



RACISM IN THE STRUCTURE: BRIEF HISTORY OF 20TH CENTURY BALTIMORE

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Baltimore City Department of Planning

PLANNING ACADEMY SESSION 1
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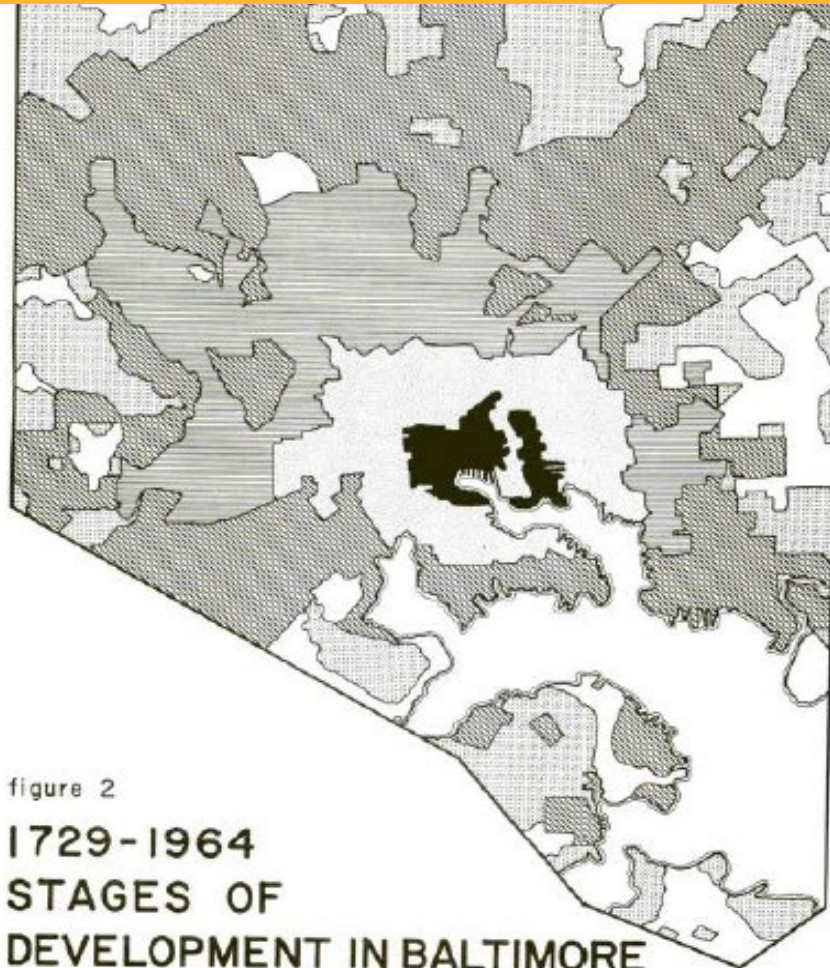
Which Structure?

Built Environment Legal Structure Regulatory Structure

- How were these structures created and upheld over time?
 - How have they impacted generations of citizens?
 - How can we ensure that planning is inclusive and equitable today?



Which Structure?



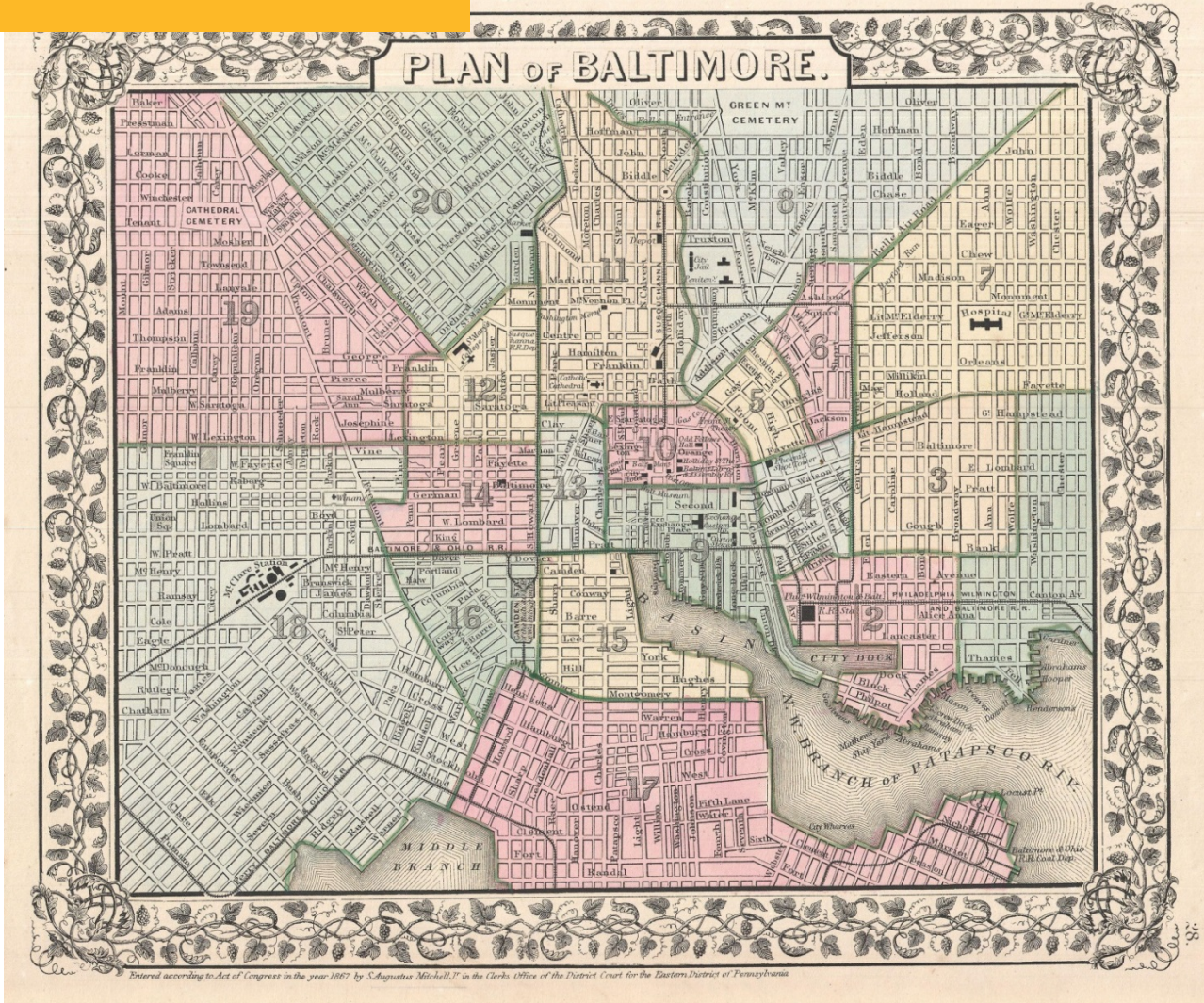
Baltimore originally was 3 separate towns in Baltimore County: Baltimore Town, Jonestown, Fell's Point

