

ONE COMPLETE HOUSTON:

UNDERSTANDING OUR
EQUITY OPPORTUNITIES AND
CHALLENGES EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY



Houston
Complete
Communities



RICE UNIVERSITY
Kinder Institute for
Urban Research



PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT



Funded by Shell USA, Inc.

A LETTER FROM OUR MAYOR

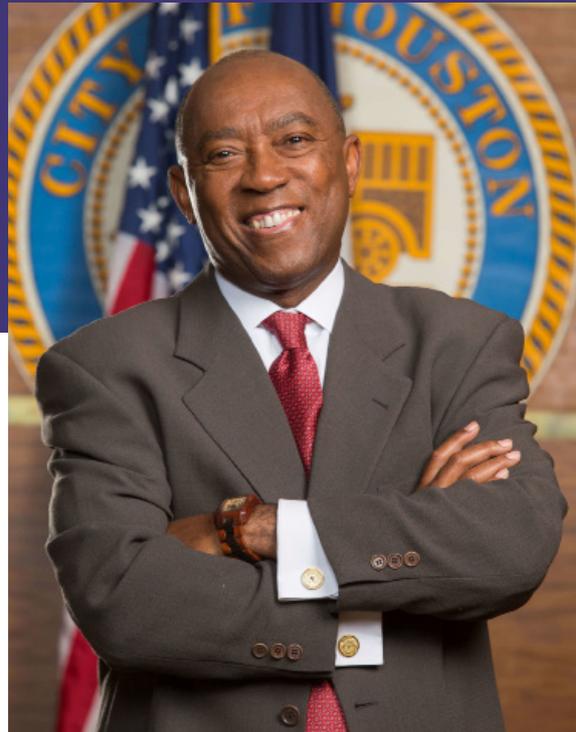
MAYOR SYLVESTER TURNER,
CITY OF HOUSTON

When the people of Houston first elected me as mayor in 2015, I said that I did not want to be the mayor of two cities. Houston cannot continue to be divided as a city of haves and have nots. Through my Complete Communities initiative, we are addressing issues we are demonstrating our commitment to bridge the deep disparities that exist in our city – the division of wealth, unequal accessibility of opportunity, and the inconsistent availability of necessities that are exacerbated by racial, ethnic, gender and ability biases. Houston is celebrated for our multiculturalism and opportunity for all, but the track to opportunity and success does not look the same for everyone. Start lines do not look the same for everyone. Finish lines do not end in the same place for everyone. Hurdles are higher for some, not forgetting those who struggle to make it onto the track at all.

If you have not examined the important differences between equity and equality, I encourage you to use this report as a guide. This analysis provides crucial insight to Houstonians new to the equity conversation, community leaders, and decision makers working close to the pervasive and complex causes and compounding effects of inequities.

I'm incredibly proud of all the work this administration has done to foster equity in projects across all sectors of the city. But despite our successes, this report is intended as a hard look in the mirror, a tool for accountability, and a deep dive into data that can guide the City's efforts to achieve even greater equity in the future.

Our Equity Score is assessed on a scale of 1-100, and the score reflects the disparity between the highest



and lowest scores. Don't take the number at face value or compare it to a report card in the traditional sense – there is no passing or failing. I urge you to take some time to understand the methodology before drawing conclusions.

Equity is a lens we must use to assess and adjust city policies and procedures so that all residents, especially those who have been historically marginalized, can thrive. We take the feedback we received through community surveys and the data in report seriously. We will use this tool to direct our focus on increasing equitable outcomes and we encourage you to use it in the same way. It is imperative that we come together and address systemic problems in the community to build a movement that makes Houston a leader in opportunity and equity.

I give my most sincere thanks to our partners at the Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research and Shell Corporation for their research and funding support for this initiative. I applaud staff from the Planning and Development Department, Mayor's Office of Resilience and Sustainability, and Complete Communities for their collaborative work that ties to the vision and framework for a resilient community outlined in the Resilient Houston strategy.



A LETTER FROM SHELL USA, INC.

Houston has long been celebrated as one of the most diverse cities in the United States. For Shell USA, Inc., we believe that Houston's diverse population opens up a workforce that adds the value of diverse perspectives to our objective to supply the energy that people need to power their lives. At Shell in the US, working to promote diversity is not merely a human resources initiative. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the very core of how we do business.

