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Exploration of Brookland Park and Surrounding Neighborhoods: Exploration of Race and Space

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Exploration of Brookland Park and Surrounding Neighborhoods

Exploration of Race and Space

EXPLORATION OF BROOKLAND PARK AND SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

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INTRODUCTION

In Richmond, Virginia, and many other localities, minority residents have faced discrimination for decades, especially regarding race. This can be seen through redlining and the destruction of neighborhoods to create the interstate system. All of the racist planning practices and policy that took place in the past few centuries has led to concentrated poverty and the lack of generational wealth among minority groups. Time and time again, Planners and policymakers would create luscious neighborhoods for white families. At the same time, they isolated black residents and refused to invest in creating better neighborhoods that were majority-minority. Planners then had little idea how their actions impacted the residents in those communities. Today we see that many changes can not occur because many people are unaware of what is happening to those neighborhoods. We must take the time to educate the public on how these impacts can affect all aspects of a person's life. And that everyone's experiences are different, and the more the public knows, the more change we can make in combatting systemic racism.

The inequality among minority residents contributed to the lack of quality housing for residents all over the United States. (The Color of Law 2018) As we will discuss later in this paper, Racial Planning played a significant role in creating neighborhoods. One example is the Randolph Community which was split due to the construction of the Richmond Downtown Expressway. Today we see many more people participating in the planning process, but what other things could we do to help? Educating the public on how race may impact a space is essential to creating more integrated and equal spaces. We can also refer to this as the term reparative planning, which works to repair inequitable neighborhoods for all residents. For this professional plan, we will explore how race and place impact the Northside neighborhoods of Brookland Park, Barton Heights, and Providence Park.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this project is to research the development and racial changes in the neighborhoods of Brookland Park and North Barton Heights, and Providence Park. So that we can better understand how race has impacted these neighborhoods over time. We will look into how race changed in these neighborhoods over the last 130 years. We will also look through the lens of development and how development changed over time. And also develop policies and program recommendations to help create more diverse neighborhoods and help educate the public on how racism can severely shape our neighborhoods and the opportunity structures of the residents. This project aims to assist Ebony Walden in researching the places she has resided in the Richmond area. The research will result in a book narrative with interviews with past and current residents and business owners.

Education is critical in understanding how systemic racism has played a significant part in many neighborhoods, including our study area. We may only pay attention to our specific

neighborhood and how it may have functioned as we grew up. Still, to make actual change, we must all understand what changes have occurred in other neighborhoods. Understanding this and being aware of racial disparities in our own neighborhoods so that we can better understand what may have gone wrong and what we can do in the future to address the issue.

CLIENT DESCRIPTION

The Client for this project is Ebony Walden. Ebony Walden is the founder of Ebony Walden Consulting (EWC). EWC's Mission is to work with "non-profits, Philanthropic, and government leaders that are passionate about building thriving and exclusive communities" (EWC 2022). EWC has also worked with organizations like Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, Better Housing Coalition, and Project Homes (EWC 2022). Furthermore, with all of the projects, Equity and Inclusion are always at the forefront of their work (EWC 2022).

Ebony Walden is also an adjunct professor at VCU and has received many awards for her work within Equity and Inclusion. Most recently, Ebony Walden teamed up with Dr. Meghan Gough and Duron Chavis to create The Richmond Racial Equity Essays. This project consists of 24 essays, seven video interviews, and an eight-episode podcast that "explore what an equitable Richmond looks like. Especially as it relates to racial equity and highlight the strategies that will help us get there" (RREE 2021).

Her current project explores the areas that surround her home. She wants to create a book narrative on growing up in certain areas and the history of how race in places has changed over time within homes and businesses in the surrounding neighborhoods.

OUTLINE

This plan will first dive into the background for this paper, which will look at some of the literature. The literature talks about how race can impact space and how education can be a helpful step in combatting systemic racism. We will also dive into the planning theory in this paper, where we will talk about how racial planning has played a hand in systemic racism within our lower-income and minority neighborhoods. Restorative planning is also a considerable part of this section. We will talk about why this is important and how this theory has aided in combating systemic racism in our neighborhoods.

Our Context section will take a deeper dive into the neighborhoods themselves. We will get a closer look into the location boundaries of our study areas and a brief history of the Brookland Park, Providence Park, and Barton Heights neighborhoods. Lastly, we will top off this section with some existing conditions.

Following our context section, we will go into our methodologies section, which will cover what methods we will use to conduct our findings and the two main questions we want to answer with this plan.

After our methodologies section, we will discuss the findings from our research methods outlined in our previous section.

Following this section, we will go over our policy and program recommendations that we can potentially use to help combat systemic racism.

Lastly, we will close the paper with a conclusion about everything we covered. By the end, we will better understand how we can combat systemic racism within these Richmond neighborhoods.

BACKGROUND- LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This project explores how education and racial equity can help us achieve the goal of creating more diverse neighborhoods and mitigate the systemic impacts of racism in the future with policies and program recommendations. We will explore this through the theoretical lenses of Racial planning and Reparative Planning.

EDUCATION AND RACIAL EQUITY

Education and Racial Equity are essential topics we must discuss at all ages. “We teach (usually) young people to critically engage different perspectives on how the world is put together and how to find their place in that world.” (Delaney 2002). It is said that individuals who grow up with more economic privilege will only think of equity through their experiences and will form their perceptions about what equity is, which pushes us further back from combatting racial injustice (Brand 2015; Silos 2020). Goetz brings up an excellent point about how living in a predominantly white community is less likely to challenge or question beliefs of white supremacy (Goetz et al., 2020). In many White neighborhoods, there is an inheritance of legacy and generational wealth that has been passed down. The advantage that predominantly white neighborhoods have is significant, while neighborhoods of color are more likely to be disadvantaged (Goetz et al., 2020).

Most spaces occupied by African Americans have higher poverty rates and poor health conditions. These neighborhoods are more likely to be in food deserts and may lack open spaces (Solis 2020). An excellent way to compare neighborhoods can be done by looking at life expectancy per neighborhood. In the neighborhoods of Northside, we are looking into (CSH 2015). This is one way to indicate the demographics of a given neighborhood. African American Residents, for a while, also did not have a say in what happened in their communities and had to endure many racist practices that drained their wealth, like increased housing prices and higher interest rates.

Furthermore, redlining areas with a D grade were predominantly African American. Due to this, many of those areas were subject to being demolished to make way for public housing and highways (Goetz et al., 2020). Historically planners were known for aiding in creating racial inequity and aiding the destruction of many African American neighborhoods. Today, the roles of planners have changed. Today, planners are charged with educating our communities on racial equity and informing the community on steps we can take to address these issues. We also must be a voice in those communities.

We often talk about what our roles are as planners. Our responsibility is to ensure that the residents in our communities are adequately educated on these issues. In the past, planners were known to practice a lot of racial inequity and segregation regarding communities of color (Silos 2013). We touched on the current roles planners have in our society. In the last paragraph, we talked about how some of the crucial roles of planning are educating and advocating for the residents in our communities. Doing this can inform residents within advantaged neighborhoods about what is happening in disadvantaged communities. There are various viewpoints on how a neighborhood should be or look. This can help with many other issues that have plagued us in the past, like lack of quality housing and educational opportunities for residents in lower-income neighborhoods.

