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AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE COMBINED IMPACTS OF REDLINING AND ZONING IN HARRISBURG

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ABSTRACT: *This research investigates the combined long-term impacts of redlining and zoning on four neighborhoods in the City of Harrisburg in Pennsylvania. Using a mixed methods research approach, including neighborhood profiles, field observation, and a comparison of key indicators across red-lined and green-lined neighborhoods, the analysis explores each neighborhood's development history with redlining and zoning and assesses the impact on physical and socio-economic outcomes. Findings illustrate how one of the most negative impacts of redlining – the disparity in household wealth creation – was established through redlining practices and perpetuated through local development regulation. Findings suggest how steps can be taken today to support the households that faced historic discrimination and mitigate the spatial inequities that resulted from redlining and zoning.*

***Keywords**: Redlining, Zoning, Harrisburg*

INTRODUCTION

In 1935 and 1936, many neighborhoods in the City of Harrisburg were redlined. Shortly after, in 1950, Harrisburg adopted a zoning ordinance. The purpose of this research is to explore the combined long-term impacts of redlining and zoning on households and local neighborhoods in Harrisburg. Redlining is a policy that created a structural barrier to homeownership and wealth-building opportunities. In many areas zoning continued to reinforce patterns of racial segregation and inequality while also redirecting development opportunity and potential. Neighborhood development is influenced by several factors including household and business financial investment incentives, local land use policies, and investment in local public improvements. Land use policies can be regulatory in nature, such as zoning, or can influence spending such as for public amenities like sidewalks and street trees. Land use regulations influence neighborhood development character directly by controlling the nature of development and protecting values for existing property owners, and indirectly by creating incentives that can redistribute development potential and associated wealth across neighborhoods. Through a close examination of four neighborhoods in the city, the research investigates how neighborhood character evolved through periods of redlining and early zoning and the long-term impacts on household wealth and neighborhood character.

REDLINING AND THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP

Historic redlining practices are a major factor in creating and maintaining the wealth gap between black and white households in the U.S. (Freund, 2007; Rothstein, 2017). The practice of redlining refers to the systematic discrimination in offering home mortgages and other financial services based on the racial and ethnic composition of a neighborhood, rather than assessing value and risk on the physical condition of a property and its surroundings. Redlining came about with the New Deal when the federal government, in the wake of the Great Depression, created new programs to issue loans to ease the wave of foreclosures across the U.S. (Rothstein, 2017). The Homeowners Loan Corporation (HOLC), a government-sponsored corporation, was created in 1933. The HOLC introduced a new federal lending program aimed at addressing the housing crisis by refinancing home mortgages at risk of foreclosure. The HOLC helped families stay in their homes by offering lower interest rates and longer repayment periods. Around the same time, the National Housing Act of 1934 was passed and established the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA was charged with devising a system to insure private mortgages to enable more families to buy homes with lower interest rates and down payments.

In 1935, the HOLC launched its City Survey Program and sent field agents to examine 239 US cities, large and small including Harrisburg, to create "Residential Security Maps" that would indicate the degree of risk for real estate investments in different neighborhoods. The HOLC targeted minorities by making race and country of birth key criteria in the district ratings that would indicate neighborhood suitability for lending and investment (Winling & Michney, 2021) Neighborhoods that received the highest rating of "A" and colored green on the maps, were considered "best." Neighborhoods that received the lowest rating of "D," and colored red, were considered "hazardous." Blue "B" and yellow "C" risk ratings fell in between. Building on explicitly racist criteria, areas with a large share of Black families and immigrant populations were most likely to be redlined, while neighborhoods comprised of mostly white families were likely to be greenlined. The HOLC and the FHA utilized the maps in their underwriting to assess the risk associated with providing mortgages in different neighborhoods. Most mortgages went to the top two – green "A" and blue "B" – areas. Households living in redlined neighborhoods found it almost impossible to get a federally subsidized loan to purchase homes or invest in housing improvements. For over 30 years, 98% of FHA loans went to white borrowers (McCargo & Choi, 2020). Without the opportunity to invest, minorities and immigrants saw the inevitable decline in their neighborhoods.

