

Racism and Metropolitan Dynamics:
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Racism and Metropolitan Dynamics:
The Civil Rights Challenge of the 21st Century



August 2002

A briefing paper
prepared for
the Ford Foundation
by the Institute
on Race & Poverty



institute on race & poverty
Research, Education and Advocacy

Institute on Race & Poverty: mission, goals, history

The Institute on Race and Poverty (IRP), established in 1993 by John A. Powell, is a strategic research center located at the University of Minnesota Law School. It is one of very few national organizations that directly address the underlying causes of the problems created at the intersection of racism and poverty. In the relatively short time since its inception, IRP has gained a national reputation for pro-active work through relevant research, coalition building, public policy influence, and effective consultation and technical assistance.

IRP's Racial Justice and Regional Equity project is a multi-year effort to engage communities of color and the racial justice advocacy community nationally in addressing issues of concentrated poverty, regionalism, and metropolitan equity. The goals of the project include:

- Reframing the regionalism dialogue to address racial equity issues.
- Acknowledging the legitimacy of traditional community mistrust of regionalism efforts.
- Developing specific strategies to engage communities of color in regional policymaking and making regional processes more participatory and inclusive.
- Changing the way communities of color define issues and consider regionalism in their analysis and solutions. This goal includes involving specific groups in identifying issues and developing strategies around metropolitan equity that honor the concerns of communities of color and help maintain control and cultural cohesion.
- Identifying and connecting groups that have already begun to address regional issues from a social and racial justice perspective and bringing them together to exchange information and ideas.

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New lenses for racial justice

A message from john powell

Gone are the laws on the books that promoted White supremacy outright. Civil rights laws now promise protection against a number of forms of discrimination. The time of Jim Crow racist exclusion has ended. Racial attitudes arguably are better than ever before.

But, by almost any indicator, people of color do not enjoy the same life chances and opportunities Whites do. Their mortality rate is higher, their personal assets lower. They are less likely to own a home or earn a college degree, and more likely to be harassed by police officers and sent to prison by the courts. Their access to democratic decision-making processes continues to be limited.

Structural racism has transcended personal racial animosity as the most significant cause of the racial inequities present in society today. More than personal racial animosity, more than single instances of discrimination on the job or in commercial exchanges, this inequality of genuine access to opportunity demands concerted and strategic redress.

The existence of disparities is not new information. What is new is the exploration of their structural roots and relationship to institutional practices, the ways in which seemingly neutral laws and policies contribute to racial disparities. Persistent disparities cannot be explained by the personal choices of Whites or the personal failures of people of color. The law that provides schools be funded with local property revenues, for instance, is race-neutral. But when the districts with low property values, hence a smaller funding pot for schools, are also the districts where people of color live, this school funding law produces inequality of educational opportunity along racial lines. Far too often, this is what happens today. Laws and policies are anything but neutral in effect, even though they are racially neutral on their face.

Racially neutral policies fail to correct for past racism. For example, explicitly racist governmental home mortgage policies of the past contribute to current disparities, such as in the amount of wealth held by people of color and Whites. Governmental laws and policies initiated patterns that repeat themselves today, regardless of racial animosity.

Racial disparities are connected to one another. Disparities in housing, for example, contribute to disparities in educational opportunity, and these affect employment opportunities. Improvements (or declines) in one area affect other life areas.

Many racial and economic disparities are fundamentally related to where opportunities, such as strong schools and jobs, are located in metropolitan regions. Location, or “space,” often in combination with other factors such as individual discrimination, substantially defines who has access to resources and other opportunities.

Although this report focuses on racial justice and regional equity in the United States, the use of metropolitan space to order opportunity along racial lines is not unique to it. In fact, this phenomenon – in differing configurations – has been observed in Europe, Latin America, and southern Africa. While each region structures race in relation to space somewhat differently, they all share the problem of spatially isolating racial minorities from opportunities. The United States has probably one of the most extensive sets of practices that use space to isolate marginalized racial populations. Cardinal Francis Eugene George, Archbishop of Chicago, has described this phenomenon in the U.S., and in particular in Chicago, as “spatial racism.”

Advocates for racial justice can be more effective in their strategic efforts by looking through three new lenses: the structural racism lens, the interconnections lens, and the spatial lens.



john a. powell

Combatting racist history

Advocates must contend with the long legacy of explicitly racist government policies that substantially dictate both where opportunities are located today and who is able to gain access to those opportunities. To combat this racist history, make connections between people and opportunities, and remedy the spatial aspects of structural racism, we need to adopt regional strategies and policies.

We cannot solve unemployment disparities, the affordable housing crisis, and racially disparate school achievement levels, among other concerns, unless we act from a regional viewpoint. A single community, even a single municipality, faces enormous obstacles to linking low-income workers of color in the city with jobs emerging in the metropolitan periphery. A single community organization or advocacy group can be frustrated trying to improve schools in a high poverty, racially segregated district when “racially neutral” policies privilege schools in affluent, majority White districts. The community’s work is on target, but the dynamics of inequality are region-sized.

Regional policies are key

Regional affordable housing, transit, revenue, economic development, and educational policies make sense if advocates want to improve life circumstances for people of color, particularly low-income people of color, in terms of educational opportunity, employment, housing stability, and wealth. These policies can complement the work being undertaken at the organizational, community, and municipal level.

While the implementation of regional strategies has resulted in enhanced access to opportunities like affordable housing and employment, we have also seen harmful results in terms of the political power of communities of color. Regional programs have dispersed families and disrupted communities.

For far too long, racial justice advocates and communities of color have been given “either-or” propositions by policymakers: affordable housing in middle-class areas or the preservation of a community; few employment opportunities or assimilation into majority White suburbs; and high achieving schools or meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

These “either-or” propositions are unacceptable. Communities of color must be able to access the full spectrum of rights and opportunities or racism will continue to reconfigure and reproduce itself.

A just brand of regionalism

Racially just “federated regionalism” is a model in which a regional authority controls access to the opportunities that have regional dimensions, but local authorities control other matters. This way, identity, governmental responsiveness, and community are preserved.

Regionalism – specifically a racially just form of regionalism that not only facilitates access to fundamental life opportunities but protects against harms and nourishes political power and community strength – is simply a tool to gain greater traction and results on existing efforts. Local efforts in housing, education, transportation, employment, and other areas should be complemented by regional strategies, and advocates should develop the capacity to work at a regional level.

Today’s racial justice advocacy community must steer regional efforts and forge new endeavors in order to contend with contemporary manifestations of structural racism.

john a. powell
Executive Director
Institute on Race & Poverty
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“If regionalism isn’t dealing with land-use, fiscal disparities, housing, and education, then regionalism isn’t dealing with the issues that count.”

Racial justice through new lenses: structure, space, and interconnections



- African Americans and Latinos have poverty rates nearly three times as high as those of Whites.
- People of color are disproportionately represented in neighborhoods in which 40 percent or more of residents live in poverty – “concentrated poverty” is racialized.
- African American and Latino students obtain college degrees at half the rate of White students.
- For roughly the past 20 years, the unemployment rate for African Americans has been twice that for Whites.
- Rates of “housing hardship” for African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans are twice as high as those of Whites and Asian Americans.

Lens of structure

Racial and economic disparities are present in nearly every aspect of the lives of metropolitan residents. Income, health, home-ownership, educational achievement, employment — all differ by race. An important relationship exists between these disparities, access to opportunities, and the distribution of decision-making power in metropolitan regions: laws enacted and policies adopted by local governmental entities impact how people of color, particularly low-income people of color, are able to access necessary structures and make gains in these life areas.

Access to high-achieving schools, for instance, can mean gains in terms of educational attainment levels, employment, and, later, homeownership. But students in low-performing schools may not be able to move to high-performing schools in a metropolitan region because district boundaries and attendance policies dictate that students attend only the schools near their homes. Often, low-performing schools are in racially segregated, high-poverty areas of the central city and struggling suburbs.

- Local governments mandate laws and policies over a number of key racial-equity concern areas. Local governments control zoning, which can provide for or restrict the development of the affordable housing lower-income families need.
- Many local governments have the authority and resources to subsidize the relocation of businesses, which can mean that jobs relocate far from the residences of workers in the city or inner-ring suburbs.
- Local governments raise revenue to pay for public services, which translates often into gaps between the quality of services that residents of various municipalities receive.
- Local authorities control many decisions regarding the funding and administration of public schools.

Racially and economically isolated municipalities have few opportunities; affluent municipalities cordon off a disproportionate store of opportunities through the walls of local governmental control.

This is the problem of “fragmentation,” or the proliferation of separately acting local governmental entities in metropolitan regions. Racially neutral in their language and their stated intent, these laws and policies often produce racial and economic inequality. They contribute to inequities by blocking access to opportunities found within their borders and perpetuate the existing disparities in opportunities that are related to the segregated residential patterns found in regions across the nation.

Racial disparities exist in access to affordable housing, jobs, public services, and strong schools. Racially and economically isolated municipalities have few opportunities; affluent municipalities cordon off a disproportionate store of opportunities through the walls of local governmental control.

