



HOUSING &
PLANNING

Shaping Austin

Racism and Urban Planning

Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission

July 13, 2022

Sam Tedford, *she/they*
Principal Planner
Inclusive Planning

Outline

Shaping Austin

Inheriting Inequality

Learning from History



Content Warning





Shaping Austin

Stay Engaged

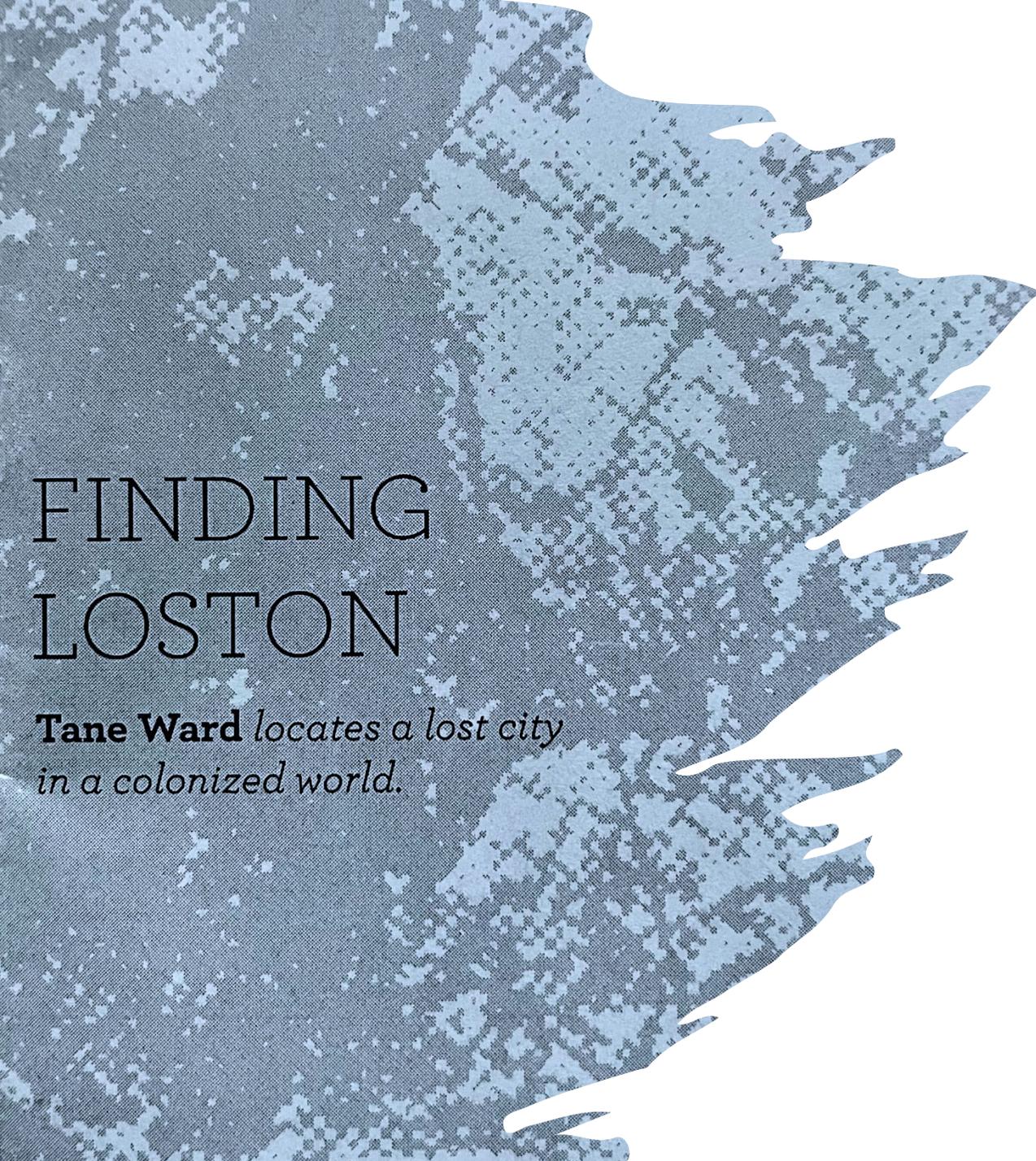
What you're experiencing as you listen and discuss (physically, emotionally, mentally)

Events that you think are connected to the map or neighborhoods discussed in the previous exercise (think about both the highs and lows)

How your personal and ancestral histories intersect with this history

Any actions that involved the City government. Keep a list of other key players.





FINDING LOSTON

Tane Ward *locates a lost city
in a colonized world.*

Is this the End of Austin?

How presumptuous. Endings and Beginnings are always the same process. Austin has been around for a long time; only it wasn't always called Austin...This cultural territory is old. In fact, it is the oldest continually inhabited place in the Americas. The oldest arrow-point ever found in North or South America was found at the Gault archeological site near Round Rock at over 14 thousand years old. The oldest continually inhabited sacred site in the Americas is the Coahuiltecan presence at Spring Lake in San Marcos at 12 thousand years. "Austin" sits in the middle.

Instead of thinking about Austin ending, perhaps we should think of something that has been lost, something we are searching for. Instead of Austin, why don't we call it Loston...[Loston] has been here for thousands of years, and I think it will be for thousands more, but only when people can find themselves historically, politically, and economically as connected with a larger world. How can we connect [Loston] with the end of...inequality? And what will this be the beginning of? It may take a hundred years to find ourselves...We may not see the great change in our lifetime. But this place will be here, long after we are gone.

Dr. Tane Ward

Finding Loston (2013)



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

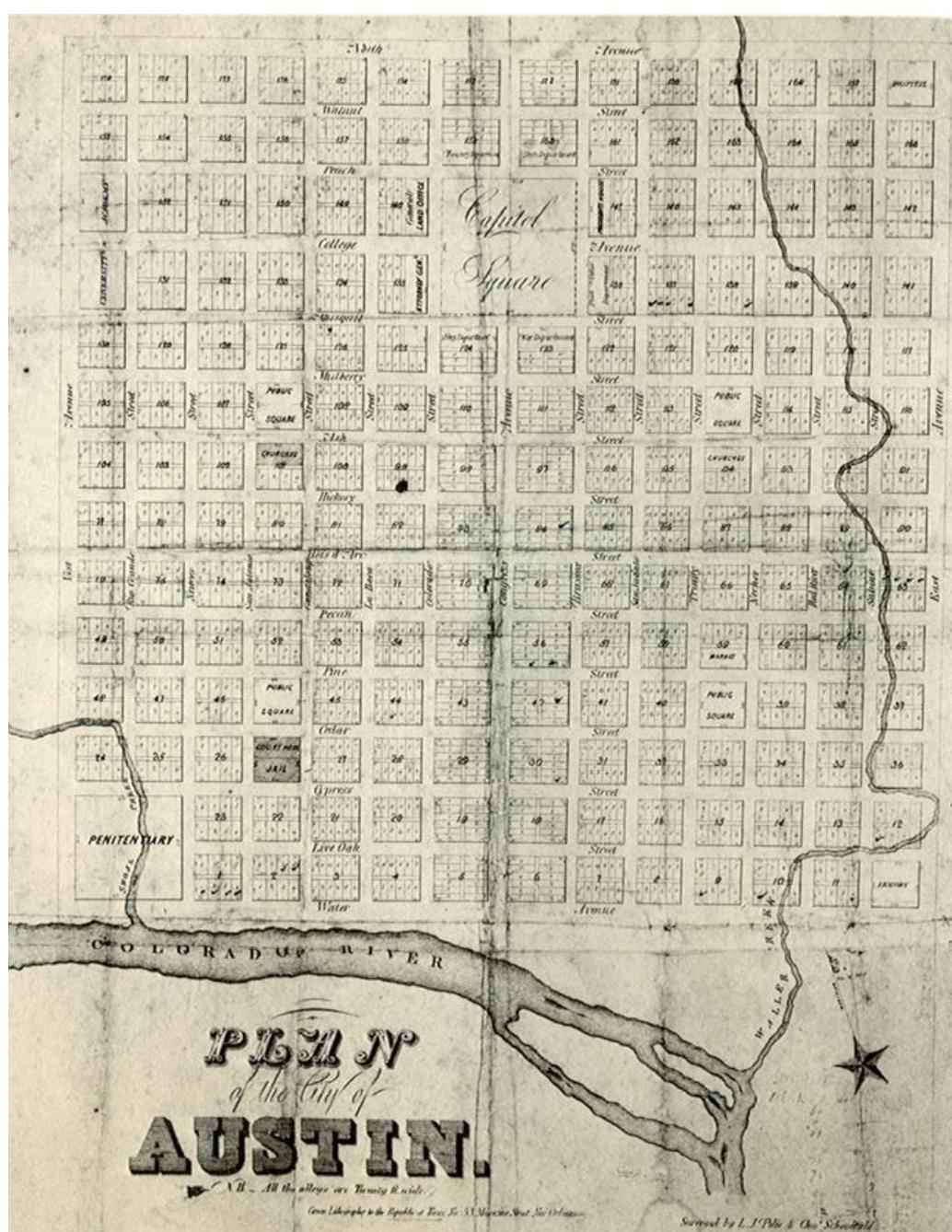
- Exploitation of the labor of enslaved African people was part of the original colonization of Texas under Spanish rule.
- Despite being outlawed under Mexican rule (following their independence from Spain), Stephen F. Austin (our namesake) gained an exception to the law from the Mexican government 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)