RACE AND SPACE

Understanding Race and Space is imperative to our knowledge, and coming steps closer to finding solutions that will help us combat systemic racism in our neighborhoods. The literature shows many ways to understand the racialization of space. Some literature talks about how geography is one of the main components of understanding Race and Space (Delaney 2002). Moreover, race is rooted in the history of a space (Neely and Samura 2011). This is due to the racial inequities within different spaces, like the taking of land and discrimination in neighborhoods with majority-minority residents.

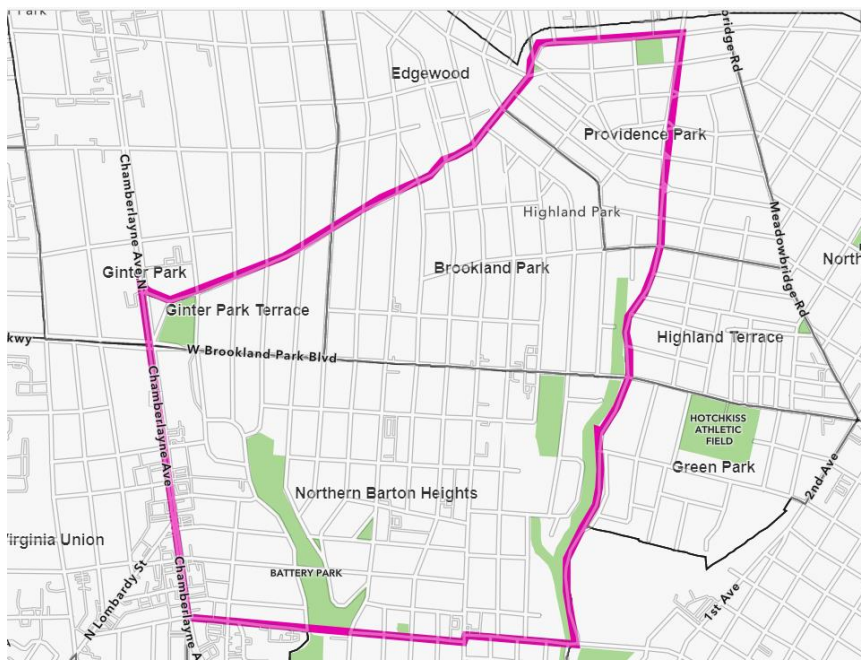
We will first talk about Race and Space through the lens of geography. As we have discussed, where we live determines the opportunities we are given. Race and space are also seen in neighborhoods and places throughout our daily lives, like classrooms, board rooms, and even convenience stores (Delaney 2002). Geography is critical to understanding Race and Space. It shows how space is very “valuable and finite” and is our responsibility to keep up with and take care of (Lipsitz 2007). In past years Geography has been a predominantly white field. This, unfortunately, has been said to be part of the problem. We need to start talking about geographical career paths more with minority students. We will also begin a conversation about Race and Space within the younger generation.

The literature talks in-depth about how history has shaped our modern-day spaces and that since race is directly correlated with race, we must first think about space to change race within these areas. Historically Race and Space have proved to be more harmful than good early on in our

history, depending on where you lived, showed what status you have, and the opportunity. For minority groups, Race and Space were seen as taking land and taking control of spaces owned by minorities (Neely and Samura 2011).

CONTEXT

To fully understand what policies may be needed, we need to look back into the history of the study area. This will give us an inside account of whom the neighborhood serviced throughout time and help us understand how race impacted these neighborhoods. This also gives us a chance to think about what is currently being done to create racial equality within these neighborhoods. In this section, we will go into a brief history of each selected neighborhood just to get a bit of background. From there, we will look at some of the area's existing conditions. Before we dive into it, below is a map of the study area we will be looking into. The north of our study area is Ladies Mile Rd. The eastern boundary stops at Richmond Henrico Turnpike. To the south, our border is Wickham St. Lastly, our border to the east is Chamberlayne Ave.



Map 1 - Study Area: <https://editions.lib.umn.edu/electionacademy/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2013/06/Consent-Form.doc>

BROOKLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Today Brookland Park is a transitioning neighborhood that is becoming more diverse in terms of its businesses and residents. Still, unfortunately, this was not always the case—going back to the 19th century. This neighborhood started as farmland within Henrico County. James H. Barton

saw the prime opportunity to develop the area since it was north of the city and would allow city residents to move into a quieter suburban neighborhood. This area would soon be known as one of the first streetcar suburbs.

In 1890, the area was platted out to make way for new development. This was a bit hard at first; however, due to the trolley line station being farther away and located in Barton Heights (DHR), In 1910, we started to see the first signs of development within the area. This came in the form of American Foursquares, which were reflections of the colonial revival and craftsman (DHR)



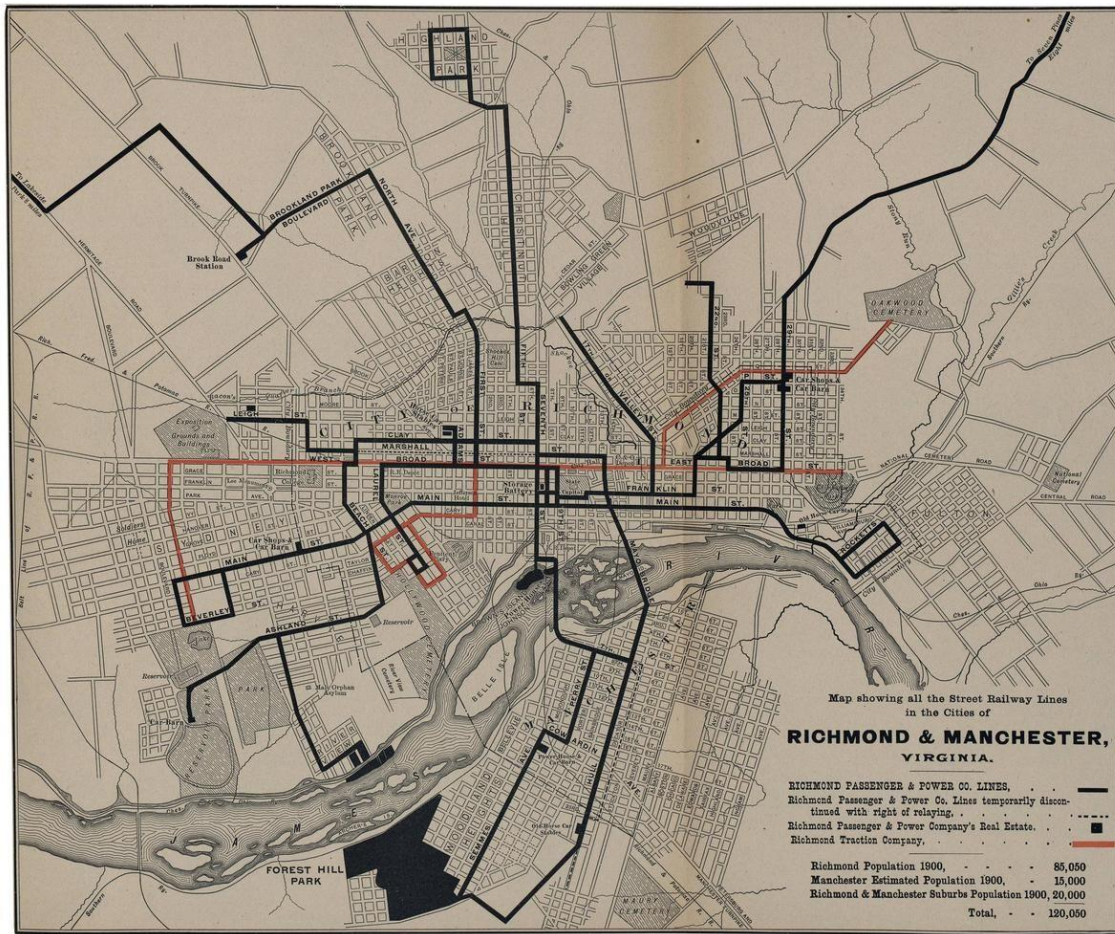
Figure 1-American Foursquare Home:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fidx.richmondvaml.net%2F%2Fhouses-built-from-1920-to-1929&psig=AOvYaw015QNi_f6ASB13QrEX5oVK&ust=1650609285634000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAwQjRxqFwoTCNDYopPFpPcCFQAAAAAdAAAAAB