Metropolitan regions are frequently characterized by high poverty areas, where people of color are more likely to live, and high wealth areas, where Whites are more likely to live. Research and mapping by the business group Chicago Metropolitan 2020 show that concentrated poverty and concentrated wealth in the Chicago metropolitan region are highly racialized, with wealthy residents living in the north and poor residents living in the south. This relationship between high need sectors and the “favored quarter” has a strong connection with local governmental control over matters like zoning and public education.

Regional governmental approaches to certain aspects of decision-making can improve the degree to which people of color, especially low-income residents of the central city and struggling suburbs, can gain access to the opportunity structures typically placed within the authority of local governmental entities. Issues of political power and community, however, necessitate localized structures.

Lens of space

People of color tend to be more disconnected spatially than Whites from opportunities in metropolitan regions. These spatial disconnections play a role in whether people can fully access key metro opportunities. This spatial ordering of many opportunities in metropolitan regions tends to privilege Whites and harm the stability and advancement of people of color.

Access to employment is a prime example. A substantial entry-level labor pool resides in the central city and certain inner-ring suburbs of many regions. Entry-level jobs are scarce in these municipalities, however. More than 14 million jobs were created in the nation between 1993 and 1998, but only 13 percent of these jobs were in central cities. Looking at entry-level jobs specifically in 1999, researchers found that predominantly White suburbs host nearly 70 percent of these jobs while central cities host merely 10 percent. Low-income people of color who cannot find affordable housing in the suburbs, or who must use limited public transportation, are effectively blocked from employment opportunities in distant suburbs. The spatial arrangement (or mismatch) of the labor pool and jobs contributes to employment disparities by race.

This is just one example of how racial justice advocates can use the lens of space to understand the structural and regional roots of a concern area, disparities in employment.

Lens of interconnection

When access to one opportunity structure is hindered, other aspects of life are adversely impacted. The flip side is that when access to one opportunity structure is improved, access to other opportunities is increased. The interconnected nature of opportunities demonstrates the benefits of a regional approach.

Disparities are interrelated, and touch every life area when economic isolation and segregation are present.



*Right now,
the average
White
household
has a net
worth of
\$84,000.*

*The average
Black
household
has only
about
\$7,500.*

*—Frank
Raines*

A quick illustration: Working parents who have affordable housing can spend more on transportation. When transportation is within their economic reach, employment opportunities are expanded. If they have an income from a job, they are more likely to be able to buy enough food for the family. When children are fed and their housing is stable, they will be able to perform far better in school. Doing well in school increases the children's chances of being employed later, accessing housing, and even generating wealth to pass on.

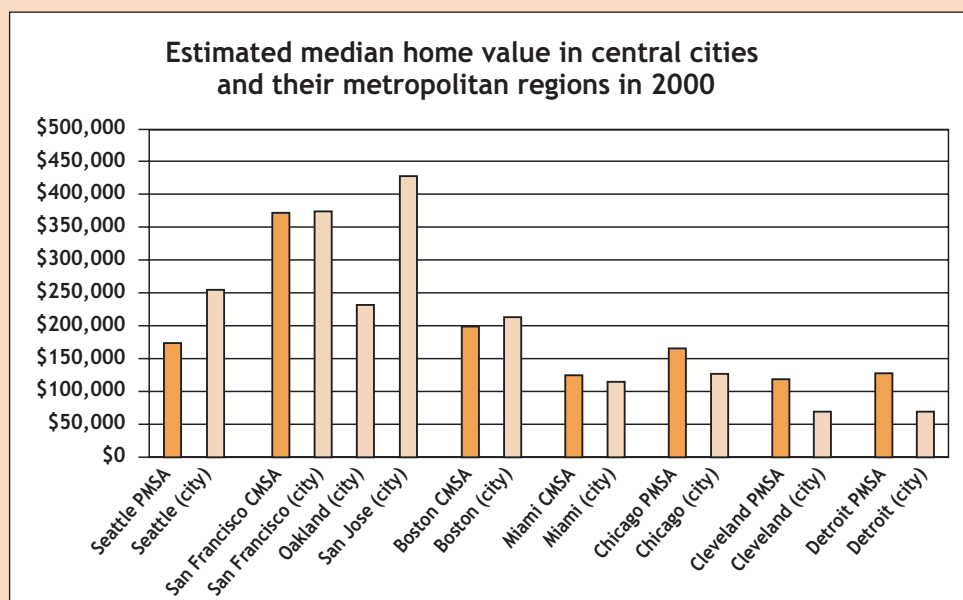
Consider the relationship between homeownership, home equity, and access to other opportunity structure: When families own homes in an area experiencing home value appreciation, they gain equity. This gives them access to other opportunities such as higher education and small-business loans. Owning a home that appreciates in value ultimately leads to wealth accumulation — wealth that can be passed on to the next generation. This is how access to one structure improves access to others.

There are stark racial and economic disparities in home-ownership rates even today. The Harvard Joint Center on Housing Studies reported the following

homeownership rates for 2001: 73.8 percent of Whites, 47.6 percent of Latinos, and 53.9 percent of Asian Americans owned homes. Moreover, residents living in segregated areas of metropolitan regions experience little appreciation in the value of their homes, according to recent research by David Rusk. Because of larger regional trends, such as segregation, homeownership for many people of color is not the gateway to wealth and other opportunities that it is for Whites. Frank Raines, chair of Fannie Mae, noted in a speech to the Urban League in 2001:

Right now, the average White household has a net worth of \$84,000. The average Black household has only about \$7,500. If we had full equality, the wealth of Black households would rise by \$1 trillion. African Americans would have \$200 billion more in the stock market, \$120 billion more in our pension plans, and \$80 billion more in the bank. And we might have 31 African-American billionaires instead of one.

The National Council of La Raza reports that Latino households' net worth is one-tenth that of White households.



How the government set the stage for today's structural racial injustices

Perhaps municipal differences are part of the natural order of things, like the rising sun... But...socioeconomic variation in American towns and cities is not random or natural. Rather, it is determined by government, and especially by those who have controlled it. And it is not fair.

—Kenneth Jackson in *Reflections on Regionalism* (2000).

It is no accident—nor is it simply a result of individual behavior and choice—that people of color are more likely than Whites to live in high-poverty neighborhoods and to struggle against substantial odds to have a stable and sustaining job, attend strong schools, afford housing and gain equity in homeownership. Paul Jargowsky and others have found that African Americans in particular are disproportionately represented in high-poverty neighborhoods where 26 percent or more residents have incomes below the federal poverty line; 34 percent of poor African Americans live in these areas compared to 22 percent of poor Latinos and only 6 percent of poor Whites. These and other stark disparities are not so startling when the full legacy of governmental racism in creating current spatial disparities is considered. From paying Whites to leave the city to bolstering the local control that allows affluent suburbs to exclude people of color, particularly low-income people of color, from many opportunities, government at a number of levels has devastated racial justice objectives over the past century.

This is an essential piece of knowledge for several reasons. First, since the government created these troubling dynamics, the government should take responsibility for correcting them. The

task should not fall solely on people of color or the racial-justice advocacy community. Second, this governmental role explodes the myth, so often espoused by opponents to racial-justice efforts, that people of color are to blame for disparities. Particularly onerous is the fact that the promotion of White flight and disinvestments from communities of color took place at the same time that civil rights advocates were achieving victories, such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation case, in the courts. Finally, because structural racism shows itself in these regional dynamics, it is appropriate for advocates to adopt regional approaches: intervening in existing regional decision-making processes, and endorsing regional strategies that will help achieve racial justice objectives so the mistakes of past approaches such as “urban renewal” can be avoided.

The departure of Whites from the central city was no accident, nor was the isolation of people of color in central cities that now are fraught with a multitude of problems. The federal government played a central role. As Kenneth Jackson and others have described, the government first opened up the suburbs to Whites via the National Housing Act of 1934. This law created the Home Ownership Loan Corporation, which subsidized home mortgages for Whites in the suburbs, a practice continued later by the Federal Housing Administration.

Before this time, homeownership was beyond the reach of many families because of the requirement that a substantial percentage of the purchase price be paid as a downpayment, often one-third or more. The federal government changed this, enabling millions of families to purchase and build equity in their homes. But the government explicitly offered these

The departure of Whites from the central city was no accident, nor was the isolation of people of color in central cities.



The opening of the suburbs to Whites also was subsidized by through the creation and funding of highways.

subsidies to Whites, would only fund houses in racially homogeneous, White neighborhoods, and favored the purchase of homes in the suburbs. The underwriting manual for home mortgage insurance disseminated by the federal government was explicitly racist:

Areas surrounding a location are [to be] investigated to determine whether incompatible racial and social groups are present, for the purpose of making a prediction regarding the probability of the location being invaded by such groups. If a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes.

Furthermore, the federal government pushed home purchasers to adopt covenants that prohibited the future sale of these government-subsidized homes to people of color.

