

CANOPY ASSESSMENT DRIVES SUCCESS IN LEXINGTON, KY

Data-powered decisions and measurable impact for every neighborhood.



A canopy assessment transformed Lexington's urban forestry strategy and is the backbone for targeted investments, transparent reporting, and meaningful results. Here's a concise, impactful 1-pager that spotlights Lexington as a client example—and captures why a canopy assessment is essential.

THE CHALLENGE

- Large urban areas in Lexington suffered from low tree canopy, especially in industrialized neighborhoods with lower incomes and high impervious surfaces.
- Stormwater management was a persistent issue, with most city watersheds funneling runoff to the urban core.
- The city needed a way to measure, prioritize, and communicate tree planting opportunities and benefits without burdening residents financially.

THE CANOPY ASSESSMENT SOLUTION

- PlanIT Geo's urban tree canopy assessment revealed coverage increased from 20% in 2012 to 23% in 2020 across 286 square miles.
- Lexington City Council responded with a \$1.5 million investment and set a goal for 30% canopy cover.
- TreePlotter™ CANOPY mapping and analysis brought sharp visual clarity and numbers to citywide forestry conversations.

TANGIBLE RESULTS FOR STAKEHOLDERS



Equitable Investing:
Assessment criteria (income, impervious cover, and more) pinpoint priority planting zones—guiding funds to the communities most in need.



Stormwater Innovation:
Tree canopy data now secures funding for projects that mitigate runoff, thanks to integration with iTree and local grants.



Internal Accountability:
Graphic-rich district report cards translate data into powerful district-level recommendations for city council and staff, fueling productive conversations and action.



Educational & Nonprofit Partnerships: Fayette County Schools (11% canopy) use assessment data to plan new plantings and earn national green recognition; nonprofits and universities leverage results for outreach and instruction.



NatureScore™ Targeting: Health, equity, and environmental metrics help the city prioritize areas for nature-rich investments, retrofitting flood-prone sites and driving grant applications.

WHY GET A CANOPY ASSESSMENT?

A canopy assessment is invaluable for cities like Lexington because it unlocks critical funding, such as the \$1.5 million invested after demonstrating clear needs with credible data. Actionable maps and metrics replaced guesswork with focused, strategic decisions that support growth, public health, and equity. By showcasing transparent, science-based insights for every district, Lexington built public trust and secured buy-in from stakeholders, enabling lasting change. Additionally, the compelling visuals and data inspired policymakers, fostered collaboration, and amplified communication throughout the community.

A canopy assessment isn't just measurement—it's momentum. Lexington proves that data drives dollars, action, and outcomes. Contact PlanIT Geo to learn more about how our solutions can support your urban forestry goals.

