

# Compelling Question: What decisions shape a city?



## Supporting Questions

1. What was the plan for urban renewal in Louisville in the mid-1900s?
2. How did urban renewal shape the way our city looks?
3. How did this urban renewal shape the people living in our city?
4. How is Louisville continuing urban renewal today, but doing it differently?

## Compelling Question: What decisions shape a city?

Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies	8.I.Q.3 Evaluate the types of supporting questions each of the social studies disciplines uses to answer compelling and supporting questions.
	8.E.MA.4 Analyze how property rights are defined, protected, enforced and limited by the government. 8.G.GR.1 Use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies and spatial thinking to analyze settlement patterns in the United States
	8.I.U.E.3 Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection to answer compelling and supporting questions.
	8.I.CC.3 Evaluate how individuals and groups address local, regional and global problems concerning the development of the United States.
Staging the Question	<p>Think about where you live. Make a list of the things you like about your neighborhood or community and the things you wish were different. For example, you might ask yourself questions like, “Does my neighborhood have a park? Is my neighborhood safe? Do I have access to fresh foods from grocery stores nearby?”</p> <p>Discuss with their partners and with the class. Next consider the following questions, “Who gets to make decisions about communities? How can these decisions shape a community, even a city?”</p>

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	Supporting Question 4
What was the plan for urban renewal in Louisville in the mid-1900s?	How did urban renewal shape the way our city looks?	How did this urban renewal shape the people living in our city?	How is Louisville continuing urban renewal today, but doing it differently?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Write a summary of Louisville’s plan for urban “renewal.”	Explain how decisions shaped the way our city looks.	Explain how urban renewal shaped the lives of individuals living in our city.	Create a claim, backed with evidence that answers the supporting question.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<p><b>Source A:</b> Buchanan v. Warley (1917)</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Race of Household map, Works Progress Administration 1938-1939</p> <p><b>Source C:</b> Summary of Housing Act of 1949</p> <p><b>Source D:</b> Excerpt from “Confronting Racism in City Planning and Zoning”</p> <p><b>Source E:</b> Map of sites slated for clearing during urban renewal</p> <p><b>Source F:</b> Table: <i>Neighborhoods Suggested for Detailed Urban Renewal Study</i></p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> Image of Walnut Street before and after urban renewal</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Excerpt from “<i>Urban Renewal and Lost Louisville</i>”-Filson Historical Society</p> <p><b>Source C:</b> Worst: Louisville went crazy with the wrecking ball in the name of “Urban Renewal”, <i>Broken Sidewalk Contributors</i>, February 8, 2016</p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> James Everett Recalls Beecher Terrace and “Old Walnut” in the 40s.</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> WDRB article: “<i>Once a booming strip of black business, Walnut Street faded from Louisville’s memory for failed Urban Renewal</i>”</p> <p><b>Source C:</b> Documentary “The Beecher Terrace Story” Blu Boi Entertainment, LLC.</p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> WLKY Article: “<i>Louisville getting national recognition for A Place of Promise initiative in Russell neighborhood</i>”</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Louisville Metro Housing Authority Russell Neighborhood Survey Summary Table</p> <p><b>Source C:</b>Excerpt: Vision Russell Revitalization Plan</p> <p><b>Source D:</b>Vision Russell Revitalization Plan: Map of Land Use</p> <p><b>Source E:</b><i>Wave 3 News Story:</i> Beecher Terrace welcomes old residents into brand new units</p>

<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	<i><b>What decisions shape a city?</b></i> Construct an argument that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical and contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<p>UNDERSTAND: Think back to the list you made at the beginning of the inquiry about what you do and do not like about your neighborhood or community. Pick one thing from the list you would like to improve in your community.</p> <p>ASSESS: Come up with a plan for how to improve the area you picked to improve in your community. This may include interviewing others who live in your community and getting feedback or creating a survey for members of your community to complete and provide feedback. Research who gets to make the decisions that shape your community as well as how to use your voice to show concerns to these leaders or organizations.</p> <p>ACT: Write a letter or email to the appropriate leadership that states your concerns about your community and includes your plan for improving this aspect of your community.</p>

**SQ #1: What was the plan for urban renewal in Louisville in the mid-1900s?**

**Source A:** [Buchanan v. Warley \(1917\) Confronting Racism in City Planning and Zoning, Louisville Metro and Design Services, September 1, 2021](#)

*Annotation: Zoning in Louisville has a troubling racist past. In the Supreme Court Case Buchanan v. Warley, the courts decided that owning houses based upon the race of the individual owner was unconstitutional.*

**Louisville's Mark on Land Use Law: Buchanan v. Warley (1917)**

In 1914, the city of Louisville adopted a racial segregation ordinance. This ordinance prevented Black people from occupying residences on blocks having a white majority, and vice versa. This ordinance was not unique to Louisville. Similar land use practices spread across the nation beginning with the Baltimore ordinance of 1910 .

The Louisville chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) brought together two opponents of the 1914 law, William Warley and Charles Buchannan, who worked together to challenge the law up to the U.S Supreme Court. In a landmark decision , the Court ruled that the ordinance was a violation of the 14th Amendment of the U.S Constitution. The Court wrote:

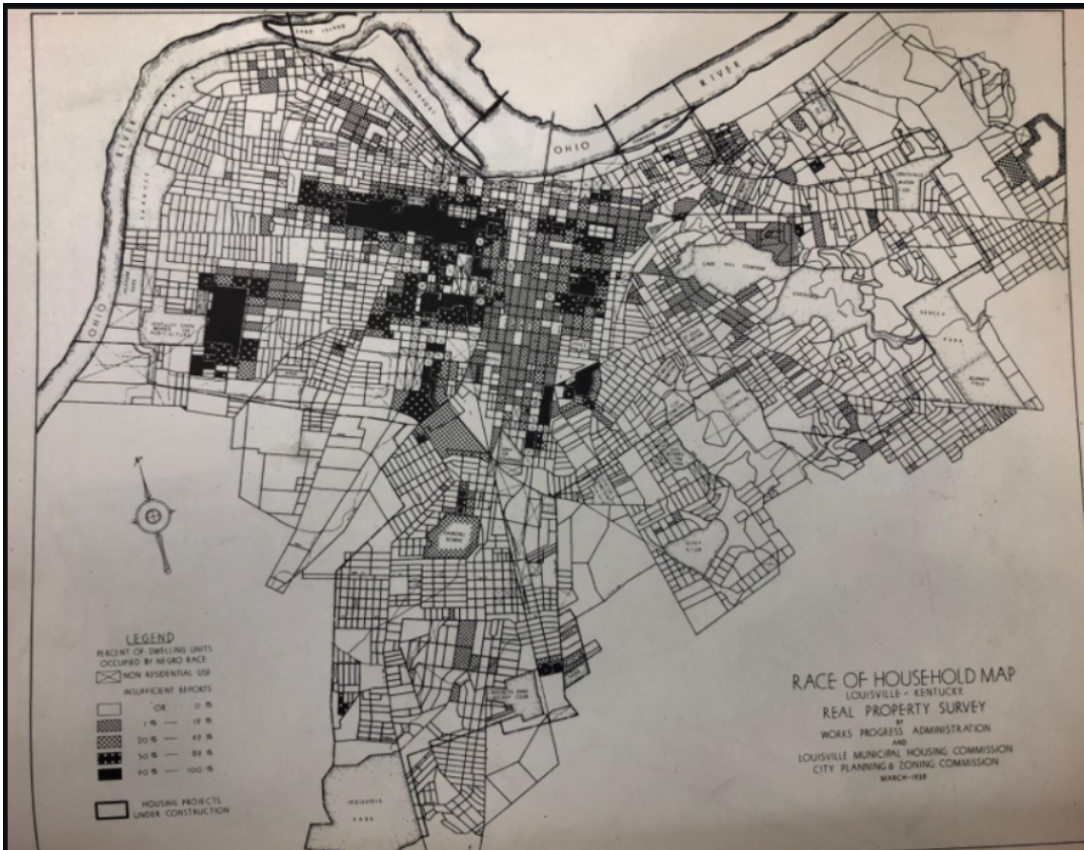
"We think this attempt to prevent the alienation of the property in question to a person of color was not a legitimate exercise of the police power of the state, and is in direct violation of the fundamental law enacted in the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution preventing state interference with property rights except by due process of law. That being the case, the ordinance cannot stand." (U.S Supreme Court, 245 US 60 (1917)).



**SQ #1: What was the plan for urban renewal in Louisville in the mid-1900s?**

**Source B:** [Race of Household Map from Real Property Survey and Low Income Housing Area Survey of Louisville, KY, 1938-1939 by Work Progress Administration, City of Louisville Municipal Housing Commission and City Planning and Zoning Commission.](#)

*Annotation: The following zoning map shows the role that race played in zoning.*



SQ #1: What was the plan for urban renewal in Louisville in the mid-1900s?

Source C: [Housing Act of 1949, American Planning Association, 2022](#)

*Annotation: Only a decade after the Great Depression, the federal government used its financial power and laws to help address the needs of cities across the country.*

# Housing Act of 1949

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The Housing Act of 1949 was passed to help address the decline of urban housing following the exodus to the suburbs. The legislation provided governance over how federal financial resources would shape the growth of American cities. Components of the legislation aimed at reducing housing costs, raising housing standards, and enabling the federal government for the first time, to aid cities in clearing slums and rebuilding blighted areas. The program emphasized new construction. In addition to improving the available housing stock, the program made open space land, neighborhood facilities, and basic water and sewer facilities eligible for federal assistance.

**SQ #1: What was the plan for urban renewal in Louisville in the mid-1900s?**

**Source D:** [\*Confronting Racism in City Planning and Zoning, Louisville Metro and Design Services, September 1, 2021\*](#)

*Annotation: The following shows the use of city planner and how the impacts of thinking of individuals and the “scientific” approach at a time impacts the*

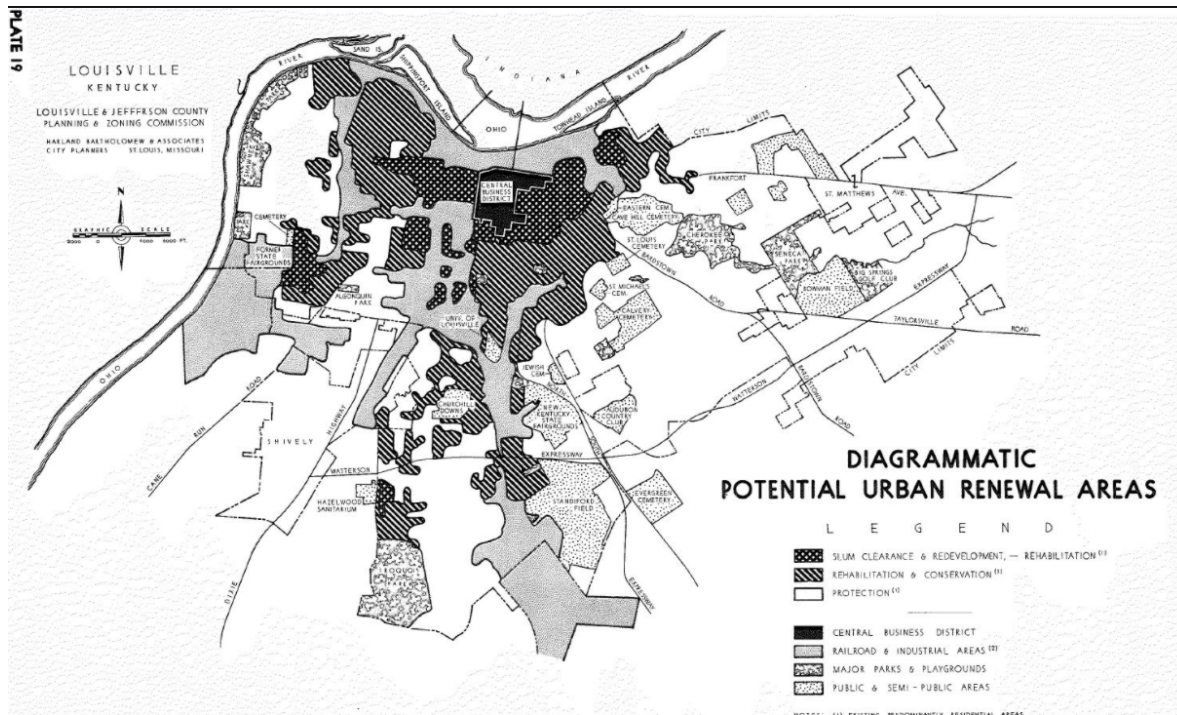
Harland Bartholomew was a city planner. His job was to determine and develop plans and programs for the use of land in Louisville, Kentucky as well as hundreds of cities around the country. He took a scientific approach to comprehensive city planning; performing an extensive analysis of neighborhood conditions including sewer connectivity and plumbing, prevailing winds, housing maintenance and upkeep, as well as the affordance of light and air upon dwellings.