The opening up of suburban terrain to “Whites only” during this period has had crucial impacts on how metropolitan regions have developed. As a result, Whites are now living at the rim and African Americans are living in the central city, from which not only Whites but multiple opportunity structures have relocated. John Kasarda has found that large central cities grew in terms of their

populations of color, unemployment rate, and number of families living in concentrated poverty between 1960 and 1990, while they experienced losses in overall population. His survey of 94 large cities showed that, on average, the population of color living in the city more than doubled, the unemployment rate increased from 5.5 to 8.1 percent, and the percentage of all

individuals living in concentrated poverty increased from 8.0 percent to 10.8 percent during this period.

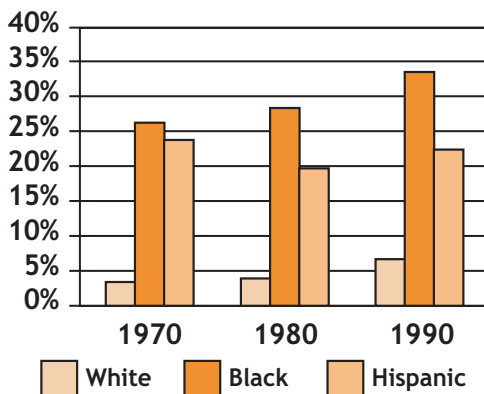
Furthermore, the denial of home ownership to African Americans has had devastating intergenerational effects because homeownership is the primary source of wealth accumulation in this nation. According to an analysis by Dalton Conley, African Americans could claim 0.5 percent of the wealth in the United States at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865. By 1990, 125 years later, African Americans’ share of the nation’s wealth had risen to only 1.0 percent.

The opening of the suburbs to Whites also was subsidized by the government through the creation and funding of highways. By the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, the federal government became the largest funder of the interstate highway system. These highways were intended for long-distance travel, but over half of the funding had gone to highways within metropolitan regions as of the mid-1990s, according to David Rusk and others. In other words, the federal government bankrolled Whites’ departure and created easy access to jobs and other institutions within regions for suburban residents over a span of decades.

The federal government does not ante up in the same manner when it comes to the public transit that people of color are more likely to use. Kenneth Jackson revealed that highway spending has eclipsed transit spending by a 5-to-1 margin during the past half-dozen decades.

At the same time that the federal government was shaping racially and economically inequitable regions, the federal courts made it very difficult for racial justice advocates to obtain regional remedies for matters such as school desegregation. The victory of *Brown* was tempered considerably by court decisions that restricted regional remedies to those instances where it could be proven that suburban jurisdictions intended to cause harm to communities of color.

Percent of poor population in concentrated poverty tracts



Federal subsidies of gasoline and suburban infrastructure have made it possible for further abandonment of the central city and the inner-ring suburbs to which people of color increasingly are moving.

The federal government did not keep its hands off the central city as it was subsidizing White flight; rather it engaged in a number of programs and practices that decimated the neighborhoods of people of color, and it failed to respond to the crises faced by central cities.

The so-called urban-renewal policies initiated in the late 1940s are a chief example. The federal government directed funding to revitalize central city neighborhoods in economic decline. Local governmental officials did not use the funds to strengthen communities of color, however. Instead, residential neighborhood structures, even entire neighborhoods, were demolished and replaced by businesses and other structures. Many

central city residents were displaced as a result, dislocated not merely from their homes but from their communities. Low-income families were moved to high-density, high-rise public housing, located in racially segregated and economically isolated areas of central cities. Some \$13.5 billion went to urban redevelopment between 1953 and 1986. As David Rusk and others have described, this destruction, displacement, and segregation in public housing has had adverse implications not only for city residents at the time, but also for people of color and others living in central cities for decades to come.

In the 1960s, the federal government created the Model Cities program, an anti-poverty effort, and was charged with enforcement of a number of civil rights laws. But the program wasn't funded adequately, and the civil rights laws were limited in their utility against the increasingly structural and regional dynamics of racial inequality.



While the federal government paid for Whites to leave cities, “urban renewal” programs destroyed inner-city neighborhoods.



All levels of government are responsible for inequitable metro dynamics.

From the 1930s to today, the federal government has shifted its approach from an explicitly racist position to one that continues to enforce structural racism in metropolitan dynamics — the dynamics it engineered.

State governments also have played a substantial role in creating and maintaining the spatial and structural inequities present in metropolitan regions today. The responsibility of state governments for problems such as the affordable housing crisis, the jobs and housing mismatch, and unequal educational funding came about in no small part because of state governments' empowerment of local municipalities.

Local governments have a great deal of control over zoning, taxation, public services, business relocation subsidies, and public education. These powers have important ramifications for racial justice. Rolf Pendall recently analyzed zoning in 1,000 jurisdictions in the 25 largest metropolitan areas and found that low-density zoning — the zoning commonly found in newer suburbs — has the negative effects of limiting the total

supply of multi-family housing and excluding people of color, who are more likely to need more affordable housing. Local control hasn't always been the "law of the land", according to scholars such as Nancy Burns. In fact, state legislatures delegated these powers to local governments beginning in the 1920s — and retain ultimate control over their use.

An interlocking set of laws, governmental policies, and court decisions have indeed "set the stage" for the problems contended with by racial justice advocates today. From racially and economically isolated public schools to a lack of affordable housing throughout metropolitan regions, these policies morphed from being outright racist to being neutral in appearance, while racist in impact. Yet they continue. Because the multiple barriers to opportunity — material, social, and political — faced by communities of color have these structural roots and these regional dimensions, advocates must consider the merits of regional approaches to accompany and augment local government control.

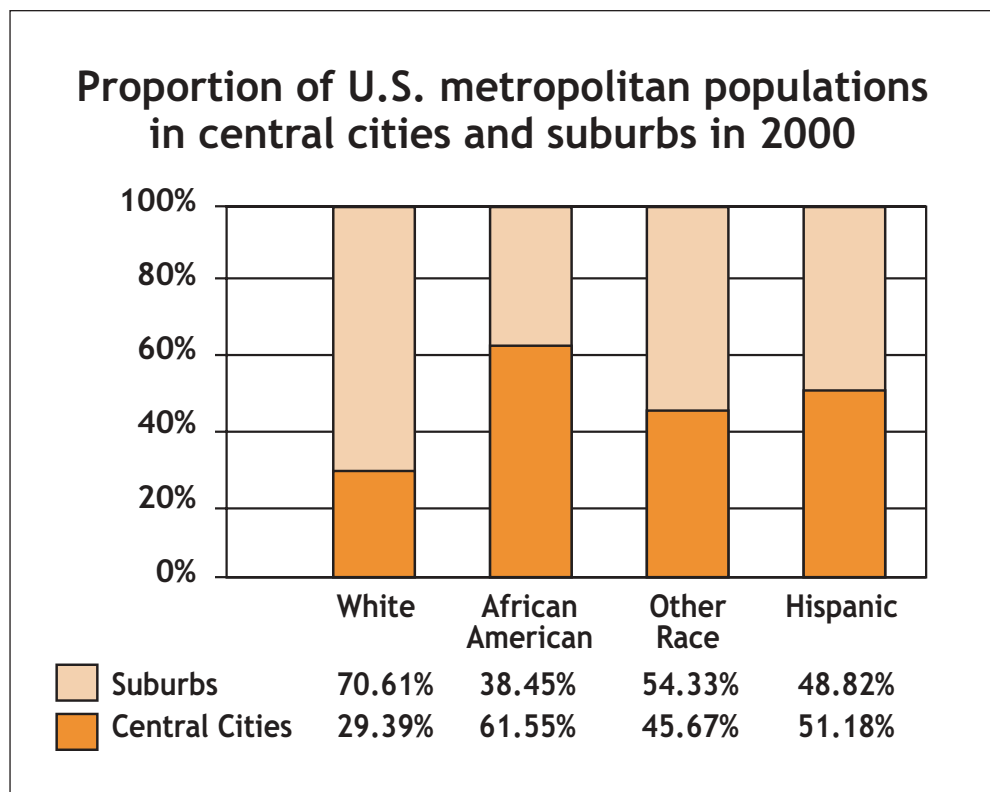
Even today, there are governmental policies at all levels that fail to solve these problems and that create new crises. Gentrification is one example of such a crisis. In cities with tight housing markets, the influx of higher income residents displaces people of color from their neighborhoods, forcing them to seek housing in other, often economically struggling, parts of metropolitan regions. The Mission District in San Francisco is one notorious example of this. Gentrification isn't happening in all regions, as some central cities have the space and the need for this influx, but where it does occur, it reproduces the displacement of the past.

States continue to subsidize the decentralization of resources by, for example, funding the relocation of businesses (and the jobs and municipal revenue associated with businesses) from the central city to peripheral zones. A 1995 congressional report offered this example of the subsidization of business relocation from the city to the suburbs: "Illinois [provided] Sears with \$110 million

to move out of the downtown, where a large share of its workforce was central city residents, to Hoffman Estates, an outer suburb of Chicago with little public transportation access for [current and] potential workers from the central city." According to planners William Lucy and David Phillips, state policies also continue to have influence in terms of how transportation funding is spent, how schools are funded, where public housing is located and financed, and whether infrastructure will receive state funding.

