



**HOUSING &
PLANNING**

Shaping Austin

Racism and Urban Planning

Speaker

Sam Tedford

Principal Planner, Inclusive Planning

City of Austin, Housing and Planning Department



Outline

Shaping Austin

Learning from History

Discussion



Shaping Austin



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge, with respect, that the land we are on is the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Tonkawa, Lipan Apache, Ysleta del sur Pueblo, Texas Band of Yaqui Indians, Coahuiltecan, and other indigenous peoples not explicitly stated. It is important to understand the long history that has brought us to reside on the land, and to seek to acknowledge our place within that history.

Adapted from the Climate Equity Plan and the research of Celine Rendon and Tane Ward

mural by Raul Valdez

Enslavement and Colonization of African people

- Exploitation of the labor of enslaved African people was part of the original colonization of Texas under Spanish rule.
- Despite being outlawed under Mexican rule (following their independence from Spain), Stephen F. Austin gained an exception to the law from the Mexican government to entice more white settlers to move to Texas.
- Slavery was legal in the Republic of Texas and free Black people were banished from Texas under the constitution.
- The enslavement of Black people continued when Texas joined the United States and, later, the Confederate States of America.
- Even after the Emancipation Proclamation legally ended slavery, white plantation owners refused to release their enslaved workers until Federal troops were sent to Texas to enforce the Proclamation two years later.

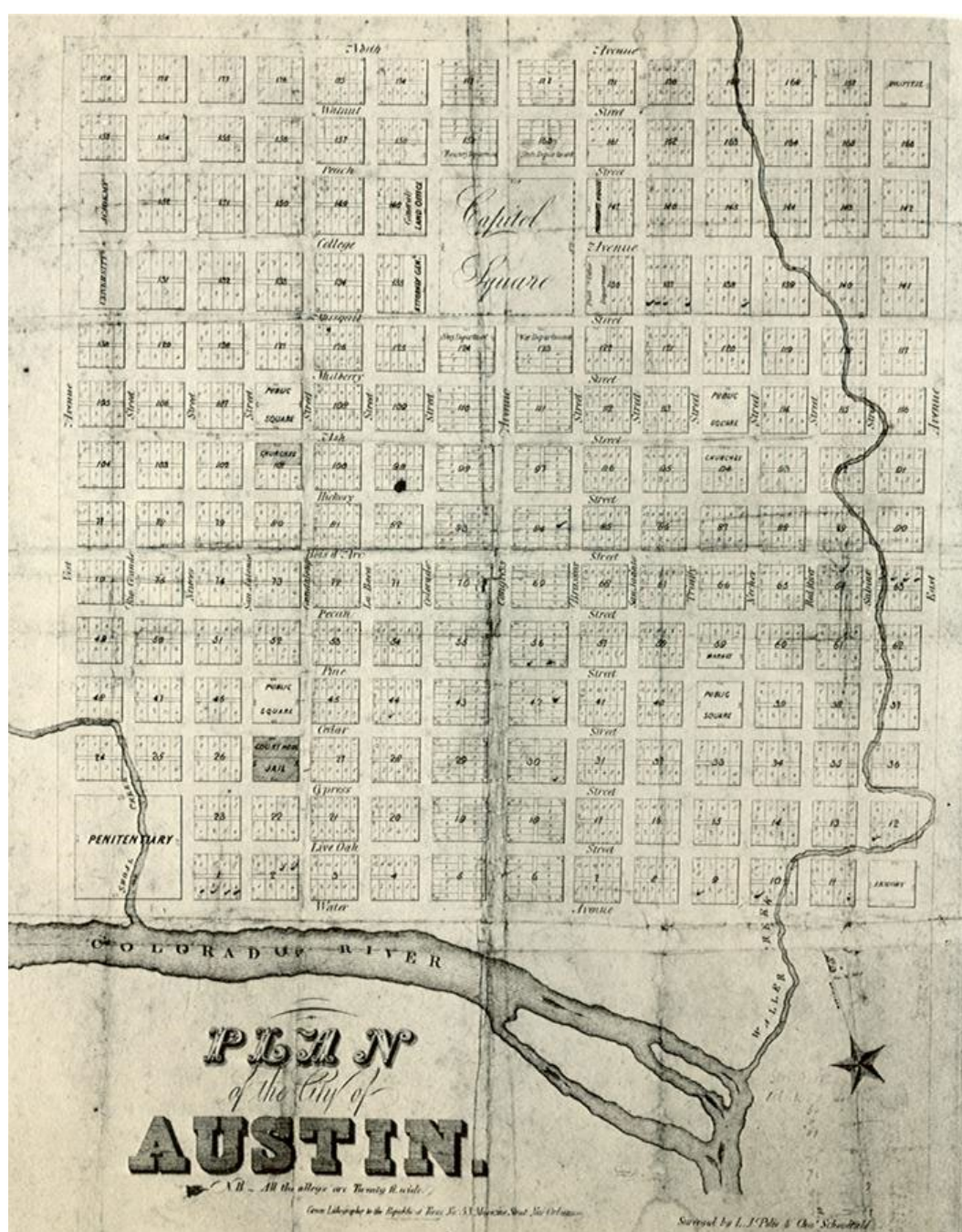




The Plan of the City of Austin (1839)

created in 1839 by Judge Edwin Waller,
first Mayor of Austin

This plan designed a grid that remains
mostly intact today downtown while
designating land for the future Capitol
building, four public squares, a
penitentiary, courthouse and jail,
armory, and hospital.





HOUSING &
PLANNING

Partial View of Austin, 1890

Austin spans two distinct ecological regions: to the West the Edwards Plateau and to the East the Blackland Prairie



PARTIAL VIEW OF
AUSTIN, TEXAS.

THE most beautiful and wealthiest city of its size in the United States.

THE COMING GREAT MANUFACTURING CENTER OF THE SOUTH!

For its Schools, Churches, and other public institutions, it is already famous. The Capitol is preeminent, by common judgment, one of the finest Government Buildings in the world.

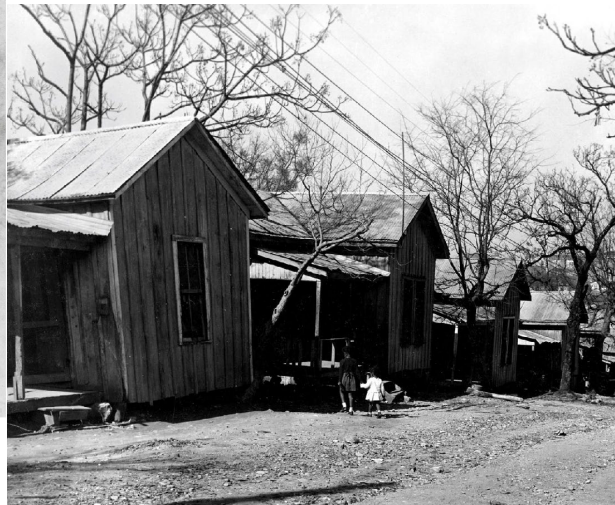
For particulars about this great Cotton Center, address

THE AUSTIN RAPID TRANSIT CO.,

THE BOARD OF TRADE.



Freedperson's Communities (1865-1928)



Communities such as Clarksville, Wheatville, Kincheonville, Masontown, and Gregorytown were established by former slaves after the Civil War and interspersed throughout the city.



Freedpersons' Communities not indicated on map

- Burditt's Prairie (the Burditt Plantation)
- Ryna Branch
- Bell Hill



Early Black Austinites



Henry Green Madison,
*Austin's first Black
alderman was appointed by
reconstructionist Governor
Davis in 1871*

Wheeler's Grove (now
Eastwoods Park) was home to
many Juneteenth Celebrations

Photo (right): 1900

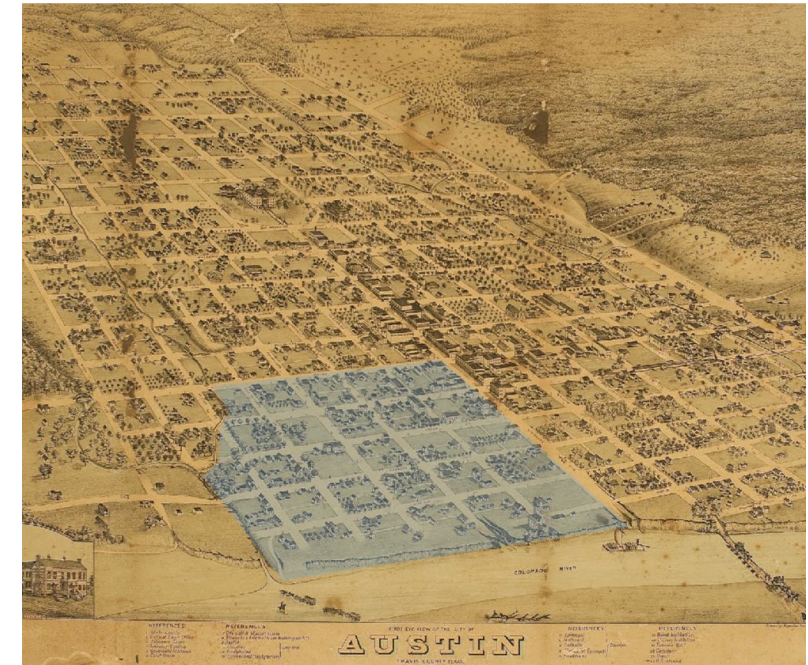


President Thos. J. White and a major portion of annual Officers and Directors
of the Organization, 1909

The Austin Emancipation
Association (pictured to the left)
purchased Emancipation Park
in 1907 with the express
purpose of creating a place for
Black Austinites to celebrate
Juneteenth and to gather in
community on Black-owned
land



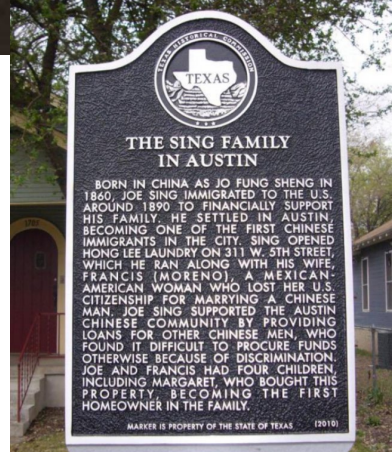
Early Mexican and Latino Austinites



Parts of Austin's old First Ward and settlements along Shoal Creek were predominantly Mexican and Mexican American. With the stabilization of the Colorado River due to dams and the rise of "downtown," Austin's business district, the value of land rose and the Mexican Americans who lived there were displaced in waves.



Early Asian Austinites



AR.2008.002(001)

AR.2008.002(003)



Joe Sing (born Jo Fung Sheng) was born in China in 1860 and came to the US around 1890, eventually settling in Austin. He opened Hong Lee Laundry on 311 W 5th Street and provided laundry service to many State Legislators and Austinites. All his life Mr. Sing was prohibited from American citizenship as well as buying property under the federal law, The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which wasn't repealed until 1943. In 1927, Joe died after being hit by a car while riding his bike.

Joe Sing and Francis Moreno had four children. Unbeknownst to her, Francis lost her American citizenship when she married Joe Sing as a result of the Expatriation Act of 1907 that mandated that “any American woman who marries a foreigner shall take the nationality of her husband.”



