

For Immediate Release: September 1, 2022

Contact: James Harvey, Partnership for Southern Equity, 678-557-6561, jharvey@psequity.org

Metro Atlanta Racial Equity Atlas Launches to Disrupt the Region's Entrenched Racial Wealth and Opportunity Prosperity Gap

ATLANTA - The Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE) and its partners Neighborhood Nexus and ARCHI announce the launch of the [Metro Atlanta Racial Equity Atlas](#) (MAREA), seizing the present moment of opportunity for action and accountability to change the region's consistent ranking as a top city for inequity and growing opportunity divide. Through elevating stories of lived experience, maps that reflect the data that results in these stories, and amplifying action, the MAREA platform seeks to shift decision making and delivery systems for shared prosperity across the region. The release will occur at an event at The Gathering Spot, 384 Northyards Blvd, NW in Atlanta on September 6, 2022 from 12:00 noon until 2:00 p.m.

In 2014, PSE began shining a light on metro Atlanta's tale of two regions through the launch of the Metro Atlanta Equity Atlas (MAEA). Through its maps, analysis and training of residents, PSE and its partners catalyzed the equity conversation in the region and began to put the power of data into the hands of those most living with the burdens of the inequities reflected.

Eight years after the release of MAEA, COVID-19, the ensuing economic recession, a wave of police-violence-spurred uprisings around the country, and a white nationalist-driven insurrection in our Capitol have catapulted racial equity to a new level of urgency in our local and national consciousness. The Atlanta Regional Commission's [2020 Metro Atlanta Speaks survey](#) found race relations to be a top concern for the region across respondents. Geospatial data tools have evolved, our equity analysis has deepened, our understanding of interconnected systems has increased, and our ecosystem of grassroots to grassroots partners has grown. Decision-makers from philanthropy to government and private/nonprofit sectors are searching for actionable insights to help them make more equitable decisions, and the community is hungry for tools to hold those decision-makers accountable.

Tommy Pearce, Executive Director for Neighborhood Nexus notes that "For too long we've had conversations about education, housing, health, and other issues in silos, while the data show that the most impacted communities are often the same -- communities of color. MAREA seeks to explain the intersection of our complex systems while highlighting the role of racial segregation and exclusion as a driving force behind our disparities. Any real solution to these issues will have to address structural and systemic racism."

One driving priority in the design of MAREA is the direct inclusion of stories as a critical means for putting data in context. As Carrie Oliver, Senior Research Associate for ARCHI observes, "Those most impacted by decision-making have invaluable expertise. It is important that we have a tool that allows us to both learn from and act on insights from community members. MAREA centers their expertise and provides resources for responding with action." In addition to ARCHI's contributions to MAREA by capturing stories of those who have experienced homelessness, Canopy Atlanta's new community-powered approach to journalism provided the perfect framework for connecting live experience to regional data.

“Organized data is required to build the foundation of racial equity,” says Nathaniel Smith, Founder and Chief Equity Officer for PSE. “We believe that the democratization of data builds agency and through MAREA, Black, Brown and other historically marginalized residents across the region will have their voices heard, and their lived experiences supported by data. People are more than shading on a map, and when they connect through MAREA with partners taking action and holding decision-makers accountable, their data becomes an organizing strategy. By bringing folks together, MAREA provides scaffolding for our ecosystem and racial equity grows.”

###

About The Partnership for Southern Equity: Based in Atlanta, PSE is a nonprofit organization that advances policies and institutional actions that promote racial equity and shared prosperity for all in the growth of metropolitan Atlanta and the American South. Through forums, research, and organizing efforts, PSE brings together the regional community to lift up and encourage just, sustainable, and civic practices for balanced growth and opportunity. www.psequity.org

Neighborhood Nexus: By helping leaders ask the right questions and use the best data, Neighborhood Nexus is growing a culture of data-informed decision-making among Georgia's social impact sector. Learn more at www.neighborhoodnexus.org.

The Atlanta Regional Coalition for Health Improvement: The Atlanta Regional Collaborative for Health Improvement (ARCHI) is a coalition of public, private and nonprofit organizations committed to improving the region's health. By aligning resources and expertise around shared goals, ARCHI seeks to build a coordinated system of care that addresses social determinants of health and removes the burden of navigating complex and siloed services. Housing, education, jobs, food and nutrition, and safe, quality communities all play a powerful role in achieving desired outcomes. Through work that is data-driven, health-focused, and people-centered — from community resource hubs to health-housing collaboratives — ARCHI is creating meaningful change in metro Atlanta. To learn more, visit archicollaborative.org.