In 1851, Baltimore City became its own jurisdiction, separate from the surrounding County

Source: "Inventory of Residential Blight: Findings. Baltimore, Maryland." Baltimore Urban Renewal And Housing Agency, October 1964. Used with permission of the University of Baltimore.



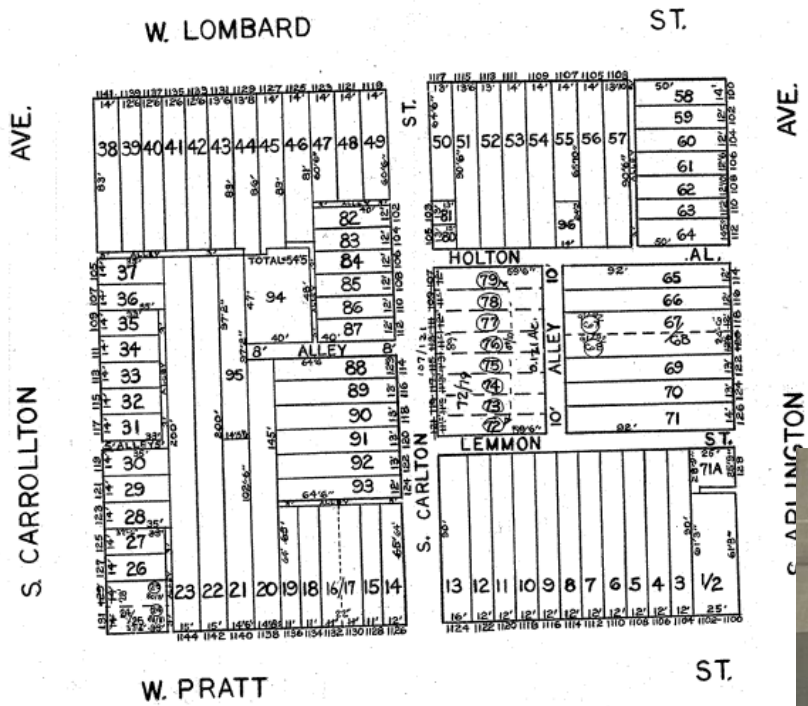
1867 Map of Baltimore



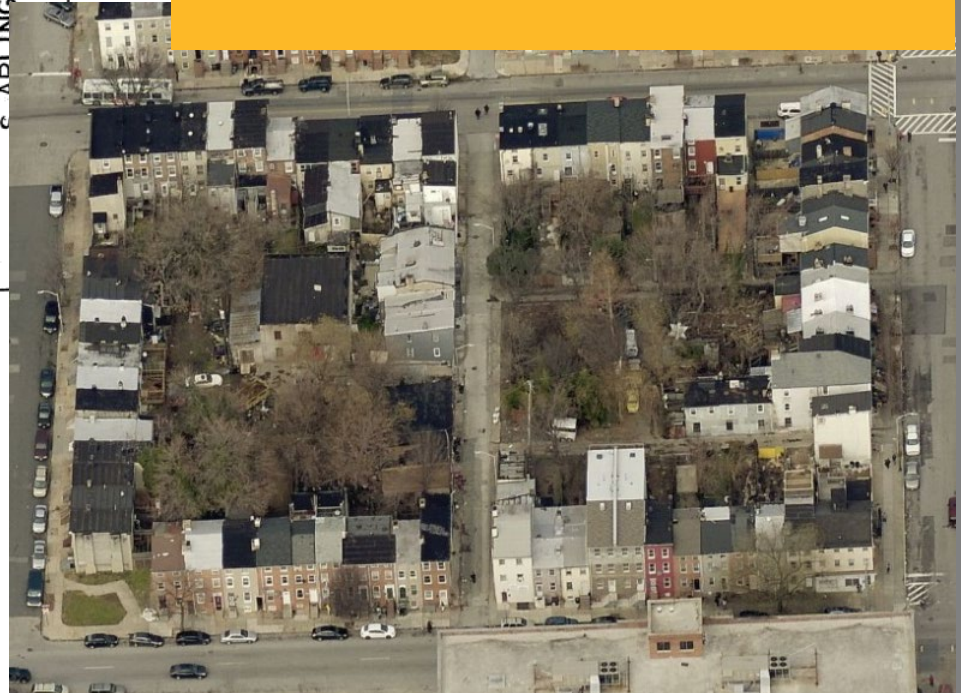
Source: "Map of Baltimore, 1867" by Samuel Augustus Mitchell. Wikimedia Commons



