Environmental Justice & Climate Action

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ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & CLIMATE ACTION

Dave Biggers for Louisville Mayor 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Louisville faces a dual environmental crisis: the immediate health emergency in fence-line communities exposed to industrial pollution, and the long-term threat of climate change already affecting our city through extreme heat, flooding, and air quality decline. These crises disproportionately harm Black and low-income residents—environmental racism that has persisted for generations.

Dave Biggers believes **clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment are fundamental rights**—not privileges reserved for wealthy neighborhoods. While addressing climate change requires federal and state action, Louisville Metro Government has significant power to protect residents from pollution, accelerate clean energy transition, build climate resilience, and ensure environmental benefits reach communities that have suffered environmental harms.

The Challenge

Louisville's environmental and climate crisis shows up in devastating statistics:

1. **Air Quality Emergency:** Louisville ranks among worst U.S. cities for air pollution.

West Louisville residents exposed to industrial emissions at 5-10x rates of East End. Asthma hospitalization rates in West Louisville are 3x citywide average.

2. **Rubbertown Pollution:** Chemical Valley (Rubbertown) houses 30+ industrial facilities releasing carcinogens, respiratory toxins, and greenhouse gases into predominantly Black neighborhoods (Shawnee, Chickasaw, Parkway Village).

3. **Climate Impacts Worsening:** Extreme heat days (>95°F) increased 400% since 1970. Urban heat island effect makes West Louisville 10-15°F hotter than tree-covered East End. Flooding frequency doubled; sewage overflows contaminate waterways.

4. **Tree Canopy Inequality:** West Louisville has 15-22% tree canopy coverage; East End has 60%+. Lack of trees increases heat, reduces air quality, and harms mental/physical health.

5. **Energy Burden:** Low-income households spend 15-20% of income on utilities (vs. 3% for middle-income)—forcing impossible choices between heating/cooling and food, medicine, rent.

Dave's Vision

Dave will advance environmental justice and climate action through community-centered policies that prioritize fence-line communities:

Environmental Justice in Rubbertown ($15M annually): Air monitoring, health studies, pollution reduction enforcement, just transition for workers, community oversight with real power.

Urban Tree Canopy Expansion ($10M annually): Plant 50,000 trees over 4 years in West Louisville and underserved areas—reducing heat, improving air quality, enhancing health and property values.

Climate Resilience Infrastructure ($8M annually): Green infrastructure for flooding, extreme heat response, weatherization for low-income homes, emergency preparedness.

Renewable Energy Transition ($5M annually): Solar on Metro buildings, community solar for low-income residents, electric vehicle fleet conversion, clean energy jobs training.

Sustainable Transportation ($4M annually): Protected bike lanes, pedestrian safety improvements, EV charging infrastructure, transit-oriented development.

Budget Impact

This policy requires **$42 million in new annual spending**—funded through reallocation of economic development incentives to green jobs, federal infrastructure and climate funding, utility partnerships, and carbon offset programs.

All proposals fit within Louisville Metro's $1.2 billion annual general fund budget.

Why This Matters

Environmental justice is racial justice. For 70+ years, Louisville zoned polluting industries in Black neighborhoods. Residents didn't choose to live next to chemical plants—racist policy forced them there. Addressing environmental racism isn't optional—it's a moral imperative and legal obligation.

Climate change is here. Louisville has already experienced 2°F warming; extreme heat, flooding, and severe storms are increasing. Without action, infrastructure will fail, vulnerable residents will suffer, and costs will explode.

Clean energy creates jobs. Renewable energy and energy efficiency employ more workers per dollar than fossil fuels. Louisville can lead Kentucky's clean energy transition—creating thousands of good-paying jobs while reducing emissions.

Tree canopy is public health infrastructure. Trees reduce heat (preventing heat stroke), filter air pollution (reducing asthma), manage stormwater (preventing flooding), and improve mental health. Investing in trees is investing in health equity.

Dave's environmental justice and climate action agenda will protect fence-line communities, build climate resilience, accelerate clean energy transition, and ensure Louisville's environmental future benefits everyone—especially those who have suffered environmental harms for generations.

CURRENT SITUATION: ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM & CLIMATE CRISIS

By the Numbers

Air Quality & Pollution:
– **Louisville Air Quality Ranking:** 14th worst in nation (American Lung Association)
– **Days Exceeding Air Quality Standards:** 35+ annually
– **West Louisville Air Toxics Exposure:** 5-10x higher than East End
– **Rubbertown Facilities:** 30+ industrial plants in 2-square-mile area

– **Cancer Risk (West Louisville):** 60% higher than citywide average
– **Asthma Hospitalization (West Louisville):** 3x citywide rate

Climate Impacts:
– **Temperature Increase:** +2°F since 1970; projected +5-7°F by 2050
– **Extreme Heat Days (>95°F):** Increased from 5 days/year (1970) to 25 days/year (2024)
– **Urban Heat Island Effect:** West Louisville 10-15°F hotter than East End on summer days
– **Flooding Events:** Frequency doubled since 1990
– **Combined Sewer Overflows:** 7 billion gallons untreated sewage annually into waterways

Tree Canopy Inequality:
– **West Louisville Tree Canopy:** 20% coverage
– **East End Tree Canopy:** 60%+ coverage
– **Citywide Average:** 42% coverage
– **Trees Needed:** 400,000 to reach 45% citywide goal

Energy & Emissions:
– **Louisville Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** 16 million metric tons CO2e annually
– **Emissions Per Capita:** 22 tons (U.S. average: 16 tons)
– **Energy Burden (Low-Income Households):** 15-20% of income on utilities
– **Energy Burden (Middle-Income Households):** 3% of income
– **Renewable Energy (Louisville Metro Buildings):** <5% of electricity

Major Problems

Problem 1: Rubbertown Environmental Racism & Health Crisis

For over 70 years, Louisville has concentrated polluting industries in a 2-square-mile area called Rubbertown (also known as Chemical Valley)—immediately adjacent to predominantly Black neighborhoods (Shawnee, Chickasaw, Parkway Village, Algonquin).

What's in Rubbertown:
– 30+ chemical plants, refineries, and industrial facilities
– DuPont, Hexion, Clariant, Koch Industries, others
– Production of synthetic rubber, resins, chemicals, asphalt

What Rubbertown releases:
– **Carcinogens:** 1,3-butadiene (rubber production byproduct; known human carcinogen)
– **Respiratory toxins:** Sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter
– **Greenhouse gases:** Millions of tons CO2 annually
– **Odors:** Noxious smells residents describe as "rotten eggs," "burning rubber," "chemical stench"

Health impacts on fence-line communities:

Cancer:

– West Louisville cancer risk 60% higher than citywide
– 1,3-butadiene exposure linked to leukemia, lymphoma
– Facilities required to reduce emissions but enforcement weak

Respiratory disease:
– Asthma hospitalization rate 3x citywide average
– COPD prevalence 2x citywide average
– Children miss school due to respiratory illness at twice the rate

Cardiovascular disease:
– Air pollution linked to heart attacks, strokes, hypertension
– West Louisville cardiovascular mortality 40% higher than East End

Birth outcomes:
– Low birth weight 50% more common
– Preterm birth rates elevated
– Developmental issues in children exposed to toxins

Quality of life:
– Residents can't open windows on hot days (odors, pollution)
– Children can't play outside when air quality poor
– Property values depressed (who wants to live next to chemical plants?)
– Constant fear about long-term health effects

This is environmental racism:

1. **Historical zoning:** Louisville deliberately zoned heavy industry in Black neighborhoods (1920s-1960s)
2. **Residential segregation:** Redlining confined Black families to West Louisville; couldn't move away
3. **Political powerlessness:** Fence-line communities lack political power to force cleanup
4. **Continued siting:** New polluting facilities still located near existing pollution (cumulative impacts ignored)
5. **Inadequate enforcement:** Violations occur; fines are minimal; companies continue polluting

Current response is inadequate:

- **Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District (APCD):** Underfunded, understaffed, industry-friendly
- **Air monitoring:** Only 6 monitors citywide; gaps in fence-line communities
- **Enforcement:** Rarely shuts down facilities for violations; fines too small to deter
- **Health studies:** Limited tracking of long-term health impacts

- **Community input:** Residents excluded from permit decisions
- **Just transition:** No plan to support workers if facilities close or transition

Result: Generations of Black residents exposed to toxic pollution, suffering premature death and disease, while companies profit and government fails to protect public health.

Problem 2: Climate Change Impacts Hitting Louisville Now

Climate change isn't a future threat—it's harming Louisville today, with impacts worsening:

Extreme Heat:

- **Increase:** Extreme heat days (>95°F) increased from 5/year (1970s) to 25/year (2020s)
- **Projection:** Will reach 45+ days/year by 2050 without action
- **Health impacts:** Heat stroke, heart attacks, respiratory distress; 200+ deaths during 2023 heat wave
- **Vulnerable populations:** Elderly, outdoor workers, people without AC, people with chronic illness

Urban Heat Island Effect:

- **Disparity:** West Louisville 10-15°F hotter than tree-covered East End on summer days
- **Cause:** Lack of tree canopy, abundance of asphalt/concrete, industrial heat emissions
- **Impact:** Poor and Black residents suffer most from extreme heat
- **Infrastructure stress:** Power grid strain; roads buckle; water systems stressed

Flooding:

- **Frequency:** Major flooding events doubled since 1990
- **Causes:** More intense rainfall (climate change), impervious surfaces, inadequate stormwater infrastructure
- **Impacts:** Property damage, basement flooding, road closures, combined sewer overflows
- **Sewage contamination:** 7 billion gallons untreated sewage overflow annually into Ohio River, Beargrass Creek

Air Quality Decline:

- **Ozone:** Heat and pollution create ground-level ozone (smog); unhealthy air quality days increasing
- **Particulate matter:** Wildfires (climate-driven) degrade Louisville air quality
- **Health:** Asthma attacks, emergency room visits, respiratory hospitalizations increase

on poor air quality days

Economic Costs:

- **Infrastructure damage:** Roads, bridges, stormwater systems degrading faster
- **Energy costs:** Cooling costs rising as extreme heat increases
- **Health costs:** Heat-related illness, air pollution disease
- **Lost productivity:** Workers less productive in extreme heat; outdoor work dangerous

Current response failing:

- **No comprehensive climate action plan:** Louisville lacks enforceable emissions reduction targets, adaptation strategy
- **Insufficient green infrastructure:** Stormwater management still relies on gray infrastructure (pipes, basins)
- **Inadequate emergency response:** Heat warning systems exist but insufficient cooling centers, outreach to vulnerable residents
- **Fossil fuel dependence:** 95%+ of Metro energy from fossil fuels; no renewable transition plan

Result: Climate impacts intensifying, vulnerable residents suffering, infrastructure failing, costs mounting—while Louisville lacks coordinated response.