Household wealth takes various forms, but homeownership is the major way that Americans create wealth and has been shown to have the greatest impact on creating the racial wealth gap (Conley, 1999; Oliver & Shapiro, 2006). Discrimination in housing is the major reason that Black families across the income scale have a fraction of the family wealth that white families do (Killewald & Bryan, 2016; Krivo & Kaufman, 2004). African American families have a homeownership rate of 45 percent, less than two-thirds of the white homeownership rate of 73 percent. In 2016, the average African American family held just 8 percent of the average white family's wealth (Sullivan, 2017). The racial wealth gap reduces the opportunities available to African American, including "a loss of economic security, and inability to invest in the next generation, and lower psychological well-being." (Thomas and Meschede, 2018; p. 1079). Redlining was outlawed in 1968 with the passage of the Fair Housing Act, but there is still a close association between the areas deemed hazardous for investment and long-term investment potential of those areas (Hillier 2003). A 2022 report found that, over the past 40 years, homeowners in areas redlined by the government on average gained 52% less in wealth generated by property value than homeowners in non-redlined areas (Anderson, 2020).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Across U.S. cities of every size, twentieth century urban development has been impacted by policies that promote and maintain racial separation in housing and neighborhoods, including restrictive covenants, racial zoning, exclusionary zoning, and redlining. Systemic historical discrimination in development practices manifests in the continued segregation and isolation of communities of color from neighborhoods of opportunity. The theoretical framework for this research study draws on literature the investigates the intersections of urban development, race, urban poverty, neighborhood opportunity, and the connections between zoning and redlining. Together, these areas define key concepts, explain the origin and complexity of the research problem, and support generalizations of observed phenomena.

Urban Development, Race, and Urban Poverty

The post-World War II era in U.S. cities witnessed the emergence of what Wilson (1996) called the "new urban poverty," characterized by the proliferation of segregated, isolated, concentrations of poverty. While urban areas accounted for less than one-third of poverty in the 1960s, this figure surged to nearly 60% by the early 1990s (Wilson, 1996). This increase in concentrated urban poverty paralleled the rise in the percentage of poor African American residing in inner cities, climbing from 38% in 1959 to 80% in 1991 (Jargowsky, 1994). The spatial concentration of urban poverty resulted from a multifaceted interplay of economic shifts, racial segregation, and social policies (Wilson, 1987). Highlighting the prevalence of joblessness in these segregated neighborhoods, Kasarda (1989) underscored the significance of economic shifts and globalization in shaping urban neighborhoods, in particular the movement in the 1970s and 1980s of low-skilled manufacturing jobs away from the Northeast and Midwest to the South or overseas. Social isolation from more affluent communities and the decline in available low-skilled jobs were the main barriers to support socio-economic mobility (Wilson 1987). While race alone does not fully account for these neighborhood transformations, most scholars agree that racial segregation is an important factor. Massey and Denton (1993) detailed how systematic racial practices including restrictive covenants, redlining, and zoning, contributed to the creation of segregated ghettos.

Neighborhood Opportunity

Families of color disproportionately live in what are regarded as low-opportunity neighborhoods compared with white families (Sharkey 2013). Neighborhood opportunity is generally defined using characteristics such as: quality of public schools, rates of violent and property crime, stability of property prices, range of employment opportunities, and overall accessibility. In low-opportunity neighborhoods, it's difficult for families to send their children to good schools, to keep their families safe, to find good jobs, and to access basic services. Local neighborhood disparities magnify unequal wealth accrual from homeownership as property owners in low opportunity neighborhoods see less home value appreciation than those in high-opportunity neighborhoods (Ioannides, 2011). Neighborhood opportunity and redlining are closely connected. When banks refused to make loans for homes or businesses in redlined neighborhoods, they initiated a degenerative process of disinvestment, ultimately creating isolated, marginalized, and segregated neighborhoods (Sugrue, 2014). Even if residents in red-lined areas were able to maintain their property without bank financing, neighborhoods were not afforded investment for the maintenance of infrastructure or provision of other local services or amenities like recreational uses. As neighborhoods deteriorated, individual properties, even if maintained, might still be classified as "blighted." The systematic disinvestment from redlining practices created long-lasting effects that were evident in the instability and inability of red-lined neighborhoods to improve decades later.

Redlining and Zoning

While legally sanctioned segregation has been outlawed in the U.S., several legal and institutional structures still support de facto segregation, including zoning. Redlining and zoning have a complex relationship. Although they are distinct practices, in many urban areas, redlining and zoning are intertwined. Zoning is thought to have sustained the segregation of redlining and other forms of exclusion, such as deed restrictions and racial covenants, and reinforced neighborhood inequality (Pendall, 2000; Rothwell & Massey, 2010). There is little evidence that early zoning officials referenced the residential security maps in making decisions (Hillier, 2003), but the impacts of redlining on local development character likely influenced the creation of zoning districts. Early on, the major legal rationale for zoning was to avoid conflicting land uses and early zoning ordinances created a hierarchy of land uses (McGrew, 2018). Well-established residential areas were protected with restrictive zoning designations while residential areas designated as "blighted" were zoned to support large-scale redevelopment and houses torn down to make way for more profitable commercial and institutional development (Rugh & Massey, 2018). With the adoption of zoning ordinances, the inequities across neighborhoods were further solidified into law. The legacy of redlining is also reinforced through exclusionary zoning, which perpetuated high levels of residential segregation and limited homeownership opportunities, especially for African Americans (McGrew, 2018).

