

INVOLVING THE FOLK: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN COMMUNITY LEADERS AND  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN EAST ATHENS,  
GEORGIA

by

LINDSEY KATHRYN GLASS-DESHMUKH

(Under the Direction of Stephen Ramos)

ABSTRACT

The profession and practice of planning have the power to influence economic, social, and political landscapes of communities, neighborhoods, cities, and regions. Because of this, citizens that are living in neighborhoods of income disparity, citizens that are politically disenfranchised, and minorities should hold a place of participation within the political process of planning. This thesis examines the neighborhood of East Athens, Georgia, a historically African-American neighborhood with low levels of citizen participation in the planning process. Through interviews with neighborhood leaders and government officials, I explore the issues that facilitate low resident participation: participation solicitation methods, top-heavy local government, low levels of trust, and rampant poverty.

INDEX WORDS:     planning, urban planning, historic African-American neighborhoods,  
                          minorities, minority communities, participation, civic involvement

INVOLVING THE FOLK: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN COMMUNITY LEADERS AND  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN EAST ATHENS,  
GEORGIA

by

LINDSEY KATHRYN GLASS-DESHMUKH

BA, Berry College, 2012

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND DESIGN

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2014

© 2014

Lindsey Kathryn Glass-Deshmukh

All Rights Reserved

INVOLVING THE FOLK: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN COMMUNITY LEADERS AND  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN EAST ATHENS,  
GEORGIA

by

LINDSEY KATHRYN GLASS-DESHMUKH

Major Professor:	Stephen Ramos
Committee:	John Crowley
	Nik Heynen
	Bruce Lonnee

Electronic Version Approved:

Julie Coffield  
Interim Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
December 2014

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated the people of East Athens. Simone Weil wrote, “attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity”; may you receive the attention you deserve. To my parents, for loving your strange bird endlessly. To Viraj, for constantly spurring me on. To all my dear ones, for encouraging me to keep my hands on the freedom plow and allowing me to crash on your couches. To Professor Ramos, for not giving up even though I have been, quite possibly, the most procrastinating person on the planet. You are all the salt of the earth. Thank you.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'll start from the beginning. Ms. King, you made me love learning from the beginning; thank you for encouraging my five-year-old self to be curious, creative, and comfortable with asking big questions. Allen Edwards, you encouraged me to walk around in other peoples' shoes (figuratively), told me read Letter from Birmingham Jail, encouraged me to always seek frontier before comfort, and are the most "Atticus" person I know. Dan Sundblad, it's all your fault that I seek, as much as I do, to understand those who are different from me. Sarah Allred, your strength, grace, and bold compassion will always inspire me. Robinson, Lucas, Brown, and Belche: thank you for deeply concerning my heart, soul, and bones with the state of the Hood. When you get out, stay out. Bruce Lonnee, thank you for letting me pick your brain on such a constant basis, and I hope you know we're friends now; keep fighting the good fight. And finally, my spirit guide, Stephen Ramos. You made me love grad school, gave lectures I still think about, and have constantly challenged me to be a more deeply diplomatic human. When I think back on the people that have shaped my intellectual life, it's you all that I think of. You'll always be the voices in my head and I wouldn't have it any other way.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
Summary of the Research Problem .....	1
Research Questions and Objectives .....	7
Methods .....	9
Organization of the Thesis .....	10
2 Planning and the Urban Black Experience .....	13
Introduction.....	13
Between Two Wars.....	14
The Post-War Urban Black Experience.....	18
Conclusion .....	24
3 The Era of Civil Unrest.....	25
Introduction.....	25
The Civil Rights Movement and Resulting Legislation .....	25
Black Power .....	30
The Intersection of Urban Planning and Equity Planning .....	33
The Great Society, the War on Poverty, and Model Cities.....	34

The Fair Housing Act .....	37
“Inheriting the Ghetto” .....	39
Conclusion .....	40
4 Public Participation Theory and Application: Roxbury, Boston as a Case Study .....	42
Public Participation in Planning Processes .....	42
Community Participation Ethics .....	42
Ladder of Public Participation .....	46
Effective Participation in a World of Elites .....	48
“Successful” Participation and “Successful” Planning .....	50
Public Participation Case Study: Roxbury Master Plan .....	52
5 East Athens as a Crucible: Past and Current Realities Explored Through Dialogue with Community Leaders and Government Officials .....	64
Introduction to East Athens .....	64
A Wealth of Community Based Organizations .....	66
Athens-Clarke County’s Planning Department and Comprehensive Plan .....	70
Introduction to the Project .....	75
Research Methods/ Data Collection .....	77
Findings .....	80
Conclusion .....	94
6 Analysis, Conclusions, and Future Research .....	96
Introduction .....	96
East Athens and Roxbury: Similarities, Differences, and Lessons .....	97



Making Sense, and Plans, from Dialogue with Community Leaders and Government Officials .....	100
Future Research .....	102
REFERENCES .....	103
APPENDICES	
A Survey .....	106

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Roxbury Context Map.....	53
Figure 2: Roxbury Neighborhood Map .....	54
Figure 3: The East Athens Neighborhood: Census Blocks 301 and 302.....	64

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Summary of the Research Problem

Historic African American neighborhoods are epicenters of significant political, economic, and social intersections. Because historic African American neighborhoods have developed within and alongside subjugating local and national political, economic, and social forces, their inner workings- including social capital networks and levels of collective efficacy- are both powerful and specialized. While these networks have long served the unique needs of the African American individuals and families that live within them, they also present a unique challenge for urban planners. A long history of neglect by local and regional urban planning forces now stands between historic African American neighborhoods (and individual residents) and the now shifted urban planning process- one theoretically and often practically interested in a planning process centered around equality and public input. As in the case of the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department and the East Athens Neighborhood- an in-city historically African-American neighborhood in East Athens bounded by Peter Street, East Broad Street/ Lexington Avenue, and the Athens Perimeter- or, more specifically, Census Tracts 301 and 302- the public has been largely absent from planning input, boasting the lowest rates of public participation in Athens-Clarke County. While mistrusting of the urban planning process and planning officials, the Neighborhood is battling several mounting pressures, the most

obvious of which is the studentification<sup>1</sup> of the neighborhood. Studentification of the East Athens neighborhood threatens the long-standing social networks that preserve identity and community, the landscape of the neighborhood, and the survival of one of the two Historic African American neighborhoods in Athens, Georgia. Athens-Clarke County planning officials are immensely interested in working with historic residents to preserve the integrity of the neighborhood, but must first find ways to bridge the gap between their skills and political power and the historic residents, who possess powerful social connections but are largely unengaged with the very public input process that determines so much about the future social landscape of the neighborhood. If this gap can be closed it would create, for historic African American residents, an influential space within the local public realm.

This thesis aims to narrate and examine the historical, social, economic, and political realities of the East Athens neighborhood from two perspectives: the perspectives of those who work in positions of civic power within the Athens-Clarke County's local government and the perspectives of community leaders of the East Athens neighborhood. By putting these two sets of perspective into dialogue with one another, I will develop a framework that aims to define and clarify methods of engagement for the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department so they can better facilitate citizen public in participatory

---

<sup>1</sup> The term 'studentification' refers to the process of social, environmental, and economic change affected by large numbers of students invading particular areas of the cities and towns in which popular universities are located (Macmillan Dictionary). Smith notes that studentification effects communities in four types of regards: (1) social, the replacement and/ or displacement of established residents with a transient, generally young and single, social grouping; (2) cultural, the growth of concentrations of young people with shared cultures, lifestyles, and consumption practices, which in turn results in the increase of certain types of retail and service infrastructure; (3) physical, the downgrading or upgrading of the physical environment, depending on the local context; (4) economic, the inflation of property prices and a change in the balance of the housing stock resulting in neighborhoods becoming dominated by private rented accommodation and houses in multiple occupation, and decreasing levels of owner occupation (Smith 2014).

input for the urban planning process among minority neighborhoods, specifically historic Black neighborhoods.

The American Planning Association (AICP) adopted an official code of ethics and professional conduct in March of 2005. Section A of the code, “principles to which we aspire” addresses overall responsibilities to the public. Included in these principles are (1) a commitment to always be conscious of the rights of others; (2) a commitment to have special concern for the long-range consequences of present actions; (3) a commitment to pay special attention to the interrelatedness of decisions; (4) a commitment to give people the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs that may effect them, even those who lack formal organization or influence; (5) to seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a social responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration; (6) to promote excellence of design and endeavor to conserve and preserve the integrity and heritage of the natural and built environment; and (7) to deal fairly with all participants in the planning process (AICP 2009). The attention given to an overarching goal of ‘justice’ or, as Fainstein might specify, the advancement of ‘equity’, ‘diversity’, and ‘democracy’ by planners within cities, is necessary, not only because of the popular history of planners failing their public, but because of the pressures put on planners and communities in the cities of the “wealthy, Western world, where neo-liberal formulations have become powerful influences on urban policy” (Fainstein 2010). The meeting of these two pressures, the first being the long and sorted history of urban planning failures and the second, the system within which these failures were allowed

(and even encouraged) to occur, are worth unpacking further, particularly within the context of historic African American neighborhoods and communities.

An essential point of failure which has been historically prevalent and which continues today is the intended or unintended exclusion of those who lack “formal organization or influence”. While this phrasing leaves room for the understanding that many of the communities ignored or underserved by the planning process contain, within themselves, complex and organized social systems, structures, and networks, it acknowledges that these systems, structures, and networks are not always evident to outsiders (planning officials, etc.) and they do not always meet the planning process, particularly where public input is concerned, in what is understood as an ‘organized’ front. This is not solely a failure of the discipline of urban planning but of deliberative democracy as well (ibid.). While deliberative democracy does hold dear the ideal that everyone’s opinion should be respectfully heard and that no particular group should be privileged in the interchange of opinions and ideas, it is not a sufficient ideal, especially when dealing with communities who mistrust elected officials and entities for ignoring or failing to fully practice deliberative democracy and public engagement in the past (ibid.). The ideal also ignores a plethora of other attributes that might discourage an individual from participating in a public input process outside of mistrust for the planning entity, including sex, gender, race, class, and ability, to name a few. This itself presents yet another troubling intersection: a poorly executed and ignorant public engagement process met with not only the possibly “unorganized” public but also the particular life histories and attributes of individuals.

It is also important to recognize the fact that historic African American neighborhoods are no longer homogeneous within their bounds. While the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct upholds the goal of expanding justice for all persons and groups and the chance for all to be meaningfully involved in the development of plans, the Code also mentions a goal of promoting racial and economic integration. In many neighborhoods, the two goals are in direct conflict. In the case of historic African American neighborhoods, inundation of non-historic residents of differing racial and class backgrounds typically disrupts the social cohesion and longstanding social networks of the historic residents. Particularly when the inundation of non-historic residents serves development rather than integration. In recent years, the topics of gentrification and studentification have become prominent in dialogue surrounding historic ethnic neighborhoods, both in popular media and within research. Most of this research has focused on the objective macro effects of gentrification, primarily examining property values and other effects of development that occur alongside gentrification and how these effects disrupt social cohesion through the physical removal of historic residents. However, little has been done to examine the subjective effects of gentrification, meaning its effect on collective efficacy (socialization) and social networks (social ties) within historic African American neighborhoods as understood by the historic residents who remain in their neighborhood. In the case of the East Athens neighborhood, studentification is equally as important to consider. Studentification is the phenomenon in which an expanding student population moves in mass to traditionally non-student neighborhoods. Often low-income neighborhoods fall victim to studentification because they are centrally located and property values/ rent costs are low. The East Athens

neighborhood is subject to both gentrification and studentification. While the two are not mutually exclusive, studentification seems to be the more toxic, as the defining trait of studentification is transience.

While historic minority communities, African American ones amongst them, have been subject to a horrible past and an underserved present, it is important to learn about their inner-workings from a standpoint that is not victimizing. Ever in stasis- rather from developmental pressures, economic pressures, changing job markets, changing political climates, gentrification and studentification pressures, evolving cultural and social norms, etc.- there always exists a possibility for grassroots organization. An exploration of the very systems, structures, and networks that allow historic African American neighborhoods to function so highly on an ‘informal’ level might enable the community to better recognize itself, capitalizing on the strengths already in place to organize in a way that would allow the neighborhood as a whole to grasp power within the public input process rather than shying away from it.

We are left with many interfaces: desire for equity vs. development; uninvited public vs. disinterested public; unorganized neighborhood vs. highly complex neighborhood; students and new residents vs. long-standing social networks; appropriation vs. control; integration vs. inclusion, all of which materialize in concrete ways, and all of which affect the ways the neighborhood functions, both within itself and in the realm of public involvement. These interfaces are what make this project not only important but necessary, offering the possibility of bridging the gap that exists between the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department’s public input process and a neighborhood, which is all at once valuable and threatened, powerful and absent, old and new, connected and



disengaged, a truly unique political ecology. Gaining insight into the co-existing methods of public engagement as well as the ways in which local leaders are reaching out to the local government will enable Athens-Clarke County's planning department, and others which struggle with engaging historic minority communities in public input processes, to better meet their public, while also making that public aware of a space in the public process that is intended for them, if they will rise to fill it. Not only will this serve the needs and desires of a historically ignored and underserved community, but it will be one step in the work of transforming the local public realm and evolving the political community of Athens.

As with any project, the research that led up to this thesis presented me with many questions, new directions, and revelations. However, much of which I uncovered was outside the scope of this document and is best preserved for a later date. I was able to formulate several questions with connected objectives to guide me in my exploration of this rich and complex topic. These questions follow a certain linear logic: history, a picture of the present reality, and takeaways for the future.

## 1.2 Research Questions and Objectives

In order to critically examine the gap between the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department's public input process and the East Athens neighborhood's low levels of public input, I asked several questions:

- 1) How have urban planners failed Historic African American neighborhoods in the past?, and what remnants of that failure are still present in these neighborhoods-

in the attitudes of residents toward planning or in the physical landscape of the neighborhood?

- a. How do the landscape and collective memory of the neighborhood impact levels of trust historic residents feel toward planning professionals in ACC?

2) Further, how is the current public realm of Athens-Clarke County impacting historic resident participation in various local governmental departments' attempts to engage historic African American neighborhoods?

- a. How is the current method of public engagement failing historic residents?
- b. How is the current method of public engagement benefiting historic residents?
- c. How could ACC's planning department and the East Athens neighborhood work together to develop a more successful set of methods to engage the residents in public discourse?

3) What role can bottom-up social movement play in garnering more participation by historic residents in the public realm?

These questions aim to understand the complex web of social, economic, and political relations that are underlying in the simple question: How can ACC's planning department better engage historic African American residents to participate in the public input process of planning?

### 1.3 Methods

In order to explore the intersection of history, present reality, and the future of civic involvement, specifically involvement in the planning process, in the East Athens neighborhood, I used two main methods of enquiry. The main thrust of this project focuses on interviews with two groups of people. The first I refer to as “governmental officials”, which are defined as individuals who work for the legislative branch of the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government. I spoke with people who worked for governmental departments that directly interact with the East Athens community in some facet. The second group of interviewees are referred to as “community leaders”; these are individuals who are either historic residents of the East Athens neighborhood or individuals that serve at community based organizations and non-profit organizations that originated in and serve the East Athens neighborhood. Their individual and diverse narratives contribute to two perspectives of understanding- one of which sees from within a local governmental authority into the community (from without working within) and the other a “bottom-up” perspective, one rooted deeply within decades of Black history, experience, community, and change.

I will be using mixed qualitative methods, specifically thematic analysis, to maintain the narrative of each of the leader’s stories while pulling out and examining the distinctive themes they address. By putting government officials’ perspectives alongside the perspectives of community leaders, we begin to grasp the similarities and differences in thinking regarding public participation/ civic engagement in the East Athens neighborhood, specifically public input in the planning process.

Additionally, I will ground myself with written texts, which serve as a secondary source of data. Examples include governmental reports, applicable newspaper articles, planning documents prepared the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, and other relevant data.

#### 1.4 Organization of the Thesis

The first two chapters of the thesis (chapters two and three) will deal with the ways in which the discipline of urban planning has impacted the lives of African Americans and African American neighborhoods. Chapter 2 will be broken down into several subsections, and each one will examine planning's influence on a specific time period, designated by significant social, political, economic, and planning acts. The first subsection will address the planning in relation to Black population between World War I and World War II. During this time, legal cases were the basis of governmental planning institutions interactions with Black populations, and major desegregation cases will be covered. The second subsection will visit Black urban communities post-World War. This was a time of metropolitan revolution, white flight, and the ghettoization of blacks in urban America, influenced primarily by the Federal Housing Acts of 1937 and 1949, the Home Owners Loan Corporation, and the FHA and VA loan programs. While many of these acts are now antiquated, their impacts on African-American neighborhoods are innumerable, and, in many cases, still visible within those communities. One cannot understand the present reality of historically African-American neighborhoods without understanding the ways urban policy and legislation shaped them throughout the middle-Twentieth Century.

Chapter 3 will focus on what can be called the “Era of Civil Unrest”, which spans from the late 1950s to present day. This era is defined by the racialization of poverty, continued ghettoization of blacks in urban centers, segregation, and Jim Crow; the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement were both incredibly influential to urban policy and planning during this time. The legislative products of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement will also be addressed: the Fair Housing Act, The War on Poverty, Model Cities Legislation, Advocacy Planning, and Community Organizing, are all children of these two monumental social movements.

Chapter 4 addresses the public participation process. I will discuss several theories of public participation, including community participation ethics, the ladder of public participation, and effective participation in a world of elites. I will offer a case study: the Roxbury, Boston Comprehensive Planning process of 1999. The Roxbury Case Study is helpful in a number of ways, primarily in that it illuminates a neighborhood that faced similar levels of disengagement with the planning process to East Athens, and supplies the ways and means that neighborhood used to overcome the majority of its urban planning woes.

Chapter 5 hones in on Athens, Georgia, and the study site, the neighborhood of East Athens. The purpose of chapter five is to offer a truncated description of public participation processes from the past (running alongside urban planning history in the states) up until the present. I will offer critiques of Athens-Clarke County’s current public participation methodology, one adopted from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. In addition, this chapter houses the conversations had with East Athens neighborhood leaders and local government officials.

Chapter 6 offers analysis of both the dialogues with East Athens neighborhood leaders and local government officials, as well as a framework that places East Athens on the spectrum of the Roxbury Case Study. This allows me to present a snapshot of the current dialogue between East Athens community leaders and ACC officials, and revealing how the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department can better engage them in the public realm. The final chapter, Chapter 7, will tie up any loose ends; discussions, conclusions, and future research will all be addressed.