Problem 3: Tree Canopy Inequality Creating Health & Heat Disparities

Louisville has massive tree canopy inequality:

- **West Louisville:** 15-22% tree canopy
- **East End:** 60%+ tree canopy
- **Citywide average:** 42%

This isn't natural—it's the result of policy choices and disinvestment.

Why tree canopy matters:

Heat reduction:
– Trees provide shade; reduce surface temperatures 10-20°F
– Neighborhoods with low tree canopy experience dangerous heat
– Heat stroke, heart attacks, respiratory distress concentrated in low-canopy areas

Air quality:
– Trees filter particulate matter, absorb ozone precursors
– Low-canopy neighborhoods have worse air quality

– Asthma and respiratory disease concentrated in areas with few trees

Mental health:
– Access to trees reduces stress, depression, anxiety
– “Nature deficit” linked to behavioral problems in children
– Low-canopy neighborhoods have worse mental health outcomes

Property values:
– Tree-lined streets increase property values 10-15%
– Low-canopy neighborhoods have depressed values
– Wealth gap perpetuated by tree canopy inequality

Stormwater management:
– Trees absorb rainfall, reduce runoff, prevent flooding
– Low-canopy neighborhoods flood more frequently
– Green infrastructure cheaper than gray infrastructure

Why inequality exists:

1. **Historical disinvestment:** West Louisville received no tree planting, park development for decades
2. **Urban renewal:** Highways, public housing demolished trees; never replanted
3. **Lack of maintenance:** Trees planted but not watered, pruned; died from neglect
4. **Private property:** East End homeowners plant/maintain trees; low-income residents can’t afford

Current tree planting insufficient:

- Louisville plants 3,000-5,000 trees annually (mix of public and private land)
- Need to plant 10,000-15,000 annually to close canopy gap in reasonable timeframe
- Planting concentrated in East End, parks—not fence-line communities needing trees most
- Maintenance lacking; 30-40% of planted trees die within 5 years

Result: Tree canopy inequality perpetuates health disparities, heat inequality, and the racial wealth gap.

Problem 4: Energy Burden Crushing Low-Income Families

Low-income Louisville households spend 15-20% of income on utilities (electricity, gas, water); middle-income households spend 3%. This “energy burden” forces impossible choices:

Energy or food:
– Families skip meals to pay utility bills

– Children hungry because energy costs consume food budget

Energy or medicine:
– Seniors choose between heating/cooling and prescription medications
– Chronic conditions worsen when patients can't afford both utilities and healthcare

Energy or housing:
– Families face eviction when utility costs push total housing costs beyond 50% of income
– Utility shut-offs common (15,000+ annually in Louisville)

Health consequences:
– **Summer:** People without AC suffer heat stroke during extreme heat
– **Winter:** People without heat suffer hypothermia, respiratory illness
– **Year-round:** Stress of energy insecurity harms mental and physical health

Why energy burden is so high:

1. **Inefficient housing:** Low-income residents live in old, poorly insulated housing; energy leaks out
2. **Old appliances:** Can't afford efficient refrigerators, water heaters, HVAC; pay more to run inefficient equipment
3. **Inability to invest:** Can't afford upfront costs of weatherization, efficiency upgrades
4. **Utility rate structure:** Fixed charges and declining block rates favor high-volume users (punish low-income conservation)

Current assistance inadequate:

LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program):
– Federal program providing utility bill assistance
– Serves only 15-20% of eligible households (underfunded)
– One-time annual payment ($300-500)—doesn't address long-term burden

Weatherization Assistance Program:
– Federal program providing free weatherization (insulation, air sealing, furnace replacement)
– Waitlist 2-3 years
– Serves 500 homes annually (need is 50,000+)

Utility company programs:
– LG&E offers bill payment plans, crisis assistance
– But doesn't address root cause: inefficient housing

Result: Low-income families trapped in energy poverty—spending huge portions of income on utilities, suffering health consequences, unable to escape cycle.

Problem 5: Louisville's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Excessive, No Transition Plan

Louisville emits 16 million metric tons of CO2e annually—22 tons per capita, 38% higher than U.S. average.

Emissions sources:

1. **Electricity (40%):** Coal and natural gas power plants
2. **Transportation (30%):** Cars, trucks (Louisville is car-dependent)
3. **Industry (20%):** Rubbertown chemical plants, manufacturing
4. **Buildings (10%):** Heating, cooling, appliances in homes and businesses

Louisville lacks enforceable climate action plan:

- 2013 Climate Action Plan set goals but no binding targets
- No emissions reduction mandates
- No timeline for fossil fuel phase-out
- No accountability mechanism

Renewable energy adoption minimal:

- Louisville Metro buildings: <5% renewable electricity
- Residential solar: <1% of homes
- No community solar (low-income residents can't access solar benefits)
- No municipal utility (can't control energy sources)

Transportation emissions unaddressed:

- Louisville remains car-dependent (sprawl, inadequate transit)
- Electric vehicle adoption low (<2% of vehicles)
- EV charging infrastructure minimal (100 public chargers for metro area of 1.3M)
- No incentives for EV purchase, home charger installation

Result: Louisville contributes disproportionately to climate crisis while failing to transition to clean energy—missing job creation opportunities, harming public health, increasing long-term costs.

Why Current System Persists

Six factors maintain the status quo:

1. **Industry political power:** Chemical companies, utilities, fossil fuel interests lobby against regulation

2. **Regulatory capture:** Air Pollution Control District influenced by industries it regulates
3. **Fragmented authority:** Climate and environment span multiple agencies; no coordinated strategy
4. **Racism and classism:** Affluent white residents insulated from pollution; lack urgency for environmental justice
5. **Short-term thinking:** Politicians prioritize visible projects over long-term climate resilience
6. **Insufficient funding:** Metro invests <$5M annually in environmental programs; peer cities invest $30-100M

Bottom Line: Without major policy intervention, environmental racism will persist, climate impacts will worsen, and Louisville will fall further behind on clean energy transition.

Dave Biggers will change course.

DAVE'S VISION: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & CLIMATE ACTION

Dave Biggers believes **clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment are fundamental rights**—not privileges for the wealthy. Environmental justice and climate action are inseparable: we must protect fence-line communities while building a resilient, sustainable Louisville.

Core Principles

1. **Environmental Justice First:** Prioritize communities suffering greatest environmental harms—especially West Louisville fence-line neighborhoods.

2. **Community Power:** Affected residents must have decision-making power—not just "input" but real authority over environmental decisions.

3. **Just Transition:** Support workers in fossil fuel and polluting industries with retraining, good jobs in clean economy.

4. **Climate Resilience:** Prepare for climate impacts already locked in (heat, flooding) while reducing emissions.

5. **Equity in Clean Energy:** Low-income residents and communities of color must benefit from clean energy transition—not just wealthy homeowners.

Goals (4-Year Term)

By 2029, Dave will achieve:

 Community air monitoring: Real-time air quality data in all fence-line neighborhoods; public dashboard

 Pollution reduction: 25% reduction in toxic air emissions from Rubbertown facilities

 50,000 trees planted: Primarily in West Louisville and low-canopy neighborhoods; tree canopy increased from 20% to 30%

 Energy burden reduced 40%: Weatherize 10,000 low-income homes; energy costs drop from 15-20% to 9-12% of income

 Renewable energy: 50% of Metro government electricity from renewable sources; community solar serving 2,000 low-income households

 Climate resilience infrastructure: Green stormwater infrastructure preventing 50% of sewer overflows; extreme heat response system protecting vulnerable residents

 Sustainable transportation: 50 miles of protected bike lanes; EV charging infrastructure at all Metro facilities

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DETAILED PROPOSALS

Proposal 1: Environmental Justice in Rubbertown ($15M Annually)

What It Is

A comprehensive environmental justice initiative protecting fence-line communities from industrial pollution through air monitoring, health studies, pollution reduction enforcement, just transition for workers, and community oversight with real power.

Six Components:

Component 1: Fence-Line Community Air Monitoring Network ($2M annually)

Current: 6 air monitors citywide; gaps in fence-line neighborhoods

New system:
– **20 community air monitors** in Shawnee, Chickasaw, Parkway Village, Algonquin (areas within 1 mile of Rubbertown facilities)
– **Continuous monitoring:** Real-time data on 1,3-butadiene, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), odors
– **Public dashboard:** Residents access current air quality on phones, computers; alerts when thresholds exceeded
– **Fence-line monitoring:** Monitors at facility property lines (required by EPA Clean Air Act but not implemented in Louisville)

Technology:
– Low-cost sensors (PurpleAir, Clarity) + research-grade monitors
– Community scientists trained to maintain, interpret data
– University of Louisville partnership for data validation

Transparency:
– All data public in real-time
– Monthly community meetings presenting findings
– Resident-friendly reports (not technical jargon)

Component 2: Health Impact Study & Disease Registry ($3M one-time + $500K annually)

Louisville has never studied long-term health impacts of living near Rubbertown—unacceptable after 70+ years of pollution exposure.

Comprehensive health study:
– **Population:** All residents within 2 miles of Rubbertown (past and present)
– **Outcomes tracked:** Cancer incidence, respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, birth outcomes, developmental disorders
– **Exposure assessment:** Link health outcomes to air pollution exposure levels (using monitoring data)
– **Comparison:** Compare fence-line community health to Louisville overall and similar non-exposed populations
– **Duration:** 10-year longitudinal study

Disease registry:
– Ongoing tracking of cancer, respiratory disease in fence-line communities
– Early detection of cancer clusters
– Data informs pollution reduction priorities

Partners:
– University of Louisville School of Public Health
– Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness
– Independent epidemiologists

– Community oversight to ensure study serves residents (not industry)

Component 3: Pollution Reduction Enforcement & Facility Upgrades ($5M annually)

Current enforcement weak; violations common but fines minimal.

Enhanced enforcement:

1. **Triple APCD inspection capacity:**
2. Hire 15 additional inspectors (currently 10 for entire city)
3. Unannounced inspections at least monthly for each Rubbertown facility
4. Real-time violation reporting to community
5. **Meaningful penalties:**
6. Increase fines 10x (current fines: $500-5,000; new fines: $5,000-50,000 per violation per day)
7. Require facility shutdowns for repeat violations (not just fines)
8. Community benefit payments for violations (polluters fund health services, home air filtration)
9. **Technology upgrades required:**
10. Facilities must install best available control technology (BACT) for emissions reduction
11. Leak detection and repair (LDAR) programs to catch fugitive emissions
12. Real-time emissions monitoring with public reporting
13. **Cumulative impact assessment:**
14. Evaluate combined impact of all Rubbertown facilities (not facility-by-facility)
15. Deny new permits if cumulative impact exceeds health thresholds
16. Require emissions offsets: new sources must reduce emissions elsewhere

Funding:
– Metro investment: $5M annually (inspectors, technology, legal support)
– Polluter fees: Annual facility fees increased from $5,000 to $50,000 (generates $1.5M)

Component 4: Just Transition Program for Workers ($3M annually)

Dave will not sacrifice workers for environmental protection. Pollution reduction and worker support go together.

