

Gentrification:

An overview and discussion paper of trends, research, and policies

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INTRODUCTION

With its focus on our conceptions of home, place, community, and equity; gentrification is a sensitive issue that can evoke strong reactions from across the political spectrum. The sensitive nature of gentrification requires clarity on the factors and mechanisms that have been associated with this process in order to begin to parse the impacts of this phenomenon in our own communities and to address the issues it raises. While the academic research and the anecdotal evidence can paint an often discordant picture, this report aims to clarify technical definitions, distill areas of consensus, ascertain best practices on measurement, and examine potential policy solutions in order to apply them to the context of St. Louis.

According to a study by Governing (2015) that examined the prevalence of gentrification in the 50 largest cities in the United States, levels of gentrification have been accelerating. The analysis found that gentrification occurred in 20% of all census tracts that were categorized as eligible to gentrify¹ in the period between 2000 and 2009-'13, compared to 9% in the 1990's. While the study highlighted what appears to be a marked increase in the phenomenon, they also noted that gentrification is not necessarily widespread and has been occurring with higher frequency in select cities such as Minneapolis, Seattle, Washington D.C., and New York.

In addition, housing affordability continues to be a pressing concern nationwide. Since 2001, the number of American households who can't afford their housing costs has increased 146% to over 38 million Americans². The provisioning of affordable housing has been aggravated by the expiration of affordability requirements on housing developments, housing costs that are rising faster than incomes, and the inability of the cost-burdened to obtain housing assistance. Today, more than 53% of renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent and 75% of extremely low-income renters pay more than half of their incomes on rent & utilities³. Affordable housing and housing assistance is often only available to a minority of those who are in need.

While a confluence of the aforementioned factors, and other macro-level trends have served to bring discussions of gentrification more directly into the public discourse; community activists, long-term residents, and the compelling media portrayals of indigent residents faced with harassment and evictions^{4,5,6} have also played a role in spreading awareness of gentrification and in heightening public concern with rising housing costs. On the other side of the issue city officials, developers, and residents in struggling neighborhoods are seeking ways to reinvigorate long blighted areas, address

¹ Gentrification eligible tracts were defined as any tract with at least 500 residents at the beginning and end of the study period, that were located within a central city, and that had median household incomes and median home values in the bottom 40th percentile of all tracts within a metro area at the beginning of a decade. Gentrification was determined to occur based on multiple factors such as the percentile rank of the tract based on the number of residents with a BA degree or higher, increases in the median home value, and the percentile rank of the tract based on median home value.

² Popken, B. (2017). NBC News.

³ Kalima, R. & Miller, T.K. (2016).

⁴ Rayani, S. (2017, February 10). 100-year-old woman evicted from SF home. SF Gate.

⁵ Stewart, N. (2017, June 27). Manhattan Man, 80, Faces Eviction Again After Years of Fighting Back. The New York Times.

⁶ Del Signore, J. (2017, May 24). Elderly Woman Battling Cancer Faces Eviction for Renting Spare Bedroom On Airbnb. Gothamist.

areas of concentrated poverty, and promote economic growth and development. Addressing gentrification requires a deft handling and the ability to deploy appropriate policy responses that account for historical context, market conditions, and both qualitative and quantitative neighborhood data.

DEFINITIONS & MECHANISMS OF GENTRIFICATION

One of the primary issues surrounding discussions of gentrification involves the way the issue is defined. Ruth Glass, a sociologist who first coined the term in *London: Aspects of Change* (1964), defined gentrification as the process of higher-income households moving into working class neighborhoods, upgrading the housing stock, and displacing working class families as well as changing the character of a neighborhood. Since her initial publication, a wide array of definitions incorporating various themes has been employed in academia, community discussions, and by the media. While the core elements of Glass' definition persist in many of the variations, others have chosen to omit or include certain themes based on their interpretation. Certain elements that are often given additional emphasis in newer definitions include thematic areas such as demographics, real estate markets, and displacement.

Newer definitions that incorporate demographic elements focus on changes in the characteristics of in-movers identifying them as primarily white, college-educated, young professionals, and higher income individuals; while out-movers are typically identified as longer-tenured residents, lower-income residents, and minorities. Others have examined certain demographic and occupational factors such as the role of artists, LGBT households, and other members of the creative class as early pioneers of gentrification although there is less research and little consensus on the impact of these factors.

The conversation regarding the incorporation of real estate themes has focused on framing the issue in terms of rising housing costs, luxury housing development, increased code enforcement, changing tastes in the location of residential housing, and changes in the services offered by businesses in the community. A broad definition employed by Keating (2003) that emphasizes real estate elements defined gentrification as the upward change in land use to middle and upper income residential. Davidson and Lees (2005) suggested a holistic definition that included elements such as the reinvestment of capital and landscape change as key components of gentrification.

Displacement has inarguably been the most prominent theme in the gentrification discussion and is of primary concern to many activists and community leaders grappling with neighborhood change. As noted in the Brookings Institute report "Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices", there are three different types of displacement that are often defined in the academic literature: direct displacement, secondary displacement/involuntary displacement, and exclusionary displacement. Direct displacement, as defined in Freeman and Braconi

(2004), is the succession of a demographic or ethnic group as a result of a specific program or process such as the forced displacement that took place during the urban renewal programs of the 1950-60s. Secondary/Involuntary displacement is the form of displacement most commonly discussed today and is considered to be the indirect removal of lower-income residents as a result of rising housing costs or through the eviction process. Exclusionary displacement is the inability of new low-income households that have never previously been residents in a specific neighborhood to take up residence in that neighborhood as a result of high housing costs or the restricted availability of affordable units.

In addition to the common themes discussed above, certain disciplines have also referred to changes in the culture and character of a neighborhood as key components of the gentrification process. Some point to changes in specific neighborhoods that have come to be associated with a specific ethnic identity or neighborhoods with prevailing attitudes and social norms that change as a result of the differing cultural attitudes of in-movers. Certain definitions provide emphasis to the changing business and services landscape as well, particularly how changing tastes create a shift from businesses and services patronized by long-term residents to those that no longer meet their needs.

Approaches in defining the issue have varied as some cities and organizations have adopted focused and comprehensive approaches. Portland in their Gentrification and Displacement Study embraced a focused approach by refining their area of concern to housing displacement whereas The San Francisco Mission District in their Mission Action Plan 2020 has adopted a more comprehensive approach by highlighting the cultural diversity and history of the Mission district in addition to objectives related to housing affordability, tenant protections, and safety concerns. Certain groups have also attempted to eschew the term, 'gentrification' entirely as a result of the negative connotations that have come to be associated with it.

Defining gentrification is an important part of moving towards a comprehensive understanding and in developing plans for addressing gentrification pressures at a regional scale. Differences in opinion can create misunderstanding and tensions between residents, neighborhood organizations, and community leaders. It can be commonplace in cities affected by gentrification pressures for residents, city officials, and other groups to descend into rhetoric and factional fighting as a result of different parties having different ideas about the nature and character of gentrification⁷. Understanding the elements and dynamics associated with neighborhood change can be an important first step in the creation of productive solutions.

STUDIES ON DISPLACEMENT

Displacement is one of the processes that features prominently in conversations on gentrification and revitalization. The primary, albeit difficult, questions that cities need to ask about

⁷ Kennedy, M. & Leonard, P. (2001).

gentrification will likely center on defining and identifying displacement.

Rowland Atkinson (2002) produced a systematic, although not comprehensive, review of 114 papers, books, and grey literature published between 1964 and 2001 that were related to measuring the neighborhood effects of gentrification. His review identified displacement as the most dominant theme addressed in the literature and that displacement was generally acknowledged as a serious problem due to the negative social, psychological, and economic effects it has on displaced residents. However, Atkinson also acknowledged that much of the research infers, rather than directly measures, displacement and that when displacement has been identified as a problem, it has been done so without sufficient supporting empirical data. Atkinson concludes his review by stating that displacement as a result of gentrification is difficult to refute, although he also acknowledges that estimates of its impact have been wide-ranging.