Most research on the ongoing impacts of redlining examines larger cities, such as Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles (see for example Jacoby et al., 2018; Bell, 2021; Bloch and Phillips, 2022). Recent case studies have explored sustained impacts of redlining in medium sized cities, including Hartford (Zhang and Ghosh, 2016), Sacramento (Hernandez, 2019), and Richmond (Perry, et al., 2021), but there is limited attention to the ongoing impacts of redlining on medium and smaller-size cities. Smaller cities remain highly segregated along dimensions of class and race. In a 2001 study of third-tier cities by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, which included Harrisburg, smaller cities were found to have disproportionately high unemployment rates, a declining population base, and high poverty rates (Siegel and Waxman, 2001). The authors note that smaller cities have unique community and economic development challenges due to their size, including less diverse economic resource bases, smaller geographic regions that they serve, and out-of-date infrastructure. With limited economies of scale, smaller cities face special challenges in updating their infrastructure and building the human capital base to attract businesses.

HARRISBURG: LAND DEVELOPMEMT INFLUENCES AND TRENDS

Harrisburg is the state capital of Pennsylvania. Located in Dauphin County, the city sits along the east bank of the Susquehanna River. Harrisburg industrialized in 1850 and served as a regional center of transportation and industry until the early-1900s (Eggert, 1993). Harrisburg's population reached its peak in 1950 at nearly 90,000 people. The population declined sharply through the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, and didn't stabilize until around 2000. In 2020, Harrisburg had a population of 49,230, which represents a slight decrease of approximately 300 people since

2010 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2020). Over half of the city's population is Black or African American, and slightly over one-third of the population is white.

Land development patterns in Harrisburg have several key influences, including proximity to the Susquehanna River and Paxton Creek, and the Pennsylvania Railroad corridor that runs north and south through the city. The rivers and rail corridor form natural and manmade boundaries that directed neighborhood growth north and south. Third street runs north to south through most of the city and forms a juncture between lower-lying land by the river and the ridge that rises to the east. Historically, neighborhoods west of 3rd Street contained a higher-end residences, while neighborhoods east of 3rd Street contained a mixture of dense housing mixed with more intensive commercial and light manufacturing (Harrisburg Comprehensive Plan, 2020). Many neighborhoods west of 3rd street have a similar character defined by a consistent building fabric, while neighborhoods to the east have housing interspersed with higher intensity uses.

Development in Harrisburg was influenced by the City Beautiful Movement, an urban design approach that occurred in the early 1900s, and sought to incorporate more natural space, trees, vegetation, and open space into urban environments. There are several demonstrations of projects in Harrisburg, including the Pennsylvania Capitol Complex. Redevelopment of the state capitol within a campus of state buildings was guided by a master plan developed by an architect and urban designer. Most city beautiful initiatives relied on the utilization of urban renewal, often underwritten by federal grants and loans, and slum clearance for their implementation (Wilson, 1980). To implement the capitol complex, the commonwealth and the city agreed that the state would gradually purchase and remove properties within the older sections of the adjacent neighborhood to make room for government buildings.[1]

The City of Harrisburg was redlined in the mid-1930s. Figure 1 shows how government appraisers classified neighborhoods across the city. Most of Harrisburg was classified as "B" blue ("still desirable"), "C" yellow ("definitely declining"), or "D" red ("hazardous"). Only two neighborhoods in the city were designated as "A," colored green, and labeled safe for investment. Most other areas of the city were deemed stagnant, declining, and dangerous areas for mortgage lenders to invest in. Redlined districts included areas adjacent to the industrial district along the rail corridor, as well as areas along the riverfront. The capitol complex did not receive a designation.

