Historical Context of Racist Planning

How land use planning segregated Portland
Institutional / Explicit

Policies which explicitly discriminate against a group.

Example:
Police department refusing to hire people of color.

Institutional / Implicit

Policies that negatively impact one group unintentionally.

Example:
Police department focusing on street-level drug arrests.

Individual / Explicit

Prejudice in action – discrimination.

Example:
Police officer calling someone an ethnic slur while arresting them.

Individual / Implicit

Unconscious attitudes and beliefs.

Example:
Police officer calling for back-up more often when stopping a person of color.
• Pivotal moment in time when we have the opportunity to do something differently

• Residential Infill Project, Better Housing by Design, Anti-Displacement Action Plan

But in order to move forward, we must first acknowledge our past ...
Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule

• Provides a framework to more effectively further the Fair Housing Act

• “Recipients also must take actions to address segregation and related barriers for groups with characteristics protected by the Act, as often reflected in racially or ethnically concentrated areas of poverty.”

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing; Final Rule”
Key Points in Portland’s Racist Planning History

1900-1930  Early Zoning
  1924  Portland’s first zoning code

1930s-1980  Expansion of single-family zoning
  1968  The Fair Housing Act
  1977  Population Strategy

1980-Early 2000s  Contemporary Planning
  1980  Portland’s first Comprehensive Plan
  1981-2000  Annexation of East Portland
  1993  Albina Community Plan
  1996  Outer Southeast Community Plan
  2000  Southwest Community Plan
Early Zoning
1900 to 1930
Buchanan v. Warley, 1917

- In the early 1900s, some U.S. cities created separate areas for black and white households
- Ordinances overturned in the Supreme Court case Buchanan vs. Warley
- Many cities found workarounds and continued to segregate using other zoning tactics
Portland’s First Zoning Code, 1924

Zone I - Single Family
Racially Restrictive Covenants in Deeds

Premises have a frontage on two streets, the foregoing 20-foot restriction shall apply as to each of such front streets; nor shall said premises or any building thereon be used or occupied otherwise than strictly for residence purposes (or for church or school purposes, and then only with the prior consent of the first party, or its successors or assigns); nor shall the same or any part thereof be in any manner used or occupied by Chinese, Japanese or negroes, except that persons of said races may be employed as servants by residents; nor shall any old buildings be placed on said premises; nor shall any building or any part thereof, on said premises, be erected, maintained or used for flats, apartments, stables, stores or business or manufacturing purposes; nor

Racist covenant found in Laurelhurst, 1913
Concentration of African Americans in Albina

Source: OPB
Expansion of Single-family Zoning
1930s to 1980s
“Excessively large areas have been zoned for apartments, occupying 40% of the total area of the City. Portland is a city of single family homes. We are therefore of the opinion that only a very small percentage of the area of the City should be set apart for multiple dwellings.”
Redlining (and Greenlining)

Portland, 1937

4. AVAILABILITY OF MORTGAGE FUNDS:  
a. Home purchase: Ample;  
b. Home building: Ample

5. CLARIFYING REMARKS:  
Deed restrictions expired in 1935 but is zoned single-family residential which with terrain and price levels is believed to be ample protection. Development of this area, which would naturally be slow, was undoubtedly arrested by the depression and has not since gained momentum, however the pattern is definitely established and it is believed that as Portland develops this area will progress along the lines of present development. The area is therefore accorded a high green grade.

6. NAME AND LOCATION:  
Kings Heights  
SECURITY GRADE: A+  
AREA NO. 6

HOLC loans in area approximate 4 for an aggregate of $30,000.
Home Values Still Lag in Most Redlined Neighborhoods

Median home values for areas the government designated best, still desirable, definitely declining and hazardous for mortgage lending

Source: Zillow median home values and data from Mapping Inequality (https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining)
1959 Zoning Code

- Expansion of single-family zoning
- Duplexes and apartments **outlawed** in much of the city

Illustration of R10 One-Family Residential Zone, 1959
National Context

Fair Housing Act, 1968
• Prohibited discrimination in housing based on federally protected classes

Community Reinvestment Act, 1977
• Financial institutions must provide credit assistance to all neighborhoods, especially those historically affected by redlining
• Banks still continued to discriminate in those areas
Contemporary Planning
1980 to Early 2000s
Population Strategy, 1977

“Increasingly the city is becoming a community of extremes, populated by the young and the old, the lower income and unemployed, minorities and renters.”