Creating Race

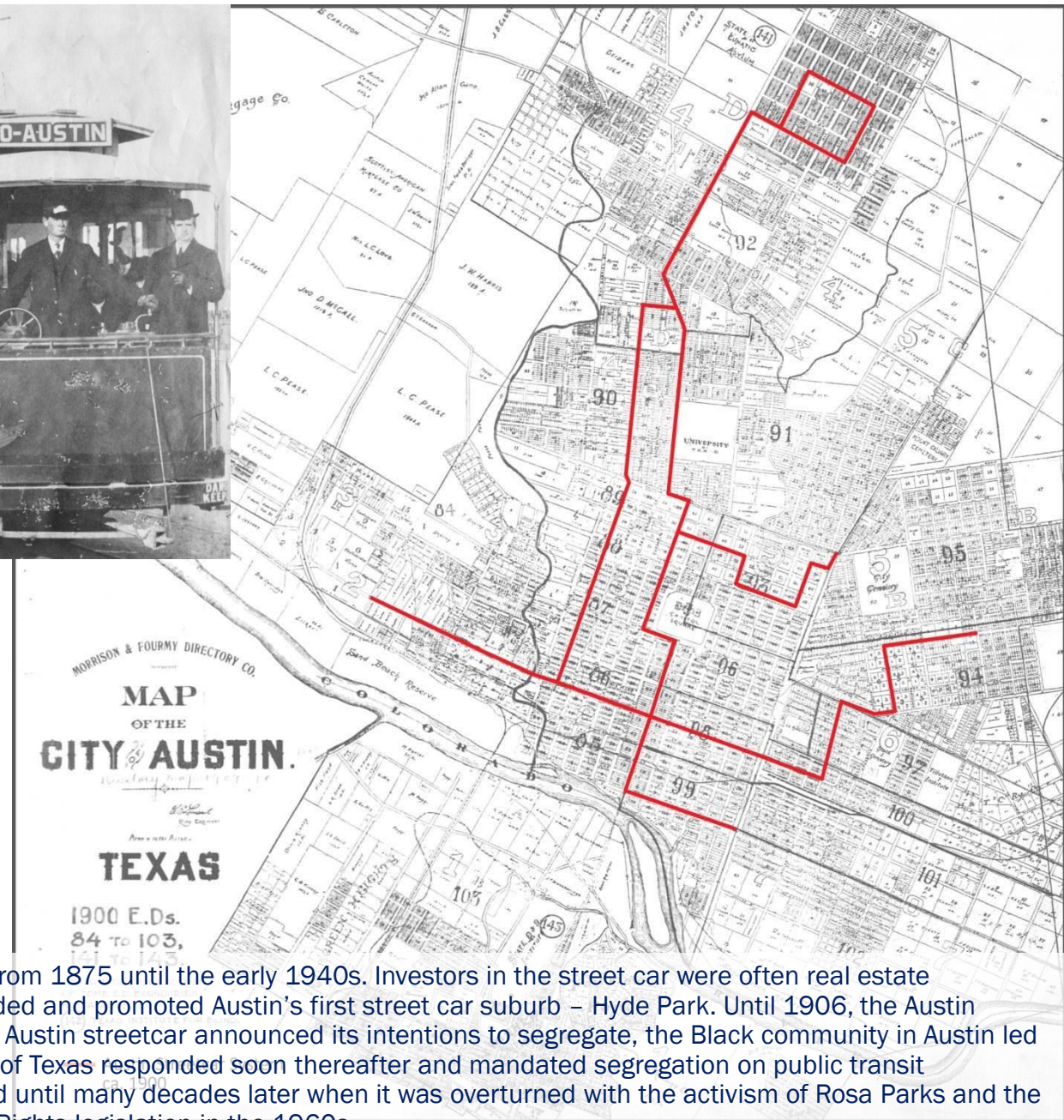
- There is no race without racism. Despite race being a social and political construction, it has been used to dictate access to power.
- Definitions of who is considered to be “white” has changed over time. “White” as a race did not exist before colonial America and was directly created to distinguish between European indentured servants, for whom freedom was attainable after the completion of their period of servitude, and African slaves, for whom slavery was heritable. (Bacon’s Rebellion 1676)
- In the early 20th century, courts receive petitions concerning racial categorizations and are given the power to determine who is “white” in the eyes of the law and therefore qualify for things like Naturalized citizenship. The results were highly variable. In 1922, the Supreme Court concludes that Japanese people are not legally white despite their white skin because they are not “Caucasian.” Less than a year later, the Supreme Court contradicts itself by concluding that Native Americans are not legally “white,” even though they are classified as “Caucasian,” and instead declaring that whiteness should be based on “the common understanding of the white man.”



The US Supreme Court in 1922.



Austin's Streetcar System



Austin had a popular street car system that ran from 1875 until the early 1940s. Investors in the street car were often real estate developers such as Col. Monroe Shipe who founded and promoted Austin's first street car suburb – Hyde Park. Until 1906, the Austin streetcar was not formally segregated. When the Austin streetcar announced its intentions to segregate, the Black community in Austin led a boycott for several months. However, the state of Texas responded soon thereafter and mandated segregation on public transit statewide, including busses. This wasn't reversed until many decades later when it was overturned with the activism of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in the 1950s and Civil Rights legislation in the 1960s.



Congress Avenue, 1913



HOUSING & PLANNING

The rise of the private automobile began to shape cities by the 1940s by prioritizing the paving of streets instead of maintaining rails for public transit, enabling folks to live further away from the city center where they worked, shopped, or congregated, and assisting the separation of places with different functions across the city.



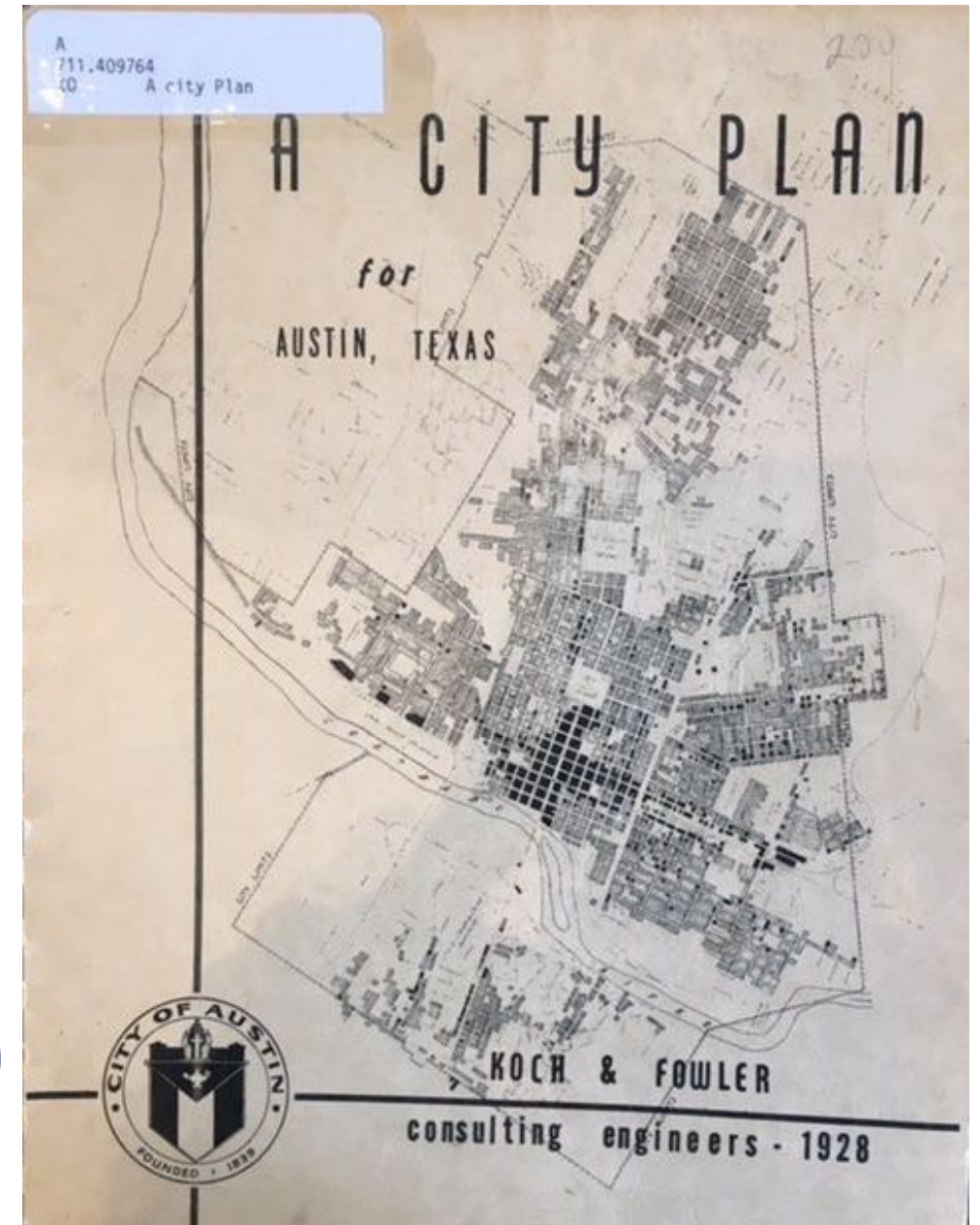
Congress Avenue, 1945



A City Plan for Austin, Texas (1928)

- Created the “Negro District” in East Austin
- Ensured most industry would be placed in East Austin
- Laid the groundwork for red lining, displacement, and long-lasting racial divides

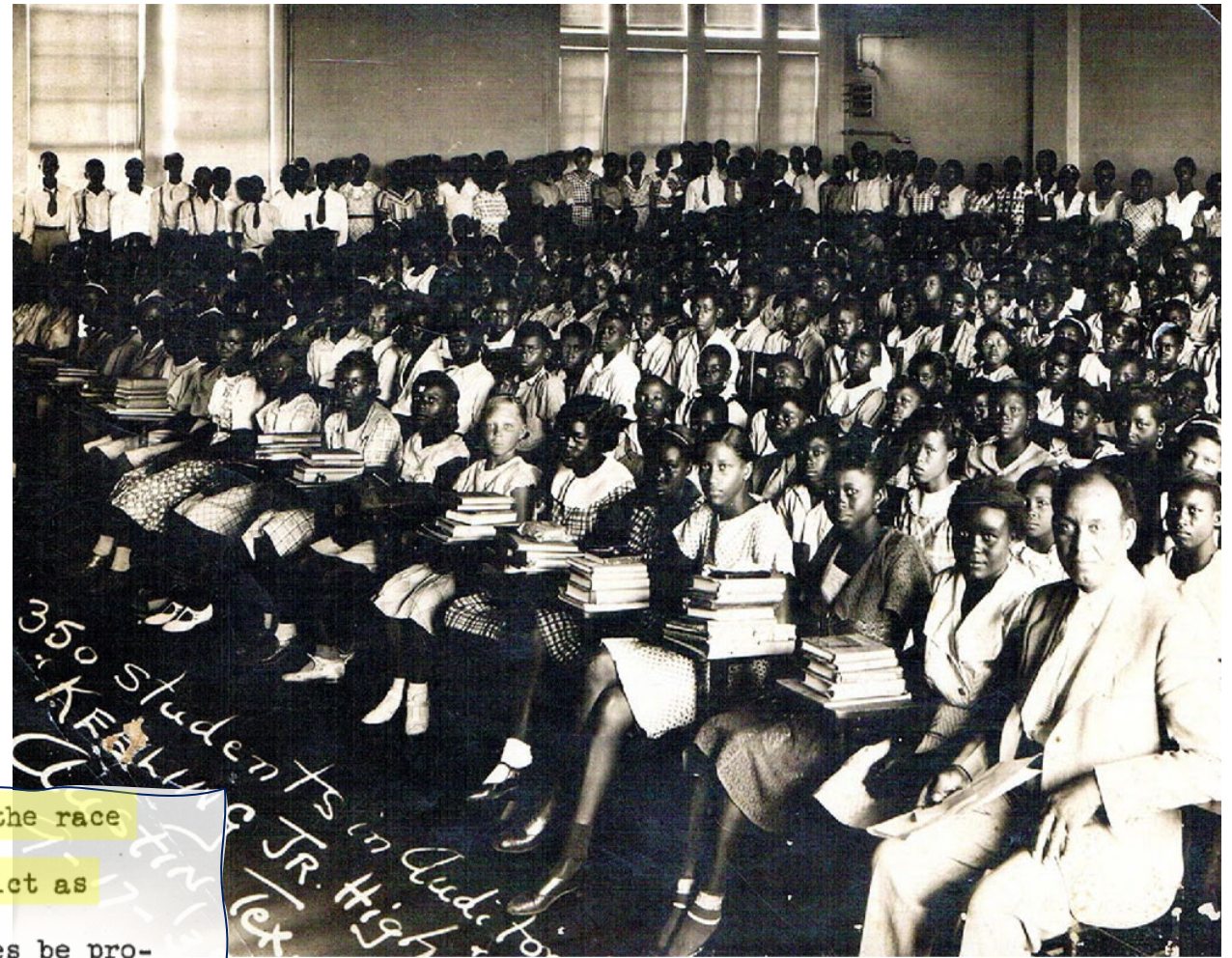
There has been considerable talk in Austin, as well as other cities, in regard to the race segregation problem. This problem cannot be solved legally under any zoning law known to us at present. Practically all attempts of such have been proven unconstitutional.