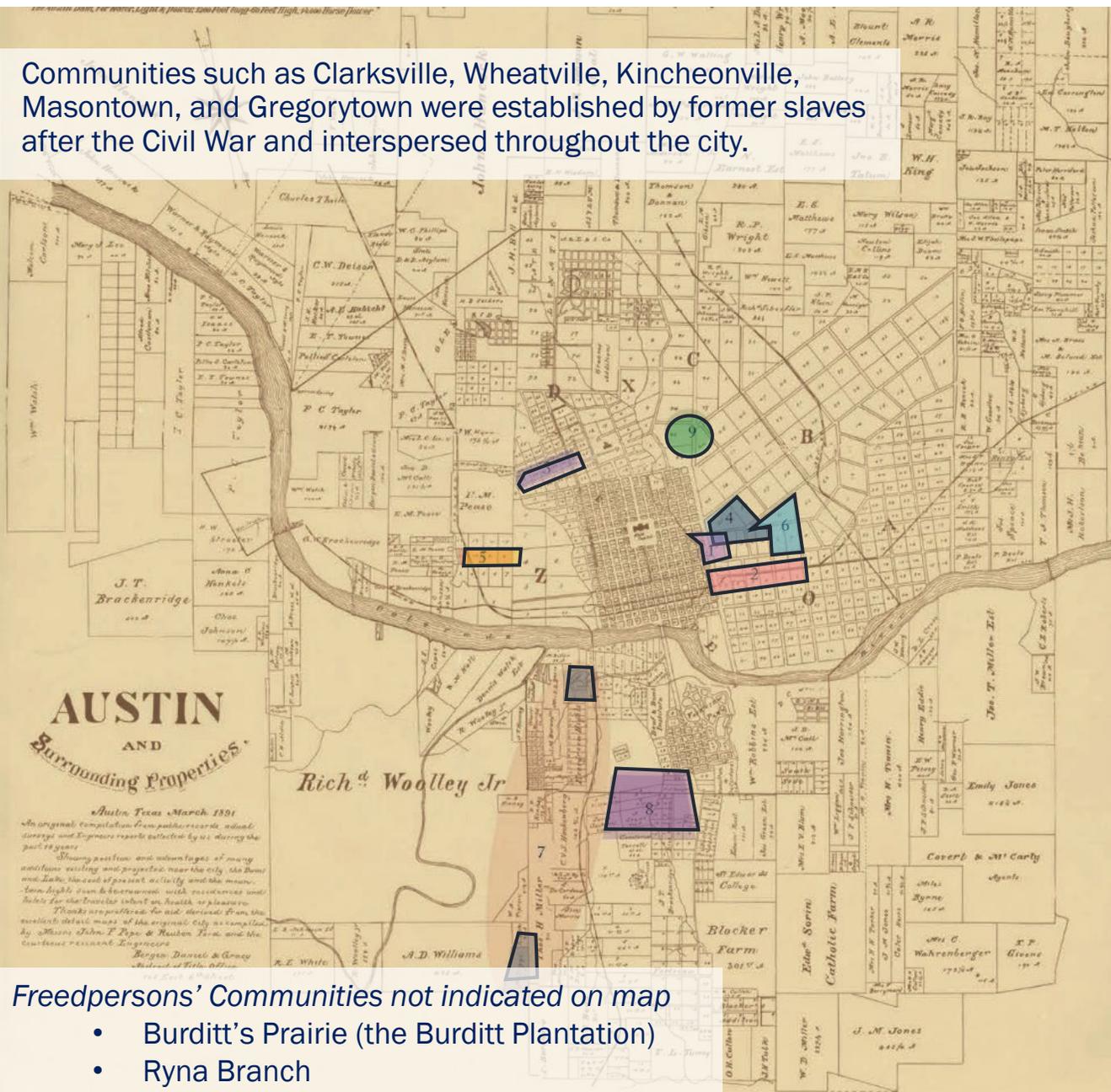
- Created by Judge Edwin Waller, first Mayor of Austin the year Austin became the capital of Texas.
- Designed a grid that remains mostly intact today downtown while designating land for the future Capitol building, four public squares, a penitentiary, courthouse and jail, armory, and hospital.
- ❖ Black people were legally considered property in Texas still. About 47% of Austin's family heads owned slaves. 26% of Austin's total population were slaves (about 225 people).





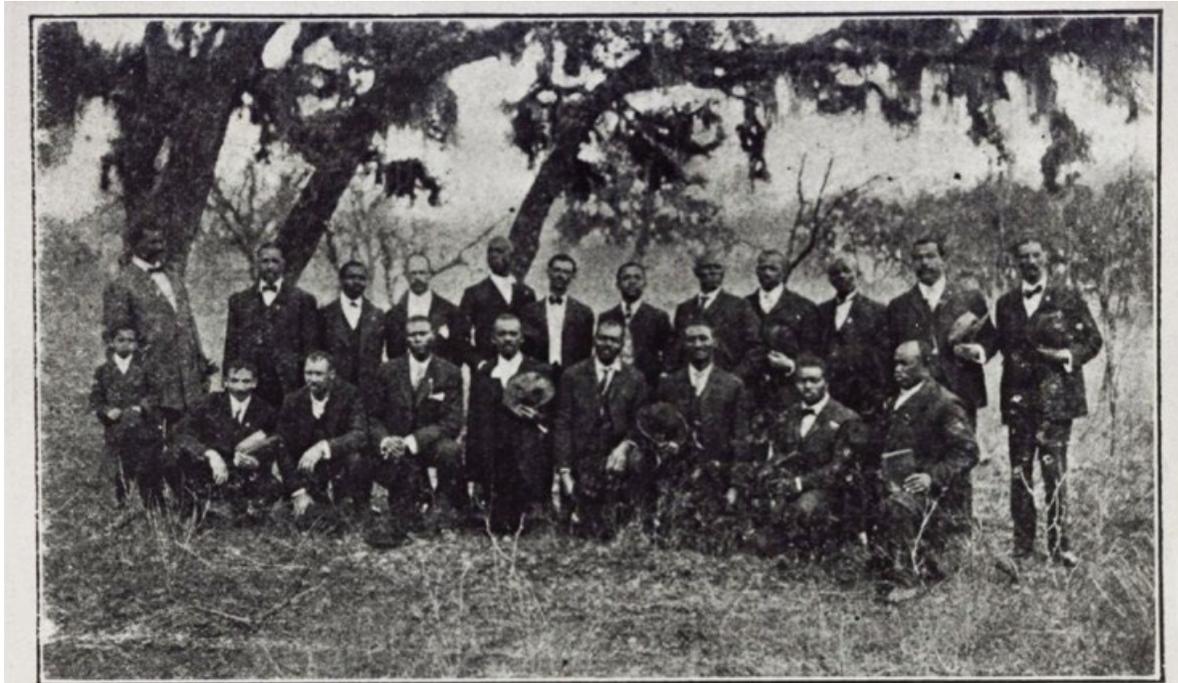
Freedperson's Communities (1860s-1928)

- Pleasant Hill
- Kincheonville
- Barton Springs
- Reyna Branch
- Masontown
- Wheatville
- Robertson Hill
- Belle Hill
- Clarksville
- Burditt's Prairie
- Red River Street
- West Side
- Gregorytown
- South Side
- Horst's Pasture





Juneteenth and the Emancipation Association



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. This land was later seized through Eminent Domain for the development of a segregated public housing project – Rosewood Courts.

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

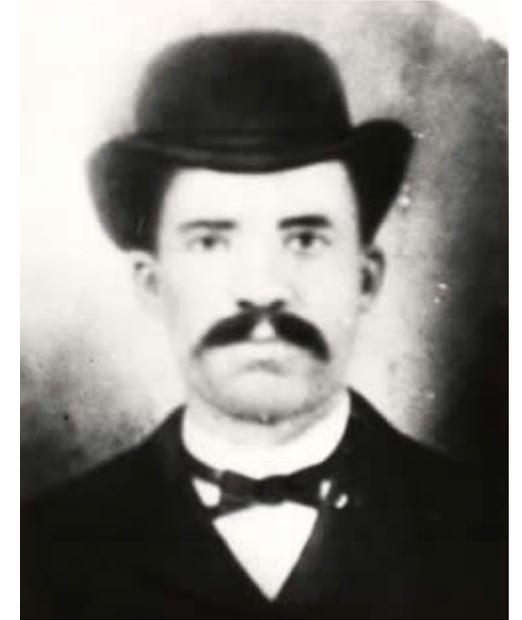
Photo (right): 1900





Austin City Government Structure

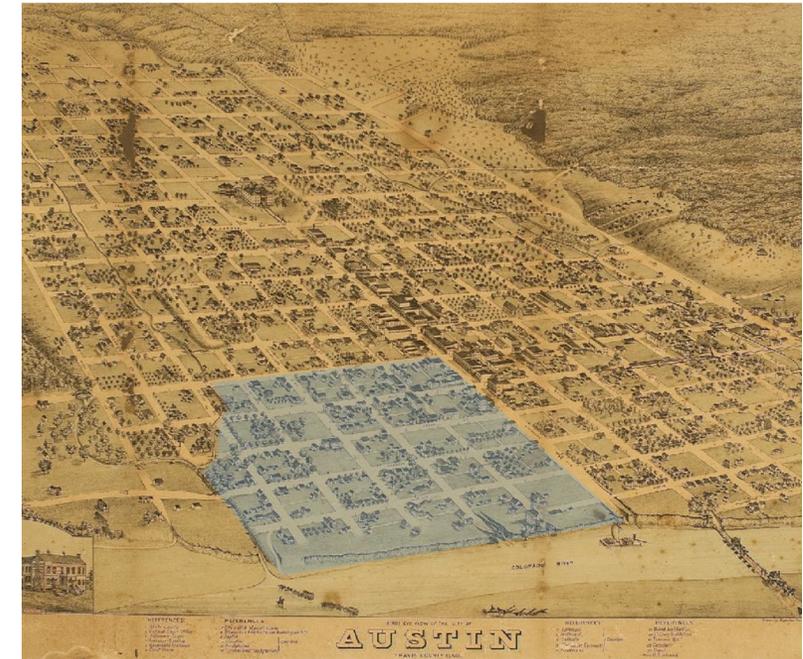
- 1840 to 1908: Mayor aldermanic form – voted in by specific geographic portions of the city (wards)
 - Two African Americans held Alderman seats under this form of government (Henry Green Madison, William G. Wilson) in 1871 and then 1883
- 1908 to 2012: Voters adopted commission form of Government; Mayor and four Commissioners elected at large
 - This change was advocated for largely by Anglo Austinites, named Businessmen A.P. Wooldridge and Col. Monroe Shipe
 - In 1951, Arthur DeWitty, an African American, ran for Austin City Council and nearly won. The next year, Austin City Council changed the way elections were held to create more barriers to BIPOC representation in local gov.
 - First African American City Council member is elected in 1971 (Berl Handcox)
 - First Latino councilmember is elected in 1975 (Johnny Trevino)
 - “The Gentlemen’s Agreement”
- 2012 to present: Voters approve election of 10 Council Members by district and a Mayor at large.



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



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.



Disappearance and Reappearance of Mexican/Hispanic/Latinos/Chicanos

- Mexicans, like other racialized groups, have been defined differently at different points in time and in different places. The definition of race is often dependent on the political climate.
- In the 19th century, they were classified as white and allowed to naturalize, based upon the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
- In 1930, nativists lobbied for them to be classified separately on the census, to limit their immigration, and reinforce their distinctness from whites.
- During WWII, as demand for labor grew, Mexicans were again classified as whites.
- Precedent-setting court cases in 1950s and 1970s fought to recognize Hispanics as an identifiable minority group and grant them equal protections under the law.
- In the 1970s, they are reclassified in the US Census as 'Hispanics.'



Map of Mexico in 1828



Early Asian Austinites



AR.2008.002(001)

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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.”



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going to close to done more to consolidate communit- ties and family life than anything going to be on recreational facilities so the city can be prepared

The Austin Statesman
THE SECOND OLDEST DAILY IN TEXAS
Friday, March 13, 1942—Page 12

CITY NEWS
THE FRIENDLY CITY'S
NEWSPAPER
FEATURES

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CCC Camp Is Considered As Place for Enemy Aliens

The possibility that the CCC camp on the city park at Lake Austin might be turned into an alien camp was being studied here Friday.

The camp will be abandoned March 23, and the barracks, recreation hall, dining room and kitchen will be occupied only by a caretaker. The CCC said they have had so much trouble keeping boys due to the drain of the army and war industries, that they are forced to close up.

It was recalled that Gov. Coke Stevenson was quoted as saying that Texas would take aliens if called upon to do so.

However, the proximity of the camp to the vital Colorado river dams may be a factor that will be taken into consideration if the question of putting aliens there ever comes up.