Produced through collaboration between the City of Houston and the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, and funded by Shell USA, Inc., this Equity Indicators Report is the first of its kind for the City of Houston. It is important to us to support this initiative, including transparency of the report's findings, because we believe that action, from all sectors, must be taken by which we can measure progress toward a more equitable society.

We believe to uphold a city as diverse as Houston, differences should also become strengths, so that together we are all helping move Houston forward in efforts to close the opportunity gap. At Shell USA, Inc., we strive to support individuals and communities by providing jobs, bringing local businesses into our supply chain, promoting entrepreneurship, investing in education, and offering skills training in communities where we operate.

We also endeavor to support historically disadvantaged communities as the energy system changes, by listening and engaging with them to identify opportunities for them to shape their own energy future. To make progress, we believe everybody must experience the economic, social, and environmental benefits of a changing energy system.

Shell USA, Inc. has proudly called Texas home for decades. The heart of our US operations is based in Houston, including our US corporate offices and most of Shell USA, Inc.'s core businesses. We strive to be one of the most diverse, equitable, and inclusive companies in the world – and we believe creating opportunities for a diverse range of people is a community effort, and that working together to create opportunities will strengthen our communities, which in turn strengthens our company.

Houston is one of our largest homebases, and Shell USA, Inc. is invested in its societal health. Our goal is to thrive in this City and uplift others to thrive with us.

We understand everybody is on a journey, and this report's findings serve as indicators for the work happening in the greater Houston area today and what comes next for the future.

The companies in which Shell plc directly and indirectly owns investments are separate legal entities. In this letter, "Shell" is used for convenience where references are made to Shell plc and its subsidiaries in general and no useful purpose is served by identifying the particular entity or entities. The report was funded by Shell USA, Inc. The report was authored by the Kinder Institute for Urban Research under its full editorial control. The views, data and analysis represented in this report may not represent the views of Shell plc, Shell USA, Inc. and Shell subsidiaries

HOUSTON'S UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY OUTCOMES

Houston is considered by many to be the land of opportunity and in many ways it is. Unfortunately, that opportunity flows differently to some Houstonians based on their zip code and their race and ethnicity group. An Equity Indicators Tool was developed to compare data on 63 topical areas that measures whether opportunities are equally available to all Houstonians. The data coalesces into a score, called an Equity Indicator.

**HOUSTON'S
OVERALL
EQUITY SCORE IS
44.1 OUT OF 100
DELINEATING A
DIRE NEED FOR
IMPROVEMENTS.**

Compared to other cities that have used the Equity Indicators methodology, our score is higher than Dallas's 2021 score of 38 and Tulsa's 2022 score of 42.63. Houston follows behind St. Louis's 2018 score of 45.57 and Pittsburgh's 2018 score of 55.

The City of Houston is the fourth largest city in the United States with more than 2.3 million people, 145 languages, 10,000 plus restaurants representing more than 70 countries, and more than 25 religions and faiths practiced within the city's limits. It is a world business center with two international

airports offering non-stop service to more than 70 international destinations. Fourteen major institutions of higher learning and more than 60 degree-granting colleges, universities and technical schools service the greater Houston area, making it one of the biggest college cities in the nation. From an external perspective, Houston is a stunning and novel combination of cultures, languages, influences, business enterprises, learning and traditions. Its present and future have been called the next great American experiment.

As diversity increases in Houston, does equity keep pace? Do the services, opportunities, infrastructure and leadership match the diversity of the fourth largest city in the United States? To answer this question and ultimately develop policies and initiatives to increase equity for all 2.3 million residents, the City of Houston embarked on an exercise to objectively analyze its own equity, equality, justice and resilience assets.

This report is the first of its kind for the city and marks a commencement to collective action. To that end, the findings of this report establish a baseline of indicators, something against which we can measure progress toward a more equitable city in the future.

Houstonians have a choice to make about their city and its future. Will we live into our unique opportunity to advance outcomes for people of all races and ethnicities or continue the status quo?