“Separate but Equal”

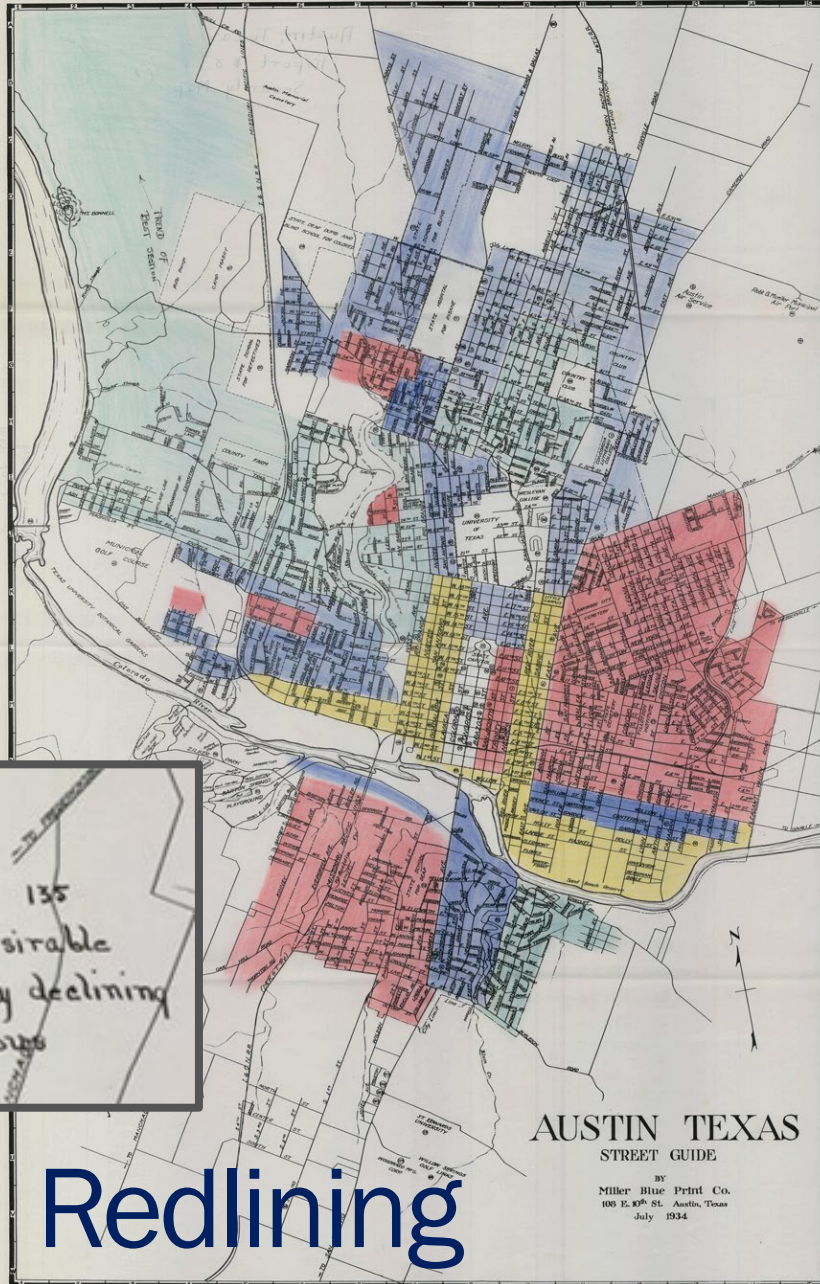
recommendation that the nearest approach to the solution of the race segregation problem will be the recommendation of this district as a negro district; and that all the facilities and conveniences be provided the negroes in this district, as an incentive to draw the negro population to this area. This will eliminate the necessity of duplication of white and black schools, white and black parks, and other duplicate facilities for this area. We are recommending that sufficient area be



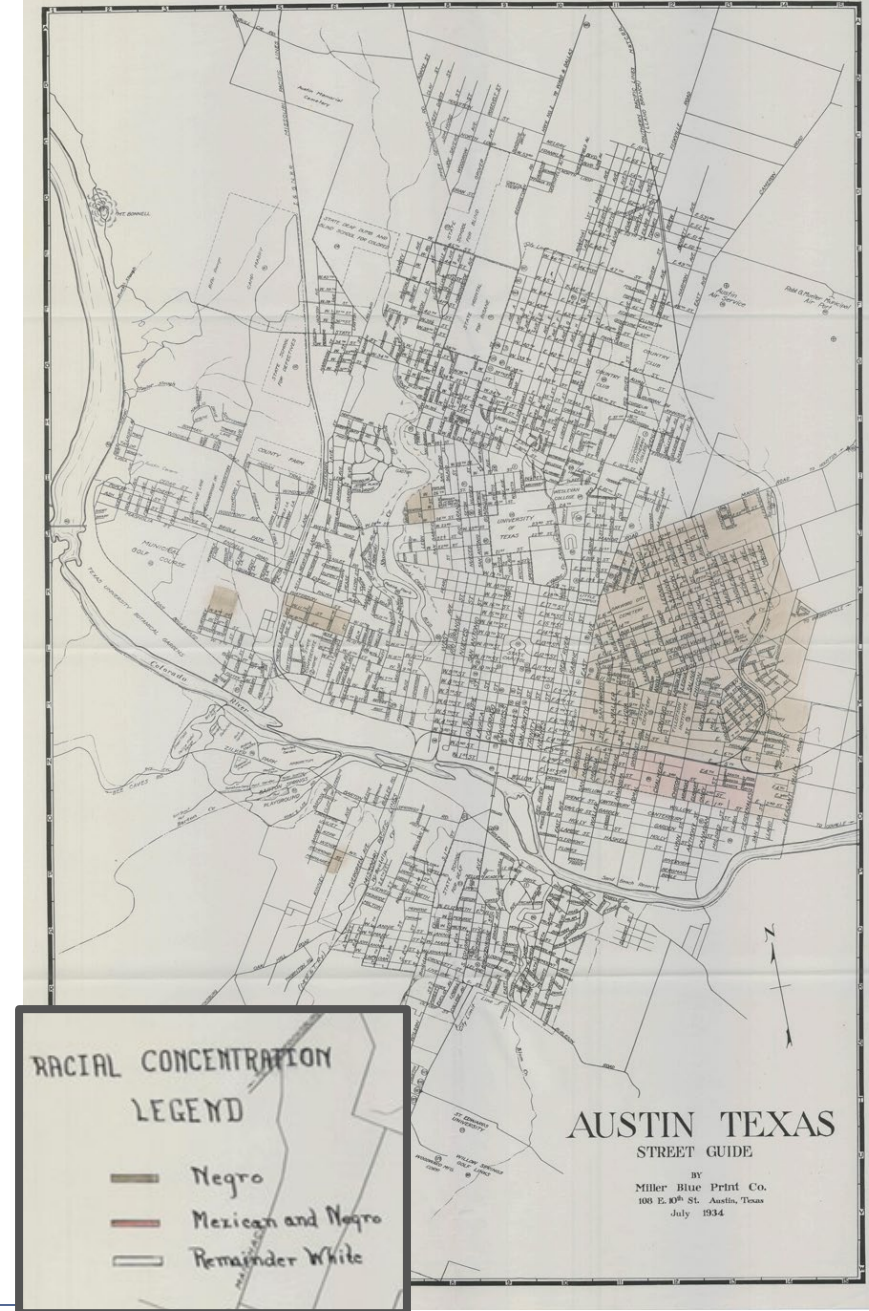
Kealing JR High, 1935



HOUSING & PLANNING



Redlining






Racist Real Estate Practices

HYDE PARK

The most beautiful, healthful, and practical place for homes in the city of Austin. It's the safest place for investment. The terms offered are remarkably easy. The prices are very reasonable. Any person buying two lots WILL BE GIVEN ONE LOT FREE OF COST. There are six miles of beautiful graded streets in HYDE PARK, and a magnificent

SPEEDWAY FROM THE PARK TO THE CITY.

THE FINEST DRIVE IN TEXAS.



HYDE PARK IS EXCLUSIVELY FOR WHITE PEOPLE.

The main line of Electric Street Cars run into and around a belt in the Park. Free Mail Delivery twice a day. There is no limestone dust. The soil is the best for Fruits, Flowers and Lawns. No one thinks of taking a carriage drive without going to Hyde Park. The drives are free from mud and dust. The scenery is interesting. The altitude of Hyde Park is 185 feet above the river. Hyde Park is Cool, Clean and Healthy. Invest while YOU CAN SELECT, and SECURE ONE LOT FREE. If you wish to buy on the installment plan the terms are \$3.00 per month on each lot. If you pay in cash a discount of 8 per cent will be allowed. If you wish to invest and do not live in Austin, we will pay your fare both ways, if the distance is not over 300 miles. Strangers who wish to see the city can have a Free Carriage by calling at our office.

Extraordinary Inducements Are Offered

To persons who will agree to erect good houses. If parties wish to build in Hyde Park we will trade lots for other Austin property on a fair basis, and DONATE ONE LOT as a Premium. Beautiful Views of Hyde Park, and of THE SPEEDWAY sent free upon application. Write to us, or call at 721 CONGRESS AVENUE, AUSTIN, TEXAS.

M. K. & T. LAND AND TOWN CO.

M. M. SHIPE, General Manager

Hyde Park property advertisement

Travis Heights property advertisement

AUSTIN DAILY STATESMAN, SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 21, 1914

Here it is
Right in the Heart of
AUSTIN

Warranty Deed
Free Abstract

LOTS
\$100 DOWN ~ \$100 A WEEK
FOR 3 YEARS

We Sell Only To White People

Restricted—High Class

NO PAYMENTS While Out of Work
NO PAYMENTS WHILE SICK

Prices, \$75 to \$995
18 Per Cent Discount for Cash. Large Lots, 50x140. Many Larger

\$45,000
Already Expended on Street Improvements

OWNED BY THE
Citizens Loan and Investment Co.
AUSTIN, TEXAS
Capital Stock - \$300,000.00

OFFICERS
Jefferson Johnson President
C. T. Butler Vice President
S. E. Baughman Vice President
Wm. H. Stacy Secretary
J. W. Robbins Treasurer

DIRECTORS
Jefferson Johnson S. E. Baughman
W. D. Hall John W. Robbins
R. L. Stacy R. L. Butler
C. T. Butler Wm. H. Stacy
J. H. W. Williams

TRANSPORTATION
Present and Prospective

TRAVIS HEIGHTS is so close to the heart of the city, and being connected by a paved street, the question of transportation is really unimportant. However, it will probably soon enjoy rapid transit facilities unsurpassed by any section of the city.

At present the Austin Electric Railway line is five blocks distant, but an agreement has been secured from the company to extend its line into the addition just as soon as home building is advanced far enough to warrant the necessary extension of service.