City officials are still undecided about what to do with the unfinished camp this summer. Already built by the CCC boys are a bathhouse, boat docks, picnic shelter, sewage system, and water storage tank, but no camp houses have been completed.

The original idea of the city was to turn the camp into a place where a family could go and spend the week-end swimming, boating and fishing for a low cost. How much the war will affect the leis-

Madsen, f	3	1	7
Haupt, c	3	2	8

Austin Cagers Bow at Dallas U.S.E.S. Wins, Then Loses in Next Round

DALLAS, March 13.—(P)—Teams from Mineral Wells, Denton, Grand Prairie, Galveston, Lubbock, Houston, Dallas and Abilene forged into the quarter-finals of the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation basketball tournament Friday.

United States Employment Service of Austin took out Ellington Field, 44-37, and Camp Berkeley of Abilene beat J. R. Foster of Fort Worth, 49-41, in morning games to trim the field to 16 teams.

Gulf Oil of Port Arthur lost to Mentasana Grocers of Dallas, 59-41.

In the afternoon the Austin quintet fell before the reception center of Camp Wolters, Mineral Wells, 45-35; Camp Wallace of Galveston trimmed the city of San Antonio, 43-23; Dyches Corner of Denton won over the 113th cavalry of Camp Bowie, 48-29; North American Aviation of Grand Prairie won by forfeit over the Red Jackets of Tyler; the 83rd air base of Lubbock was awarded a forfeit over

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Knight, first; Harold Loitis, second; Autry Jackson, third.

3-19-42

City Would Let Government Use Park for Aliens

No Objection Planned To Internment Camp If Requested

The City will have no objection to the government's using the municipal park on Lake Austin for an alien interment camp, City Mgr. Guiton Morgan said Thursday.

"We are willing to turn over any of our facilities to the government at any time if it will help win the war."

He expressed some doubt, however, that the government will wish to use the park for this purpose because of its proximity to Tom Miller Dam.

Work Ends March 23

Development of the city park, 12 miles up the lake, will come



Creating Race

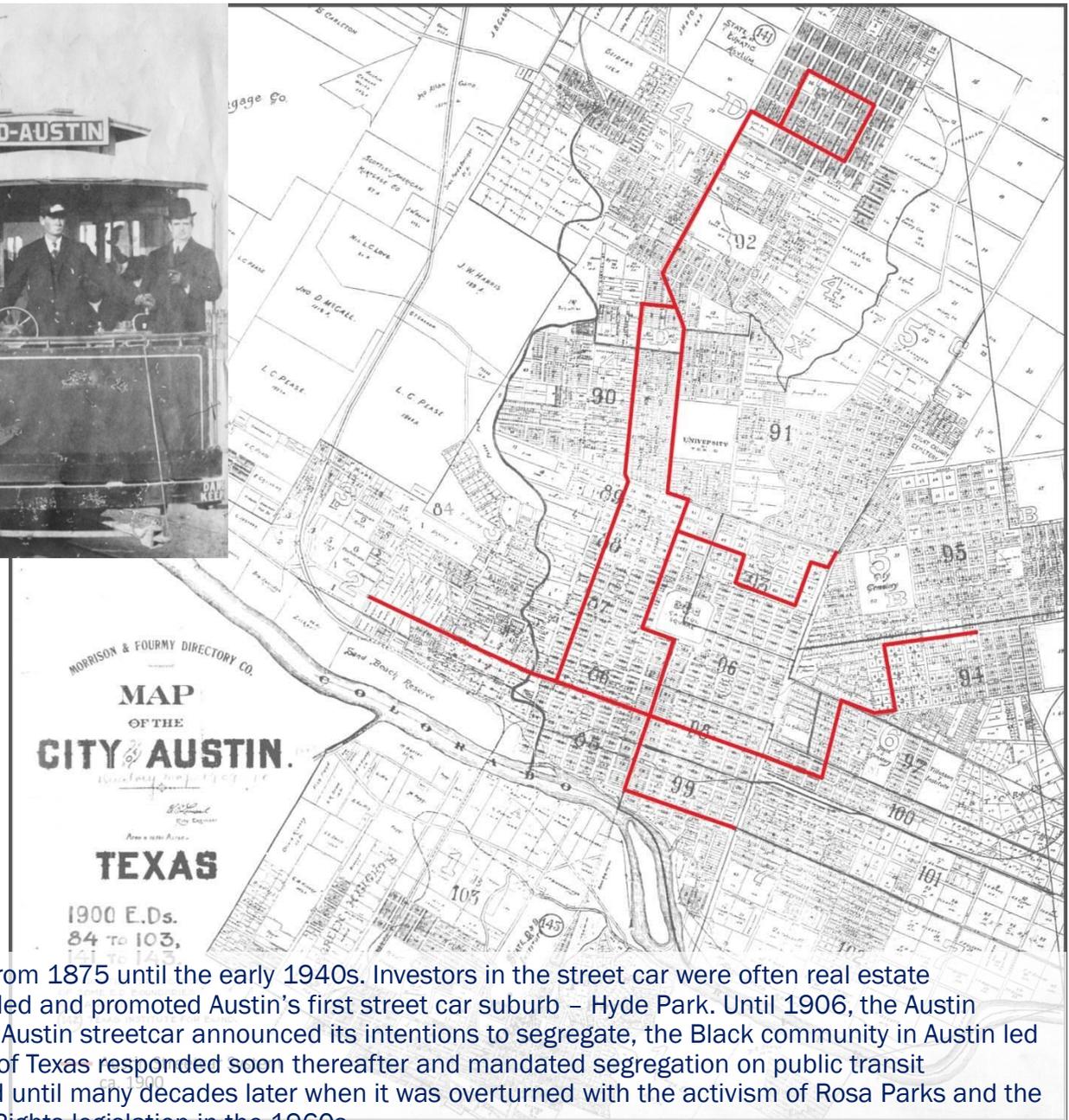
- Definitions of who is considered to be “white” has changed over time. “White” as a race did not exist before colonial America and was directly created to distinguish between European indentured servants, for whom freedom was attainable after the completion of their period of servitude, and African slaves, for whom slavery was heritable.
- 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.



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Congress Avenue, 1913



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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

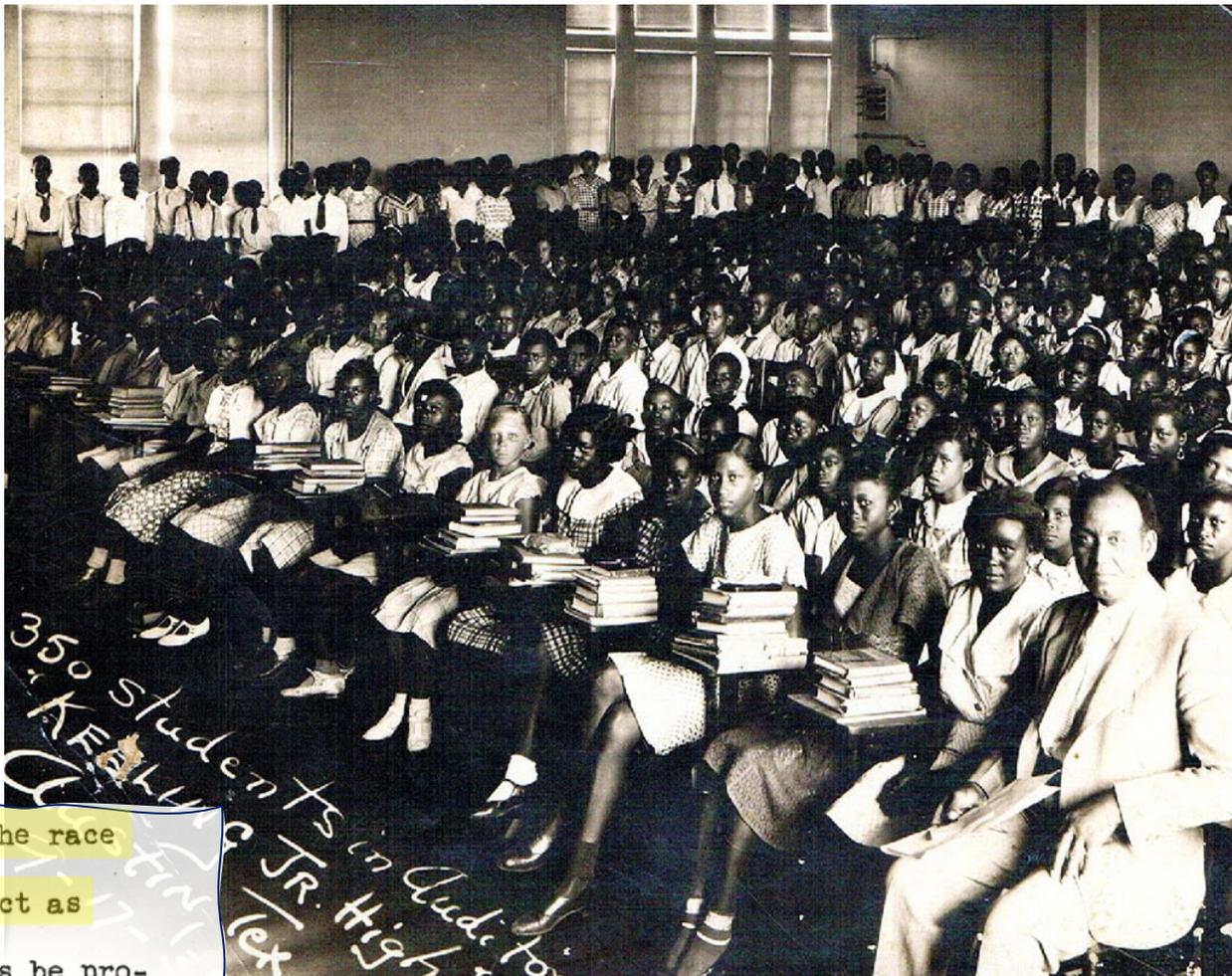
There has been considerable talk in Austin, as well as other cities, in regard to the race segregation problem. This problem cannot be solved legally under any zoning law known to us at present. Practically all attempts of such have been proven unconstitutional.