Developers James H Burton and Joseph M. Fourquarean were the leading developers who developed within the Brookland Park area. The area was marketed toward middle-class white families who wanted to live further and escape the city (Muden 2010).

During the 1920s, development started to boom even more due to the trolley going down Brookland Park Boulevard, which provided a connection from the neighborhood to downtown Richmond (DHR). Because of this, we began to see a rise in the commercial development on the Brookland Park Boulevard corridor. Some developments included grocery stores, restaurants, bakeries, and many more (Murden 2010).

The 1930s stayed consistent with the 1920s, where we saw large booms in residential and commercial development and the trolley line owned by the Virginia Electric and Power Company. Below is a picture showing the rail lines throughout Richmond in the 1930s.



Map 2- Richmond Manchester Trolley Line:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fpin%2F287737863667050974%2F&psig=AOvVaw0HQfGsGJlIsekyxlzoIENC&ust=1650692679576000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAwQjRxqFwoTCjIv8f7pvcCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAI>



Figure 2- Trolley Turning onto Brookland Park Boulevard: <https://chpn.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/dhr/The%20Brookland%20Park%20Historic%20District.pdf>

Between the 1940s and 60s, Black residents started to move into these neighborhoods, which caused White flight, which meant that White Residents did everything they could to sell their homes and move away. We see a rise in Black Homeownership and business in the area. Unfortunately, because of this and the residents' lower incomes, the neighborhood started to deteriorate due to the neighborhood's neglect from the

government. We also see an increase in crime in the area during this time.

In the 2000s, Richmond Residents started to take notice of the area, and policymakers wanted to go in and begin the revitalization of the area. Due to this, White residents started to move back in. This caused panic among Black residents because they knew their neighborhood was beginning to gentrify, which meant they could potentially be priced out of their homes (Eshleman 2017)

This area has started to thrive today, and many residents are working together to create a diverse and equitable community. This can be seen through many residents and businesses within the area. Some Examples include the Ice Cream shop Ruby Scoops.

NORTH BARTON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD

The North Barton heights neighborhood started as farmland. It was originally a part of Henrico County until the city of Richmond annexed the area in 1914. The Barton Heights neighborhood was founded in 1889 by James H. Barton, who got into development after fighting as a Union Soldier in the Civil War (LV 2008). Burton acquired about 22 acres of land just north of Richmond. He hoped that he could provide affordable homes to the middle class and allow residents to live outside of the city (LV 2008). Between the development from the 1890s to the 1940s, white middle-class residents resided in the area. During this time, the streetcar developed in the area providing transportation in and out of the city for the residents of Barton Heights (Kollatz Jr 2015). Lastly, redlining was prominent during this period in many neighborhoods around Richmond, including Barton Heights. The redlining map shows that the area was in the

“Still Desirable” Area, also known as class B. The area also had zero African Americans (DLS 2020).

The 1940’s brought a change in demographics to the area. 1944 marked the day when the demographics started to shift in the area. Middle-class African American Professors started to move into the area, which caused many of the existing white residents to sell their homes for whatever they could get and move out of the area (Kollatz Jr 2015)

In the 1960s, with the constriction of Interstate 95, the Upper Middle-Class black families started to move out of the area, which made way for the lower-income black families displaced in Jackson Ward by Interstate 95. To help the families find housing in this area, many of the bigger homes were torn down and made into smaller infills to accommodate the lower-income families. After this time, the area remained predominantly black until the early 2000s, when revitalization occurred (Kollatz Jr 2015)

After revitalization, more white families started to move in, and now we have a more diverse community where most residents work together and host events to promote diversity. Although these conditions have significantly improved, we still have a long way to go to make sure we continue to improve the diversity in these neighborhoods and combat any potential displacement that may take place. We also must ensure that residents continue to have a say in what may be going on in their neighborhoods (Kollatz Jr)

PROVIDENCE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

Lastly, we will briefly cover providence park. Providence Park is located to the east of the Brookland Park neighborhood and follows the same history as the neighborhood. The area started as a predominantly white middle-class neighborhood where most of the development was created in the 1920s and was primarily residential (DHR). Similar to Brookland Park, Providence park saw a shift in demographics starting in the 1940s, and the neighborhood shifted to a predominantly black neighborhood which it has remained to this day

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Brookland Park is home to 1,846 residents, where around 85% of the population are Black, 9% are White, and 2% are Hispanic. The Household Median Income for this area is about \$35,400. Lastly, most residents in the area have received their high school diploma, and the second-highest number of residents had some college experience (Statistical Atlas)

North Barton heights have a total population of 2,747 Residents, where around 73% are Black, and 19% are White. The median household income for the area is about \$39,100. Furthermore, the majority of residents have a high school diploma or better.

Providence Park is home to 1,649 residents. Providence Park is a predominantly African American Neighborhood, with about 91% of the population being Black residents and about 7% of the residents are white. The median household income for the area is about \$30, 400 for the area and the majority of residents only have a high school diploma, but most of the residents in the area have a high school diploma or better (Statistical Atlas)

Regarding transportation, The Richmond Insights Report (RIR) Shows that the area is somewhat walkable, but most residents who live there drive. The transportation modes map shows that the area lacks bus lanes, but transit does go through the area. The GRTC bus route 20 runs along Brookland Park Boulevard, and busses 1 and 2 drive through our selected neighborhoods (RIR 2018).

The area's housing market varied from median sales of \$117,00-195,00 in 2018. These numbers come from the market value analysis done in 2017 for the City of Richmond Insights Report (RIR 2018). Part of the area is rated in the D market. The other half is at a Grade G. Due to the booming housing market and the demand for housing in the Northside, house prices have steeply risen over the past five years. In Brookland Park and Northern Barton Heights, housing prices have risen to over \$300,000. (Redfin). Providence Park has also seen a rise in its housing prices but only to the mid \$200,000's and is a bit less competitive than Brookland and Northern Barton Heights (Redfin).