The line of the Austin and Lockhart Interurban has already been surveyed across the north end of the subdivision, and the first stop off at Congress Avenue will probably be made at the intersection of Travis Heights Boulevard and Edgely Terrace.

HOW TO GET THERE—Take the South business corner of Austin (corner of Sixth Street and Congress Avenue) get off at the New Riverside Drive Boulevard, just across the bridge.

Automobiles Waiting to Meet All Street Cars

PROPER-GRAY CO.
EXCLUSIVE SELLING AGENTS

FIELD OFFICE ON THE ADDITION
Open Until Dark
Phone 3650

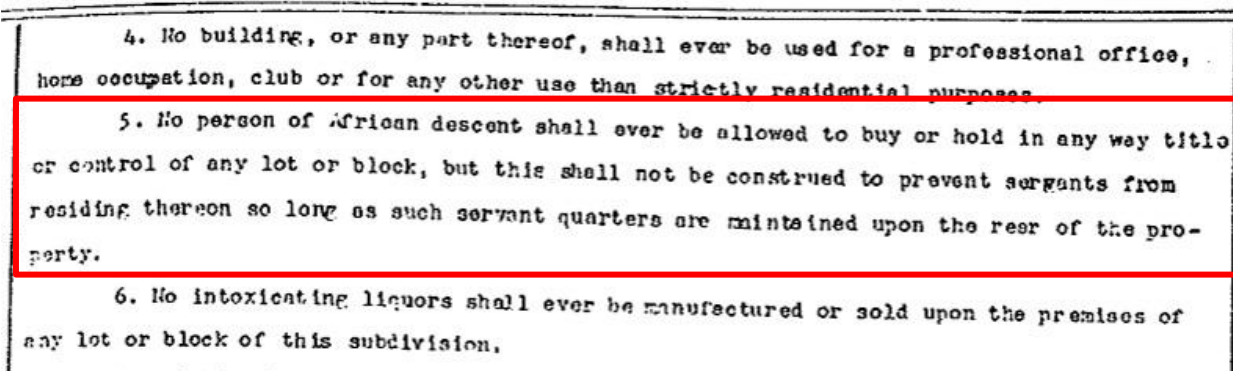
Down-Town Office With
Stacy-Robbins Co.
714 Congress Avenue
Both Phones



Restrictive Covenants

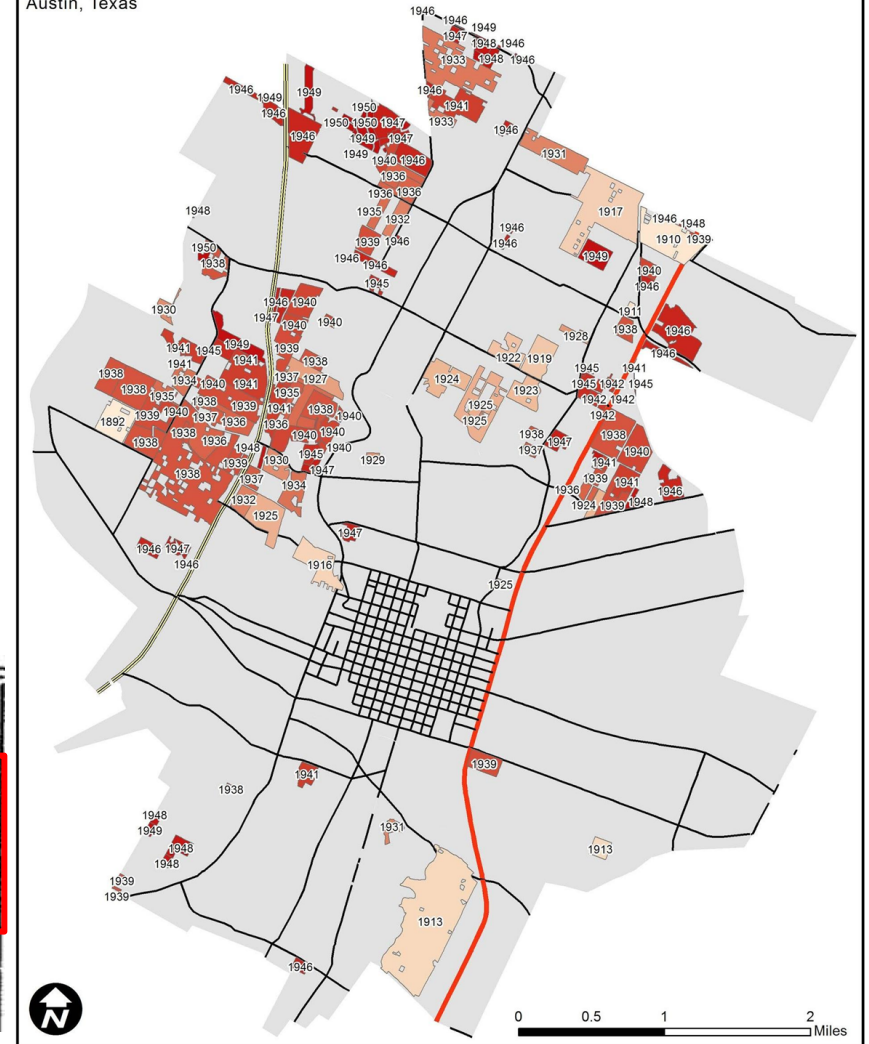
“No lot shall be sold or leased to any Mexican or person of Negro blood or to any corporation or firm composed of Negroes or Mexicans”

Rosedale neighborhood deed restriction



Racial Restrictive Covenants 1890-1950

Austin, Texas



map from the City of Austin East Austin Historic Survey and research from Eliot M. Tretter, “Austin Restricted: Progressivism, Zoning, Private Racial Covenants, and the Making of a Segregated City”



Racially Segregated Public Housing



Santa Rita Courts 1939,
PICA 24091

Santa Rita – for residents of Mexican descent
Rosewood – for residents of African descent
Chalmers – for white residents



Rosewood Courts 1930s,
PICA 38053

In 1939, Rosewood Courts was built after the City used eminent domain to claim Emancipation Park, to the dismay of Black East Austin residents



Urban Renewal

Housing Act of 1949

- Stated goals: *rebuild nation's cities, eliminate slums & blight, provide decent housing for all*
- Federal funds subsidized the acquisition and clearing of sites for redevelopment by tearing down slums and “blighted” areas. Less than 1% of funding went to assisting relocation.
- For every unit of public housing created, one “slum” dwelling unit was supposed to be cleared. Far more housing units were demolished than were created as a result of this act.
- This is why Urban Renewal became known by many communities of color as urban **removal**. Slum clearance became a means of moving Black people from potentially valuable real estate.



This cartoon written in both Spanish and English summarizes and talks about Urban Renewal.
- East Town Lake Citizens (1979)



HOUSING &
PLANNING

Urban Renewal and Slum Clearance

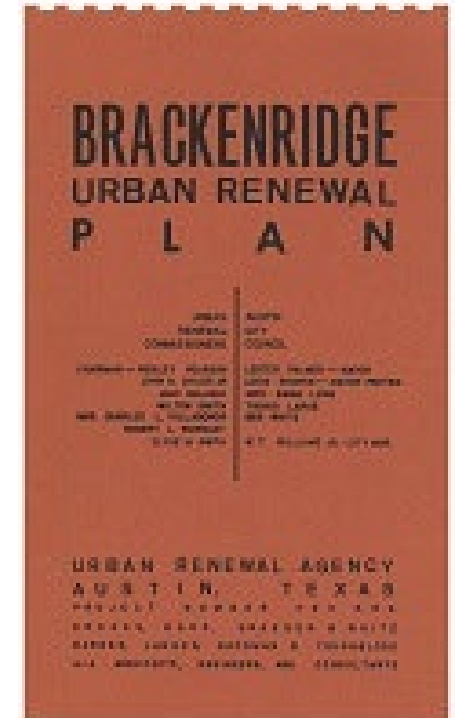
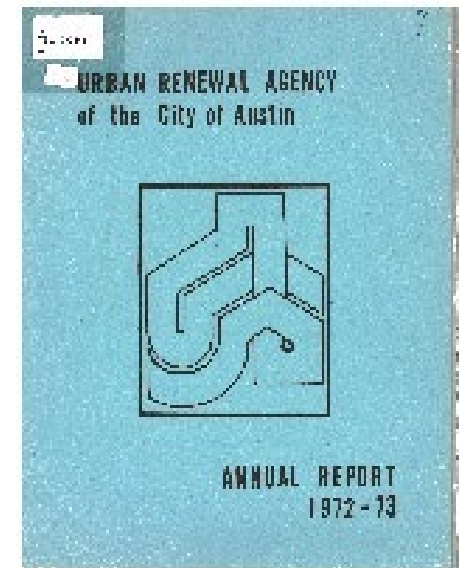


East 11th Street Property Destroyed

PICA 34454



photos taken by property assessors of
homes in East Austin
AR.1996.008-150





Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956

- Originally billed as a “National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.”
- Federal funding favored privately-owned vehicles over public transportation and subsidized suburbanization.
- Originally estimated to cost \$27 billion, but by 1958 the cost was at least \$41 billion.