A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR HOUSTON

To better understand this work, we must first be clear about what equity is and what it is not. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and needs. These circumstances and needs are not absent from the impact of historic and present day policies and practices that have targeted black and brown communities. Different groups of people need different resources to thrive. Equity is not equality. Equality is giving everyone the exact same resources across the board regardless of an individual's or group of people's actual needs. Equity considers the impact of race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation from a person or community's outcomes.

With this in mind, the equity indicators and the findings in the report can help drive equitable policies, programs and services to meet communities where they are and allocate resources as needed to create better opportunities for all of Houston's residents.

The City of Houston is committed to advance racial and ethnic equity by mobilizing all departments, divisions, and programs to review, revise, and implement systems providing for equity, as defined above. To ensure limitless choices, opportunities, and freedoms, we will invest and support historically underserved and marginalized communities, such as people of color, people with disabilities, people

with low incomes, immigrants and refugees, youth, those with limited-English proficiency, and other compounding factors related to racial and ethnic disparities. This commitment includes the provision and continuation of the amount of goods, services, supports and resources specifically required to accomplish the equity goals in the City of Houston. In doing so, we will meet our vision as a city to offer opportunity for all and fully celebrate our diversity of people, economy, culture, and places. The definition of equity intentionally leaves out the concept of everyone having equal outcomes.



EQUITY is achieved when a Houstonian's race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation, do not predict their outcomes or limit their choices. Our city embraces and nurtures its multiculturalism and diversity by offering opportunities for all and deploys policies that support fair and just access to opportunity.

Houston includes equity as an important component in projects and programs. As such, it is a key component in major plans from Plan Houston to the Civic Art Collection Equity Review to the 10 Complete Communities Action Plans.

HOUSTON'S EQUITY INDICATOR TOOL COMPONENTS

The City of Houston's Equity Indicators tool was developed in partnership with the Kinder Institute for Urban Research and is based on a model developed by the City University New York Institute for State and Local Governance. The City of Houston's Equity Indicator Tool has been used successfully by six other US cities to measure disparities faced by disadvantaged groups and to use the overall score as a guide to frame policy and program development. While there is no passing or failing, the score helps to identify the disparity between the highest and lowest scores among different racial and ethnic groups in Houston.

This report measures equity across 63 indicators for the City of Houston. The Houston Equity Indicators tool comprises seven broad themes: Access &

Inclusion. Economic Opportunity, Environmental & Climate Risks, Health, Housing, Infrastructure, and Public Safety. Each of the seven themes is broken down into twenty one topics, and each topic is subdivided into three indicators each. The themes and topics are based on priorities established through existing planning efforts and public engagement. The indicators within each theme were selected based on the availability of reliable, regularly collected data.

While Houston's Equity definition includes characteristics beyond race and ethnicity (as defined above), this report focuses solely on the two. Future reports could and should focus on the other features listed in Houston's definition of equity (e.g., disability or sexual orientation).

HOW TO USE THE EQUITY INDICATOR TOOL:

1

For each indicator, the tool compares outcomes between two racial and/or ethnic groups and assigns a score on a scale from 1 to 100. One hundred represents the highest possible score, and one represents the lowest possible score.

2

The closer the score is to one, the more disparity exists between race and ethnicity groups on that particular indicator. For instance, a score of 15 indicates that there is a great difference between how people of different races can access an opportunity. Conversely, a score of 75 indicates that opportunities seem to flow evenly, regardless of race or ethnicity. Having the indicators measured this way allows for comparison across indicators and across time.