“Separate but Equal”

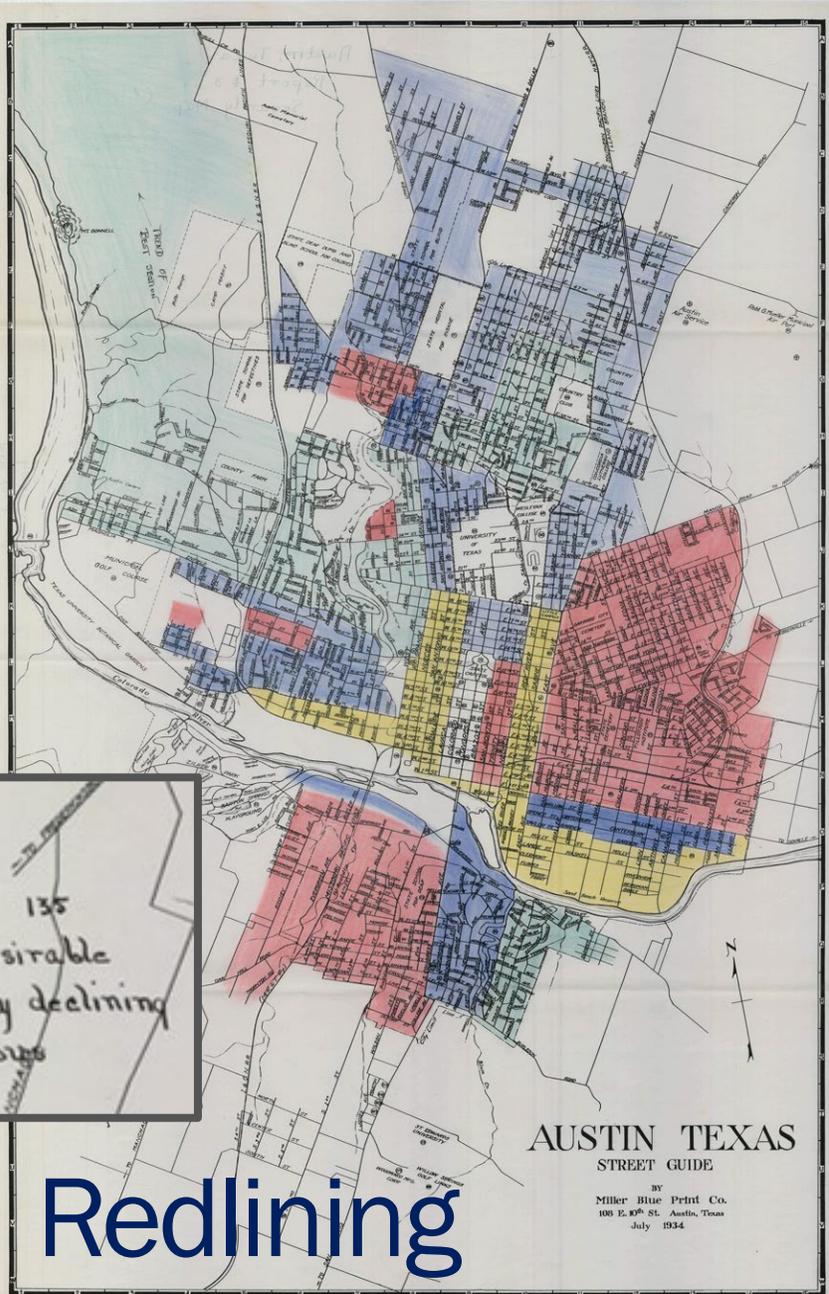
recommendation that the nearest approach to the solution of the race segregation problem will be the recommendation of this district as a negro district; and that all the facilities and conveniences be provided the negroes in this district, as an incentive to draw the negro population to this area. This 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



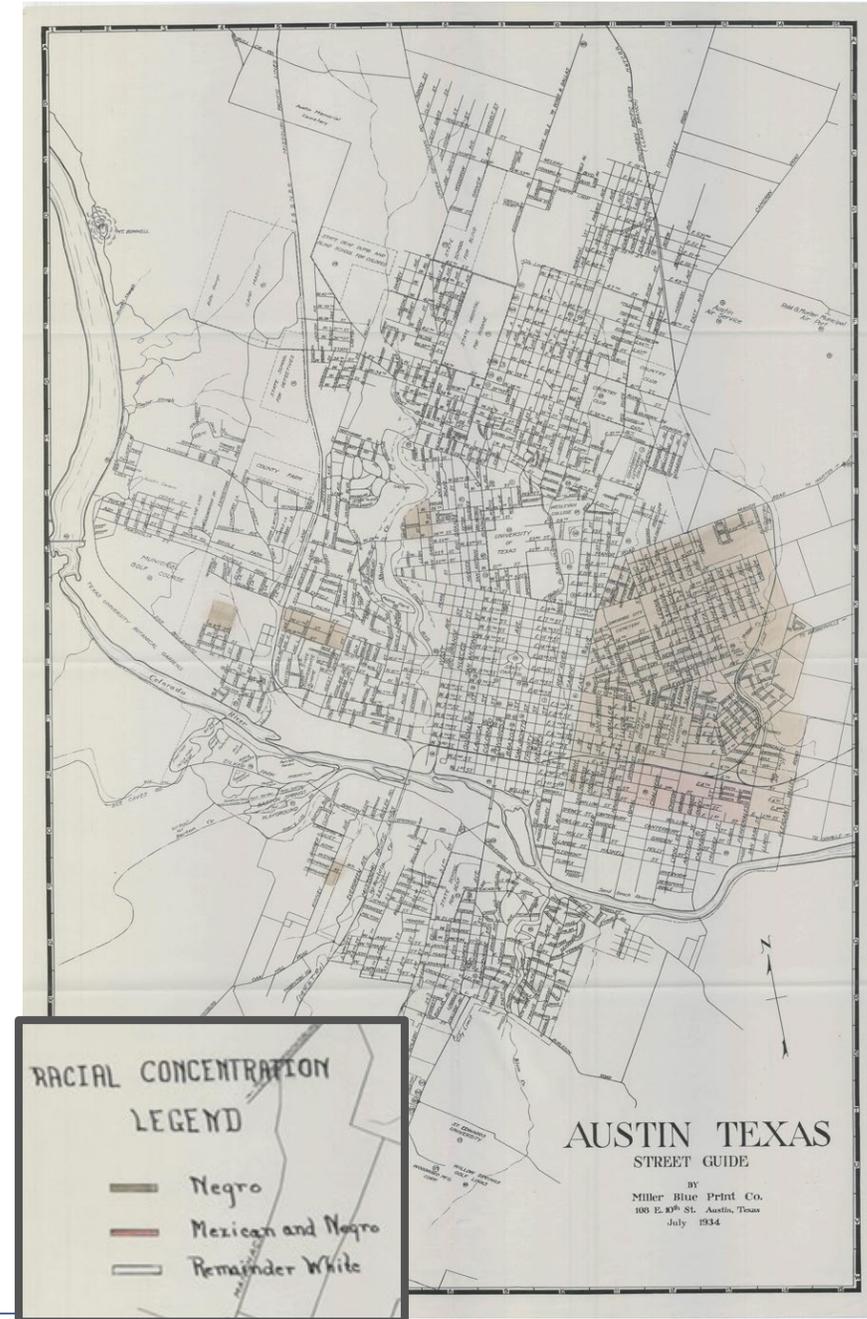
Kealing JR High, 1935



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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 beautiful. 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

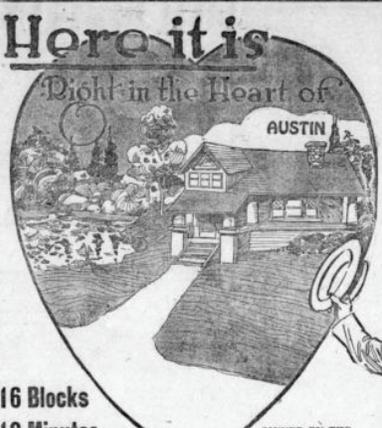
Hyde Park property advertisement

Travis Heights property advertisement

AUSTIN DAILY STATESMAN, SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 21, 1914

Here it is

Right in the Heart of AUSTIN



TRAVIS HEIGHTS

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

16 Blocks
10 Minutes
FROM THE BUSINESS CENTER OF
AUSTIN

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

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

DIRECTORS
Jefferson Johnson E. R. Soungren
W. G. Hall John W. Robbins
R. L. Bate E. 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

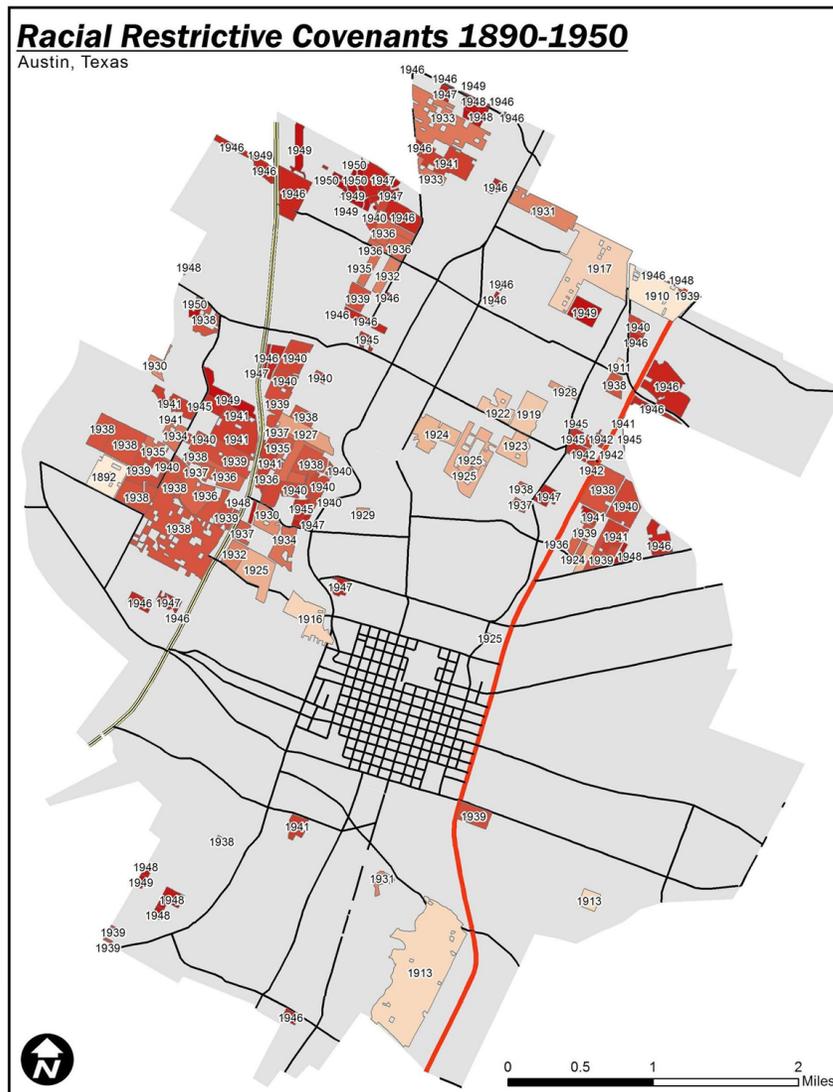
“No lot shall be sold or leased to any Mexican or person of Negro blood or to any corporation or firm composed of Negroes or Mexicans”

Rosedale neighborhood deed restriction

4. No building, or any part thereof, shall ever be used for a professional office, home occupation, club or for any other use than strictly residential purposes.

5. No person of African descent shall ever be allowed to buy or hold in any way title or control of any lot or block, but this shall not be construed to prevent servants from residing thereon so long as such servant quarters are maintained upon the rear of the property.