The first zoning code for Harrisburg was adopted in 1950. The ordinance included text and a map. The text was a 12-page document that created 11 zones and established permitted development uses and densities for each zone. The zoning map identified the location of the zones. The zoning ordinance created a hierarchy of residential districts including five residential districts, four business districts and two industrial districts. (City of Harrisburg Zoning Ordinance, 1950).[2] While there is no evidence that the public officials considered the earlier redline maps in establishing the districts, a comparison of the areal boundaries of the zoning and the residential security maps indicates some boundary alignment. Both green-lined areas on the residential security maps received restrictive zoning designations that limited development to low-density residential uses including single-family detached housing, twins, and townhouses, and complementary neighborhood community and retail uses such as schools. Building structures were limited to three stories with lot coverages maximums that protected considerable areas of open space and put limits on density. In contrast, most of the red and yellow areas from the redline maps were zoned to allow a mix of land uses and building types that supported more intensive development, often at odds with the existing neighborhood fabric. Zoning permitted uses such as higher-density apartments, as well as commercial, institutional, and light industrial development. Structures could be built at heights that greatly exceeded that of the existing houses. Generous impervious coverage standards allowed almost complete coverage of building lots. While the initial zoning reinforced and protected the residential character of the two green-lined areas, it incentivized large-scale redevelopment of many of the red-lined areas.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach was used to assess the impacts of redlining and zoning on neighborhoods in a quantitative and qualitative framework. The three primary methods included neighborhood profiles, field observation, and a comparison of key socio-economic indicators across the selected neighborhoods. Neighborhood profiles focused on location characteristics, regulatory history, and socio-economic conditions. Drawing on public documents, media

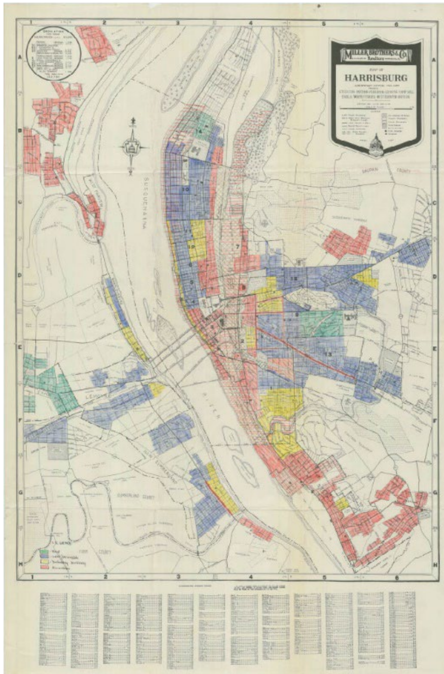

Figure 1. Residential security map for city of Harrisburg and the surrounding area.

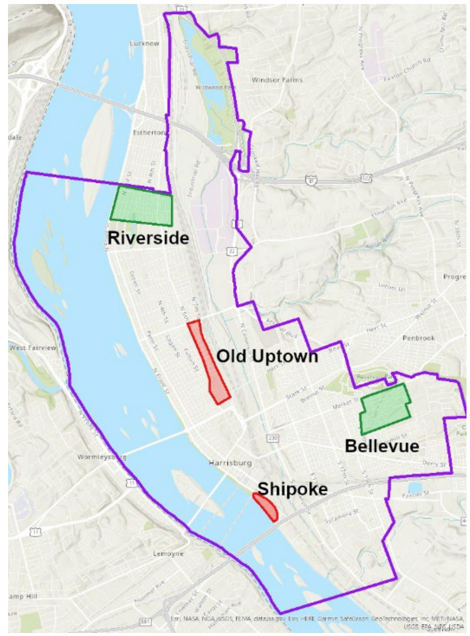

Figure 2. Location of selected neighborhoods for profiles.

and local historical accounts, the evolution of each neighborhood from the early 1900s through the present was explored. Land use policies and regulations implemented after redlining were examined, including zoning and any related planning policies. Data were collected to compare social and economic outcomes across the different neighborhoods. Key indicators examined included basic demographics, housing tenure (homeowner versus rental), household income, and household net worth. Field observation was conducted in each of the four neighborhoods to document key physical characteristics of the neighborhoods. The primary characteristics inventoried included public improvements such as sidewalks, streetlights, street trees, building conditions and upkeep, and visual character.

Four Harrisburg neighborhoods were selected for the neighborhood profiles, including two that were redlined (deemed "hazardous" for investment) and two that were greenlined (deemed "best" areas and safe for investment). Since only two neighborhoods in the city received a green designation, profiles were completed for each. There were five red-lined areas from which to choose. Two were selected on the basis that they shared a similar residential character around the time of redlining. Located west of Paxson Creek and the rail corridor, both were established neighborhoods with a similar residential fabric in the early 1900s. One neighborhood was adjacent to the historically industrial area; the second was located south of the city core, adjacent to the Susquehanna River. Figure 2 shows the location of the four neighborhoods.

NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

Ward 9 Bellevue Park

Bellevue Park is located at the easternmost edge of the city, at the top of an elevated ridge. Considered one of Pennsylvania's first landscaped suburbs, Bellevue Park was privately developed by the Union Real Estate Investment Company on a 132-acre tract of previous agricultural land. A master plan for the community was prepared in 1909 that included a network of roads that followed the natural contours of the land. The plan had lots for nearly 300 single-family detached houses. Utilities were placed underground and deed restrictions limited the use of fences and the removal of trees on individual properties. A design review process provided oversight to maintain the architectural quality of the neighborhood's houses (Beers, 2011).

The Bellevue Park community was completed by the 1930s when the residential security maps were developed. Government appraisers deemed Bellevue Park as "one of the most desirable areas," with a "very kept up" neighborhood "full of businessmen" (Digital Harrisburg Project, 2020). The neighborhood received an "A" rating and was colored green on the map, ensuring that households in the neighborhood would have access to financial resources to buy homes and maintain their investments.

When zoning was implemented in 1950, Bellevue Park was zoned R-1, the most restrictive zoning district. The R-1 district limited uses to single-family residential dwellings that met a minimum building footprint of 400 square feet. The zoning was later changed to Residential Low Density (RL), still the most restrictive zoning designation. Bellevue Park was one of only two areas in the city to receive this designation. The purpose of the RL district was "to provide for neighborhoods of primarily single-family detached housing at low densities. To protect neighborhoods from incompatible uses and other activities that would adversely affect the stability of the area." (Harrisburg Zoning Code, 2014). Single-family detached houses and semi-detached (or twin) houses are the only uses allowed. Multi-family uses, such as apartments, and all non-residential uses were excluded.

Density and area and bulk standards that govern the size, dimension, and placement of structures protected the low-density residential character of the neighborhood. The minimum lot area in the RL district was 5,000 square feet per dwelling unit and density was limited to 4-8 dwelling units per acre. The maximum building height was 35 feet, or approximately three stories. The impervious coverage ratio for a lot in the district was 50%, requiring that at least half of every lot remain undeveloped.

Field observation in Bellevue Park revealed an abundance of mature trees, established landscaping, and well-maintained community open spaces. Viewsheds remain free of power cords and electrical infrastructure (see Images 1 and 2). Most of the neighborhood has well-kept sidewalks. Residents of Bellevue Park have access to multiple recreational activities, including reservoir park, an 85-acre municipal park adjacent to Bellevue Park. The neighborhood is close to one of the only high schools in Harrisburg and to a selection of grocery stores and other retail services. Today, Bellevue Park is home to 317 households, with a median household income of $65,427 that is 40% higher than the city average.


Image 1. Typical house in Bellevue Park.


Image 2. Typical street view in Bellevue Park.

Ward 14 Riverside

The second green-lined district is a neighborhood called Riverside. Riverside sits at the northern edge of the city and is bordered by the Susquehanna River to the west and the railroad tracks to the east. To the south, the neighborhood is adjacent to Italian Lake Park, a 9.5-acre master-planned public park with a man-made lake that was planned in 1901 as a city beautiful initiative and reconstructed along with the adjacent High School in 1918. Riverside was annexed from Susquehanna Township to the City of Harrisburg in 1917. When the Residential Security Maps were created in the 1930s, government appraisers described the neighborhood as "excellent," and "the most desirable neighborhood," and "full of the best people in the entire city." According to the HOLC assessors, of the 1,543 residents at the time, there were seven black people and 218 foreign-born. The neighborhood received an "A" designation and was colored green on the map.

The Riverside neighborhood was initially zoned R-2 Residential and later rezoned Residential Semi-Detached (RSD). Both designations permitted pairs of single-family semi-detached dwellings that met a minimum floor area of 400 square feet for each unit. When the zoning was updated in 2005, the Italian Lake neighborhood was zoned Residential Medium Density (RM). The purpose of the RM district was "to provide for neighborhoods at medium densities," and "to protect neighborhoods from incompatible uses and other activities that would adversely affect the stability of the area." (Harrisburg Zoning Code, 2014). The RM district allows for a broader range of housing types, including townhouses and rowhouses. Multi-family uses are allowed if they meet certain design conditions. The maximum density is 8-20 dwelling units per acre, depending on the use type. Area and bulk standards specify a 1,500 square foot minimum lot area, a maximum building height of 45 feet. No less than 30% of an individual lot must remain open space. Together, these standards support a medium density neighborhood scale. The RM district allows for some non-residential uses that would be compatible with a residential neighborhood, such as bakeries, community centers, artist's studios, and florists.