One of the more recent and frequently cited studies regarding gentrification in the United States is Freeman's "Displacement or Succession? Residential Mobility in Gentrifying Neighborhoods" wherein Freeman uses longitudinal PSID (Panel Study of Income Dynamics) data from 1986-1999 to examine census tracts for relocations and to contrast those relocations in gentrifying and non-gentrifying neighborhoods. Freeman's analysis finds that while higher probability of displacement is a statistically significant result of residency in a gentrifying neighborhood, the expected increase in probability is relatively low; only 0.5% higher than displacement rates in non-gentrifying neighborhoods. Freeman finds that neighborhood change is more closely linked to the changes in the composition of in-movers into gentrifying neighborhoods where there is a much higher probability that in-movers will be white, college-educated, and have higher incomes. Being lower-income, black, and not having a college-education were factors negatively associated with moving into a gentrifying neighborhood.

Another study conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, "Gentrification and Residential Mobility in Philadelphia" used longitudinal Census and Consumer Credit Panel data to compare mobility in gentrifying and non-gentrifying neighborhoods. While they did not find elevated rates of mobility for vulnerable residents, they did find that more vulnerable residents were more likely to move into neighborhoods that were lower income than the ones they resided in originally; a finding that suggests that the redistribution of underprivileged residents into underprivileged neighborhoods contributes to the persistence of concentrated poverty. While the Philadelphia Federal Reserve study did not find elevated rates of displacement, they did note that not all displacement may have occurred over the observed time frame and that there may be mitigating factors inherent to Philadelphia that allayed the displacement of poorer residents.

A literature review by Zuk et al. (2015) conducted with support from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco examines the disconnect between claims by certain groups and agents that displacement is the primary and most detrimental issue affecting lower and middle (LMI) income

residents in gentrifying neighborhoods and the dearth of social science research that lends quantitative support to these claims. While the literature review acknowledges the conflicting results of many different research papers, it also offers some potential explanations to the assertions that gentrification-related displacement is not a significant factor. Their primary assertion is related to data issues affecting gentrification-related displacement studies; specifically that there are several problems that are consistent among a significant portion of the research such as data availability, inadequate time scale, and inconsistency in operationalization and definitions. They also point to a potential alternative hypothesis in studies that use some form of control group for measuring displacement in that in neighborhoods that are gentrifying and gaining additional residential amenities; that the rate of displacement slows as residents make a concerted effort to remain in their neighborhoods even when housing costs increase. Some of these issues are explored in "The Right to Stay Put, Revisited"⁸ where a prior study of the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey that found lower levels of displacement after gentrification⁹, was re-examined and compared to field interviews with displaced households. The authors found that the data used in the original study failed to capture households displaced by earlier gentrification, households that were doubling up on housing, households that became homeless, and households that had entered the shelter system.

Zuk et al. (2015) also highlights the general consensus that exclusionary displacement, the inability of households to move into ascendant neighborhoods as a result of increasing costs or other factors, is a definitive characteristic amongst gentrifying neighborhoods. Exclusionary displacement can also be characterized as the changing composition of in-movers to a particular neighborhood – in-movers to gentrifying neighborhoods have consistently been found to be wealthier, whiter, and college-educated. As noted in Freeman & Braconi (2004) "...a neighborhood can go from 30% poverty to 12% poverty in as few as 10 years if all vacated units are rented by non-poor households."

The important takeaway from these papers isn't that displacement is or isn't a problem, but rather that assessing displacement is a difficult endeavor and the research has yet to present a general consensus on the measurement, magnitude, and outcomes of displacement. Even when research on displacement finds muted effects, authors are quick to caution that gentrification can still bring about both positive and negative benefits that public policy should attempt to expedite or ameliorate where appropriate. Several major cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Portland, and San Francisco have formed taskforces and initiatives with clear objectives of targeting and reducing displacement of lower-income residents in order to address concerns highlighted by neighborhood organizations and community activists. While secondary displacement continues to be an area of some contention, there is general agreement in the academic community that exclusionary displacement is a persistent feature of gentrification, a process that can lead to the stratification of neighborhoods by income and wealth and lead to areas of increasingly concentrated poverty.

⁸ Newman, K. & Wyly, E.K. (2005).

⁹ Freeman, L. & Braconi, F. (2004)

THE STRATIFICATION OF URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

Although gentrification-related displacement has been a difficult phenomenon to measure, there has been extensive study on the effects of gentrification-related phenomena such as elevated residential mobility, the concentration of poverty, segregation, higher housing costs etc. and the impact that they can have on less-advantaged households. Concentrated poverty is defined as occurring in any census tract where more than 40% of households live below the federal poverty threshold¹⁰. There are currently more Americans living in census tracts of concentrated poverty than have ever been recorded before and recent studies of ACS data found that the Midwest has experienced a 132% increase in the number of people living in high poverty neighborhoods, particularly in mid-sized MSA's¹¹. Residency in high poverty areas has been shown to have independent effects on child development, educational attainment, health, and labor market outcomes¹². In 2015, severely-cost-burdened households that spent more than 50% of their income on housing and utilities spent 53% of less on food, healthcare, and transportation combined than households who were not cost-burdened¹³. An article by Metzger et al. reviews the high levels of school mobility in St. Louis (40% in the 2011-'12 school year), its association with neighborhood turnover, and reviews the negative educational outcomes that have been associated with higher rates of mobility. A Philadelphia Federal Reserve study on gentrification found that displaced residents were more likely to end up in poorer neighborhoods with higher levels of crime, lower levels of economic opportunity, and lower-performing public schools¹⁴.

Additional research supports that gentrification processes can have reinforcing effects on segregation and racial inequality as one study found that racial composition plays an important role in deciding which neighborhoods gentrify. While some contend that gentrification leads to diverse and integrated neighborhoods, an analysis of Chicago neighborhoods found that gentrification occurs more frequently in already white neighborhoods, (at least 35% white) and that neighborhoods with more African-Americans and Latinos were less likely to continue to gentrify and more likely to reverse course and decline after early signs of revitalization, particularly when the share of African-Americans in a neighborhood is greater than 40%¹⁵. This research indicates that a passive approach to gentrification as a way to revitalize poor neighborhoods may not reduce concentrated poverty due to the racial preferences of gentrification in neighborhood selection. These findings are supported by research examining the urbanized part of St. Louis¹⁶ from 1970-2010 that found that majority African-American neighborhoods that were surrounded by other African-American neighborhoods failed to

¹⁰ Approximately \$24,600 for a family of four as of 2017.

¹¹ Jargowsky, P. (2013).

¹² Jargowsky, P. (2013).

¹³ Harvard Joint Center on Housing, (2017)

¹⁴ Ding et al. (2015).

¹⁵ Hwang, J. & Sampson, R.J. (2014).

¹⁶ As of 1950

rebound, although there were majority African-American neighborhoods as of 1970 that rebounded in the Central Corridor¹⁷.

A qualitative survey of displaced residents in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia¹⁸ highlights some of the problems faced by those faced with gentrification-induced secondary displacement. Many of the interviewees faced increased housing costs and had landlords who sought massive increases in rent or significant increases at regular periods during their tenancy. Other effects noted by survey participants included increased housing stress, the disruption of social networks, serial displacement, longer commutes, and disruption in the school performance of the tenant's children as a result of serial moves.

