Race, Class, and Housing in Louisville, KY

The Racist Origins of City Planning, Banking, and Real Estate
1909 – The Birth of City Planning

- National Conference on City Planning - Held in Washington, D.C.

- Many fields attended:
  - Municipal art societies, civic improvement clubs, conservationists, settlement house leaders, architects, engineers, landscape architects

- Attended by big names
  - Olmsted, Robinson, Nolen, Ford, Marsh, Simkhovitch

- Main objective: validate study of health, safety, and welfare of nation

- Call for shift from aesthetics (City Beautiful) and focus more on efficiency and scientific management

- Big question: What should the US provide its citizens?
Benjamin Marsh

- Studied economics at Penn
- Brash, reform minded
- Traveled to Germany on numerous occasions and admired the German system
  - Believed planning should incorporate social justice and public health perspectives
- “A city without a plan is like a ship without a rudder.” - 1909
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr

- 1917 organized American City Planning Institute and served as President throughout the 1920s
- 1918 – said that good zoning policy had to be distinguished from “the legal and constitutional question.”
- “in any housing developments which are to succeed...racial divisions...have to be taken into account.”
The big battle at NCCP

- Marsh vs. Olmsted
- Social justice & public health vs. planning expertise and "scientific management" of the city
- Turning point in solidifying national city planning movement
- Olmsted’s interests prevailed
1910 - 1911

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
CITY PLANNING
AND THE
PROBLEMS OF CONGESTION
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
MAY 2-4, 1910

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
CITY PLANNING
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
MAY 15-17, 1911
1917 - Buchanan v Warley

- US Supreme Court ruled Louisville’s residential segregation ordinance illegal
- Case brought an end to racial zoning
- 1921 – Hoover Advisory Committee on Zoning
- 1924 – “A realtor should never be instrumental in introducing any race whose presence would be detrimental to property values”
- 1926 – Supreme Court upholds the constitutionality of zoning in Euclid v Ambler prohibiting apartment houses in single-family neighborhoods
- Zoning established in Louisville 1931, Comp plan in 1932
  - Harlan Bartholomew arrives
Alfred Bettman

- Director of National Conference on City Planning
- National Landuse Planning Committee
- Planning was necessary to maintain "the nation and the race."

Plate 6.1 Caricature of lawyer Alfred Bettman c. 1905.
Harland Bartholomew

- First full-time city planner in St Louis in 1916
- Introduced St Louis zoning ordinance in 1919
- Purpose was to prevent movement into “finer residential districts...by colored people.”
- Plans designed single-family areas that prevented future multifamily, commercial, or industrial uses
- Estimated where African Americans might try to move and zoned those areas industrial
Bartholomew’s 1932 Russell Design

NEGRO HOUSING SURVEY
LOUISVILLE KENTUCKY
Walnut Street Before Urban Renewal
“There are a number of obstacles that are fundamental to any scheme for improving housing conditions among Negroes. [These include] A lack of desire among a large portion of the population for something better than they are accustomed to...if it were possible to create among the Negro masses a real desire for decent accommodations, the slums would automatically eliminate themselves.”
Bartholomew’s 1957 Comp Plan

- Two urban renewal areas
  - “Insulate and protect the tremendous values in the central business district against the run-down and blighted neighborhoods around it.”

- 9th Street divide
  - “To allow more breathing space for downtown.”
    - Louisville Board of Realtors

  “A high-speed traffic artery or a wide street parkway may prevent the expansion of undesirable entities into adjacent areas.”
  “Natural or artificially established barriers will prove effective in protecting a neighborhood from adverse influences...and inharmonious racial groups.”

  - FHA Underwriting Manuals 1936
Renewal Areas
Traditional Development Pattern vs. the Suburban Experiment
Planning in 2017

Vision of Broadway as a complete street with BRT

Frankfort Avenue today

Vision of Frankfort Avenue as a complete street
2007 Supreme Court Ruling on School Integration in Louisville

“Where racial imbalance is a product not of state action but of private choice, it does not have constitutional implications.” - Chief Justice John Roberts
Form Based Codes

How zoning defines a one-block parcel
Density, use, FAR (floor-area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, and maximum building height(s) specified.

How design guidelines define a one-block parcel
Density, use, FAR (floor-area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building height(s), frequency of openings, and surface articulation specified.

How form-based codes define a one-block parcel
Street and building types (or mix of types), build-to lines, number of floors, and percentage of built site frontage specified.
# Housing Units Added To Downtowns Since 2000

**Sources:** Downtown Organizations, Development Strategies, January 2013

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Population

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Single Family Residential Building Permits Issued in Jefferson County Between 2011 and 2013