

Planning and Zoning

Early planning
and zoning
didn't protect
all neighborhoods
equally

1930: Lexington's first zoning ordinance purpose includes "promoting the public health, safety, morals, or the general welfare."

For Black and low income Lexingtonians, our city failed to carry out this purpose.

How early
zoning failed
to protect
Black and
low-income
neighborhoods

- Grandfathered in unhealthy uses near some post-Civil-War settlements
- Created industrial zones near some African American and low-income neighborhoods

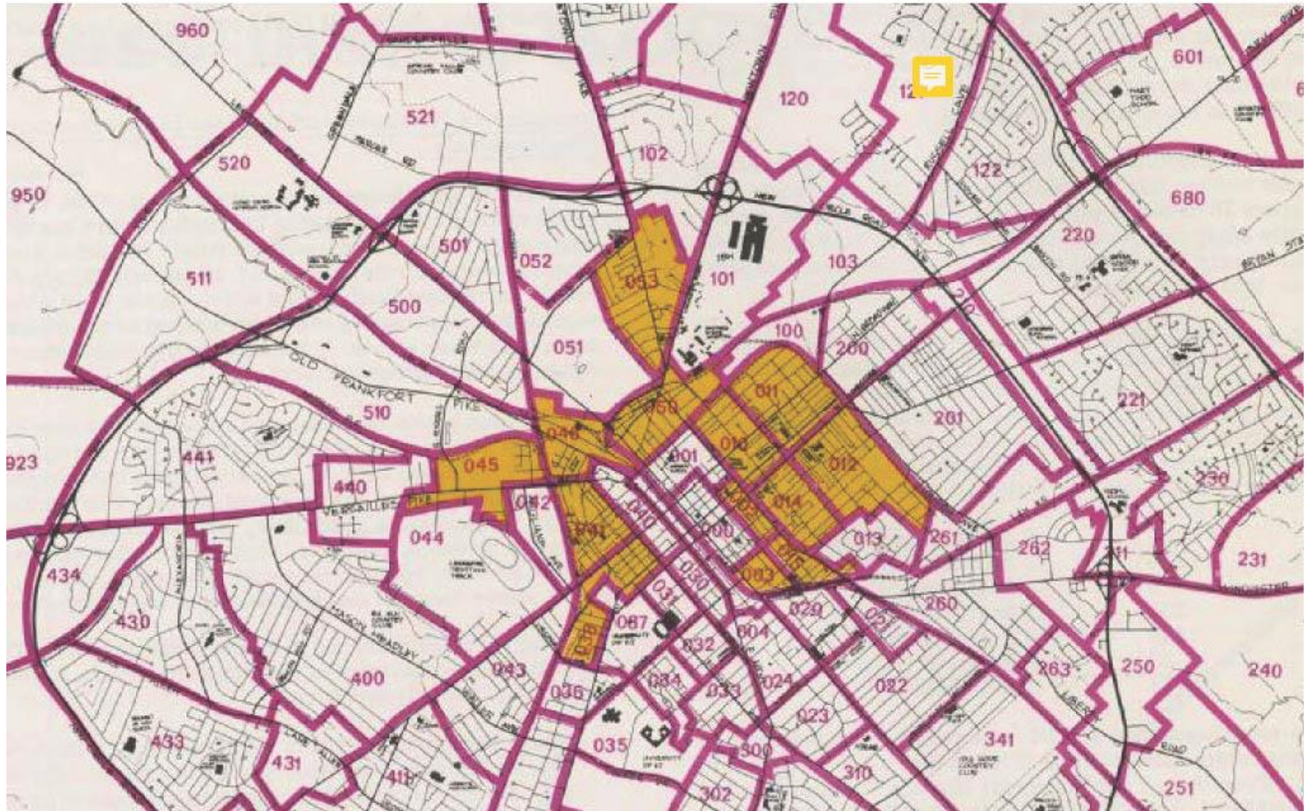




Photo credit: Ron Garrison, *Lexington Leader*, 1980. Used with permission.

Residential
zoning
regulations have
always worked
to reduce
diversity in
Lexington
neighborhoods

- Separation of *homes* of different size and density
- Separation of *people* of different incomes, family size, and other life circumstances

Race-based Steering by Realtors

Steering was national Realtor policy

Realtors' national ethics code *required* steering:

“A Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood ... members of any race or nationality...whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood.” *

Lexington realtors followed this policy.

* National Assn. of Real Estate Boards Code of Ethics 1924, rev.1928

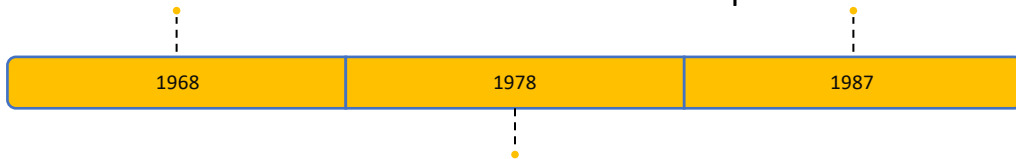
Steering
by
Lexington
Realtors

- Dr. Joseph Scott and family, 1965
- O.M. Travis, Jr., Black real estate broker: unable to show clients all houses for sale until 1973

The 1968 Fair Housing Act made racial steering illegal. Improvement has been gradual.

Steering becomes illegal
(Fair Housing Act)

Steering declined to 38.3%. Black testers were shown fewer houses than Whites, offered fewer houses as serious possibilities, and asked to inspect fewer houses.



In 2 out of every 3 cases, “blacks and whites seeking homes or apartments in Fayette County were given racially discriminatory information” about availability, prices and requirements.

Progress:
NAR
revises its
code and
apologizes

“What REALTORS® did was an outrage to our morals and our ideals. It was a betrayal of our commitment to fairness and equality. We are sorry.”

Charlie Oppler
NAR President, 2020

Lexington Realtors 1979-2023

Agreement with NAACP and Fair Housing Council to train agents in fair housing, and recruit board members from underrepresented groups. Now Bluegrass REALTORS®

- Has held at least 22 fair housing classes since June 2020
- Requires fair housing training of all new members
- Has an active Diversity Committee

The long-
term
impact of
realtor
steering in
Lexington

- “Huge homeownership gap*:
65% of White households
31% of Black households
- Ongoing segregation

"Mapping the Black Homeownership Gap" Urban Institute, 2018.