In addition to the negative effects of concentrated poverty, the issues of land clearance, housing discrimination, and segregation have a long history in St. Louis and their effects continue to inform the attitudes of the community to policy remediation. In the earlier part of the 20th century, the sale of homes to African-Americans in certain white areas was once regarded as professional misconduct by the St Louis Real Estate Exchange¹⁹. Redlining, the process of denying services to a certain geographic area on the basis of race or ethnicity, was embraced by the Federal Housing Administration in the 1930's-'60's when determinations were made that neighborhoods with African-American or other minority residents were likely to decline in value solely on the basis of race. This process made these neighborhoods ineligible for loan underwriting and led to disinvestment as well as the segregation of racial and ethnic minorities. These minority groups were unable to obtain home loans, particularly the FHA-backed loans that had favorable interest rates and lower down payment requirements and were widely available to white households. This formed a major impediment to homeownership and the accumulation of wealth in communities of racial and ethnic minorities – a force that has only served to deepen racial inequalities. Other policies that helped spur segregation included racially explicit zoning, segregated housing projects, restrictive covenants, subsidies for white suburban development, and the denial of municipal services in black neighborhoods²⁰.

Many of the major land clearance and urban renewal projects that occurred in St. Louis in the period 1950-'70 have also been widely regarded as failures as they destroyed vibrant African-American communities and served to reinforce segregation. The Mill Creek Valley land clearance project, initiated by Mayor Raymond Tucker, demolished 5,600 dwelling units and commercial buildings in one of the largest African-American neighborhoods in St. Louis reinforcing the North-South division as a result of heightened African-American migration to specific parts of the region. These segregation effects were worsened by the construction of public housing almost exclusively on

¹⁷ Swanstrom et al. (2015).

¹⁸ Atkinson et al. (2011)

¹⁹ Covert, B. (2014).

²⁰ Rothstein, R. (2014).

the north side. Certain racial and ethnic minorities have been historically aggrieved by the land use and housing policies of the past, particularly in St. Louis.

If we accept the premise that gentrification, exclusionary displacement, and to some degree secondary displacement lead to the stratification of neighborhoods by income and race; and that these outcomes can have negative impacts on LMI residents, particularly minority residents, then the question one must ask, while being mindful of the historic implications of a housing policy that has often had detrimental outcomes for racial minorities, is what approach to development and neighborhood revitalization should be taken that maximizes the public benefit and minimizes harm to economically vulnerable residents?

THE EQUITABLE REVITALIZATION FRAMEWORK

While gentrification has often been framed in a negative light, there are certain benefits that have been attributed to redevelopment and reinvestment such as increasing local revenues, renewed interest in housing and commercial development, rehabilitation and infill development, new higher wage jobs, increased amenities, improved public services, increased housing values, neighborhood stabilization of declining areas, reductions in vacancy, and increased viability of future development. As negative associations with gentrification have grown, social researchers and community organizers have sought a new paradigm for neighborhood development that prioritizes the concerns of lower-income residents and manages to allow cities to reap the benefits of improving and stabilizing neighborhoods. Equitable revitalization is one such framework that seeks to ensure that all residents, regardless of income, race, occupancy status, etc. are able to share in the benefits of neighborhood development and revitalization. This approach emphasizes community involvement, shared benefits of economic prosperity, and above all striving to create vibrant economically diverse communities. The following section explores the application of equitable revitalization principles in several different contexts.

In “Managing Neighborhood Change – A Framework for Sustainable and Equitable Revitalization” Mallach outlines the primary reasons for embracing an equitable revitalization approach as the following: that low income households should be able to benefit by living in stronger economically-mixed communities, that loss of low-income housing units contributes to increased poverty concentrations elsewhere in the region, that there is inherent value in fostering mixed-income neighborhoods as a step towards breaking down race and class barriers, and that the loss of low-income residents impairs the economic vitality of a region as their absence can make it harder for businesses to find and hire workers. Mallach outlines a framework for equitable development that underscores the importance of residential market strength as the most significant factor in neighborhood change and the importance of developing a real estate based neighborhood typology. Mallach explores different strategies to promote neighborhood desirability, stability, and amenity value that are coupled with efforts to preserve affordable housing as a share of the neighborhood’s

housing stock, prevent involuntary displacement of the neighborhood's lower income residents, and to build economic resources of indigent residents. Mallach goes even further by exploring which strategies are most successful in different neighborhood typologies and how these strategies affect different kinds of housing and residents of different occupancy status.

In the Portland Plan for gentrification, which focused primarily on addressing residential and commercial displacement, a racial/ethnic justice lens was incorporated into the analysis components of their strategic and program development processes. The Portland Plan discusses the historic impacts of racial segregation and its ties to disinvestment and the negative impacts that these mechanisms have had on racial/ethnic minorities and on minority-owned businesses. This approach involved incorporating documented disparities into the planning process, building organizational capacity for addressing institutionalized racism, the engagement of diverse constituencies, and efforts to reduce racial discrimination in public agency hiring. The Portland Plan specifically seeks to adopt policies that help reduce racial/ethnic disparities.

In the gentrifying Shaw neighborhood in Washington D.C., significant demographic change has occurred as the neighborhood, a former center of African-American culture, has become wealthier and whiter. Shaw residents have formed ONE DC (Organizing Neighborhood Equity DC) in response to gentrification pressures that threaten displacement and to ensure that long-term residents are able to benefit from development activities. The organization emphasizes a participatory democracy model that promotes resident leadership in confronting interests that run contrary to those of local residents. Through their community-led structure, ONE DC has prevented the redevelopment of Kelsey Gardens and obtained rights to affordable housing at the same location for the next 50 years through a legal challenge to the city, employed protest action to halt development of a parcel as a result of the local government's refusal to implement an affordable housing plan to which they had previously agreed, recruited and trained residents for jobs available from local commercial developments, and signed a community benefits agreements with local developers in exchange for community support on a local project²¹.

Another equitable revitalization effort in San Francisco's Central Market involved a public-private partnership between the Northern California Community Loan Fund, the San Francisco Grant for the Arts, The San Francisco's Mayor Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and other organizations to help maintain nonprofits, arts organizations, and other community-oriented services from being displaced. By working with non-profits, the partnership was able to obtain private funding, provide real estate and financial consulting services, arrange flexible loans, and identify "development resistant" properties so that these service-providers were able to remain in the community. The several examples reviewed above may differ in their application and structure but all place emphasis on the priorities of existing community members either through providing solutions for different

²¹ Moulden, D.T. (2013).

neighborhood typologies, prioritizing racial equity, championing community-led resistance to displacement, retaining important community institutions, and through preserving and expanding affordable housing.

While equitable revitalization seems to offer a promising framework for the regeneration of legacy cities in a way that prioritizes and empowers lower-income community residents, there are criticisms and challenges that have been highlighted by conflicts over recent developments. In Houston, TX, a 233-unit affordable housing development funded with federal tax credits known as the Fountain View Drive Project failed to obtain approval for development in the Galleria district, an affluent and majority white neighborhood. In community meetings regarding the project, existing residents expressed considerable opposition to the development and elected officials sided with them, allowing the project to fail. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has threatened to take the city to court over the decision, which they have described as racially motivated. A New York Times analysis of the placement of affordable housing projects has found that they are disproportionately placed in majority nonwhite communities; a practice that fair housing advocates have argued is tantamount to government-sponsored segregation²². NIMBYism²³ continues to be a major obstacle to affordable housing development, although in areas of California where the success of neighborhood groups in halting development for the last 30 years has led to a supply-restricted high-cost housing market, pro-development movements are emerging and spurning “YIMBYism” to combat exploding rents and home prices. It is not so difficult to imagine that some of the tenets of equitable revitalization, such as the provisioning and creation of economically diverse neighborhoods, will be subject to similar levels of opposition and controversy as to those faced by developments in Houston and California. On the other side of the equation, when property values increase sufficiently, lower-income households may eventually hit a threshold where selling and relocating is in their best economic interest. Despite the challenges to the creation of economically diverse neighborhoods highlighted by these examples and other ethnographic analyses of mixed-income communities, equitable revitalization continues to garner support and be included as a key element in anti-displacement plans across the country. Exploring and examining these challenges will be an important part of implementing an equitable revitalization framework.