Federal grants continue to subsidize new suburban development. The government provides billions of dollars to state and local governments for new infrastructure. Much of the money is used to provide new capacity for suburban growth, rather than to improve existing systems. New development does not, as a rule, occur without this and other types of governmental subsidies. New development has an important relationship with contemporary spatial and racial disparities in metropolitan regions.

The influx of higher-income residents displaces people of color from their neighborhoods, forcing them to seek housing in other, often economically struggling, parts of metropolitan regions.



A city mayor and a planning process based on "we, not me"

Planning for development has long been the domain of private developers, the business community, city planners, and other governmental officials.

Communities of color have not had a seat at the table where decisions about land use, transportation, and economic development are made, and they have seen their interests ignored or harmed. Neighborhoods have been torn apart by planning or left to struggle without public investment, while it is plentiful in other communities. What was true during the era of so-called urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s remains true in many regions today.

In Rochester, N.Y., an innovative process for engaging city residents in the planning process has been initiated by a forward-thinking mayor.

This is a mayor who sees a real need for reinvestment in the city as the surrounding region sprawls and fragments, but who knows that planning has to incorporate the insight and engagement of city residents, or past patterns will repeat themselves. This is why Mayor William A. Johnson, Jr. ran for office under the banner of "We, not me."

Johnson implemented Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) in Rochester to involve and empower citizens who have not traditionally participated in the planning process. This citizen-based planning process touches all aspects of charting the future of Rochester, and has real results. Johnson wrote recently:

In Rochester, residents now help establish the city's budget priorities for housing, public safety, economic development, human services, land use, capital improvements and Community Development Block Grants. Through the NBN process, we've created a body of citizens so steeped in the planning process that they've become stewards of their neighborhoods.

How does it work? The city is divided into 10 sectors. In each, committees made up of citizens are entrusted to create community vision statements, identify pressing neighborhood issues and priorities, and develop action plans to realize goals they've set for their sectors' communities. Citizens are trained in various planning processes and tools, so that they can make decisions from an

"Empowerment is essentially a capacity to define clearly one's interests, and to develop a strategy to achieve those interests. It's the ability to create a plan or program to change one's reality in order to obtain those objectives or interests. Power is not a 'thing,' it's a process. In other words, you shouldn't say that a group has power, but that, through its conscious activity, a group can empower itself by increasing its ability to achieve its own interests."

—Manning Marable, *The Crisis of Color and Democracy*.

informed position. These citizen committees collaborate with businesses, faith-based institutions, and schools, among other stakeholders and constituencies, to ensure that all members of the community have not only a voice, but a role to play in designing, implementing, and sustaining their plans.

While in some areas citizens do not have the opportunity to genuinely influence planning—and are more like window dressing to government-monopolized planning—this is not the case in Rochester. The original citizen-developed action plans form the substance of the city's comprehensive plan, entitled "Rochester 2010: The Renaissance." Impressively, the citizen committees and other key players in Rochester have worked to actually complete over 78 percent of the original plans. Accountability has been aided by the development of a public awareness campaign, the creation of a system that tracks the progress of initiatives, and the installation of a communication network for community participants. Citizen participation in the planning process has increased over time. Committees are currently updating plans for their sectors' communities.

From a racial justice perspective, it is important that communities of color have a say in decision-making processes. Administrators of the NBN initiative have made encouraging racial and economic diversity a top priority since its genesis, and they continue to market the program through a variety of outreach initiatives. As a result, people of color are wholly and energetically involved. In 2000, NBN was honored with a Cultural Diversity Award from the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials of the National League of Cities.

Rochester's Neighbors Building Neighborhoods initiative is a model for inclusive, participatory planning. In the words of Mayor Johnson, "In Rochester, we have a proud tradition of vigorous debate, followed by meaningful action. We have a tradition of taking the path less traveled. Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony wouldn't have gotten anywhere if they kept their mouths shut or stayed put in their living rooms."

You can learn more about Rochester's participatory planning process by visiting <http://www.rochesternbn.com>



**Mayor
William A.
Johnson, Jr.**



Current racial justice problems and regional approaches

Regional approaches hold promise, but the majority of them do not consider needs of low-income people of color.

Problems faced by many people of color in the United States are aggravated by laws and policies that distance them from opportunities such as jobs, safe housing and high-performing schools. The laws and policies that restrict opportunities for many people of color, at the same time make it easier for Whites and higher-income families to take advantage of those same opportunities.

What would a racially just region look like?

In a racially just region, resources of all varieties would not favor the suburban periphery where Whites predominate. Instead, resources and development would be distributed fairly throughout

the region. Each municipality would have adequate revenue to provide public services, an adequate supply of affordable housing, homes that can appreciate in value without restraint from forces like segregation, high-performing schools not marked by disproportionately high levels of student need, effective transit infrastructure, and economic development. If resources and opportunities were fairly distributed and racial discrimination did not limit genuine access to them for people of color, a metropolitan region would be more racially just. In turn, racial disparities in life chances and outcomes would be diminished.



Advocacy groups, community organizations, business communities, governments, and faith-based organizations have spearheaded promising regional efforts in recent years. The efforts described here address a variety of problems that are both relevant to racial justice work and related to regional dynamics. Problems addressed include: the affordable housing crisis, school segregation, jobs and housing mismatch, and environmental racism. Some efforts are established and others are in their infancy. These regional strategies merit consideration by the racial justice advocacy community because they have the potential to increase equity in the areas of housing, employment, transportation, and education.

The efforts highlighted are steps in the right direction. However, to achieve a more holistic remediation of metropolitan inequities, efforts like the ones described

here should be undertaken in conjunction with one another. That way, opportunity structures will not only be distributed more equally across regions, but connections between them will be strengthened.

The concerns faced by communities of color should be an integral component of regional strategies. This can be accomplished by making racial equity an explicit goal of policies and strategies, tailoring programs and policies to the particular obstacles faced by people of color, and tracking the outcomes for communities of color in the region.

For more discussion of the specific criteria for selecting racially equitable regional policies and strategies, turn to the section titled "Essentials of racially just, federated regionalism" on page 32.



When schools are built at the edges of regions, residential development and resources tend to follow.

Regional inclusionary zoning

Local zoning policies adopted by suburban governments often lead to the exclusion of affordable housing. One approach to this problem is regional inclusionary zoning, a policy requiring developers of new housing to set aside a percentage of units as affordable. This has worked in Montgomery County, Maryland, making many affordable units available throughout that area.

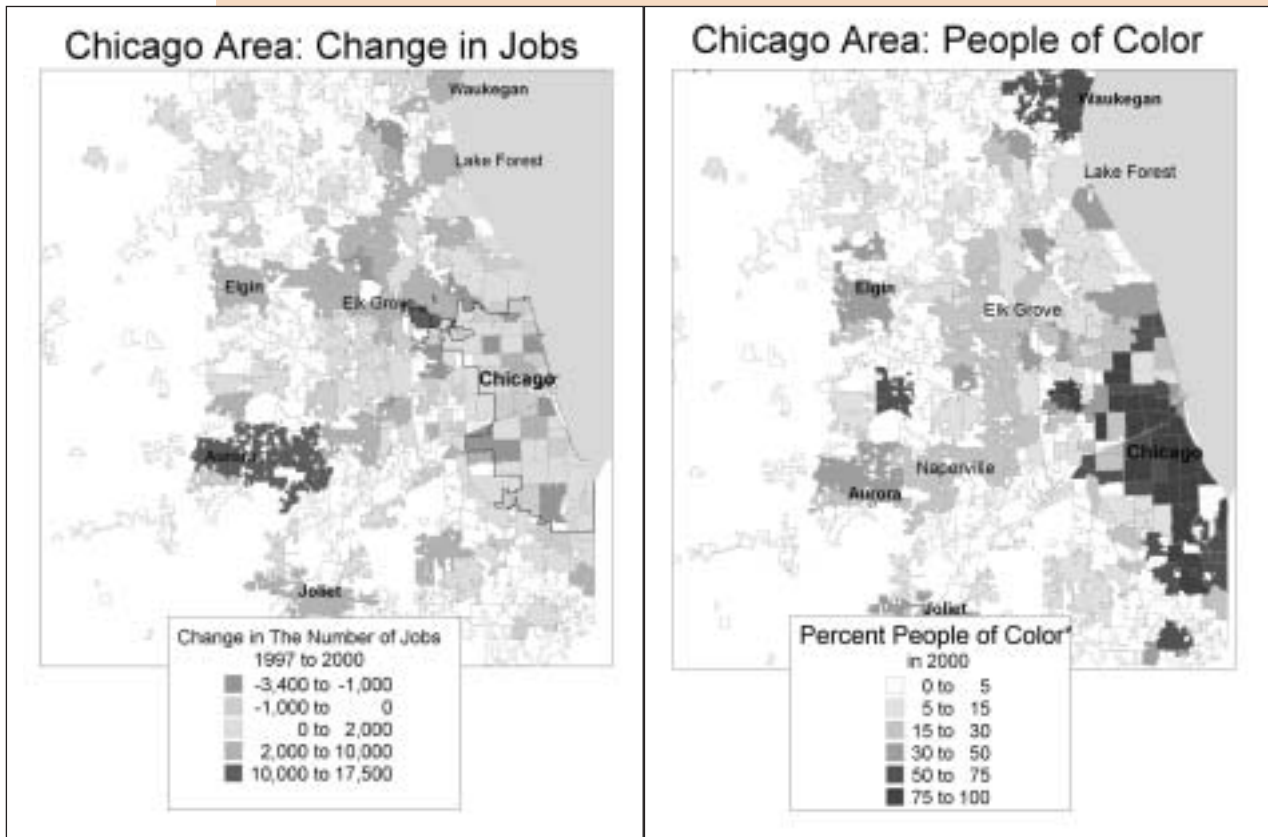
Coordinating investments in schools

When schools are built at the edges of regions, residential development and resources tend to follow. This racialized process pulls resources from the central city and inner-ring suburbs. Most state funding formulas promote new school development rather than rehabilitation of schools in the central city, but Maryland does it differently. In 1995, only 34 percent of the funding for school facilities

went to improving existing buildings in Maryland. By 1998, 84 percent of school construction funding went to rehabilitation of existing facilities rather than to new schools.

