

# ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM IN ST. LOUIS



# Environmental Justice

Full report available for download at: [www.environmentalracismstl.com](http://www.environmentalracismstl.com)

# Environmental Justice: Defined

As defined by Dr. Robert Bullard, known as the father of environmental justice, "**environmental justice embraces the principle that all people and communities have a right to equal protection and equal enforcement of environmental laws and regulations.**"

To achieve Environmental Justice, all people – regardless of race, color, or national origin – must have:

- ▶ **Equal protection from environmental and health hazards, and**
- ▶ **Equal access to the decision and policy-making process, allowing them a say in the health of the environment in which they live, learn, and work.**

# Asthma

- ▶ St. Louis is one of the worst cities in the country for asthma. Black St. Louisans bear the brunt of this problem.
- ▶ *ER visits for asthma: Black vs. White*
  - ▶ Black: 8.5 times more ER visits
  - ▶ Black Children: 10.8 times more ER visits
- ▶ *Looking at the numbers, ER visits per 1,000 residents:*
  - ▶ White Children, STL City: 3.9 visits
  - ▶ Missouri, Overall: 5.3 visits
  - ▶ STL County, Overall: 7.4 visits
  - ▶ STL City, Overall: 14.8 visits
  - ▶ Black STL City Residents: 24.7 visits
  - ▶ Black Children, STL City: 42.4 visits





# Air Pollution

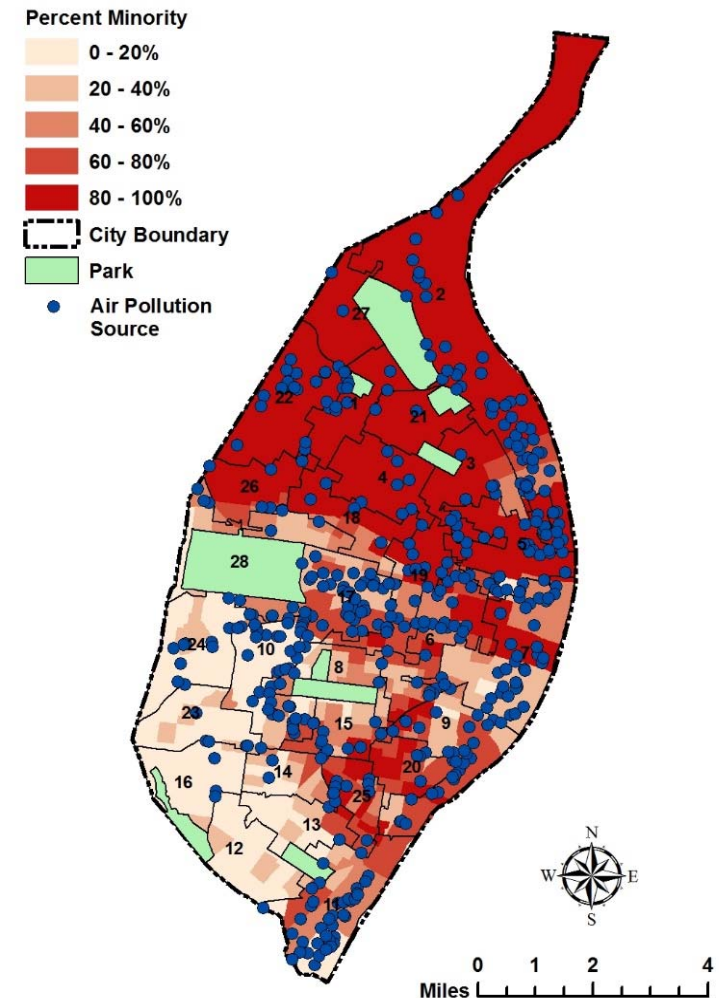
- ▶ Significant negative impacts on health.
- ▶ Two primary types of air pollution:

*Ground Level Ozone ( $O_3$ )*

*Fine Particle Pollution ( $PM_{2.5}$ )*

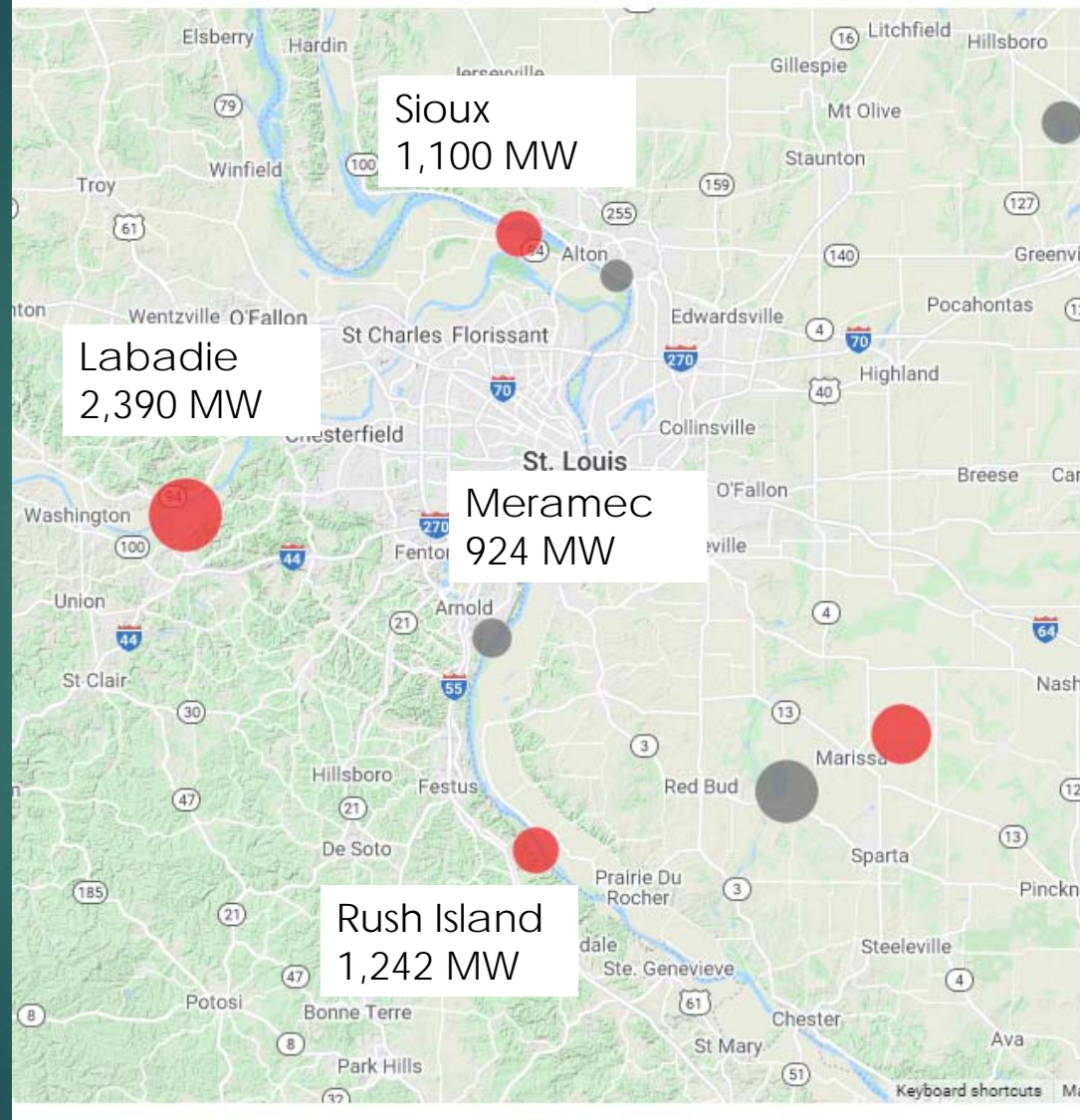
- ▶ Majority of air pollution and demolition sources in majority black neighborhoods.

## Air Pollution Sources and Percentage of Minority Residents



# Air Pollution

## Coal-Fired Power Plants



# Mold

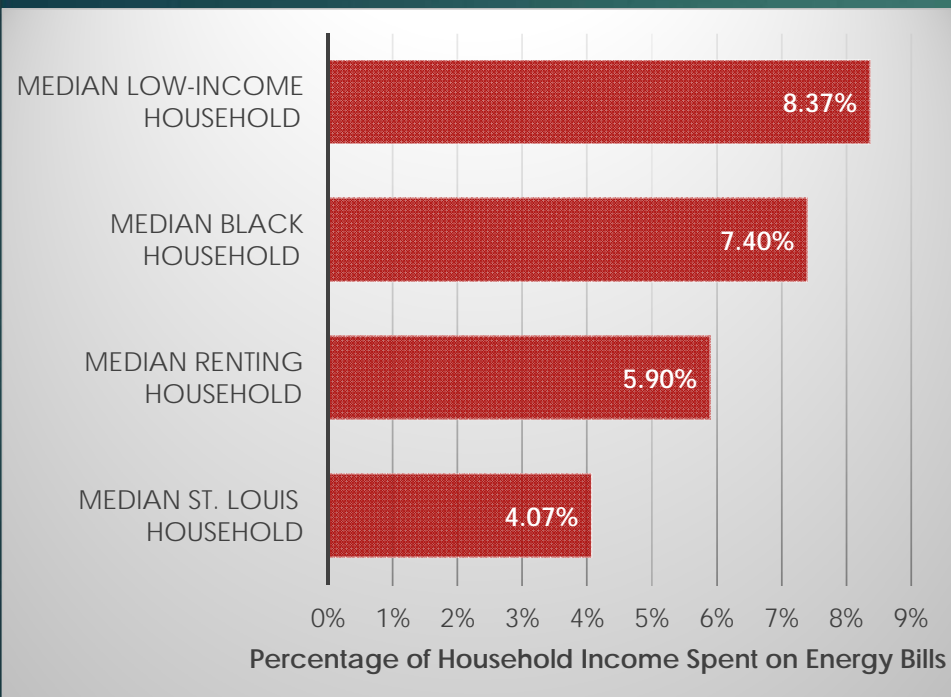


- ▶ Causes variety of ailments, including upper respiratory tract problems, and serves as an asthma trigger.
- ▶ Endemic to old, ill-kempt housing stock; often low-income & rental properties.
- ▶ Complaints significantly more common in majority-black neighborhoods.
- ▶ There are no legal standards to protect St. Louis residents.



# Home Energy Burden

Median Energy Burdens in St. Louis



- ▶ Defined: Percentage of household income spent on utilities.
- ▶ People most effected: low-income; renters; communities of color.
- ▶ Poor housing quality → insufficiently sealed from elements → high energy costs.
- ▶ Linked to: increases in asthma, mold, and air pollution.

# The Big Question: What can be done?

## The Answer: Quite a lot!

### ► Federal Level

- Environmental Justice Mapping & Data Collection Act
- Funding for environmental justice initiatives
- Laws and Regulations:
  - Renewable energy,
  - Clean air,
  - Pollution controls on coal-fired power plants.

### ► State & Local Level

- Air pollution monitors
- Flora & fauna
- Urban agriculture
- Renewable energy
- Safe demolitions
- Alternate transportation
- Pesticides
- CAFO's
- Inside the home