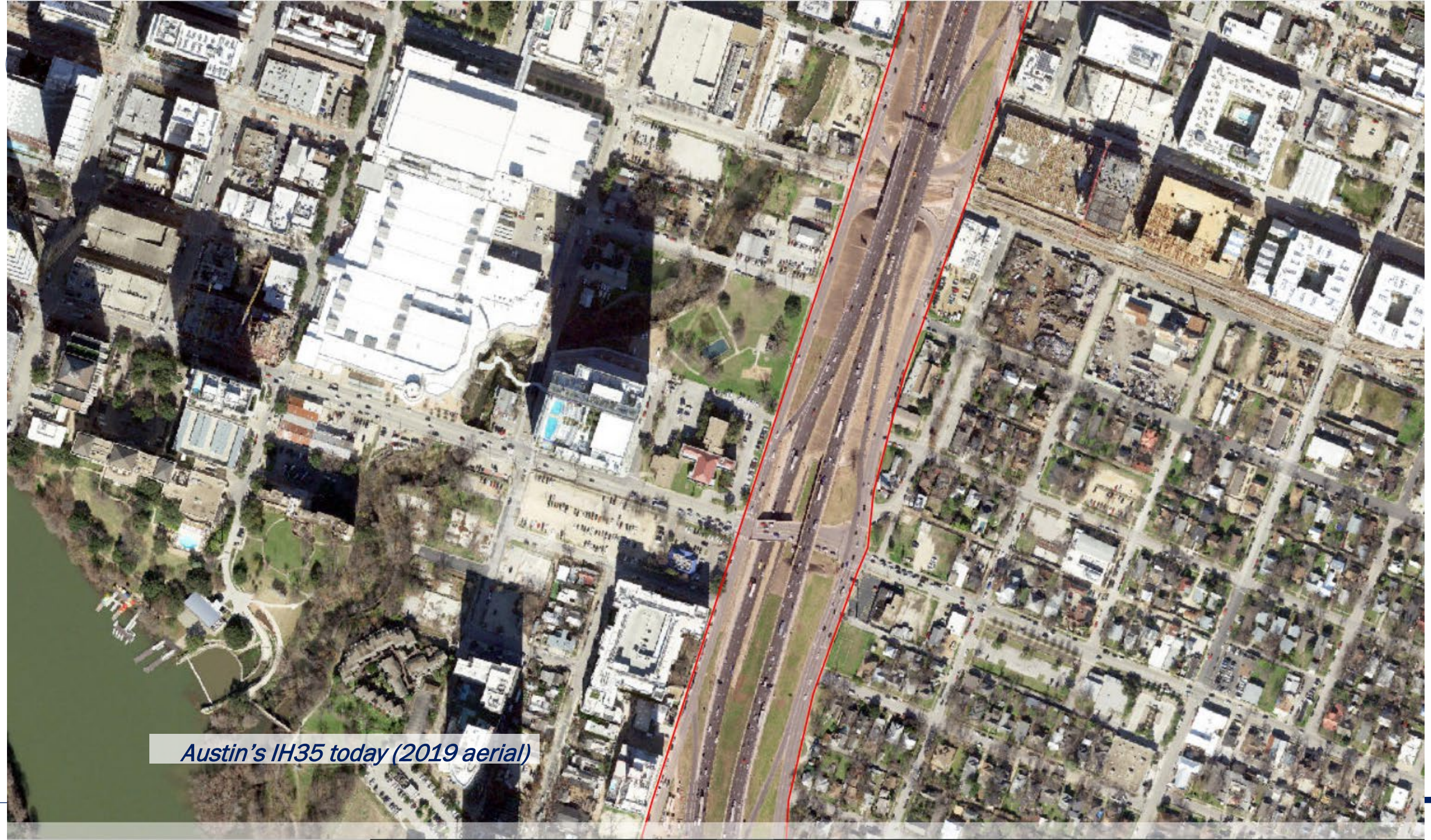


Interstate Highway 35





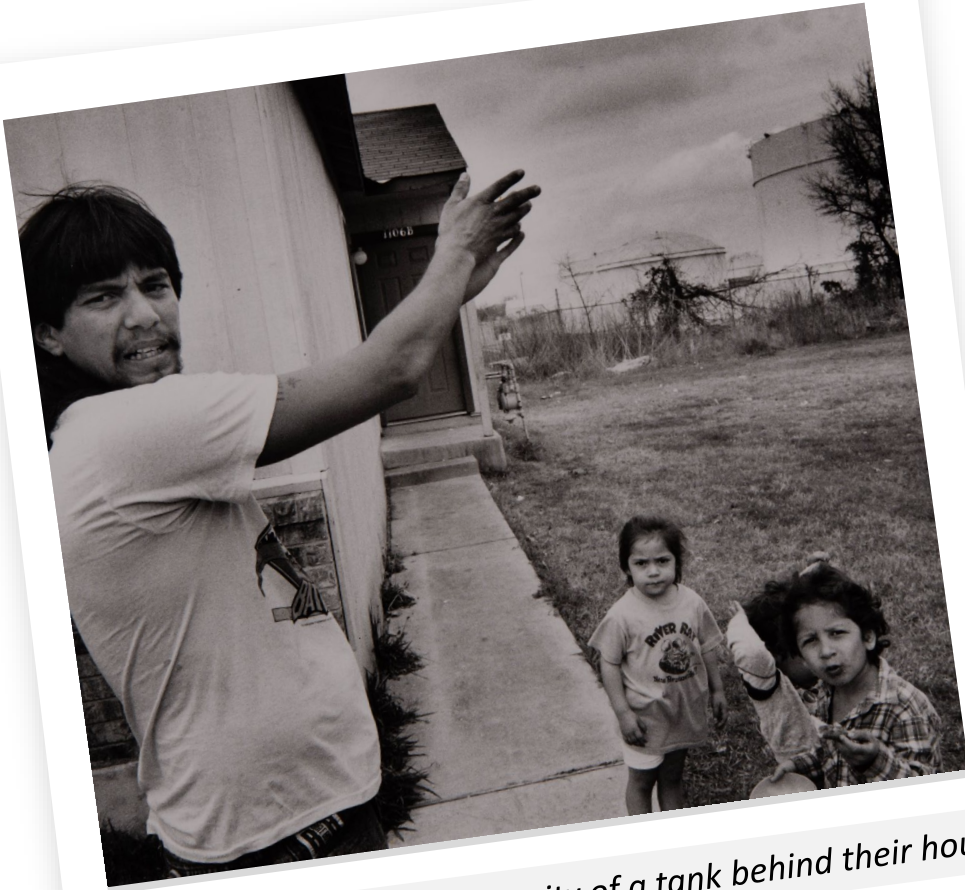
Austin before the construction of IH35 (1940 aerial)



Austin's IH35 today (2019 aerial)



Industrial Development Plan of 1957



A neighbor shows the proximity of a tank behind their house.

- In 1957 large swaths of East Austin were designated as an industrial zone.
- The plan guaranteed that polluting industries were located in primarily communities of color and resulted in hazardous living conditions, lowered property values, and the construction of heavy industrial developments like the Tank Farm and Holly Street Power Plant.
- Lower property values meant that property owners lost wealth – making it difficult to get loans to maintain and expand their buildings– and opened the door to predatory buying practices in later years.



Old Anderson High School

1967

AISD officials said the school as **“impossible to desegregate”** and closed the school. Black students of the former AHS were bussed to different high schools in other parts of town.



“The federal government said to integrate black schools, not to close them down. You said Anderson can’t be integrated, have you tried? Have you told white and Mexican students that they would have to go to Anderson? Why is it every time you have a problem you throw it on the blacks?”
- AHS students 1970



Economic Development and Recruitment

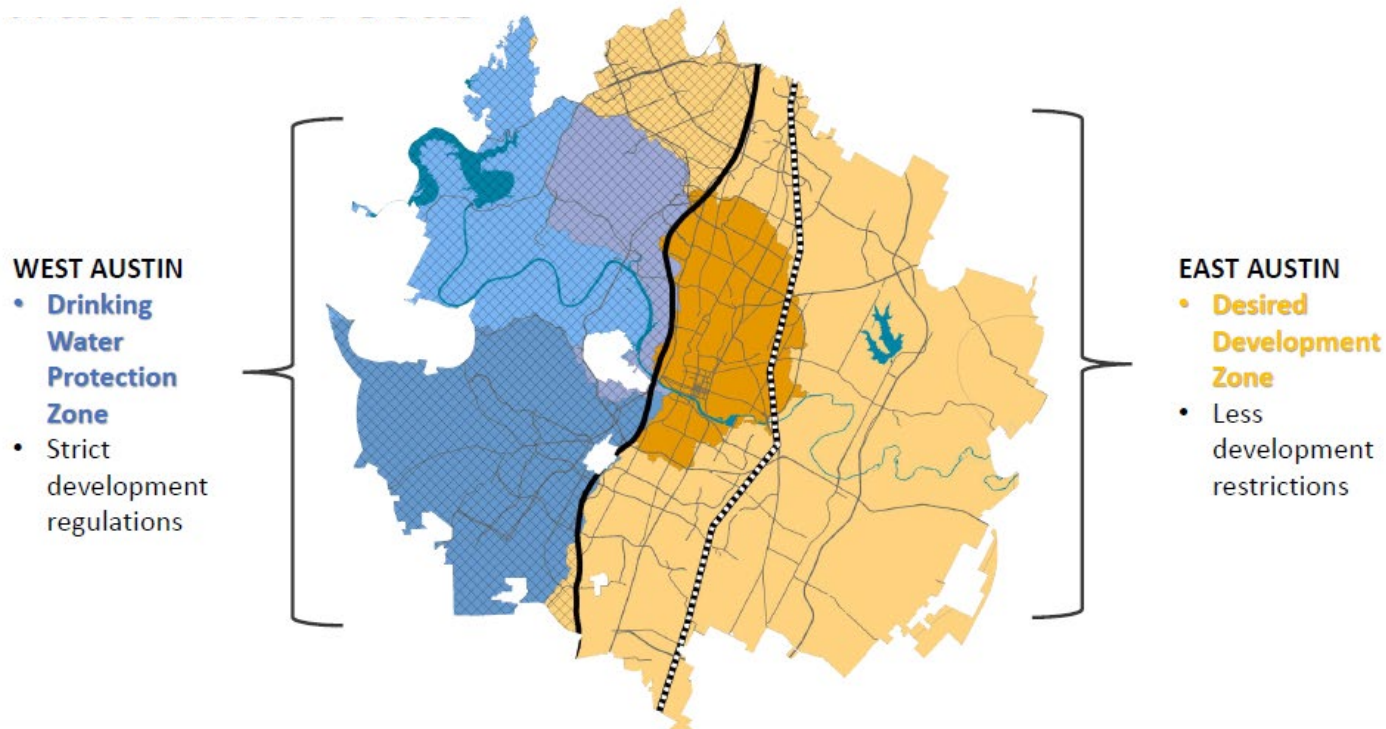
- From the 1950s to today, business leaders have led an economic development effort to expand the city's economic base with the tech industry.
- The tech industry is a primarily white workforce even today due to barriers in educational opportunities and other facets of systemic racism.
- As the explosive local economy and cultural sheen draws 150 new residents per day and pushes up the cost of living, older houses and apartment buildings in East Austin's residential neighborhoods have been purchased by higher-income, often white, households and developers better able to compete in a hot real estate market.



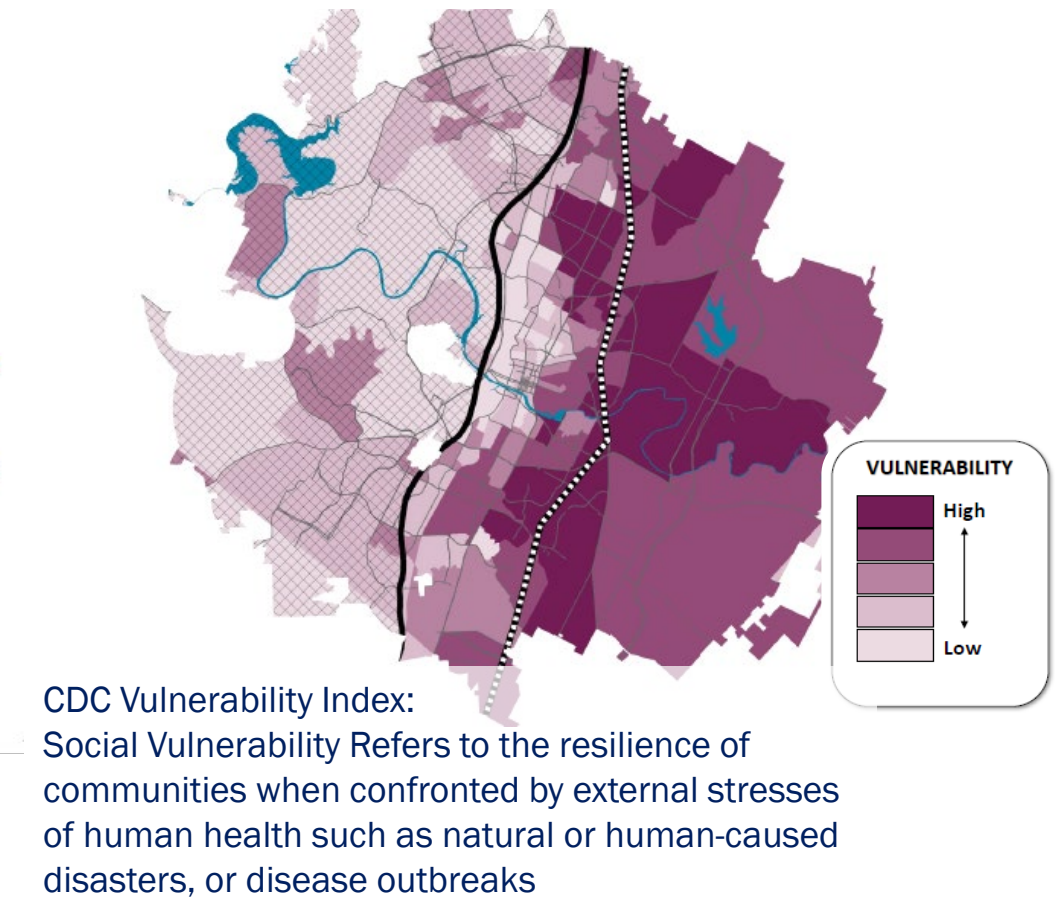
[PBS Documentary – Austin Revealed: Booting Up Big Tech](#)