6. No intoxicating liquors shall ever be manufactured or sold upon the premises of any lot or block of this subdivision.



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

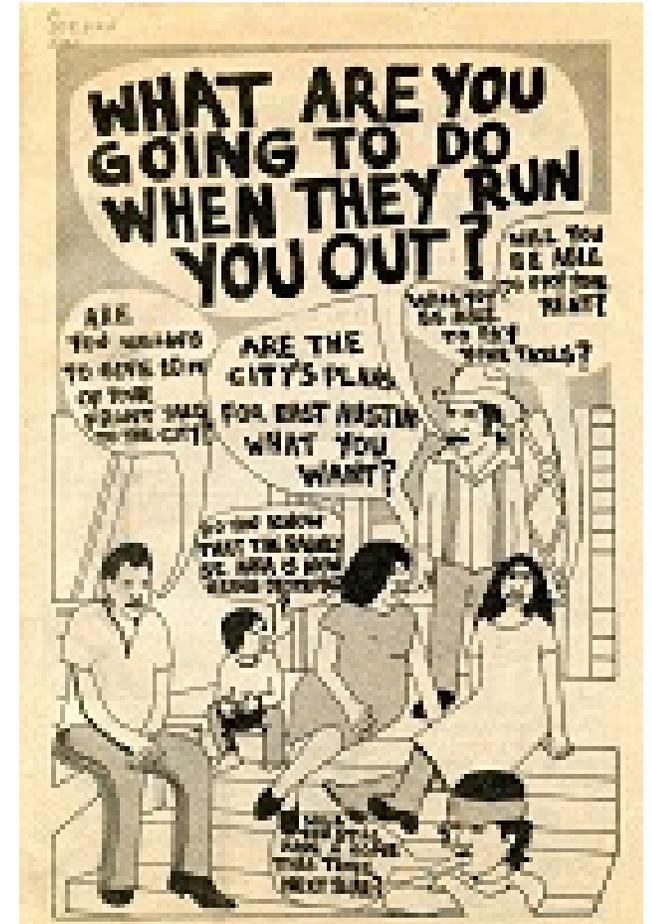
In 1939, Rosewood Courts was built after the City used eminent domain to claim Emancipation Park, to the dismay of Black East Austin residents



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)



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.

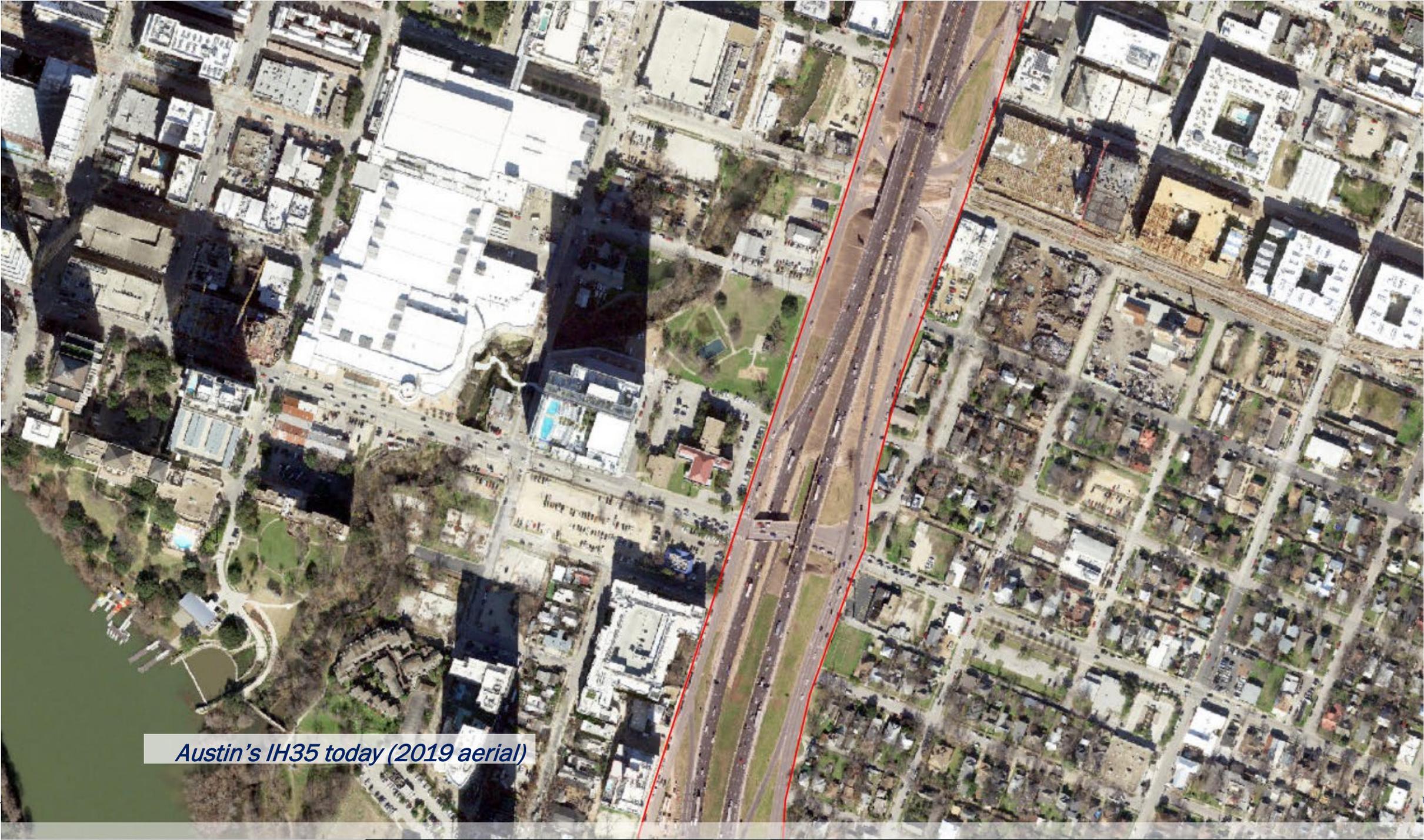


Interstate Highway 35





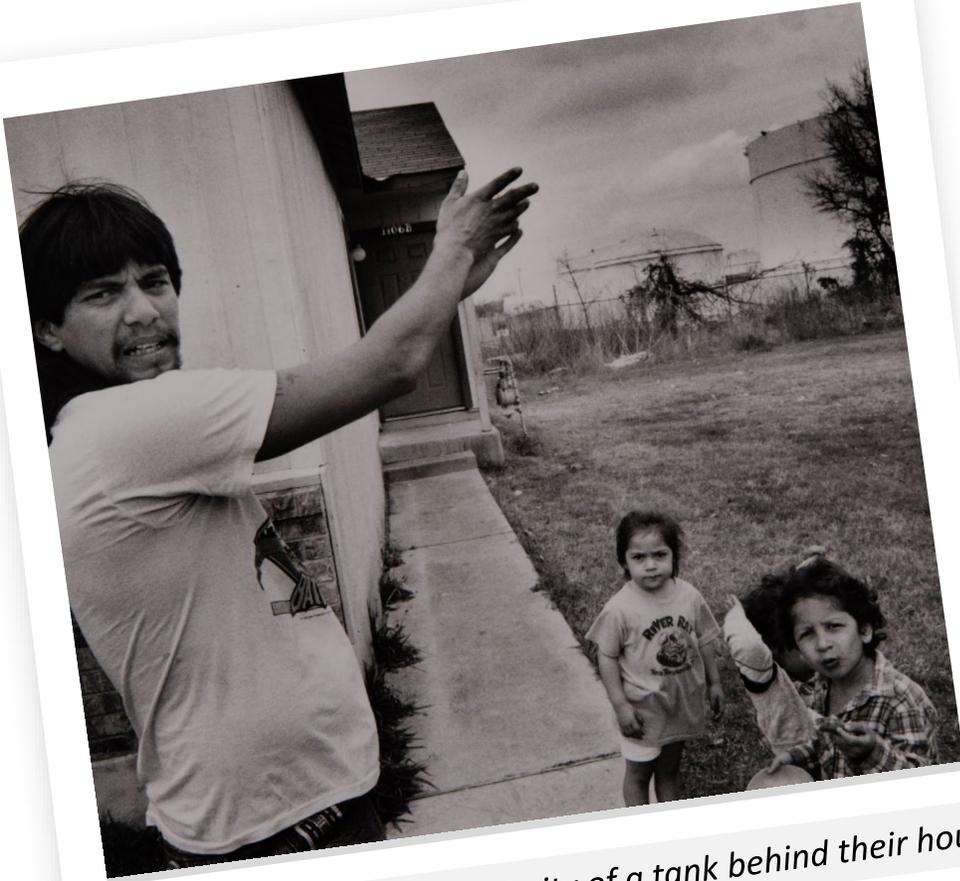
Austin before the construction of IH35 (1940 aerial)



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

AISSD 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.



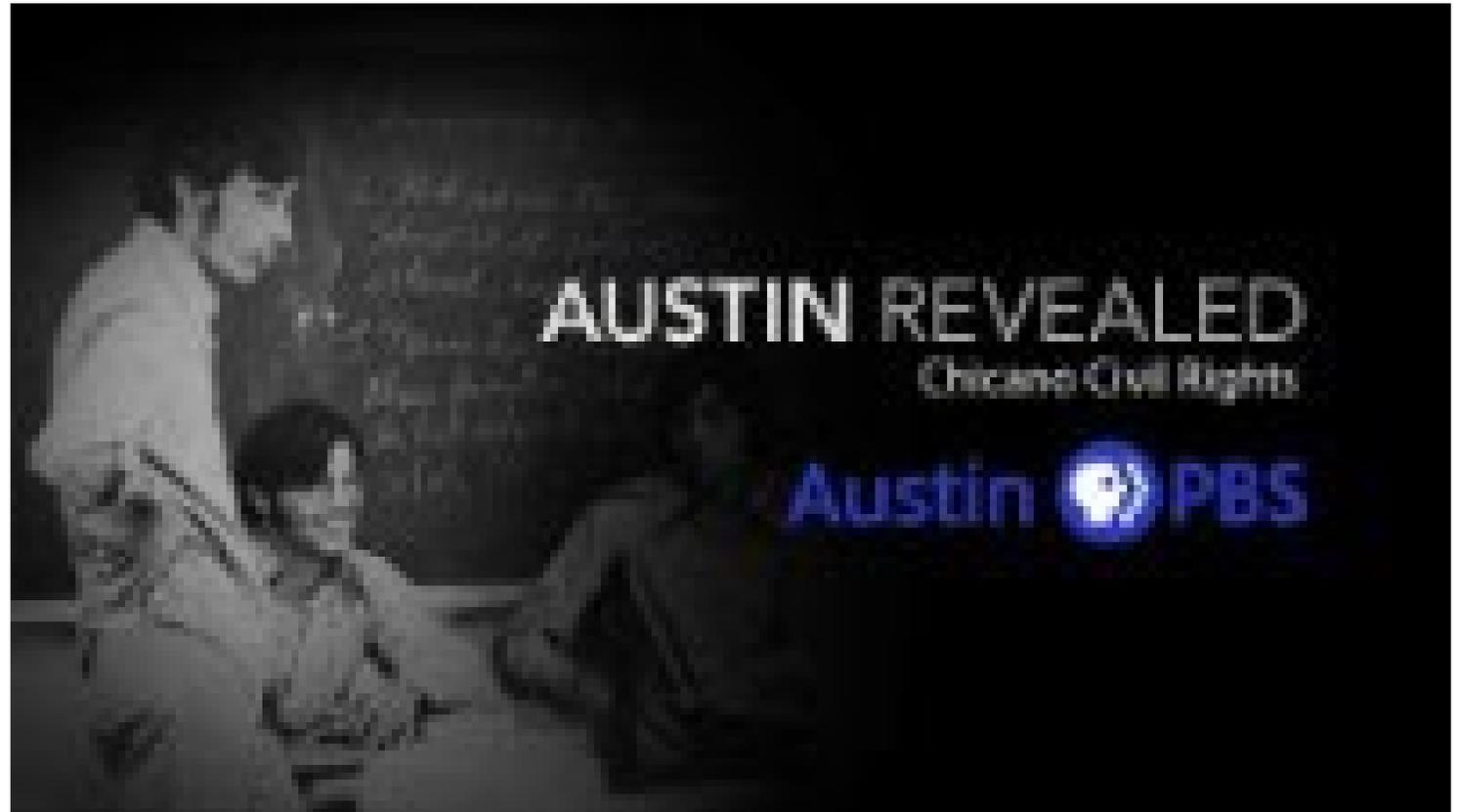
“The federal government said to integrate black schools, not to close them down. You said Anderson can’t be integrated, have you tried? Have you told white and Mexican students that they would have to go to Anderson? Why is it every time you have a problem you throw it on the blacks?”