Promoting school integration

Desegregating schools at a regional level has benefits of all kinds, not least the enhancement of educational opportunity. There can be legal, social, and economic limitations to desegregating schools. But an innovative approach is underway in Chattanooga. There, local communities, developers, and city planners are building two new schools downtown that will educate nearby residents (predominantly low-income and students of color) and set aside seats for the children of downtown employees (tending to be more middle-income and White students). This approach considers the regional employment market and matches it with a regional educational approach targeted to produce integration.



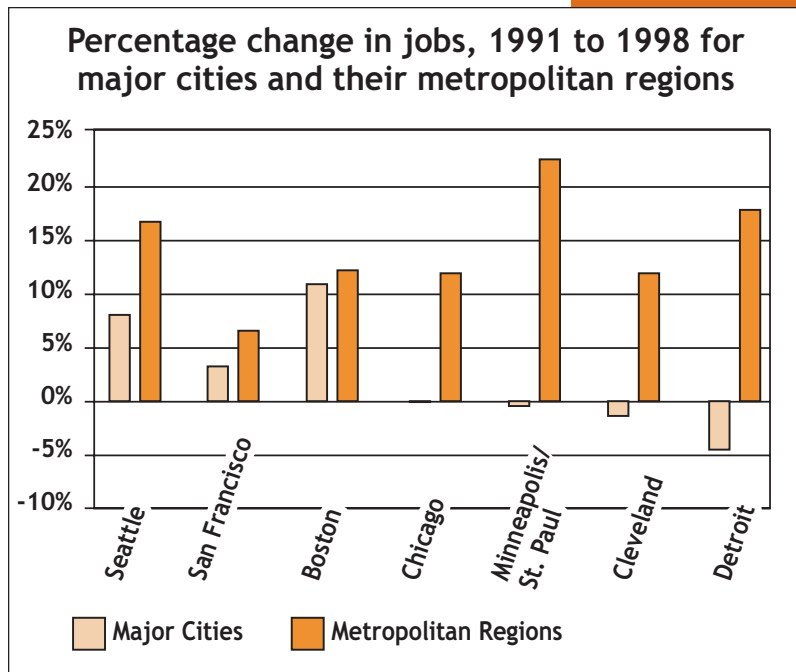
Remedying segregation in cities and schools

In Hartford, Conn., school district lines followed city lines and reproduced in the classroom the racial and economic segregation found in municipalities. A lawsuit was brought under the state constitution, which promises all students “substantially equal educational opportunity.” The courts agreed that the district boundaries created a serious problem and ordered a set of regional remedies. Implementation of these orders has been complicated, but using the state constitution is a promising approach.

Planning and funding transportation regionally

A regional approach to transportation already has been created by federal legislation, which requires that areas of 50,000 or more residents have in place a metropolitan planning organization that plots out transportation after considering land use, environmental impact, and other factors. Of central significance to racial and economic equity work, these organizations must include public participation and consider the needs of economically and racially marginalized communities when making decisions. Under federal regulations, these organizations must “seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households.”

In 1999, when a metropolitan planning organization in Indiana was seeking triennial renewal of its federal funding, a faith-based coalition, the Interfaith Federation of Northwest Indiana, challenged the planning process. The group showed how the process had not included the voices of people of color and had not responded to their needs. As a result of this grassroots challenge, the planning organization was only conditionally re-certified for federal funding and must alter its processes and planning. The federation continues to



closely monitor the planning organization to ensure that federal regulations are complied with and that the needs of low-income families and people of color are genuinely met.

Tying housing to jobs

Jobs are emerging in suburbs that lack affordable housing, making it difficult for low-income workers to get and keep them. The Chicago Metropolis 2020 organization, a group of regional business and civic leaders, asks members and supporters to make a pledge to The Metropolis Principles for Livable Communities: “We feel that to keep our region economically viable, we must actively encourage communities to provide a variety of housing for all people who live and work in the community. We must also encourage the same communities to provide viable transportation alternatives for working people.”

Businesses that share this concern sign a pledge to “give substantial weight” to two issues when considering expanding or relocating their business facilities: “whether a community has zoning, building and land-use policies that allow the construction of housing affordable to working people” and “whether a

Metropolitan growth policies have not always incorporated racial justice concerns and have even harmed the interests of communities of color.

community is served by reliable and accessible mass transit, especially mass transit near work sites.”

Metropolis 2020 suggests that having housing that is affordable to workers located near job sites has multiple benefits to businesses. Absenteeism and turnover rates decrease if employees are not burdened by long commutes and reduced time with their families. Productivity levels are higher because employees spend less time in congested traffic and have better health. As of June 2001, more than 100 businesses, finding these and other rationales compelling, had made the pledge.

Distributing municipal revenue regionally

Municipalities in most metropolitan regions rely on local taxes to provide essential services, including police protection, fire safety, and public education. Because municipalities differ in terms of their economic status and home values, revenues available to municipalities are disparate — often along racial lines.

The most extensive revenue sharing plan is that of the Minneapolis/Saint Paul region, which was accomplished through the state legislature in the 1970s, and is titled the Twin Cities Fiscal Disparities Plan. Under the plan, municipalities in the multi-county region contribute 40 percent of gains in commercial and industrial property revenue into a pool. These funds are then redistributed to the municipalities. “Among the 56 communities of 3,000 or more households, the ratio of richest-to-poorest community in fiscal capacity is 4 to 1 under the plan” reports David Rusk, who adds that without the Fiscal

Disparities Plan, the ratio would be 17 to 1.

Coordinating development while promoting environmental justice

Metropolitan growth policies have not always incorporated racial justice concerns and have even harmed the interests of communities of color. For example, anti-sprawl measures implemented in the Portland region are successful in restricting growth but may be causing people of color to be “priced out” of their housing, due to increases in rents and home values. There can be tensions between strategies that restrict development and those that actually open access to opportunities for people of color. One useful approach is to analyze in advance the potential impact of growth policies on communities of color and make adjustments to prevent harm and provide benefits.

Maryland has led the nation in terms of regional coordination and development over the past several years. In March of 2001, Governor Glendening signed an executive order establishing the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities. The governor declared that [e]nvironmental justice considerations “should be integrated into the State’s revitalization initiatives for reducing sprawl, encouraging redevelopment and enhancing community life.” Maryland’s new commitment to ensuring that growth control does not come at the expense of communities of color merits consideration by those in other regions because it addresses — up front — the implications of regional policies on communities of color and seeks to avoid negative impact.



Coalition building to challenge regional transportation inequities

Once a community-based organization recognizes a problem faced by people of color and low-income families requires regional strategies, what are the paths it can take to achieve real results? The Northwest Indiana Interfaith Federation, under the leadership of chair Rev. Cheryl Rivera, asked its members to identify a problem to tackle, did the research, mobilized communities across the region, and got results in terms of more equitable funding planning.

In Northwest Indiana, transportation money has largely gone to highways, leaving people who need public transit underserved. “Less than an hour from Chicago, race and class starkly divide the area,” according to the Center for Community Change. “Highways criss-cross the region, dividing neighborhoods

and connecting suburban residents to jobs, shopping and services. For poor and working class people, or those who cannot drive, the situation is bleak.”

In a survey conducted with the help of Valparaiso University, members of the Northwest Indiana Interfaith Federation identified transportation inequities as the issue they wanted to focus on. According to Rivera, the Federation knew that it would have to get the commitment of its members and develop a broad base of support for the cause to avoid being marginalized. “Simply because the issue is important does not mean that people will latch on to it. You have to show them that it is in their self interest.” Rivera emphatically asserts that combating the strong resistance to regional equity requires reaching out to people of all races



Reverend Cheryl Rivera

In Northwest Indiana, transportation money has largely gone to highways, leaving people who need public transit underserved.



“It cannot be just a city thing, we had to become powerful enough to take hits and still stand.”

—Reverend Cheryl Rivera

and all sectors of the region. “It cannot be just a city thing,” states Rivera, “We had to become powerful enough to take hits and still stand.”