ST. LOUIS MARKET STRENGTH AND OTHER MITIGATING FACTORS

Another important consideration is that certain cities have characteristics and policies that can serve as mitigating factors against gentrification. This addresses an important point about regional market differences and their impact on gentrification. It would be difficult for someone to argue that the gentrification pressures felt by residents in the City of St. Louis are similar in scale or force as the gentrification pressures felt by LMI residents in Brooklyn or San Francisco and it is important to keep

²² Eligon, J. Alcindor, Y., and Armendariz, A. (2017). The New York Times.

²³ “Not In My Back Yard”, a term for resistance to unwanted development, which can often include affordable housing development.

in mind that gentrification is most often discussed in the context of these 'hot market' cities. These differences in markets can primarily be attributed to differences in housing supply & demand and differences in the cost impacts of higher housing prices. As mentioned in a Philadelphia Federal Reserve study on residential mobility, the high vacancy rates and relaxed property tax assessment practices of Philadelphia may have helped mitigate gentrification in Philadelphia over the observed period. St. Louis shares one of these factors, a high vacancy rate, and in the past has had property assessments that have been accused of being artificially low²⁴. Recent property assessments in the City of St. Louis have risen to \$3.61 billion this year, surpassing their previous high (in 2010) of \$3.48 billion, although the median single-family home appraised value in the area north of Delmar has continued to decline since 2007²⁵. Overall, the assessed value for existing residential property has risen 12% since the previous citywide assessment in 2015. Neighborhoods experiencing the largest change in their appraised median value were Fox Park (47.5%), McKinley Heights (39.8%), Shaw (31.9%), The Gate District (29.6%), Compton Heights (29.2%), and Tower Grove South (29%)²⁶.

While the City of St. Louis market appears to remain soft overall there are also some signs that may be cause for concern regarding the housing situation of some of the city's more economically vulnerable residents. According to an analysis by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, in 2015 nearly 16,000 lawsuits were filed for back rent or possession in St. Louis City and St. Louis County courts, potentially a result of the increased number of residents pushed into the rental market due to foreclosures during the most recent recession and the subsequent increasing rents that have exceeded increases in wages. According to the analysis, the number of residents struggling with rent in St. Louis continues to exceed the number of affordable market rate apartments, subsidized units, and housing vouchers that are available. Also, an analysis by the Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council of landlord-tenant cases filed in the City of St. Louis in 2012 found that of the more than 6,000 cases reviewed, landlords won 4,934 cases while the defendants in the cases only won twice²⁷. While housing demand remains low and affordability is high relative to other markets, low-income residents still find themselves struggling to cover housing costs.

Swanstrom et al. (2015) examined neighborhood trends in the urbanized area of St. Louis as defined in 1950 over the 40-year period 1970 to 2010 utilizing an index based on median home value, median rent, and per capita income data obtained from the US2010 Longitudinal Tract Data Base. The index was used to develop a typology of neighborhoods based on their trajectory and index position at the end of the study period. Their research presents a comprehensive review of long-term geographic trends of different neighborhood types although their most interesting findings were that neighborhoods categorized as upper-half ascenders (or rebound neighborhoods²⁸) did not

²⁴ Larger increases in residential assessed values occurred in 2005 and 2007 as a result of a state action compelling the Assessor's Office to catch up with market values.

²⁵ Barker et al. (2017, May 21). St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

²⁶ Post-Dispatch Analysis of City of St. Louis Assessor Data, Moskop, M. (2017).

²⁷ Moskop, W. & Cambria, N. (2016, October 17). St. Louis Post-Dispatch

²⁸ These neighborhoods were found to be primarily located in the Central Corridor

experience a steep drop in low-income households. The average decline of poor residents in rebound neighborhood over the observation period amounted to only 18 persons per census tract and while housing costs tended to increase in these areas, rents remained relatively affordable. In the 2000-'10 period, rents increased 20.4%, although in dollar terms the median contract rents rose to only \$563. They also found that rebound neighborhoods, which accounted for 15% of the region's occupied housing units, also contained 27% of the region's subsidized units, although upper half stable neighborhoods which accounted for 34% of all occupied housing units contained only 11% of all subsidized units. They suggest that the ascendancy of certain neighborhoods in St. Louis hasn't caused significant displacement of lower-income residents, although they also noted that the black population in rebound neighborhoods has been declining. The researchers also caution that while ascendant neighborhoods had some of the highest levels of economic diversity at the end of the study period, this pattern may change in the future if the conditions in the St. Louis housing market strengthen in the future. Swanstrom et al. urge a focus on addressing concentrated poverty and stagnating incomes in St. Louis neighborhoods.

Other factors of note that have been found to inhibit gentrification or have been proposed as inhibitors of gentrification are security of tenure, community activism and embeddedness, unappealing housing stock, progressive local government, maintenance of significant industrial employment, neglect on behalf of city officials towards nuisance uses and environmental externalities, and alternative/ethnic forms of housing finance capital²⁹. Another analysis by Governing found that the unregulated building heights in Miami have also served as a mitigating factor on the gentrification of working-class neighborhoods such as Little Havana and Overtown.

While the City of St. Louis market remains relatively soft, it has begun to show some signs of nascence during the post-recession recovery period and some have pointed to declining months of inventory of single family homes for sale as a sign of a market that is heating up³⁰. The low-demand in the market and other structural factors will likely continue to serve as a buffer against gentrification pressures although it is important to continually reassess the market as conditions change. Overall, the St. Louis' housing market remains relatively affordable when compared to other cities but there continue to be significant pressures on lower-income residents as reports indicate that evictions, rental demand, and demand for housing assistance are persistent problems for our lower income residents.

MEASUREMENT/NEIGHBORHOOD INDICATORS

An analysis of Neighborhood Early Warning Systems³¹ by Karen Chapple and Miriam Zuk indicates a few clear patterns in terms of systems of measurement related to gentrification. Most of

²⁹ Walks, A., & August, M. (2008).

³⁰ Moskop, W. (2017). St. Louis Post-Dispatch

³¹ Which they have defined as systems and analyses that use indicators to assess patterns of neighborhood change

the neighborhood early warning systems examined by Chapple and Zuk were developed at the city level with neighborhoods or census tracts as the primary unit of analysis and are often developed as online map interfaces that are coupled with reports that provide an overview of methodologies, neighborhood analysis, and policy solutions or recommendations. The systems reviewed in their paper were primarily hosted by city governments, universities, or other community organizations. They also identified several broad categories of commonly utilized indicators such as changes in property values and rents, neighborhood investment, disinvestment, changes in tenure and demographics, investment potential, reasons for moving into and out of a neighborhood, and coping strategies and displacement impacts; as well as commonly listed objectives for early warning systems such as for use in identifying needs, targeting resources, raising awareness, solutions implementation, service delivery, capacity building, and for use in data exploration³². The neighborhood early warning systems often developed some form of gentrification index, displacement risk index, or neighborhood typology of varying complexity to visually display patterns of neighborhood change. Some of the risk assessments used some proxy for gentrification such as loss of low-income households and ran regressions on other variables to assess their predictive ability. While these models often identified gentrifying neighborhoods with a high degree of accuracy, they also tended to identify a larger number of false positives, limiting their predictive ability. Many developers of these systems cautioned against using these systems for prediction due to some of the aforementioned issues and instead advised using neighborhood early warning systems as a first step in identifying areas with the potential to change and supplementing that data with additional qualitative data in order to develop tailored plans and policies. Chapple & Zuk also cautioned that the use of these models for prediction runs the risk of hindering development and revitalization when disinvested neighborhoods are placed in a false positive categorization and market rate development is hindered.