The demographics help us paint a picture of who currently lives in the area and what we can continue to do to make the correct policy changes. This will help create a space that increases its diversity without driving out any of the residents currently living there and being able to educate others on how the neighborhoods are adequately structured.

METHODOLOGIES

The outcome of this project was finding policy and program recommendations that will help combat the systemic racism that has taken place in the past within Richmond's predominantly black neighborhoods in Northside. To do this, we have answered two prominent questions listed in table one below. These questions have helped us better understand what years of discrimination did to black neighborhoods and the day-to-day struggles due to systemic racism. The second question will helped us find programs and policies that could work for us to combat the systemic neighborhoods in Richmond without causing more issues like displacement within these areas.

Research Questions

- **How has race and systemic racism shaped the majority Black neighborhoods in the Northside of Richmond (historically and presently)?**
- **What are the policy, program, and educational interventions that can be employed to disrupt the compounding and cumulative impacts of systemic racism on the Black neighborhoods in Northside to create more equitable neighborhoods?**

Table 1- Research Questions

The other main component of this project was understanding the development and demographic patterns over the past 100 years to have a clear picture of who lived in the areas throughout this time, what their experiences were, and what businesses were located within the area. In order to complete this, we have collected data from their different viewpoints (1) Oral Histories: (2) Demographic Mapping, (3) Archival Data, and Policy Research.

ORAL HISTORIES

Oral Histories are a vital step to enhancing understanding within an area. As you listen to the interviews, you can close your eyes and imagine what it would have been like to live and grow up in those areas. Long-standing residents or business owners have a lot to share about their time living in their neighborhoods. While diving into the Fulton Oral histories, many residents had many stories to share about their neighborhoods. Evelyn Bowman, a longtime resident in the neighborhood, talked about her education, how most school supplies were passed down from white schools in the area, and how they did not have access to newer school materials (FOH 2011). Before Urban renewal came to the area, the residents of Fulton were all super close, and they all knew each other.

We also see talk of oral histories within our literature. Delaney talks about how first-person narratives are very helpful in thinking about our very racially impacted world. Delaney offers this as a solution to help with teaching students and starting conversations about race and space within our communities.

ORAL HISTORIES PROCESS

For this section of the project, we have reached out to local business owners with diverse backgrounds and long-standing and new residents within the area about conducting the interviews with business owners via email and reaching out to see if they would be interested in

participating in the interview. I reached out to random businesses along the corridor, and I worked with Ebony to create a list of potential interviewees for this project. I focused on business owners and residents because the project looks at how the demographics of businesses and residents have changed over time in Northside and has given us great insight into how the businesses and residents have changed over time. I then gave the interviewee a consent form before conducting the interviews (Appendix A) and asked them a few questions about their experiences living in the neighborhood and things they may want to see within the neighborhood. I prepared a list of questions below that I used for the interviews (Appendix B). Doing this will help us see what is happening within the neighborhood and give a clear picture of how systemic racism has impacted the area.

MAPPING

Next, I used mapping to visually see the change in demographics within the area. Some examples of maps I created were demographic maps that show the racial changes over the course of 2010 to 2020.

I used ArcGIS (Geographic Information Systems) to map the different demographic information I showed racial changes over time. In order to map these, I collected census data from the census bureau's website, and from there, I converted the table into a CSV format so that GIS could accommodate the table and joined it with the Richmond shapefile that I will also get from the census website. Due to past census data not being available on the census website, I omitted that data and stuck with more recent racial data. This mapping style helped because we are able to see the changes from the past ten years and can help us figure out how we can keep the neighborhoods integrated and avoid displacement.

ARCHIVAL DATA

Next, I expanded my context section and did more in-depth research on the neighborhoods. Archival data is fundamental to providing a deeper understanding of a topic. That data represents a "...long-term view of the effects of change over months or years rather than a snapshot of one particular process over a few days." (Drury 1995, pg. 111) I did this by finding collecting data sources such as Sanborn maps and historical photos and looked through phone books to analyze the development patterns of the area further and who was actively occupying the space throughout time.

In order to gather all of this information, I gathered these materials by doing research in the Library of Virginia and contacted the Valentine for their archival data from these neighborhoods.

I put all the data into a spreadsheet shown below, saying what type of data it is and where it was found. A brief description of the item so all sources and data stay in one organized space (Appendix C).

POLICY RESEARCH

Lastly, to answer question 2, which talked about what policies and programs would help combat systemic racism, I researched policies and programs that have worked for other localities that have suffered from systemic racism. I did this by looking at different legislatures like LIS to see what legislation has passed in terms of helping combat systemic racism. I also looked into other states' legislation to check out policies and programs that have worked for other organizations. I also did some research to find out what neighborhoods have been able to successfully take steps in the right direction to create equality within their neighborhoods.

FINDINGS

This section outlines the research collected through the various research methods outlined in this paper's previous section. Archival data, oral history, and mapping. The structure of this section will go through archival data, oral histories, and mapping. We will explore how race and racism shaped majority-black neighborhoods in Northside Richmond. We will cover our second question more in the recommendation section of this paper. Some of the main themes seen while collecting data were. Throughout the time the Brookland Park neighborhood and the surrounding neighborhoods were developed, race was always concentrated, whether black or white. From the early 20th century to the mid-20th century, White residents were prominent throughout Richmond's northside neighborhoods. From the mid-20th century to the present day, this area transitioned to black residents and remains predominantly black. However, this is rapidly changing, with the older vacant homes getting renovated and resold. We will first look into how race and racism have shaped northside black neighborhoods through our first finding.