Services for Rubbertown workers:

1. **Retraining for clean economy jobs:**
2. Chemical plant workers → renewable energy technicians, energy efficiency workers
3. Funded apprenticeships in solar, wind, battery technology, green building
4. Prevailing wage guarantees (match or exceed current wages)
5. **Income support during transition:**
6. 80% wage replacement for up to 2 years while retraining
7. Healthcare continuation (no gaps in coverage)
8. Pension protection
9. **Hiring preferences:**
10. Metro government, local businesses prioritize hiring transitioned workers
11. Louisville Forward (economic development) targets clean jobs to affected workers
12. **Community benefits:**
13. Workers who lived in fence-line communities while employed at facilities receive priority
14. Union partnerships ensure worker voice in transition planning

Funding:
– Metro investment: $3M annually
– Federal Just Transition funds (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act): $2M
– Polluter contributions: $1M (condition of permits)

Component 5: Community Environmental Justice Board ($500K annually)

Fence-line residents must have decision-making power—not just "input."

Board structure:
– **15 members:** 10 residents from fence-line communities (Shawnee, Chickasaw, Parkway Village, Algonquin), 3 environmental health experts, 2 Metro Council members

– **Selection:** Residents elected by community; experts appointed by residents
– **Term:** 3 years, staggered

Powers:
1. **Permit review:** Vote on all new or renewed permits for Rubbertown facilities; Metro cannot approve permits Board rejects
2. **Enforcement priorities:** Direct APCD enforcement actions; decide which violations prioritized
3. **Budget oversight:** Review and approve environmental justice spending
4. **Health study governance:** Oversee health impact study; ensure serves community
5. **Policy development:** Propose environmental ordinances to Metro Council

Support:
– Board receives $500K annual budget for legal counsel, technical consultants, community organizing
– Staff support from Metro Sustainability office
– Training on environmental law, health, community organizing

Component 6: Home Air Filtration & Relocation Assistance ($1M annually)

While pollution reduction is long-term, residents need immediate protection.

Services:

1. **HEPA air filtration systems:**
2. Free installation in 1,000 homes annually in fence-line communities
3. Filter particulate matter, VOCs, odors
4. Maintenance and filter replacement provided
5. Priority: homes with children, elderly, people with respiratory/cardiovascular disease
6. **Relocation assistance:**
7. Families who want to move away from pollution receive assistance
8. Down payment assistance ($25,000) for home purchase outside fence-line area
9. Rental assistance for 2 years
10. Moving expense coverage
11. Priority: families with children, severe health issues

Funding:
– Polluter payments for violations: $500K
– Metro general fund: $500K

Why It Matters

Environmental justice requires action, not promises.

Air monitoring:
– Community knows what they're breathing
– Real-time data enables protective action (stay indoors, use filtration)
– Evidence for enforcement actions

Health study:
– Documents harms (potential litigation, policy change)
– Early detection of disease enables treatment
– Validates community concerns (too often dismissed)

Enforcement:
– Pollution actually reduced (not just monitored)
– Companies held accountable
– Health harms prevented

Just transition:
– Workers protected (not scapegoated for pollution)
– Clean economy jobs created
– Community support for environmental protection

Community board:
– Decision-making power (not just advisory)
– Residents control their environmental future
– Accountability to those most affected

Evidence from other cities:

- **Richmond, CA:** Fence-line monitoring reduced refinery emissions 40%; community oversight board forced pollution reduction
- **Houston, TX:** Health registry detected cancer cluster; led to facility closure
- **Just transition programs (coal communities):** Workers retrained for renewable energy; 85% retained income levels

Budget

Annual Cost: $15 million (after Year 1)

Year 1 (includes health study startup): $18M

Breakdown:
– Fence-line air monitoring network: $2M annually (capital costs in Year 1)

– Health impact study: $3M one-time + $500K annually
– Pollution reduction enforcement: $5M annually
– Just transition program: $3M annually
– Community Environmental Justice Board: $500K annually
– Home air filtration & relocation: $1M annually
– Administration & coordination: $500K annually

Funding Sources:
– Metro general fund: $10M (new investment)
– Federal environmental justice grants (EPA, Infrastructure Act): $3M
– Polluter fees and violation payments: $2M

Cost-Benefit:
– **Health savings:** $20-50M annually from reduced disease, hospitalizations, premature death
– **Economic development:** Cleaner environment attracts residents, businesses
– **Avoided litigation:** Proactive action reduces lawsuit risk
– **Return on investment:** $2-5 per $1 invested

Implementation Timeline

Year 1 (2026):
– January-March: Establish Community Environmental Justice Board; elect/appoint members
– April-June: Install 10 fence-line air monitors; launch public dashboard
– July-September: Begin health impact study enrollment
– October-December: Hire 10 additional APCD inspectors; begin enhanced enforcement

Year 2 (2027):
– Complete air monitoring network (20 monitors)
– Just transition program launches (500 workers)
– First enforcement actions under new regime
– Home air filtration begins (500 homes)

Year 3 (2028):
– Health study preliminary findings released
– Facility technology upgrades required
– Cumulative impact assessment framework implemented
– 25% pollution reduction measurable

Year 4 (2029):
– Full implementation all components
– 40% pollution reduction from baseline
– 2,000 homes with air filtration
– 1,500 workers transitioned to clean economy jobs
– Louisville model for environmental justice nationwide

Proposal 2: Urban Tree Canopy Expansion ($10M Annually)

What It Is

Louisville will plant 50,000 trees over 4 years—primarily in West Louisville and underserved neighborhoods—increasing tree canopy from 20% to 30% in low-canopy areas.

Program Components:

Component 1: Targeted Tree Planting (10,000 trees annually)

Priority neighborhoods:
1. **West Louisville** (Shawnee, Russell, Park DuValle, Chickasaw, California): 5,000 trees annually
2. **South End** (Newburg, Highview, Okolona): 2,000 trees annually
3. **Other low-canopy neighborhoods** (Portland, Smoketown, Shelby Park): 3,000 trees annually

Planting locations:
– **Public rights-of-way:** Streets, sidewalks (6,000 trees annually)
– **Parks and public property:** Playgrounds, community centers, schools (2,000 trees annually)
– **Private residential property:** Free trees for homeowners (2,000 trees annually)

Tree selection:
– **Native species:** Adapted to Louisville climate; support local ecosystems
– **Climate-resilient:** Species tolerant of heat, drought, flooding
– **Diversity:** Mix of species (prevents disease decimating entire canopy)
– **Size at maturity:** Large shade trees prioritized (maximum cooling, air quality benefits)
– **Community preferences:** Residents choose species (fruit trees, flowering trees, shade trees)

Planting standards:
– Professional installation (not volunteers—ensure quality)
– Adequate soil volume (trees can grow to full size)
– Irrigation systems for first 2-3 years (critical establishment period)
– Mulch, stakes, protection from mowers/cars

Component 2: Tree Maintenance & Care (5-Year Guarantee)

Problem: 30-40% of urban trees die within 5 years—wasted investment

Solution: Guaranteed maintenance for 5 years post-planting

Services:
– **Watering:** Weekly during dry periods, years 1-3

– **Pruning:** Structural pruning years 2, 4, 6 (healthy growth)
– **Pest/disease management:** Monitoring, treatment as needed
– **Mulching:** Annual mulch replenishment
– **Replacement:** Dead trees replaced at no cost (100% survival guaranteed)

Maintenance workforce:
– **40 full-time tree care workers** (Year 4; scale up from 10 in Year 1)
– **Living wage jobs:** $18/hour + benefits
– **Training provided:** ISA Certified Arborist pathway
– **Local hiring:** Priority for residents of planting neighborhoods

Component 3: Community Engagement & Education ($500K annually)

Tree planting succeeds when communities are engaged:

Activities:
1. **Neighborhood tree selection meetings:** Residents choose species, locations
2. **Tree stewardship training:** Residents learn to care for trees (watering, identifying problems)
3. **School programs:** Students learn about trees, participate in plantings
4. **Community tree inventories:** Residents map existing trees (citizen science)
5. **Tree giveaways:** Free trees for residents to plant on private property

Benefits:
– Community ownership (residents protect trees they chose)
– Education (understanding tree benefits)
– Employment pipeline (tree stewards become tree care workers)

Component 4: Urban Forestry Master Plan ($200K one-time)

Develop comprehensive 20-year plan:
– Tree canopy goals by neighborhood (45% citywide; 40% minimum any neighborhood)
– Species diversity targets (no species >10% of canopy)
– Planting and maintenance strategies
– Funding mechanisms (ordinances requiring developers plant trees)
– Climate adaptation (species selection for future climate)

Plan development:
– Urban forestry consultants
– Community input (residents shape vision)
– Metro Council adoption (enforceable goals)

Why It Matters

Trees are public health infrastructure:

Heat reduction:
– Trees reduce temperatures 10-20°F through shade and evapotranspiration
– Prevents heat stroke, heart attacks during extreme heat
– Reduces cooling costs (saves low-income households money)

Air quality:
– Trees filter particulate matter, absorb ozone precursors
– Reduces asthma attacks, respiratory disease
– One large tree removes 50 lbs of air pollution annually

Mental health:
– Access to trees reduces stress, depression, anxiety by 20-30%
– Children with tree access have better focus, lower ADHD symptoms
– Neighborhoods with trees have lower crime rates

Property values:
– Tree-lined streets increase property values 10-15%
– Builds wealth for low-income homeowners
– Addresses racial wealth gap

Stormwater management:
– Large tree intercepts 2,000+ gallons of rainfall annually
– Reduces flooding, sewer overflows
– Saves Metro millions in gray infrastructure costs

Climate resilience:
– Trees sequester carbon (large tree: 50 lbs CO2/year)
– Reduce urban heat island effect
– Increase biodiversity and ecosystem resilience

Evidence:

- **Philadelphia:** Planted 10,000 trees in low-canopy neighborhoods; heat-related illness reduced 20%, air quality improved 15%
- **Louisville research (Nature Conservancy):** $15M tree planting investment returns $90M in benefits over 30 years (6:1 ROI)
- **American Forests:** Tree canopy inequality correlates with income, race across every U.S. city

50,000 trees will:
– Reduce West Louisville summer temperatures 3-5°F
– Filter 2.5 million lbs of air pollution over 30 years
– Intercept 100 million gallons of stormwater over 30 years
– Increase property values $25-50M
– Create 40 living-wage jobs

Budget

Annual Cost: $10 million (Years 2-4)
Year 1 Cost: $10.2M (includes master plan)

Breakdown:
– **Tree purchase & planting:** $5M (10,000 trees × $500 average cost including installation)
– **Maintenance (5-year commitment):** $4M (trees planted in Years 1-4 require ongoing care)
– **Community engagement:** $500K
– **Program administration:** $300K (coordinators, data management)
– **Urban Forestry Master Plan (Year 1 only):** $200K

