SEGREGATION BY DESIGN

BPA, MARCH 28, 2022

[Image of a building being demolished with a sign in the foreground reading: WEST END PROJECT U.R. MASS. 2-3, A PROJECT OF BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND THE CITY OF BOSTON.]

[Text on the sign: THIS LAND ASSEMBLY AND REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT IS BEING UNDERTAKEN WITH FEDERAL AID UNDER TITLE 1 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1949 THROUGH THE URBAN RENEWAL ADMINISTRATION, HOUSING AND HOME FINANCE AGENCY.]
1865 13th Amendment  Slavery is abolished

1866 Civil Rights Act  Mandates that all persons born in the United States (except indigenous people) are citizens and are granted the “full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property.”

1868 14th Amendment  Grants citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to all persons born or naturalized in the United States (including formerly enslaved people).

1896 Plessy v. Ferguson  Supreme Court approves racial segregation in public accommodations where separate but equal facilities exist for African Americans.

1913 Segregation of Government Offices  President Woodrow Wilson approves segregation in federal government offices. Secretary Roosevelt implements this initiative.

1917 Buchan v. Warley  Supreme Court finds that racial zoning ordinances violate the 14th Am. freedom of contract protections, but the Court does not prohibit individuals or private agreements from banning African Americans from neighborhoods.

1926 Euclid v. Ambler  Supreme Court holds that towns can use zoning to prohibit apartment buildings in single family neighborhoods (a thinly veiled method of keeping African Americans out of white neighborhoods).

1934 FHA Established  President Roosevelt creates the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) as part of the National Housing Act, revolutionizing home ownership by introducing the federally insured 30-year mortgage and institutionalizing and promoting racial segregation by refusing to back loans in African American and other ethnic neighborhoods.

1944 Federal Highway Act  Federal Highway Act is passed encouraging the construction of highways through urban areas leading to the 1959-1969 build of Syracuse’s I-81 project, which demolished the vibrant, racially diverse 15th Ward.

1954 Brown v. Board of Education  The Supreme Court states that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. “White flight” to the suburbs and enrolling in white-only “segregation academies” work against integration efforts.

1957 Levittown, PA  A white mail carrier incites a violent mob when he notices the African American Myers family has moved into this 17,500 home FHA-financed development and shouts “N**%$# have moved into Levittown” at each stop as he delivers the mail.

1958 Jones v. Mayer  Citing the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and reversing many precedents, the United States Supreme Court holds that Congress can regulate the sale of private property to prevent racial discrimination.

1965 Fair Housing Act  Prohibits discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, sex, and family status.

1973 US Commission on Civil Rights  Reports that “the housing industry, aided and abetted by Government, must bear the primary responsibility for the legacy of segregated housing...Government and private industry came together to create a system of residential segregation.”

1983 Sylvania, KY  The Marshall family’s home is firebombed when they move in. The county police officer was a KKK member and testified to the actions of he and 20 other KKK members in the department were approved. The Marshall family’s home is firebombed when they move in.

1990 Arlington Heights, IL  The Marshall family’s home is firebombed when they move in. The county police officer was a KKK member and testified to the actions of he and 20 other KKK members in the department were approved.

2010 Dodd-Frank  Bans certain predatory lending practices acknowledging two decades of racially discriminatory subprime lending (in Buffalo, NY ¼ of all refinanced loans to African Americans were subprime).

Housing Segregation Timeline

Courtesy of Legal Services of Central New York
“White flight was not a mystical process for which we have no real explanation or understanding. **White flight was the policy of our federal, state, and local government.** That policy held that Americans should enjoy easy access to the cities via the automobile and live in suburbs without black people, who by their very nature degraded property and humanity.”

-Ta-Nehisi Coates

“If the ends don’t justify the means, what does?”

-Robert Moses
**D7 South Berkeley**

“This area of modern type bungalows was originally put on as a white subdivision. However, now Negroes have crowded in until there is only a small percentage of white remaining, mostly Italians. District known as ‘Negro Piedmont’. This district will never recover its original pre-Depression values.”

**D5 North Oakland**

“Unless one knows about the colored families living in the district, there is no means of distinguishing their homes from those of their white neighbors. The homes of the Negroes are in many instances better kept than the adjoining homes of white owners. Loans in this area should be governed according to hazard.”

**C12 Hoover-Foster**

“If this area were not a border-line case, it might with propriety, be graded High Red (D) or designated as a business area; but on account of predominances of old single-family residences and absence of undesirable racial elements, has been accorded a Low Yellow (C) grading.”

**D8 West Oakland**

“In the small, triangular portion of this area, lying east of Market Street, there are but very few Negroes, but west of Market Street the number steadily increases until the vicinity of Peralta, where they constitute approximately 80% of the population.”

**D8 Fruitvale**

“The western part of this area is the concentrated Oriental residential section of Oakland. The area, however, includes many good apartment houses of older type, mainly occupied by laboring classes.”

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@segregation_by_design

**Selected 1937 HOLC Red-lining Comments**
TO: THE MAYOR, THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
AND THEIR SYCOHANTS, THE COMMITTEE FOR NORTH HARVARD ST.

FOR NINE YEARS: WE HAVE RESISTED YOUR EFFORTS TO FORCIBLY EVICT US FROM OUR HOMES.
YOU HAVE FAILED TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL: THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD
BY YOUR ACTIONS YOU HAVE DENIED US THE RIGHT TO BE FREE AND SECURE IN OUR OWN HOMES.
YOU CANNOT MORALLY WIN HERE, AND NO RATIONALIZATION ON YOUR PART CAN JUSTIFY YOUR ACTS
OF THEFT AND BRUTALITY. YOU VALUE MONEY AND BUILDINGS MORE THAN PEOPLE’S FREEDOM.
THIS LAND IS RIGHTFULLY OURS, AND YOU KNOW IT! WE SHALL DEFEND IT WITH OUR LIVES!

WE STILL WON'T MOVE!
TO HELL WITH URBAN RENEWAL!

JULY 4, 69
IN MEMORIAM: TO ANNIE SORICELLI AND OTHERS WHO HAVE DIED IN DEFENSE OF THEIR HOMES
POST-REDLINING: INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA

1968 - Present

[Image of a map showing proposed improvements along I-605 with labels for existing I-5, alternative 1, and alternative 2, with numbers of demolitions and a mention of Edith Unsworth Elementary and Dennis the Menace Park.]
Both the Metro and the LRT followed existing freight railroad rights-of-way. As such, outside of the core, stations are poorly located, far from population centers. Moreover, white residents in the northern suburbs were wary of a direct connection to downtown, afraid that people of color in the formerly redlined neighborhoods would "invade." This accounts for the incredibly long distances (up to 7 miles) between stations outside downtown.

The Red Line LRT was to be an entirely new right-of-way, connecting formerly red-lined neighborhoods to job centers both in the urban core as well as in the sprawling suburbs. Republican Governor Larry Hogan cancelled the project and redirected funds towards suburban highway construction in primarily white areas.

The Red Line would make use of the infamous "highway to nowhere" corridor, breathing life into neighborhoods decimated by freeway construction.
PROVIDENCE, RI: I-195 Re-Routing
REMOVAL | ROCHESTER INNER LOOP

- **1951**: Electric Transit
- **1969**: Ped-Based Downtown
- **2018**: Black Neighborhoods Targeted
- **Urban Renaissance**

**Mass Displacement**


“Historic Aerials.” Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC. https://www.historicaerials.com/


“Taken for a Ride.” Directed by Olson, Martha and Klein, Jim. PBS, 1996. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-I8GDkl-sN4