A few short summaries of different gentrification-related indices and typologies have been profiled below:

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy Gentrification Typology³³: Inspired by the Portland Study on Gentrification and Displacement, the MCEA Gentrification Typology utilizes data from the ACS, Census, local GIS resources, and US2010 Project's Longitudinal Tract Database to create a neighborhood typology of gentrification at the census tract level. The primary factors analyzed were the vulnerability of local residents, demographic change, and the housing market; and an index was created where points were allocated to neighborhoods falling into a categorical classification of certain variables for both vulnerability and demographic change and paired with data on changes in housing value change over the period 1990 – 2010. This index was used to place neighborhoods into one of the following categories (or left unclassified if a neighborhood was determined to be a stable long-term wealthy or poor neighborhood):

- Susceptible: Neighborhoods with vulnerable populations that were adjacent to a high value or appreciating tracts but that have not experienced significant appreciation in home values

³² A reproduction of a table from their report has been provided in the appendix that examines examples from these indicator categories and common data sources.

³³ Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy. 2011

- Early Type 1: Neighborhoods with vulnerable populations that experienced little demographic change and had appreciation rates but also maintained low to moderate home values.
- Early Type 2: Neighborhoods with vulnerable populations that have experienced demographic change and were in close proximity to high value or appreciating tracts but maintained low to moderate home values.
- Dynamic: Neighborhoods with vulnerable populations have experienced demographic change, had high appreciation rates, but maintained low to moderate home values.
- Late: Neighborhoods that still have vulnerable populations but have experienced some demographic change. These neighborhoods have low values in 1990 and high values as of 2010 due to high appreciation.
- Continued Loss: Neighborhoods that no longer have vulnerable populations but were still experiencing demographic change. These neighborhoods had low or moderate home values in 1990 but had high home values in 2010 due to high rates of appreciation.

Seattle Displacement Risk & Opportunity Indices³⁴: Developed as part of the Seattle 2035 Plan by the City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development and incorporating data primarily related to demographics, economic conditions, and the built environment. This endeavor created two indices, an index of displacement and an access to opportunity index that were combined in a final assessment of growth strategies for the city. The displacement index identified areas of the city where displacement was likely to occur and was based on 14 variables such as the percentage of people of color living in a neighborhood, the level of English proficiency, educational attainment, household income, development capacity, median rent, and proximity to amenities such as bus service, light rail, core businesses, civic infrastructure, affluent neighborhoods, and job centers. The access to opportunity index identified disparities in marginalized populations' access to determinants of well-being and included 14 variables such as proximity and performance of local schools, transit time to a university or college, proximity to a library, the number of jobs within a two mile radius, the change in median home value, and the network distance to transit stops, community centers, public health facilities and stores with fresh produce. Neighborhoods were then identified as primarily falling into one of the following categories: high displacement risk/low access to opportunity, high displacement risk/high access to opportunity, low displacement risk/low access to opportunity, and low displacement risk/high access to opportunity. The report also analyzed likely displacement risk in the event that growth were to be guided to urban centers, urban villages near light rail, urban villages near transit, or if no action were to be taken. The report estimated that guiding growth to urban centers would likely have the least displacement risk but also would do the least to expand opportunities to marginalized populations.

Boston Risk Displacement Map³⁵: Methodology that was based on the Seattle and Portland Displacement Risk Assessments and primarily utilized Census and ACS data on three categories of variables: vulnerability of renters, proximity to amenities, and housing market conditions. The Boston Risk Displacement map took a unique approach in that it incorporated the location of affordable housing into its analysis so neighborhoods containing more than a certain percentage of housing units categorized as deed restricted affordable units were not incorrectly categorized as at risk of displacement. The Boston Risk Displacement Map also employed an analysis of indicators where they were weighted based on their historical correlation to a displacement proxy.

In "Measuring the Impact of Revitalization: Considerations in Assessing Equitable Revitalization" Hebert contrasts common measurements of neighborhood change against metrics that can better serve the goals of equitable revitalization. In his presentation, Hebert cites how metrics such as population increase, property values, homeownership rates, crime rates, employment, and

³⁴ City of Seattle, Department of Planning and Development. (2015, May).

³⁵ Bousquet, C. (2017, June 6). *Government Technology*.

median household income are commonly used but are not entirely effective in an equitable revitalization framework as they fail to measure whether pre-existing low and middle income residents and businesses are benefitting from the revitalization. Hebert provides the following as examples of more appropriate metrics for measuring whether pre-existing residents and businesses are benefitting from revitalization: the number of residents moving to better and affordable housing, the number of residents who are homeowners, the number who are improving educational levels, the number who are employed or have gained employment, the total reduction in health disparities as compared to citywide averages, the number of businesses that maintain or increase sales and profits, the number of businesses that fail, and any improvements in amenities and services that meet the needs of pre-existing low and middle income residents. Hebert also emphasizes that this form of measuring equitable revitalization is far more demanding in terms of data collection and assessment and requires expanded efforts and resources as compared to standard revitalization.

Indicators of neighborhood change often employ different methods to create indices, typologies, or mapping tools that focus on the degree to which neighborhood change has already occurred or the likelihood that it will occur. As hard data on displacement remains elusive, governments and organizations have begun to focus their efforts in measuring gentrification on assessments of displacement risk, displacement proxies, housing market conditions, and demographic change. While these assessments may have their weaknesses and their use as predictive tools is commonly cautioned against, they continue to be some of the best available methods for responding to gentrification pressures and have informed residents, organizations, and policy makers in major cities across the United States. As the conversation on measuring gentrification evolves, some proponents of equitable revitalization hope to influence neighborhood analysis with more measurement regarding the outcomes for existing lower and middle income residents, although these methods can come with higher resource commitments to data collection.

Some selected demographic and housing trend maps from recent ACS data in the City of St. Louis have been provided in Appendix A.

GENTRIFICATION POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

There is a wide array of policy options designed to address gentrification and they generally fall into one of the following categories: strategies to build residential wealth and increase economic opportunity, provisioning and preserving affordable housing, and strengthening tenant protections.

Efforts to strengthen, enforce, and spread awareness of tenant rights are vital to anti-displacement strategies as gentrification pressures grow. When faced with strong profit-maximizing incentives, certain landlords have in hot market cities been known to engage in unscrupulous practices to remove lower-income residents through harassment or eviction, convert rental apartments to condominiums, implement excessive rental increases, and to maintain lax maintenance

and repair standards. Some policies and programs that have been implemented to combat these practices include tenant counseling, tenant rights education, tenant anti-harassment policies, penalties for landlord harassment, mandated and enforced maintenance and repair in both subsidized and market rate housing, right of first refusal³⁶, legal assistance for evicted families, increased code enforcement, control over the circumstances in which rentals and SRO³⁷ units are converted to condominiums, and just cause eviction policies. Analyses of the outcomes of tenant-landlord cases can also provide guidance on correcting disparities in tenant law.