## CHAPTER 2

### PLANNING AND THE URBAN BLACK EXPERIENCE

#### 2.1 Introduction

Excavating the long and interconnected history of urban planning and the Black urban experience is important for several reasons: a need to document the planning profession's contributions to and negations of society, a need to acknowledge Black history's place in the planning dialogue, the realization that the urban Black experience cannot be fully understood without exploring historical urban planning pressures, as well as the ultimate realization that planning practice and conditions in Black urban neighborhoods still influence one another (Thomas 1994). On the national level, the historical interplay of planning and historically Black neighborhoods is best understood when divided into eras; these eras are generally bookended by significant socio-historical movements. June Manning Thomas suggests four eras that express the historical connection between race and planning in the U.S.: (1) the period between the two world wars; (2) early post-war; (3) civil rebellion and the 1960s; and (4) the contemporary divided city (ibid). Within each of the historical periods there are particularly potent political, social, and economic influences at play, and within each of the periods it is essential to remember that national policy and social movements effect every level of society in one way or another, down to individual neighborhoods.

## 2.2 Between Two Wars

The most prominent elements of urban planning's interaction with the urban Black experience during the period between the two World Wars (1918-1939) were the emergence of zoning as a tool for social and racial segregation and the prominence of radically restrictive covenants (*Corrigan v. Buckley*, 1926) (ibid.). The great demand for a labor force during and after World War I prompted the northern migration of hundreds of thousands of southern Blacks to industrialized cities. Between 1916 and 1918, a half-million Blacks migrated from the South to the North, and between 1870 and 1940, there was a net out-migration from the South of two million Blacks. This migration morphed the racial, social, economic, and political landscape of American cities almost overnight, presenting unprepared city officials with racial problems that would plague city governments well into future; many city governments and officials maintained and perpetuated racial tensions by supporting segregation in housing, employment, and community services (ibid.).

There were several landmark legal cases during this period that made it particularly easy for cities experiencing an influx of southern African American workers to exclude them, physically, from certain areas of a city; physical exclusion from majority White residential areas often meant seclusion and ghettoization for Black migrants. Zoning was often the go-to exclusionary tool. Before discussing the specific zoning cases that forever impacted the ways in which African American neighborhoods could and would form, it is important to understand that not all zoning was intended for social exclusion of Blacks. However, as in any situation, political pressures were at play; progressives who were interested in using zoning as a method for improving blighted



physical environments came up against racially motivated groups, transforming zoning from a helpful mechanism for neighborhood improvement into a mechanism for protecting property values and excluding the “undesirables”, including immigrants and African Americans (Silver 1997). This drive was particularly strong in Southern cities, where the power of zoning was gauged by its effectiveness in enforcing and perpetuating racial segregation (ibid.).

In 1917, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Louisville, Kentucky’s racial zoning ordinance unconstitutional in *Buchanan v. Warley* (ibid.).<sup>2</sup> However, because of unchallenged discriminatory practices in Southern cities coupled with Northern cities’ rapidly increasing African American populations, racial zoning persisted post *Buchanan v. Warley*, only differing in several ways (ibid., 32). Before the decision on *Buchanan v. Warley*, residential zoning laws were the work of nonplanners who recognized the potential for land use regulation to achieve social objectives (ibid.). Silver writes of racial zoning after the Supreme Court decision in 1917:

After 1917, cities preferred to engage professional planners to prepare racial zoning plans and to marshal the entire planning process to create the completely separate Black community. The *Buchanan* decision undermined the use of zoning to segregate explicitly by race but not the use of the planning process in the service of apartheid. (ibid.)

By this, Silver means that cities were now openly engaging their planners- elected officials and public servants- in the process of full racial segregation by using “designations” of Black residential areas to guide public and private development. Even if legal racial zoning ended in 1917, the practice was still alive and well in most major

---

<sup>2</sup> *Buchanan v. Warley* 245 U.S. 60 (1917)

cities because their planning process continually supported the creation and maintenance of a bifurcated society (ibid.).

In 1926, the U.S. Supreme Court legitimized zoning as an appropriate use of the police powers reserved for the states under the constitution in *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Corporation* (Ritzdorf 1997).<sup>3</sup> The *Euclid v. Ambler* decision was steeped in politics of racial and ethnic hatred that defined the nativist backlash of the time, propelled along by fear inspired by the millions of immigrants who were arriving in U.S. cities- the migration of millions of Blacks from the south during and after World War I contributed to swelling cities, fueled negative responses from the White “native-born” population, and cumulated in one “American cultural ideal”: homogeneous, exclusively White single-family suburbs (Ritzdorf 1997). Although *Euclid* was a less acute method of racial segregation it nonetheless enabled communities to segregate themselves from the growing numbers of immigrant and in-migrant populations flooding cities. With this, the racialization of space became infinitely more entrenched in cities and psyches. Two prominent impacts of *Euclid* come to mind: the first is the way it smoothly took the place of racialized zoning, cloaked community protection, just in time for the advent of government subsidized housing in the 1930s and 40s- usually in the form of multi-family apartment complexes- which could easily be excluded from particularly zoned areas with race remaining only in the undercurrent of conversation, but never the focus. The second is the way in which *Euclid* and discriminatory zoning in general have influenced the segregated minority communities they caused- the primary one being that those communities were often denied the basic protections of existing Euclidian zoning offered

---

<sup>3</sup> *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Corporation* 272 U.S. 365 (1926)

to other communities- leading to still existing issues of environmental racism, including decisions made in regards to hazardous wastes and landfill sites (ibid., 44-5).

One technique used to maintain racial and ethnic segregation, which spans from the time between the World Wars into 1948, are restrictive covenants. The staple case for restrictive covenants is *Corrigan v. Buckley*, which was decided in 1926- the same year the *Euclid* decision came down from the U.S. Supreme Court (Thomas 1994). Individuals or groups used restrictive covenants in housing to restrict other individuals or groups from residing in a house, neighborhood, or area (Leavitt 1997). Vose, in *Caucasians Only: the Supreme Court, the NAACP, and Restrictive Covenant Cases*, details that restrictive covenants could be placed in title deeds or signed as separate agreements apart from the property titles (Vose 1959). These restrictive covenants were typically imposed or entered into by land companies or individuals concerned with the ongoing interest of the real estate they sold (ibid.). While individuals and corporations could agree to insert covenants into their title deeds, if a larger area of land was affected, *Corrigan v. Buckley* allows that property owners in an area could collectively agree amongst themselves, as well as their heirs and successors, to observe restrictions against the sale or rent of any of the properties to Blacks (ibid.). Between 1918 and 1948, when the Supreme Court found restrictive covenants to be unenforceable, twenty states and the District of Columbia sanctioned racially restrictive covenants (Leavitt 1997). This was a way for property owners to affect the same end as residential segregation laws, effectively excluding Black people from White communities. *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the 1948 Supreme Court case that brought down *Corrigan* specified that the judicial enforcement of restrictive covenants constituted government action that is unconstitutional under the equal protection clause

of the Fourteenth Amendment (Wilson 2006).<sup>4</sup> With this, time and situation collided: World War II ended, veterans flooded back into the country and immediately into the White suburbs, and the consolidation of ghetto boundaries.

### 2.3 The Post-War Urban Black Experience

Post-war urban Black experience was defined by several factors: the not so distant past of blatant racial segregation measures, white flight, public housing, urban renewal, and the consolidation of the ghetto (Thomas 1994). During the years following the end of World War II, there were two mass exoduses: the first was the overwhelming movement of White middle and working classes to the suburbs. This “metropolitan revolution” established decentralization as the dominant urban pattern for decades to come (ibid.). The second mass exodus was the continued migration of Blacks out of the South and into Northern cities. In the 1950s, some 1.5 million African Americans left the South for Northern cities, followed by 1.4 million in the 1960s (Massey and Denton 1988). Black migration to the North coupled with home mortgage insurance programs offered to white war veterans spurred “white flight”. While white families left cities, African Americans suffered from overcrowding and limited economic/housing mobility (Thomas 1994).

While the outlines and form of the modern Black ghetto were in place in most cities by the outbreak of World War II, thanks in part to racialized zoning laws and restrictive covenants, the end of the War established a new economic order that dramatically transformed the social and special organization of cities; sprawling decentralized metropolises replaced the once compact settlements:

---

<sup>4</sup> *Shelley v. Kraemer* 334 U.S. 1 (1948)

“This new urban political economy mixed the public and private sectors to an unprecedented degree, and the distinguishing feature of racial segregation in the postwar era is the direct role that government played not only in maintaining the color line but in strengthening the walls of the ghetto.” (Massey and Denton 1988)

In 1942, 84% of white Americans polled said “yes” to the question “Do you think there should be separate sections in towns and cities for Negroes to live in?”; and in 1962, 61% of white respondents agreed that “white people have a right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and blacks should respect that right” (ibid.). During this time, racial turnover in neighborhoods was rapid, and the ghetto’s expansion was even more rapid.

While it may seem odd that White populations leaving cities caused intensified ghettoization of Blacks, there are a few reasons. First, white policy makers, city officials, property owners, and business owners still felt a pressing need to contain Blacks in restrictive sections of cities and this influenced policy decisions (Thomas 1994). Although the U.S. Supreme Court declared racially restrictive covenants unenforceable in 1948, real estate policies were pervasively discriminatory against blacks in most American cities (Massey and Denton 1997). In a study of real estate policy done by Rose Helper in the 1950s, she found that, in Chicago, 80 percent of realtors refused to sell blacks property in white neighborhoods, and 68 percent refused to rent them such properties (Helper 1969). Realtors were not the only entities discriminating against blacks; banks and saving institutions were also instrumental in the ghettoization of urban blacks in their denial of loans to black homeseekers (Massey and Denton 1997). Sixty-two percent of the real estate agents Rose Helper interviewed in the 1950s felt that few or very few banks were willing to make loans to blacks, and half the agents confirmed that

banks would not make loans to areas that were black, turning black, or threatened with the possibility of black entry (ibid.,50).

However, the persisting prejudices against blacks by private real estate agents, banks, and lending agencies- which eventually contributed to a systematic, institutionalized racial discrimination within urban housing markets- were not the only forces at play encouraging the ghettoization of black in the post-War era. The federal government was essential to the process (ibid.,52). The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) was established in 1933; HOLC provided funds for refinancing urban mortgages in danger of default and granted low-interest loans to former owners who had lost their homes through foreclosure to enable them to regain their properties (ibid.).

Unfortunately, HOLC was not without racial prejudices as it initiated and institutionalized the practice of "redlining"; this practice grew out of HOLC's need to evaluate the risks associated with making home loans in certain urban neighborhoods (ibid.). HOLC established four categories of neighborhood quality (the lowest was coded with the color red, hence "redlining") and the two lowest coded categories of neighborhoods virtually never received HOLC loans (ibid.). Though HOLC did not invent these standards of racial worth in real estate, it "bureaucratized them and applied them on an exceptional scale. It lent power, prestige, and support of the federal government to the systematic practice of racial discrimination in housing" (ibid.).

HOLC's greatest offense to urban black populations was its influence on the underwriting practices of the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration during the 1940s and 1950s (Mohl 1997). The FHA loan program was created by the National Housing Act in 1937, and the VA program was authorized by the

Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944; these two loan programs together transformed the residential housing market of post-War United States and were the major impetus behind the rapid suburbanization of the United States post 1945 (Massey and Denton 1997). The FHA program operated by guaranteeing the value of collateral for loans made by private banks- it guaranteed 90% of the value of collateral so that down payments of 10% became the norm; the FHA program also extended the repayment period to 25 or 30 years, lowering monthly mortgage payments and eliminating most of the risks to banks (ibid.). Home ownership became a mass phenomenon almost overnight, and, because of FHA financing and new construction techniques, it became cheaper to buy new suburban homes than to rent comparable older dwellings in the central city, therefore contributing to the decline of the inner city and encouraging the out-migration of middle-class whites to the suburbs (ibid., 53).

The FHA program reinforced segregation in myriad ways, the most prominent of which was their rating of homes and neighborhoods; this rating system established minimum standards for lot size, setbacks, and separation from existing structures that eliminated from eligibility many inner-city dwellings, particularly row houses and attached dwellings (Farrell 2002). When evaluating neighborhoods, the agency followed suit with HOLC: "if a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes" (Massey and Denton 1997). As a result, the majority of FHA and VA mortgages went to white middle-class suburbs, effectively disinvesting the federal government in central cities at the expense of suburbs and the disinvestment in blacks as opposed to whites (ibid., 53). The FHA and VA programs, federal programs, sent a strong message to private lending institutions,

which followed in divesting from the affected areas: “The lack of loan capital flowing into minority areas made it impossible for owners to sell their homes, leading to steep declines in property values and a pattern of disrepair, deterioration, vacancy, and abandonment” (ibid., 55).

White flight and ignorance of urban black populations encouraged by federal policies left many cities in a spiral of urban decline. Because of the cycle in place: immigration of southern blacks, out-migration of middle-class whites, the array of social problems that accompany poverty, a growing demand for city services- particularly social services- and therefore increasing costs for local governments, rising taxes furthering white flight, and so on, forced prominent interests within cities to turn to the federal government for relief from the very problem that government had created.

The federal government delivered this ‘help’ via the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954, which provided federal funds to local authorities to acquire slum properties, assemble them into large parcels, clear them of existing structures and “blight”, and prepare them for “redevelopment” (MGraw 1955). However, to qualify for slum clearance funding, local redevelopment authorities and planners were required to provide an adequate supply of replacement housing for those who were displaced, with rents within their means; this was the advent of public housing (ibid.). Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, local authorities manipulated housing and urban renewal legislation to carry out widespread slum clearance in growing and prospering black neighborhoods that were considered to be encroaching on white business districts and institutions (ibid.). White citizens and politicians also mobilized to block the construction of projects within white neighborhoods, forcing public housing onto cleared land within or adjacent to



existing black neighborhoods- neighborhoods which were already densely populated and struggling with poverty and lacking social services. On top of their location, public housing projects were built as cheaply as possible and so were multi-unit projects with extremely high density (ibid.). It became virtually impossible for black neighborhoods to remain intact:

As black neighborhoods adjacent to threatened white areas were torn down and converted to other uses, thereby blocking the expansion of the ghetto in that direction, public housing for displaced residents had to be constructed elsewhere. Because for political reasons projects could only be built in ghetto areas, other black neighborhoods were razed and high-density units constructed there to accommodate the residents of both neighborhoods. (Massey and Denton 1997)

The result of razing and displacement was the permanent displacement of urban blacks into other crowded ghetto neighborhoods, further contributing to their instability and decline- only successful in that they shifted the problems of blight, crime, and instability from areas adjacent to elite white neighborhoods to places deeper in the black ghetto (ibid.).

As cities systematically cleared out slums, established black neighborhoods were not able to absorb all of the victims of urban renewal, and some sought housing within working-class white neighborhoods, which were located along the ghetto's boundaries (ibid.). In this way, urban renewal accelerated racial turnover within in-city neighborhoods, expanding the ghetto:

In cities receiving large numbers of black migrants, racial turnover was so regular and so pervasive that most neighborhoods could be classified by their stage in the transition process: all white, invasion, succession, consolidation, or all Black. In six northern cities... 90% of all neighborhoods inhabited by blacks in 1960 were either all black or clearly moving in that direction, a pattern that prevailed through 1970 (ibid., 45-6).

Not only did this process of urban renewal fail at solving the very problems it sought to remedy, it successfully transformed an urban landscape that was highly segregated into one of severe social isolation where public housing projects and ghettos effectively served as black reservations.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The institutional ghettoization of African-Americans during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century deeply influenced the living patterns, lifestyles, and collective identities of Black Americans; through racialized zoning restrictions, high-profile and racist legal precedent, private sector real estate discrimination, red-lining, and the FHA and VA loan programs, white Americans were able to construct, for themselves, an urban reality in which Blacks were corralled. The effects of these deeply entrenched processes still effect many African American individuals, neighborhoods, and communities socially, politically, and economically. The effects of these processes also set the stage for the great urban Black revolution that would engulf most of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Little did legislators, judges, real estate agents, mayors, and families know it, but their racially restrictive practices were feeding a fire that would soon become two of the strongest social movements the United States had ever seen: Civil Rights and Black Power.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE ERA OF CIVIL UNREST

#### 3.1 Introduction

Continued racialized poverty, the blooming Civil Rights Movement, other civil rebellions, neighborhood organizing, and a continued lack of available resources- including housing- defined the urban black experience of the 1960s. The Federal Government and local governments, including local planning departments, met this host of urban black experiences with several related actions: the War on Poverty, social planning, citizen participation, advocacy planning, neighborhood planning, and the Model Cities legislation. In the way that post-war planning defined the physical landscape experience of urban blacks, the 1960s- commonly referred to as the era of civil rebellion- defined the collective social psyche of urban blacks. This was a defining moment in black liberation efforts. The birth and growth of the nationwide civil rights movement invigorated African Americans- both Northern and Southern- and their efforts, born out of civil disobedience, protest, and sometimes violence, made the United States government very aware of the legislative and social changes that needed to occur.

#### 3.2 The Civil Rights Movement and Resulting Legislation

Although the Civil Rights Movement was in active prior to the 1960s, the beginning of the movement was incredibly influential on the legislation and further social movements that occurred during the era of civil rebellion proper. On December 1, 1955,

Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give her bus seat to a white passenger (Ware 2013). Within days, the Montgomery Improvement Association was formed, with a young Martin Luther King, Jr. as president (ibid., 1108). After a year of intense organization the Montgomery Buss Boycott was successful with the Supreme Court ruling in November of 1956 that segregation on public transportation was unconstitutional.<sup>5</sup> In 1957, Little Rock, Arkansas was the focus of the country, as a previously unaware population witnessed the ugliness of segregation. The effort to desegregate schools in the South began an era of “massive resistance”; the Supreme Court’s decision in *Cooper v. Aaron* was the result of these events, holding that the Arkansas officials were bound by the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment in *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>6</sup> Three years later, in 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded by a group of students in Raleigh, North Carolina who had been previously responsible for organizing lunch counter sit-ins across the South; SNCC was the face of student activism, with the goal of ridding the South of Jim Crow segregation and all of the country of American apartheid (Wilkins 2007). In the spring and summer of 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and SNCC organized “freedom rides” throughout the South; over 1,000 black and white volunteers from across the country came to ride interstate busses in order to protest illegal but locally enforced segregation of interstate travel facilities (Ware 2013, 1089). The freedom rides attracted much media attention as many riders were subject to gross violence and beatings when arriving at Southern bus terminals. In 1962, James Meredith became the first African American student to enroll at the University of

---

<sup>5</sup> *Browder v. Gayle* 352 U.S. 903 (1956)

<sup>6</sup> *Cooper v. Aaron* 358 U.S. 1 (1957)

Mississippi (ibid., 1090). Meredith had to be escorted into the University by U.S. Marshals for his own protection; his acceptance into a public University caused so much social unrest, rioting, and violence that President John F. Kennedy sent U.S. Army police and troops from the National Guard to Oxford, Mississippi to keep the peace (ibid.). Two people died in the conflict, 160 U.S. Marshals were injured, and forty soldiers and National Guardsmen were wounded (ibid.). In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. launched the Birmingham campaign, which included marches and sit-ins; Eugene “Bull” Connor, Birmingham’s Commissioner of Public Safety, ordered police officers to use high-pressure water hoses, police dogs, and tear gas to control protesters- this extreme brutality was featured on newscasts across the country, once again awakening those outside the South to extreme and entrenched racial injustice. Dr. King was arrested during the riot and while imprisoned wrote the *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, which argued that individuals have a “moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws”, and after long weeks of tense negotiations, an agreement was reached that provided for the desegregation of Birmingham’s stores, restaurants, and schools (ibid., 1091).