Today, Riverside is home to 443 households in a mix of single-family homes, and twins, with community uses including churches, schools, and some neighborhood retail. The median household income of $59,668 is 28% higher than the city average. A suburban character is maintained with front and side yard setbacks and building heights that don't exceed three stories. Most of Riverside has well maintained sidewalks and mature trees and landscaping (see Images 3 and 4). Historically, the neighborhood was home to three educational facilities, including a high school, middle school, and an extension of a local college. Many medical practices and firms are also located within the neighborhood.

Image 3. Typical houses in Riverside.

Image 4. Typical street frontage in Riverside.

Ward 1 Shipoke

Shipoke is a historic neighborhood, originally settled as a trading post by Europeans in the early 1700s (Eggert, 1993), Located in what was the heart of the city, it housed industrial workers through most of the early 1900s, reaching a peak of nearly 3,000 residents by 1950. The neighborhood is bordered by the Susquehanna River to the west, with historic riverfront features including Victorian homes, gardens and courtyards, and views of the river. It is adjacent to the city center to the north. Most of the neighborhood sits within the flood plain of the Susquehanna River and has been subject to floods over time.

The notes on the Residential Security Map indicated that the neighborhood was mostly comprised of white-collar clerks and businessmen, and overall, the area was in good condition with good facilities. However, HOLC agents noted that the ownership of vacant lots by "foreigners" could be a detriment in the future and warned that Front Street was "definitely declining." It received a "D" designation and was colored red on the residential security map.

The original zoning classified the neighborhood RLA (Residential Limited Zone A) and RMV (Residential Mixed Vertical). The RLA zoning would maintain the existing residential character while allowing relatively low-density one and two-family residences. The RMV zone allowed the mixing of residential and certain limited professional or specialty service uses in a building. Building heights were limited to 45 feet. Today the neighborhood is zoned Residential Medium Density (RM), the same designation as Riverside. In addition to the range of residential housing uses and types (see summary in the Riverside neighborhood profile), the RM district allows some neighborhood-scaled non-residential uses, including neighborhood restaurants and retail. The density and dimensional standards, also summarized in the preceding profile, support a medium density neighborhood scale.

Today Shipoke is bordered by an Interstate highway to the east and is within walking distance to the city's Amtrak station, as well as restaurants and other retail services in the downtown area. Field observation reveals a neighborhood of well-maintained townhomes and a historic residential fabric (see Images 5 and 6). Neighborhood features include sidewalks, a riverfront trail, street trees, and landscaped entries around front doors. It's desirable location close to the river and downtown, however, is offset by the flooding potential stemming from its position within the flood plain. Shipoke is home to 152 households with a median household income of $52,355, 12% higher than the average for the city.

Image 5. Typical houses in Shipoke.

Image 6. Typical streetscape view in Shipoke.

Ward 7 Old Uptown

In the late-19^{th} and early-20^{th} centuries, Ward 7 was home to a large population of middle-class African Americans, as well as hundreds of Black-owned businesses. The area's proximity to the industrial rail corridor made it a desirable location for workers. Until the 1950s, much of the neighborhood had large areas of housing. When government appraisers redlined the area, they noted that it had a large population, most of which were "black," "alien," or an "undesirable" type of white. Notes state that the area was "neglected and undesirable" due to the railroad and several commercial elements (Digital Harrisburg Project, 2020).

The early zoning was a mix of Business General (BG), Light Industry (ML), and R5 Residential. The 5^{th} Avenue commercial corridor was zoned Business General (BG), and a small section of the neighborhood adjacent to the rail corridor was zoned Light Industry (ML). The R5 district supported the highest density residential uses. Over time a new Residential Planned Conversion (RPC) district was created, and a large area of the district was rezoned to RPC, which allowed a range of residential and neighborhood commercial uses.

The mosaic of zoning designations supported large-scale redevelopment in the 1950s, which significantly changed the character of much of the neighborhood. Under the guise of urban renewal, the commonwealth extended the capitol complex from the adjacent ward. The expansion included the construction of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry building. Through the 1960s and 1970s, substantial demolition of the housing stock occurred, with many blocks east of 5^{th} street torn down to make room for the new state buildings, institutional uses, and high-rise apartments, displacing many of the existing residents who were largely African American residents (Harrisburg Comprehensive Plan, 2020).

The entire area was rezoned to Commercial General (CG) in 2014. The CG district remains one of the most permissive of all the zoning designations and can support a wide spectrum of redevelopment. The purpose of the district is "To provide for a wide range of commercial, office, service, and some residential uses that serve local and regional needs and are located on major arterials." (Harrisburg Zoning Code, 2014). The CG district allows for multi-family (apartment) uses, as well as a wide range of non-residential uses. The area and bulk standards support larger structures, with a 3,000 square foot minimum lot area and a building height of 100 feet, or approximately eight stories. The maximum impervious coverage in the district is 95%, allowing almost total development of a lot.