Circa 1860 Plat Map



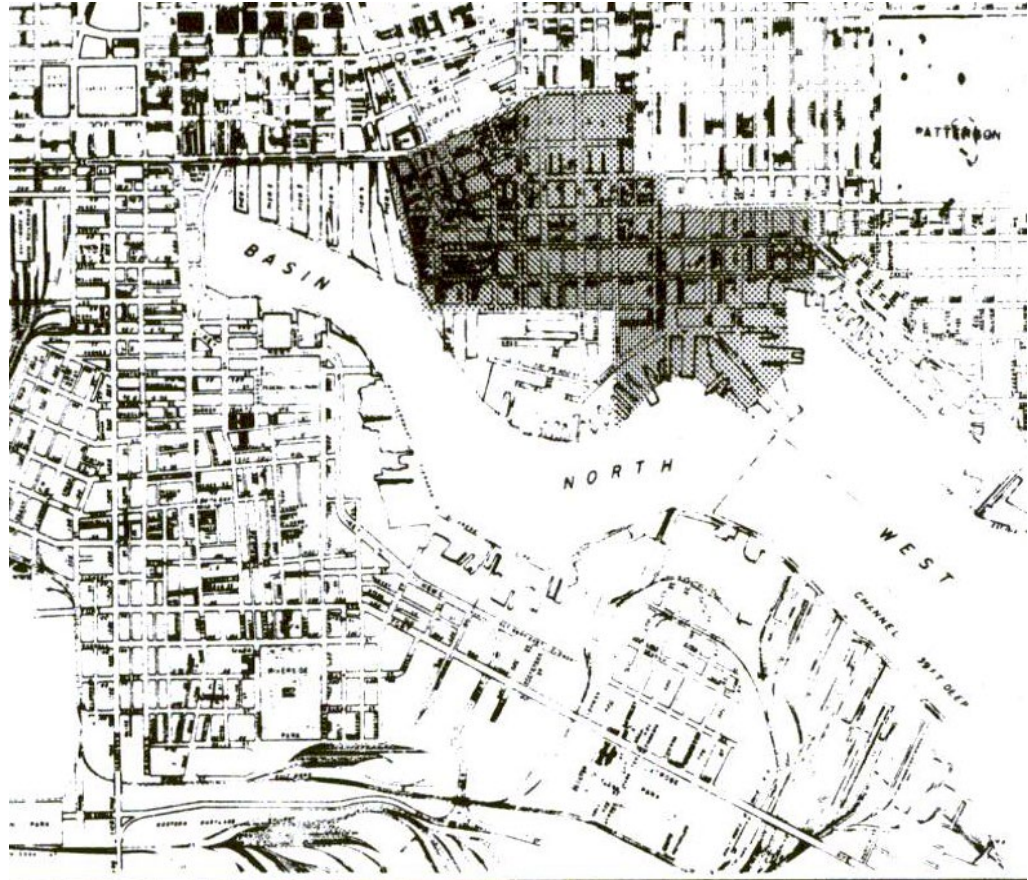
Aerial view of same block today



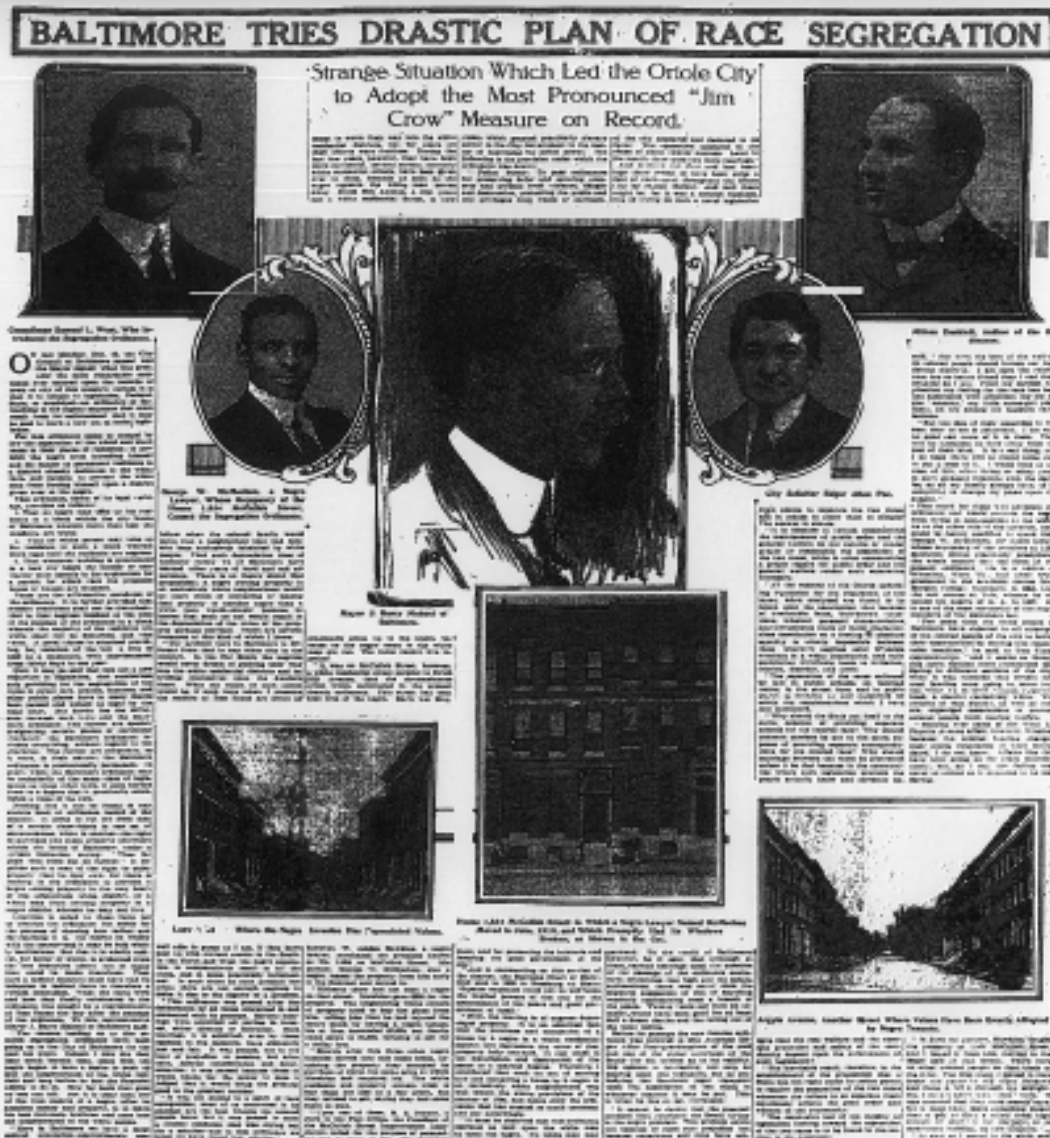
1893 “Slum” Criteria

Considerations:

- Ethnic Background
- Employment Pattern
- Housing Conditions
- Health
- Rent
- Crime Rate



1910 Segregation Housing Ordinance



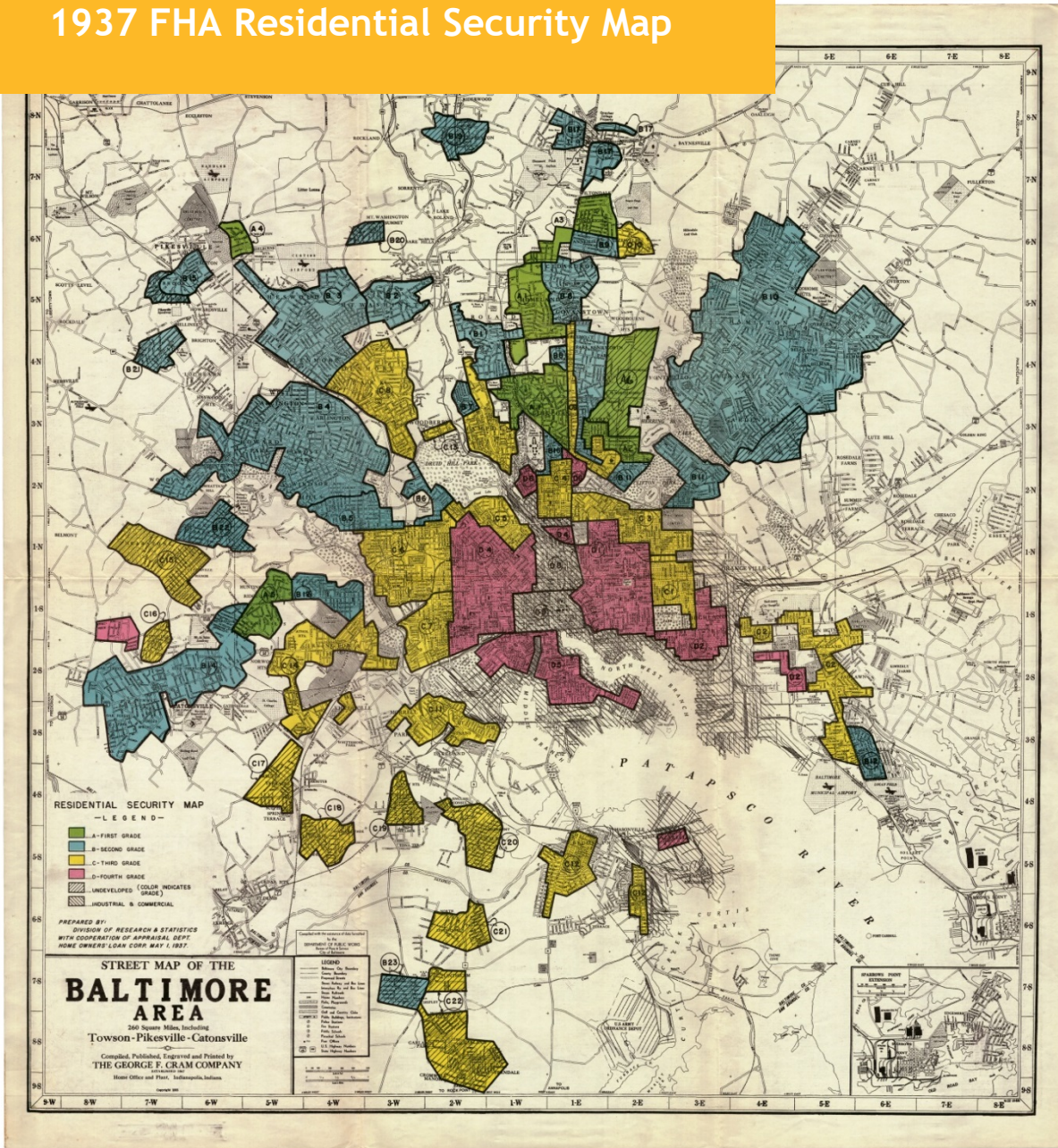
“We did not move up there because we wished to force our way among the whites; association with them in a social way would be just as distasteful to us as it would be to them. We merely desired to live in more commodious and comfortable quarters...

As for property deteriorating on account of our advent into that neighborhood, I know it cannot be so, because all of us are paying higher rentals than the white occupants who immediately preceded us, and there is no better criterion of value than the rent a property brings.”