Strategies for provisioning and preserving affordable housing are numerous and usually target expanding the supply of affordable housing, providing cost assistance, or other alternative housing arrangements. Tax discount or abatement programs for long-term low-income residents who live in areas where assessed property values have experienced significant increases have been growing in popularity in efforts aimed at providing cost assistance. One such program is the Longtime Owner Occupants Program (LOOP) in the City of Philadelphia, which provides a real estate tax discount for homeowners who have had a significant increase in their property assessment, who meet certain income eligibility requirements, and who have lived in their home for more than 10 years. Other policies targeting property taxes include tax deferrals for longtime residents where property taxes can be deferred until the sale of a home, which can help lower-income residents stay in their homes when property taxes exceed their ability to pay them; and providing grants, loans, and tax abatements to landlords who maintain affordability in their units. Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers are part of a federally-funded program that provides rent assistance to the disabled, seniors, and low-income families in the private market, although waiting lists can be long and the program has been criticized for inadequate funding³⁸. Certain cities have also created rent boards that have been responsible for creating rent controls or rent stabilization programs; holding mediation and arbitration; and holding other housing cost related hearings. While rent controls have been widely regarded as ineffective by economists on both the right and the left due to the restricting effects they can have on the supply of housing, rent stabilization policies that are tied to increases in inflation or wage growth have generally been viewed more favorably.

Strategies that focus on expanding the supply of affordable housing include certain federally funded programs such as project based Section 8, public housing, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Community Development Block Grants, and HOPE VI and promoting one-for-one replacement of affordable housing that expires through the restrictions of these programs. Community development corporations have also been employed in supplying affordable housing as well as other local initiatives related to taxation, incentives, and zoning. Some communities have implemented various

³⁶ A contract mechanism that gives a specific party (the tenant), the right to be the first to purchase a property before it is offered for sale to a third party.

³⁷ Single Room Occupancy.

³⁸ Relative to other housing assistance programs that target homeownership and generally accrue benefits to middle and upper income households such as the Mortgage Interest Deduction.

taxes in order to generate revenue for housing trust funds³⁹ such as developer linkage fees and real estate transfer taxes. Developer linkage fees are essentially a tax on all market-rate residential and oftentimes commercial development intended to tie new development to the funding of affordable housing. Real estate transfer taxes are levied on transfers of the title of property, usually during residential home purchases, and have the added benefit of capturing investment that is entering the neighborhood and in discouraging speculation. Certain locales have implemented requirements that a certain proportion of TIF be set aside for affordable housing development and infill incentives have also been deployed by municipalities to increase the supply of affordable housing. Zoning practices have also served as important tools in provisioning affordable housing and resisting gentrification pressures. Inclusionary zoning, a practice in which developers set aside a certain percentage of housing units in new (or rehab) developments for low and middle income residents, has become more prevalent with more than 400 jurisdictions adopting the practice since its first use over 40 years ago⁴⁰. Inclusionary zoning practices tend to vary in whether or not they are mandatory or voluntary, their set-aside requirements, the levels of affordability, and the periods under which affordable units must be offered and sometimes include bonuses and incentives for developers such as density bonuses and fee waivers. Other zoning practices that have been advocated for use in stemming gentrification include promotion of high-density developments, resistance to up-zoning, and the promotion of market-rate developments although these practices can be at odds with one another in certain circumstances and have both their opponents and supporters.

Another area of policy is alternative housing arrangements that include programs such as community land trusts and limited equity housing cooperatives. Community land trusts are defined as a “private, nonprofit organization that buys land and holds it in trust for the benefit of a community.”⁴¹ Community land trusts purchase land and build new residences which are sold to lower-income residents through a 99-year renewable land lease that allows for improvements to the home and land as well as passing on of the house to heirs. The community land trust retains ownership of the land which allows it to sell homes affordably by subtracting the cost of the land from the sales price. The primary restriction on the owners of homes built through community land trusts are that the resale value of the home is restricted by some formula related to the original sales cost plus some percentage of the increase in market value. Some trusts will capture part of the increase in market value to maintain and expand operations and affordability. Limited equity housing cooperatives are similar to community land trusts although they are organized as business corporations where tenants share ownership of a building. LEHCs offer ownership opportunities to lower-income residents but limit the return that can be made from the resale of housing units. Some places, such as Houston,

³⁹ Affordable housing production program funded by local revenues. In St. Louis, a Housing Trust Fund was established in 2001 and is administered by the Affordable Housing Commission. The Affordable Housing Trust Fund in St. Louis is funded by special use tax on major purchases by individuals and corporations based outside the city limits and allocates approximately \$5 million per year to organizations and developers who expand and provide affordable housing.

⁴⁰ Evidence Matters. (2013). HUD Office of Policy Development and Research.

⁴¹ Fischer, D. (2003). St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank

have been coordinating with intermediaries to bank land earmarked for future use as affordable housing in anticipation of strong gentrification pressures in the future.

Finally, another issue at the crux of gentrification and housing affordability has been the declining household wealth, stagnating incomes, and limited economic opportunities for certain lower-income residents. Thus, another avenue that has been explored for combatting displacement pressures and the negative effects of gentrification are strategies for building resident wealth and increasing their economic opportunities. While there is an abundance of traditional strategies for increasing household wealth, the ones most often associated with gentrification policy include foreclosure prevention, assistance to escape predatory loans, alternative sources of financing for home repairs and refinancing, the creation of accessory apartments to provide additional income from boarders, the creation of CDCs with resident shareholders, living wage provisions, and linking regional job growth and development to lower income residents.

It's also important to note that one of the key difficulties with gentrification lies in understanding the challenges associated with provisioning affordable housing at different stages of the process. In the early-stages of gentrification, land and housing stock may be plentiful and the provisioning of affordable housing is not considered a pressing concern. At the late stages of gentrification, land costs have increased, making the production of affordable housing more difficult, not to mention the political opposition that can occur as a result of NIMBYism. In "In the Face of Gentrification: Case Studies of Local Efforts to Mitigate Displacement" Levy et al. detail that one of the most commonly expressed regrets of cities experiencing late-stage gentrification was that they did not bank land earlier when it was still available and affordable. However, cities must exercise caution as provisioning land for future affordable housing development prior to the later stages of gentrification may be politically unpopular and there is no guarantee that certain areas or neighborhoods will experience gentrification.

The effectiveness of the various strategies outlined above often depends on the context in which they are applied. Mallach examined the suitability of strategies based on the various stages of neighborhood change and concluded that there were few strategies that were suitable for late stage neighborhoods, although he endorsed banking land, rehabbing private property as affordable housing, and creating property acquisition funds for obtaining private property for affordable housing in mid-to-late stage neighborhoods. In early-to-mid stage neighborhoods, Mallach recommended enacting right of first refusal ordinances, inclusionary zoning ordinances, affordable housing replacement ordinances, and using vacant property receivership to restore properties held vacant by speculative investors as the most suitable strategies. Levy et al. looked at early stage neighborhoods (Bartlett Park in St. Petersburg, FL and Oak Park in Sacramento, CA) and middle stage neighborhoods (Reynoldstown in Atlanta, GA and Figueroa Corridor in Los Angeles, CA) to examine what policies were being used to combat gentrification in practice. In the early stage neighborhoods that were

profiled, key strategies included housing rehabilitation, infill development, and vacant property development. The middle stage neighborhoods profiled utilized housing rehabilitation, affordable housing production, and housing trust funds as their key strategies. Both early and middle stage neighborhoods also implemented supplementary strategies such as zoning changes (Bartlett Park, St. Petersburg), homebuyer programs (Oak Park, Sacramento), and rent stabilization (Figueroa Corridor, Los Angeles).

