and inclusively engages residents and stakeholders in taking an action or making a decision and gives full consideration to public input in making that decision.

SECTION 2: This Resolution establishes the City of Evanston's policy for environmental justice and puts in motion the development of ordinances to ensure active consideration of environmental justice and meaningful public participation in City policies, practices, procedures, and other decision-making.

SECTION 3: The City of Evanston is committed to meaningful and inclusive public engagement that provides the foundation for making better decisions around environmental justice issues. Decision-makers will have more complete information to understand any potential impact a project or program may have on an underserved community, decisions are more implementable and sustainable, decisions are perceived as more legitimate, and decision-makers become better communicators particularly in regard to residents and communities whose voices are underrepresented in public processes.

SECTION 4: The City of Evanston will incorporate environmental justice into City of Evanston ordinances, codes, policies, and processes, which could include review of existing codes which will be conducted with appropriate revisions to bolster and improve environmental justice outcomes. This work will be done in consultation with Environmental Justice Evanston, Evanston Environment Board, the Equity and Empowerment Commission, relevant City departments and other community organizations.

SECTION 5: The City of Evanston is committed to developing a policy that specifies clear goals for meaningful public engagement, policies and decision-making processes. These engagements are intended to ensure that all decisions with the potential to affect the quality of life for residents and entire neighborhoods in Evanston are supported by public engagement that is pursuant to the City's policy on meaningful, timely, inclusive, accessible and compliant public comment as well as responsiveness to public comment. The public engagement policy shall be developed in consultation with the Equity and Empowerment Commission and with the input and concurrence of community stakeholders.

SECTION 6: The City will develop and maintain an active GIS-based inventory of environmental justice areas in Evanston. Environmental justice areas are geographic regions in which there are likely to be disparities in access to environmental assets or exposure to hazards. That inventory will be made public through online mapping platforms. Once completed, this tool will help identify existing burdens, needed infrastructure improvements, and investments that can be considered by City Departments through their planning process.

SECTION 7: This Resolution 72-R-20 will be in full force and effect from and after the date of its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

Stephen H. Hagerty, Mayor

Attest:

Approved as to form:

Devon Reid, City Clerk

Kelley A. Gandurski, Corporation Counsel

Adopted: _____, 2020