SMART Growth and Desired Development Zones



CDC's Social Vulnerability Index





Histories of Resistance

Community resistance and resilience has always been there



Black Austin Boycott of Segregated Streetcars

1906





Wanetta Overton and
Members of the NAACP

Demanding Equal
Rights for Housing,
Schools, Voting

1964



AS-64-45169-20



Brown Berets

The Day the Klan
Marched

1983



PICA 37566



**PODER members
demanding the
relocation of BFI
Recycling Plant and
solutions for historic
and environmental
racism in East Austin**

1997

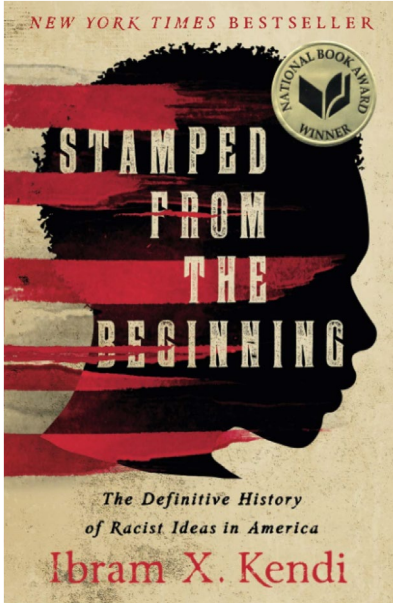
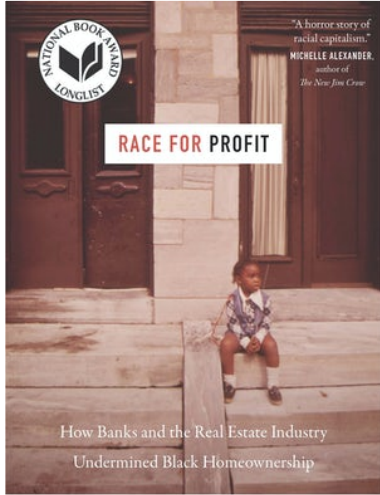
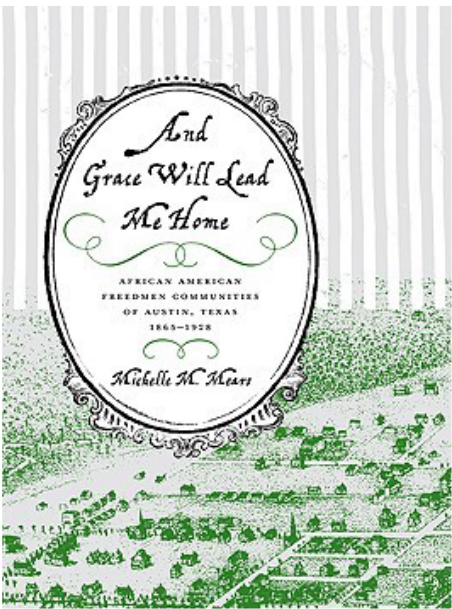
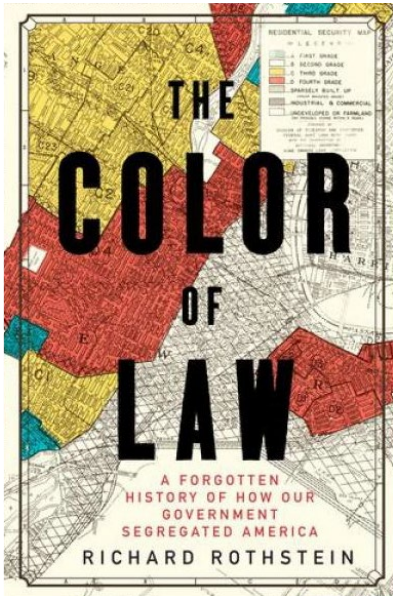
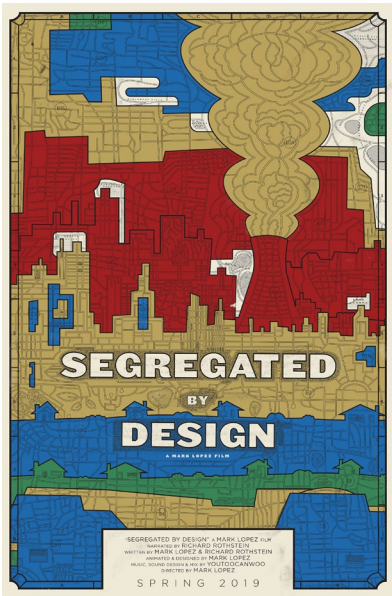
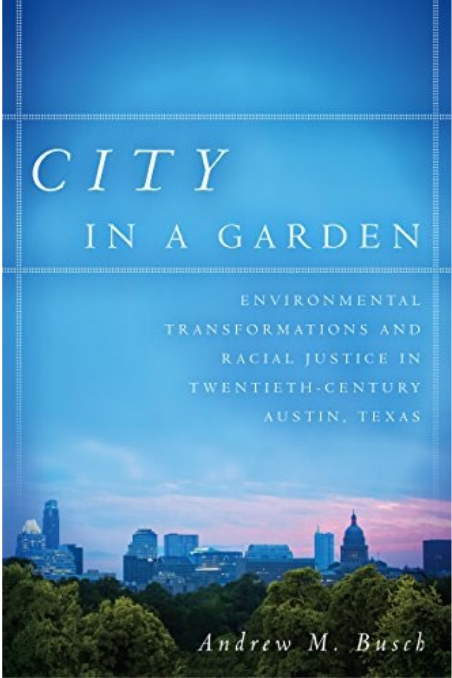
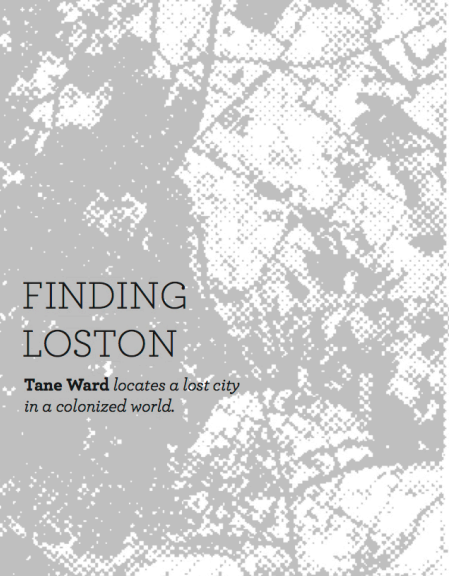




Inheriting Inequality

How we carry our racialized history with us today


Resources





Inheriting Inequality

- Displacement and Genocide of Indigenous People
- Displacement of African People and Slavery
- Creating and Litigating Race
- Reconstruction and Jim Crow
- Creating Exclusionary Power Structures
- Segregated Public Transit
- 1928 Plan and the Negro District
- Redlining and Disinvestment
- Use of Eminent Domain to Seize BIPOC Land
- Segregated Public Housing
- Racially Restrictive Covenants
- Barriers to Accessing Opportunity
- The End of the Austin Streetcar System
- Environmental Injustices
- Slum Clearance and Urban Removal
- Interstate Highway 35
- Segregated Public Services and Facilities
- “Impossible to Desegregate” Austin School System
- “Smart” Growth and Desired Development Zones
- Tech Recruitment
- Gentrification and Displacement



How does our racialized
history remain with us today?

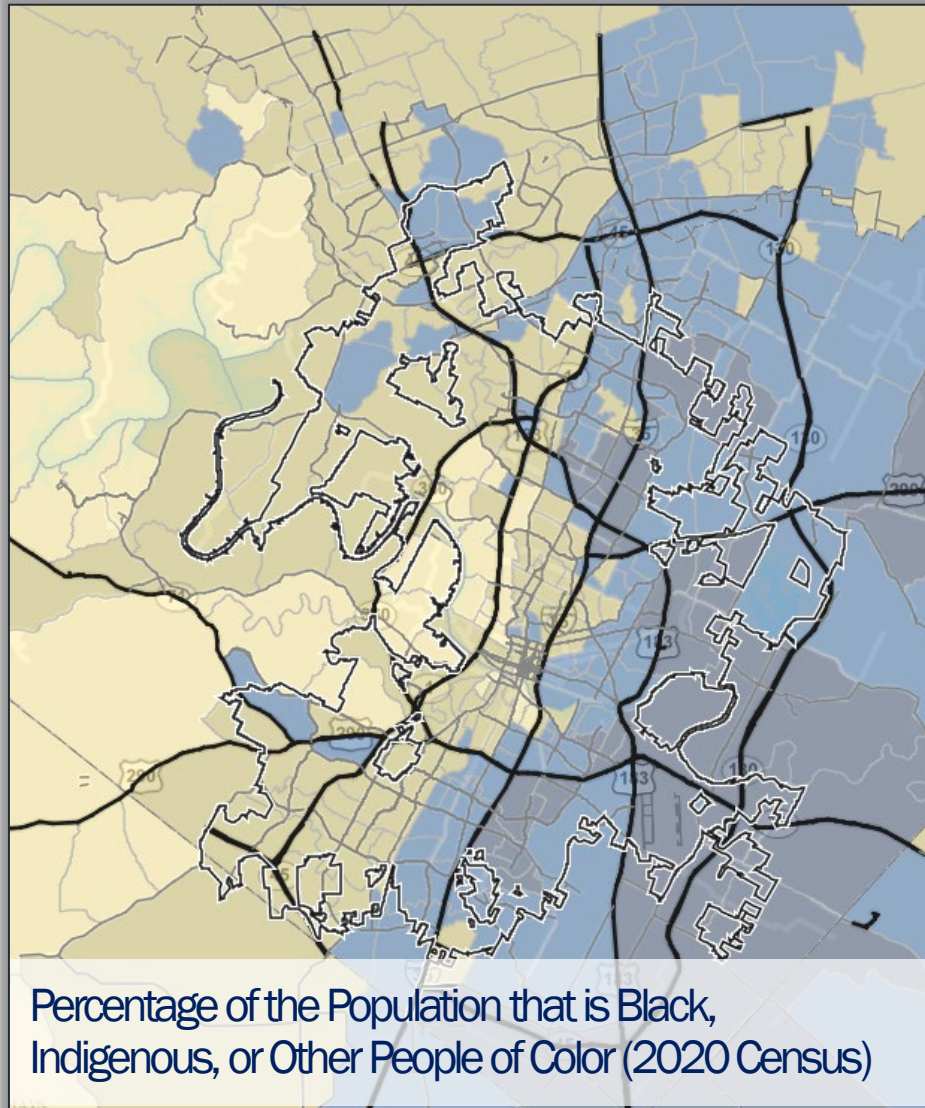
We Carry our History with Us

- Segregation
- Gaps in Wealth and Income
- Health Disparities
- Educational Attainment
- Disparate Impacts in Housing
- Gentrification and Displacement
- Climate Resilience
- Public Safety
- Access to Opportunity

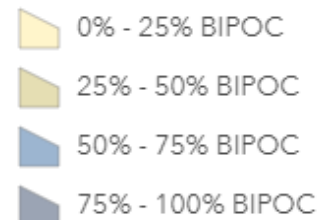




Racial and Economic Segregation



Census 2020 Population Data by Race/Ethnicity



Study: Austin is Most Economically Segregated Metro Area

Among the largest metro areas in the country, Austin ranks as the place where wealthy, college-educated professionals and less-educated, blue-collar workers are least likely to share the same neighborhoods. [f](#) [t](#)