Per-tree cost: $500 (industry standard for street/park tree planting including maintenance)

Funding Sources:
– Metro general fund: $6M
– Federal Infrastructure Act (urban forestry): $2M
– Utility partnerships (LG&E green infrastructure): $1M
– Private donations (Louisville Nature Conservancy, foundations): $1M

Cost-Benefit:
– Every $1 invested returns $6 in benefits (heat reduction, air quality, stormwater, property values, health)
– $10M annually = $60M in benefits over 30 years

Implementation Timeline

Year 1 (2026):
– January-March: Develop Urban Forestry Master Plan; community input
– April-June: Hire 10 tree care workers; procure 10,000 trees
– July-December: Plant 10,000 trees in West Louisville, South End; begin maintenance

Year 2 (2027):
– Plant 10,000 additional trees (20,000 total)
– Hire 20 tree care workers (maintain Years 1-2 trees)
– First trees showing growth, canopy development

Year 3 (2028):
– Plant 10,000 additional trees (30,000 total)
– Hire 30 tree care workers
– Tree canopy in West Louisville measurably increased (from 20% to 24%)

Year 4 (2029):
– Plant 10,000 additional trees (40,000 total)
– Hire 40 tree care workers

– Tree canopy in West Louisville reaches 28% (8-point increase from baseline)
– Heat reduction measurable (3-5°F cooler summers)
– Air quality improvement measurable (10% reduction in particulate matter)

Proposal 3: Climate Resilience Infrastructure ($8M Annually)

What It Is

Louisville will build climate resilience through green infrastructure for flooding, extreme heat response systems, weatherization for low-income homes, and emergency preparedness.

Four Strategies:

Strategy 1: Green Stormwater Infrastructure ($4M annually)

Problem: Louisville's combined sewer system overflows 7 billion gallons untreated sewage annually into waterways during heavy rain.

Gray infrastructure solution: Separate sewers, build detention basins—cost: $4 billion, 20+ years

Green infrastructure solution: Absorb rainfall where it falls (bioswales, rain gardens, permeable pavement, green roofs)—cost: $200M over 10 years

Louisville Green Infrastructure Program:

Projects (100 annually):
1. **Bioswales and rain gardens:** Vegetated channels absorbing rainfall (50 projects/year)
2. **Permeable pavement:** Parking lots, alleys, sidewalks that absorb water (25 projects/year)
3. **Green roofs:** Vegetation on flat commercial/industrial roofs (10 projects/year)
4. **Rainwater harvesting:** Cisterns capturing rooftop runoff for irrigation (15 projects/year)

Priority areas:
– Combined sewer overflow hotspots (Beargrass Creek watershed, Southwestern Parkway area)
– Low-income neighborhoods experiencing flooding (California, Shawnee, South End)

Benefits:
– Reduce sewer overflows 50% over 10 years (saves $2 billion in gray infrastructure)
– Improve water quality (less sewage in Ohio River, Beargrass Creek)
– Reduce flooding (property damage prevention)
– Green jobs (construction, maintenance)
– Beautification (green infrastructure doubles as community amenities)

Strategy 2: Extreme Heat Response System ($2M annually)

Problem: 200+ Louisville residents died during 2023 heat wave; mostly elderly, low-income, people without AC

Solution: Comprehensive heat response protecting vulnerable residents

Components:

1. **Cooling centers (20 locations):**
2. Libraries, community centers, Metro buildings open as cooling centers during heat emergencies
3. Extended hours (6am-10pm)
4. Transportation provided
5. $500K annually (staffing, utilities, transportation)
6. **Heat vulnerability mapping & outreach:**
7. Identify high-risk residents (elderly, isolated, no AC, chronic illness)
8. Proactive outreach during heat waves (wellness checks, transportation to cooling centers)
9. $300K annually (staff, technology)
10. **Free AC distribution (500 units annually):**
11. Window AC units for high-risk households without cooling
12. Installation and electrical upgrades included
13. Priority: elderly, people with cardiovascular/respiratory disease, young children
14. $700K annually (500 units × $1,400 average cost including installation)
15. **Cool roofs and shade structures:**
16. Reflective white roofs on public buildings (reduce temperatures 10-20°F)
17. Shade structures at bus stops, playgrounds, public spaces
18. $500K annually

Strategy 3: Low-Income Home Weatherization ($1.5M annually)

Problem: Low-income households spend 15-20% of income on energy due to inefficient housing

Solution: Weatherize 1,000 homes annually (10,000 over 4 years)

Services (per home):
– Insulation (attic, walls)
– Air sealing (caulking, weatherstripping)
– HVAC upgrades (efficient furnace, AC, heat pump)
– Water heater replacement (efficient models)
– LED lighting
– Refrigerator replacement (if old, inefficient)

Eligibility: Households <80% AMI

Benefits (per home):
– Energy bills reduced 30-40% ($600-800 annual savings)
– Energy burden reduced from 15-20% to 9-12% of income
– Improved comfort (warmer in winter, cooler in summer)
– Health benefits (reduced mold, improved air quality)

Funding:
– Metro investment: $1.5M (leverages federal Weatherization Assistance Program funds)
– Total value: $15,000 per home (Metro pays $1,500; federal pays $13,500)

Strategy 4: Emergency Preparedness & Climate Adaptation Planning ($500K annually)

Louisville lacks comprehensive climate adaptation plan.

Develop plan addressing:
1. **Extreme heat:** Heat action plan (triggers, protocols, vulnerable populations)
2. **Flooding:** Flood risk mapping, evacuation routes, shelter locations
3. **Severe storms:** Power outage response, debris management, mutual aid
4. **Public health:** Disease surveillance (vector-borne diseases increasing with warming)
5. **Food security:** Urban agriculture, emergency food reserves

Community engagement:
– Vulnerable communities shape adaptation priorities
– Equity lens (ensure responses serve those most at risk)

Funding:
– $500K annually (staff, consultants, community engagement)

Why It Matters

Climate impacts are here—Louisville must adapt or suffer catastrophic costs:

Green infrastructure:

– Saves $2 billion in gray infrastructure costs
– Improves water quality, reduces flooding
– Creates green jobs, beautifies neighborhoods

Extreme heat response:
– Prevents heat-related deaths (200+ lives saved during heat waves)
– Protects vulnerable populations
– Reduces emergency room visits, hospitalizations

Weatherization:
– Reduces energy burden 40% (frees up $6-8M annually for low-income families)
– Improves health (warmer homes reduce respiratory illness)
– Reduces emissions (less energy used)

Emergency preparedness:
– Faster, more equitable disaster response
– Reduced costs (preparedness cheaper than crisis response)
– Community resilience

Evidence:
– **Philadelphia green infrastructure:** $2.4B investment avoids $9.6B gray infrastructure (4:1 ROI)
– **Phoenix heat response:** Deaths reduced 50% after implementing comprehensive heat plan
– **Federal weatherization program:** Every $1 invested returns $2.78 in energy savings + health benefits

Budget

Annual Cost: $8 million

Breakdown:
– Green stormwater infrastructure: $4M
– Extreme heat response: $2M
– Low-income weatherization: $1.5M
– Emergency preparedness: $500K

Funding Sources:
– Metro general fund: $4M
– Federal Infrastructure Act (climate resilience): $2M
– Federal Weatherization Assistance Program: $1.5M (requires $500K Metro match)
– MSD (Metropolitan Sewer District) partnership: $500K (green infrastructure reduces sewer overflows)

Cost-Benefit:

– Green infrastructure: $4 saved per $1 invested (avoided gray infrastructure)
– Heat response: 200 lives saved; $50M in avoided healthcare costs
– Weatherization: $2.78 per $1 invested (energy savings + health)
– Return: $3-5 per $1 invested

Implementation Timeline

Year 1 (2026):
– January-June: Develop heat action plan, climate adaptation plan
– July-September: Install 25 green infrastructure projects; establish 10 cooling centers
– October-December: Weatherize 500 homes; distribute 250 AC units

Year 2 (2027):
– 50 green infrastructure projects; 20 cooling centers
– Weatherize 1,000 homes; distribute 500 AC units
– First heat season with full heat response system

Year 3 (2028):
– 75 green infrastructure projects (cumulative)
– Weatherize 1,000 homes (3,000 cumulative)
– Sewer overflows measurably reduced (25% reduction from baseline)

Year 4 (2029):
– 100 green infrastructure projects (cumulative)
– Weatherize 1,000 homes (4,000 cumulative)
– Heat deaths eliminated (comprehensive response system prevents vulnerable resident deaths)
– Sewer overflows reduced 40-50%

Proposal 4: Renewable Energy Transition ($5M Annually)

What It Is

Louisville will transition to clean, renewable energy through solar on Metro buildings, community solar for low-income residents, electric vehicle fleet conversion, and clean energy job training.

Four Components:

Component 1: Solar on Metro Buildings ($2M annually)

Goal: 50% of Metro electricity from renewable sources by 2029

Strategy:
– Install solar panels on 50 Metro buildings over 4 years (10-15 buildings annually)
– Target: Large flat roofs (fire stations, libraries, community centers, maintenance facilities,

parking garages)
– Capacity: 5 megawatts total (provides 20% of Metro electricity needs)
– Power Purchase Agreements (no upfront cost; pay for solar power instead of LG&E power)

Buildings:
– Louisville Metro Hall
– 20 fire stations
– 10 libraries
– 10 community centers
– Parks maintenance facilities
– Metro fleet garage

Benefits:
– Electricity cost savings: $500K annually (solar cheaper than grid power long-term)
– Emissions reduction: 8,000 tons CO2 annually
– Resilience: Backup power during grid outages
– Visible leadership: Solar on public buildings demonstrates commitment

Component 2: Community Solar for Low-Income Residents ($1.5M annually)

Problem: Low-income residents can't access solar benefits (renters can't install rooftop solar; low-income homeowners can't afford upfront cost)

Solution: Community solar—centralized solar farm; residents subscribe; receive bill credits

Program:
– Metro partners with solar developer to build 2-megawatt community solar farm
– 2,000 low-income households (<80% AMI) subscribe at no cost
– Receive 20% discount on electricity bills (average $250/year savings per household)
– No upfront cost, no rooftop installation, no equipment maintenance

Location:
– Closed landfill (environmental remediation + renewable energy)
– Metro-owned land (parking lots, vacant lots)

Funding:
– Metro subsidy: $1.5M annually (covers low-income subscription costs)
– Federal Investment Tax Credit: Reduces project cost 30%
– Solar developer: Finances, builds, operates array

Benefits:
– Energy cost savings for 2,000 low-income households ($500K annually total)
– Clean energy access equity
– Emissions reduction: 3,000 tons CO2 annually

Component 3: Electric Vehicle Fleet Conversion ($1M annually)

Louisville Metro operates 2,000+ vehicles (police, fire, public works, parks, admin).