- AHS students 1970



Chicano Civil Rights: Desegregation & Education

- Lack of culturally responsive education system for Latinx students
- Disinvestment created inadequate educational facilities
- Pre-determined career and education paths for students in East Austin versus West Austin





Economic Development and Recruitment

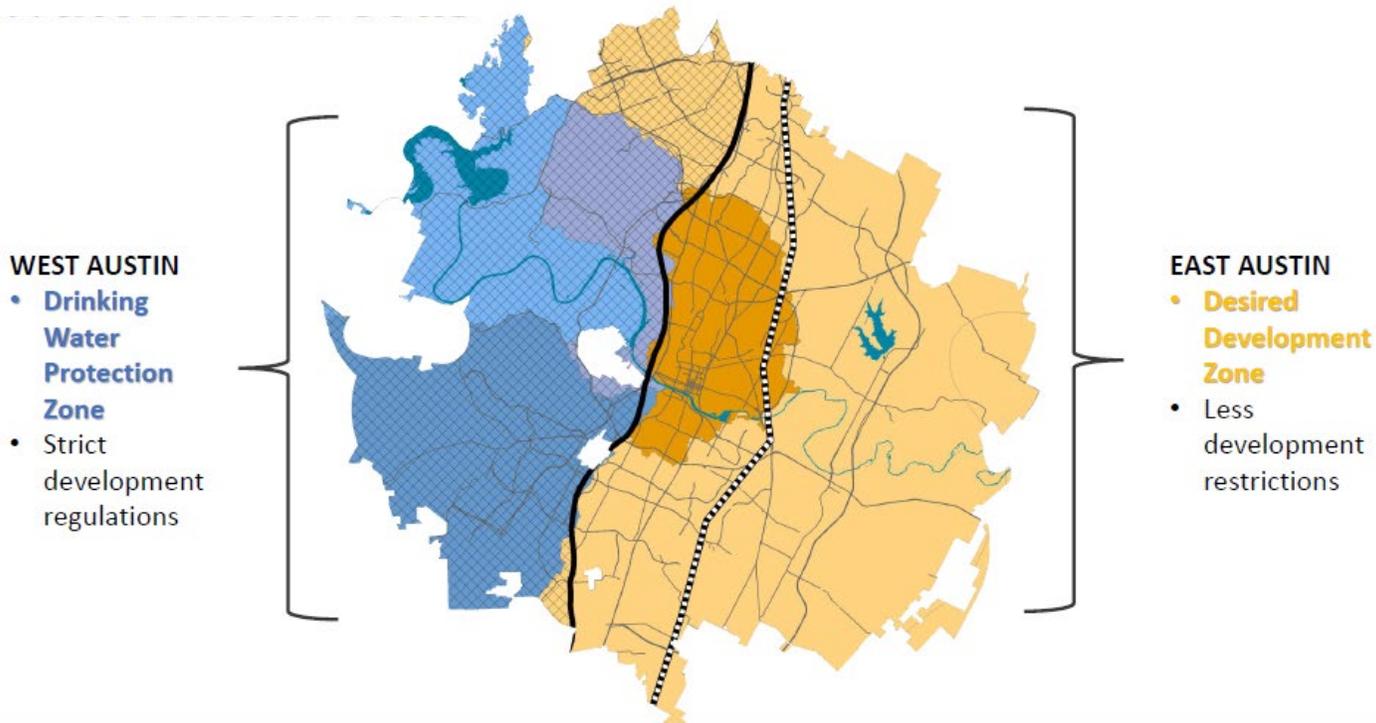
- From the 1950s to today, business leaders have led an economic development effort to expand the city's economic base with the tech industry.
- Public investments went into efforts to expand Austin's tech economies, yet public benefits were not equitably received by all Austinites
- The Austin tech industry is a primarily white workforce even today due to barriers in educational opportunities and other facets of systemic racism.



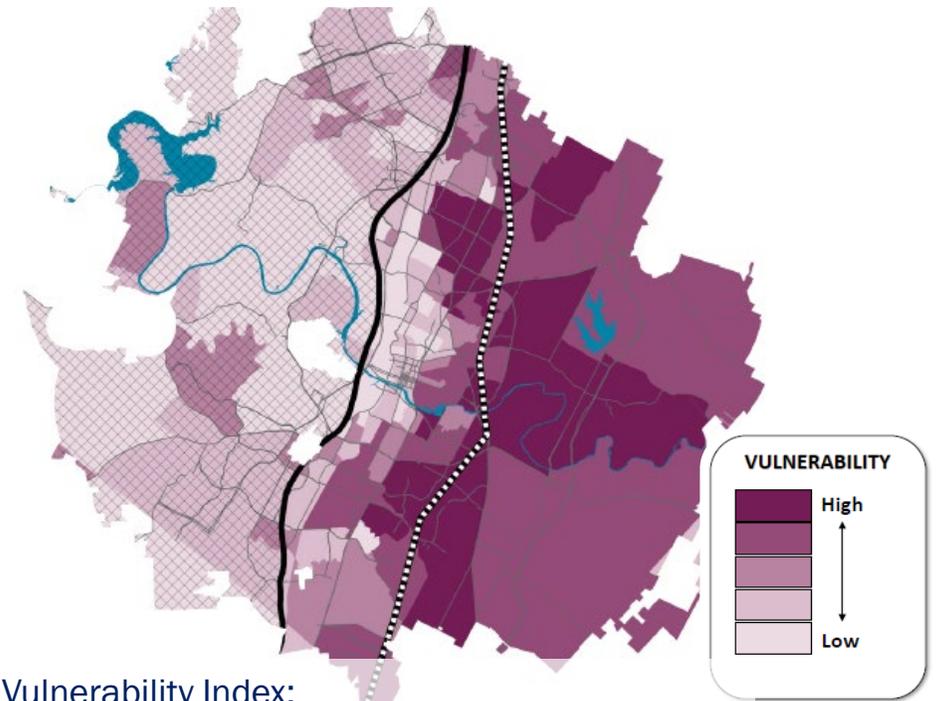
[PBS Documentary – Austin Revealed: Booting Up Big Tech](#)



SMART Growth and Desired Development Zones



CDC's Social Vulnerability Index



CDC Vulnerability Index: Social Vulnerability Refers to the resilience of communities when confronted by external stresses of human health such as natural or human-caused disasters, or disease outbreaks



Planning and Power have been Racialized

Planning is inexplicably tied back to race historically. Since we have racialized the movement of people (migration/immigration/displacement) and who has power (the ability to control someone's reality) and access to places, services, resources – then planning has been racialized.



Histories of Resistance

Community resistance and resilience has always been there



Black Austin Boycott of Segregated Streetcars

1906





**Warretta Overton and
Members of the NAACP**

**Demanding Equal
Rights for Housing,
Schools, Voting**

1964





Brown Berets

The Day the Klan Marched

1983



PICA 37566



Inheriting Inequality

How we carry our racialized history with us today



“Two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy.

Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole.”