After identifying transportation as a problem people could unify around, the Interfaith Federation conducted research. They learned that the regional planning council in the Greater Gary region planned to spend less than 1 percent of an \$880 million budget on buses, an essential mode of transit for many low-income workers. Because federal law requires metropolitan planning organizations to listen and respond to the needs of its citizens, the Federation knew that it could take a stand on this decision. If the organization failed to respond, the Federation could challenge its certification by the federal government.

Rivera’s motto is “Walk the Talk and Leave No Community Behind.” In this spirit, Rivera and her colleagues at the Federation undertook an extensive organizing campaign, empowering citizens to make themselves heard on the issue of transit. They didn’t limit

organizing to the city. Indeed, they drew more than 1,600 people to a predominantly White suburban church as part of the organizing drive, creating a 2-mile long traffic jam. The Federation drew support from residents of suburban communities that were experiencing the same problems residents in the city faced. This shared sense of a problem created a bond. They even managed to convert some of their toughest foes in local government and the region. Rivera offers as a lesson of regional organizing that “there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies.”

As part of a series of challenges, the Federation convened the nation’s first citizens hearing in 1999. There, people were able to explain the problems they faced because of inadequate transit, including difficulties accessing jobs in the region. As a result of this hearing and vocal participation at many public meetings, the metropolitan planning organization was only conditionally certified by the federal government and told it would have to make real changes to meet the needs of people of color.



Rivera explains that they are still figuring things out in the greater Gary region, and that racial justice advocates should realize that their victories were not won overnight – indeed, the struggle for transit equity has gone on since the mid-1990s. “You’ve got to be willing to stand the test of time,” Rivera remarked in a telephone interview. “We went through five years of stalls and stops.”

The Interfaith Federation is still running strong and continuing to make demands for fairness in transportation spending and other areas, including land use, in the region.

You can learn more about the community-based, faith-based fights for equity being waged by the Interfaith Federation by e-mailing fednwi@aol.com

Strive to increase public understanding of the regional forces that create social and economic problems.

Suggested regional strategies for advocates

Racial justice advocates who desire to adopt a regional approach to current racial and economic disparities can consider these strategies:

- Strive to increase public understanding of the regional forces that create social and economic problems.
- Work in coalition with other organizations in the region to promote change, including organizations and advocates working in diverse geographic and issue areas, and non-traditional allies such as the business community and environmentalists.
- Undertake efforts that cross municipal boundaries and address inter-municipal problems.
- Coordinate efforts to address inequalities in interrelated issue areas, such as education, housing, employment, economic development, and transportation.

- Support strategies that have indirect positive effects for work on race and poverty, such as those that reduce fragmentation.
- Weigh in on these issues so that the interests of communities of color are not ignored but instead may be advanced or promoted.
- Shape and participate in existing regional structures such as regional decision-making bodies and regional processes (for example, the planning of transportation systems or comprehensive planning) to make them more effective and responsive.
- Push for the creation of regional governmental and non-governmental organizations. Participate in these groups and monitor their activities. (To guide this effort, a section on “federated regionalism” later in this report offers a set of criteria for racially equitable forms of regionalism.)



Potential pitfalls of regional approaches

Political power has been lost and inner-city communities have been destroyed by regionalism.

Governmental actors, environmentalists, and proponents of metropolitan growth control are not necessarily going to put the concerns of people of color at the forefront of their call for regional approaches. To ensure that regional approaches in housing, transportation, education, employment, and other areas of racial inequity actually respond to the needs of communities of color and low-income families, advocates must take part in the process. As Executive Director of the Applied Research Center Gary Delgado put it, it does not make good sense to “take a back seat in this process and leave the conceptualization of the initiative to political dealmakers of good will.”

Awareness of harms that regionalism has caused is a major barrier to engagement on the part of the racial justice advocacy community. Political power has been lost, neighborhoods have been plowed under, and social networks and communities have been decimated through the implementation of regionalism over the last several decades.

Increasing opportunities or promoting community strength and political power is a fundamental “either-or” faced by the racial justice advocacy community. But it doesn’t have to be. What must be sought, for people of color and low-income households to enjoy the full spectrum of societal rights, is a form of regionalism that simultaneously opens access to essential opportunities, enhances power in political and other decision-making arenas, and preserves and strengthens communities. This model is racially just federated regionalism.

Political power dilution

Because of residential patterns, people of color typically have garnered political power in central cities. This power is significant at the local level but limited in terms of access to resources that are impacted by regional dynamics. Those living in the suburbs tend to have a greater influence over decisions that affect the region as a whole — in state legislatures and Congress — because



of their numerical majority and relative affluence.

Standing by as Whites and other residents of affluent suburbs dictate policy for affordable housing development, transportation spending, subsidies for business relocations, and school funding is not an option. But traditional regional approaches can topple the political power base built by people of color in the central city by a number of means, including shifting decision-making to a regional government that does not represent their interests and breaking up neighborhoods, the political strongholds of people of color.

People of color living in the central city of the Indianapolis region saw their political influence and interests undermined when a regional government structure, Uni-Gov, was put into place in the 1970s. Their voice and political power were overwhelmed by a White majority in a regional government that delivered some services regionally but did not address key racial justice concerns such as social services and public schools. (For more on this, advocates can turn to John Powell's chapter in *Reflections on Regionalism*, published by the Brookings Institution.) City-county consolidations in the south also diminished the political power of communities of color in dozens of areas.

This is not simply a matter of history. Critics today charge, for instance, that Metro in Washington, D.C. does not represent the interests of communities of color. An advocacy group put it this way: "Regionalism is based on the notion that all urban problems would go away if we just had a big enough government in charge of them. In fact, many of them would seem to go away because no one would mention them anymore."

Political power on the part of communities of color cannot be sacrificed in any of these ways — not through subordination to the interests of Whites

and wealthy suburban residents, nor through the imposition of a regional government hostile to their interests. A racially just regionalism must be forged.

A racially just regional government, according to Gary Delgado, requires that "both the racial impact of specific policy proposals and a plan for racial representation on regional bodies be well developed and articulated." To build on that, regional governments must not only be inclusive in representation, but have participatory decision-making processes and ensure that the needs of communities of color are met.

One way to increase the likelihood that a regional government will be racially representative and responsive to the concerns of communities of color is to reform the way that officials are elected. Under the winner-take-all system in place in most jurisdictions in the nation, all people of color essentially have to live in the same political jurisdiction to have their needs represented (not that the needs of communities of color are monolithic). Because their numbers are dwarfed by the population of Whites in many metropolitan regions, people of color voting in a regional jurisdiction under a winner-take-all scheme are likely to have their needs ignored. Instead, were individuals able to vote for regional representatives in single-member districts rather than in an at-large vote, people of color would have greater electoral strength. Another possibility is a cumulative voting method, in which people have a number of votes that they can put toward a single candidate or spread across a number of candidates. Cumulative voting has proven more effective than winner-take-all voting in terms of representation for people of color and women. Safeguards against the political isolation of officials elected by communities of color should be put into place.

One way to increase the chances that a regional government will be racially representative is to reform the way that officials are elected.



“If the only alternative to accepting the differentiation of the region’s population is to eliminate it, many have felt the price is too high.”

—Gerald Frug

Destruction of communities

When regionalism is mentioned as a way to achieve greater equity, the minds of racial justice advocates often leap to housing dispersal programs, and policies that draw higher-income Whites to neighborhoods in the city and displace families of color from their housing or even their neighborhoods. In short, regionalism is associated with forced assimilation into White-dominated settings, and with the burden of achieving greater resource equity placed on people of color. Regionalism also connotes for many the destruction of neighborhoods established by communities of color — neighborhoods that include not just housing units, but social networks, support systems, and a strong sense of “place.” Demands for assimilation and the decimation of communities are real concerns.

Regional mobility strategies have placed people of color in situations where they have to assimilate in order to function, whether they were students bused to suburban schools or are people with housing vouchers. The problematic nature of these programs contributes to a

sometimes vocal opposition to regional strategizing. As Gerald Frug expressed, “If the only alternative to accepting the differentiation of the region’s population is to eliminate it, many have felt the price is too high.”

At the same time that people of color have been forced into assimilationist settings, their neighborhoods have been disrupted by their departure. Networks, support systems, and institutions have been depleted in strength by dispersal policies and policies that spur gentrification.

The participation of people of color in decision-making processes is essential to constructing a racially just model of regionalism. Gerald Frug argues:

There is no reason to think that the choice facing America is between local autonomy and regional (or state or national) government – between separation from others and being overwhelmed by them in the name of togetherness. There is considerable room for maneuvering between separation and unity, between local autonomy and centralization, between balkanization and assimilation.



How local and regional efforts can reinforce each other:

The Leadership of Hattie Dorsey and the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership

A theme emphasized throughout this writing is that advocates for racial justice need not accept the “either-or” solutions put forward in the past. The proposition, for instance, that families of color can either gain access to affordable housing in middle-class areas or sustain community strength is unacceptable. So is the proposition that the racial justice advocacy community should either engage in local efforts or take on regional approaches. Local strategies cannot be replaced wholesale by regional strategies; rather, local and regional work must be undertaken in concert to make substantial gains on racial and economic equity goals.