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom took place on August 28, 1963 and was the result of the collective efforts of several civil rights groups; this seminal event was the largest civil rights demonstration in American history, with 250,000 people gathering peacefully on the Mall in Washington, D.C. to hear Dr. King’s “I have a dream” speech (Jones 2010, 33-52). The March mobilized behind demands for equal access to jobs, public accommodations, voting rights; raising the minimum wage and extending it to workers in agriculture and domestic service; and placing all unemployed working in “meaningful and dignified jobs at decent wages (ibid., 34). While the March

on Washington Coalition did not achieve every aspect of their agenda, it did manage to convince President John F. Kennedy to add equal employment measures to the civil rights bill that he had already proposed; the March also persuaded Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, to couple the Civil Rights Act with the War on Poverty (to be discussed later) (ibid., 35).

“It was the longest nightmare I have ever had: three months- June, July and August of 1964” (McAdam 1990). These are the words of Cleveland Sellers, a SNCC volunteer, speaking of the Freedom Summer campaign. Known at the time as “the Summer Project”, the Freedom Summer was spearheaded by SNCC; more than 1,000 people, the vast majority of them white, Northern college students, migrated to South for the purpose of registering black voters and teaching in “freedom schools”, predominately in Mississippi (ibid., 4). Ten days into the Project, three participants- James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner- were kidnapped and beaten to death by a group of segregationists, led by local law enforcement officers (ibid., 4). By the end of the summer, four project workers had been killed, four persons were critically wounded, eighty workers were beaten, there were one thousand arrests associated with Freedom Summer work, thirty-seven churches were bombed or burned, and thirty black homes or businesses were bombed or burned (ibid., 96). While the Freedom Summer will rest in American History as a high-water mark for early 60s liberalism, it also served as one of the last large acts of interracialism; the foundations of the nonviolent movement began to crack amongst calls for black power and black separatism later in the year, and were wrecked in the wake of the Watts riots in 1965 (ibid., 5).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352) was enacted in the summer of 1964 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The landmark legislation included several major provisions: (Title I) barred unequal application of voter registration requirements, but did not abolish literacy tests sometimes used to disqualify African Americans and poor white voters; (Title II) addressed public accommodations, outlawing discrimination in hotels, motels, restaurants, theaters, and all other public accommodations engaged in interstate commerce, but exempted private clubs without defining “private,” thereby allowing a loophole; (Title III) permitted Justice Department suits to secure desegregation of certain public facilities; (Title IV) encouraged the desegregation of public schools and authorized the U.S. Attorney General to file suits to force desegregation, but did not authorize busing as a means to overcome segregation based on residence; (Title V) addressed the procedures for the Civil Rights Commission, broadened its duties, and extended its life through January 1968; (Title VI) authorized but did not require the withdrawal of federal funds which practiced discrimination and; (Title VII) outlawed discrimination in employment, although it lacked meaningful enforcement powers (Civil Rights Act of 1964).

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did include some voting rights protections, it did not fully protect voters from discrimination at the polls; to mend this, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 into law, which prohibited states from imposing any requirements that would deny the right of any citizen to vote on account of race (Ware 2013, 1091).

The Civil Rights Movement caused immense social change throughout the country, inspiring an extensive amount of legislation that would forever alter the lives of

African Americas in the United States. However, another movement was waiting to take center stage, exploding in the ghettos of the North and in the imaginations of young activists: the Black Power Movement.

### 3.3 Black Power

I will never say that progress is being made. If you stick a knife in my back 9 inches and pull it out 6 inches, there's no progress. If you pull it all the way out, that's not progress. The progress is healing the wound that the blow made. And they haven't even begun to pull the knife out, much less heal the wound. They won't even admit that the knife is there.  
(Malcolm X)

The phrase “black power” was first used by Stokely Carmichael (who would later become Kwame Ture), the then leader of SNCC, during a 1966 march in Mississippi, and meant black political and economic control of predominately black communities in the Deep South. Despite past and present efforts to define the “black power”, there remains a cloud of mysticism and bewilderment in the minds of most as to what the movement intended. The phrase itself calls to mind, for most, images of gun-toting Black Panthers, that moment at the 1968 summer Olympics, the wanted poster for Angela Davis, and while these tableaux were indeed a part of the Black Power Movement, they were by no means its totality.

The Black Power Movement emerged in the mid-1960s, advocating unity, community building, a celebration of blacks' African heritage, and the development of independent black organizations, while rejecting the integrationist goal of the Civil Rights Movement (ibid., 1093). Rather than desegregation and integration into white society via non-violent action, the Black Power Movement focused on improving their



own communities. Even this description is troubling as it puts the two movements into an unfair dialogue with one another, suggesting that the Black Power Movement cannot be discussed without its foil, the Civil Rights Movement, and also that the Black Power Movement stole the momentum of the Civil Rights Movement, setting them at opposite poles.

The embrace, at times, of violent rhetoric, misogyny, and bravado by black power advocates have made them and their struggles easy targets for demonization and dismissal. For instance, black power stands at the center of declension narratives of the 1960s: the movement's destructiveness poisoning the innocent of the New Left, corrupting a generation of black activists, and steering the drive for civil rights off course in a way that reinforced racial segregation by giving politicians a clear, frightening scapegoat. The backlash that followed seemingly destroyed the potential of the civil rights movement to establish new democratic frontiers. This narrative still too often provides the basis for popular understandings, as well as scholarly framings, of black power as an unabashed failure and a negative counterpart to more righteous struggles for racial integration, social justice, and economic equality (Joseph 2009, 751-76).

The power of the movement was that while it was realized, felt, and enacted in black communities, it was, at the same time, challenging the scope of liberalism, democracy, and the nation-state, as well as how we envision the practice of democracy at the local, regional, national, and global levels (ibid., 752).

Black militants in the North, inspired by the direct action of civil rights protesters in the South- while repulsed by the treatment of those protesters- became cynical about the ability of American democracy to defend black citizenship, and formed a parallel movement with no name (ibid.). In 1962, radical black college students in Ohio founded the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), which was committed to socialism and armed self-defense (ibid.). RAM, the Group on Advanced Leadership (Detroit), and other

militant black organizations found unity in Malcolm X, who would become the face and voice of the Black Power Movement (ibid.).

At its core the black power movement, in contrast to the struggle for civil rights, privileged a view of black empowerment that was local, national, and international in scope, held political self-determination as sacrosanct, and called for a redefined black identity that connected black Americans to a national and global political project based on racial solidarity and a shared history of racial oppression. (ibid., 753)

Manuel Castells cites the massive riots in black ghettos as “the most spectacular and perhaps the most influential form of social protest of the time” (Castells 1983, 49-67). Between 1964 and 1968 there were at least 329 important riots, involving hundreds of thousands of black people, taking place in 257 American cities and leading to 52,000 arrests, 8,000 injured, and at least 220 dead (ibid., 50). These violent grassroots mobilizations emerged out of myriad demands from numerous groups but were collectively successful in transforming “the American urban scene into a battlefield”, sparking “the community revolution” or a “backyard revolution” (ibid.). A majority of the riots, or tiny revolutions, took place in Northern cities, where government policies and private practices in the real estate industry had confined blacks to substandard housing in undesirable neighborhoods; Northern ghettos had been pushed as far as they could go, and with the influence of Black Power dialogue, exploded (Ware 2013, 1094). While the upheaval did happen at a time when most of civil society was in a state of unrest, this movement specifically called into question the pattern of urban development that had been shaping the American landscape for almost half a century (Castells 1983, 50).

In 1967, Dr. King announced a plan to organize a Poor People's Campaign, which would focus on unemployment and poverty. Then, on April 4<sup>th</sup> of 1968, King was shot and killed in Memphis, Tennessee (Ware 2013, 1094). Riots erupted in 130 cities across the country and 20,000 people were arrested; Washington, Baltimore, and Chicago were the heaviest hit with unrest (ibid.).

### 3.4 The Intersection of Urban Planning and Equity Planning

Norman Krumholz defines 'equity planning' as a "conscious attempt by some professional urban planners to devise and implement redistributive policies that move resources, political power, and participation toward low-income groups" (Krumholz 1997, 109). Equity planners are steeped in ideas of racial and social justice since "deprivation and discrimination disproportionately affect low-income communities of color" (ibid.). Krumholz further details the difference between "traditional" and "equity" planners:

While traditional, or mainstream, urban planners focus on the physical environment, where they attempt to adjust public works and other investments in a way that is consistent with social and economic trends and sound principles of design, equity planners seek to reduce inequality in cities and metropolitan regions. As a result, the practice of equity planners often differs from that of most urban planning professionals and sometimes operates in tension with the local political process. Traditional planners use a generally middle-class value system that emphasizes aesthetics, efficiency, and the value of real property, while trying to fulfill local objectives of physical well-being, concerning both immediate needs and those of the foreseeable future. They are inclined to accept a technical role and let elected politicians or planning boards set goals and choose the ends of their work. (ibid.)

Equity planners take an alternative view; their process focuses upon the means as well as the ends, and perhaps to a higher degree (Krumholz and Clavel 1994). Equity planning

seeks to give precedence to the most disadvantaged citizens of a place based on the understanding that governmental institutions are inherently stacked against those at the bottom of our social system (ibid). The thrust is that no matter how well structured and aesthetically pleasing our cities are, true beauty and efficiency cannot be achieved as long as segregation, poverty, and slums exist (Krumholz 1997, 109).

While cities and society are still struggling with issues of income disparity, imbalances in power, and racial segregation, the theory and practice have been around for more than a century. The ideas that equity planners espouse gained public attention in the 1960s, when larger society began to see, through the urban civil unrest sweeping the nation, how traditional planning methods- and specific policies such as urban renewal- were victimizing working class urban populations (ibid., 110). However, Krumholz does point out that while people were more aware of the social ills ailing the country, equity planning continued to be peripheral to mainstream planning practice; he uses the example of the two most important city plans of the 1960s- Philadelphia (1961) and Chicago (1965) and their outright ignorance of race and segregation as issues (ibid., 111). Regardless, social unrest collided with the faults of mainstream urban planning to create a perfect storm, and from that emerged the Model Cities program.

### 3.5 The Great Society, The War on Poverty, and Model Cities

The Great Society was a swath of social and economic programming introduced by newly elected Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964-65, which aimed to confront the increasingly evident social problems of the time. The War on Poverty was a component of the Great Society, and within that came the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the

creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), and Model Cities (Thomas 1997, 144). Thomas calls Model Cities programming “a peace offering to the disaffected”, as it was implemented as an antidote to urban renewal (ibid.).

Often the brilliance of Model Cities is lost in the program’s rather ungraceful dismount (under Nixon) as well as inadequate resources, local political battles, uneven performance, and poor federal leadership (ibid.). Whatever the reality, the idea was a solid attempt to engage poor Black and Latino communities in new forms of municipal government to “provide greater understanding of the lives of the impoverished, improved methods for dealing with their problems, replication on a larger scale, and ultimately the elimination of urban poverty” (Weber and Wallace 2012, 173-92). Weber and Wallace also point out that Model Cities acted in another facet as well: that of calming agitated segments of the population (ibid., 174). Model Cities created a new tier of civic/ political leadership that aimed to: cause greater collaboration among, and more rational processes within, local bureaucracies and human service agencies; develop new and improved community development practices; enhance infrastructure and transportation systems; better housing, employment, and educational opportunities; reduce welfare rolls; lower crime rates; and build a greater participatory democracy (ibid.).

The most innovative aspect of Model Cities is the focus on citizen participation; during the time of the Model Cities programming, both sides of the aisle (conservatives and liberals) shared the belief that participation was necessary to battle the pervading culture of poverty in that participation brought about a sense of ownership (ibid., 177). Key government reports detail the role, extent, and type of citizen participation that took place within Model Cities; some were “staff dominant” (a term that refers to city hall

controlling the decision making) and some were “resident dominant”, but the report showed greater success in Model Cities where residents were actively involved in all decisions while being assisted by city hall support (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development 1970). This opportunity was a “political response to a political problem” (Greenstone and Peterson 1973). While Model Cities did fall under the War on Poverty and was often referred to as the “second war on poverty”, its sole purpose was not to abolish poverty in the short term; Model Cities was built around the premise that citizen participation stood at the intersection of racial and political authority issues, and participation would either be a bridge or a gap (ibid.).

Model Cities failed under the hood of Nixon’s presidency. Because Model Cities had failed to right centuries’ old dynamics in less than five years, the general mood shifted from support of citizen participation and directly empowering individuals/communities through federal support to strengthening municipal governments (Weber and Wallace 2012, 186). This is not to say that Model Cities were not successful in some ways; the programs forced local governments to alter their established procedures; change their hiring practices; expand regular services to previously ignored neighborhoods; take a leadership role in coordinating otherwise disparate agencies; improve services such as health care for the underserved and legal representation for the disenfranchised; build recreation and senior centers where none previously existed; oblige local governments to directly involve citizen input in the planning process; and finally, Model Cities played a key role in bringing racial dynamics into the greater dialogue, nurturing a renaissance of minority political participation in the United States (ibid.).

When Model Cities programs were laid to rest in 1974, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) took their place (Thomas 1997, 144). CDBG programs were more oriented toward physical development and less concerned with creating citizen participation in distressed urban areas; in many cases, CDBG turned its face away from financing projects in poor Black areas to more prosperous cities and suburbs (ibid.). Michael Bonds identifies the ways in which the CDBG program diverged from Model Cities: (1) CDBG provided local officials with more discretion and flexibility on establishing the use of these funds for program activities; (2) CDBG allowed for social and geographical targeting within broad federal guidelines; (3) gave local decision-makers the ability to determine the type of administrative structure and citizen participation it wanted for the CDBG Program; and (4) it streamlined the application process and federal monitoring (Bonds and Farmer-Hinton 2009, 74-89). Though the Community Development Block Grants program has been in place for more than four decades, its work does not fully address the still dominant issues of race, income disparity, and lack of civic engagement in urban minority communities; the hope of doing both at once, redevelopment/ rejuvenation of poor urban spaces while also treating the deep social ailments running through our minority communities has been left behind.

### 3.6 The Fair Housing Act

The Fair Housing Act of 1968 stood as the fundamental federal response to the housing segregation that had plagued American communities for decades and continues to be a powerful legislation (Prakash 2013, 1437-97). Early in that year the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, widely known as the Kerner Commission,

warned the American public that “our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal... Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American” (Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968). The Commission was erected by President Lyndon B. Johnson to examine the causes of civil unrest, particularly the race riots that had occurred the year before, in 1967. In response to the Kerner Commission’s findings, Congress passed Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968- the Fair Housing Act (Larkin 2007, 1617-53). The Fair Housing Act (FHA) was purposed with removing all obstacles to housing opportunity that had dominated both the public and private sectors, more specifically, making it illegal to “refuse to sell or rent or otherwise make unavailable or deny a dwelling to any person because of race” (Prakash 2013, 1459). The FHA extended to disallow specific and widespread acts of housing discrimination, including racial steering, exclusionary zoning, redlining, discriminatory appraisals, refusal to provide home insurance/ up-charging on the basis of race, discriminatory eviction notices and rental rates, and the sexual harassment of tenants; the FHA also mandated that the government act affirmatively against discrimination (ibid.).

During this time, the U.S. government was focused on ending institutional discrimination of all kinds: voting, employment, education, and access to public accommodations, as part of the “Second Reconstruction”, to achieve, within the county, “truly integrated and balanced living patterns” (ibid.). Larkin refers to the Fair Housing Act as a “social reengineering tool”, and while it is easy to focus on the legal aspects of the FHA, it must be noted that segregated housing was representative of the deep



exclusion of the African American community from mainstream American life (Larkin 2007, 1620).

Swati Prakash identifies three primary problems with the Fair Housing Act. First, the FHA was oriented toward ridding overt interpersonal bias rather than implicit and systematic bias, meaning that although the Act did increase freedom for homebuyers, it did not and has not effectively addressed the patterns of segregation caused by white homeowners leaving a community as soon as the population of African Americans reaches a particular tipping point (Prakash 2013, 1461). Second, targeting racial discrimination is insufficient to address the interaction between race and class in creating and maintaining segregation (ibid.). Prakash's point is that housing discrimination and racial segregation, though closely tied, are not the result of the same set of factors; and, though many neighborhoods are currently predominately Black or predominately white, that is not because of explicitly exclusion, it is because of immense disparities between whites and minorities in incomes and wealth (ibid.). Third, the Act's central focus is on the transactional act of housing (buying and selling, etc.), and that focus makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the Act to root out pervasive and systematic patterns of segregation (ibid., 1462). But how have these shortcomings of the Fair Housing Act affected minorities living in the U.S.?

### 3.7 "Inheriting the Ghetto"

In 2010, the "dissimilarity index"—an index of segregation that represents the percentage of people of a particular minority group who would have to move to other census tracts in order to have a perfectly integrated city—was at 65 percent, compared

with 83 percent in 1970 (Gurian 2011, 560-69; Massey and Denton 1987, 802-25). In Athens, Georgia, the dissimilarity index for white and Black populations is 55 percent, which is below the national average but still more than half segregated (Census Scope). Patrick Sharkey relates the dissimilarity of neighborhoods to the idea of an “inherited ghetto”; according to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, a University of Michigan survey, 72 percent of Black individuals who now live in areas deemed as “ghettos” are the children of parents who lived in ghettos a generation earlier, meaning almost three out of four Black families living in today’s poorest and most segregated neighborhoods are the same families that lived in those ghettos in the 1970s (Sharkley 2008, 16-18). Sharkley posits that this has happened and continues to happen as the result of a half-century of public policy that has only reinforced the walls of the ghetto while systematically disinvesting in black urban communities; the impact of that disinvestment will not be healed by anything less than a similar commitment, in scale and duration, to American’s urban neighborhoods (ibid., 19).

### 3.8 Conclusion

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was a radical time for Black women and men. Both in the South and the North and West of the country, social movements for equal rights and treatment brewed. Bold, energetic, and beautiful leaders emerged, leading the people in protests, demonstrations, riots, sit-ins, and boycotts that would soon morph the way the United States federal government perceived and acted upon Black lives forever. The Civil Rights movement humanized Black Americans in a way that made it impossible for White citizens, lawmakers, governments, and Presidents to ignore. The

Black Power movement inspired fear in White America, while electrifying Black men and women with pride and unflinching senses of Justice. This active, righteously angry population mobilized, and, in the end, forced the U.S. government to write legislation that directly dealt with the living conditions of urban Blacks. While the resulting legislation did not do all the work it set out to do, specifically right centuries worth of wrong, it did produce the FHA, Model Cities, progressive and socially aware urban planning theory, and a more clear understanding of the ways in which the ghetto is inherited. And though it was a strenuous, aggressive, uneasy, and dangerous time to be Black in America, this era set the table for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, a table at which everyone should and will have a seat.

