

Handout

Majora Carter

Born, raised, and continuing to live in the South Bronx, Majora believes you shouldn't have to move out of your neighborhood to live in a better one, and that this notion has environmental and economic implications that span the globe.

In 2001, after successfully shifting the Giuliani administration's plans from more municipal waste handling to positive economic development, she founded the non-profit environmental justice solutions corporation, Sustainable South Bronx (SSBx). Her first major project was writing a \$1.25M Federal Transportation planning grant for the South Bronx Greenway with 11 miles of alternative transport, local economic development, low-impact storm-water management, and recreational space. This led to the first new South Bronx water front park in over 60 years.

While needed parks are highly visible manifestations of her work, the real focus is creating intensive urban forestation, green roofing/walls, and water permeable open spaces. This robust horticultural infrastructure cleans the air, reduces urban heat island effect, efficiently manages storm water run off, calms the soul, and creates jobs – reducing poverty.

In 2003, SSBx opened the Bronx Environmental Stewardship Training program (BEST): one of the nation's first urban green-collar job training and placement systems. After 5 years it boasts an 85% employment rate with 10% now in college. Many of these success stories were formerly incarcerated, and all of them were on some form of public assistance before completing the nationally recognized 10-week course. Her local and global environmental solutions rest on poverty alleviation through green economic development, because the local jobs they create can empower communities to resist bad environmental decisions.

Majora Carter is a 2006 MacArthur "genius" Fellow, one of Essence Magazine's 25 most influential African-Americans, one the NY Post's 50 Most Influential Women for the past 2 years, co-host of the Green on Sundance Channel, a board member of the Widerness Society, and recording a special national public radio series called "The Promised Land" for 2009 release. She is currently president of the green-collar economic consulting company, The Majora Carter Group, LLC.