Ta-Nehisi Coates

The Case for Reparations

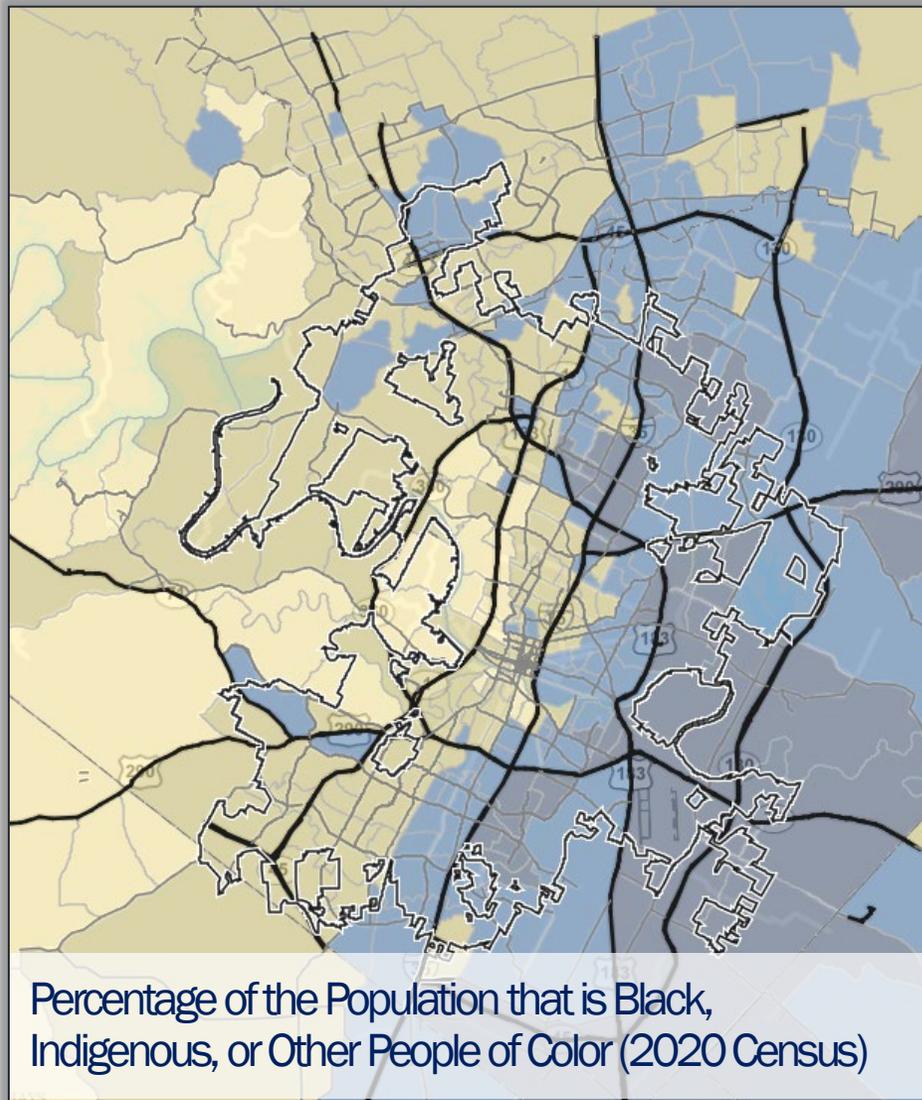
We Carry our History with Us

- 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

- 0% - 25% BIPOC
- 25% - 50% BIPOC
- 50% - 75% BIPOC
- 75% - 100% BIPOC

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

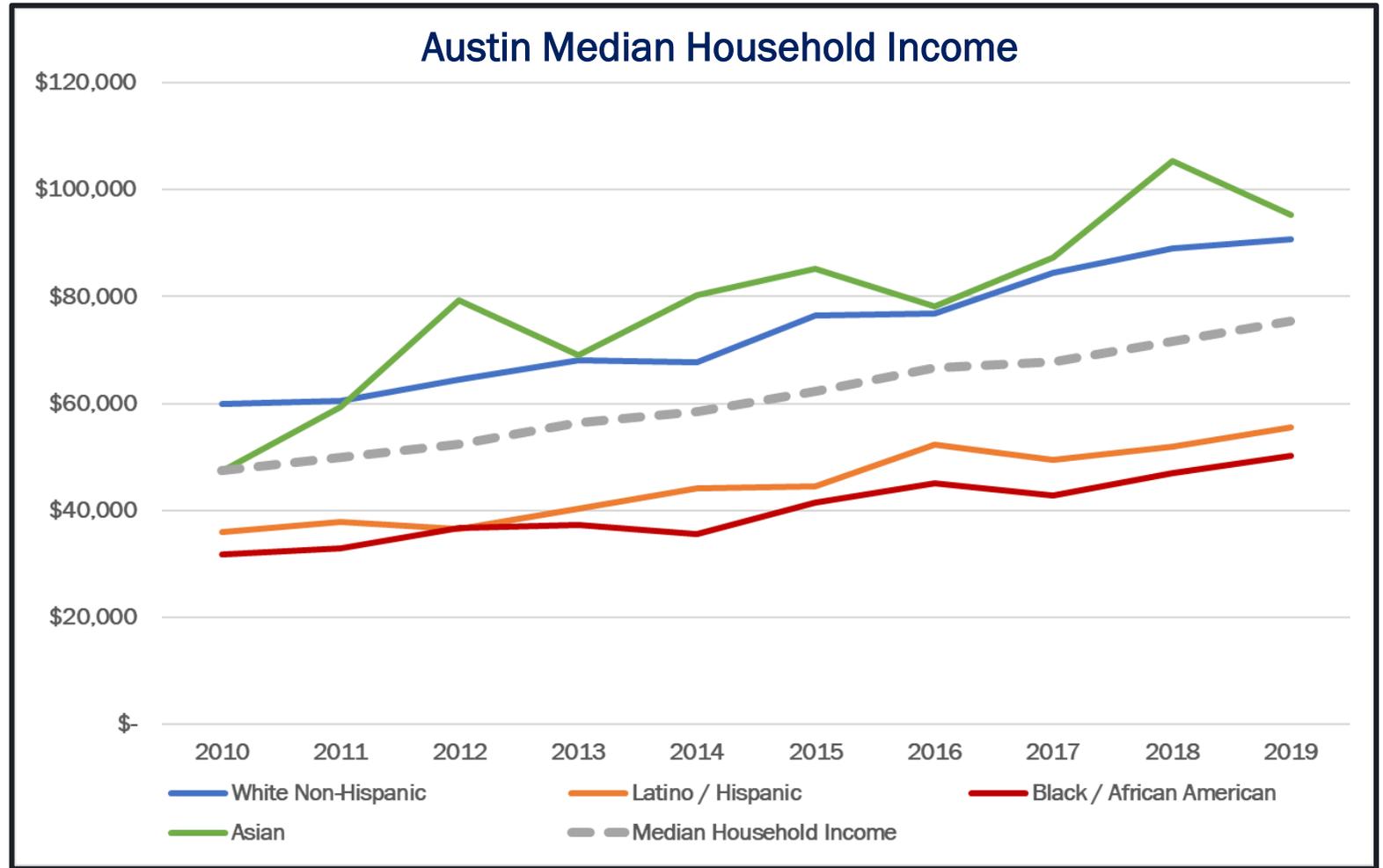


Stevie Ray Vaughn © Trey Ratcliff



Growing Racial Wealth and Income Gaps

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



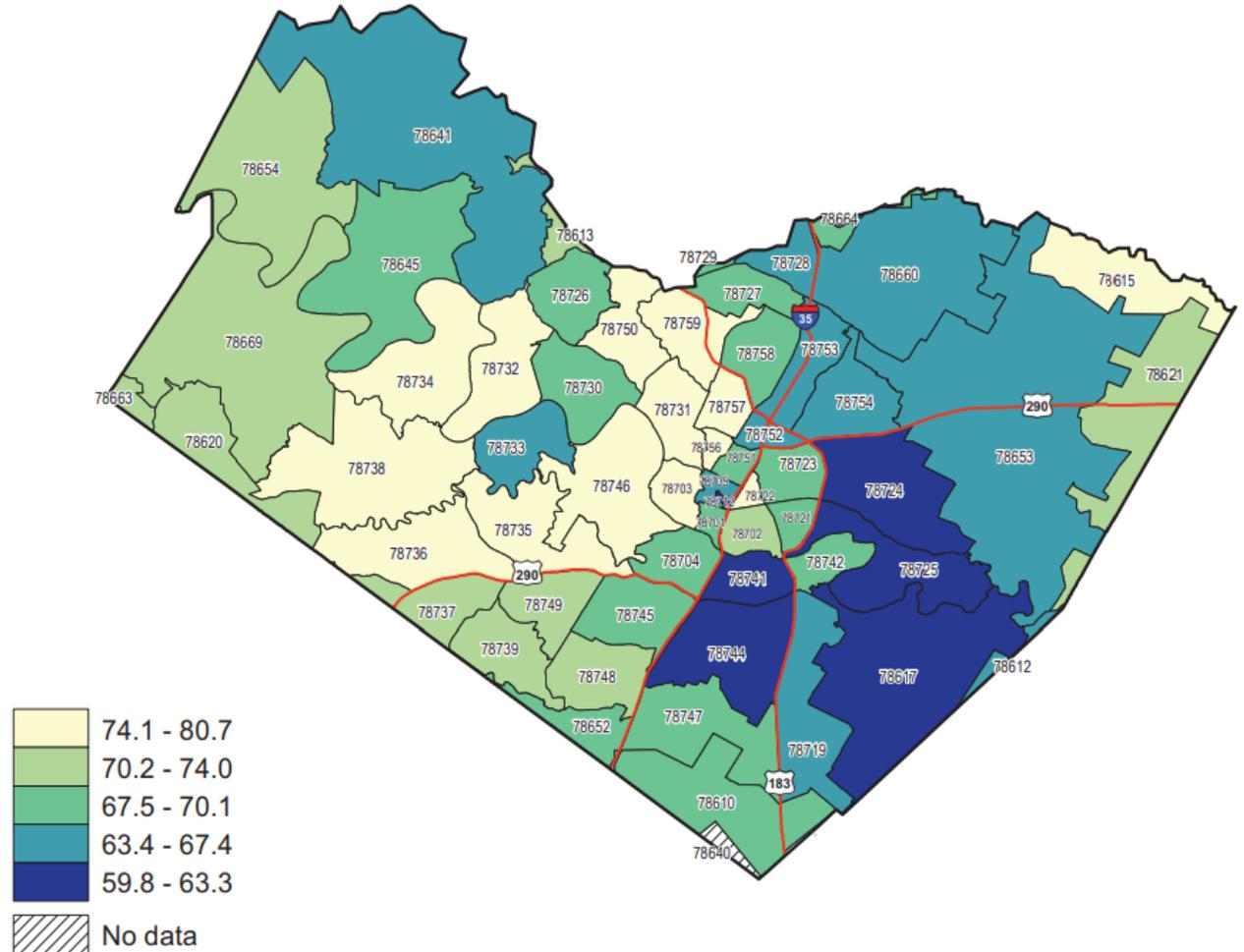


Map 3.2. Average Age at Death, Travis County, 2011-2015

Disparate Health Outcomes

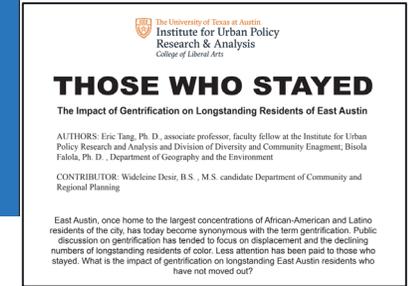
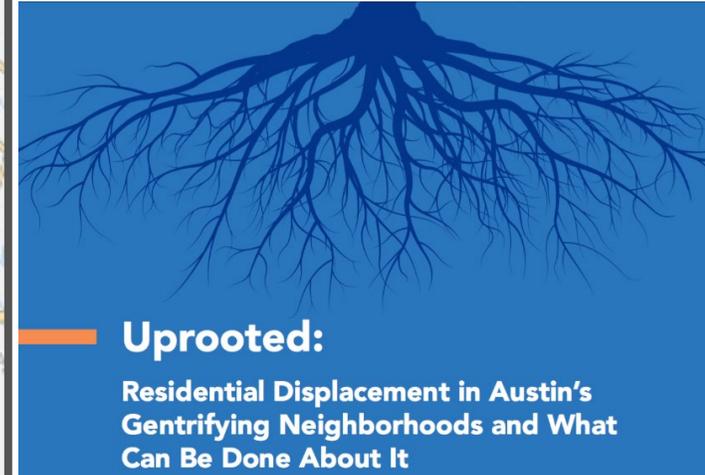
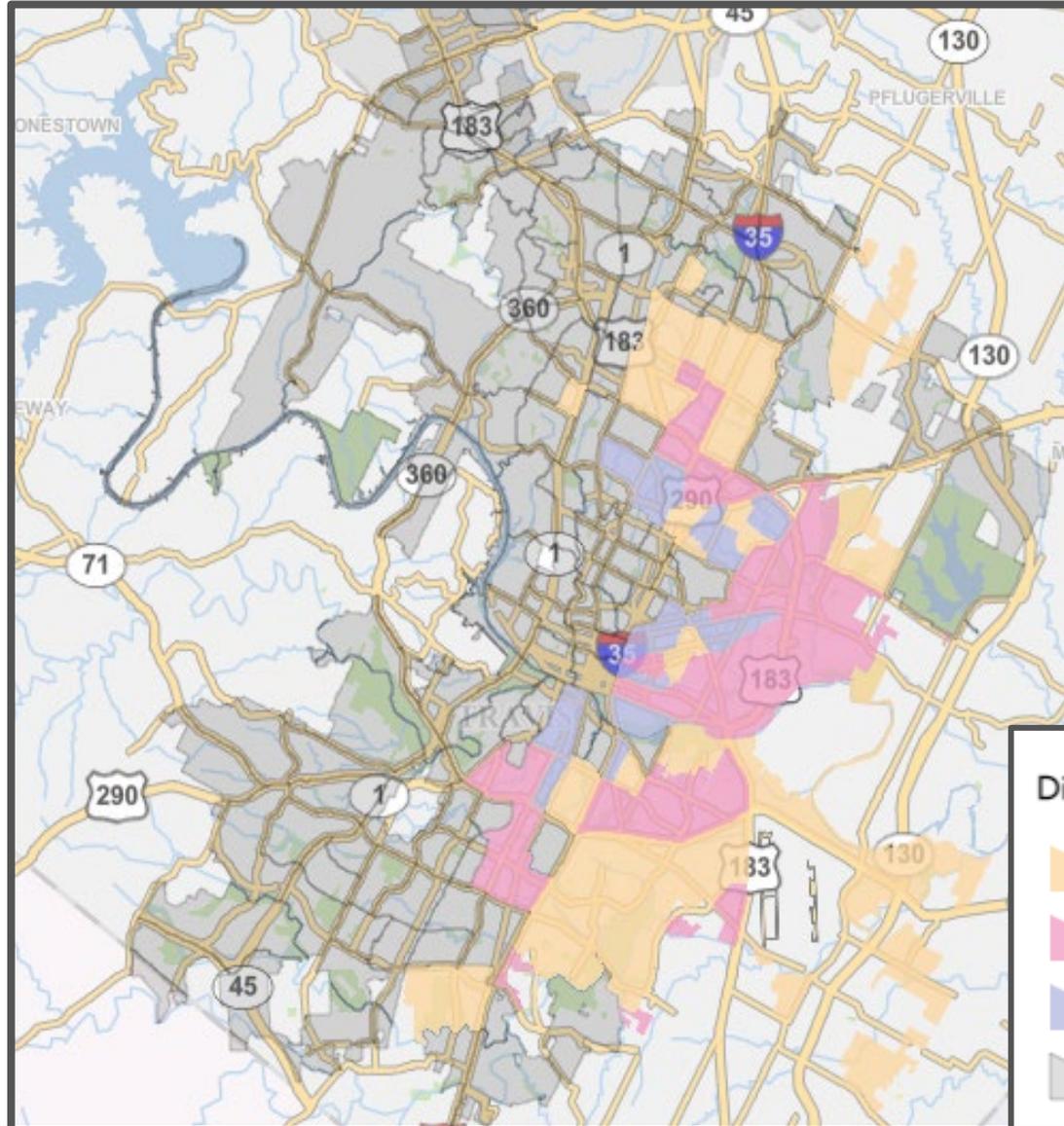
Map 3.2 shows the average age at death by zip code. Overall people are living longer in the zip codes on the west side of Travis County as compared to the zip codes on the east side.

