



# Is Recycling for the Rich?



Goal: To analyze and engage with the differences (if any) in knowledge of and ability to practice proper waste disposal amongst people of different socioeconomic statuses in Portland

## What

- Wealth disparity in Portland affects means of waste disposal, and often puts poorer communities in close proximity to waste disposal plants
- This can cause harmful health effects, and people often feel powerless against it
- The same people who are most intensely affected by this excess waste often have limited access to recycling, compost, etc.
- *Caring about sustainability is a privilege: most people in the world have more pressing issues to think about.* (Sustainable Fisheries UW)
- *What defines and constitutes environmental injustice [has] diversified.* (Walker)
- *"The connection between toxic pollution and poor and non-white communities has been widely accepted, not only by activists, but by government agencies as well."* (Stroud)

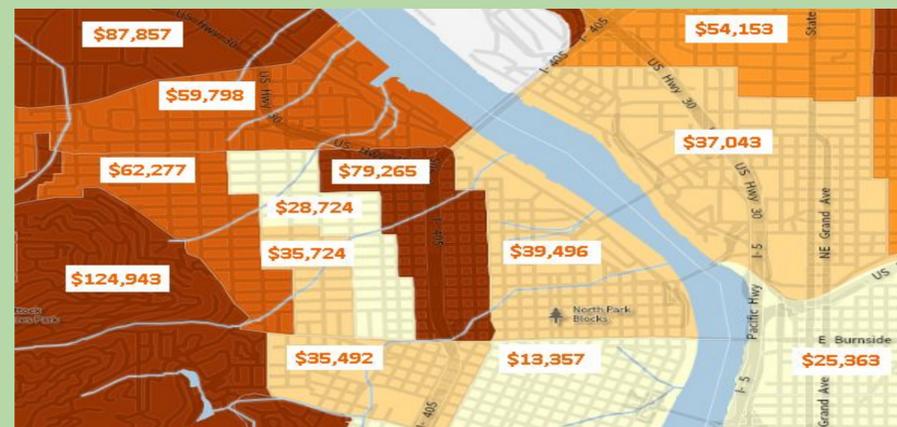
## Who

The following high schools were chosen based on their location's median income:

- Riverdale High School (SW) students and faculty
- Lincoln High School (Downtown) students and faculty
- Grant High School (NE) students and faculty
- President James Madison High School (NE) students and faculty

## How

- Contact, by phone, each of the high schools listed and request to administer an anonymous online survey. The following questions will be included:
  - Do you find recycling to be difficult?
  - Do you have a recycling bin at home?
  - Do you live near a waste treatment plant or similar facility? If so, how does this affect you?
- After the survey, we will facilitate an open discussion
- Observe trash and recycling bins around campus, comparing to other campuses in different neighborhoods
- Speak to cafeteria staff (with permission from administration) regarding food waste
- Engage with teachers and staff about access to recycling on campus and overall habits of students



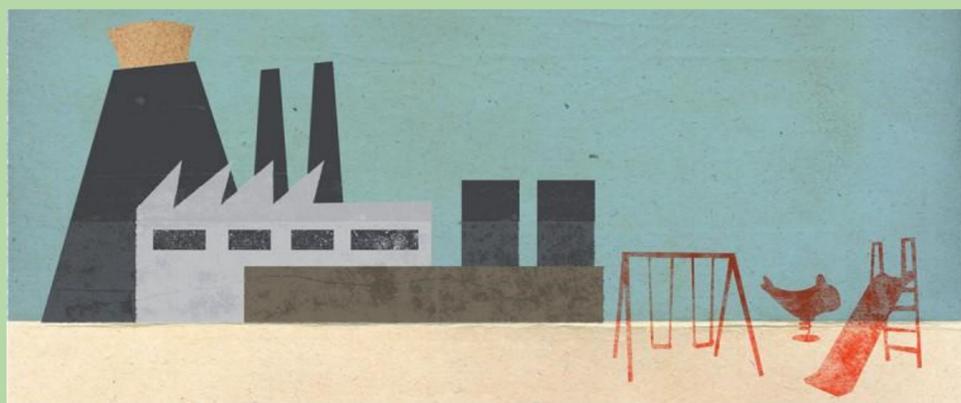
*"It's time to recognize that income inequality is a sustainability issue."*  
(Kirby)

## Assessment

- We will have met our goal if our survey results provide us with an informed understanding of environmental classism in Portland
- We will have also encouraged students to consider their waste disposal habits, and take action where they can

## References

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- Walker, Gordon. "Beyond Distribution and Proximity: Exploring the Multiple Specialities of Environmental Justice" 2009
- Dean, Barbara. "OPINION: Why We Still Need to Focus on Environmental Justice."
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*"Too often, ZIP code and race are the best predictors of health and well-being."* (Dean)