Under the leadership of Hattie Dorsey, the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc. (ANDP) continues to prove that complementing the local with the regional can work. They are seeking, through housing financing, development, and advocacy efforts, to ensure that families with a wide range of incomes can live in the central city and suburban areas where opportunities, such as new jobs, are emerging. ANDP considers a vibrant community one that blends market rate, workforce, and low-income housing options, rather than one comprised strictly of affordable housing or exclusively high-end housing. That way, families that most need them can better access the host of opportunities located throughout the region. Dorsey commented in a recent interview, “The imbalance between affordable housing and jobs in Atlanta and other regions quite simply demands a regional approach.”

The work of ANDP is truly both local and regional. ANDP strives to create economically viable mixed-income communities by working directly with community development corporations. The scope of the work is metropolitan-wide, but is implemented in conjunction with local economic development organizations. By providing access to capital skills training and leadership development programs, ANDP increases the capacity of community development corporations to revitalize their neighborhoods.

Dorsey and ANDP have numerous victories to their credit. They have been involved in the creation and development of more than 6,000 mixed-income housing units in the Atlanta metropolitan region since 1991. They successfully persuaded the executive director of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to make the inclusion of mixed-income housing a condition for receiving certain funds. Using transportation dollars as a carrot, the inclusion of a mixed-income communities strategy is now a condition for receipt of funds from ARC under one of the Commission’s initiatives. Dorsey and ANDP are proving in a multitude of ways that it’s not a matter of local versus regional work, and that local efforts and regional strategies can co-exist and strengthen one another.

To learn more about Hattie Dorsey and the work of the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc., please visit www.andpi.org



Hattie Dorsey

Local strategies cannot be replaced wholesale by regional strategies; rather, local and regional work must be undertaken at the same time.



In 2001, transit expenditures in Maryland were equal to road expenditures—an unusual ratio, when compared with the federal transportation budget.

Maryland's Smart Growth Initiative offers a framework for integrating key aspects of sound regional planning

In 1997, the Maryland Legislature enacted the Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative. According to the initiative's creator, Gov. Parris N. Glendening, it has three broad goals: "to save the state's natural resources; to reinvigorate and revitalize the state's existing towns, cities, and older communities; and to save taxpayers millions of dollars by preventing unnecessary infrastructure." The Smart Growth Initiative provides a framework for allocating state aid to support development that revitalizes existing communities by promoting rehabilitation of buildings, schools, and parks, facilitating brownfield removal and redevelopment, encouraging in-fill development, and improving mass transit.

Through this initiative the state redirects funding for infrastructure to areas that have been ignored for years. And it promises better use of existing residential, commercial, and industrial areas, and governmental facilities, such as schools. Another goal of the legislation is to preserve rural, historic, and ecologically important areas.

One major focus of Maryland's Smart Growth Initiative is the designation of Priority Funding Areas (PFAs); these areas are targeted for future growth and state funding. They include every municipality in Maryland, areas inside the Washington and Baltimore Beltways, and already designated enterprise zones, neighborhood revitalization areas, heritage areas, as well as existing industrial land. If eligibility criteria of sufficient population density and infrastructure provisions are met, areas outside the PFAs may be eligible for state funds. County governments work with the state to designate such additional priority funding areas.

A companion to this law is the Rural Legacy Program, which was designed to protect rural areas containing farms, forests, and historic sites; green areas surrounding rural communities; important ecological areas (notably the Chesapeake Bay); and areas surrounding natural resources. Its goal is to protect 200,000 acres of vital land and resident species within 15 years. The related Agricultural Land Preservation offers tax credits for donating land for open spaces, forests, watersheds, or other valued historic properties.

An incentive-based approach

The Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative is statewide in its reach, and it operates through incentives and disincentives rather than through mandates. The state does not prohibit development outside designated areas; however, it will not provide funding for those who do so. In other words, the counties and municipalities continue to have control over their growth, but if the desired development conflicts with smart growth principles, they must pay for it on their own.

In the five-year period of its existence, this initiative has effectively deterred many sprawling developments that threatened rural areas. Developments that would have consumed 277,000 acres of open space have been stopped; and plans to build several highway bypasses encouraging urban sprawl have been redirected in favor of alternative transit solutions.



Although the initiative does not expressly state goals of reducing racial injustice and regional inequity, many PFA areas are in declining, distressed areas where low-income communities of color exist, creating the potential for increased opportunity and revitalization. The state's school and transit investments also indicate a commitment to social equity.

Maryland's Smart Growth Initiative offers strong incentives for local governments, developers, and communities through programs and via tax credits, loans, grants, and financial and technical assistance. Those that focus on areas of concern to communities of color include:

Neighborhood Revitalization Programs – A record \$206 million in funding was committed in 2001 to complement existing revitalization programs.

Mass Transit – \$1.5 billion in funds is being invested for new transit measures. Funds are targeted to improve mass transit and increase ridership by lowering fares, adding service hours, new buses, routes, and neighborhood shuttles, offering additional parking at stations, and streamlining the system. In 2001, transit expenditures in Maryland were equal to road expenditures—an unusual ratio, when compared with the federal transportation budget.

Live Near Your Work – This program encourages people to buy homes within walking or bicycling distance from their work. A public-private partnership (involving the state, the city, and the employer) offers \$3,000 to home buyers for their down payment or closing costs, providing the homebuyer lives in the home for at least three years. By 2002, more than 130 businesses, and more than 600 employees had bought homes using this program. The majority of program participants are first-time home buyers and/or residents of Baltimore. While the program has no income restrictions, most participants have moderate incomes.

(More than half had annual incomes of \$50,000 or less, and one-quarter had annual incomes of \$30,000 or less.)

Job Creation Tax Credit – This tax credit gives eligible small businesses incentives to locate near labor pools in a PFA. This incentive boosts declining older areas and lessens the distance between jobs and job seekers.

Brownfield-Urban Redevelopment – This program encourages developers to clean up and redevelop abandoned, often contaminated, industrial or commercial sites. The state offers tax credits and financial assistance for site assessment and other efforts relating to clean ups. By 2002, more than 30 sites (and 1,600 acres) of brownfield areas had been returned to productive use.

This initiative is a promising model for other states. State aid allocations must address the needs of low-income communities and communities of color (groups traditionally marginalized in the political process). State leaders should also ensure that the decision-making process includes the participation of these groups.

Without explicit goals and incentives to ensure that racial equity goals are part of growth management, state planners risk perpetuating development patterns that have been historically harmful to communities of color. It is noteworthy that in its analysis of the Maryland initiative's strengths and shortcomings, state leaders have recognized the need to promote social equity. This evolving initiative will become stronger as explicit social equity goals are integrated into regional growth management.

To learn more about Maryland's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative, please visit www.smartgrowth.state.md.us



Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening

Maryland state leaders have recognized the need to explicitly promote social equity.

Forums sponsored by Chicago Metropolis 2020 have brought together individuals from a wide variety of sectors to work toward regional coordination.

A new ally for racial justice advocates: leadership in the business community

The problems created by metropolitan development patterns, such as the spatial mismatch between affordable housing and entry-level jobs, are causing concern for many members of the business community. Across the nation, business leaders who recognize the importance of regional coordination are coming forward, demanding change, and developing innovative responses.

In Chicago, the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club, a group that includes the city's most prominent business executives, has been at the forefront of efforts to develop a more coherent and sensible strategy for long-term regional growth. In 1996, the Commercial Club of Chicago examined the imbalances and inequities in that region. Members then formed a new organization, called Chicago Metropolis 2020, to proactively address the issues. The newly forged organization describes its approach:

There are numerous issues vital to our social and economic well-being that must be addressed regionally. These issues relate to unlimited, low density sprawl; concentration of poor minorities; the spatial mismatch between jobs, affordable housing and transportation; and disparate degrees of access to quality education.

Under the helm of Executive Director Frank Beal, former president and CEO of Ryerson International, the organization has studied problems in the Chicago region and produced regional report cards, including the recently released 2002 Metropolis Index. The Metropolis Index quantifies 31 indicators of regional well-being, such as the child poverty rate, the percentage of protected open land, per capita transit ridership, and the high school graduation rate, which reflect progress or deterioration in education, transportation, land use, and the regional economy.



“To succeed, businesses have to be able to move people and goods efficiently,” says Beal. “That requires sensible regional planning. The long-term alternative is gridlock, which makes it awfully hard to run a competitive firm. But you also have to remember that for most people, business is just a day job. They also care about having good schools, strong communities, and a healthy environment.”

Forums sponsored by Chicago Metropolis 2020 have brought together individuals from a wide variety of sectors to work on regional coordination. The organization also has developed a regional civic action agenda to steer the work of stakeholders and has leveraged its influence to promote affordable housing development and transit linkages. Members of the organization have diligently educated legislators and other governmental actors on the significance of regional coordination. Chicago Metropolis 2020 is indeed engaging in “civic entrepreneurship.”