Transition plan:
– Replace 200 vehicles with electric vehicles annually (25% of fleet by 2029)
– Priority: Light-duty vehicles, sedans, small trucks (EVs most cost-effective)
– Install EV charging at all Metro facilities (50 locations)

Vehicles:
– Police cruisers (Ford Mustang Mach-E, Tesla Model Y)
– Administrative vehicles (Chevy Bolt, Nissan Leaf)
– Light trucks (Ford F-150 Lightning, Rivian R1T)

Cost:
– EVs cost 10-20% more upfront but 40-60% less to operate (fuel, maintenance)
– Payback: 3-5 years
– Total cost of ownership: EVs cheaper over vehicle lifetime

Benefits:
– Emissions reduction: 2,000 tons CO2 annually (by Year 4)
– Fuel cost savings: $300K annually (by Year 4)
– Maintenance savings: $200K annually (EVs have fewer moving parts)
– Air quality improvement: Zero tailpipe emissions
– Market signal: Demonstrates EV viability for fleet use

Component 4: Clean Energy Job Training ($500K annually)

Renewable energy and energy efficiency employ more workers per dollar than fossil fuels.

Training programs:

1. **Solar installer training:** 100 workers annually
2. 8-week program (classroom + hands-on)
3. NABCEP (North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners) certification
4. Job placement assistance
5. Guaranteed interviews with Louisville solar companies
6. **Energy efficiency auditor training:** 50 workers annually
7. BPI (Building Performance Institute) certification
8. Weatherization, HVAC, building science
9. Placement with weatherization contractors

10. **EV technician training:** 50 workers annually
11. Electric vehicle maintenance and repair
12. Partnership with local auto dealers, Ford, Tesla
13. High-demand occupation (EV adoption increasing)

Participants:
– Priority for Rubbertown workers (just transition)
– Low-income residents, people of color (career pathway to living-wage jobs)
– Returning citizens (clean energy jobs accessible despite criminal records)

Wages:
– Solar installers: $20-25/hour ($40,000-50,000/year)
– Energy auditors: $18-22/hour ($35,000-45,000/year)
– EV technicians: $22-28/hour ($45,000-58,000/year)

Funding:
– Metro: $500K
– Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): $300K
– Private sector (solar companies, contractors): $200K (contribute to training for future workforce)

Why It Matters

Clean energy transition is economic opportunity:

Cost savings:
– Solar electricity cheaper than grid power long-term
– EVs cheaper to operate than gas vehicles
– Energy efficiency reduces consumption

Job creation:
– Renewable energy and efficiency employ 3x more workers per dollar than fossil fuels
– 200 workers trained annually = 800+ clean energy jobs by 2029
– Living wages, career pathways, accessible to diverse workforce

Emissions reduction:
– Solar, EVs, efficiency reduce emissions 13,000 tons CO2 annually by Year 4
– Louisville demonstrates climate leadership
– Contributes to global emissions reduction goals

Equity:
– Community solar provides low-income access to clean energy savings
– Job training creates pathways for marginalized workers
– Distributed benefits (not just wealthy homeowners with rooftop solar)

Evidence:
– **Indianapolis:** Community solar serving 5,000 low-income households; $1.2M annual savings
– **Kansas City:** EV fleet conversion saved $2M over 5 years in fuel/maintenance
– **Solar training programs:** 85% job placement rates; average starting wage $22/hour

Budget

Annual Cost: $5 million

Breakdown:
– Solar on Metro buildings: $2M (power purchase agreements)
– Community solar for low-income: $1.5M (subscription subsidies)
– EV fleet conversion: $1M (incremental cost over gas vehicle replacement)
– Clean energy job training: $500K

Funding Sources:
– Metro general fund: $3M
– Federal Investment Tax Credit (solar): Reduces costs 30%
– Federal EV grants (Inflation Reduction Act): $1M
– Utility partnerships: $1M (LG&E energy efficiency programs)

Cost-Benefit:
– Solar saves $500K annually in electricity costs
– EVs save $500K annually in fuel/maintenance
– Community solar saves residents $500K annually
– Job training creates $40M in annual wages (800 workers × $50K average)
– Return: $2-4 per $1 invested (savings + economic activity)

Implementation Timeline

Year 1 (2026):
– January-June: Issue RFPs for solar installations, community solar, EV procurement
– July-December: Install solar on 10 Metro buildings; procure 50 EVs; train 50 clean energy workers

Year 2 (2027):
– Solar on 25 Metro buildings (cumulative)
– Community solar farm construction (2 MW)
– 100 EVs in fleet (cumulative)
– 200 workers trained (cumulative)

Year 3 (2028):
– Solar on 40 Metro buildings (cumulative); 30% of Metro electricity from renewable sources
– Community solar operational; 2,000 low-income subscribers
– 150 EVs in fleet (cumulative)

– 400 workers trained (cumulative)

Year 4 (2029):
– Solar on 50 Metro buildings; 50% of Metro electricity from renewable sources
– 200 EVs in fleet (25% of fleet)
– 600 workers trained (cumulative)
– Louisville recognized as clean energy leader among peer cities

Proposal 5: Sustainable Transportation ($4M Annually)

What It Is

Louisville will build sustainable transportation infrastructure through protected bike lanes, pedestrian safety improvements, EV charging, and transit-oriented development.

Four Strategies:

Strategy 1: Protected Bike Lane Network ($2M annually)

Current: Louisville has 100 miles of bike lanes; most are unprotected (painted lines on roads); usage low due to safety concerns

Goal: 50 miles of protected bike lanes over 4 years (12-15 miles annually)

Protected bike lanes:
– Physical barriers (curbs, bollards, planters) separating bikes from cars
– Proven to increase ridership 200-400% (safety attracts riders)
– Lower speeds, reduce crashes

Priority corridors:
1. **West Louisville to downtown:** Broadway, Market Street (connect Russell, Shawnee to jobs downtown)
2. **South End to downtown:** Preston Highway, 3rd Street (connect Newburg, Highview)
3. **University connections:** Connect UofL, Bellarmine, community colleges
4. **Parks and trails:** Connect Olmsted Parks, Louisville Loop

Design standards:
– Protected separation (not just paint)
– Intersection protection (most dangerous locations)
– Green infrastructure integration (bioswales alongside bike lanes)
– Lighting (safety for evening riders)

Benefits:
– Increased ridership (200-400% on protected routes)
– Reduced car trips (climate, air quality, congestion)
– Health (physical activity, reduced obesity/diabetes)

– Equity (low-income residents often bike for transportation, not recreation)
– Economic development (bike-friendly cities attract young talent)

Strategy 2: Pedestrian Safety Improvements ($1M annually)

Problem: Louisville has high pedestrian fatality rate (2-3x national average); concentrated in West Louisville, South End

Improvements (100 locations annually):
1. **Crosswalk upgrades:** High-visibility markings, rapid-flash beacons, curb extensions
2. **Traffic calming:** Speed humps, curb extensions, road diets (reduce lanes to slow speeds)
3. **Sidewalk completion:** Fill gaps in sidewalk network (many West Louisville streets lack sidewalks)
4. **Lighting:** Improve visibility at crosswalks, bus stops

Priority areas:
– High pedestrian crash corridors (Broadway, Dixie Highway, Preston Highway)
– Schools (safe routes to school)
– Transit stops (bus riders are pedestrians)
– Low-income neighborhoods (residents walk more; infrastructure worse)

Benefits:
– Pedestrian fatalities reduced 40-60%
– Walkability improved (more residents can walk safely)
– Transit ridership increased (easier to access bus stops)
– Equity (low-income residents depend on walking; wealthy residents drive)

Strategy 3: EV Charging Infrastructure ($500K annually)

Problem: Louisville has 100 public EV chargers for metro area of 1.3M; inadequate for EV adoption

Goal: Install 200 public EV chargers over 4 years (50 annually)

Locations:
– Metro facilities (libraries, community centers, parks)
– Park-and-rides
– Commercial corridors (encourage businesses to add chargers)
– Equity focus (chargers in West Louisville, South End)

Charger types:
– Level 2 chargers (4-6 hour full charge; overnight parking)
– DC fast chargers (30-minute charge; major corridors)

Funding:
– Metro investment: $500K annually

– Federal Infrastructure Act (EV charging): $500K (requires local match)
– Private sector (businesses install chargers with incentives): $500K
– Total investment: $1.5M annually (Metro $500K leverages $1M additional)

Benefits:
– Supports EV adoption (range anxiety reduced)
– Air quality improvement (EVs have zero tailpipe emissions)
– Equity (low-income residents can charge at public locations if can't install home chargers)

Strategy 4: Transit-Oriented Development Incentives ($500K annually)

Problem: Louisville's sprawl creates car dependence; transit ridership low

Solution: Incentivize dense, walkable development near transit

Incentives for developers:
– **Density bonuses:** Build more units if near transit (affordable housing requirement)
– **Fast-track permitting:** Expedited approvals for transit-oriented projects
– **Fee waivers:** Reduce impact fees for car-lite developments
– **Infrastructure support:** Metro invests in sidewalks, bike lanes, streetscape near developments

Criteria:
– Within 1/4 mile of high-frequency bus route or future rapid transit
– Mixed-use (residential + retail/office)
– Minimum 15% affordable housing
– Pedestrian-friendly design (buildings close to street, wide sidewalks, activated ground floors)

Funding:
– Metro investment: $500K annually (infrastructure, planning support)
– Leverages private development ($50-100M in private investment annually)

Benefits:
– Increased transit ridership (residents near transit use it)
– Reduced car trips (walkable neighborhoods)
– Affordable housing (density + transit access)
– Economic development (compact development more efficient)

Why It Matters

Transportation is Louisville's largest source of emissions (30% of total)—and most inequitable:

Bike lanes:
– Reduce car trips (climate, air quality)
– Provide affordable transportation (bikes cheaper than cars)

– Health benefits (physical activity)
– Safety (protected lanes reduce crashes 90%)

Pedestrian safety:
– Saves lives (pedestrian fatalities reduced 40-60%)
– Equity (low-income residents walk more)
– Supports transit (walkability and transit are complementary)

EV charging:
– Accelerates EV adoption (addresses range anxiety)
– Reduces emissions (transportation is 30% of Louisville's carbon footprint)
– Equity (public chargers provide access for renters, multifamily residents)

Transit-oriented development:
– Reduces sprawl (environmental and fiscal benefits)
– Increases transit ridership (makes transit viable)
– Affordable housing (density near transit)

Evidence:
– **Portland, OR:** Protected bike lanes increased ridership 400%; bike mode share 7% (vs. 1% Louisville)
– **Seattle:** Pedestrian safety improvements reduced fatalities 50%
– **Denver:** Transit-oriented development increased transit ridership 35%, reduced VMT (vehicle miles traveled) 20%

Budget

Annual Cost: $4 million

Breakdown:
– Protected bike lanes: $2M (12-15 miles annually)
– Pedestrian safety improvements: $1M (100 locations)
– EV charging infrastructure: $500K (leverages $1M total with federal/private)
– Transit-oriented development incentives: $500K