## CHAPTER 4

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION THEORY AND APPLICATION: ROXBURY, BOSTON AS A CASE STUDY

#### 4.1 Public Participation in Planning Processes

Because the social movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century impacted the ways many urban planners conceived of both citizen participation and urban Black populations, an emphasis on participation within planning as a political process became more substantial, especially in communities experiencing political disenfranchisement, racial tensions, and income disparity issues. Participation is defined as the act of participating, the state of being related to a larger whole; the action of taking part in something (Merriam-Webster). But what ethics/ morals/ ideas guide the ways participation in the planning process manifest? And what does successful participation in community planning (as a political process) look like?

#### 4.2 Community Participation Ethics

Just how important is equity in public participation to the planning process, both in design and ethic? It appears the answer is “very”. In 1971, the Code of Ethics of the American Institute of Planners was modified to address, for the first time, concern for the poor, minorities, and those otherwise vulnerable: “A planner shall seek to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs

of disadvantaged groups and persons, and shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions which militate against such objectives” (Krumholz 1997, 111). More recently the American Planning Association (AICP) adopted, in their 2005 Code of Ethics, a “commitment to give people the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs that may effect them, even those who lack formal organization or influence”, and many states and local planning statutes have recently began to set minimum guidelines for public involvement.

#### 4.2.1 Local Participation Mandates and Suggestions

Georgia’s Department of Community Affairs (GDCA) most recent minimum standards and procedures for local comprehensive planning, effective March 1, 2014, set forth requirements for community involvement (DCA Planning Rules). The GDCA maintains that each elements of the comprehensive plan must be prepared with opportunity for involvement and input from stakeholders and the general public in order to ensure that the plan reflects the full range of community needs and values (GDCA Guidelines). There are three steps for involving stakeholders and the general public in the development of the plan:

1. Identification of Stakeholders: Compile a list of stakeholders who need to be present and involved in the development of the plan; members of the governing authority must be included among stakeholders to ensure that the plan will be implemented, because involved leadership is likely to become committed leadership.
2. Identification of Participation Techniques: select which participation techniques are to be used for involving stakeholders in the process of developing the plan; at minimum, the community must form a steering committee, which includes some local stakeholders, including members of the governing authority, local economic development practitioners, and local government staff.

3. Conduct Participation Program: Invite stakeholders to participate in activities and events that solicit specific input on the content of the plan, and hold regular meetings with the steering committee to solicit input and feedback until the plan is developed.

While minimum standards for public input are theoretically a “good development”, they have not been seen as widely effective (Chakraborty 2012, 131-148). Often times mandatory participation is treated as and perceived by the public to be “little more than an opportunity for the public to comment on already developed plans (Shan and Yai 2010, 158-166; Timney 2011, 86-100). The small scope of citizen involvement has also been called into question; the longstanding tradition of the citizen hearing more often than not becomes one-way information sharing rather than a dialogue between the invested parties (Meck 2002).

Georgia’s Department of Community Affairs guidelines for public participation are equally as problematic. Consider the first guideline, which focuses on the identification of stakeholders. Athens-Clarke County has a majority minority of Blacks and Latinos, but those demographics are immensely underrepresented in local government. Asking planning officials, local government leaders and elected officials to pinpoint stakeholders will more often than not lead to the identification of people “like them”, people of like mind, social and economic standing, and those who already have a perceived skin in the game. This leaves no room for considering those outside the loop of power, those who have little trust in the local government- and therefore little interest in its actions- and those who are incredibly active within their own communities but in the larger realm. In fact, this methodology for public participation only goes to further the chasm that exists between the local government and communities like East Athens.

Step two of the GDCA, Identification of Participation Techniques, proposes two problems. First, if and when a minority population is represented within this forum of public participation in the form of a steering committee, whether the intent is present or no, that minority representative becomes a token. Many times, a seat at the table does not equal a voice, particularly when underrepresented communities used to little or no power within the local government or its dealings, are finally present. A minority individual or individuals are automatically torn between fully representing their communities' needs and desires, and the maintenance of newly awarded power. Levels of fear arise; to not adequately represent a community's concerns is betrayal, but to voice those concerns, many of which have arisen from decades of poor representation within local government and poor care of planning officials and departments, could mean a loss of seat. Either way, minority representatives are forced to ride the fence, constantly balancing a disproportionate set of needs while taking care to not be too eager, too angry, or too active. The second problem with step two is that no alternative methodologies of soliciting public participation are acknowledged or encouraged. Citizen hearings are generally poorly attended by minority populations for a host of reasons; meet the intersection of distrust, limited time, lack of knowledge/ perception of importance, and other, more weighty/ pressing concerns.

The current common critical thinking on public participation is that, in order to solicit true, abundant, and constructive input from communities, especially minority communities, "planners will need to move beyond their reliance on technical rationality and scientific methods to embrace other ways of knowing that includes local and experiential knowledge" (Chakraborty 2012, 134).

### 4.3 Ladder of Public Participation

What is citizen participation? It is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy (Arnstein 1969, 216-224). If citizen participation is indeed that, then when adopted and advocated for by those who have been underserved in any number of ways- socially, politically, economically- citizen participation becomes a redistribution of power. Those who are not or do not feel adequately represented in their local governments should be able to tap in via opportunities of citizen participation- and where they may have been previously excluded from political processes- take a seat at the table to help determine the future of their lives and neighborhoods. However, all opportunities of citizen participation are not created equally. There is a distinct and palpable difference between an empty ritual of participation and having real power to impact the process. In many cases, what was intended to be a portal into “full citizenship” or “full involvement” for those otherwise excluded or not properly represented, becomes an afterthought, a box that must be ticked before a plan can be finalized. This is frustrating, if not insulting, for those who already feel a level of powerlessness within their local government, because citizen participation and input should do more than maintain the status quo: power-holders claiming that all sides were considered while decisions have already been made without or prior to citizen input.

In her seminal work, Arnstein depicts and critiques citizen participation in terms of power relationships, developing an eight rung “ladder of participation”, which dictates how a person can be involved but still disempowered by the planning process (ibid., 217), abbreviated here: (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy, defined as “nonparticipation” that



has been contrived to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning programs, but to enable power holders to “educate” or “cure” participants; (3) Informing and (4) Consultation are defined as “tokenism”. In these levels of participation, participants may be heard, but they lack the power to ensure that their input is headed by those who have the final say. Levels of tokenism lack “muscle” and assurance of a changing status quo; (5) Placation, a higher level of tokenism, allows those in positions of less power to advise while the power holders maintain the right to decide; and (6) Partnership (7) Delegated Power, and (8) Citizen Control are all degrees of citizen power, with Partnership enables citizens to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders, while Delegated Power and Citizen Control allow the underserved citizens to obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full power.

The problem with this model, especially when applying it to neighborhoods such as East Athens, is that the model assumes a level of effort from the citizens (participants). This effort can be directly linked to trust in the local government, or it can be related to more personal issues; poverty and “day-to-day” living often inhibit a person’s desire and/or ability to become involved in input processes. The third problem with this model is that it assumes education on the topic at hand, when, in the discipline of planning, goals and objectives are often technical, complicated, future-centric, or just boring. Nevertheless, gauging the East Athens neighborhood’s perception of where they fall on the ladder of participation would reveal much about the inner-workings of the community, as well as how they view outside forces, such as the local planning department. And asking local governmental authorities to qualify and rate their efforts to

engage the public in participation is just as essential to bridging the gap in participation and trust that exists within the East Athens neighborhood.

#### 4.4 Effective Participation in a World of Elites

Community participation is fundamental to “fair and representative” decision making in contemporary urban planning practice, and part of that “fair and representative” dialogue requires hearing from the traditionally voiceless (see: poor and minority groups) (Mahjabeen et. al 2009, 45-63). However, the arena within this input takes place is, more often than not, one of powerful political and bureaucratic structures; is it possible, in this unbalanced environment, to achieve effective participation which includes poor and minority groups in programs that are controlled by political and bureaucratic elites (ibid.)? If and when community groups are encouraged to participate, the current plan making process is uncomfortable in a number of ways; politicians, bureaucrats, and professional planners who are chiefly concerned with pre-determined standards, targets, time-frames, and economic imperatives have little space to consider and make allowances for the individual (from minority communities) stakeholder’s socio-economic background, needs, or expectations (ibid.). However, when space is made for the life experiences and perspectives of minority populations, a number of gains occur, not only for the minority communities, but also for the political systems in which they have been immersed.

Zeenat Mahjabeen’s article on rethinking community participation in urban planning cites recent work shown that public participation, particularly by those who have been traditionally voiceless in planning and other elite-dominated activities,

increases the sustainability of the plan (Ribot 2014, 40-44). However, Ribot raises the valid point that when the alternative to participation in planning processes is the potential loss of resources and representation, “participation” can hardly be considered voluntary; in other words, public should not be forced to participate because their futures are being held captive by elites. Mahjabeen also discusses a growing body of literature showing that community participation in urban planning helps to bring together information, knowledge, and skills from various backgrounds in a way that improves outcomes (Margerum 2002, 237-253), achieve mutual learning and the personal growth of participants (Sager, 1994; Healy 1999), create a sense of ownership over outcomes (Healy 1999), and generate agreement over solutions and increase support for implementation (ibid.).

Nelson and Wright (1995) distinguish between two types of participation- both through the lens of an existing elite culture: (1) participation as a means—a process of achieving the aims of a project more efficiently, effectively, or cheaply, and (2) participation as ends—a process of giving some degree of control of a development agenda to a community or group. Further, if community groups and non-governmental organizations are to benefit from participation in plan-making, they need to be given enough power to influence decisions in a meaningful way (Mahjabeen et. al 2009; Nelson and Wright 1995). In situations of elite domination, well-intended projects as well as projects that follow mandated public participation methods can still fail; when local elites misrepresent community interests and control the project (on purpose or inadvertently) it can be described as “covert privatization” (ibid.). Is it important to point out here that even if local governmental agencies do not intend to “privatize” the planning process,

other forces can influence the way planning agency efforts are perceived. A previous history of manipulation, tokenism, or placation, a long history of mistrust between the minority community and the local government, and current social, political, and economic inequalities can and will impact the way a local community understands the planning process. The only answer, then, is majority power for minority populations.

#### 4.5 “Successful” Participation and “Successful” Planning

It can be difficult to put words to “success”, partially because success is largely subjective, and partially because one can easily (and fairly) fear that deeming a process “successful” can lead to complacency on the part of all involved: citizens, planning agencies, and leaders. As it turns out, successful plans, or “plans that matter”, depend upon successful participation (Burby 2003). Strong and successful plans stem from planning processes that involve a broad array of stakeholders and stakeholder input, and strong plans accompanied by broad stakeholder involvement are needed if plans are to have a significant effect on the actions of local governments (ibid.). We know why successful participation and successful planning are important: fairness; the rights of individuals to be informed and consulted and to express their views on governmental decisions; the need to better represent the interests of disadvantaged and powerless groups in governmental decision making and the contributions of participation to citizenship (ibid.). These are the pillars of ethical planning, but what does it look like when these ethics/ guideposts/ fundamentals, are manifested amongst a community, in a plan, and onto a physical space?

Successful participation should do two things: first, it must uphold the most stringent participation ethics so that those who are politically disenfranchised, those who live in areas struggling with racial tensions and income disparity, and those who are otherwise disengaged with political/ civic processes, are present, accounted for, understand the matters at hand, are involved, are heard, and are able to impact the final product; and second, successful participation should produce a successful plan, a plan that reflects a community and a plan that can be sustainably upheld and applied. When the ideas of successful participation and successful planning are separated, it allows those who are in positions of power to disregard participation as an absolute necessity, and this endangers the entire process of planning

These new understandings of what successful participation and planning look like have contributed widely to a shift from ‘participation’ and ‘power’ to ‘networks’, ‘deliberation’, and ‘interdependence’; from ‘government’ to ‘governance’, and to a ‘shared power world’ (Hopkins 2010). The ‘governance’ discourse suggests that governments should open decision-making to wider participation, engaging new forms of partnerships with stakeholder groups and the broader community (ibid.). This remedies problems that arose for equity planners, primarily that planners were expected to be community advocates; if the disempowered are allowed to speak for themselves, then a planners’ role shifts from advocate to moderator, ensuring that those who were previously disempowered by power-holders are no longer dominated (ibid.).

Castells wrote of planners as “divine fools”, “no longer the hero... [planning is] naïve in its faith in its own emancipatory potential, ignorant of the real relations of power” (Castelles 1978; Sandercock 1998). Assuming that the current system of

government is not working toward the best interest of marginalized communities, and assuming that the people, not planners, should have a chance to participate in planning processes, there is a new space in the ladder: community leaders and community based organizations possess the ability to hold that space of power in the public input process, bridging the gap between the elites (Mayor, Commission, and Planners) and the populace (in this case, the East Athens neighborhood). Planning which does not include prominent members of marginalized communities and community-based organizations in positions of decision-making power are not and will never be successful in participation or planning.

#### 4.6 Public Participation Case Study: Roxbury Master Plan

Residents of “poor” urban communities have organized themselves most consistently as members of a racially conscious industrial, if not post-industrial, working class. The third insight from historical research has to do with the legacy of the racial past in creating opportunities, impediments, but especially in establishing imperatives for organized action to promote social change.

-- Alice O'Connor, “Historical Perspectives on Race and Community Revitalization”, as quoted by James Jennings (2004)

Community action programs and non-governmental sponsored projects and surely projects that lead to greater autonomy and independence, factors vital for decolonization. That these forms have existed separately from the enunciation of postcolonialism should not be forgotten.

--Gross (1996)

##### 4.6.1 Introduction to Roxbury

How can minority community participation in urban planning input become a healthy, productive, and enlightening practice for all parties involved: stakeholders, local

governmental elites and bureaucrats, and the populous? To paraphrase W. Dennis Keating and Norman Krumholz, when there is little hope left for expanded federal urban aid or a reduction in racial segregation coupled with concentrated poverty, the only prospect left, the only hope for the betterment of the neighborhood, are strong, well connected, community-based organizations (1999, 199). The neighborhood of Roxbury, a majority African American neighborhood in Boston, Massachusetts, offers us an example of how a community can use its community leaders, social networks, and community based organizations to gain governance, deliberation, and shared power in the planning process.

Roxbury is one of twenty-one official neighborhoods and is located in the geographic core of Boston, Massachusetts (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2); it serves as the heart of Black culture in Boston.

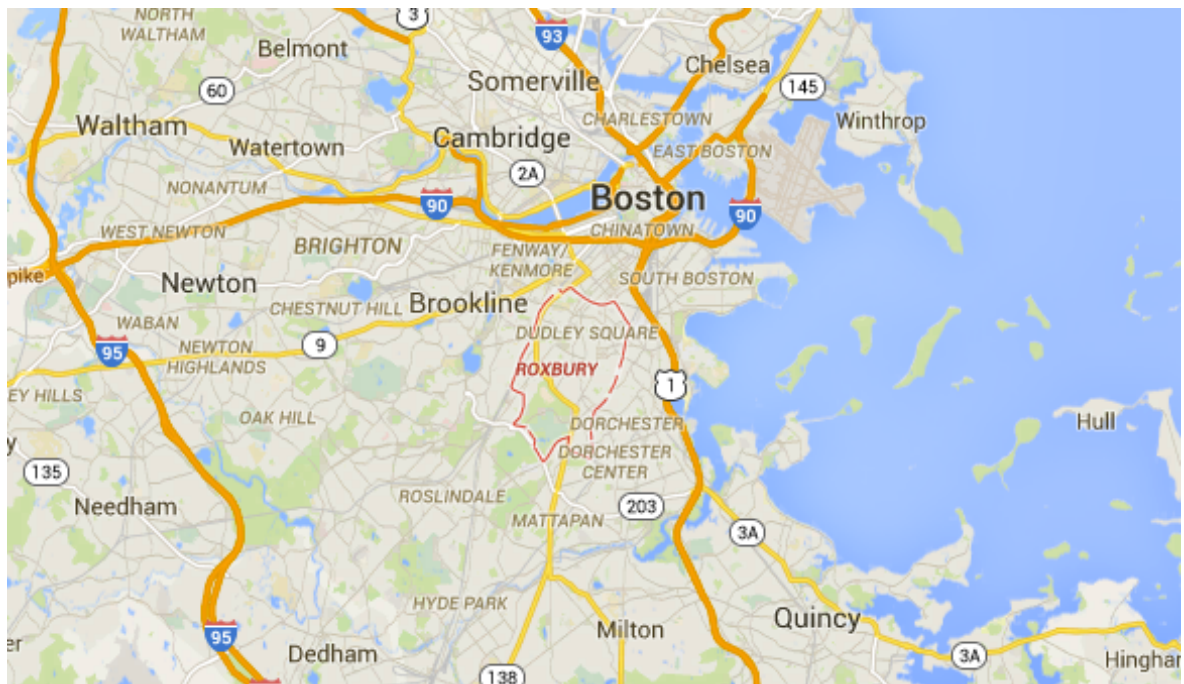


Figure 1: Context of the Roxbury Neighborhood

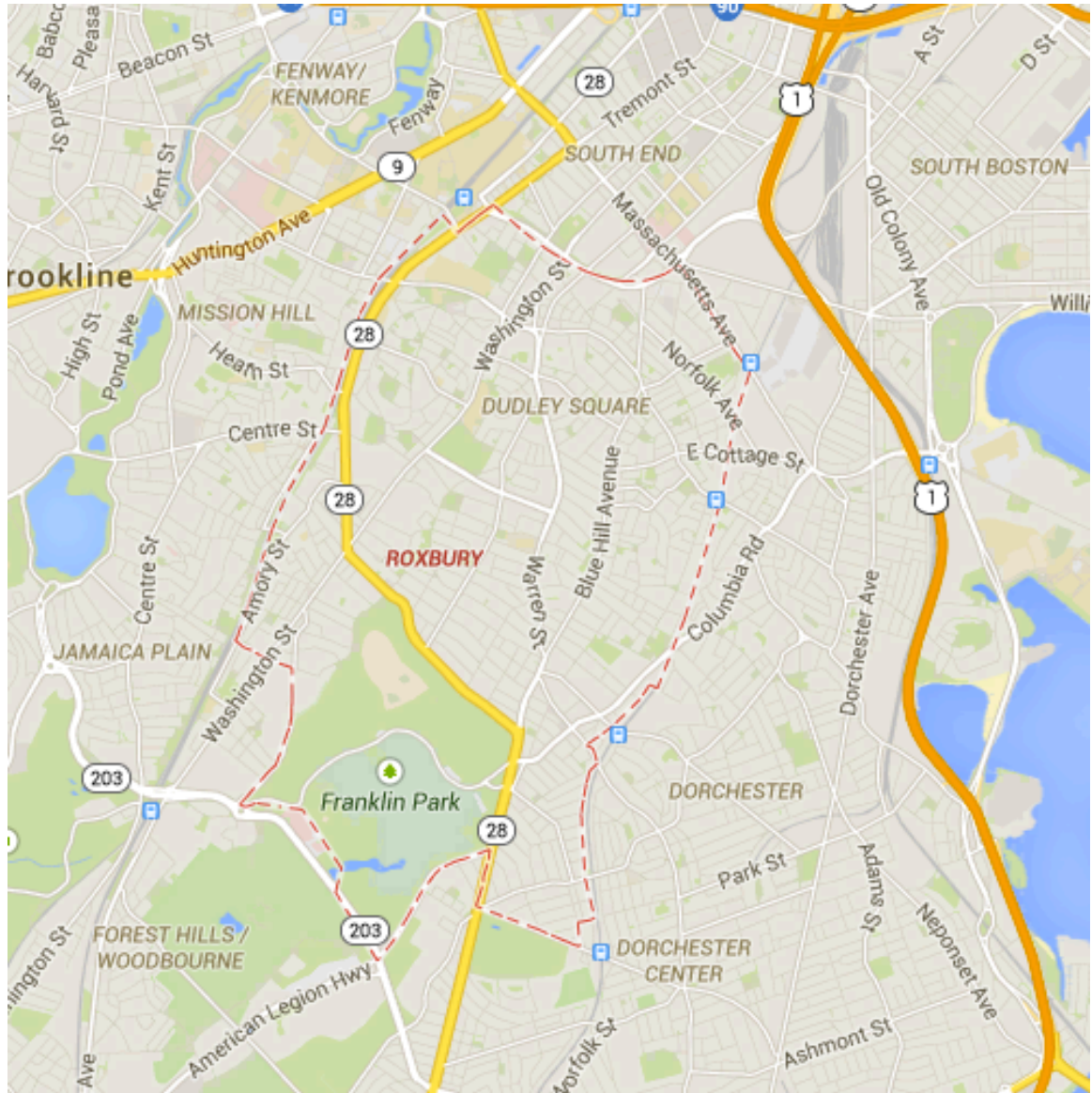


Figure 2: The Roxbury Neighborhood in Detail

When the Roxbury Master plan was written, 65 percent of residents were black, 24 percent were Latino, and 10 percent were white, though the 2010 census shows Roxbury as 48 percent Black or African American, 22 percent white, and 18 percent Hispanic or Latino. In 2000, 29 percent of the population were impoverished, compared with 20



percent for the entire city of Boston, with an average household income was \$34,682 compared with \$55,865 for Boston.