As a scientific city planner, his work often described cities using organic metaphors. For example, “blight” was used to imply that a contagion existed within the city; one that needed to be removed, discarded, and prevented from spreading. The city of Louisville contracted Harland Bartholomew and Associates of St. Louis, MO in 1929 to complete what would become the 1931 Comprehensive Plan. Bartholomew put forth policies, devised law, and advocated for the removal of 'blighted' areas through slum clearance and urban renewal.

**SQ #1: What was the plan for urban renewal in Louisville in the mid-1900s?**

**Source E:** [1956 Existing and proposed Urban Renewal Study Areas map](#)

*Annotation: The following shows the planning and zones for Louisville in 1956.*



**Source F:** Neighborhoods Suggested for Detailed Urban Renewal Study. A Report Upon Housing, A part of the Louisville-Jefferson County Comprehensive Plan, Louisville and Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Commission, July, 1956

*Annotation: The following shows a detailed urban renewal shows different neighborhoods and the use of land as well as where it is zoned.*

Table 5  
NEIGHBORHOODS SUGGESTED FOR DETAILED URBAN RENEWAL STUDY\*  
City of Louisville

Number	Neighborhoods and Parts of Neighborhoods and General Location	Preeminent Land Use	Future General Land Use(2)	Suggested(1) General Treatment	General Comments
1(Part)	Shawnee-Portland	1 & 2 Family	Residential	C & R	Includes "Southwick" urban renewal area; extensive redevelopment needed.
3B	Fairgrounds	1 & 2 Family	Residential	C & R	Includes "Southwick" urban renewal area; extensive redevelopment needed.
4	Fairgrounds	1 Fam. & Multi-Fam.	Residential	C & R	Primarily rehabilitation and conservation needed.
5	Portland	1 & 2 Family	Residential	C & R	Portions should be cleared for industrial expansion.
6	Western Park	1 & 2 Family	Residential	C & R	Extensive clearance and redevelopment needed between 14th Street
7	Portland	1 & 2 Family	Residential	C & R	Extensive clearance and redevelopment needed east of 18th Street.
9	Portland	1 & 2 Family	Residential	C & R	Certain clearance and redevelopment needed; extend present study area to Seventh Street.
10	Western Park	1 & 2 Fam., Multi-Fam.	Residential	C & R	Area not suited for residences; possible reuse for truck terminal or other industry.
11	California	1 & 2 Family	Residential	R	Necessary to retain public housing project; redevelopment other
12	Beecher Terrace	Mixed Uses	Industrial	R	Some of the worst housing conditions here are between Seventh Street and Eighth Street.
13A	California	1 Family	Industrial	C	Redevelopment needed within area lying between Sixth Street and Seventh Street from Mill to Park
13B	Parway	Mixed Uses	Industrial	C & R	Rehabilitation and some clearance needed here.
14	Central Park-East Kentucky	Multi-Family	Residential	R	Redevelop portion of area for Medical Center and auxiliary
15	Central Park	Multi-Family	Residential	C	Extensive clearance and redevelopment needed.
16	East Kentucky-Central Park	Multi-Family	Residential	R	Primarily rehabilitation and conservation needed.
17	Stockyards	Mixed Uses	Res. & Light Ind.	C	Extensive clearance and redevelopment needed.
18	East Kentucky Street	1 & 2 Fam., Multi-Fam.	Residential	C	Conservation needed within certain blocks.
19	East Kentucky Street	1 & 2 Fam., Multi-Fam.	Res. & Light Ind.	C & R	Certain portions adjoining Standford Field suitable for industrial reuse.
20	Stockyards	Mixed Uses	Res. & Light Ind.	C	
21	East Kentucky Street	1 & 2 Family	Residential	C	
22	Clifton	Mixed	Res. & Ind.	C	
23	Grant	1 Family	Residential	C	
28-1	Grant	1 Family	Residential	C	
28-1	Grant	1 Family	Residential	C	
30	Highland Park-Camp Taylor	1 & 2 Family	Industrial	C & R	
31	Churchill Downs	1 & 2 Family	Residential	C	
32-1	Churchill Downs	1 Family	Residential	C	
32-2	Churchill Downs	1 Family	Residential	C	
33-1	Churchill Downs	1 Family	Residential	C	
33-2	Churchill Downs	1 Family	Residential	C	
34-1	Churchill Downs	1 Family	Residential	C	
35-1	Beechmont	1 Family	Residential	C & R	Any redevelopment here should be for residential purposes.
36-1	Beechmont	1 Family	Residential	C	See proposed plan.
39	Highland Park	1 Family	Park	R	
40	Proposed Riverfront Park Area	1 Family	Park	R	