Funding Sources:
– Metro general fund: $2.5M
– Federal Infrastructure Act (transportation): $1M
– Private sector (EV chargers, TOD): $500K

Cost-Benefit:
– Transportation emissions reduced 10% by Year 4
– Pedestrian fatalities reduced 40-50%
– Economic development (bike/walk-friendly cities attract talent and businesses)
– Health savings (physical activity reduces obesity, diabetes, heart disease)

– Return: $3-5 per $1 invested

Implementation Timeline

Year 1 (2026):
– January-June: Design 15 miles of protected bike lanes; prioritize corridors
– July-December: Install 12 miles bike lanes; 50 pedestrian safety improvements; 25 EV chargers

Year 2 (2027):
– Install 12 more miles bike lanes (24 cumulative)
– 100 pedestrian improvements (cumulative)
– 50 EV chargers (cumulative)

Year 3 (2028):
– Install 12 more miles bike lanes (36 cumulative)
– 150 pedestrian improvements (cumulative)
– 75 EV chargers (cumulative)
– Bike ridership measurably increased (200% on protected routes)

Year 4 (2029):
– Install 14 miles bike lanes (50 cumulative)
– 200 pedestrian improvements (cumulative)
– 100 EV chargers (cumulative)
– Pedestrian fatalities reduced 40%
– Transportation emissions reduced 10%

BUDGET SUMMARY

Total Annual Cost

Program	Annual Cost	Notes
Environmental Justice (Rubbertown)	$15M	Air monitoring, health study, enforcement, just transition, community board
Urban Tree Canopy Expansion	$10M	50,000 trees over 4 years; primarily West Louisville
Climate Resilience Infrastructure	$8M	Green infrastructure, heat response, weatherization, emergency preparedness
Renewable Energy Transition	$5M	Solar on Metro buildings, community solar, EV fleet, job training

Program	Annual Cost	Notes
Sustainable Transportation	$4M	Protected bike lanes, pedestrian safety, EV charging, transit-oriented development
TOTAL	**$42M**	

Funding Sources

Source	Amount	Notes
Metro General Fund (New Investment)	$25.5M	New budget allocation for environmental justice and climate
Federal Infrastructure & Climate Funding	$10.5M	Infrastructure Act, climate grants, weatherization
Polluter Fees & Violation Payments	$2M	Increased facility fees, enforcement penalties
Utility & Private Partnerships	$3M	LG&E, MSD, solar developers, businesses
Federal Tax Credits (Solar)	$1M	30% Investment Tax Credit reduces solar costs
TOTAL	**$42M**	Funded without tax increases on residents

All funding within Louisville Metro's $1.2 billion annual general fund budget.

Outputs (4-Year Term)

Environmental Justice:
– 20 fence-line air monitors operational; real-time public data
– Comprehensive health study documenting pollution harms
– 25% reduction in toxic air emissions from Rubbertown
– 1,500 workers transitioned to clean economy jobs
– Community Environmental Justice Board with real decision-making power

Tree Canopy:
– 50,000 trees planted (primarily West Louisville, underserved areas)
– Tree canopy in West Louisville increased from 20% to 30%
– Temperature reduction: 3-5°F cooler summers
– Air quality improvement: 10% reduction in particulate matter

Climate Resilience:
– 100 green infrastructure projects reducing sewer overflows 50%
– Heat response system preventing vulnerable resident deaths
– 10,000 low-income homes weatherized; energy burden reduced 40%
– Comprehensive climate adaptation plan

Renewable Energy:
– 50% of Metro electricity from renewable sources
– 2,000 low-income households accessing community solar

– 25% of Metro fleet electric vehicles
– 800+ clean energy workers trained

 Sustainable Transportation:
– 50 miles of protected bike lanes
– 200 pedestrian safety improvements
– 200 EV charging stations
– Pedestrian fatalities reduced 40%

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE (4-YEAR TERM)

Year 1 (2026): Foundation

Q1:
– Establish Community Environmental Justice Board
– Develop Urban Forestry Master Plan, Heat Action Plan, Climate Adaptation Plan
– Issue RFPs for solar, EVs, bike lane design

Q2:
– Install 10 fence-line air monitors
– Plant 10,000 trees
– Launch health impact study
– Hire 10 APCD inspectors, 10 tree care workers

Q3:
– Install solar on 10 Metro buildings
– Weatherize 500 homes
– Install 12 miles protected bike lanes
– Deploy 10 cooling centers

Q4:
– Begin enhanced Rubbertown enforcement
– Complete 25 green infrastructure projects
– Launch community solar planning
– Procure 50 EVs

Year 2 (2027): Expansion

Q1-Q4:
– Complete fence-line air monitoring network (20 monitors)
– Plant 10,000 trees (20,000 cumulative)
– Solar on 25 Metro buildings (cumulative)

– Community solar farm construction
– Weatherize 1,000 homes (1,500 cumulative)
– 24 miles bike lanes (cumulative)
– 50 green infrastructure projects (cumulative)
– 100 EVs (cumulative)
– Just transition program serves 500 workers

Year 3 (2028): Maturity

Q1-Q4:
– Health study preliminary findings
– Plant 10,000 trees (30,000 cumulative); West Louisville canopy 26%
– Solar on 40 Metro buildings; 30% renewable electricity
– Community solar operational (2,000 subscribers)
– Weatherize 1,000 homes (2,500 cumulative)
– 36 miles bike lanes (cumulative)
– 75 green infrastructure projects (cumulative)
– 150 EVs (cumulative)
– Pollution reduction 20% measurable

Year 4 (2029): Sustainability

Q1-Q4:
– Plant 10,000 trees (40,000 cumulative); West Louisville canopy 28-30%
– Solar on 50 Metro buildings; 50% renewable electricity
– Weatherize 1,000 homes (3,500 cumulative)
– 50 miles bike lanes (cumulative)
– 100 green infrastructure projects (cumulative)
– 200 EVs (25% of fleet)
– Pollution reduction 25%
– Heat deaths eliminated
– Sewer overflows reduced 40-50%
– Louisville recognized nationally for environmental justice leadership

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SUCCESS METRICS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Environmental Justice

 Air Quality: 25% reduction in 1,3-butadiene, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter in fence-line communities
 Health: Cancer risk reduced 20%; asthma hospitalization reduced 30%
 Monitoring: Real-time data from 20 monitors; 100% public access

 Enforcement: Zero tolerance for violations; meaningful penalties assessed
 Community Power: Environmental Justice Board reviews 100% of permits; residents have veto power

Tree Canopy

 Trees Planted: 50,000 trees (40,000 surviving at 5 years = 80% survival rate)
 Canopy Coverage: West Louisville increased from 20% to 30% (10-point increase)
 Temperature Reduction: 3-5°F cooler summer temperatures in tree planting areas
 Air Quality: 10% reduction in particulate matter in tree planting neighborhoods
 Jobs Created: 40 full-time tree care workers (living wage, career pathway)

Climate Resilience

 Sewer Overflows: Reduced 50% (from 7 billion gallons to 3.5 billion gallons annually)
 Heat Deaths: Zero preventable heat deaths (vulnerable residents protected)
 Weatherization: 10,000 homes; energy burden reduced from 15-20% to 9-12%
 Flooding: Property damage from flooding reduced 30%
 Emergency Response: <24 hours to activate heat/flood response systems

Renewable Energy

 Metro Renewable Electricity: 50% from solar (from <5%)
 Community Solar: 2,000 low-income households; $500K annual savings
 EV Fleet: 25% electric vehicles (200 vehicles)
 Emissions Reduction: 13,000 tons CO2 annually from solar + EVs
 Clean Energy Jobs: 800 workers trained; 85%+ job placement

Sustainable Transportation

 Protected Bike Lanes: 50 miles (from 0)
 Bike Ridership: 200-400% increase on protected routes
 Pedestrian Fatalities: Reduced 40% (from 40-50 annually to 25-30)
 EV Charging: 200 public chargers (from 100)
 Transportation Emissions: Reduced 10%

Overall Environmental & Climate Goals

 Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Reduced 15% from baseline (2.4 million tons CO2e annually)
 Air Quality: Unhealthy air quality days reduced 30%
 Environmental Equity: Disparities in air quality, tree canopy, heat exposure reduced 40%
 Climate Resilience: Louisville prepared for 3°F warming, extreme heat, flooding
 Economic Benefits: $150M in annual benefits (health, energy savings, avoided costs — based on EPA estimates of pollution health cost reductions and green infrastructure ROI)

RELATED GLOSSARY TERMS

This policy connects to 22 Environmental & Sustainability glossary terms on rundaverun.org:

Environmental Justice: Environmental Justice, Environmental Racism, Fence-Line Community, Rubbertown, Cumulative Impact, Air Quality, Water Quality

Climate & Energy: Climate Change, Climate Adaptation, Climate Resilience, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Carbon Footprint, Renewable Energy, Solar Power, Energy Efficiency, Energy Burden

Green Infrastructure: Tree Canopy, Urban Heat Island, Green Infrastructure, Stormwater Management, Bioswale, Permeable Pavement

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why should Louisville prioritize environmental justice when we have urgent problems like crime and poverty?

Environmental racism IS a crime and poverty issue:

Crime connection:
– Pollution harms children's brain development → behavioral problems → school failure → justice system involvement
– Lead exposure (from industrial pollution) increases violent crime 400%
– Community disinvestment (pollution decreases property values) → economic desperation → crime

Poverty connection:
– Pollution causes illness → medical bills, lost work → deeper poverty
– Energy burden (inefficient housing) → 15-20% of income on utilities → less for food, medicine, rent
– Decreased property values (who wants to live near chemical plants?) → can't build wealth

Health costs:
– West Louisville residents hospitalized for asthma at 3x citywide rate → emergency room visits cost Metro millions
– Cancer from pollution exposure → treatment costs, premature death, lost productivity

– Every dollar invested in pollution reduction saves $3-5 in healthcare costs

Environmental justice doesn't compete with other priorities—it addresses root causes of crime, poverty, and health disparities.

2. Won't strict pollution enforcement in Rubbertown cause facilities to close and workers to lose jobs?

No—if we do just transition right:

Pollution reduction ≠ facility closure:
– Facilities can reduce emissions through technology upgrades (scrubbers, leak detection, process improvements)
– Companies profitable; can afford investments
– Many violations are from neglect (poor maintenance), not inherent to production
– Enforcement creates level playing field (companies that follow rules aren't undercut by polluters)

IF facilities do close:
– Workers receive income support (80% wage replacement up to 2 years)
– Retraining for clean economy jobs (solar, energy efficiency, EV technicians)
– Hiring preferences for Metro jobs, local businesses
– Many chemical workers have transferable skills (process control, maintenance, safety) applicable to clean industries

Clean economy creates MORE jobs:
– Renewable energy employs 3x more workers per dollar than fossil fuels
– Energy efficiency is labor-intensive (installation, maintenance)
– 800+ clean energy jobs created through Dave's programs

Evidence from other cities:
– Richmond, CA: Refinery pollution reduction requirements → technology upgrades, not closure; 150 clean tech jobs created
– Just transition programs (coal communities): 85% of workers retained income levels after retraining

We can protect workers AND communities—they're not in conflict.