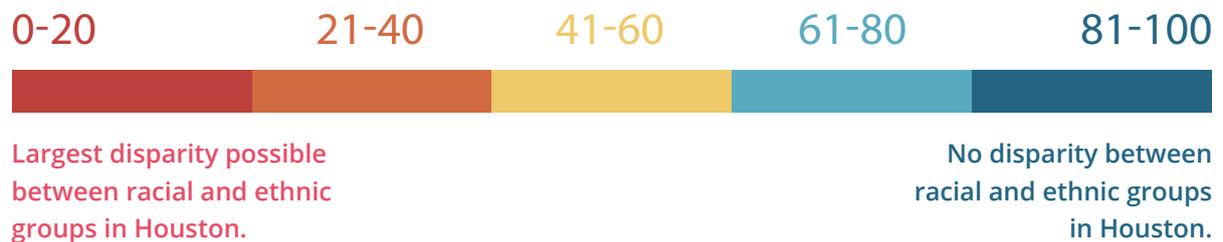
THE EQUITY INDICATOR TOOL IN PRACTICE

For example, examine the theme of Economic Opportunity. Two indicators that were identified as contributing factors of economic opportunity are: Child Poverty and On-Time High School Graduation. The score for Child Poverty is 32. This indicates that some races or ethnicities have many more children in poverty than other races or ethnicities. The other indicator, On-Time High School Graduation is 82. This shows that there are fewer disparities between the races and ethnicities in terms of how many children graduate from high school on time. Because both indicators have a range from 1 to 100, it is possible to compare the equity of those two indicators and conclude that there are greater disparities

in the percent of children in poverty across race and ethnic groups than there is in the percent of youth graduating from high school on time. This way of measuring the Equity Indicators is useful for comparison and tracking over time; it is less useful as a stand-alone score or percentage.

This tool should be used to highlight areas where equity can be celebrated and to identify the areas that need additional resources and attention to increase Houston's equity standing. Equally important, the tool can help the city understand the impact of its programs and initiatives by measuring its change in score over time.

EQUITY SCORE



EQUITY SCORE

47.8

ACCESS & INCLUSION	
Representation	City Leadership Diversity Diversity in Police Force Diversity in HFD/EMS
Community Amenities	Residents Without Internet Access Access to Parks & Green Space Art Grants
Quality of Life Assets	Early Childhood Learning Residents Without Bank Accounts Access to Healthy Food Providers

EQUITY SCORE

77.8

INFRASTRUCTURE	
Transportation	Access to a Vehicle Public Transportation Access Commute Time
Connectivity & Mobility	Street Quality Sidewalk Availability Traffic Fatalities
Green & Resilient Infrastructure	Drainage System Adequacy Green Stormwater Infrastructure LEED Certified Buildings

EQUITY SCORE

34.6

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY	
Employment	Employment in High-Paying Sectors Business Ownership Unemployment Rate
Educational Attainment	On-Time High School Graduation Youth Not in School or Working College Degrees
Income & Poverty	Median Household Income Adult Poverty Child Poverty

EQUITY SCORE

27.3

HEALTH	
Access to Healthcare	Uninsured Adults Uninsured Children Preventable Hospitalizations
Child & Maternal Health	Infant Mortality Maternal Mortality Low Birth Weight
Health Outcomes	Mental Health Related EMS Transports Cancer Mortality Premature Death

EQUITY SCORE

56.1

ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE RISK	
Pollution	EPA Penalties Hazard Waste Proximity Air Pollution
Disaster Risks	Housing in FEMA Floodplain Highly Impacted Households Flood Insurance Policies
Temperature Resilience	Temperature-Related EMS Transports Heat Islands Tree Canopy

EQUITY SCORE

24.0

PUBLIC SAFETY	
Victimization	Domestic Violence Calls for Service Robbery Victimization Rates Homicide Victimization Rates
Arrests	Adult Misdemeanor Arrest Adult Felony Arrests Juvenile Misdemeanor Arrests
Law Enforcement	Traffic Stops that Lead to Searches Officer Use of Force Police Response Time

EQUITY SCORE

41.3

HOUSING	
Home Ownership & Affordability	Homeownership Home Loan Denial Housing Cost Burden
Housing Quality	Overcrowded Housing Vacant Housing Units Low Value Stock
Housing Risks	Eviction Filings Residential Fire Incidents Fire Response Time

THE EQUITY INDICATOR SCORES TELL THE STORY OF HOUSTONIANS

Taking action requires going beyond the indicator scores to examine the data and disparities behind them. Each of the 63 Equity Indicators starts with a score, which is then broken down to reveal the Black-, white-, Asian-, and Hispanic-specific scores that are being used to arrive at the indicator's score. To change the indicator's score requires changing the numbers behind them.

Returning to the example of Child Poverty, improving the indicator score of 32 requires action and policy that will significantly reduce the percent of Black children and Hispanic children in poverty. The policy would need to target Black children and Hispanic children because currently, 37% of Black children and 33% of Hispanic children live in poverty, compared to 12% of white children and 11% of Asian children. The Child Poverty indicator score of 32 reflects the sizable differences in the percent of children living in poverty across race and ethnic groups.