During the Great Migration of Blacks from the South to northern cities in the 1940s and 1950s, Roxbury became the primary African-American community in Boston. Social turmoil and the resulting urban renewal efforts of the 1960s and 1970s (see chapter 3) caused a significant decline in the neighborhood. Currently, Roxbury is a paradox: poverty in the midst of wealth, and although Boston is now 75 percent black, Latino, or Asian, the amount of political held by minorities in Boston is staggeringly low. Recently, the fate of Roxbury has been co-opted by citizen-run grassroots organizations, focusing on bettering the social, political, and economic lives of Roxbury inhabitants; their community activism serves at the context for the initiation of the Roxbury Master Plan.

#### 4.6.2 A Case of Minority Participation

There are several major questions that arise when dealing with communities of color and participation processes: How can planners and city officials use community participation to help implement innovative planning ideas and propel progressive visions for the economic development of low-income neighborhoods? How does minority community participation impact the ways that planners and city officials see, understand, and want to “use” space? Why do levels of “antagonism” surrounding use of space intensify when participation involves communities of color that are poor and working class? Is community participation a panacea for neighborhood distress? (Jennings 2004, 12-33). These are questions that rule planning in many minority and poor neighborhoods, and during Roxbury’s recent master planning process, neither planning and government

officials nor the community shied away from them. Jennings points out several reasons why the Roxbury Master Plan is a useful case study for investigating minority community participation: (1) the development of this plan involves the poorest neighborhood in Boston; (2) it highlights fundamental differences in how community representatives approach planning and economic development in contrast to key institutional actors in a city's governing coalition; and (3) it serves as a lens by which to critique planning theories that call for community participation but ignore racial and class obstacles to participatory democracy at the local level (*ibid.*, 4).

In many ways, Jennings points out, the Roxbury master plan meet's Paul Davidoff's warning head on: city planners represent the plead the plans of many interest groups, but this profession, in theory, is "founded upon the need to establish an effective urban democracy, one in which citizens may be able to play an active role in the process of deciding public policy" (Davidoff 1965, as cited by Jennings 2004). In the case of Roxbury, residents and activists that involved themselves in the master planning process were the push that supported a participatory planning framework. Their presence and influence re-oriented how and for whom the process went forward. Roxbury's methodology for community participation and input was straightforward: (1) frequent, open, and widely advertised meetings; (2) opportunities for resident feedback regarding proposals; (3) decision making after consultations with many individuals and organizations working within the community; (4) outreach and distribution of information; and (5) partnership with a community organization, the Roxbury Neighborhood Council, in planning public dialogues (Jennings 2004, 3). These techniques, aimed at maximizing participation, were not without their complications.

Because a participation plan is, in many ways, an agreed-upon governance structure, the reality is that participation guided planning takes time. Democracy can delay, but Roxbury's stance is that public participation and input is an essential counter to the weight and influence of bigger institutional and private-sector actors, and, in the end, will ensure that the plan was and is accountable to local participation, and that growth, development, and other aspects of the plan are implemented in ways that benefit residents (ibid.).

#### 4.6.3 The Roxbury Master Planning Process

In 1999, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) issued a call for proposals to help design a master plan for the Roxbury neighborhood; residents were increasingly concerned about the disparities of public parcels in Roxbury, and the Boston Redevelopment Authority wanted to contribute a plan that would help build a vision for the neighborhood and a framework for decision making about economic development and the disposition of land (ibid., 6). The Roxbury Neighborhood Council, an elected neighborhood body, worked as a liaison between residents and the BRA; through them, residents were able to reflect on issues of zoning and physical space, strategies for enhancing the social and economic fabric of the neighborhood, and how residents wanted Roxbury to connect with other neighborhoods in the city (ibid.). In the first year of the planning process, from a plethora of public and informal meetings among residents, community groups, and meeting and information sessions held by the BRA, the actors arrived at a list of themes that must be addressed within the plan: better municipal services, improving the image of Roxbury as a vibrant neighborhood, government

accountability in the deliverance of quality municipal services, stronger physical and social linkages between Roxbury and other neighborhoods, expanding opportunities for youth, better transportation for residents, improving environmental conditions, preserving the historical resources of Roxbury, planning that aims to benefit the residents and progeny of Roxbury, building affordable housing, and, finally, using zoning to discourage ad hoc economic development that does not reflect consistency with the needs and resources of residents, local businesses, and community organizations (ibid.). While a community and its adjacent governing body knowing the needs of a community is valuable, those needs must be successfully translated into the plan. Roxbury residents translated their needs in two ways: (1) they took agreed upon needs, translated them into principles, and allowed this to be a guide for the BRA; and (2) residents were involved in the adoption of the final governance plan for implementation of the Roxbury Master Plan, which included citizen control of an Oversight Committee (ibid.).

The set of principles that emerged from the neighborhood during the planning process guided decision making but also served as a tool for encouraging participation and collaboration; their purpose, at the conception, was to ensure that any ideas or final decisions about what to include in the master plan would reflect the needs of the residents in the neighborhood (ibid.). Collectively, those principles had three aims: (1) that residents would not be displaced as the result of this planning effort; (2) that the needs of residents would drive the design strategies for housing and other services; and (3) that the plan would be holistic in terms of linking economic development with other areas such as housing, the building of public resources, and improvement in transportation (ibid.). The principles include the following:

The Roxbury Master Plan will help to identify activities and institutional relationships that enhance opportunities for youth to become involved in the civic life of Roxbury.

The Roxbury Master Plan will help to identify ways that the history of the community struggles of Roxbury can be incorporated into civic life through historical preservation.

The Roxbury Master Plan will seek to identify potential institutional and programmatic linkages between the areas of economic development, housing, and transportation.

The Roxbury Master Plan will help to increase residential stability by developing institutional, programmatic, and social connections between people and people within the neighborhood; organizations and organizations within the neighborhood; youth with elderly; neighborhood with other neighborhoods; neighborhood with the city; and neighborhood with the region.

The Roxbury Master Plan will seek to identify institutional, programmatic, and policy mechanisms to generate and keep wealth in the neighborhood for longer periods of time.

The Roxbury Master Plan will help to identify ways for increasing opportunities for small businesses and linking this sector to the civic well-being of the neighborhood.

The Roxbury Master Plan will consider ways to utilize public dollars as leverage for additional private dollars and resources.

The Roxbury Master Plan will be planned and implemented in ways that enhance the civic education and public involvement of residents and organizations, including community agencies, faith-based organizations, and small businesses.

The Roxbury Master Plan will consider how to increase housing opportunities at different income levels for residents and protect existing housing that is affordable to residents by utilizing the potential and actual assets of the neighborhood.

The Roxbury Master Plan will consider how to enhance and increase the educational, cultural, and recreational activities in the neighborhood.

The Roxbury Master Plan will help to develop a civic understanding of the role of public infrastructure, including transportation, as a key tool for economic and community development of the neighborhood.

(ibid.)

Not only did the above principles act as a guide for the community, community leaders, and planning/ government officials throughout the planning process, they also revealed something at the heart of the community: that residents are still trying to carve out a space for themselves within their local government and that there continues to be a need

for expanded government and legal efforts to eliminate racial and community discrimination in housing, banking, insurance, and real estate sectors (ibid., 7).

The Roxbury neighborhood's second important achievement was the implementation of a Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee. The committee has fifteen members and the chair of the committee is appointed by the mayor; however, the chair must be one of thirty nominations proposed by the Roxbury Neighborhood Council and elected officials. The Oversight Committee's tasks are proposing land-use programs, recommending the order of parcel disposition, coordinating public comment and input, reviewing drafts of proposals, recommending changes in proposals, working with other neighborhood review committees, creating subcommittees to review individual parcels, setting benchmarks to evaluate progress of approved plans, and reviewing zoning to ensure consistency with the Roxbury Master Plan. Project Review Committees would be appointed to review specific proposals for approved individual parcels, and these committees are composed of nine to fifteen members; The Roxbury Strategic Plan Oversight Committee would appoint five members to serve this body, and the director of the BRA would appoint between four and ten members from a pool of fifteen nominations made by the Roxbury Neighborhood Council and elected officials. This is a major victory for the Roxbury neighborhood because, for the first time, they have taken places of power and influence equal to those who have been elected to represent them; their role is no longer tokenistic or advisory, but one of management and citizen control, true citizen power. While a neighborhood may be "distressed", with disproportionately high levels of poverty, joblessness, female-headed households, and

dependency on welfare assistance, distressed neighborhoods also have histories of political and economic struggle- and victory- on behalf of the community.

#### 4.6.4 Governance and Roxbury

Roxbury is an example of the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’, but three events built upon one another to propel the neighborhood of Roxbury into a mindset that they could and should claim their space, and with it, a place at the decision-making table. First, the Boston Redevelopment Authority expressed interest in involving their populace. Several years before the Roxbury Master Plan was conceived of or written, the BRA published a pamphlet describing how residents could become more involved in working with the city to resolve a range of neighborhood concerns; this pamphlet was called the “Guide to Community Participation” (ibid.). While this may not seem like a particularly monumental episode, but it was an act of good faith on the part of the BRA and the greater City of Boston; it showed that the governing bodies were willing and desirous to share their power, and what’s more, wanted citizens, particularly those who were not already civically involved, to get there.

Secondly, Roxbury and Boston in general are an example of a city of minorities becoming civically involved and electing officials who will represent their interests. The Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power movement had a great impact on politics in Boston, and through these movements many minorities had the opportunity to run for elected office and win. In 2003, Black, Latino, and Asian voters ensured the election of Felix Arroyo to City Council at Large (containing four seats); this election showed that communities of color could work in coalition for common goals. However, minorities

struggle with representation on other levels; many disenfranchised and minority communities find it difficult to “exercise countervailing power through the city bureaucracy and the city council” (ibid.). It is because of this that many of these neighborhoods and communities build and find power within themselves and their bounds; the Roxbury Neighborhood Council is a perfect example.

Thirdly, the Roxbury neighborhood realized quickly that their land was a target for development. Though previous to the Master Plan in 2009 much Roxbury was struggling with crime and dilapidated properties, the neighborhood is centrally located and near Boston’s downtown. While property prices were skyrocketing elsewhere and property availability was dwindling, Roxbury residents realized their land was being stalked by outside developers who might not hold the neighborhood’s best interests at heart. If the community continued to hold little or no sway over development within their boundaries, the future of the neighborhood was at risk; but, if the Roxbury Neighborhood Council could construct a way that they, along with residents, could influence and determine the disposition of individual properties and development, not only would Roxbury remain Roxbury, but it could drive helpful economic and social developments not available before.

#### 4.6.5 Conclusion

The Roxbury Master Plan is a response to dominating critiques of community building and public participation in that the Roxbury neighborhood, as guides of the plan, sidestepped empty gestures, pointless and poorly attended community meetings, and got themselves into a dialogue about how to make their community better on all fronts. They



answered some fundamental questions about urban politics and the planning process: Who are key decision makers regarding economic and land development? What kinds of resources are available to community-based organizations and residents to mobilize alternative development plans? How can residents be organized more effectively given imbalances in organizing resources, including money, institutional prestige, government patronage, and generally, and unsupportive media (ibid.,12)? The neighborhood of Roxbury decided to no longer accept the call for public participation as rhetorical, leveraged their neighborhood association to nestle into positions of power right along planning officials, government elites, and bureaucrats, and built, alongside the Boston Redevelopment Authority, a model of civic participation that supports public input in new and challenging ways.

## CHAPTER 5

### EAST ATHENS AS A CRUCIBLE: PAST AND CURRENT REALITIES EXPLORED THROUGH DIALOGUE WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

#### 5.1 Introduction to East Athens

The East Athens neighborhood, composed of census tracts 301 and 302 (see Fig. 3), is a historically African-American populated neighborhood in Athens-Clarke County (ACC), Georgia.

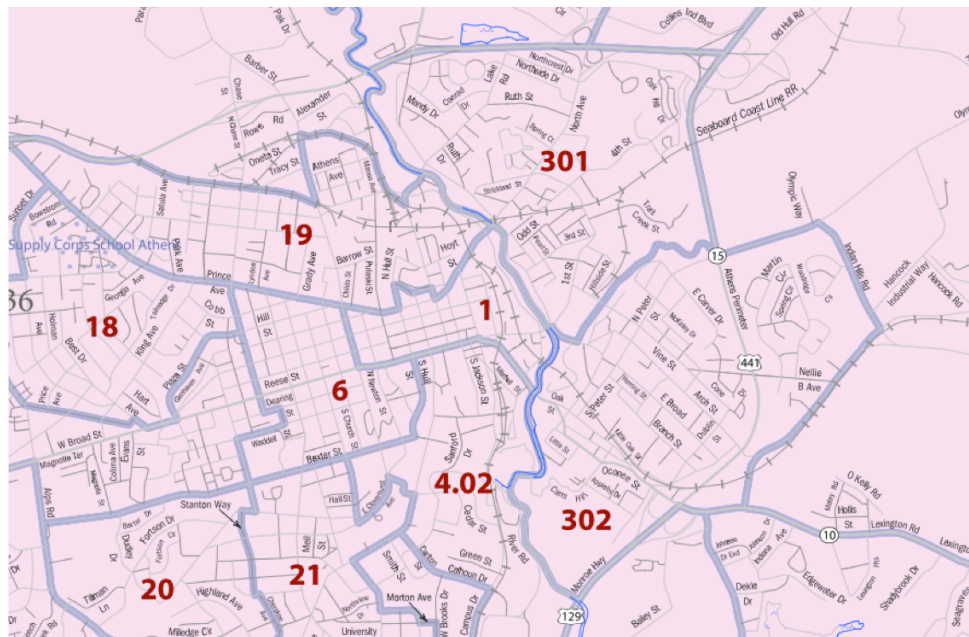


Figure 3: The East Athens Neighborhood, Census Blocks 301 and 302

Historically the East Athens neighborhood served as housing and labor stock for the swath of mills which populated Athens during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; the last of these was the Chicopee Mill, a mill owned by Johnson & Johnson which was responsible for producing cotton products, tobacco cloth, and diapers from 1958 to 1978 (Rice, Athens Banner-Herald, 12/04/2001). Residents not working in the mills were generally farm laborers or workers in the service industry. The labor background of the neighborhood from its birth explains much about the physical arrangement and appearance of the place: small wooden houses stacked closely together, with winding and narrow roads (many of which have only be paved since the late 1970s) and dense forest mixed within the neighborhood.

According to the most recent census data (2010 U.S. Census), the total population of tract 301 was 5,126 persons with 2,064 (40.265 percent) of them reporting as being “black alone”, while tract 302 was smaller in population, with 3,867 residents, 3,000 of those residents (77.58 percent) reporting as “black alone”. According to 2012 numbers, Census tract 301’s median income was \$16,059 while tract 302 reported a median income of \$17,662; ACC’s overall median income in 2012 was \$34,253 while Georgia’s median income stood at \$47,290 (American Community Survey Brief 2012).

In a 2011 article published in the Athens Banner-Herald, Athens is cited as one of the poorest places in the nation; in 2009, Athens Clarke-County’s poverty rate hit 39 percent, making it the poorest county in a metro area in the U.S. (Aued, Athens Banner-Herald 9/18/2011). A University of Georgia demographer referenced several factors as responsible for such high poverty rates: unwed mothers, low high school graduation rates, a service-based economy, and when asked who is suffering the most, the UGA

demographer said “It’s not the college students... it’s African-Americans, Hispanics, and some poor whites” (ibid.).

The ACC Human and Economic Development Department (HED) recently published the 2010-2015 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), which outlines how HED has and plans to distribute HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME program funds, funds which would ultimately serve in supporting the development of “decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities for low to moderate- income individuals” (CAPER July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013, HED). The priority of these funds was given to the residents of East Athens (census tracts 301 and 302) because it is distinguished as a “neighborhood revitalization” area as well as being considered “high-need” (CAPER July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013, HED).