- George W. McMechen, quoted in NY Times, December 25, 1910



1937 FHA Residential Security Map



KEY

- First Grade
- Second Grade
- Third Grade
- Fourth Grade



Restrictive Housing Covenants

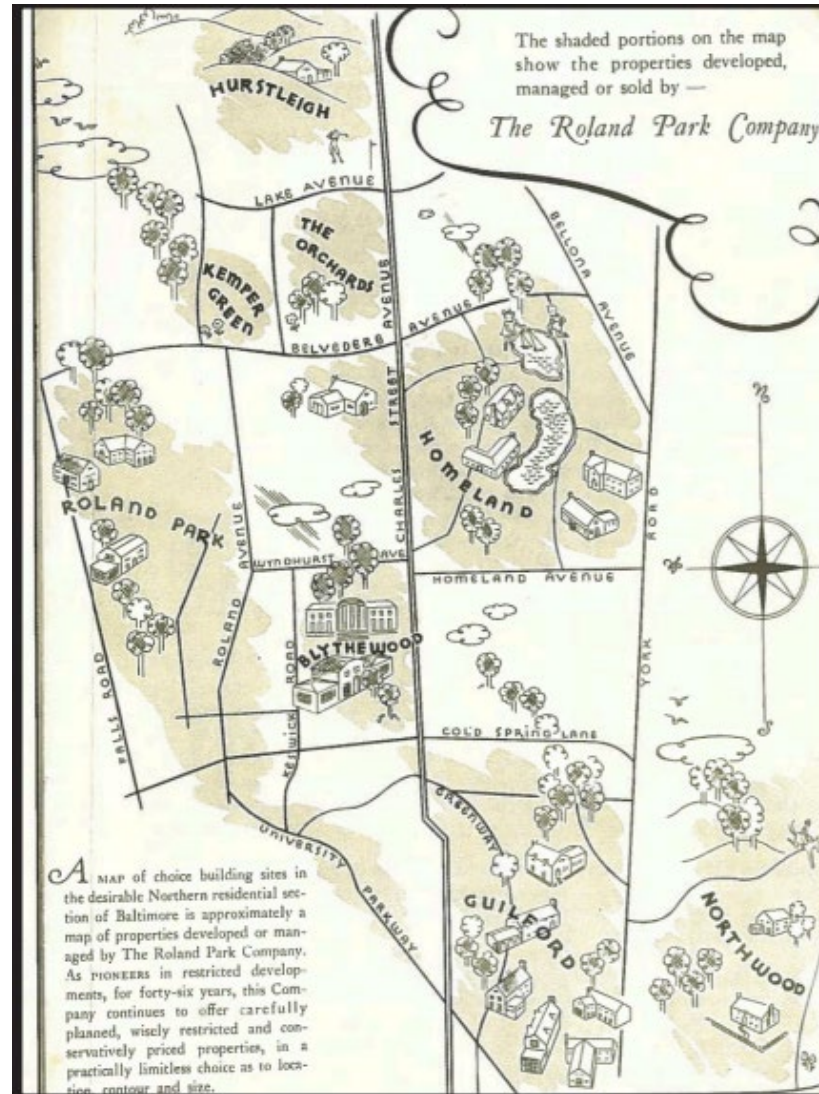


Illustration from Gardens, Houses and People, Vol. XII, No. 4, April 1937, published by The Roland Park Company.

Baltimore City Department of Planning



Fighting Restrictive Housing Covenants

For Sale! For Sale!

ANOTHER BIG DEVELOPMENT IN

..Wilson Park..

Open to our race. Nineteen acres, 200 lots, 6 new cottages with all conveniencies; hot water heat, electric lights; large porch fronts. The smallest lots are 25 ft x 112ft; owned by one of our Leading Business Men of Baltimore City, MR. HARRY O. WILSON.

This beautiful site is located 3 squares east of the beautiful Guilford on the York Road. There is no low or marsh land on this magnificent site; it 400 feet above sea level overlooking Baltimore City. Five-cent carfare, 10 minutes' ride from City Hall. The prices of lots range from \$300 up; Cottages from \$1600 up.

Take York Road Car and get off at Arlington Avenue and York Road; go east 3 squares and you will find the beautiful site on the left upon the hill. You may secure any of these lots or cottages on easy terms from the following agents authorized by Mr. Harry O. Wilson:—



1917 Ad in the *Afro-American* for Wilson Park.



Blockbusting



Would you panic if a Negro moved next door?

"I'm broad-minded," said one home owner when Negroes moved into his block. But a short time later he panicked—and sold his house at a loss. out the whites. And how one speculator brags that he could "bust" your block in no time at all.

In this week's Post, you'll read how speculators decide which blocks are "ripe" for racial change. How they use vicious tactics to force