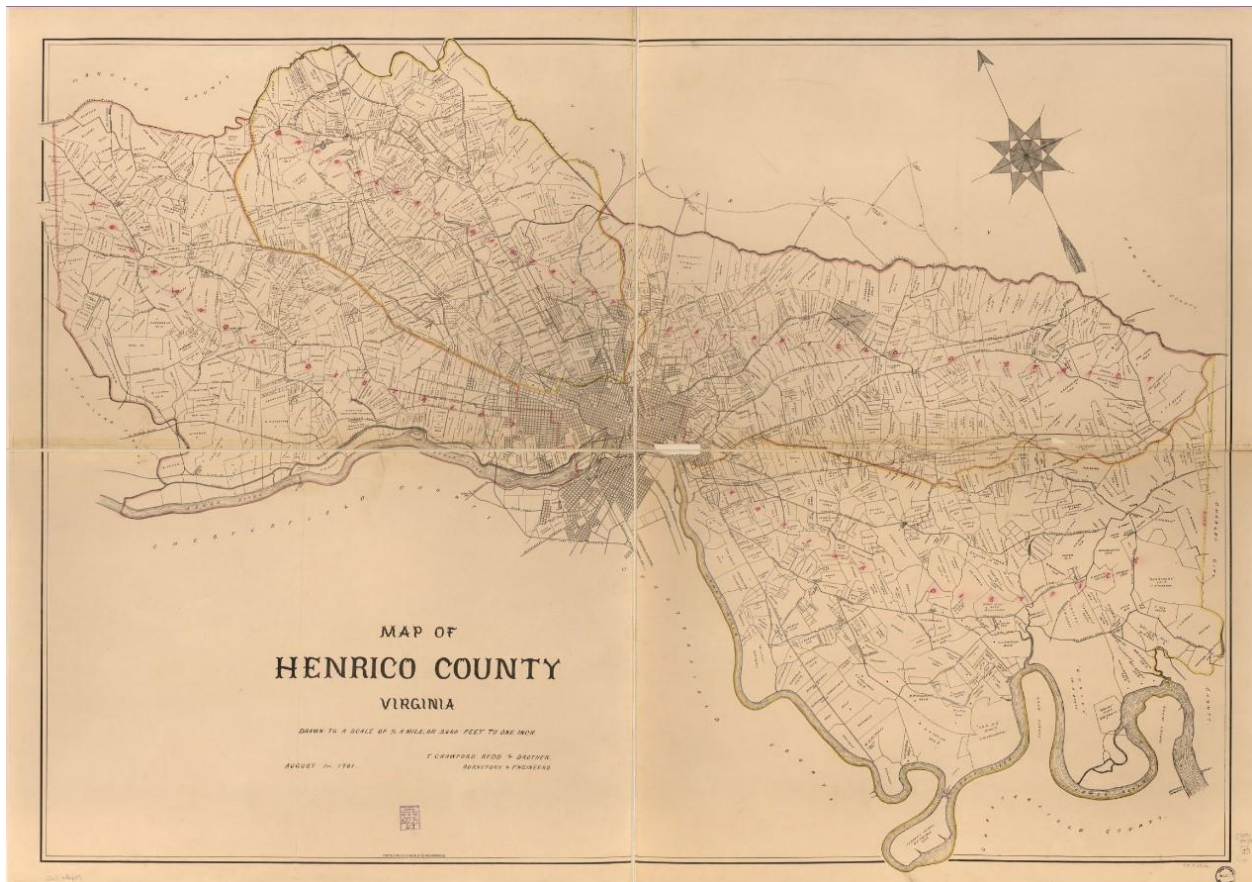
Returning to how race and racism have shaped majority black neighborhoods. For the first finding, we will go back to better understand how the neighborhoods transitioned over time.

FINDING #1 - FROM THE START OF DEVELOPMENT TO THE PRESENT DAY, THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY TWO DRAMATIC DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS.

We will now go into the first moments of the neighborhoods, how the neighborhood rose and when the neighborhood was predominantly white. We will look at how the neighborhoods transitioned through the decades. Each section looks into each dramatic demographic shift.

1890S-1950S

During the late 19th century, Brookland Park, North Barton Heights, and Providence Park were. In the early stages of their development and were still majority farmland. As mentioned in the background section, these neighborhoods were created to accommodate the white working class. The developers wanted to give white workers a chance to venture out of the city and settle into a quieter suburb or soon what would be known as a streetcar suburb. Before these neighborhoods were annexed by the city of Richmond in 1914, the area lay within Henrico County's boundaries.



Map 3- 1901 Henrico County map: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3883h.la002082/?r=0.088,0.479,0.56,0.262,0>

Development of the land started in the 1890s. The areas did not take off in terms of development until the 1910s. Barton heights led the development due to access to the streetcar, and Brookland Park and providence park followed shortly after (DHR 2003). The 1920s brought lots of housing and business to the area. Most of the housing still stands and gives us a peak into the architectural styles that were prominent in the 1920s. In terms of businesses, we saw small grocery stores open, like the Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company and the Brookland Park theatre, which still stands today. The theatre opened in 1925 and was a popular place for entertainment among the residents who lived there. With the addition of the many stores in the area, residents could sufficiently shop for everything they needed.

Music and
Pictures
Supreme

The Show Place of Richmond

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The Mighty
Wurlitzer
Organ

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INCLUDING MARQUEE
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124 & Eighth St., Richmond, Va.

General Contractor, Architect and
Sub-Contractors Made Possible the Beauty and
Comfort of This Theatre



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**RICHARD
BARTHELMESS**
In the Crowning Achievement of His Career
"CLASSMATES"

Also
COMEDY CLASSIC
BOBBY VERNON in "BRIGHT LIGHTS"
International News
(Overture on the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ at 8:45 P. M.
Carl Reed at the Console
Second Performance, 9 P. M.
ADMISSION: Adults, 25c; Children, 12c

Typhoon Cooling System

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BY
TYPHOON FAN CO.
145 W. 39th ST., NEW YORK CITY
THE TWO BIG TWIN FANS WILL MAKE THIS
THEATRE THE COOLEST HOUSE IN
THE CITY IN SUMMER

All Electrical Equipment in This Theatre
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The Brookland Electric Sign

BUILT BY
FEDERAL ELECTRIC CO.
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Local Representative
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INSTALLED IN THE BROOKLAND THEATRE
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Office, Fifth and Main Phone Box 1654

Figure 3- Brookland Park Theatre Grand Opening Announcement 1925:
<https://richmond.newspapers.com/clip/10370292/brookland-theatre-opening/>

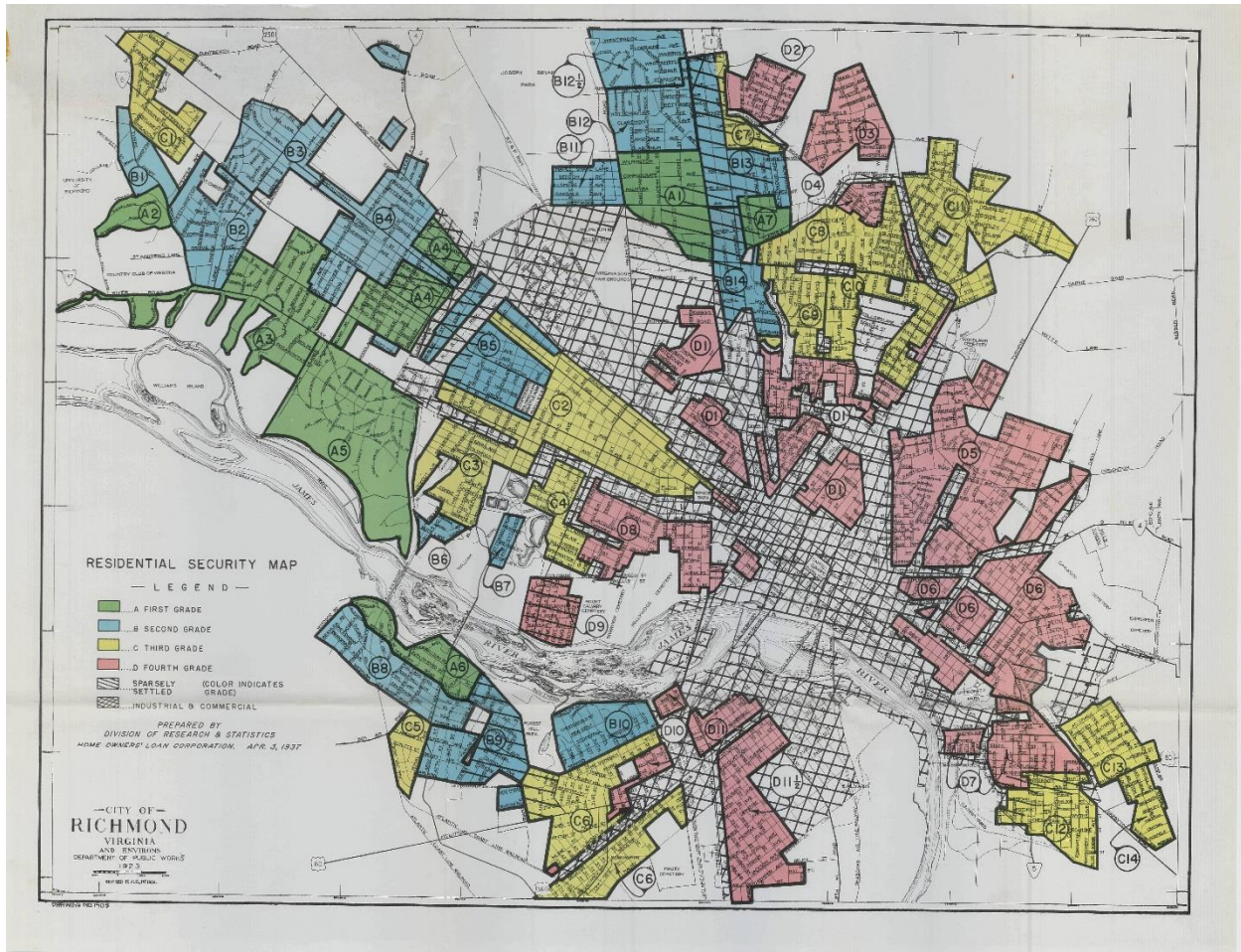
As said above, this area was created for the white working class who wanted to move out of the city and settle into a quieter life. The picture below depicts what a typical house would look like and shows what the housing looked like before suburban development crowded the area.