Today the neighborhood has a disjointed mix of uses and building types including townhomes, high-rise apartments, large-scale commercial, and commercial lots. Along many streets, there are vacant, abandoned, or severely neglected lots with little to no green space. Old Uptown is home to 629 households with a median household income of $27,812, which is 40% lower than the city average.

Image 7. Typical townhomes in Old Uptown.

Image 8. Typical commercial development in Old Uptown.

Comparison of Key Neighborhood Indicators

To assess the presence of a wealth gap across the four neighborhoods, neighborhood indicators were selected to compare the current state of the four neighborhoods across four key socio-economic dimensions.[3] The indicators selected included median household income, percentage of families living below the poverty line, median net worth, percentage of homeowners (versus renters). Table 1 provides a summary of these indicators across the four study areas. Results affirm notable differences in household wealth creation between the red-lined and green-lined neighborhoods. The greatest contrast is evident in the differential in median net worth and housing tenure across the red-lined and green-lined neighborhoods. The average net worth for households in the green-lined neighborhood is considerably higher than that of the red-lined area and average net worth for the city. A substantially higher percentage of households in the previously green-lined areas own their homes compared to those in the previously red-lined neighborhoods. Net worth and housing ownership are related as homeownership is a primary factor in household net worth.

Table 1. Key Neighborhoods Indicators

Neighbor-hood	No. HHLDs	Median HHLD Income	HHLDs Below Poverty	Median Net Worth	% Black Alone	% White Alone	Owner-Occupied Housing
Bellevue	317	$65,427	15.0%	$125,246	40.4%	37.5%	62.8%
Riverside	443	$59,668	1.3%	$132,881	28.9%	46.1%	60.45%
Old Uptown	594	$27,812	32.5%	$12,178	43.8%	34.0%	17.31%
Shipoke	152	$52,355	7.1%	$18,693	35.4%	47.2%	27.15%
Harrisburg City	21,474	$46,654	28.3%	$14,892	46.4%	34.3%	35.53%

Source: U.S. Census 2020; ESRI Business Analyst

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of this exploratory research demonstrate that the combination of planning policy, local land use regulations, and financial practices impacted by redlining shaped the socio-economic landscape of Harrisburg to the benefit of some neighborhoods and detriment of others. Spatial inequities influenced through early planning policy and institutionalized through redlining, were perpetuated through zoning. City beautiful initiatives targeted investment to selected areas. Building on these policies, redlining created more neighborhoods of advantage and disadvantage and broadened spatial inequities across a wider area. The negative impacts of redlining on neighborhoods were reinforced and perpetuated through subsequent zoning decisions made by local officials.

The biggest household economic impacts were related to homeownership and wealth creation. In the green-lined neighborhoods, existing residents were afforded cheap mortgages and restrictive zoning protected their private property interests by preserving neighborhood character and limiting intensive development. They also benefited from greater access to resources for neighborhood improvements such as well-maintained sidewalks, street trees, streetlights, parks, and other general neighborhood amenities. Grocery stores, retailers, and other neighborhood-based businesses were more likely to locate in or near the green-lined neighborhoods, further contributing to neighborhood opportunity and protecting home values.

The neighborhood profiles demonstrate that redlining does not directly correlate with socio-economic decline in a consistent way. Despite being redlined, Shipoke now boasts restaurants, neighborhood parks, newly renovated apartments, and a historic residential character, while Historic Uptown shows evidence of social and economic distress (including a high poverty rate and low median household income), and broad clearance of the previous residential uses. The Shipoke neighborhood had location advantages including proximity to the Susquehanna River and a unique historic character that from a land use perspective justified protection against more intensive development. The Historic Uptown neighborhood's proximity to industry and the capitol district justified a more intensive redevelopment that replaced many of the older homes. The key income indicators show that Shipoke has stayed largely on par with Bellevue and the Italian Lake neighborhoods, while Historic Uptown lagged. However, as reflected in lower household net worth and high proportion of renters in Shipoke and Historic Uptown, the "high-risk" designations in both redlined neighborhoods were consistent in denying residents homeownership opportunities. The more restrictive zoning in Shipoke protected the structures, but not the existing residents.