The Saturday Evening
POST
July 14-21 issue.
A Curtis Magazine

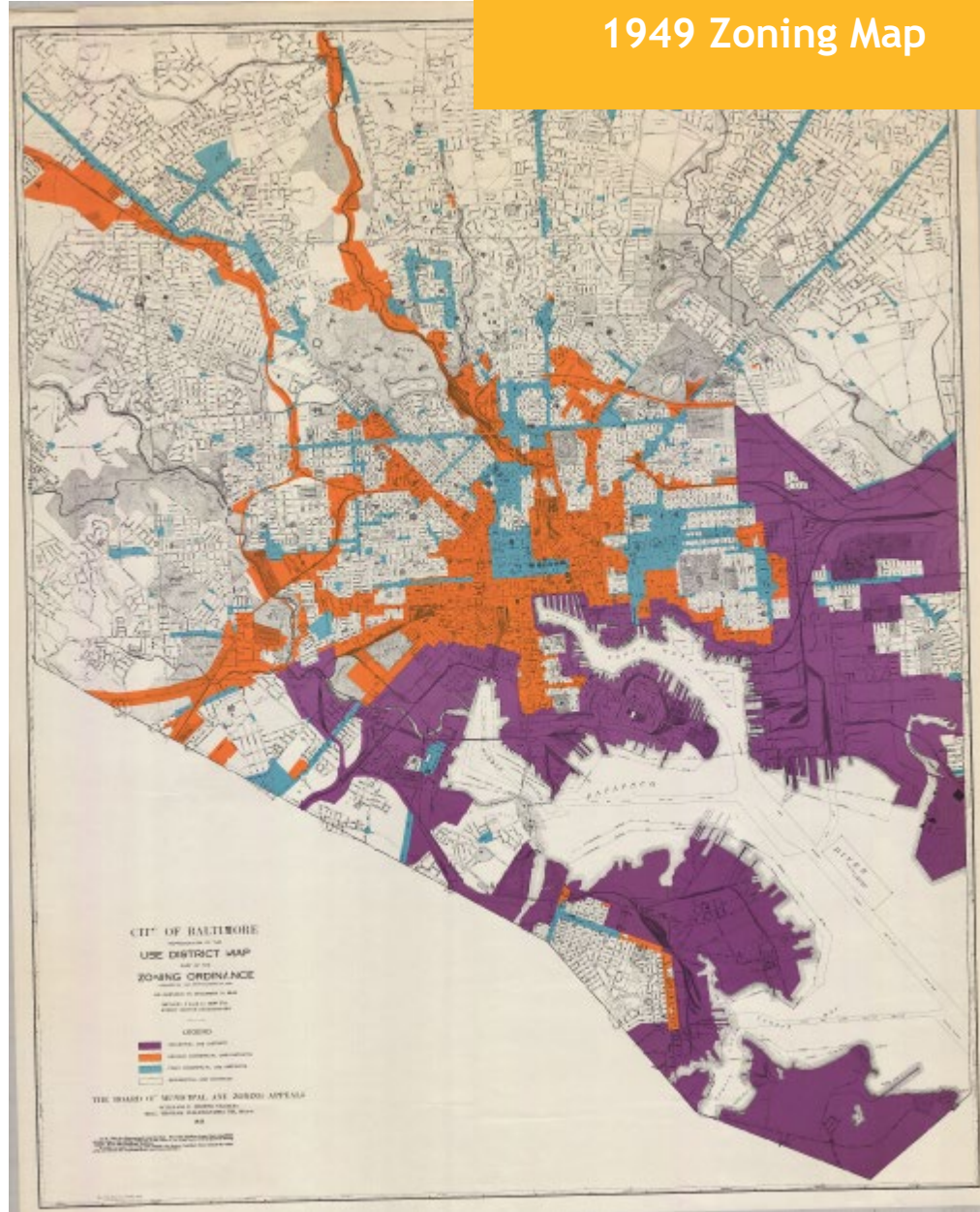
"Would you panic if a Negro moved next door?," *Newberry Digital Exhibitions*, accessed April 11, 2019, http://publications.newberry.org/digital_exhibitions/items/show/96.



Fighting Blockbusting



1949 Zoning Map

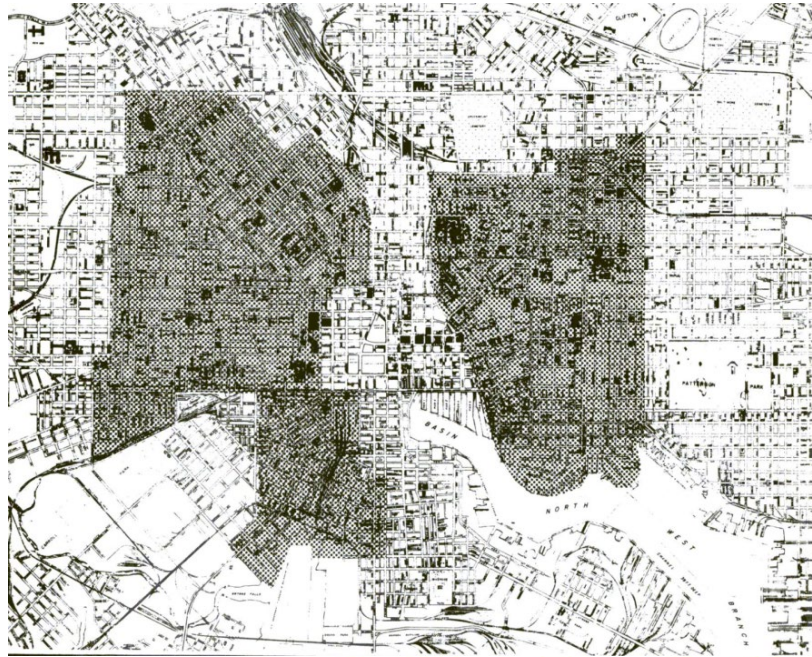


KEY

- First Commercial
- Second Commercial
- Industrial



1940s Slum Clearance



The conclusions of this study confirmed the opinions of the Authority regarding principal causes for concentration of bad housing in Baltimore.

The identified causes were:

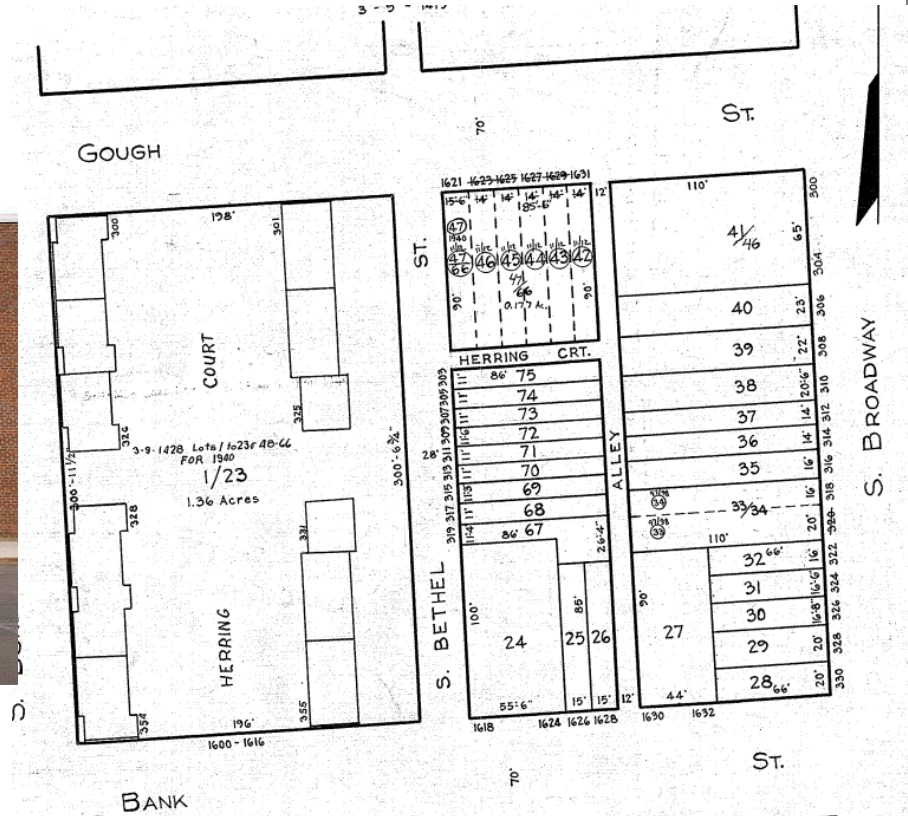
- o Migrations within the city.
- o Great concentrations of dwelling structures obsolete or undesirable for pleasant and convenient modern living.
- o System of irredeemable ground rents.
- o Concentrations of low-income Negroes who could rarely buy a house and were segregated in rental districts.