Figure 4- Suburb of Barton Heights in 1916

https://richmondmagazine.com/downloads/7863/download/Flashback_Terrace_rp0515.jpg?cb=ebba2e487a6556c2277dbc892216fc58&w=640&h=

As time progressed, the area filled up with working-class white residents, so the neighborhoods stayed in pretty good condition and stayed that way until the mid to late 1940s. Due to the neighborhood being mostly working-class white residents getting loans in this area was a bit complicated. According to the Richmond redlining map, created in 1937, this area is laid on areas C8, C9, C10, and a bit of D4. These grades were given due to the residents' lower salaries, and the stucco building material wasn't desirable then. It was also said that neighborhoods given a grade of "C" were considered to be declining and less desirable to white residents (Schmidt, 2022). This grade was also received because of the age of the homes, and many of the houses were rented out to the families that lived there. Around this time, rent was around \$60-\$70. The study area also had a few black residents labeled D4. This area was described as increasing in black residents and decreasing in white residents and a fair sales demand, and an excellent rental demand with an average rent of about \$10 a month. And the report was missing the repair condition and average age of housing units there (HOLC 1937).



Map 4- Richmond Redlining Map:

In the mid to late 1940s, black residents moved into Brookland Park, Barton Heights, and Providence park. In turn, white residents were leaving the area. This caused many homes in the area to get sold at meager rates and were sold to African American residents at higher prices and interest rates. By this time, many of the existing homes had not been renovated due to the residents prior mostly renting out and not owning the homes. And due to the constant discrimination. Many black residents who moved into these homes could not properly take care of them due to their lack of income. Many houses were not updated, and you can still see aspects of the old designs today.

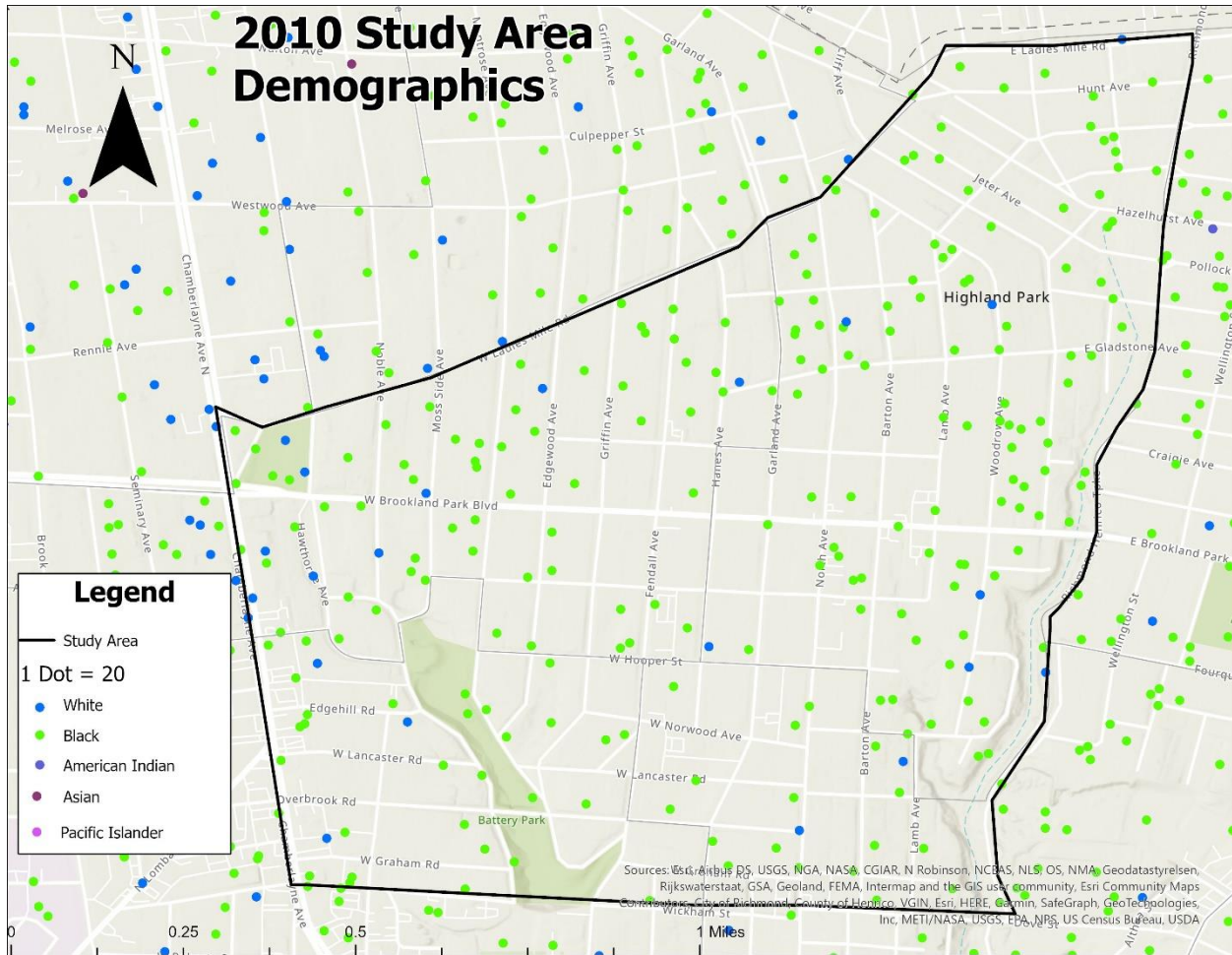
1950'S TO 2000S

As the 1950s rolled in, we saw a true demographic shift throughout our neighborhoods Brookland Park and adjoining neighborhoods. The redlining map (Figure 6) outlined that these neighborhoods were becoming undesirable to white residents, and black residents were settling in close by. This ultimately caused many events within the neighborhood, like blockbusting which in turn caused white flight. Block Busting was the act of lenders getting a black family to move into a predominantly white neighborhood, and this caused panic. Most of the white