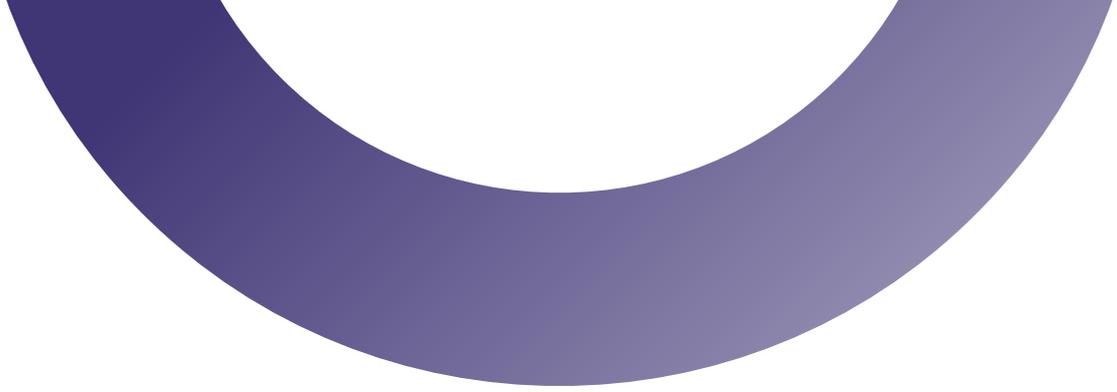
With this data, policymakers have a decision to make. To improve the Child Poverty data, they can institute policies such as a child tax credit that helps those in poverty but equally distributes resources to everyone with a child regardless of income, or they can target policies and resources toward those families living in poverty. The former will raise all children out of poverty but have little effect on the indicator score. The latter would raise the score and narrow the opportunity gap between races. These decisions are not easy, but this Equity Indicator tool can make the decisions more data-driven.

We can also look at the example of Housing, the indicator is homeownership and the equity score is 39. In 2019, 40% of Houstonians lived in a home they own, down 1.5% from 2018. White and Asian Houstonians are more likely to own their home than Hispanic or Black Houstonians. In 2019, 56% of White Houstonians owned their home, roughly the same rate as in 2018. However, only 25% of Black Houstonians were homeowners in 2019, down almost 3% from 2018. The fall in Black homeownership caused the equity score to decrease from 41 in 2018 to 39 in 2019.

A 2022 study from the National Community Reinvestment Coalition reported that racial discrimination persists in mortgage lending. While most forms of discrimination in the housing market declined or ceased (including the most extreme forms, such as lying about the availability of advertised housing units), the authors of the study said that Black and Hispanic borrowers still face disproportionately high levels of rejection.

According to the study, racial gaps in loan denial decreased slightly between the 1970s and 2020, while gaps in mortgage costs remained for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. Discrimination like this entrenches racial segregation by pushing those with weak preferences to neighborhoods made up of residents with similar racial backgrounds. This only serves to fuel the racial wealth gap by making it harder for Blacks to actually build wealth.

Other studies also corroborate this finding,



including a 2019 LendingTree report, which indicated racial differences in lending rejection rates. According to that report, Black borrowers have the highest denial rates, at 17.4%, and non-Hispanic Whites have the lowest, at 7.9%.¹

We can also examine the disparities in the Health theme. One of the indicators used to measure the health of Houstonians is if they have health insurance or not. Those with health insurance have more access to health care which gives them better health outcomes. The Equity Indicator score for Uninsured Adults was 25. This score tells us that while 1 in 3 adult Houstonians do not have health insurance, there is a big difference in the number of adults insured across different race and ethnicities.

In 2019, half of the adult Hispanic population in Houston did not have health insurance, by far the highest percentage among the different racial ethnic groups. Black Houstonians had the second-highest percent of uninsured adults at 27%. White and Asian adult residents experienced much lower uninsured rates, at 12% and 16% respectively. Between 2018 and 2019, the uninsured rate for the city increased almost 2%, and the impact was seen across all groups. This led to the equity score remaining stable while the overall situation did not improve.

Black and Latino/Hispanic adults have historically reported much higher uninsured rates than white adults. This disparity reflects economic inequities, for these communities are less likely than white adults to receive coverage

through their jobs, as well as immigration policies that can constrain coverage options for Latino/Hispanic families in particular.