(1) C - Rehabilitation and Conservation

R - Slum Clearance and Redevelopment

(2) See proposed zoning districting

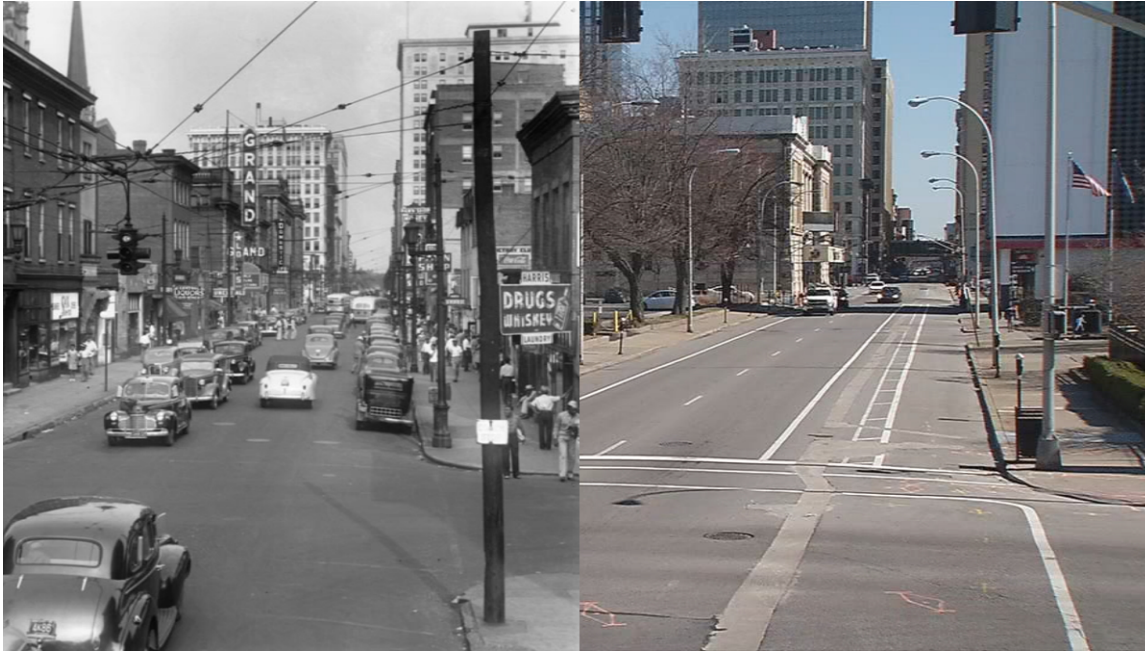
\*Neighborhoods listed here are shown on plate of "Existing and Proposed Urban Renewal Study Areas".



## SQ #2: How did urban renewal shape the way our city looks?

**Source A:** [Image of Former Walnut Street before Urban Renewal and Same Street Today](#)

*Annotation: Once a booming strip of black business, Walnut Street faded from Louisville's memory for failed Urban Renewal  
Feb 27, 2020 Updated Feb 27, 2020 Copyright 2020 WDRB Media.*





## SQ #2: How did urban renewal shape the way our city looks?

**Source B:** [Urban Renewal and Lost Louisville, The Filson Historical Society](#)

*Annotation: the following description shows how decisions shape the landscape and nature of Louisville.*

### In the Name of Progress

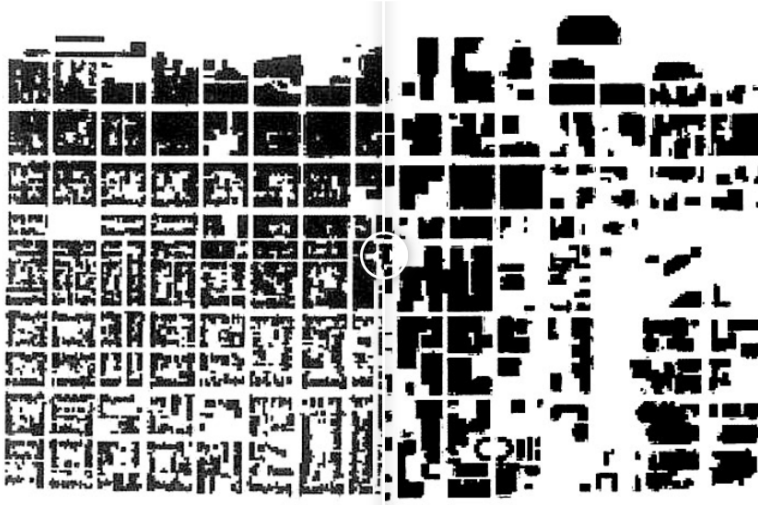
The urban renewal programs of the mid-20th century leveled entire city blocks deemed substandard and not worth preserving. It also displaced viable and often vibrant communities (this is particularly true for African American areas of Louisville, especially the old Walnut Street business district) in the name of “progress.” Granted, some areas had declined to the point that demolition was a reasonable solution and modern and much more useful buildings were built. But the frequent “scorched earth” approach of urban renewal all too often destroyed structures that today might be considered gems of 19th century architecture. The preservation movements that often battled this practice enjoyed some successes, but the wrecking ball often left gaping holes in the city’s landscape; holes that fifty and more years later sometimes remain as vacant lots.