BY EMILY BADGER, THE WASHINGTON POST FEB. 23, 2015 6:17 PM

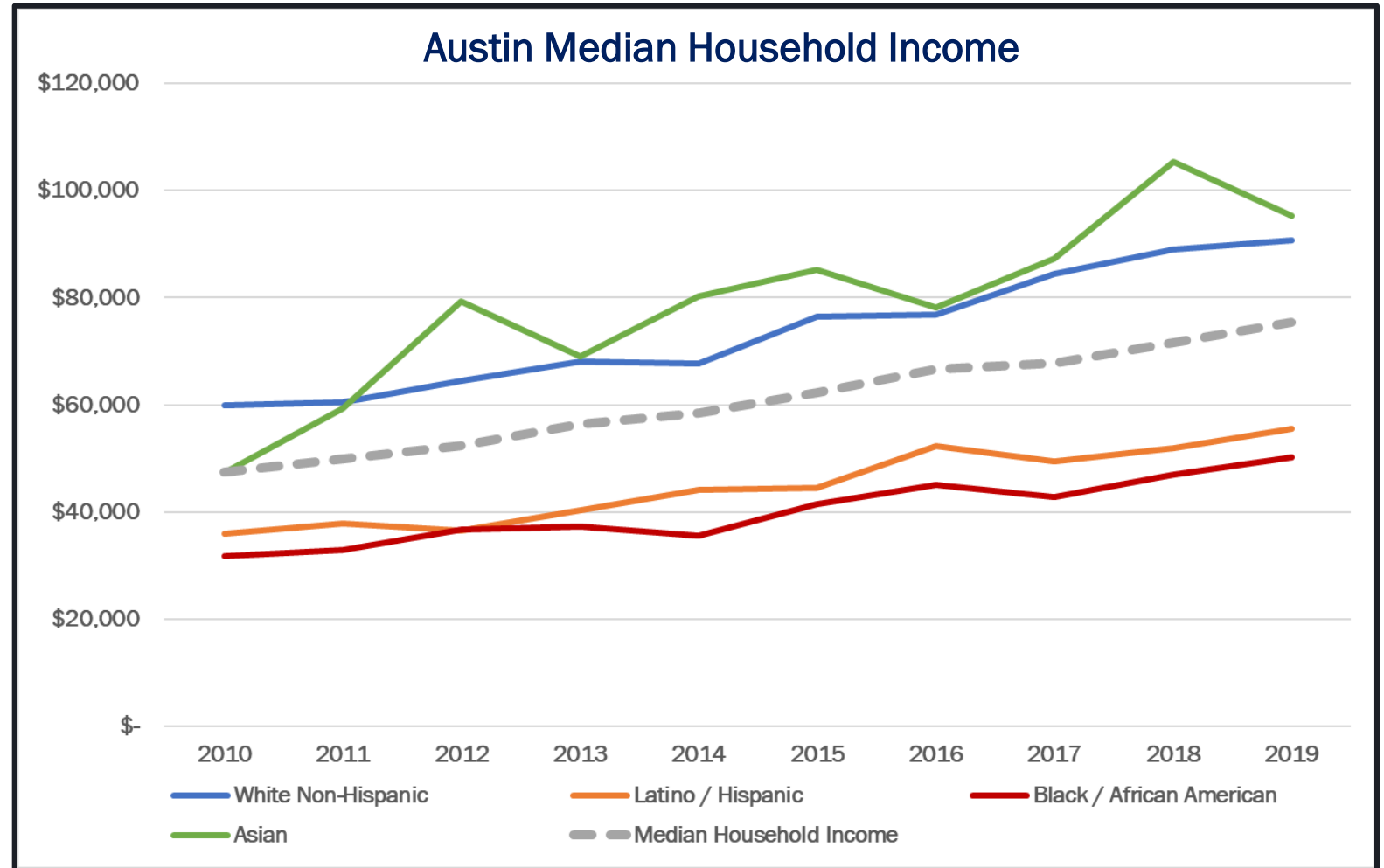


Stevie Ray Vaughan © Trey Ratcliff



Growing Racial Wealth and Income Gaps

Report: Austin's economic growth is leaving black and Latino communities behind



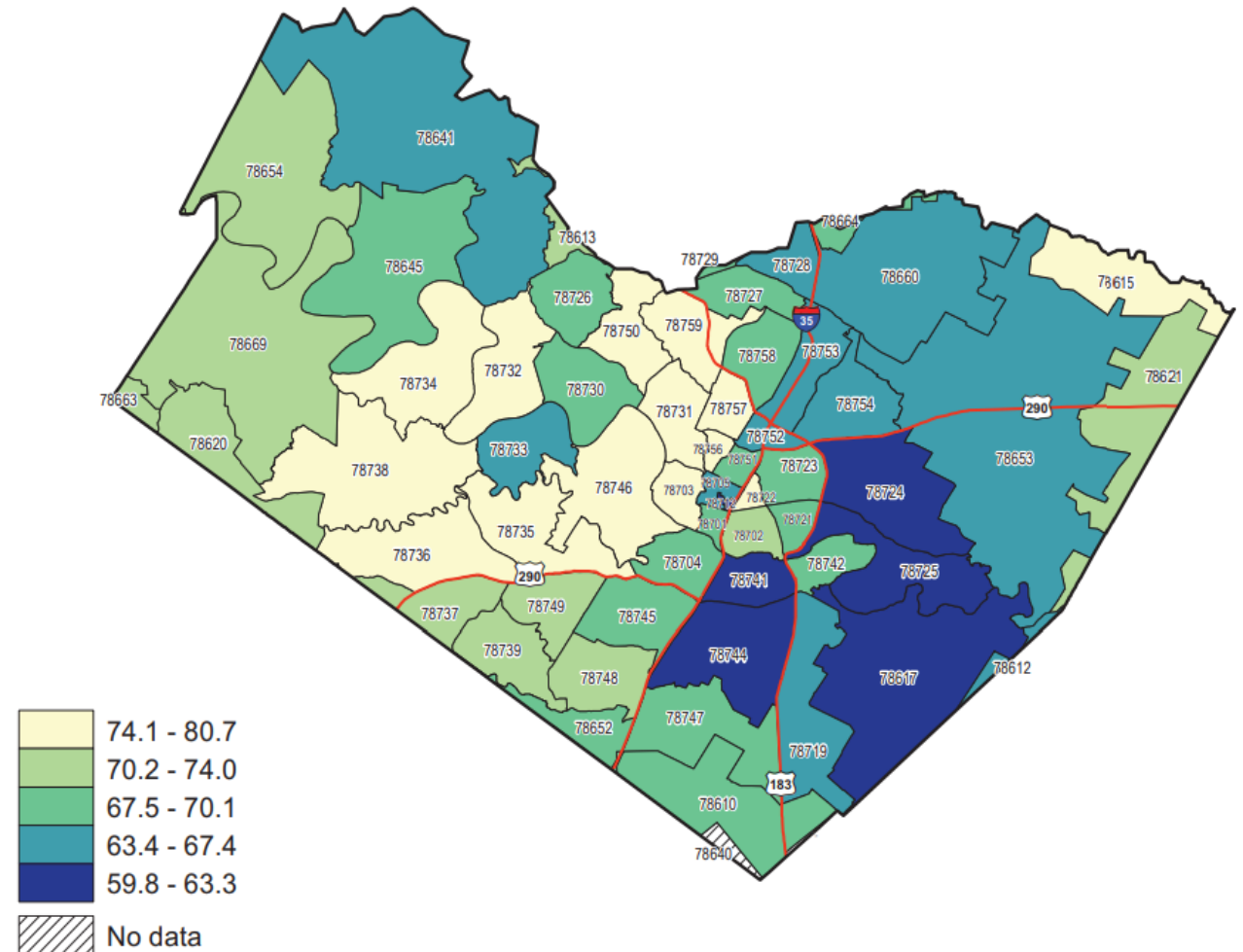


Disparate Health Outcomes

Map 3.2 shows the average age at death by zip code. Overall people are living longer in the zip codes on the west side of Travis County as compared to the zip codes on the east side.

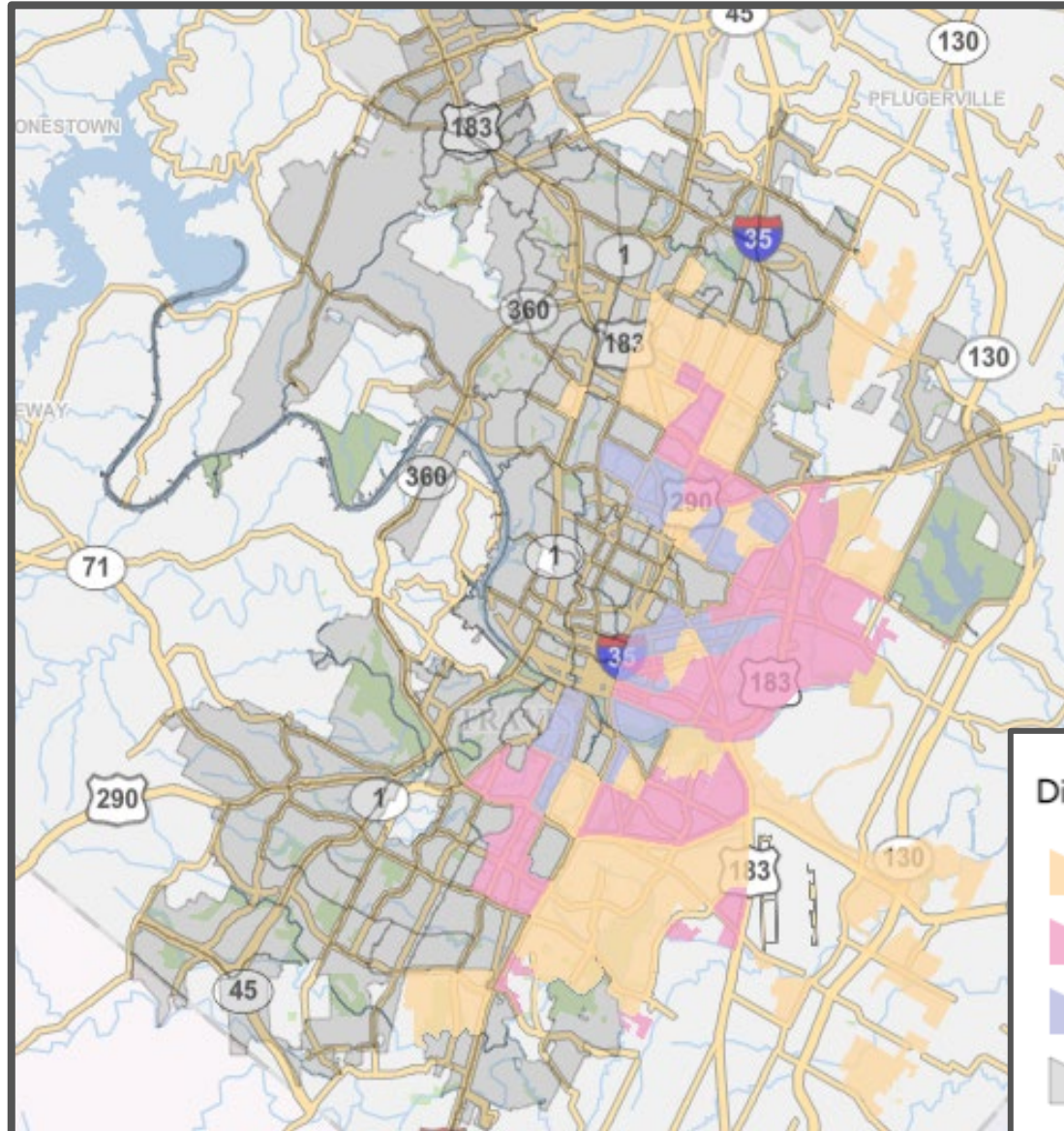
There is a variance of 21 years from the zip code with the lowest average age at death (78741) to that of the highest (78731).