## 5.2 A Wealth of Community Based Organizations

ACC’s Department of Human and Economic Development is not the only local governmental organization that recognizes the high levels of need within East Athens. Athens Housing Authority (AHA) has seven ‘neighborhoods’ within East Athens, totaling 307 units. The ‘neighborhoods’ in East Athens also have their own organization, the Inter-Community Council, Inc. (founded in 1973), that works as a liaison between residents and the Housing Authority, not only to voice collective concerns from within Housing Authority neighborhoods, but also to provide services to AHA residents, including: resource referrals, notary services, copying services, health and safety

information, community service opportunities, household pantry, monthly food distribution, and various other job and finance oriented programs (Inter-Community Council pamphlet). The Inter-Community Council has done well in their effort to connect those living in Housing Authority properties to each other, to the neighborhoods around them, to resources, and to power structures.

Aside from HED and AHA, the East Athens neighborhood has grown several organizations from within themselves aimed at bettering the quality of life within the neighborhood. The East Athens Development Corporation (EADC)—a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization—was founded in the community in 1993 and was originally oriented toward neighborhood revitalization. Since then, the EADC has partnered with local organizations, such as the HED, to focus on community-based micro-enterprise, job training and development, affordable housing initiatives, and historic preservation and protection in the African-American community. The EADC has been a partner to HED, AHA, and the Planning Department; when looking to engage with East Athens, governmental organizations often connect with the EADC to garner participation and support. However, when talking with several of the government officials and community leaders, it was suggested that the East Athens Development Corporation is not going in the direction that its community wants it to go. The sentiment seems to be that after decades of focus on micro-enterprise, the community feels that the EADC's efforts would be better applied elsewhere; as gangs and gang violence, the prevalence of drugs, ambivalence toward schooling, schismed families, devastating poverty, lack of opportunity, absence of role models, and the possibility of prison bombard East Athens' young people, the community knows that their youth are where priorities lie. There is an

overwhelming sense of hope in the community that one day things will be better, and they will be better for their young people and because of their young people.

In January of 2014, the Flagpole ran an article on a man named Fenwick Broyard, the person brought in to breathe new life into another of Athens' community based organizations, Community Connection. Community Connection, a non-profit, was originally incorporated as the Community Resource Council of Northeast Georgia in 1983, and since then, has been working to identify and address unmet needs in the Athens-Clarke County area. Community Connection (1) seeks to refer individuals or families to the right agencies that can address their specific needs; (2) connects volunteers with non-profit services that best match their individual skills and interests; and (3) is available to new non-profits to assist with referral resources, leadership learning, and technical assistance. In the past, Community Connection has partnered with many non-profits that directly serve disenfranchised communities in ACC, including East Athens; some of these are the Athens Area Homeless Shelter, the Nancy Travis Home (childcare for those experiencing housing crisis), The Cottage (a rape crisis center), Project Safe (domestic violence hotline and emergency shelter), Georgia Options, Inc. (residential support for those with disabilities), Rites of Passage (mentoring services), Athens Justice Project, and many more.

Chess and Community Conference, Inc. (CCC) was founded in 2012 and aims to empower at-risk youth in the areas of academic achievement, community engagement, and critical thinking using chess as a learning tool. CCC's motto is "think before you move", which speaks to the lessons the organization is seeking to instill in young people from the East Athens neighborhood. The founder of the organization (one of my

interviewees) is passionate about many things, but spoke most often of “keeping kids off the streets”, discouraging youth from taking paths that may land them in prison, while also focusing on higher ideas: expanding the mind and instilling leadership qualities. Over 300 students take part in CCC, but their weekly attendance hovers around 80 youth; that means that roughly 80 young people from high-risk communities in ACC are choosing to spend their time learning the game of chess every week. It is CCC’s hope that they are priming the youth of underserved neighborhoods to challenge themselves in school, be leaders among their friends, attend higher education of some kind, and then come back to their neighborhoods and make things better. These CBOs, along with the NAACP and the churches in the neighborhood- Ebenezer Baptist Church, East Friendship Church, and New Faith Tabernacle- are doing the morally imperative work, seeking the permanent revolution that so many before them sought, the revolution that the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement sought.

Athens played an integral role in the Civil Rights Movement because of the integration of the University of Georgia in 1961; Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes, the University’s first two African American students, became a focus of national news media, while the East Athens community supported them and the collective integration of all Athens businesses and institutions. Though there were significant pressures from the Ku Klux Klan, Black Athenians “collectively resisted a victim mentality and created strong religious, benevolent, and educational systems,” many of which still exist in the East Athens neighborhood today, and many of which inspired CBOs that exist there today ([civilrights.uga.edu](http://civilrights.uga.edu)). In this way, East Athens residents and the land itself acted as a safe space, a microcosm, for Blacks living through racial

injustice in Athens, and because of this, the neighborhood remains powerful and robust, while struggling struggle with the issues facing minority populations today.

The East Athens neighborhood, at a recent forum held by the School of Social Work at the University of Georgia and their partner organization, the Department of Human and Economic Development, listed the top issues plaguing their community: income disparity, disinterest in political processes/ lack of community involvement in governmental processes, decreasing community engagement, student rental house market/ gentrification, disproportionate population of young people spending time in jail or prison, crumbling infrastructure, and apathetic youth. Residents' concerns with disinterest in political processes, the local government, and community engagement are reflected in the overall limited participation in public input forums held by local governmental departments in the neighborhood. What is the importance of minority input in participatory planning? Why are some residents in East Athens disengaged with important civic processes? How can the two- participatory planning and community- be re-linked as to better serve the East Athens neighborhood in development and revitalization?

### 5.3 Athens-Clarke County's Planning Department and Comprehensive Plan

#### 5.3.1 Public Outreach and Alternatives

Before addressing Athens-Clarke County's Planning Department and their methods of citizen input and involvement, it is important to understand the structure of ACC's government. The legislative branch is headed by an elected mayor and ten elected commissioners from ten geographical districts, while the executive branch of the Unified



Government of Athens-Clarke County is overseen by a manager, appointed by the mayor and commission, with twenty-four main departments, divisions, and offices; the Planning Department is one of which.

Athens Clarke-County's Planning Department carries the following mission: Our mission is to effectively manage community change in both the short and the long term with regard to land use, transportation, historic preservation, urban design and overall development in order to achieve a positive environment that is productive and beneficial to all citizens of Athens-Clarke County (ACC Planning Department).

While a comprehensive plan has its own public participation methodology (to be discussed later), the public needs a way to stay aware of development happening in and adjacent to them. Atlanta uses a system of Neighborhood Planning Units, or NPUs. the city limits are divided into twenty-five NPUs, which are citizen advisory councils that make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on zoning, land use, and other planning issues (ibid.). NPUs are helpful in that they are government-established lines of communication between itself and its neighborhoods and are intended to keep the public aware of any and all planning matters; NPUs allow all neighborhoods, not just those who have the time and agency, to connect into the planning process. According to one government staff member,

“A proposal to put NPUs in place was put in front of the Mayor and Commission several times during the early 2000s, but it was not embraced. Several factors caused the lukewarm response to NPUs: staffing concerns, defining neighborhood boundaries, and a minority opinion that perceived the NPUs to be a parallel government that perhaps would usurp Commissioner authority. Instead, as an interim step towards neighborhood planning units, we started the Neighborhood Notification Initiative (NNI) as a way for neighborhoods to define their own boundaries and sign-up for online notices of planning development activity in their neighborhoods. We have a lot of areas that have joined this program, but the East Athens neighborhood is not one of them.”

In 2005, the Mayor and Commission adopted a program that aims to facilitate communication between neighborhoods and developers about projects proposed in or near the neighborhood's boundaries, called the Neighborhood Notification Initiative (NNI). Unfortunately, to be a part of NNI, your neighborhood must have a neighborhood association, and the East Athens neighborhood does not. The ACC Planning Department website does, however, offer a resource on starting a successful neighborhood association, defined as “a group of homeowners, renters, apartment dwellers, and representatives from neighborhood businesses, churches, and schools who organize to improve conditions in the neighborhood” (ACC Planning Department).

### 5.3.2 Comprehensive Planning in Athens-Clarke County

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires that every local government in Georgia develop a comprehensive plan in order to maintain local government certification (*ibid.*), and in 1999, the ACC Planning Department developed and adopted a comprehensive plan for the county, with an update due in 2008. The goals of the Comprehensive Plan were to establish land use plans, protect the natural environment, design visually appealing places, and diverse and wide reaching transportation network. While a wider review of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan might be preferable, in the case of this thesis I will be spending time with aspects of the planning process that deal specifically with public participation and input and how this process relates back to East Athens.

Public Input for the 1999 Comprehensive Plan was guided by the Community Participation Program—a document prepared and approved by the Mayor and

Commission in 2006. The ACC Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was charged with overseeing community participation in the formation of the plan to ensure that the plan included input from the community (ACC planning department). According to the Community Participation Program, citizens and other stakeholders should be made aware of the planning process and all that it entails, be provided opportunities to comment on the plan, and, most importantly, have the ability to participate in the process of “defining the community’s vision, values, goals, policies, priorities, and implementation strategies” (Community Participation Program 2006). Included in the list of stakeholders was the human and economic development department (HED), the planning department, the Athens Housing Authority, and the East Athens Development Corporation—all of which provided input for this thesis.

The Participation Program’s detail of participation techniques states that “the Community Participation Program tasks are derived from the essential need to educate the public and media regarding the Comprehensive Plan and ensure a broad participatory base. *A specific emphasis on the views of all segments of the community will also include representation from the low and moderate income and minority populations identified in the planning process*” (emphasis added) (section A.3 of the Community Participation Program).

However, a staff member at the ACC Planning Department remembers that input and participation from the African American community during the 1999 Comprehensive Planning process was “less than desired, but not non-existent”:

“We have no documentation of participation by race or gender or age- or any other statistical category. However, since we targeted schools with the Visual Preference Survey, we know we captured input from all school-aged kids. And we did initiate survey sessions with church congregations and other institutions in the African-American community, so their input was folded in as much as possible.”

One of the corridor land use planning workshops, held in August of 2007, did address traditional in-city neighborhoods, the East Athens neighborhood being a study area. The meeting was held on UGA's campus and asked residents as well stakeholders to comment on the quality of life in their neighborhood; East Athens residents identified the following as inhibiting their quality of life: lack of affordable housing, unkept lots/ vacant houses, aging infrastructure (or missing infrastructure) including roads, curbs, storm water, and sidewalks, lack of code enforcement, traffic management problems, developers tearing down small homes and building bigger ones, crime, gentrification, lack of protection for existing residents, increased taxes, and unequal distribution of ACC funds, trees, and maintenance (section 2.3 of Corridor Land Use Planning Workshops). However, when asked to identify their top two concerns, East Athens residents identified (1) issues surrounding new development and gentrification in their neighborhood, including infill, student housing, rising property taxes, and little protection for long-term residents and (2) a potential loss of the sense of community (ibid.).

When compared with the other study area workshops conducted, it becomes clear that while residents of other areas have their concerns, generally related to smart growth, the concerns of the East Athens neighborhood residents are rooted in a particular lack of political, social, and economic power: fear of loss of place, home, livelihood, community. The reality is real and felt amongst the community—if something is not done to address the unmonitored infill and student housing occurring in the neighborhood, the result will not just be a place in which historic residents no longer desire to live, the result will be a place historic residents can no longer afford to live. This is the disconnect between the Athens-Clarke County Government and minority citizens: the Community Participation

Program makes an explicit statement about low-income members of the community, guaranteeing them a place in the process, but the process is flawed. The Community Participation Program itself was developed by the Mayor and the Commission—of the ten commissioners, only two were representative of minority populations (at the time, currently only one commissioner is a minority) in a county that has a majority-minority of African Americans and Latinos. Minority communities, and by this I mean the minority electorate, not the elected, had no place in the formation of the document that would serve to guide public participation for the Comprehensive Planning process. Citizen power, which is a pure form of participation, was missing from the table. Without that power, all is at stake for this community, and all could be so easily lost. Ironically, the income disparity of this neighborhood is partially responsible for its low participation in public input forums—like the Corridor Land Use Planning Workshops—that heavily influence the future of their neighborhood. This cycle is the reason East Athens residents need and desire more influence over the planning decisions made in their neighborhood.

#### 5.4 Introduction to the Project

In March of 2014, I reached out to the East Athens neighborhood. The original goal of this thesis was to investigate and address, with East Athens residents, the issues that are plaguing them, particularly issues that relate back to the planning department. I sent out 150 letters that stated my name, purpose, and a request for a sit-down, and after a month, I heard back from one person, a graduate student living in the study area. I kept going back to the neighborhood, the churches within the neighborhood, non-profits within the neighborhood, but got little interest in return. The issues were clear in my

mind; from reading the 1999 ACC Comprehensive Plan, I knew that East Athens residents are heavily concerned with gentrification—though I prefer to call what is happening “studentification”—in their neighborhood (section 2.3 of Corridor Land Use Planning Workshops). This, in their minds, is related to a loss of community in that gentrification, or studentification, changes the nature of a neighborhood. I desperately wanted to get to the heart of this loss: loss of social networks, social capital, and pin down a physical anthropology of the neighborhood, but I kept hitting a wall.

In October of 2014, I was invited to attend a meeting held at East Friendship Baptist Church by the University of Georgia’s School of social work and the Department of Human and Community Services; the meeting was sponsored by the East Athens Development Corporation. The purpose of this meeting was to address, with East Athens residents, the direction their community is headed in and the services and resources they feel are still lacking. During that meeting, residents mentioned the usual things that were bothering them, like gentrification, student housing, affordable housing, poorly lit streets and sidewalks, public transportation, and the like. Then the moderator asked about “roadblocks to improvement” and the mood in the room changed: things like “very little civic involvement”, “government not understanding how the community works”, “lack of voting participation”, and “not feeling a part of the local government” were spouted out within a number of minutes, along with a charge from one woman in the crowd: “It is time for action! We’ve been talking about this since the 60s, let’s do something”. When the meeting was over, I went around the crowd trying to collect as many contacts as possible, asking for names, phone numbers, their general interest in the meeting, and found that the majority of the people at the forum were not only residents, but members

of the East Athens community who are deeply involved leaders: preachers, professors, deacons, board members of the EADC, Chess and Community, doctors, teachers, activists, and on. This brings to light two things: first, that the East Athens neighborhood is not lacking in adult male leadership/ civic engagement, and second, that East Athens is lacking in almost every other facet of leadership/ civic engagement.

A staff member at the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department informed me that, of all the communities in ACC, East Athens, as well as other minority communities, had the lowest rates of participant input. The traditional methods for soliciting public participation, including fliers, radio and newspaper advertisements, and town hall style meetings, are not engaging the community. This led me to the question: why, in a neighborhood that is straining under the influence of student housing, crumbling infrastructure, and deafening income disparity, are so few people showing up to voice their concerns at sessions held by the ACC Planning Department? Yes, residents admit that they, as a whole, are less than civically engaged, but why? Is there anything the local government can do to inspire and facilitate public participation? And, most importantly, who could I talk to for answers? I decided to seek out known community leaders in the East Athens neighborhood and leaders within the legislative branch of ACC's government for answers.

## 5.5 Research Methods/ Data Collection

I conducted seven interviews with individuals from two primary groups: community leaders, meaning those who are recognized as civically involved in the East Athens neighborhood, and government officials, meaning people in high-up positions

within departments that interact directly with the East Athens neighborhood. Four of those individuals are classified as community leaders, three of which are involved in non-profits that generated from the East Athens community—one from the East Athens Development Corporation, one from the Inter-Community Council, a non-profit that functions at the neighborhood association for housing authority residents, and another that is involved with Community and Chess, a non-profit that engaged young people after school—and one, a long-time resident of Athens, a professor at the University of Georgia who is a well-known and respected part of the community. Three of the individuals worked within departments of the legislative branch of the Athens-Clark County government. I selected individuals whose departments had a direct tie to the East Athens neighborhood: the Planning Department, the Athens Housing Authority, and the Department of Housing and Community Development. I intended to interview two more groups of individuals: residents of the neighborhood who are not involved in any leadership role in the community, and members of the executive branch of Athens-Clarke County's government, specifically the Mayor and Commissioners. Both of these sets of people were unresponsive to my requests for interviews, though I do not feel this limited my research in any way. If we were to set up a scale of power within the East Athens neighborhood, it would house residents with little involvement in civics or public participation at the bottom, and the Mayor and commission at the top; community leaders and governmental department leaders would be in the middle of the two. Therefore, it makes sense that those who agreed to speak with me were the two groups most in contact with one another.



These interviews were guided, but open-ended. While I asked specific questions, I also allowed interviewees the freedom to extend these questions as per their experience and expertise. As a rule, I addressed four specific issues within each interview: (1) community participation; (2) the relationship between the East Athens community and the local government; and (3) trust. Because I wanted the interviews to be as personal and narrative as possible, when addressing these specific issues, I did not define the issue for the interviewee, but asked the interviewee to define the issue in their own words. I also engaged with other related documents, such as Athens-Clarke County's 1999 Comprehensive Plan, as well as their participatory guidelines. These two documents helped to situate me within the participatory input narrative that exists within ACC's government.

According to Sandelowski and Barroso, research findings can be placed on a continuum indicating the degree of transformation of data during the data analysis process from description to interpretation; the use of qualitative descriptive approaches, such as thematic analysis, functions well for researchers who wish for a relatively low level of interpretation (Sandelowski and Barroso 2003). More specifically, thematic analysis is method that aims to identify, analyze, and report patterns (or themes) within data (ibid.). By breaking up text into small units of content, they can be better understood and then put into the context of the whole dialogue (other interviews with community leaders and/ or government officials), so that the common threads extending across the entire set of interviews can be identified (ibid.).

## 5.6 Findings

### 5.6.1 On Engaging the Community

The first theme that arose was engagement with the community. For government officials, this was a basic methodological question: “how do you, as an individual within a governmental agency, solicit public participation from minority communities?” The question for community leaders was a question of perception: “how does the community you work within and represent perceive the act or offer of community participation from the local government?”

Government official #2, who had been working for Athens Housing Authority for 38 years, offered this:

“There is no magic. The first thing is, you can’t be concerned about numbers, but you do have to be concerned about quality... One of the first lessons I had to learn is that a few people with great ideas who are willing to work together is better than fifty people who are all over the map who don’t want to be participatory. But everyone should have the opportunity to know what’s going on. The best way to do it, it’s time consuming but you always get better results, is when you go door to door and talk with people face to face. They need to know what you want, why you need them to come, and encourage them to participate. You can send out the fliers, you can mail stuff, you can do advertisements... But if you really want to make it better, that personal contact is what works. And it works more from the people in the community than it does me, or you, knocking on doors. But the people knocking on the doors need to be knowledgeable, sincere, and interested in having people involved. But when they have neighbors or community leaders, people they see who are doing positive things in the community and they do it [get involved in participation], it makes a big difference.”

The Athens Housing Authority, while admittedly having “some good years and some bad years” in terms of participation, does not simply theorize that community-to-community contact is the best way of increasing participation, they practice it; AHA has a partner non-profit organization, the Inter-Community Council (ICC), that has been organized

since 1973. Each housing community has two representatives on the ICC board, which serves as an advisory group to housing management and resident services. The ICC serves two purposes: it allows residents of Housing Authority properties to advise and participate in the decision-making processes of their parent organization, the AHA, while allowing the AHA a line into community workings, having representatives present and involved in the day-to-day lives of residents; both benefit from the partnership.