## SQ #2: How did urban renewal shape the way our city looks?

**Source C:** [Worst: Louisville went crazy with the wrecking ball in the name of “Urban Renewal”, Broken Sidewalk Contributors, February 8, 2016](#)

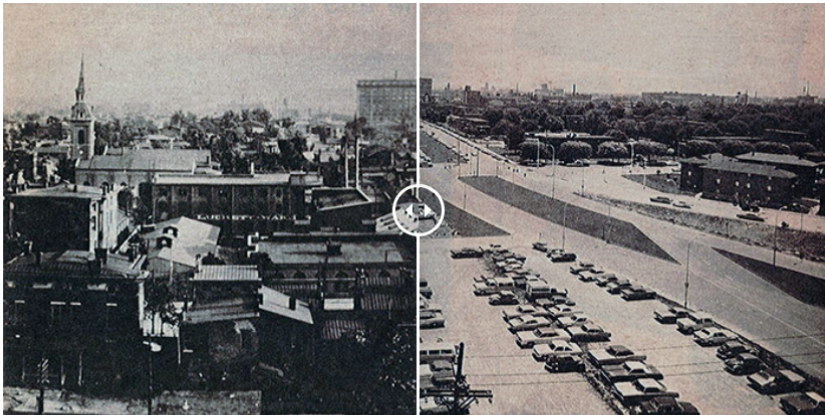
*Annotation: Click on the link to “slide back and forth” to see how the decision to knock down much of the city shaped the city.*

*Map 1: Ground map of Downtown Louisville*



*Above: A figure-ground map of Downtown Louisville circa 1900 and again in 1990.*

*Map 2: Louisville view of the city.*



*Above: A view looking south from the Glassworks building before urban renewal circa 1926 and the same view after clearance in 1976.*

### SQ #3: How did this urban renewal shape the people living in our city?

**Source A:** [James Everett Recalls Beecher Terrace and 'Old Walnut' in the '40s, Tom Owen, Archivist for Regional History, Archives & Special Collections, University of Louisville Libraries News](#)

*Annotation: The following is an interview that reveals a childhood and change.*



#### **Young James Everett. Courtesy of Howard Breckinridge**

Howard Breckinridge of Plano, Texas, a longtime friend of our Archives and Special Collections and a fountain of information about West Louisville history, told me that his eighty-eight-year-old cousin James Everett also had keen memories of Louisville's African American community in the 1940s. Everett and his parents were among the first residents of the brand-new Beecher Terrace public housing project on Muhammad Ali, and he spent his entire youth enjoying the bustle of the 'Old Walnut Street' business district. I jumped at the chance to capture those memories on tape since Beecher Terrace is being totally redone as a mixed-income community. At the same time, the wisdom of the destruction by Urban Renewal of that segregated commercial district immediately west of downtown in the late 1950s is being reopened for debate.

The problem was James Everett, an Indianapolis resident, was in poor health and under Covid protocols it was unwise for me to travel. Heather Fox, director of ASC's Oral History Center, stepped into the breach, downloading an app to my cell phone that allowed me to record an almost one-hour interview with James Everett which as a digital file has been added to our

massive collection of 2000 oral histories, gathered since the early 1970s and including many from the African American community.

In our interview last July, Everett recalled the family move to Beecher Terrace when he was eight as a God-send—a new comfortable home with central heat, indoor plumbing, and hot and cold running water which trumped in every respect their former rental in Louisville's Black Hill neighborhood at Eleventh and Magnolia. He also remembered 'Beecher' as a safe, pleasant community where children were admonished by other parents if they got out-of-line and there were plenty of things for kids to do. For him, the lengthy 'Old Walnut' business district, which bordered his home on the south and stretched from Sixth to Thirteenth and beyond, offered a potpourri of possibilities: a favored donut shop, movie theaters, cleaners and tailor shops, pawn shops, dry goods and drug stores, cafes, and taverns and much more. (Some of the venues were Black owned.) At one point, James tells how as a teenager he snuck into the locally famous Top Hat Nightclub without being ejected by Frankie Maxwell, the watchful manager. On Derby Day, he said, 'Old Walnut's' sidewalks were filled with fashionably dressed visitors—some not even headed to the track—and a large parade filled the street on Thanksgiving Day prior to an annual Central High School rivalry football game.

One especially warm memory involved Mr. Davidson, James' teacher at Central, who met eight or ten male students in the neighborhood and led them on a lengthy Saturday hike through Downtown Louisville, across the Second Street bridge, and down the Indiana shore to the Falls of the Ohio. Praising this youth mentorship, Everett told of wading into the shallow pools at the Falls to catch carp with his hands and stopping for lunch on the way back to Beecher Terrace. The last third of our interview is a chronicle of James Everett's years in the Air Force, his brief return to Louisville, and a permanent move to Indianapolis where, after a decade of job changes, he was employed by Ford Motor Company twenty-eight years until his retirement.

Sadly, a couple of weeks ago, Howard Breckinridge texted that James Everett died on November 13. How happy I am that Heather Fox made possible a phone interview that will be preserved in our ASC Oral History Collection. Now we hold forever the memories of a childhood and youth of an elderly Indianapolis resident spent in the 1940s in Louisville's Beecher Terrace housing complex along that once-vibrant 'Old Walnut' business district.

### SQ #3: How did this urban renewal shape the people living in our city?

**Source B:** [Once a booming strip of black business, Walnut Street faded from Louisville's memory for failed Urban Renewal, Gil Corsey Feb 27, 2020 Updated Feb 27, 2020](#)

*Annotation: The following story shows the changes that directly affected the Black business community.*

Once a booming strip of black business, Walnut Street faded from Louisville's memory for failed Urban Renewal LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) -- There is a story in Louisville long faded from view, and time is taking the people who remember it best. It's the story of what happened to Walnut Street, what we now know as Muhammad Ali Boulevard.

In the days when segregation split the city, Walnut Street between Sixth and Thirteenth streets and the surrounding blocks played host to a booming black business district where African Americans worked, shopped, lived and owned stores.

"This was the hub of the black community," famed sculptor Ed Hamilton said. "I will never get Walnut Street out of my blood. Growing up there was just phenomenal for me." Hamilton's parents owned Your Valet Shop. His mother was a barber and his father a tailor.