Map 3.2. Average Age at Death, Travis County, 2011-2015





Displacement Risk



Displacement Risk Areas (2019)

- Vulnerable
- Active
- Chronic
- Historical Exclusion



Uprooted:

Residential Displacement in Austin's
Gentrifying Neighborhoods and What
Can Be Done About It

LEAVING HOME: AUSTIN'S DECLINING AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION

21 NOV 2018 POSTED BY VICTORIA DAVIS

0 COMMENT



The University of Texas at Austin
Institute for Urban Policy
Research & Analysis
College of Liberal Arts

THOSE WHO STAYED

The Impact of Gentrification on Longstanding Residents of East Austin

AUTHORS: Eric Tang, Ph.D., associate professor, faculty fellow at the Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis and Division of Diversity and Community Engagement; Bisola Falola, Ph.D., Department of Geography and the Environment

CONTRIBUTOR: Widelene Desir, B.S., M.S. candidate Department of Community and Regional Planning

East Austin, once home to the largest concentrations of African-American and Latino residents of the city, has today become synonymous with the term gentrification. Public discussion on gentrification has tended to focus on displacement and the declining numbers of longstanding residents of color. Less attention has been paid to those who stayed. What is the impact of gentrification on longstanding East Austin residents who have not moved out?



Where do we go from here?

Learning from History to Build a More Equitable Future



Why is history important?

We fill those gaps in history with our own assumptions, stereotypes, and bias.

We repeat what we don't repair.

Nothing can be changed until it is faced.

Understanding the need for equity vs equality



The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond believes that an effective, broad-based movement for social transformation must be rooted in the following Anti-Racist Principles:

Analyzing Power

As a society, we often believe that individuals and/or their communities are solely responsible for their conditions. Through the analysis of institutional power, we can identify and unpack the systems external to the community that create the internal realities that many people experience daily.

Developing Leadership

Anti-racist leadership needs to be developed intentionally and systematically within local communities and organizations.

Gatekeeping

Persons who work in institutions often function as gatekeepers to ensure that the institution perpetuates itself. By operating with anti-racist values and networking with those who share those values and maintaining accountability in the community, the gatekeeper becomes an agent of institutional transformation.

Identifying and Analyzing Manifestations of Racism

Individual acts of racism are supported by institutions and are nurtured by the societal practices such as militarism and cultural racism, which enforce and perpetuate racism.

Learning from History

History is a tool for effective organizing. Understanding the lessons of history allows us to create a more humane future.

Maintaining Accountability

To organize with integrity requires that we be accountable to the communities struggling with racist oppression.

Sharing Culture

Culture is the life support system of a community. If a community's culture is respected and nurtured, the community's power will grow.

Undoing Internalized Racial Oppression

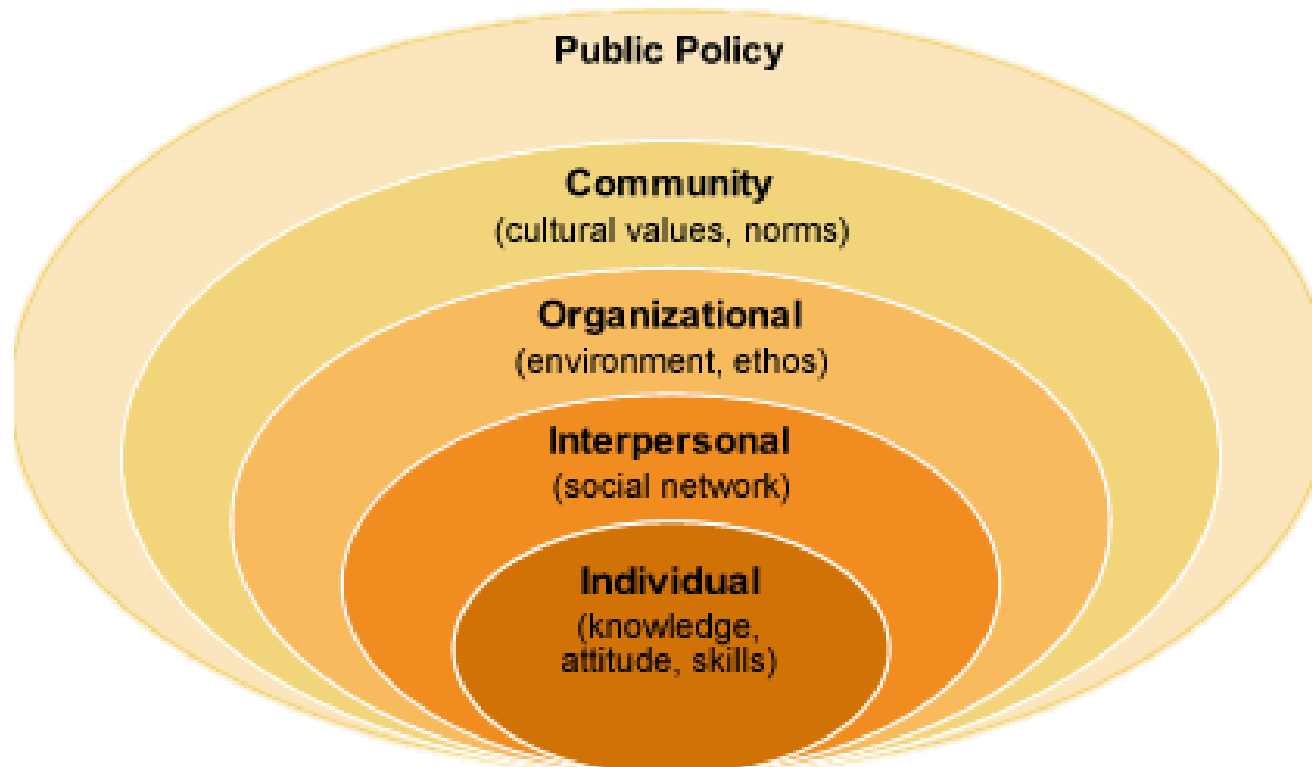
Internalized Racial Oppression manifests itself in two forms:

- **Internalized Racial Inferiority**
The acceptance of and acting out of an inferior definition of self, given by the oppressor, is rooted in the historical designation of one's race. Over many generations, this process of disempowerment and disenfranchisement expresses itself in self-defeating behaviors.
- **Internalized Racial Superiority**
The acceptance of and acting out of a superior definition is rooted in the historical designation of one's race. Over many generations, this process of empowerment and access expresses itself as unearned privileges, access to institutional power and invisible advantages based upon race.

Undoing Racism®

Racism is the single most critical barrier to building effective coalitions for social change. Racism has been consciously and systematically erected, and it can be undone only if people understand what it is, where it comes from, how it functions, and why it is perpetuated.

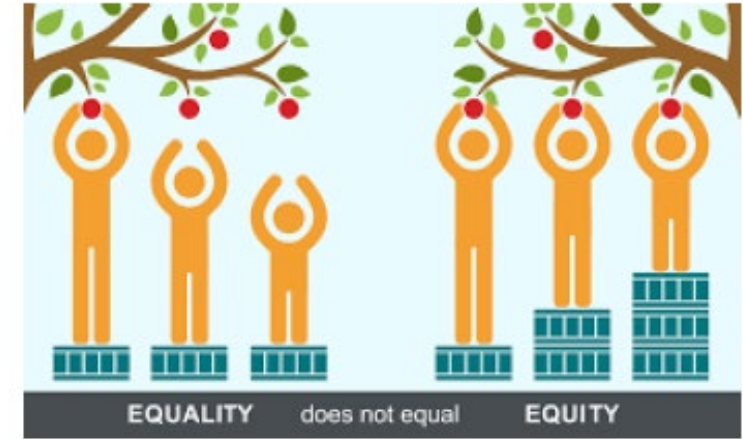
Learning from History



- **the history of our country, state, city, and community**
 - the construction of race and racism
 - the enforcement of racialized values and separation
- **our organization and fields' history**
 - how have stated values and goals differed from reality?
 - how has it intersected with racism?
 - who has driven or directed the work?
 - think about "race blind" policies or programs that disproportionately impact BIPOC communities?
- **who we serve**
 - who benefits from your services? how have services varied by race?
 - has demand for your services been influenced by systemic racism?
 - how are we accountable to BIPOC communities to ensure equitable outcomes?
- **yourself**
 - understand your own identities and how they have been constructed, regulated, and enforced
 - understand your own internalized racial oppression
 - how did you learn race? how did you learn to see it (or not)?



Equity is About Better Outcomes

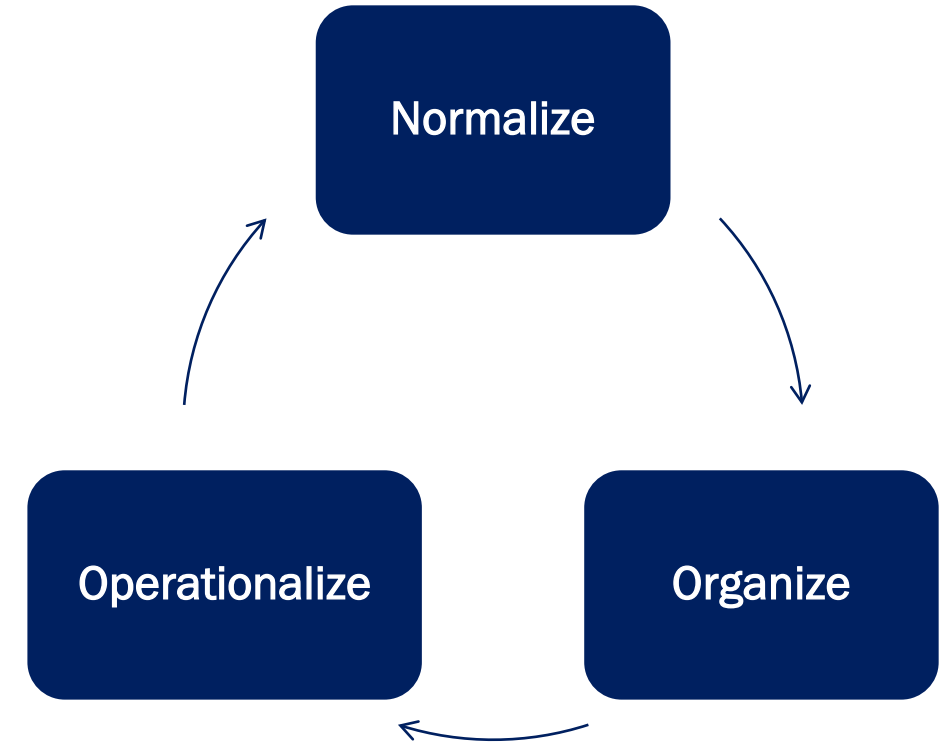


- Equity is the condition when every member of the community has a fair opportunity to live a long, healthy, and meaningful life.
- *Racial Equity is the condition when race is no longer a predictor of quality of life outcomes in our community.*
- The City of Austin recognizes that race is the primary determinant of social equity and therefore we begin the journey toward social equity with this definition.
- The City of Austin recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of these wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.



Building an Equity Framework

1. **Know the history:** Acknowledge it and create space for communities to share so as not to repeat the same mistakes.
2. **Review and monitor data:** What do the data tell us? Are they disaggregated by race/ethnicity?
3. **Engage the community:** Are there opportunities to expand engagement and what were the efforts to reach most marginalized populations and bring those voices into consideration?
4. **Advance racial equity:** Be intentional. Normalize discussions of racial equity and inequity. Does this project have an opportunity to advance equity within the six strategic outcomes and reduce or eliminate a disparity?
5. **Analyze unintended consequences:** Could the project have a negative impact on communities of color and/or other marginalized populations?





Discussion

- Reflections on the presentation. What stood out to you? Surprised you? What did you learn? What is missing? Overlooked?
- Why is it important to know Austin's history? What does it change for your work? Did anything click for you?
- What are your thoughts about how we should move forward? How can your work contribute towards a more equitable future?



HOUSING & PLANNING

Contact Info

Sam Tedford, Principal Planner

City of Austin, Housing and Planning Department

sam.tedford@austintexas.gov