Government Official #3, a long-time employee of ACC's Department of Housing and Community Development, identified similar traditional outreach methods:

“We never expect the folks to come to us. Our approach to public participation is direct, it's based on us going to the community. We hold a number of meetings on a number of days and at different times. We advertize meetings on the local radio channels. We advertize in the papers. We directly email folks to get them to come out to these meetings. That's part of our standard planning process.”

On top of their outreach methods, the HCD has two other means of securing participation in planning and project input: a close relationship with the East Athens Development Corporation (EADC) as well as a citizen advisory committee. Because the HCD is responsible for administering HUD and other types of federal funding to high-need communities (East Athens is one), they have worked closely with the EADC since its conception in 1993; the EADC is a non-profit organization that was established to revitalize the East Athens neighborhood, specifically Census blocks 301 and 302. The connection between the EADC and the Department of Housing and Community Development has not gone unnoticed by members of the East Athens neighborhood; Community Leader #1 says that the HCD is and has always been their connection to the local government because, when ACC's government was unified, the HCD was

established specifically to serve that community and others like it, meaning low-income and minority communities. However, this relationship is not without its complications.

Community Leader #1 says that when a non-profit is funded by a local governmental department it often limits how far they can go in voicing concerns and unhappiness:

“In this neighborhood, we [the EADC] are the non-profit. There was another, the East Athens Advisory Board, which was more of a vocal group that spoke to issues within the local government. They spoke more directly to, and could speak more directly to local government because they weren’t getting funded by the local government. They had a more direct opportunity to complain, voice, advocate... some of the things we aren’t allowed to do. They were the voice and we were the implementers. That was most effective, and was for a number of years. Now we work more in collaboration and partnership with the local government than in an adversarial position where we would go in and say ‘ok, you’re not doing your job’.”

HCD’s other means of participatory input is their citizen advisory committee:

“We have a citizen advisory committee. You apply for membership, it’s a 10-member committee, you have to live in this county, and the mayor and commission appoint you. They are our advisors on running the program. I meet with them individually and as a committee. So what we do is a multi-faceted approach that just doesn’t simply rely on the community having to come to the chambers at a public hearing and stand up and say their name and address and what they’re mad about.”

However, because the planning process is inherently political, an advisory committee set up in this fashion has the opportunity to be flawed. Asking a mayor and commission, both of whom are concerned with maintaining power and a certain stasis, and both of which do not represent the minority-driven community they lead, to select members of an advisory committee is, in a sentiment, less than preferable. Nelson and Write (discussed in Chapter 4) would call this participation as a means rather than participation as an ends, a type of “covert privatization” in which the goal is not to give any degree of power to the

community, but maintain the right, as a mayor and commission, to decide whose input is heard and headed.

Perhaps, to counter-balance this covert privatization, non-profits can play a greater role in governance and decision-making processes in urban America (Orr 2001, 71). Gittell et al. (1999) speak to why non-profits can be and are important vehicles for community development in low-income neighborhoods:

“For such communities participating in organizations and nurturing one another is not simply a civic exercise, nor a leisure activity. It is an emergency response to the failure of the economic and political systems to meet their most basic needs.”

Government Official #1 reinforces Gittell’s sentiment:

“That’s where CBOs come into place. You’ve got non-profits and community based organizations that are planted. They are those people. The EADC, that was their root, people of that neighborhood wanting to turn around that neighborhood. The people running it are the people being served by it. Total investment. So they don’t have to worry about getting credibility, they don’t have to go up against the things that we [planners] have to go up against when we try to meet communities proactively.”

For Government Official #2, garnering public participation is about working with the already-existing social networks that exist in the neighborhood; for her, a ‘lack of participation’ means your department needs to try harder and try different:

“If you can’t afford to put someone in the community full time, that’s fine. But aren’t there other solutions? Like working with the folks who are already there to help them be a part of your team, so they can be the liaison to folks in the community. They full time person would be the ultimate, but what happens when you can’t have that, are you going to say ‘oh well, we can’t have anything else’? It’s a matter of how bad you want it [participation].”

Hula, Jackson, and Orr (1997, 478) note that “governing nonprofits seek to restructure local political agendas by assuming a number of roles and responsibilities traditionally identified with formal governmental authorities, including the identification of citizen preferences, program design, securing public resources, and marshalling public opinion”. Non-profits can also serve to bridge the gap between government and civic officials and the citizens of a neighborhood through forging relationships and partnerships with said leaders, and these are the relationships that can change communities (ibid, 74). Community Leader #2 confesses that he believes one of the greatest barriers standing in-between the East Athens neighborhood and civic participation and one of the greatest barriers standing in-between government officials trusting the public enough to grant them greater degrees of participatory power is that:

“People don’t know who each other are. When we hear about East Athens, we hear about the drugs and the houses on fire and the unwed mothers and the gangs and the violence, but rarely do we hear the good stories. This community knows it has a reputation. But we need to make hearing the voices of these minority communities, hearing about their struggles and their poverty but also their victories a normal experience. We need to all sit down together at the table and figure out how we can make this thing work for everyone, represent everyone, and how we can do that civilly.”

#### 5.6.2 Top-Heavy Planning and Impacts

As in the case of the Department of Housing and Community Development’s citizen advisory committee, the very structure of citizen involvement and input in the planning process has been structured by the mayor and planning commission. This can be seen in their decision to not implement Neighborhood Planning Units in the early 2000s. Some members of the commission were of the opinion that NPUs would undermine their authority, or contest it. However, from the viewpoint of equity planning, the elite

authority should in fact be contested as it does not represent the minority. Whatever fears the local government held about NPUs aside, that strategy for generating participation and educating the entire public on what planning, development, and revitalization efforts are being made within neighborhoods is intrinsically superior to Neighborhood Associations and the Neighborhood Notification Initiative. The NNI, the primary way residents find out about development, zoning changes, projects, etc. in their bounds, requires a Neighborhood Association. Neighborhood Associations are, in Athens-Clarke County, largely absent from low-income and minority communities; even in the case of the Inter-Community Council, which serves as the Housing Authority's neighborhood association, they are not registered in the NNI.

When the local government has a history of heightened oversight, one must wonder what portion of the responsibility, if any, falls to low-income and minority communities to set a place for themselves at the table? How deterrent is the local government to this possibility? Government Official #1, a long-time staff member at the Planning Department acknowledges the role local government officials have had in deterring input from minority communities like East Athens:

“The “whatever” attitudes we get [from the East Athens neighborhood], we earned those. In their minds, we don't answer to them. We answer to someone else. So there's no beef, but they don't think it's worth their time. How can we push past that sentiment? How can we make planning relevant to their community? How can we show them that we mean it?”

Community Leader #2 is a resident of the East Athens community and has been championing civil rights causes and social action in minority communities for more than 30 years. Through his experience as a community servant, Community Leader #2 has an interesting take on power imbalance v. community responsibility:

“There’s a lack of confidence in the local government on the part of minority communities for a host of reasons. Firstly, we are raised up to believe that the government we elect has a fundamental duty and responsibility to work with and empower communities, and, more importantly, to understand and address our fundamental needs. Minority communities like East Athens don’t see this happening in their community. Secondly, the local government must learn that, in order to accomplish any good thing, they have to share their power. Thirdly, there is fault in the way the local government functions. If poverty is a real and lived issue in East Athens, it shouldn’t only be their commissioner that cares and works to make change. Commissioners should be everyone’s commissioners, and a mayor should be everyone’s mayor, not just the mayor of those who elected her or him. In order to draw out participation from communities like East Athens, all of these missteps must be addressed. That community is passionate and interested to make change, but they need to see an equal commitment to change from a majority of the commissioners, the mayor, and other political leaders.”

In the same vein, Community Leader #1 referenced a collective notion, amongst the East Athens community, that their input and participation in planning projects does not count for much anyway:

“When the planning department wants input from the community, the community doesn’t perceive that as an opportunity for participation. They think that a plan has already been made, decisions have been made, things are already in play, whether the community says ‘yay’ or ‘nay’. Even if they come and get input, what’s the follow-up? They don’t take it and then come back to us again with an amended project. That’s the missing link, that’s the disconnect, and there are major concerns within the community about that. A community doesn’t like feeling that the next 10 years [referring to the comprehensive plan] of development in their community is etched in stone, without their input, and they are just a party to that happening.”

This effect is the result of intersecting phenomena: a local government that has a history of discounting minority and low-income voices, a populace that feels levels of disengagement due to that history, their own poverty and life experiences, and a general



misunderstanding about what the planning process can accomplish if people were to get involved. Government Official #2 said,

“You’re working with people who don’t understand the power they could have. This is a power issue. The public doesn’t fully understand—partly by the fault of the local government and partly by their own fault—participating in public input in regards to planning can be a venue for change”.

According to Government Official #3, “People need to feel like they have some skin in the game and have a chance of getting what they want. Then they show up.”

### 5.6.3 When poverty looks like disinterest

Another theme that came up within interviews with both community leaders and government officials was the idea of the community being disinterested. Government Official #1, a long-time staff member at the ACC Planning Department, commented on the East Athens neighborhood’s low attendance to public meetings and meager participation:

“The crazy thing is, sometimes an effort for input is made, and there’s radio-silence [from the East Athens community]. But it’s a complicated silence. It’s not silence due to the absence of something, and it’s not always a conscious choice, they’re not biting their tongues. There’s no gag order on these people. It’s not that they don’t care, but what is it? Have they given up? Are they beat down?”

Government Official #2, the Housing Authority employee, reifies this notion of being “beat down”:

“A lot of times, if you’re talking about planning, people don’t have a clue what that is. On top of that, these people are tired. They have worked all day. And when they come home, they’re not coming home to an empty house, they’re coming home to a family and responsibilities.”

This statement engages two issues that plague the community: the first is a disconnect with the institutional processes that form their physical environments and, therefore, lives. The second is working with and within a neighborhood in which a significant portion of the population is struggling to meet their basic, day-to-day needs. Government Official #2 addresses the intersection of these concerns:

“These communities [poor, minority communities], where they live, if a sidewalk is not available, they just make do. They don’t know that they could go and ask somebody, petition, upgrade where they’re living. They just live where they live and try to manage the day-to-day stuff. How to I have money to get to work? Dealing with family... those things take priority over planning. If the planning department wants to be visible, wants to have folks participate, then they may need to do some work on letting people know ‘here we are, this is what we do, these are some things you might want to consider about where they live’. You know, introduce folks to what this planning thing is really all about. Then they might see how it can connect to where they are in their world. But there isn’t a connection there yet.”

Community Leader #3, a board member of AHA’s non-profit counterpart, the Inter-Community Council, has experienced this sentiment within her own life:

“When I lost my job, I couldn’t think about anything outside of my survival: How was I going to eat? How was I going to pay rent? When would I get another job? Was I going to lose everything? I didn’t have the time or the ability to think about things like planning. Now I’m more stable and these things matter to me; being involved in the community, bettering the community, matters to me. But in a way, you have to be able to afford to care.”

Again, from Community Leader #2:

“When you go into a poor community talking about a ten-year plan, they’re like, well, for starters, what about a one-year plan? They need that one-year plan, because they need a roof, food, child care. They’re struggling to get all of that taken care of from day-to-day, month-to-month, year after year. Athens is a University town, and so we have a lot of people talking intellectually and statistically about things like “poverty” and “joblessness”, but what most of them don’t realize is that those words

and catchy phrases that everyone is so interested in, those define people's lives. That's a person's real life that they're talking about. To know a person or a group of people is experiencing these things and to know the experience yourself are two completely different things."

This phrase, "day-to-day", turned up time and again during interviews with community leaders. Community Leader #1:

"It's not a sexy to come out [the planning department] and say, 'alright, let's talk about street lights'. You know, these people are concerned with feeding their kids, or eating the next day, of having a roof over their head. Lighting isn't the biggest priority. There are communities that are just now getting water lines for fire hydrants. It matters how mature [developed] the community already is. Talking to a community about directional lighting is pointless when you look and see that the next three streetlights are out. Turnout can depend on a number of things, but it's not a build-it-and-they-will-come type of situation. If you're not meeting people where they are, even if you're doing something that is good, they have other things to be concerned about. Making it to the next day is a bigger deal than which way a light is going to point. In low-wealth communities, you're not going to have a big turn out for long-term planning because they're not on a long-term planning track, they're on a day-to-day track. Planning department doesn't do next day stuff."

Participation of low-income and minority communities like East Athens in decision-making processes is, all at once, immensely challenging and immensely important in that it decreases social exclusion. Anja Claeys (2001, 127) says this about participation:

"Participation implies the recognition of people as fully-fledged citizens and assumes they can substantially contribute to the development of society. Participation therefore implies respect and the recognition that people are competent in all aspects of personal and social life."

Claeys says that the poor meet greater barriers to participation in our society, disproportionately face the complexity of the society we live in blaring ways, and are more likely to strongly experience exclusion than other citizens because they do not have,

or have less access to, alternative and socially accepted channels to exercise their rights (ibid). Poverty in itself is the first great issue. The second is how to relate personal experiences (for example, those mentioned in interviews: joblessness, hunger, lack of affordable housing, transportation issues, etc.) with current social structures, especially when those social structures have a history of exclusion. In the case of low-income neighborhoods, poverty—and the lack of participation poverty can breed—should not be perceived as disinterest, because it is, in actuality, a result of the community’s inability to perceive fragmented policy (meaning policy that addresses only an individual problem) as helpful (ibid). Though low-wealth status within the East Athens neighborhood plays a great role in their low rates of public participation within the Planning Department’s efforts to engage input, we must understand that “missing” input for what it actually is, not only face-value. Yes, the neighborhood, and many other minority neighborhoods in Athens, struggle to be present. However, this perceived absence is only a signifier of a much deeper problem: the intersection of rampant poverty and little faith in or knowledge of the system in which they are being asked to function within and contribute due to previous exclusion.

#### 5.6.4 The Case of the Missing Trust

Planning is a contested social activity, often characterized by fractious practices and disputed outcomes; mediating the production and reproduction of the built environment has historically and commonly involved making choices that disadvantage some groups while richly benefiting others (Tait 2012, 597). Bob Evans, in his scathing critique “Why We No Longer Need a Town Planning Profession”, published in Planning

Practice & Research, points to all the ways that planning has been attacked: by the political left as having the function of promoting capitalist accumulation (Castells, 1977); by the right as being inflexible, bureaucratic and restrictive towards enterprise (Ehrman, 1972); and attacked by community organizations and minority communities as being insensitive and inhuman (Davies, 1972) (Evans 1993). As Evans says, “if town planning emerged as the ‘child of consensus’, it is certainly no longer in that happy position” (ibid). What, then, is the role of the planner? Tait (2012, 597) comments:

“The role of the planner... is disputed. For some, the planner is a powerful orchestrator, able to influence and co-ordinate diverse actors, sometimes to good effect. For others, the planner is a marginalized actor, who struggles to create just places in the face of inexorable economic and social forces.”

In low-income, minority, and otherwise subjugated communities, it is necessary to understand how planners are trusted by others (including the community they are working within), and how they seek to build trust when making decisions about the built environment (ibid). Despite the fact that trust is a major and recurrent feature of social relationships, how do we conceptualize of ‘trust’?:

Trust helps us to understand the meaning and value of social relations, to explain the breakdown of relationships, to elucidate the respect (or lack thereof) granted to certain social and political roles and to investigate why institutions find it difficult to engage with certain groups. It also provides us with an alternative model for understanding social relations to that of power, shedding light on contested relationships, the workings of authority, and legitimacy. While governments can demand obedience through incentives and sanctions, they may gain a greater ‘level of quality and compliance’ if they are trusted” (ibid, 601; Setin and Harper, 2003, Misztal 1996, 245).

Tait points out that trust and distrust are not only generated through personal relations, but also through institutional circumstances (ibid). For example, an individual within the

East Athens neighborhood may not have a personal experience of being wronged by the planning process or a person within the planning department, but because of their neighborhood's orientation to planning, they may feel distrust toward the planning department. In the same way, the mayor or the commissioners may feel they do all they can to encourage the East Athens neighborhood to trust them, but they still act within the realm of the powerful/elite. Government Official #2 emphasizes this dynamic:

“Whether people working in the government think it or not, a lot of communities [minority communities] don't trust them. When people perceive you as untrustworthy, whether it's true or not, you have to deal with that. I don't know all of the experiences people have had, but for them to feel that way, there must have been situations over a period of time that caused them to feel like they can't trust in a power, and can't be what that power wants them to be, including showing up to meetings. The planning department needs to figure out why this is happening, and what can be done to fix it.”

Community Leader #3 explains the break-down in trust between low-income and minority communities and their local governments:

“Many people in this community feel they have been promised so much, and those promises have yielded few results. So it's hard us to trust. But we're not the only people who don't trust. We don't trust that we will actually be counted and listened to, and that our words will have some impact, but the local government doesn't trust us enough to listen to us or share power. It's a two-way street.”

If both community leaders and government officials acknowledge that the East Athens community (and possibly other low-income and minority communities as well) feel levels of mistrust toward the local government, and that mistrust can inhibit public participation, where do we go from here?

Tait briefly discusses an idea that is part of the integrative model of organizational trust referred to as “mitigating vulnerability” (2012, 602; Coulson 1998). He says that

trust is one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the other party is competent, open, concerned, and reliable (ibid). Trust is also produced through "facework", which involves an individual (perhaps a planner) representing an institution and building trust (within a community) in its capacities and motivations.

"Facework" can also occur between an individual or an agency and another organization.

Perhaps what the East Athens neighborhood needs is a system that "mitigates vulnerability"; if their absence from participation stems from mistrust, and if the Planning Department truly is willing to award some level of citizen control to minority communities (still to be determined) like East Athens, then the best option is an interface or partnership between two "facework" organizations, one that represents the local planning department, the commission, and the mayor, and the other a non-profit organization led by trusted members of the East Athens neighborhood. As Government Leader #2 said:

"Let them [a community-based liaison organization] be the ones who know more about what planning is trying to do, and let them be the ones who work with the neighbors and friends to help the community understand, this is a good thing and this is how planning can benefit our community. That will build relationships. That will involve the folk, so that they can help you [the planning department] get done what you need to get done."

Community Leader #1 backs her up on this:

"They [residents] have to trust that what they're about to say is going to be taken for what they're trying to say and not used against them. They have to be comfortable with who they're saying it too. And they have to relate to the issues at hand. If you can't meet them where they are and be able to explain how a project will make people's lives better, no one is going to participate. We need a communicator, someone whose job it is to relate things to this community, and someone who relates this community back to the powers that be."