"She was a pioneer back in those days, because women weren't barbers. They were beauticians," Hamilton said. "I remember playing around in that shop with my father's buttons and in boxes — just great, great memories."

Your Valet Shop was located in the Mammoth Life and Accident Insurance building at Sixth and Walnut streets. Mammoth Insurance was one of the largest black owned businesses in the state.

Historians say the 1930s through the 1950s saw Walnut Street at its best. City directories listed 154 black-owned businesses in 1932 alone. The community supported two black-owned newspapers, several theaters as well as offices for doctors, attorneys and dentists and a thriving entertainment and nightclub scene.

"It just made us feel complete," said Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Ellis, a 79-year-old retired Asbury Chapel AME pastor. "Business and fellowship ... gave African Americans a place to belong." White people owned businesses and shops on Walnut Street as well.

"I can't put a value on what Walnut Street meant to me," said 98-year-old Sonny Bass as he held a book with a picture of his father's clothing store at 10th and Walnut streets. "It meant so much to me. I'm telling you what's in my heart."

A similar affection can be found across cultures, but Walnut Street had a different significance for African Americans in terms of economy. "Everything was on Walnut Street," 89-year-old Elmer Lucill Allen said. "You could walk up and down the street, and you'd feel safe. It was a different time."

Restaurants like the Chili Parlor and Buckahart's were often spoken of along with the likes of lyric and grand theaters and clubs like Charlie Moore's Joe's Palm room. In fact, it seems like people can almost still see what used to be on Walnut Street in their mind's eye.

Such esteem for yesteryear prompted historian and author Kenneth Clay to put together a once-a-year throwback event called "A Night At The Top Hat." "The Top Hat Club was probably the most popular, most famous club on Louisville's Muhammad Ali Boulevard, formerly Walnut Street," Clay said. "Walnut Street was the heart and the pulse and the soul of the black community."

Clay compares Walnut to Bourbon Street in New Orleans or Harlem in New York. Likewise, the Top Hat Club, once located at 13th and Walnut streets, brought singers, musicians and crowds from all over. "Oh yes, I remember the Top Hat," Allen said with a

smile on her face. "Even though I didn't drink, I could go in, sit down and enjoy myself."

"We celebrate this institution, because in a way, it meant as much to the black community as churches and schools," Clay added. History was not kind to this street remembered with such love. In the 1950s and 60s Louisville embraced Urban Renewal, a federal program designed to tear down old properties and build back something new. The wrecking ball swung hard, forcing businesses to close and families to move.

"They separated it like a bomb that just blew up in the area, and it never came together again," Clay said. By the end of the 1960s, the eight blocks of Walnut Street and those surrounding it at the heart of the black community had been flattened.

"It totally took away the aspect of being a part of a community of people who took care of each other," Ellis said. "If it didn't destroy it, then it wrecked it to a place where it hasn't come back yet." Many businesses moved but didn't survive, and the city's plan for building something better never achieved its goal. In fact, much of the precious land that once was filled by businesses on Walnut Street is now part of city projects or public housing complexes for the poor.

"A pattern of generational poverty set in that's been so hard to break," said Kevin Fields, president and CEO of Louisville Central Community Centers. "It severed the economic connection between the business district and all of west Louisville."

History doesn't just tell what happened. Some voices tell us why. "The motive, as they told me, was to drive the negro back from the central area. They felt that downtown wouldn't become the black belt," Former Louisville Mayor Charles Farnsley said in an interview for the 1970s documentary "In the American Way." "It was a cruel thing, and later ... Urban Renewal was called negro removal by the negroes and the people who were sympathetic with them. And that's what it was. It almost always tore down the homes of black people or poor people."

Metropolitan cities throughout the country struggled with similar urban renewal woes much like Louisville. The demolition of Walnut Street fostered what we now call the Ninth Street divide. Fields said Louisville has paid the price of Urban Renewal for more than 60 years but believes this error in history is coming to an end. His hope rests on the \$50 million revitalization of Beecher Terrance. Directly across from what was the old Walnut Street business district, it became the city's most high-poverty, low-opportunity and high-crime community.

The rebuild will transform the neighborhood to mixed income and supports a vision for redevelopment that LCCC pushed for years. "Having a broader vision, not all low-income but mixed-use, and also mixed-purpose," Fields said. "Because we must bring attractions, amenities and places for people to eat and access entertainment and shop."

Add to that the Louisville Urban League's multimillion-dollar sports complex about a mile away. It's expected to attract tourism from throughout the country with high school and college athletes coming to Louisville to compete. It's all designed to build back what was broken long ago. "I'm optimistic that's going to pump more into the black community," Hamilton said.

The city renamed Walnut Street to Muhammad Ali Boulevard in 1978. One of the few buildings still standing from its heyday is Mammoth Insurance, which is now River City Bank, where Hamilton's parents owned their store. "I think it's coming back," he said. "I can see images, and I can feel the vibe."

**SQ #3: How did this urban renewal shape the people living in our city?**

**Source C:** [The Beecher Terrace Story](#) a documentary film by Lavel D. White ([Full-length Movie](#))  
[Produced and Directed by Lavel D. White, Edited by Eric Stemen, Blu Boi Entertainment, LLC. Copyright 2020](#)

*Annotation: The Beecher Terrace Story was filmed and produced by Lavel D. White of Blu Boi Entertainment. The documentary was developed at the request of the Louisville Metro Housing Authority to ensure that this historic apartment site's important role in shaping the Russell neighborhood and the city is not forgotten. Over the last several years, Louisville Metro Government, LMHA, Russell stakeholders and numerous other partners have been working to transform the Russell neighborhood. As part of this work, Beecher's obsolete apartment buildings are being demolished to make way for a new energy-efficient, mixed-income community. Since opening in 1939, Beecher Terrace has been home to thousands of families who were influenced by its strong sense of community. The Beecher Terrace Story includes interviews with several former residents and neighborhood stakeholders who articulate the community's rich history through their personal stories and anecdotes. The film also highlights the changes that have taken place at the site over the decades, and the important role Beecher Terrace is playing in the future of the Russell neighborhood.*





#### SQ #4: How is Louisville continuing urban renewal today, but doing it differently?

**Source A:** [Louisville getting national recognition for A Place of Promise initiative in Russell neighborhood](#)  
Written by Caray Grace of WLKY

*Annotation: The following news story provides background to the redevelopment of the Russell neighborhood.*

It's an initiative designed to be a model for the nation. Russell: A Place of Promise is a long-term plan to keep the residents from being pushed out of their neighborhood. The Russell neighborhood has felt the long-lasting impact of redlining and divestment. With a host of new investments in the works, the initiative wants to ensure the residents there don't get left out or left behind.