CONCLUSION

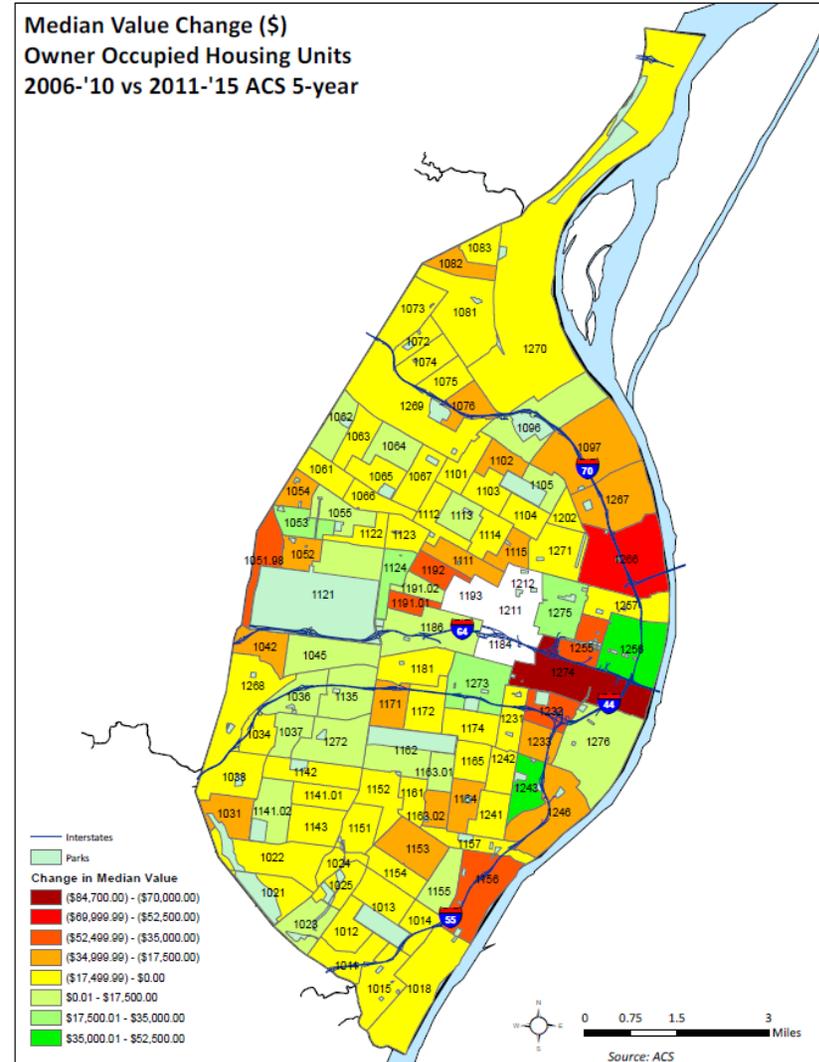
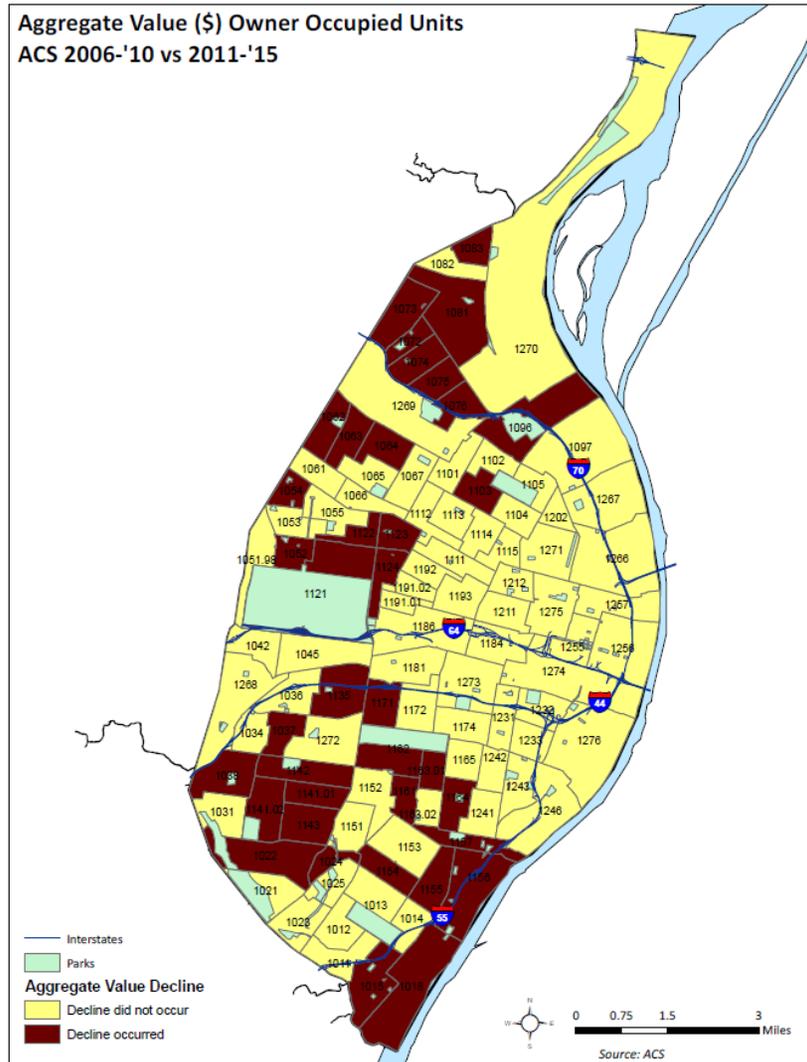
Gentrification is a multifaceted issue that is difficult to define, measure, and address. Despite academic disagreements over the breadth and scope of secondary displacement, it continues to figure prominently in community priorities and policy interventions; often as the centerpiece of anti-gentrification efforts in certain cities. As gentrification has more often been discussed in the context of coastal cities where market pressures have created serious problems for lower and middle income residents and where policy makers and community organizers have no option but to react forcefully, determining how to address the issue can be a little more perplexing in a legacy city such as St. Louis with a soft real estate market that is beginning to show signs of strengthening, historical population loss, and an excess supply of vacant land and buildings. While certain areas of the city, such as the central corridor, have begun to show signs of strength and the city remains relatively affordable; St. Louis also struggles with concentrated poverty⁴² and a subpopulation that continues to grapple with finding and retaining safe affordable housing.