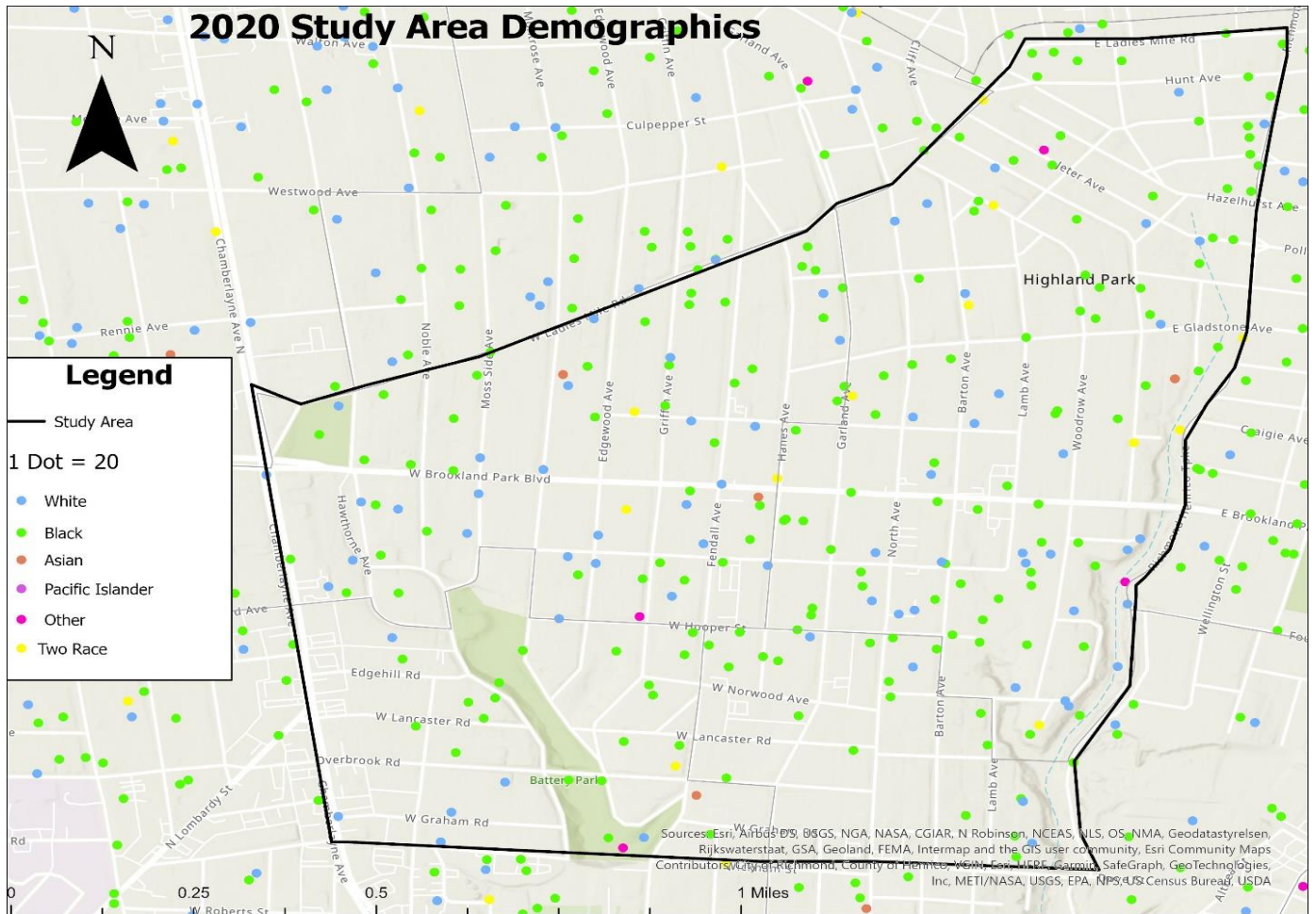
residents ended up moving out. This ended up happening in Brookland Park and the adjoining northside neighborhoods. After this, we saw a rise in black residents and started seeing more black businesses in the years to come.

2000'S TO THE PRESENT DAY

As the 2000s rolled in, we started seeing demographic shifts within the area. The change was slow at first but then started to pick up in the mid-2010s into 2020. The two maps below show how the demographic shift took place.



Map 5- Demographic Map Created By: Kearra Bright



Map 6- 2020 Demographics Map- Kearra Bright

Let's take a moment to observe these maps. Both maps represent the demographic shift that took place within our study area. Each color represents a different race, and one dot on each map represents 20 people. This was done to see what races lived in the neighborhood. The 2010 map shows us that most white residents at the time were located more on the western side of our study area and still remained predominantly black. As we look at the 2020 map(Figure 8), we can see that more white residents are moving into the area and are predominant in the southern portion of our study area. We can also know that we are getting more and more diverse regarding race. These demographic shifts are shown in ways of residents and businesses like Scotts funeral Hone, Nomads Deli, and Ruby Scoops, to name a few of the Black Owned businesses in the area. A big question we must think about is what is causing the demographic shift.

As we can see, the demographics within our study area are shifting, and part of this may be due to the transformations of many houses within the area. Due to many black residents who started moving in, in the 1950s and 60s, many homes deteriorated because they could not afford them keep. This caused many renovations after the black residents moved out or passed away. Developers were coming in, scooping up these vacant properties and reselling them at higher

rates. This brings up the question of how the market change affects the current residents who still reside there? We will answer this in our next section, where we go more in-depth about interviews with some of the neighborhood's longtime residents.

FINDINGS #2- THE RESIDENTS IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS ALWAYS FELT A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND ENJOYED THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD AND STILL THINK THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS A GREAT AND COMFORTABLE PLACE TO LIVE.

Oral Histories are a fantastic way to better understand what went on in the neighborhood. These residents have gotten a day-to-day account of what changes took place in the neighborhood. After talking with all the residents interviewed, one main takeaway I came away with is that many of them always felt close to their neighbors. None of them had any significant issues with the neighborhood currently.

It was a joy getting to talk to some of the neighborhood residents and hearing stories about how things were when they first moved in. Longtime resident Tony Armstead spoke about how the neighborhood was primarily black in the past and how he would get together with some of his neighbors. They would occasionally have cookouts and help each other with things they may have needed. As time passed, Tony talked about how the neighborhood had changed since he first moved in. As the older residents passed away and their homes became vacant, developers rehabbed the housing. They made them into move-in ready homes while some preserved some of the exteriors of the houses due to their historical significance. Tony mentioned that he still feels the same sense of community, but it is slightly different from how it was in the past. Today he, on occasion, will wave or speak to his neighbors, but it's not quite the same. He says the neighborhood is very peaceful and quiet, but he also misses how the neighborhood used to be. Lastly, the house he is currently in was the first home he ever brought, and he is not worried about the rise in property taxes due to the housing prices going up in the area. Resident Mary Bell shared some of the same sentiments as Tony, that she still feels a true sense of community in the neighborhood.