"Our job and our goal is to really say to the families and the folks who live there: Investment is coming, people. Your neighborhood is going to be changing. How do you become a part of that?" said Anthony Smith, with Cities United.

Boarded-up houses and blighted and vacant properties can be seen throughout the Russell neighborhood, but it's undergoing a sort of renaissance with \$ 1 billion dollars in investment happening in and around the area.

"Naturally, residents are expressing a lot of hope, a lot of potential for the things that could happen for them in their neighborhood," said Theresa Zowacki, with Russell: A Place of Promise.

Keeping the residents in that conversation is what's most important, and it's why A Place of Promise was developed. The initiative has already gained national attention. Journalist Soledad O'Brien will feature the Russell neighborhood and the work Zowacki and Smith are doing on her show, "Matter of Fact", over the next two years.

"How do we go from charity to justice when we invest, and really start looking at changing some of or righting some of the wrongs that have happened in the past when you think about redlining and urban renewal?" Smith said.

"Matter of Fact" will follow the progress, allowing the country to watch and learn how this group is working to keep a promise to the community.

"So for us, we're learning from this, and creating a framework that we take city by city across the country and say, 'When you're thinking about getting ahead of gentrification, these are some of things you can do?'" Smith said.

Zowacki says when low-income neighborhoods see this type of investment, gentrification often follows, and the unfortunate by-product is longtime residents can no longer afford to live there. They believe Russell could be the place where an initiative such as this works.

"We want to be different. We want to come from a place of collaboration with the neighborhood, a place of co-creation with the neighborhood," said Zowacki.

The first part of the series airs on "Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien", on Sunday afternoon at 12:30 p.m., right here on WLKY.

## SQ #4: How is Louisville continuing urban renewal today, but doing it differently?

**Source B:** [Louisville Metro Housing Authority 2015 Russell Neighborhood Survey Summary Tables INTERNAL DRAFT - October 2015](#)

*Annotation: The two summary tables show the types of questions asked to residents and non-residents of the Russell Neighborhood. These survey questions gather valuable information about the ways in which citizens think about and participate in their neighborhoods.*

### Louisville Metro Housing Authority

#### 2015 Russell Neighborhood Survey Summary Tables INTERNAL DRAFT - October 2015

FEELINGS ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD						
4. What do you consider to be the strengths of the Russell Neighborhood?	All households		Residents		Non-Residents	
	N= 485		N= 304		N= 157	
None	19	4%	11	4%	6	4%
Access to public transportation	248	51%	162	53%	80	51%
Housing affordability	234	48%	144	47%	80	51%
Close to family/friends	182	38%	115	38%	59	38%
Location	177	36%	103	34%	65	41%
Places of worship	169	35%	96	32%	65	41%
Historic buildings and houses	156	32%	65	21%	82	52%
Access to health care	104	21%	79	26%	21	13%
Schools	96	20%	55	18%	40	25%
Access to neighborhood amenities/conveniences	81	17%	56	18%	20	13%
Employment opportunities	76	16%	53	17%	17	11%
Parks/Recreational facilities	75	15%	48	16%	26	17%
Childcare options	74	15%	50	16%	20	13%
Entertainment options	42	9%	26	9%	13	8%
Youth programs	41	8%	27	9%	10	6%
Shopping/Retail stores	39	8%	29	10%	8	5%
Social services	39	8%	24	8%	13	8%
Safety	36	7%	26	9%	8	5%
Other	6	1%	1	0%	5	3%
Prefer not to answer	17		8		9	
5. Overall, how would you say the Russell Neighborhood has changed over the past 5 years?						
	N= 460		N= 291		N= 146	
The neighborhood has gotten a lot better	47	10%	33	11%	11	8%
The neighborhood has gotten a somewhat better	94	20%	66	23%	24	16%
The neighborhood has stayed about the same	141	31%	75	26%	60	41%
The neighborhood has gotten somewhat worse	118	26%	74	25%	37	25%
The neighborhood has gotten a lot worse	60	13%	43	15%	14	10%
Prefer not to answer	43		21		20	
Total	503		312		166	
6. Over the next 5 years, how would you say the Russell Neighborhood is likely to change?						
	N= 469		N= 296		N= 151	
The neighborhood will get a lot better	109	23%	73	25%	30	20%
The neighborhood will get somewhat better	155	33%	103	35%	45	30%
The neighborhood will stay about the same	116	25%	65	22%	45	30%
The neighborhood will get somewhat worse	59	13%	36	12%	21	14%
The neighborhood will get a lot worse	30	6%	19	6%	10	7%
Prefer not to answer	34		16		15	
Total	503		312		166	

**Louisville Metro Housing Authority**  
**2015 Russell Neighborhood Survey Summary Tables**  
**INTERNAL DRAFT - October 2015**