3. Will planting trees really make a measurable difference in temperature and air quality, or is this just feel-good environmentalism?

Trees make MASSIVE, scientifically documented differences:

Temperature reduction:

– Large tree shades 1,500 sq ft, reduces surface temperatures 10-20°F
– Evapotranspiration (water release from leaves) cools air like natural AC
– Philadelphia study: 10,000 trees reduced neighborhood temperatures 3-5°F
– Louisville's 50,000 trees will reduce West Louisville summer temps 3-5°F—preventing heat stroke, reducing cooling costs

Air quality improvement:
– One large tree removes 50 lbs of air pollution annually (particulate matter, ozone precursors)
– 50,000 trees = 2.5 million lbs of pollution filtered over 30 years
– Louisville research (Nature Conservancy): Tree planting in West Louisville would reduce PM2.5 by 10%—preventing 50+ premature deaths annually

Stormwater management:
– Large tree intercepts 2,000+ gallons rainfall annually
– 50,000 trees = 100 million gallons absorbed over 30 years
– Reduces flooding, sewer overflows

Property values:
– Tree-lined streets increase property values 10-15%
– 50,000 trees in West Louisville would increase property values $25-50M

This isn't feel-good—it's evidence-based public health infrastructure.

4. How can Louisville transition to renewable energy when we don't control the utility (LG&E is private)?

True, Louisville doesn't own the utility—but we have significant power:

What Metro CAN control:

1. **Metro government electricity purchases:**
2. Louisville Metro is large customer (thousands of accounts)
3. Can demand renewable energy through power purchase agreements
4. Solar on Metro buildings generates our own power
5. **Community solar:**
6. Metro partners with solar developers to build solar farms
7. Residents subscribe; receive bill credits
8. No utility ownership required

9. **Building codes:**
10. Require solar-ready roofs on new construction (wiring, structural capacity)
11. Require energy efficiency in buildings
12. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure in new developments
13. **Incentives:**
14. Property tax breaks for solar installations
15. Expedited permitting for renewable energy projects
16. Grant programs for low-income solar access
17. **Electric vehicle adoption:**
18. Convert Metro fleet to EVs
19. Install public EV charging
20. Reduce transportation emissions (30% of Louisville's carbon footprint)

What we CANNOT control (but can advocate for):
– LG&E's generation mix (state Public Service Commission regulates)
– Retail electricity rates
– Investor-owned utility structure

But Metro has enormous influence:
– Louisville is LG&E's largest customer base
– Political pressure (mayor can advocate to PSC)
– Demonstration effect (Metro solar shows viability)

Evidence:
– Indianapolis (also private utility): City installed solar on 200 buildings, created community solar, converted fleet to EVs—all without owning utility
– Kansas City: 50% renewable electricity goal by 2030 using same tools

We can't control everything—but we can control enough to make major progress.

5. Won't weatherizing low-income homes just be a giveaway that benefits landlords more than tenants?

No—program design prevents this:

Tenant protections:

1. **Rent stabilization requirement:**
2. Landlords receiving weatherization cannot raise rent for 5 years
3. Lease requirement (enforced by Metro)
4. Violators pay back full weatherization cost + penalties
5. **Priority for owner-occupied homes:**
6. 60% of weatherization for homeowners (low-income seniors, families)
7. Homeowners directly benefit from energy savings
8. **Tenant-occupied eligibility:**
9. Landlords qualify IF they serve low-income tenants (<80% AMI)
10. AND agree to 5-year rent stabilization
11. AND provide 5-year lease to current tenants (no displacement)
12. **Payback to tenants:**
13. If landlord sells building within 5 years, must pay tenants share of energy savings
14. Ensures tenants benefit even if landlord exits

Tenant benefits:

- Reduced utility bills (30-40% savings)
- Improved comfort (warmer in winter, cooler in summer)
- Better health (less mold, improved air quality)
- Housing stability (5-year lease protection)

Homeowner benefits:

- Reduced utility bills (frees up $600-800 annually)
- Increased property value (efficiency upgrades)
- Improved comfort and health
- No upfront cost (100% free)

Evidence:
– Federal Weatherization Program: 60% of participants are homeowners; 40% renters with rent

stabilization protections
– Studies show tenants receive 80%+ of energy savings when rent stabilization enforced

This benefits tenants directly—and prevents landlord windfalls through strong protections.

6. Isn't climate change a global problem that Louisville alone can't solve? Why should we spend millions when China and India are the real polluters?

Three responses:

Response 1: Louisville residents are suffering climate impacts NOW:

- 200+ heat deaths in 2023 heat wave
- Flooding doubled; $50M+ in property damage annually
- Air quality decline; asthma hospitalizations increasing
- Infrastructure failing (roads buckling, water systems stressed)

Climate resilience isn't about saving the world—it's about protecting Louisville residents.

Response 2: Louisville's emissions are excessive:

- 22 tons CO2 per capita (vs. 16 tons U.S. average, 4 tons global average)
- 16 million tons total annually
- We bear responsibility for our disproportionate contribution

Response 3: Clean energy creates jobs and saves money:

- Renewable energy employs 3x more workers per dollar than fossil fuels
- Energy efficiency reduces costs (saves low-income households $600-800 annually)
- Solar electricity cheaper than grid power long-term
- Early adopters gain competitive advantage (attract businesses, talent)

Waiting for others to act is a recipe for catastrophe:

"Tragedy of the commons" argument ("Why should I act if others don't?") ensures NO ONE acts.

Leadership approach ("We'll show it's possible"):
– Louisville demonstrates climate action is economically beneficial
– Other cities follow (peer city competition)

– Collective action emerges from leadership

Evidence:
– 500+ U.S. cities committed to Paris Agreement climate goals after federal withdrawal
– Cities account for 70% of global emissions—local action IS global action
– Early adopter cities (Portland, San Francisco, Seattle) have stronger economies, attract talent

Louisville can lead—or fall behind as other cities build clean economy while we cling to fossil fuels.

7. Won’t installing protected bike lanes reduce parking and hurt businesses?

No—evidence shows protected bike lanes INCREASE business revenue:

Parking myth:
– Studies show customers overestimate importance of parking
– Most retail customers (60-70%) walk, bike, or take transit—don’t drive
– Bike lanes increase foot traffic → more customers

Revenue reality:

New York City study:
– Retail sales increased 50% on streets with protected bike lanes (vs. 3% citywide)
– Cyclists and pedestrians visit more frequently, spend more monthly (smaller purchases but more trips)

Portland, OR:
– Businesses on bike lanes saw 20% revenue increase vs. 7% citywide

Louisville can learn:
– Prioritize bike lanes on commercial corridors (Broadway, Bardstown Road, Frankfort Avenue)
– Design with community input (businesses help plan)
– Provide bike parking (corrals replacing 1-2 car spaces = 10-20 bike spaces)

Plus: Parking utilization data shows abundance:
– Most Louisville commercial corridors have <60% parking utilization (ample supply)
– Removing 10-20 spaces for bike lane doesn’t create shortage

If parking truly concerns businesses:
– Shared parking agreements (businesses share lots)
– Residential permit parking (prevents employees taking customer spots)
– Parking behind buildings (not on main street—improves walkability)

Protected bike lanes make streets safer, more vibrant, more economically successful.

8. How will you ensure environmental justice policies actually benefit fence-line communities and aren't just greenwashing?

Four accountability mechanisms:

Mechanism 1: Community Environmental Justice Board with REAL POWER:

- 10 of 15 board members are fence-line residents (elected by community)
- Board VOTES on permits (Metro cannot approve permits Board rejects)
- Board directs enforcement priorities
- Board controls $500K annual budget
- Not "advisory"—actual decision-making authority

Mechanism 2: Transparent, real-time data:

- 20 air monitors in fence-line communities
- Data published publicly in real-time (no hiding)
- Community scientists trained to interpret data
- Monthly community meetings presenting findings

Mechanism 3: Health study independent oversight:

- Community representatives on health study steering committee
- Veto power over study design (ensures serves residents, not industry)
- Results public; accessible to community

Mechanism 4: Enforcement accountability:

- Violation reports public within 24 hours
- Community can request specific enforcement actions
- Board reviews all enforcement decisions
- Penalties paid to community (health services, home filtration)

Plus: Legal protections:

- Environmental justice ordinance (not just executive order—can't be reversed by future mayor)
- Private right of action (residents can sue polluters directly)
- Attorney General partnership (state-level enforcement backup)

Evidence from other cities:

- Richmond, CA: Community board forced refinery to reduce emissions 40%; vetoed expansion permit
- Houston: Community monitoring detected cancer cluster; forced facility closure
- Community power works when it's REAL power—not just "input" that's ignored

Dave will ensure fence-line communities control their environmental future.

9. What happens to these environmental programs after Dave's term ends? Can the next mayor undo everything?

Dave will institutionalize environmental justice and climate action so they outlast his administration:

Legal infrastructure:

1. **Ordinances (not executive orders):**
2. Environmental Justice Board established by Metro Council ordinance
3. Tree canopy goals codified in Urban Forestry Master Plan (Metro Council adopted)
4. Climate action targets in enforceable Climate Adaptation Plan
5. Future mayor cannot undo without Metro Council vote
6. **Funding mechanisms:**
7. Green infrastructure fund (dedicated revenue from stormwater fees)
8. Tree planting fund (developers required to contribute)
9. Renewable energy fund (power purchase agreements lock in long-term commitments)

Political sustainability:

1. **Constituency:**
2. Fence-line communities with decision-making power defend Environmental Justice Board
3. 800+ clean energy workers defend job training programs
4. 10,000 weatherized households defend energy efficiency
5. 2,000 community solar subscribers defend renewable energy
6. **Demonstrated results:**
7. When pollution drops 25%, health improves, trees cool neighborhoods, clean energy

saves money—success undeniable

8. Future mayor faces political cost of reversing effective programs

Institutional partnerships:

1. **University partnerships:**
2. UofL School of Public Health conducts health study (10-year commitment)
3. Long-term research programs survive mayoral transitions
4. **Federal funding:**
5. Once established, federal climate/infrastructure grants continue (renewable 5-year cycles)
6. **Utility agreements:**
7. Power purchase agreements for solar (15-20 year contracts)
8. Community solar (25-year developer agreements)

National recognition:

- Louisville becomes environmental justice leader
- Reputational incentives maintain programs (cities compete for "greenest city" status)

Once infrastructure is built—air monitors, tree planting workforce, solar on buildings, green stormwater systems—it's politically and practically difficult to dismantle.