Influential alliances between the business community and stakeholders in racial

justice could lead to progress on many of the crises discussed in this report. There is potential for powerful alliances to be developed among business representatives, racial justice advocates, members of community organizations, and philanthropic institutions working to remedy racial disparities.

Members of the Chicago Metropolis 2020 Executive Council include Jack Greenberg, chairman and CEO of McDonald’s Corporation; Don Turner, former president of the Chicago Federation of Labor; and Nicholas Pritzker, chairman of the board and president of Hyatt Development Corporation and Hyatt Equities.

It is clear that stakeholders in promoting racial justice could enhance their leverage and make real progress by partnering with members of the business community who appreciate the importance of regional coordination.

For more information about Chicago Metropolis 2020, please see <http://www.chicagometropolis2020.org>



**Frank Beal,
Executive
Director—
Chicago
Metropolis 2020**

“There are numerous issues vital to our social and economic well-being that must be addressed regionally.”



Essentials of racially just, federated regionalism

Regional and local authority are important for different reasons, and both should be present in an equitable model.

The proposition that regional governmental control be exerted over the distribution of opportunity structures like affordable housing and jobs often triggers a hostile reaction from a wide spectrum of groups. Some of these groups include conservatives, suburban residents, liberals, urban residents, Whites, and people of color. Opponents charge that regional planning constitutes “social engineering” or “big government” and is generally unfair to distinct communities’ interests and values.

These claims have some merit. Local authority over certain functions can maximize the goals of governmental efficiency. Representatives directly elected by local residents can have a greater awareness of local dynamics and tensions. Residents often seek an audience in local government over traffic and safety concerns and design plans for new facilities. Many residents of metropolitan regions fear that representatives on a regional body would not respond to concerns in the same way.

Responding to these two concerns — preservation of local character and governmental responsiveness to local concerns — does not preclude the creation of a regional governance structure that promotes racial and economic equity and more efficient administration of regional functions. Debate centered on the local versus regional dichotomy too frequently precludes a discussion of which matters are regional concerns and which matters can be administered locally. Both levels of administration are important for different reasons and both should be present in an equitable model. Local and regional governance should be viewed as complementary, not mutually exclusive.

“Federated” regionalism is a model that addresses these concerns — racial and economic fairness in terms of accessing opportunities, preservation of local character, and responsiveness of government to local concerns. It suggests that the regional and the local can co-exist in a federated structure, much as the individual states and federal government co-exist at the national level.

Metropolitan regions across the nation already have varying degrees of a federated system in place. In the Seattle metropolitan region, development is coordinated regionally, but important decision-making powers are retained by localities within the region. Matters such as growth coordination, affordable housing creation, and transportation links are governed by regional growth management legislation, and disputes are heard by regional boards. But according to Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton, “the local governments are primarily responsible for day-to-day development decisions.”

Calthorpe and Fulton note that the attention paid in the Seattle region to equity concerns, including the jobs-affordable housing mismatch and the need for transportation connections between employment centers, has resulted in a region that is more balanced, contained, and vital.

Multi-tiered structures and inter-governmental cooperation are present to varying degrees in metropolitan areas nationwide. The differences between existing examples of federated regionalism and what we propose here are issues of scope and the fact that the central and driving principle in our model is not efficiency, nor economy, but racial and economic equity.



A federated model of regionalism, steered by the goal of attaining racial and economic equity, would make the supply, general location, and accessibility of resources and opportunities matters of regional administration. For example, a regional affordable housing policy would require all municipalities in the region to address affordable housing needs to a degree proportionate to their size and employment base. The policy would have to be planned and administered regionally for overall affordable housing goals to be met. This equity-driven, federated model of regionalism covers the spectrum of opportunity and includes employment, transportation, and education. The regional body would be empowered to mandate and enforce action on the part of municipalities so that access to these opportunities is equitable.

Authority over racial and economic equity concerns would vest in a regional body under this equity-driven federated model of regionalism. To ensure that communities are able to preserve their character and some degree of self-determination, local control would be maintained over local functions falling outside the ambit of equity, functions such as sanitation and permit-issuance.

Local authority also would be retained over issues of aesthetics and community character so that the unique identities of

municipalities are not infringed upon. Local authorities and citizens would continue to have the power to make determinations about the physical appearance and scale of housing developments, whether they would be constructed in tandem with other development projects, and related matters.

Citizens and local representatives would have substantial decision-making power at the same time that racial and economic equity goals are being advanced. Indeed, citizen participation in planning for housing, education, transportation, and economic development is essential to racial and economic justice — it is the foundation of democracy. Voice and fairness must be furthered in conjunction with one another.

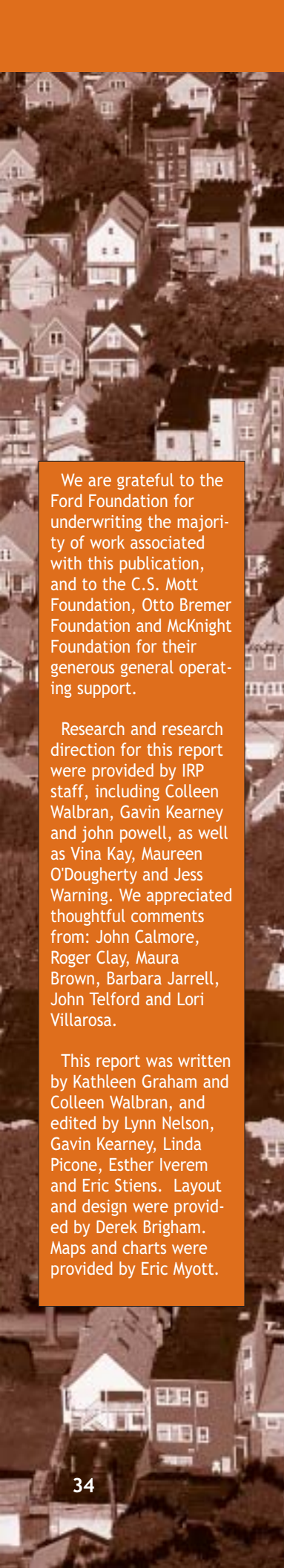
The essential principles of a racial and economic equity-driven model of federated regionalism include:

Racial equity focus. Regional and local agencies and processes must explicitly address issues of racism and inequality.

Power over opportunity distribution. A regional entity should have the authority to mandate and enforce actions on the part of local entities in terms of the supply, general location, and accessibility of housing, transportation, employment and economic development structures, and educational opportunity.

Regional authority over racial and economic equity concerns would vest in a regional body under this equity-driven, federated model of regionalism.





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Democratic representation. The regional authority empowered to administer these functions must be representative of the local communities within regions. It must be composed of fairly elected officials and be accountable to residents throughout the region, particularly residents of color whose political voice may be more tenuous. Democratic principles must inform the establishment of this regional entity.

Democratic processes. Similarly, processes for determining the distribution of opportunities throughout regions must be inclusive and participatory, with safeguards in place to ensure that the voices of groups who have been excluded from planning and other governmental decision-making processes are heard and responded to in meaningful ways. Beyond being able to elect representatives, citizens and organizations must be able to express their needs and be heard.

Protection of local decision-making

Conclusion

The racial justice advocacy community has seen racial subordination mutate from explicitly racist laws and covenants to, more recently, the superficially race-neutral policies that reproduce the isolation of people of color from opportunities. The most devastating manifestations of racism today take structural forms – in tax policy, in student assignment policies, in exclusionary zoning, in the gentrification that displaces people of color – requiring that advocacy strategies be structurally focused, multiple, and adaptive. To continue to pursue a racially just society, we must confront the ways in which structural racism, spatial dynamics, and the interconnected nature of opportunities relate to the participation of people of color in society. Immediately, limitations on participation are clearly seen in residential racial segregation and segregation in the public

power. The importance of local authority over local issues must be respected. Locally elected and responsive bodies should be retained and empowered to administer functions that do not restrict the supply and equitable location of opportunity structures in regions.

Preservation of community. Local bodies must have the authority to make decisions that impact local character and identity concerns, including decisions on the aesthetics, financing, and other elements of planning that are made in compliance with regional mandates on racial and economic equity.

We have yet to create a federated model that is built from an understanding of the importance of advancing all these concerns in concert: regional fairness across racial and economic lines, local character, and responsive governance. It is time for advocates, grant-makers, and organizers to promote these principles in order to advance the struggle for racial justice.

school systems. The larger picture is one in which people of color are being cut off from public services, public safety, wealth, and genuine participation in both the larger economy and democratic institutions – are, in fact, being denied full citizenship by the manner in which our metropolitan regions are structured. By seeking racially just regions, we will make gains on key areas of concern in the next era of racial justice advocacy.

Our regions can neither prosper nor become truly equitable without regional policy making and coordination. This is now recognized by members of the business community, environmentalists and others. Racial justice advocates must join this dialogue, develop strategic coalitions, design new strategies, and work toward attainment of the full spectrum of racial justice goals.

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Center for Neighborhood Technology <http://www.cnt.org>

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Smart Growth America <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.com>

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