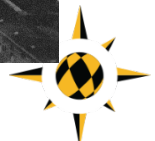
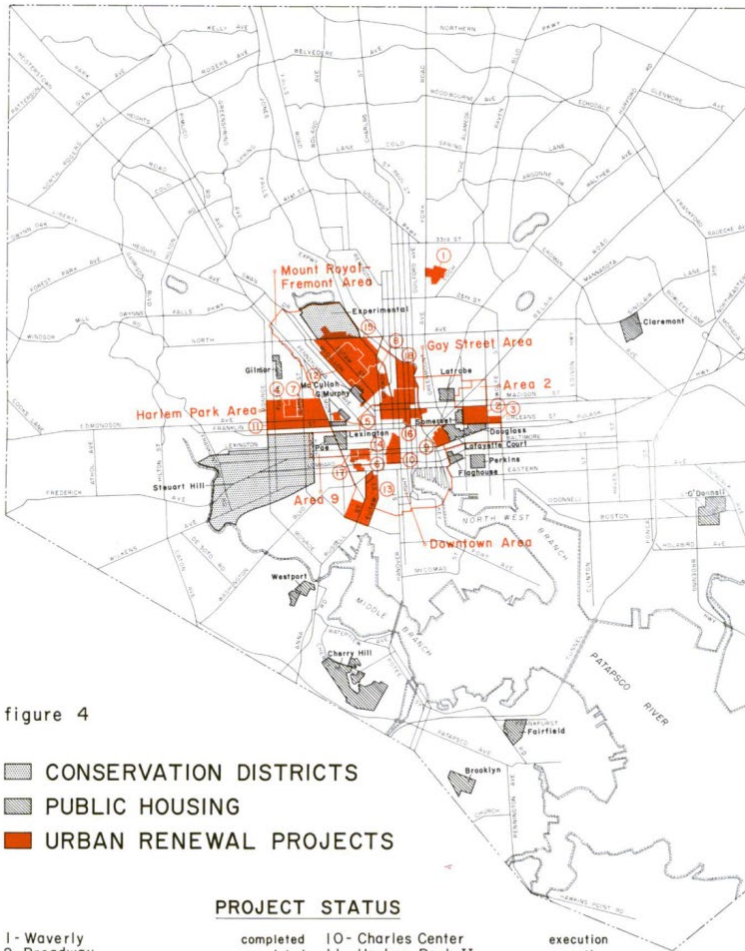
Slum Clearance for Public Housing



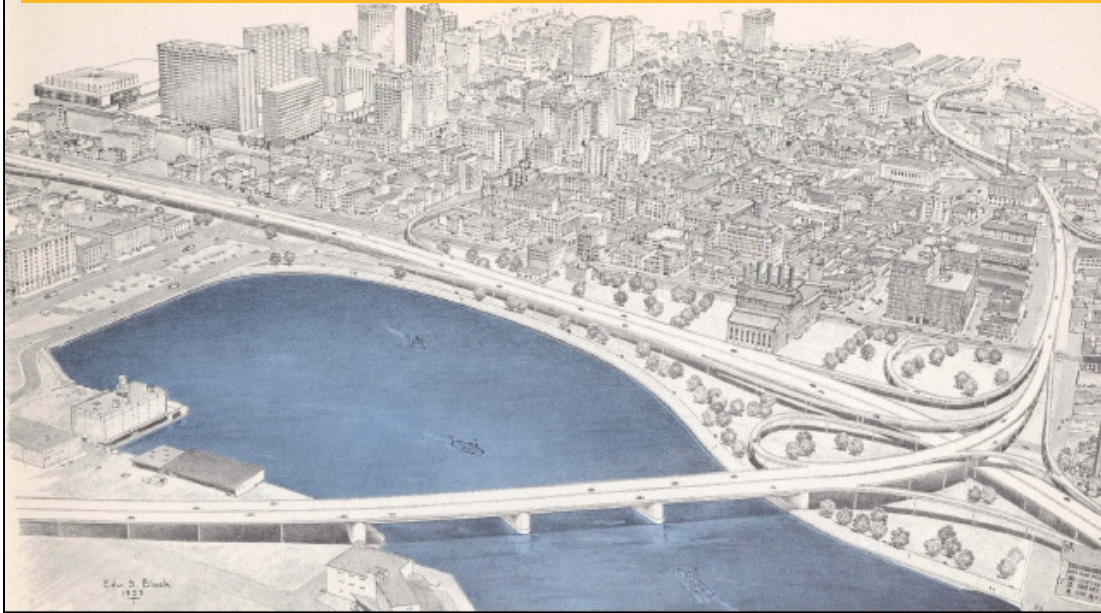
Perkins Homes. Source: Mark Steiner Show.