The ACA promised to increase coverage equity by funding 100 percent of state Medicaid expansions in the first three years, phasing down to 90 percent over time, and by subsidizing individual marketplace plans.

Uninsured rates for all three groups fell after coverage expansions went into effect in 2014, and Black and Latino/Hispanic adults made the largest gains. The Black adult uninsured rate dropped from 24.4 percent in 2013 to a low of 13.7 percent in 2016, before rising slightly to 14.2 percent in 2019. The Latino/Hispanic uninsured rate decreased from 40.2 percent in 2013 to a low of 24.9 percent in 2018 but has since edged upward to 25.7 percent in 2019. These trends reduced coverage disparities in relation to white adults by 4.6 percentage points for Black adults and 9 points for Latino/Hispanic adults.²

HOUSTON'S EQUITY SCORE IS 44.1— WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

The journey to ensure all Houstonians have equitable access to resources and opportunities is a long one which takes planning, intention, and, perhaps most importantly, execution. The community must be involved in designing equitable policy interventions. The data and research behind each of the Equity Indicators in this report are merely a reference – a map to point city leaders in the right direction. But to arrive at the destination, the city must ask which roadblocks should be addressed first, and how to overcome them. No single mayoral

administration can solve all the issues raised in this report, but each administration must ask how this data should shape its policies and practices.

And most importantly, future data and research will provide the evidence needed to change, adapt, and innovate to address inequities. This will ensure Houston is a city where everyone has the chance to thrive, and race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other features may inform our identities but not determine our trajectory.

THEMES RANKED FROM HIGHEST TO LOWEST

77.8	INFRASTRUCTURE
56.1	ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE RISKS
47.8	ACCESS & INCLUSION
41.3	HOUSING
34.6	ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
27.3	HEALTH
24.0	PUBLIC SAFETY

PLEASE NOTE: ALL RESULTS ABOVE ARE REFLECTIVE OF DATA FROM PREVIOUS YEARS

CRITICAL AREAS TO ADDRESS

Indicator Score 1 Signaling Greatest Possible Disparity

1	EPA PENALTIES
1	RESIDENTS WITHOUT BANK ACCOUNTS
1	LOW VALUE STOCK
1	BUSINESS OWNERSHIP
1	MENTAL HEALTH RELATED EMS TRANSPORTS
1	ADULT FELONY ARRESTS
1	TRAFFIC STOPS THAT LEAD TO SEARCHES
1	OFFICER USE OF FORCE
38	*TRAFFIC FATALITIES Indicator had largest drop in score between comparison years

The average air pollution exposure index for cancer and non-cancer risks for all Houstonians is 80. This means that Houston residents have higher air toxin exposure than 80% of census tracts nationwide. For air toxins with cancer risk, the index for all Houstonians was 88, again meaning that the risk is higher here than 88% of census tracts in the US. There is very little difference in exposure among racial/ethnic groups. While Hispanic Houstonians had the highest exposure index at 88.0, both Black and White Houstonians had index values of 87.8. Asian or Pacific Islanders had the lowest value of 85.4. This is a case where the equity score is high, but all Houstonians could benefit from cleaner air.

The EPA regulates over 3,700 active facilities in 71 ZIP codes with over 50% of landmass inside Houston. In the past 5 years, these facilities have been cited for over \$150 million in penalties, for an average of \$41,640 per facility. There were slightly more than 600 facilities in the 16 ZIP codes where the majority of the population is Non-Hispanic White, with an average of \$1,621 in penalties per facility. Of the 55 ZIP codes where the majority of the population are people of color, there were over 3,100 facilities, with an average of \$49,234 in penalties in the last five years. The equity score of 1 reflects the large disparity in this indicator.

EQUITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE

Indicator Score 90 or Above Signaling Low Disparity

98	DRAINAGE SYSTEM ADEQUACY
97	POLICE RESPONSE TIME
96	ART GRANTS
95	PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCESS
94	AIR POLLUTION
92	HEAT ISLANDS
90	ACCESS TO PARKS & GREEN SPACE

PLEASE NOTE: ALL RESULTS ABOVE ARE REFLECTIVE OF DATA FROM PREVIOUS YEARS

Sources

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ONE
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