FEELINGS ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD						
		All households		Residents		Non-Residents
7. Of the options below, what are the things you think would most help to make the Russell Neighborhood a better place to live?		N= 525		N= 302		N= 158
Address crime, drug, and public safety issues	346	66%	208	69%	122	77%
Address vacant properties	258	49%	146	48%	99	63%
Create more job opportunities	223	42%	143	47%	69	44%
Add more restaurants, entertainment, and shopping options	185	35%	132	44%	48	30%
Add or improve existing parks and recreation facilities (playground recreation)	167	32%	105	35%	54	34%
Improve the condition of existing homes/buildings in the neighborhood	162	31%	96	32%	62	39%
Conduct neighborhood beautification efforts	127	24%	67	22%	52	33%
Offer more programs for youth	113	22%	83	27%	26	16%
Improve streets and sidewalks in the neighborhood	100	19%	68	23%	28	18%
Create more opportunities for small business development	87	17%	42	14%	42	27%
Offer more job training programs	76	14%	51	17%	22	14%
Reduce litter and trash	70	13%	38	13%	26	16%
Improve the quality of schools neighborhood children attend	68	13%	42	14%	21	13%
Increase the availability of community and social services to support individuals	62	12%	32	11%	27	17%
Improve the public transportation to provide better access to services and jobs	60	11%	36	12%	21	13%
Offer more activities for seniors	57	11%	40	13%	13	8%
Increase the availability of quality, affordable childcare	31	6%	15	5%	15	9%
Offer more social and recreational activities for adults	26	5%	21	7%	4	3%
Provide better access to health care	17	3%	11	4%	5	3%
Other	12	2%	5	2%	6	4%
Prefer not to answer	19		10		8	

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL NETWORK							
		All households					
8. How often during the past year did you participate in:		Often		Sometimes		Rarely or Never	
							Prefer not to Answer
A Russell Neighborhood group's activities (N=440)	57	13%	159	36%	224	51%	41
A Russell Neighborhood improvement project, such as a clean-up, community gardening, or other beautification effort (N=430)	40	9%	136	32%	254	59%	51
Business events in Russell, such as a sidewalk sale, farmers market, or "shop local" day (N=434)	45	10%	157	36%	232	53%	47
A Russell Neighborhood social event, such as a festival, block party, or other celebration (N=436)	80	18%	164	38%	192	44%	45
A political activity such as registering to vote, voting, or attending a candidate rally/forum (N=431)	117	27%	134	31%	181	42%	49
An advocacy group, such as a school parent-teacher association environmental organization, or labor union (N=424)	53	13%	122	29%	249	59%	57
An action to improve the Russell Neighborhood, such as reporting a hazard or contacting authorities about an incident (N=435)	74	17%	146	34%	215	49%	46

#### SQ #4: How is Louisville continuing urban renewal today, but doing it differently?

**Source C:** [Vision Russell Transformation Plan \(page 12-14\), Louisville Metro Housing Authority July 2019](#)

*Annotation: The following provides an overview of the transformation plan.*

The Vision Russell Transformation Plan is the outcome of a collaborative and transparent planning process involving residents and community stakeholders, and informed by three surveys (one with Beecher residents, a second with neighborhood residents and a third with stakeholders and businesses). Through a comprehensive planning process that included a Coordinating Committee and four Task Forces, numerous meetings and conversations with residents and community members, along with design workshops and other special events, the community came together to “capture the past and cultivate the future” in a detailed and implementable plan for Beecher Terrace and the broader Russell neighborhood. As found in Section 3-1 of this plan—The Roadmap: Strategies and Priorities—five overarching priorities emerged as organizing principles for the community-generated goals and strategies. Selected highlights for achieving Russell’s transformation include:

- A. Improve educational outcomes for children
- B. Improve the health and safety of residents
- C. Create strong retail and service centers and expand economic opportunity
- D. Increase the availability of high-quality, mixed-income housing
- E. Improve connectivity within the neighborhood

**SQ #4: How is Louisville continuing urban renewal today, but doing it differently?**

**Source D:** [Vision Russell Revitalization Plan: Map of Land Use, Vision Russell Transformation Plan](#)  
[Louisville Metro Housing Authority July 2019](#)

*Annotation: The following is an overview of the revitalization plan.*



**BEECHER TERRACE SITE PLAN — PHASING**

Phase I Phase II Phase III Phase IV

#### SQ #4: How is Louisville continuing urban renewal today, but doing it differently?

**Source E:** [Wave 3 News: Beecher Terrace welcomes old residents into brand new units, Taylor Durden, Published: Jun. 9, 2021 at 11:55 PM EDT|Updated: Jun. 10, 2021 at 12:34 AM EDT](#)

*Annotation: This news story shows a near completion of over a hundred years--from bad policies to the revitalization.*

Mayor Greg Fischer said this project is a step in the right direction to help the West End recover from racist practices used in the past like redlining and urban renewal.

“One of our goals all along was to show America how we could regenerate a neighborhood without displacing the residents that lived here,” Fischer said. “They are the soul that builds this neighborhood and that would be the ultimate injustice.”

Lamika Jordan lived in Beecher Terrace for 15 years, raising her six kids.

“Immediately, there was a feeling of community,” she said during the ribbon-cutting ceremony. She named multiple people who made it feel like a community over the years.

She was one of the hundreds of residents displaced when the buildings were torn down to begin construction, but she is back.

“I would say Beecher had its fair share of violence and I won’t speak any more on it because that’s our past, period,” she said.

The new units all have security systems and key fobs are used to get into the buildings and each unit.

“I’m glad to be back,” Jordan said. “I’m praying and hoping the community is growing and thriving, improving, encouraging kids, lifting kids up. Lifting us in ourselves just to be better people and have a better safer neighborhood.”

State Senator Gerald Neal told the crowd at the ribbon-cutting that Beecher Terrace is personal to him — he was born there. He said he remembers Beecher Terrace growing up as a place full of families and aspirations.

“Beecher Terrace was a springboard for people who looked like me back in the day,” Neal said. “So when I see this and I see this iteration of Beecher Terrace, I see more than just brick and mortar. I see families. I see opportunity. I see an upgrade that reflects a dignity that’s associated with anyone’s life, or at least should be.”

*Image:*