## 5.7 Conclusion

Like any place, neighborhood, or community, East Athens is complex. This is a neighborhood of polarities: a wealth of community based organizations, yet no neighborhood watchdog; a history of political disenfranchisement, but steeped in the history and strength of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement; one of the greatest income disparities in the nation, but rich and meaningful social networks and social capital; centrally located to downtown Athens, but residents feel disconnected from their greater community; a minority-majority county with only one minority commissioner; less than a mile from a land grant institution, yet struggling with some of the same problems that residents faced half a century ago; painfully aware of the struggles they and their neighbors face, yet unable to mobilize mass civic participation. All of these states of being are institutionalized, yet we can see the institutions cracking under the pressure of the neighborhood's curiosity and anger; East Athens residents know its time that they are part of the governance, rather than subject to the government. This thesis is, in many ways, a fact-finding mission: what is impeding residents of East Athens from participating in the political process of planning?

East Athens Community Leaders and Government Officials pointed me in the direction of four major ideas: (1) community engagement is generally only successful when officials network with community leaders to solicit support and participation; (2) the East Athens neighborhood feels the planning process is inherently top-heavy, and therefore that there is no place for them in the political process of planning; (3) income disparity can often appear as disinterest in civic participation; and (4) there are low levels of trust between the mayor/ commission and residents of the East Athens neighborhood,



and between the ACC planning department and community leaders. If the goal is to open roads of dialogue between the powerholders and the people, this feedback, as well as Roxbury's successful master planning process from a similar position, can point us in the direction of greater citizen participation in the political process of planning.

## CHAPTER 6

### ANALYSIS, CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

#### 7.1 Introduction

This case study of the East Athens neighborhood seeks to address the differences and intersections in thought that arise in the minds of those who lead the community and those who seek to engage community in participation. The field of urban planning has had a long, sometimes terrible, sometimes beautiful, history in regards to minority and low-income neighborhoods and communities. *That* history is essential to *this* story because the East Athens neighborhood does not exist in a bubble outside of class and political strife; it exists in a community, in a city, in a state, and in a nation, and within social, political, and economic systems that impact (often times in unexplored ways) the people who live within it. This thesis was an effort to explore one of these untapped stories.

The residents of East Athens, census blocks 301 and 302, are some of the most impoverished and underserved residents in one of the poorest counties in the United States. In recent forums of citizen participant input, residents admit that they are concerned with and worry about almost every aspect of their lives, self-reporting low levels of perceived control over day-to-day matters. One of the most blaring modes of social exclusion in the East Athens neighborhood is a collective disengagement from civic processes, particularly public participation. This is problematic on a number of

levels: planning determines how this neighborhood will develop and revitalize in the coming years, but, more importantly, the opportunity to engage in participation should not be “privatized”, as it is identified as one of the most essential aspects of the planning process. East Athens neighborhood leaders are concerned that the residents they represent and serve are being locked out of these essential practices by an elite, non-representative, and disinterested ruling body. When efforts have been made to truly democratize the planning process in Athens-Clarke County, as in the case of Neighborhood Planning Units, the mayor and commission defaulted for a myriad reasons, but the one the community heard above all was that NPUs would give neighborhoods too much power. But the East Athens neighborhood and others like it are under immense pressure from development efforts, most notably studentification, and need a method of power that would allow them to control their neighborhood and the development that happens within it. Here, the Roxbury Master Plan Case Study is helpful.

## 7.2 East Athens and Roxbury: Similarities, Differences, and Lessons

It is useful to conceive of the East Athens neighborhood as an intersection: a history of political, social, and economic forces have collided over time and place to create what we see now when we look at East Athens: a neighborhood facing overwhelming political disenfranchisement, income disparity, a school-to-prison pipeline, gentrification/ studentification, a bad reputation, a community where a majority of the population is struggling to meet basic daily needs; however, when one looks closer, strong senses of equality, justice, freedom, pride, and humility emerge. A neighborhood with elders, a neighborhood where at least one person on your street marched with Dr.

King, a neighborhood that has always been and continues to be distinctly financially poor, but wealthy in some kind of unnamable spirit. A community that dwells in problems, but also dwells in solutions to those problems, with long-standing and newly emerging community based organizations that seek to carry on the good work.

When the participation in the political process of planning in East Athens is put into dialogue with the Roxbury Master Plan case study, it is clear that East Athens and Roxbury share a number of similarities, differences, and that Roxbury is a useful roadmap in guiding the East Athens neighborhood toward greater civic involvement in their governance. On the most basic of levels, East Athens and Roxbury favor demographically: both are historically African-American neighborhoods and both are combating fierce poverty. Both the neighborhoods are lacking in political representation, though in different ways: East Athens and other politically disenfranchised or minority communities in ACC are vastly underrepresented in the local government, with only one African American member on the planning commission; Roxbury, and other majority-minority neighborhoods in Boston saw like-representation in their local government, but the majority of the positions of “power” held by those individuals were lacking in agency. Here, it is useful to place both East Athens and Roxbury on the ‘Ladder of Participation’: prior to the Master Planning Process in Roxbury, Roxbury residents and a greater minority political presence were in a place of placation, which means that some among them (the Roxbury Neighborhood Association) held some degree of power, while their presence is still tokenistic. The traditional power elite still hold the majority of seats, and the have-nots can be easily outvoted or outfoxed; similarly, powerholders receive advisement from citizens, but retain the right to judge the feasibility of the advice

(Arnstein 1969). East Athens rests somewhere between consultation and placation on the Ladder; the neighborhood and other minority neighborhood residents have yet to mobilize in a way that allows them to elect minority political representation, and the neighborhood struggles to activate citizen participation in planning processes. However, the presence of community based non-profits in East Athens signals that the community would be willing and capable of occupying a higher place on the Ladder of Participation if a space was made for them by the local government. Similarly, when the Boston Redevelopment Authority offered Roxbury the opportunity to collaborate on a master plan, the Roxbury Neighborhood Association and citizens of the neighborhood gained more power in participation, no longer tokenistic but citizen controlled.

Roxbury and East Athens differ in a number of ways as well. The most glaring of which is East Athens still lacks a neighborhood association. While there are a number of community based organizations doing good work there, and while those organizations can certainly lend planners access to social networks and advocate for their presence, there is no official watchdog for planning issues in the neighborhood. And while the neighborhood has voiced a number of concerns during various planning meetings and forums over the years, they have not called a meeting themselves to evaluate the state of their neighborhood and build priorities. Secondly, East Athens is starving for a sign from the local government that they (meaning political disenfranchised citizens) are wanted in the planning process, that there is a place for their input, and that it will be heard and headed. Without an act of good faith from the Mayor and Commission, East Athens will continue to be untrusting of elected leadership. Thirdly, East Athens and Roxbury differ in size and level of development; Roxbury, prior to the master plan, had over one

thousand local businesses, while East Athens is lacking in a strong commercial backbone. Interestingly, East Athens is, in many ways, a pre-Roxbury; when Roxbury became concerned about development, it was because the number of developable properties in downtown Boston was shrinking and prices of land were skyrocketing, making their neighborhood an easy target for developers. Downtown Athens is now facing significant development pressures; the Mayor and commission have prohibited any more student housing development in downtown Athens, while the University of Georgia continues to grow. The East Athens neighborhood is nearby to downtown, centrally located, and property prices are still low. In many ways, East Athens could be the next frontier for downtown, and, if that is the case, now is the time for the East Athens neighborhood to catalyze.

### 7.3 Making Sense, and Plans, from Dialogue with Community Leaders and Government Officials

In talking with community leaders and government officials I was able to get to the marrow of the communities' due concern. Several themes emerged from the conversations: (1) how the planning department and other governmental departments engage residents in participation, and how the residents, in turn, perceive this engagement; (2) how non-profits mediate and liaise between local government departments and the neighborhoods they serve; (3) how top-down planning has wrecked the East Athens residents belief in a fair and true participatory process; (4) how to navigate participation in a community where devastating poverty is often perceived, by

ruling elites, as disinterest; and (5) the degree to which the East Athens neighborhood no longer trusts their elected officials, but how this trust can be reborn.

What emerged from the intersection of all these issues was the overwhelming sentiment of “we need to find a better way to do this before all is lost”. Firstly, the East Athens neighborhood, as well as other minority and low-income neighborhoods in Athens, need a commitment from the mayor and commission that they will begin to work strongly toward a more equitable planning process. In this, it is blindingly evident that before an equitable planning process is possible, there must be greater levels of equity within the East Athens neighborhood and between the neighborhood and its greater city. If the local government continues to ignore the day-to-day issues an overwhelming majority of residents in Athens-Clarke County are still facing- including poverty, joblessness, accessible services, etc.- in favor of supporting the University machine and impermanent residents, neighborhoods like East Athens residents will never trust their government enough to become a part of the governance.

Secondly, after this commitment, the mayor and commission should work with the planning department and leaders in the East Athens neighborhood to develop a new and more feasible set of participation parameters. This participation methodology cannot look like the many that have come before it and failed to solicit resident participation in the political process of planning. This participation methodology cannot be developed without the guidance and input of minority residents. And this participation methodology must hold the support of the Mayor and commission. It must be a necessity, it must mimic the lifestyles and movements of minority residents, it must put the planning agencies’ concerns into terms that make sense and matter to residents, and ultimately, it

must work to open up the planning process to all citizens, sharing decision-making power, granting the East Athens neighborhood a place of citizen control on the participation ladder.

Thirdly, the East Athens neighborhood needs a consistent method of control, and this should look like a citizen oversight committee, elected by the neighborhood, community leaders, and the planning department. If the government of Athens-Clarke County is truly committed to justice, equity, diversity, and democracy, then the days of sole-government control must end, and citizens must be given back some of their power. It is essential that ACC's government trust CBOs in the East Athens Community, actively facilitate the formation of an East Athens Neighborhood Association, and begin hearing their concerns.

#### 7.4 Future Research

When I first set out, my goal was to record the physical anthropology of the East Athens neighborhood. As time passes, outside and internal pressures development pressures mount, and historically African American neighborhoods are slowly being lost. There are not just areas where Blacks have lived for decades upon decades, they are lands saddled with meaning, with important sights, smells, tastes, and stories. I discovered that I could not ask those questions as long as the neighborhood I was asking them to had no method of self-control. Once the East Athens neighborhood has mobilized and has claimed its place in shared self-governance, then the goal will be to collect and record stories of meaning that address Blackness and connection to land, while using these stories to ensure that the neighborhood will never again lose its seat at the table.



## REFERENCES

- Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35 no. 4 (1969):216-224.
- Association, American Planning. AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Chicago and Washington, DC: AICP, 2009.
- Bonds, Michael and Raquel L. Farmer-Hinton. "Empowering neighborhoods Via Citizen Participation or a Trojan Horse from City Hall: The Neighborhood Strategic Planning (NSP) Process in Milwaukee, Wisconsin." *Journal of African American Studies* 13 no. 1 (2009):74-89.
- Burby, R.J. "Making Plans that Matter: Citizen Involvement and Government Action." *Journal of American Planning Association* 69 (2003):33-49.
- Castells, Manuel. "The Post-Industrial City and the Community Revolution: The Revolts of the Inner City in the 1960s." *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983. 49-67.
- Chakraborty, Arnab. "Recognizing Uncertainty and Linked Decisions in Public Participation: A New Framework for Collaborative Urban Planning." *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 29 no. 2 (2012):131-148.
- Civil Rights Act of 1964.  
[http://www.congresslink.org/print\\_basics\\_histmats\\_civilrights64text.htm](http://www.congresslink.org/print_basics_histmats_civilrights64text.htm)
- Claeys, Anja, Filip Coussee, Silke Heiden, Annelien Merckaert, and Lieve Dr Grande. *Engaging the Poor in Policy Making and Social Exclusion in Flanders, Belgium*. Paris: OECD, 2001.
- Evans, Bob. "Why We No Longer Need a Town Planning Profession." *Planning Practice and Research* 8 no.1 (1993).
- Fainstein, Susan S. *The Just City*. Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2010.
- Farrell, Joshua L. "Community Development: The FHA's Origins: How its Validation Method Fostered Racial Segregation and Suburban Sprawl." *Journal of Affordable Housing and Community Development Law* 11 no. 4 (2002):374-389.
- Greenstone, David and Paul E. Peterson. *Race and Authority in Urban Politics: Community Relations and the War on Poverty*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Gurian, Craig and Michael Allen. "Making Real the Desegregation Promise of the Fair Housing Act: "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing" Comes of Age". *Journal of Poverty Law and Policy* (2010):560-69.
- Healy, P. "Institutional Analysis, Communicative Planning and Shaping Places." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 19 (1999): 111-121.
- Helper, Rose. *Racial Policies and Practices of Real Estate Brokers*. University of Minnesota Press, 1969.

- Hopkins, Diane. "The emancipatory limits of participation in planning: equity and power in deliberate plan-making in Perth, Western Australia." *Town Planning Review* 81 no.1 (2010): 54-81.
- Jennings, James. "Urban Planning, Community Participation and the Roxbury Master Plan in Boston." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 594 (2004):12-33.
- Jones, William P. "The Unknown Origins of the March on Washington: Civil Rights Politics and the Black working Class." *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas* 7 no. 3(2010): 33-52.
- Joseph, Peniel E. "The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field." *Journal of American History* 96 no. 3 (2009): 751-776.
- Krumholz, Norman and Pierre Clavel. *Reinventing Cities: equity planners tell their stories*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.
- Krumholz, Norman. "Urban Planning, Equity Planning, and Racial Justice." *Urban Planning and the African American Community: In the Shadows*, edited by June Manning Thomas and Marsha Ritzdorf, 109-125. SAGE Publishers, 1997.
- Larkin, Brian Patrick. "The Four-Year "First Step": The Fair Housing Act As An Incomplete Tool for Suburban Integration." *Columbia Law Review* 107 (2007):1617-1647.
- Leavitt, Jacqueline. "Charlotta A. Bass, the *California Eagle*, and Black Settlement in Los Angeles." *Urban Planning and the African American Community: In the Shadows*, edited by June Manning Thomas and Marsha Ritzdorf, 167-186. SAGE Publishers, 1997.
- Mahjabeen, Zeenat, K. Krishna, and John A. Dee. "Rethinking Community Participation in Urban Planning: The Role of Disadvantaged Groups in Sydney Metropolitan Strategy." *Australian Journal of Regional Studies* 15 no. 1 (2009):45-63.
- Margerum, R.D. "Collaborative Planning: Overcoming Obstacles During Consensus Building." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 21 no. 3 (2002):237-253.
- Massey, D.S. and N.A. Denton. "Trends in the Residential Segregation of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians." *American Sociological Review* 52 (1987):802-25.
- Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. "The Construction of the American Ghetto." *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988. 17-59.
- McAdam, Doug. *Freedom Summer*. Oxford University Press, 1990.
- McGraw, B.T. "The Housing Act of 1954 and Implications for Minorities." *Phylon* 16 no. 2 (1955):171-182.
- Meck, S. *Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook: Model Statutes for Planning and the Management of Change*. Chicago, IL: APA Press, 2002.
- Mohl, Raymond A. "The Second Ghetto and the "Infiltration Theory" in Urban Real Estate, 1940-1960." *Urban Planning and the African American Community*, edited by June Manning Thomas and Marsha Ritzdorf, 58-75. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997.
- Nelson, N., & Wright, S. (1995). Participation and power. In N. Nelson and Tait, Malcolm. "Building Trust in Planning Professionals: Understanding the Contested Legitimacy of a Planning Decision". *Town Planning Review* 83 no.5 (2002): 597-617.

- Wright, S. *Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1995.
- Prakash, Swati. "Racial Dimensions of Property Value Protection Under the Fair Housing Act." *California Law Review* 101 (2013):1437-97.
- Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.  
<http://www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/docs/kerner.pdf>
- Ribot, J. "Participation Without Representation." *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 20 no. 3 (1996):40-4.
- Ritzdorf, Marsha. "Locked Out of Paradise: Contemporary Exclusionary Zoning, the Supreme Court, and African Americans, 1970 to present." *Urban Planning and the African American Community: In the Shadows*, edited by June Manning Thomas and Marsha Ritzdorf, 43-57. SAGE Publishers, 1997.
- Sager, Tore. *Communicative Planning Theory*. Avebury, 1994.
- Sandelowski M. and J. Barroso. "Classifying the Findings in Qualitative Studies." *Qualitative Health Research* 13 (2003):905-23.
- Sandercock, Leonie. *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities*. Chichester, England: Wiley and Sons, 1998.
- Shan, C. And T. Yai. "Public Involvement Requirements for Infrastructure Planning in China." *Habitat International* 35 no. 1 (2010):158-166.
- Silver, Christopher. "The Racial Origins of Zoning in American Cities." *Urban Planning and the African American Community: In the Shadows*, edited by June Manning Thomas and Marsha Ritzdorf, 23-43. SAGE Publishers, 1997.
- Thomas, June Manning. "Model Cities Revisited: Issues of Race and Empowerment." *Urban Planning and the African American Community: In the Shadows*, edited by June Manning Thomas and Marsha Ritzdorf, 143-163. SAGE Publishers, 1997.
- Thomas, June Manning. "Planning History and the Black Urban Experience: Linkages and Contemporary Implications." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 14 no. 1 (1994): 1-11.
- Timney, MM. "Models of Citizen Participation." *Government is Us 2.0*, edited by Cheryl Simrell King 86-101. Routledge, 2011.
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. *The model cities program, a comparative analysis of the planning process in eleven cities*. University of Michigan Library, 1970.
- Vose, Clement E. *Caucasians Only: the Supreme Court, the NAACP, and Restrictive Covenant Cases*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1959.
- Ware, Leland. "Civil Rights and the 1960s: A Decade of Unparalleled Progress." *Maryland Law Review* 72 no. 4 (2013): 1087-1095.
- Wilkins, Fanon Che. "The Making of Black Internationalists: SNCC and Africa Before the Launching of Black Power, 1960-1965." *Journal of African American History* 92 no. 4 (2007): 467-490.
- Wilson, Bobby. "The Historical Spaces of African Americans." *Contemporary Ethnic Geographies in America*, edited by Ines Miyares and Christopher Airriess, 71-92. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.

## APPENDICIES

### Appendix A: Interview Questions

- 1) What is your history in and with the East Athens neighborhood?
- 2) How do you understand the physical boundaries of your neighborhood?
- 3) In what ways do you feel connected or attached to your neighborhood?
- 4) How have the relationships you share with neighbors and family members living in the same neighborhood changed over time? Have they grown stronger, stayed the same, or decreased?
- 5) How do you feel about the change in the age and income level of people moving into the neighborhood currently, including students?
- 6) How has the loss of historic neighbors and homes impacted the way you connect with and function within your neighborhood?
- 7) Do you feel as though you have a say in the planning decisions made in your neighborhood?
- 8) Have you ever participated in planning decisions that impact your neighborhood?
- 9) How could the planning process better serve you and your neighborhood?
- 10) How could the planning process be more community and neighborhood centered?
- 11) How do you think you could be “more heard” in the planning process?