Old Uptown and Shipoke had different development trajectories, but redlining played a role in each. Old Uptown was most directly impacted by large-scale, government-led redevelopment, enabled by permissive zoning. Redlining provided an environment that allowed this redevelopment to occur. By denying existing residents access to financial resources, redlining created the conditions that later justified the government's determination of "blight." In Shipoke, the government did not lead redevelopment directly, but government policy through zoning created private development opportunities that supported the transfer of development rights from existing residents to residential developers. Redlining in Shipoke provided an environment that supported this property transfer, by denying existing residents the ability to accumulate wealth and rendering them unable to compete for space against better-funded private interests. This comparison illustrates the complex ways in which redlining, and government development policies and practices interrelate in shaping Harrisburg's socio-economic landscape.

Barred from access to mortgages and property investment funds, families living in the red-lined neighborhoods did not have resources to purchase homes and benefit from the wealth-creation opportunities that come from property ownership. Zoning shifted development opportunities from existing residents to private commercial developers. Zoning incentivized redevelopment, either in the form of high intensity uses that destroyed the existing character of the neighborhoods, or in the form of context appropriate development that protected the existing character, but not the property interests of the existing residents. In both cases, zoning catalyzed the redistribution of wealth to private developers through incentives that created development potential for either large-scale commercial redevelopment or smaller-scale residential redevelopment, the economic beneficiaries of which were private developers and their outside investors. The wealth that was created in the Shipoke neighborhood was largely generated for private real estate landowners who were able to purchase properties at reduced rates. These properties were subsequently redeveloped into high-end rentals.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings of this exploratory research suggest directions for further research on understanding the relationship between redlining and zoning, and the long-term impact of neighborhoods, and unique challenges in smaller cities to overcoming a history of racist urban development policies. The combined impacts of redlining and zoning were significant contributors to Harrisburg's housing landscape and the pattern of inequity that still exists today. Through an examination of neighborhoods, this research demonstrates how public and private sector development influences worked together to target investment across the city. The creation and implementation of development regulations protected neighborhood character and incentivized private investment in some areas, while supporting wholesale government-led redevelopment in others. Previously green-lined neighborhoods received the highest zoning protections, further benefiting existing homeowners. Previously red-lined neighborhoods were zoned to incentivize commercial development, generally to the detriment of existing residents.

Addressing the legacy of redlining and zoning is essential for achieving more equitable urban environments. Understanding the relationship between redlining and zoning can help to inform future planning and land development regulation decisions that are more equitable and counteract the longstanding historic impacts of redlining. While a full redress for the long-term impacts of redlining is unlikely to ever be achieved, the findings suggest local steps to remedy disparities from historic discrimination and provide some redress for the long-term impact to intergenerational wealth related to housing. A better understanding of the challenges faced by smaller cities impacted by redlining can help to better understand how to support racial equity in small cities, while addressing their unique community and economic development challenges.

The goal of local programs should be to address racial disparities in housing by creating some form of wealth-building opportunities, and homeownership incentives. Programs can include direct support for housing and zoning reform. The City of Evanston Illinois, for example, provides housing grants to eligible Black residents for home repairs, down payments, and mortgage payments. Households are eligible if they are descendants of residents who suffered historical discrimination. In recent years there have been various zoning reform efforts to address the legacy of the connection between redlining and zoning by promoting more inclusive and equitable zoning policies. Cities and municipalities have revised zoning regulations to allow for greater density, affordable housing, and mixed-use development to counteract historical patterns of exclusion and segregation and promote homeownership opportunities. Inclusionary zoning initiatives can be targeted to the provision of affordable housing, particularly in areas prone to gentrification.

To support use of quantitative research methods, the study could be expanded to include a larger number of neighborhoods in Harrisburg, including blue-lined and yellow-lined neighborhoods. With a larger set of neighborhoods, impacts on variables such as housing prices, median household income and others could be more rigorously quantified. Alternatively, more detailed case study approaches of selected neighborhoods could better explain the local dynamics at play in the neighborhoods, including the array of stakeholders, and the local social, economic, and political influences. This richer qualitative approach could provide a better accounting of the direct impacts on existing households at the time of redlining and might reveal the extent to which early zoning decisions were directly influenced by the residential security maps.

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[1]The neighborhood referred to as the Old Eighth Ward had many types of businesses, hotels churches, synagogues, and residences. It was home to approximately 1,500 residents and was known as the center of Harrisburg's African American population. It is estimated that nearly 600 structures were removed to make way for the Capitol Complex.
[2] Starting with 11 districts, the zoning ordinance grew to include 27 base zoning districts and six overlays. A major zoning revision in 2014 led to the adoption of a new code with nine base districts and four overlay districts.
[3] Neighborhood indicators were generated with the use of Business Analyst, and extension of ESRI's ArcGIS.