Slum Clearance as Urban Renewal



Highways as Slum Clearance

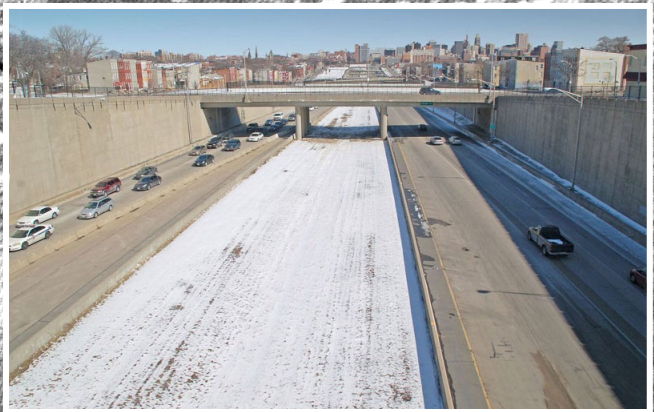
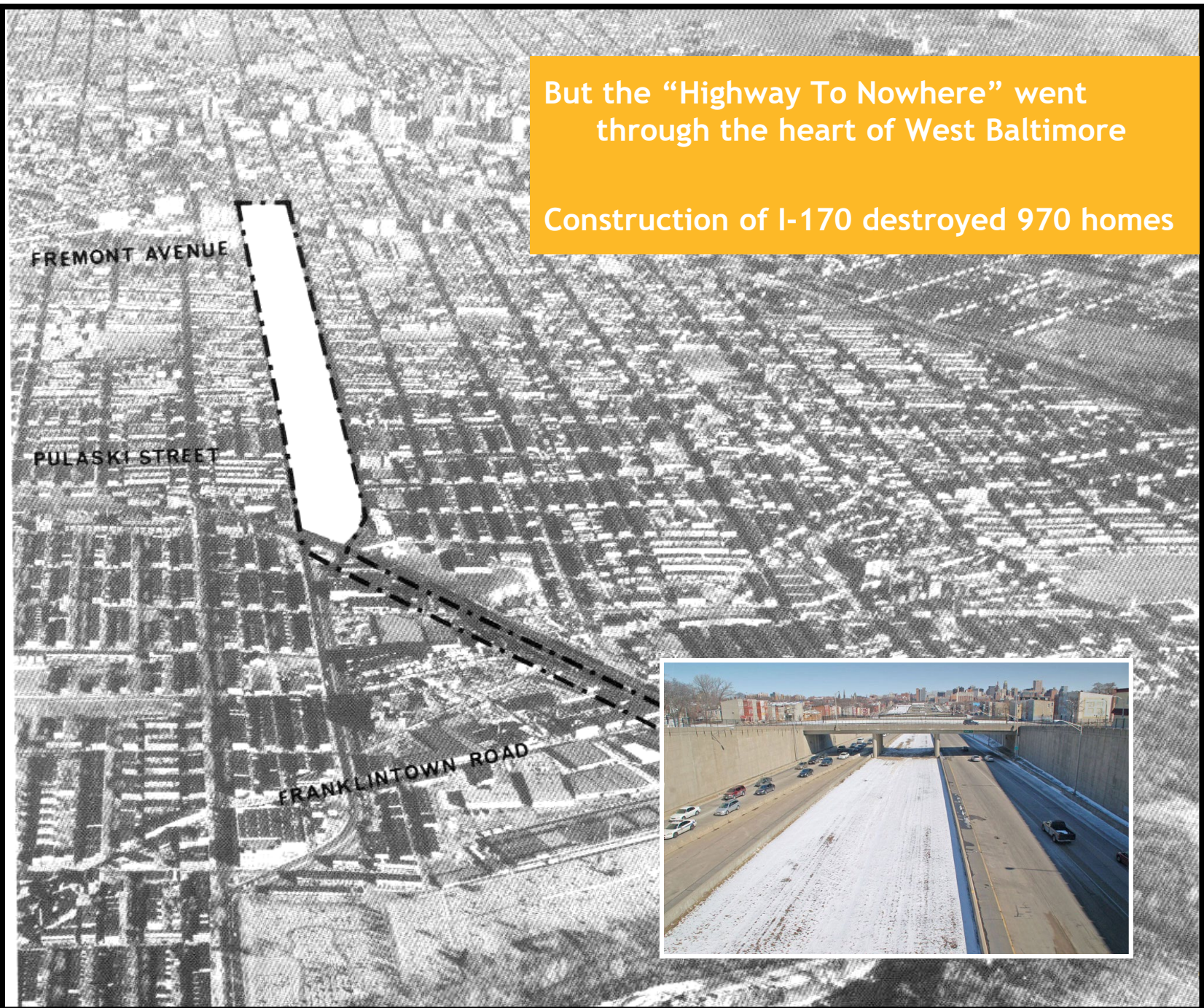


Citizens in South Baltimore stopped a highway through downtown and the waterfront...



But the “Highway To Nowhere” went through the heart of West Baltimore

Construction of I-170 destroyed 970 homes



Urban Renewal, Human Renewal

“The final stage [of urban blight] ... is equivalent to the death of part of the city’s tissue. Human existence and economic activity in such areas become moribund. Subsequently, the affected locales become breeding places for crime, disease, pestilence, poverty and human despair. Transference of these ill-effects to other parts of the city is swift and deadly.

“When this stage of physical degradation is reached, surgery or removal of slums constitutes only part of the cure for urban decay. Substandard social and economic circumstances of the people who live in such slums do not disappear when decayed slum structures are removed. ***Unless “human renewal” - improvement of the social and economic conditions of people - is achieved, the conditioning factors...are merely shifted to other areas...***”

- Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency
(BURHA) Community Renewal Program report, 1964



Community-led Revitalization



Discussion