10. Why focus on trees and green infrastructure when we need jobs and economic development?

Trees and green infrastructure ARE economic development:

Job creation:

- **Tree planting/maintenance:** 40 full-time workers ($18/hour = $1.4M annual wages)
- **Green infrastructure construction:** 200 jobs (construction, landscaping, engineering)
- **Clean energy:** 800 workers trained for renewable energy, energy efficiency, EV jobs ($50K average salary = $40M annual wages)
- **Total:** 1,000+ jobs created

Cost savings:

- **Green infrastructure:** Saves $2 billion in gray infrastructure costs (sewer separation)
- **Weatherization:** Saves low-income households $6-8M annually (frees up income for local spending)
- **Energy efficiency:** Saves Metro $500K annually in electricity costs
- **Healthcare savings:** Reduced pollution, heat deaths, asthma saves $20-50M annually in healthcare costs

Economic development advantages:

- **Talent attraction:** Young professionals choose cities with environmental quality
- **Business location:** Companies consider environmental sustainability, climate resilience
- **Property values:** Tree-lined streets, green infrastructure increase values 10-15%

Evidence:

- **Philadelphia green infrastructure:** $2.4B investment creates 4,000 jobs; avoids $9.6B gray infrastructure
- **Portland tree planting:** $30M investment creates 250 jobs, increases property values $100M
- **Clean energy nationally:** 3.2 million jobs; fastest-growing sector

Traditional economic development (tax breaks for corporations):
– $80M annually in Louisville tax abatements
– Often creates <100 jobs ($800K per job)
– Many jobs low-wage

Green infrastructure economic development:
– $42M annually in environmental/climate investment
– Creates 1,000+ jobs ($42K per job)
– Living-wage jobs, can’t be outsourced

Green infrastructure is BETTER economic development than corporate giveaways.

CONCLUSION: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IS RACIAL JUSTICE

For over 70 years, Louisville has allowed Black communities to breathe toxic air, suffer

preventable disease, and die premature deaths so chemical companies could profit and white neighborhoods could remain “clean.” This environmental racism is not ancient history—it’s ongoing, deliberate policy that our government maintains every day.

Dave Biggers believes **clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment are fundamental rights**—not privileges for the wealthy. Environmental justice and climate action are inseparable from racial justice, economic justice, and health equity.

This comprehensive environmental justice and climate action agenda will:
– Protect fence-line communities through real air monitoring, pollution reduction, and community decision-making power
– Plant 50,000 trees, reducing heat and improving air quality in West Louisville
– Build climate resilience through green infrastructure, heat response, and weatherization
– Transition to clean energy with solar, EVs, and 800+ good-paying clean energy jobs
– Create sustainable transportation with bike lanes, pedestrian safety, and EV charging

Environmental racism ends now. Climate action begins today. Louisville’s environmental future will benefit everyone—especially those who have suffered environmental harms for generations.

Dave will make Louisville a city where every resident can breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live free from pollution—regardless of zip code or skin color.

Related Policy Documents:
– Public Safety & Community Policing
– Criminal Justice Reform
– Health & Human Services
– Budget & Financial Management
– Affordable Housing & Anti-Displacement
– Education & Youth Development
– Economic Development & Jobs (Employee Bill of Rights)

Learn more at rundaverun.org/policy

Dave Biggers for Louisville Mayor 2026
“Democracy that works for everyone.”

RELATED POLICIES

This policy works in coordination with these related initiatives:

- **Public Health & Wellness:** Environmental justice eliminates toxic exposures causing cancer, asthma, and the 12-year life expectancy gap between neighborhoods.
- **Infrastructure & Transportation:** Green infrastructure and sustainable transportation reduce emissions while managing flood and heat impacts.
- **Neighborhood Development:** Tree canopy expansion addresses environmental inequality between West Louisville and the East End.
- **Food Systems & Urban Agriculture:** Local food systems and urban agriculture reduce transportation emissions and build climate resilience.
- **Economic Development & Jobs:** Clean energy transition creates thousands of good-paying jobs in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Explore all 16 comprehensive policies at Dave's Complete Policy Platform.

What Louisville Residents Say

What This Means for YOUR Neighborhood

Every Louisville neighborhood is unique. Enter your ZIP code to see how this policy directly impacts your community:

Find Your Mini Substation

Enter your ZIP code to see when your neighborhood will receive a community police

substation.

Find My Substation

63 ZIP code areas across Louisville will receive mini substations over 4 years.

Part of Dave Biggers' comprehensive public safety plan.

See the Budget Impact

Explore how this policy fits into Dave's comprehensive $1.2 billion budget plan:

How Does Dave's Budget Affect You?

See your personalized impact - zero tax increase, real benefits

Household Income $50,000 50000

Children in JCPS 0 0

Your ZIP Code

Your Personal Impact

How we calculate: Benefits based on average family savings from wellness center access ($800/year), youth program value (after-school + summer jobs), and your specific mini substation timeline. All benefits come from the same $1.2B budget - zero tax increase.

Share your results with friends and family:

Share My Results

⚖ Compare This Policy

See how Dave's approach differs from current administration policies:

⚖ Policy Comparison: Real Change vs. Status Quo

See the clear differences between Dave Biggers' transformative vision for Louisville and the current mayor's approach. The choice is yours.

 Share This Comparison Print Comparison
 Public Safety Wellness Youth Economy Housing Transparency

Public Safety & Policing

Current Mayor

Traditional policing model

Approach

- Centralized police response
- Reactive approach to crime
- Limited community engagement
- Focus on patrol units

Timeline Ongoing
Budget Status quo funding
Impact Response times: 15-20 minutes average

Dave Biggers

Community-based mini substations

Approach

- 63 mini substations across Louisville (4-year deployment)
- Officers living and working in communities they serve
- Preventative community policing model
- Year 1: 12 substations in highest-need areas

Timeline Year 1-4 phased rollout
Budget Revenue-neutral through property tax restructuring
Impact Response times: 3-5 minutes (neighborhood-based)

Mental Health & Wellness

Current Mayor

Limited wellness infrastructure

Approach

- Reliance on existing healthcare facilities
- No dedicated community wellness centers
- Fragmented mental health services
- Emergency-room dependent model

Timeline No expansion planned
Budget Minimal dedicated funding
Impact Long wait times, limited access in underserved areas

Dave Biggers

Regional wellness centers network

Approach

- 18 wellness centers across 6 regions
- Mental health counseling, addiction support
- Youth programs, family services
- 3 centers per region for accessibility

Timeline Year 1-4 phased rollout
Budget Integrated with public safety restructuring
Impact Accessible care within every neighborhood, preventative focus
□

Youth Development

Current Mayor

Standard recreation programs

Approach

- Traditional rec centers
- Limited after-school programming
- Seasonal sports leagues
- Minimal job training for youth

Timeline Status quo
Budget Existing recreation budget
Impact Serves fraction of Louisville youth

Dave Biggers

Comprehensive youth investment

Approach

- After-school programs at all substations
- Job training and mentorship
- Arts, sports, and STEM programs
- Youth advisory councils
- Summer employment pathways

Timeline Immediate implementation with substation rollout
Budget $1,200 value per child annually
Impact Accessible programs in every neighborhood
□

Economic Development

Current Mayor

Corporate incentives focus

Approach

- Tax breaks for large corporations
- Downtown-centric development
- Limited support for small business
- Gentrification without displacement protection

Timeline Ongoing
Budget Millions in corporate subsidies
Impact Benefits concentrated in select areas

Dave Biggers

Community wealth building

Approach

- Small business incubators at substations

- Local hiring requirements for city contracts
- Neighborhood-based economic zones
- Affordable housing protection
- Living wage standards

Timeline Immediate policy changes, 4-year infrastructure build
Budget Redirected from corporate subsidies
Impact Jobs and wealth stay in neighborhoods

Housing & Affordability

Current Mayor

Market-driven housing

Approach

- Minimal affordable housing requirements
- Limited tenant protections
- Rising rents in many neighborhoods
- Displacement from development

Timeline No comprehensive plan
Budget Minimal housing trust fund
Impact Affordability crisis worsening

Dave Biggers

Housing as a human right

Approach

- Expanded affordable housing trust fund
- Strong tenant protections
- Community land trusts
- Rent stabilization measures
- Anti-displacement policies for existing residents

Timeline Immediate policy changes
Budget Increased trust fund through property tax reform
Impact Protects residents, prevents displacement

Government Transparency

Current Mayor

Standard reporting

Approach

- Annual budget reports
- Limited real-time data
- Reactive public engagement
- Closed-door development deals

Timeline Status quo
Budget Minimal transparency infrastructure
Impact Limited public accountability

Dave Biggers

Radical transparency

Approach

- Real-time budget dashboard
- Public data portal for all city metrics
- Community advisory boards with veto power
- Open contracting process
- Regular town halls in all neighborhoods

Timeline Immediate implementation
Budget Low-cost digital infrastructure
Impact Citizens empowered with information and decision-making power

The Choice is Clear

Louisville deserves transformative change, not more of the same. Join us in building a city that works for everyone.

Join the Campaign Read Full Policy Platform

What Louisville Residents Say

Community Endorsements

Share This Policy

Help spread the word about Dave’s vision for Louisville:

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Related Policies You Might Like

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Make Your Voice Heard

Register to Vote

Register to Vote

Make your voice heard! Register to vote and participate in our democracy.

Register to Vote Check Registration

Important Deadlines

- **Registration Deadline:** Typically 30 days before election day

- **Early Voting:** Check your state's early voting schedule
- **Absentee Ballot:** Request absentee ballots early
- **Election Day:** Polls typically open 6 AM - 6 PM

Note: Deadlines vary by state. Check your local election office for specific dates.

Find Your Polling Place

Find Your Polling Location

Enter your address to find your polling place and get directions.

Your Address
City
State KY
ZIP Code
Find My Polling Place

You can also call **1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)** for assistance finding your polling location.

Stay Updated on This Policy

Get notified when this policy is updated or when Dave speaks about this issue in YOUR neighborhood.

* indicates a required field

Email Signup Information
Fax Number (Leave blank)
Name *
Email * We'll send you updates about the campaign
Zip Code 5-digit zip code (optional)
☐ I'm interested in volunteering! We'll send you information about volunteer opportunities
Sign Up

Have Ideas to Improve This Policy?

This is YOUR city. If you have suggestions for how we can make this policy better for Louisville, please share them. Every idea is reviewed.

Suggest an Improvement for Louisville

Have an idea for improving Louisville? Share your policy suggestion below. Your voice matters in shaping our city's future.

Policy Title *
Description *
0/2000 characters
Category Select a category...
Your Name *
Your Email *
ZIP Code (Optional)
☐ I agree that my suggestion may be reviewed and potentially incorporated into campaign policy. My email will only be used to notify me about the status of my suggestion.
Submit Suggestion

NOT ME, WE.

Together, we make Louisville better for everyone.