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).





Displacement Risk





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.

Key Terms

Power

- “to be able to”
- The ability to define reality for yourself and other people
- The ability to deny people the ability to determine reality for themselves

Systemic Racism

- when policies, practices, and procedures across multiple institutions work better for white people at the expense of people of color – even if unintentionally so – over decades and generations
- Power is fundamental to understanding systems of oppression/racism/structural racism. It is the confluence of power and prejudice that shapes inequities, and power that allows these systemic inequities to continue even many years or decades after they were put in motion. If we don't address a root cause, then the systemic inequities will continue to persist, if not widen.



Adapted from [Nothing About Us Without Us: Racial Equity Anti-Displacement Tool](#)



Power Analysis



Who had institutional power in:

- 1776 - “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal”
- 1840 – founding of the City of Austin
- 1863 – “government of the people, by the people, for the people...”
- 1908 – Austin adopts a new city government structure
- 1928 – Austin creates a city plan to address “racial segregation problem”
- 1949 – US Federal Government adopts Housing Act to address “slums and blight”
- 1950s – Austin leaders work to expand tech industry in Austin
- 1960s and 1970s – Austin moves to desegregate public schools
- 1980s and 90s – Austin implements “smart growth” planning approach and protects environmentally sensitive areas of West Austin

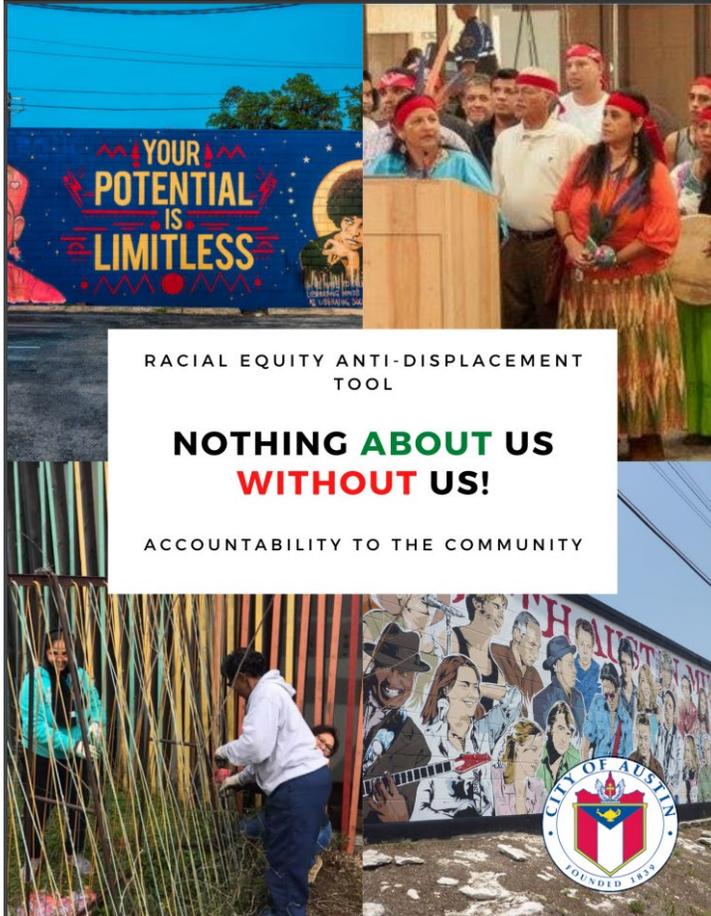
Key Terms

Root Cause

- An underlying condition or event that set in motion a cause-and-effect reaction that ultimately led to an inequity we see today (health, wealth, housing, income, and other quality of life outcomes)
- Examples of root causes: slavery, colonialism, government disinvestment, capitalism

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, People of Color

- People of many different backgrounds
- Categorically connected through structural racism, though with differences in particular outcomes and characteristics



Adapted from [Nothing About Us Without Us: Racial Equity Anti-Displacement Tool](#)



Dig a little deeper - Root Causes



What are some of the root causes of the following outcomes?

- Racial segregation
- Economic segregation
- Racial wealth gap
- 20+ year variance in life expectancy among Austin zip codes
- Disparities in access to culturally responsive education
- Gentrification and displacement of BIPOC communities
- Increased vulnerability to environmental disasters
- Fewer protections against environmental destruction and pollution in East Austin
- Growing population of people who are unhoused in Austin
- Lower rates of homeownership among BIPOC communities compared to white people
- Unequal access to healthy foods in Eastern Crescent



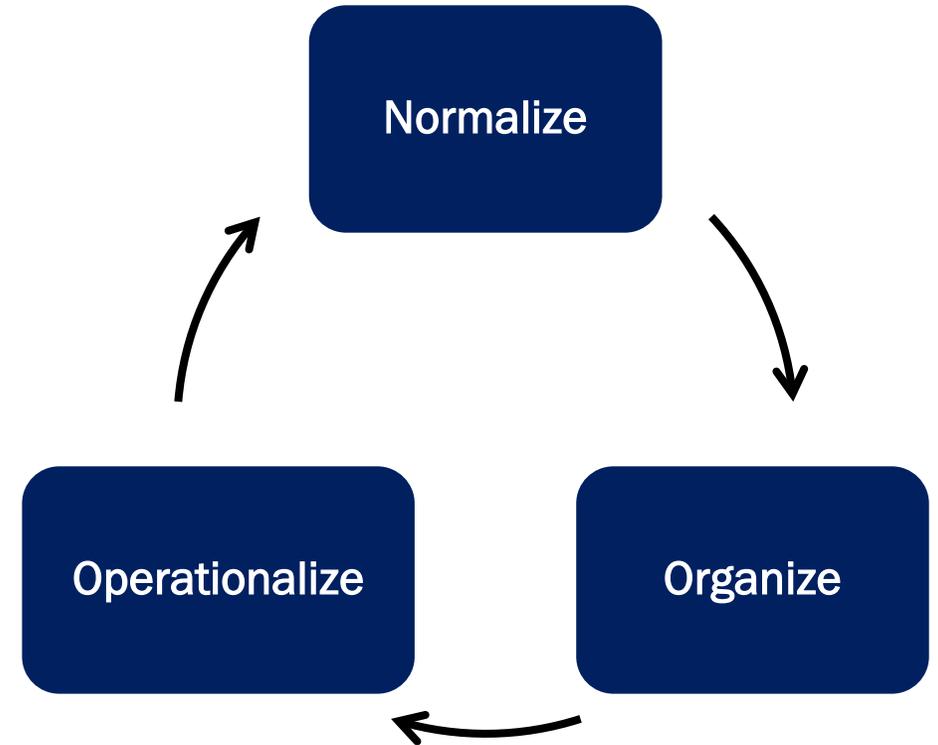
Equity is About Better Outcomes

- 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? What is missing?
3. **Engage the community:** Are there opportunities to expand engagement and what were the efforts to reach most marginalized populations and give those people power in decision making? Are we creating spaces that are inclusive of different cultures?
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? Are we addressing root causes or symptoms?
5. **Analyze unintended consequences:** Could the project have a negative impact on communities of color and/or other marginalized populations?





Operationalizing Racial Equity

Lead with Race

Focus on human-centered design and institutional empathy

Engage residents, especially those adversely affected, in decision making

Bring conscious attention to racial inequities and disparities before decisions are made

Avoid or minimize adverse impacts and unintended consequences

Affirm our commitment to equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility



Questions to explore

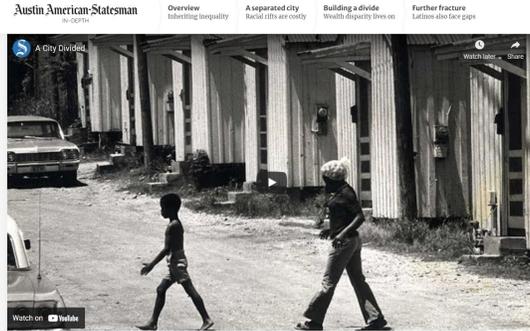
- How did my dept/field begin? What was the impetus?
- Has race been explicitly used for planning or other business purposes in my dept/field in the past?
- Has race ever impacted the way our residents experience our services? Has it impacted the quality of our services?
- Has a need for our services been created or produced through another facet of systemic racism?
- Has my dept/field made “color blind” policies/programs that disproportionately impacted BIPOC due to our racialized environment? What else was going on in our history that might have racialized an outcome?
- Who has historically provided leadership in my dept/field? Have there been BIPOC voices at the table? Are there now?
- Have there been attempts to remedy/repair racist impacts? Do we have accountability structures in place today that ensure BIPOC communities have power and receive equitable outcomes?



HOUSING & PLANNING

Thank you all

Resources



Inheriting inequality