- Prioritized educated, employed, middle class families to reverse “white flight”
- Guided the 1980 Comprehensive Plan
1980
Comprehensive Plan

Map of inner SE Portland, 1979
Community Planning

1980 • Comprehensive Plan
1990s • Community Planning Program
Early 2000s • Area Planning
Disparate Treatment: Albina vs. Southwest
Share of People of Color in 1990: Albina vs. Southwest
Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area (ICURA) Plan, 2000

• Goal #6 of the Housing Strategy:

  “Increase the housing stability of existing residents and protect them from involuntary displacement caused by gentrification, increases in housing costs and loss of housing choices.”

• Promised 2,000 units of affordable housing in the area.

• The City failed to implement these anti-displacement goals.
NUMBER OF BLACK HOUSEHOLDS BY TENURE
INTERSTATE CORRIDOR URA, 1950 - 2016

* 1950 and 1960 censuses mark race of householder as either white or non-white.
Source: University of Minnesota, NHGIS. Portland BPS.
Racial Equity in Planning
Current Era
VisionPDX, 2008

Engaged community members, particularly underrepresented groups, in shared vision of Portland

The Portland Plan, 2012

“Advancing equity in Portland means improving the way the city works — starting with how the city government and its partners make decisions, invest, and engage with Portlanders and each other to measure success.”
Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, 2011

• City of Portland, City of Gresham, and Multnomah County
• Fair housing complaints, demographics, mortgage data, zoning, and land use policies

**Findings:**

• Single-family zoning contributes to overwhelmingly high white student body at Alameda Elementary and Grant High School
• Low-income residents and communities of color concentrated in low opportunity areas
City’s Response: New practices and investments

- Fair Housing Advocacy Committee - Portland Housing Bureau
- Annual State of Housing report - Portland Housing Bureau
- Preference policy for Northeast Portland - Portland Housing Bureau
- Opportunity mapping - Portland Housing Bureau
- Housing Bond - Portland Housing Bureau
- Landlord discrimination testing - Portland Housing Bureau
- Rental Services Commission, Rental Services Office - Portland Housing Bureau
- Tax Exemption Program changes - Portland Housing Bureau
- Inclusionary Housing - Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Offices of Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and Bureau of Development Services - 2015
2035 Comprehensive Plan, 2016

- 5.10: Coordinate with fair housing programs
- 5.11: Remove barriers
- 5.12: Impact analysis
- 3.3.f: Coordinate housing, economic development, and public facility plans and investments to create an integrated community development approach to restore communities impacted by past decisions.
- 5.18: Rebuild communities
Current Land Use and Demographic Conditions
Racially Concentrated Areas of Affluence
Racially Concentrated Areas of Affluence
Racially Concentrated Areas of Affluence
Areas of Vulnerability

Four vulnerability factors:
- Renter households
- Low-income households (3X-80X AMI)
- People of color
- Lack of four-year degree

Composite vulnerability is the sum of the quintile score that each census tract ranked across all four factors.

Data sources:
1. 2010-2019 American Community Survey (ACS)
2. U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, CSHH Data 2010-2014
Average Mortgage Interest Deductions
On average, a Black Portland household could afford to purchase a home without becoming cost burdened and spending more than 30% of their monthly income on housing, not including taxes, insurance, or utilities, as indicated below.
“Hold the City, County, and Metro accountable for the HUD mandate to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing by **ending racial segregation** from opportunity, providing **community development** and **investment without displacement.**”

The People’s Plan, PAALF, 2017
Significance

• Current **zoning patterns uphold and reinforce** past harmful practices of **exclusion and speculation**
  
• **Exclusion in some areas** contributes to **displacement in other areas**
  • Inequitable benefits for privileged white homeowners
  • The Black community and other people of color have been repeatedly excluded, displaced and otherwise harmed

This is unacceptable. **We are obligated and authorized to do better.**
Questions

1. What is coming up for you after hearing this history?

2. How might lessons from this history be applied to how our city develops today?
Resources

Videos:
• Segregated by Design: www.segregatedbydesign.com
• Invisible Walls Shutting You Out? www.sightline.org/upzoning

Books:
• The Color of Law by Richard Rothstein
• Zoned Out! by Tom Angotti and Sylvia Morse
• Capital City by Samuel Stein