Mary Bell had a lot of stories about the past, she first talked about how she did not feel super safe when she first moved in and how she could not leave mail in her mailbox for too long, or someone would steal the mail. She also mentioned that her family has lived in the area for many years. Today she enjoys living there minus the trees and upkeep. Still, she loves to occasionally sit on her porch and relax in her free time. All of the residents were a joy to talk to. It was terrific to hear all of their stories of how the area used to be, and they all have very fond memories and love how quiet and peaceful the neighborhood has been.

FINDINGS SUMMARY

In this section, we went over how archival research, oral histories, and mapping have all played a part in looking into how systemic racism has taken place within our study area and how the area is currently progressing. Many of our problems have hatched due to unfair policies and practices in the early to mid-20th century, which has caused minority groups to have an unfair disadvantage in the housing market along with concentrated poverty and lack of money flowing in to improve these neighborhoods. As the neighborhoods become more diverse due to the rehab of many housing units in the area, we must ensure we are not displacing the residents who have lived there for many years and are happy and comfortable with their neighborhood. There are many ways to approach this, but w some recommendations can help mitigate systemic racism within these neighborhoods, and we will now dive into the recommendations section to discourage displacement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal 1- Have a mix of housing types to aid in keeping the neighborhood diverse and prevent displacement.

- **Objective 1.1- Create Duplex and Triplex options to create affordable options within the study area.**
 - **Action 1.1.1-Advocate for more policies to incentivize low-density multi-family housing to create more affordable newer housing options.**
 - **Action 1.1.2- Advocate for policy that creates more options for developers to create more affordable housing in the area.**
- **Objective 1.2- Enforce more inclusionary Zoning Practices Within The Area.**
 - **Action 1.2.1- Advocate for the creation of more inclusionary zoning practices.**
 - **Action 1.2.2- Advocate for clear policy on what’s applied in the inclusionary zoning guidelines.**

Goal 2- Educate residents on systemic racism and its impacts.

- **Objective 2.1- Create Educational programs that teach about systemic racism in schools and adult programs.**
 - **Actions 2.1.1- Advocate for policies that teach children about systemic racism and diversity and the effect they could have on neighborhoods.**

- **Actions 2.1.2- Advocate policies to create adult programs that teach about systemic racism.**
- **Actions 2.1.3- Create websites and easily accessible materials highlighting the impacts of systemic racism in neighborhoods and what individuals can do to help combat systemic racism within neighborhoods.**

Goal 3- Programs that increase opportunities for lower-income residents

- **Objective 3.1- Strengthen programs that aid lower-income residents in certain opportunities.**
 - **Action 3.1.1- Advocate for more programs that help lower-income students have the same opportunities as higher-income students.**
 - **Action 3.1.2- Advocate for more policies to help lower-income families with receiving education and find jobs within their respective fields.**

Goal 4- Help close the generational wealth gap to create equal opportunities

- **Objective 4.1- Educate lower-income residents on more policies to help close the wealth gap.**
 - **Action 4.1.1- Advocate for policies that help educate lower-income residents on policies that can help them close the wealth gap.**
 - **Action 4.1.2- Create more programs that help close the wealth gap.**

CONCLUSION

The outcome of this project provided policy and program recommendations that will help combat the systematic racism that has taken place within Richmond’s predominantly Black Northside neighborhoods and also explore how these neighborhoods have changed over time from its birth to the present day. Race and space need to be actively considered as we integrate these neighborhoods. Readers can see how important this topic is and understand the demographic and development patterns that took place throughout the life of these neighborhoods. Lastly, We wanted this project to aid in changing a reader's perception of the

spaces they inhabit and the places we live in. It is imperative to think about what we are doing within the areas we live in because this can directly impact Race (Neely and Samura 2011). We are all responsible for creating equitable spaces that can be used to combat systemic racism so that future generations can enjoy equal opportunities and equitable spaces.

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APPENDICES A- INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Race and Space: Uncovering Richmond's Northside Neighborhoods Project

Virginia Commonwealth University

Informed Consent Form

1. You are being asked to participate in an interview in connection with Kearra Bright's Race and Space: Uncovering Richmond's Northside Neighborhoods Oral History Project. You are being asked to participate because of your experience as a resident/business owner. You will be asked about your experiences living or creating a business within this neighborhood. You will also be asked to give your thoughts on how the neighborhood could further be improved to combat systemic racism in the area.

2. The interview will be digitally recorded, transcribed, and made available for public and scholarly use at Virginia Commonwealth University's Archives. Any member of the public will have access to this interview and your words may be quoted in scholarly and popular publications.

3. The interview will take approximately thirty to forty five minutes . There are no anticipated risks to participation in this interview. However, you can withdraw from the interview at any time without prejudice prior to the execution and delivery of a deed of gift (see the attached form). You will also have the opportunity to make special provisions or restrictions in the deed of gift. During the interview, you may request to stop the recording at any time to discuss or clarify how you wish to respond to a question or topic before proceeding.

In the event that you choose to withdraw during the interview, any recording made of the interview will be either given to you or destroyed, and no transcript will be made of the interview. With your permission, a photograph of you will be taken. If you withdraw from the project, all copies of the photograph will be given to you. Any digital image will be destroyed.

4. Any restrictions as to use of portions of the interview indicated by you will be handled by editing those portions out of the final copy of the transcript.

5. Upon signing the document, the digital recording and one copy of the transcript will be kept in the Virginia Commonwealth University Archives.

6. If you have questions about the research project or procedures, you can contact Kearra Bright by email or phone number

Phone number: 571-435-0909

Email: brightkm@vcu.edu.

Interviewer signature _____

I agree to participate in this interview.

Interviewee Printed Name _____

Interviewee signature _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Date ___/___/_____

APPENDICES B- INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Residents Questions

1. Tell us your name and how long you've been a resident in the neighborhood? How and why did you come to live here?
2. Tell me a little bit about the neighborhood when you first moved here, who were your neighbors, what was it like? What businesses were near you?
3. How was your experience living in the neighborhood?
4. What has it been like being a black resident in this neighborhood?
5. What were a couple of your favorite places to visit in Richmond?
6. What mode of transportation did you use the most? (past and present.)
7. What are two or three of your fondest memories living in this neighborhood?
8. How many of your neighbors do you keep in touch with?
9. Tell me about the change in the neighborhood over time. How has it changed from when you moved here till now?
10. What has it been like in the past 5-10 years? How do you feel about these changes?
11. What changes would you like to see in your neighborhood?
12. What kind of help do you need as a homeowner? Have taxes or upkeep been an issue?
13. Do you have any pictures you would like to share?
14. Do you know of anyone else that might be good to interview? Could you connect me to them?

Business Owner Questions

1. Tell us your name and how long you've been a business owner in the neighborhood?
Why did you want to set up your business here?
2. Tell me a little bit about what the area was like when you first started business here?
3. What has been your experience owning a business here so far?
4. What is your fondest memory as a business owner within this area?
5. What businesses were here before you moved in?
6. Do you interact with other business owners in the area?
7. What are the general demographics of your customer base?
8. Has your customer base changed since when you started?
9. What changes would you like to see in the area ?

APPENDICES C- ARCHIVAL DATA TABLE

Archival Data Title	Data Type	Data Description