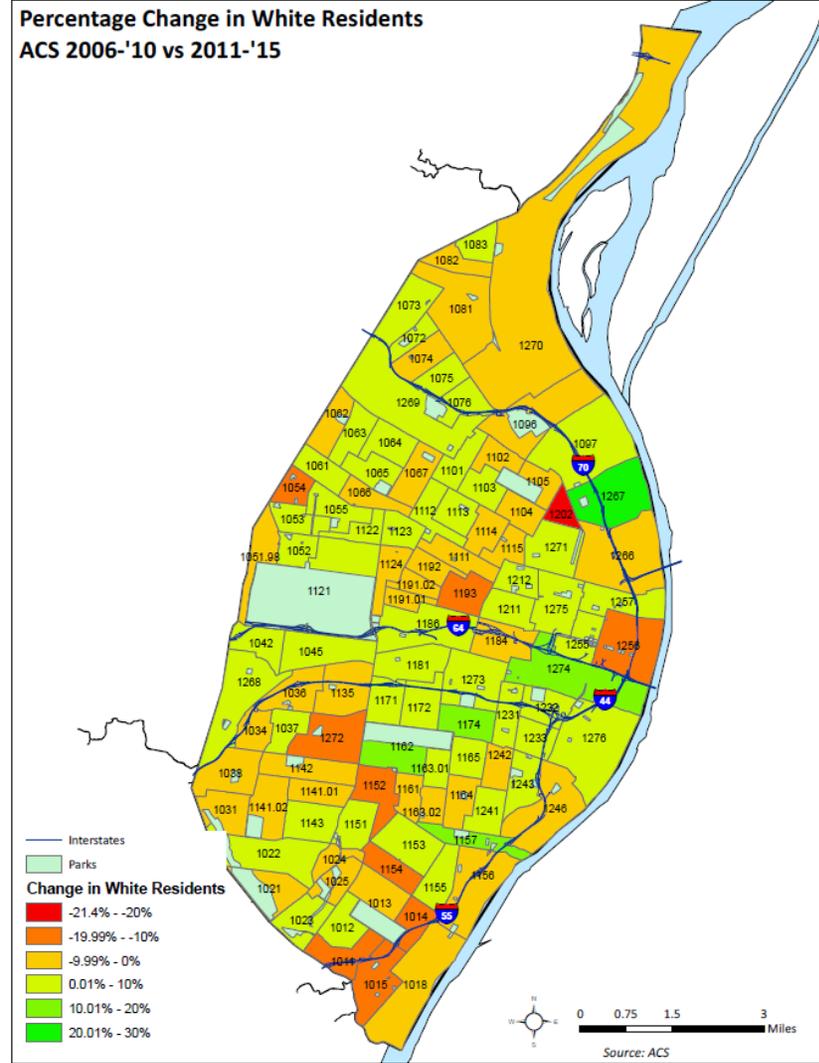
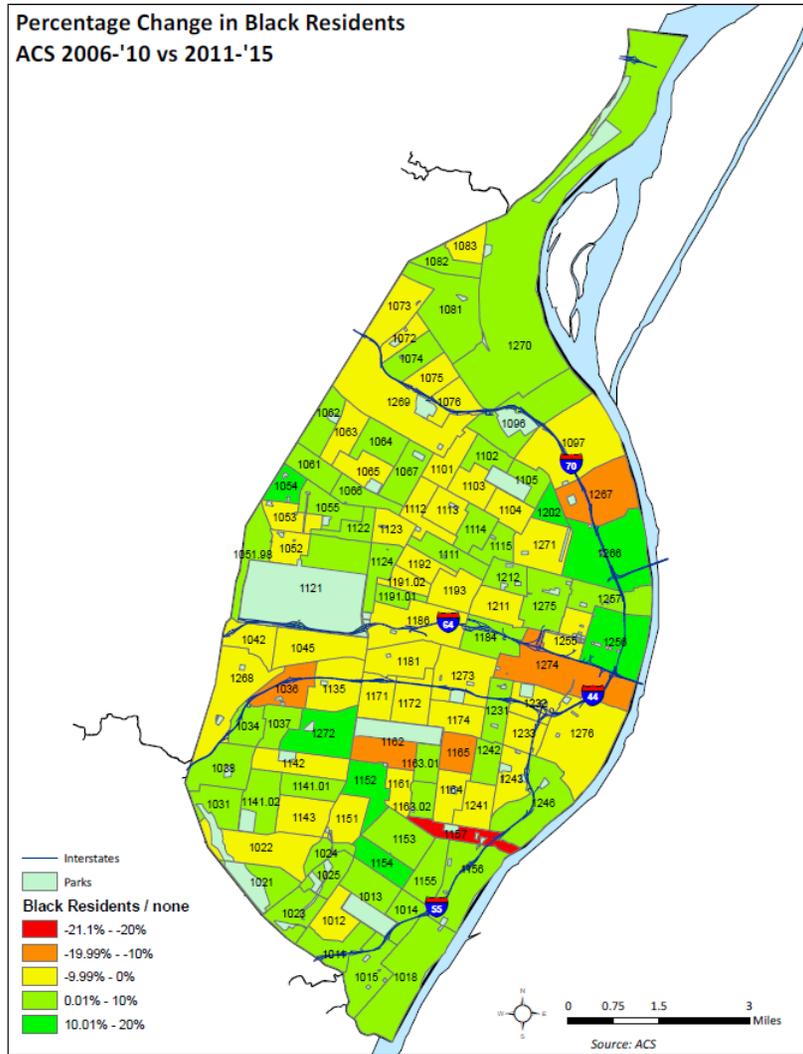
As cities continue to work to ameliorate the negative effects of gentrification, equitable revitalization has emerged as a dominant theme in city and neighborhood plans as well as in academic literature as a framework that prioritizes residents and strives for the creation of economically diverse communities. Certain proponents of equitable revitalization would emphasize the importance of building market strength in specific areas of St. Louis to revitalize neighborhoods while also implementing policies that allow for sustained affordability and community involvement, although different strategies will likely be required in different parts of the city. If the St. Louis market continues to show signs of strength in the future, adopting a policy of measurement and analysis will eventually play a role in identifying trends and appropriately deploying policy. Many cities have developed neighborhood typologies and indices of displacement risk based on widely available data to inform their strategy but some researchers endorse developing new and more complex measurements that can better capture data on the well-being of lower and middle income residents. Many tools and policies have been put forth as potential solutions to combat gentrification, such as cost-assistance and tax abatement for long-term LMI residents, inclusionary zoning, affordable housing trusts, community land trusts, limited equity housing cooperatives, strategies for building resident wealth and many others. The type of strategy employed often depends on the context of the

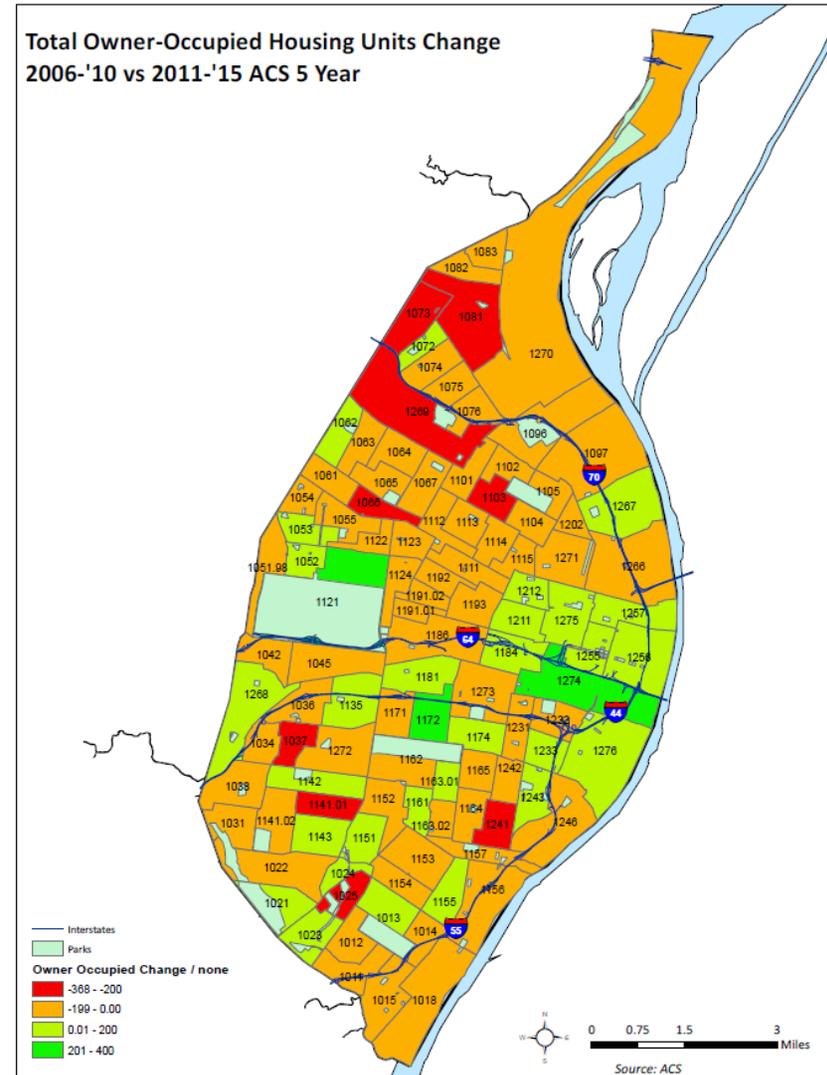
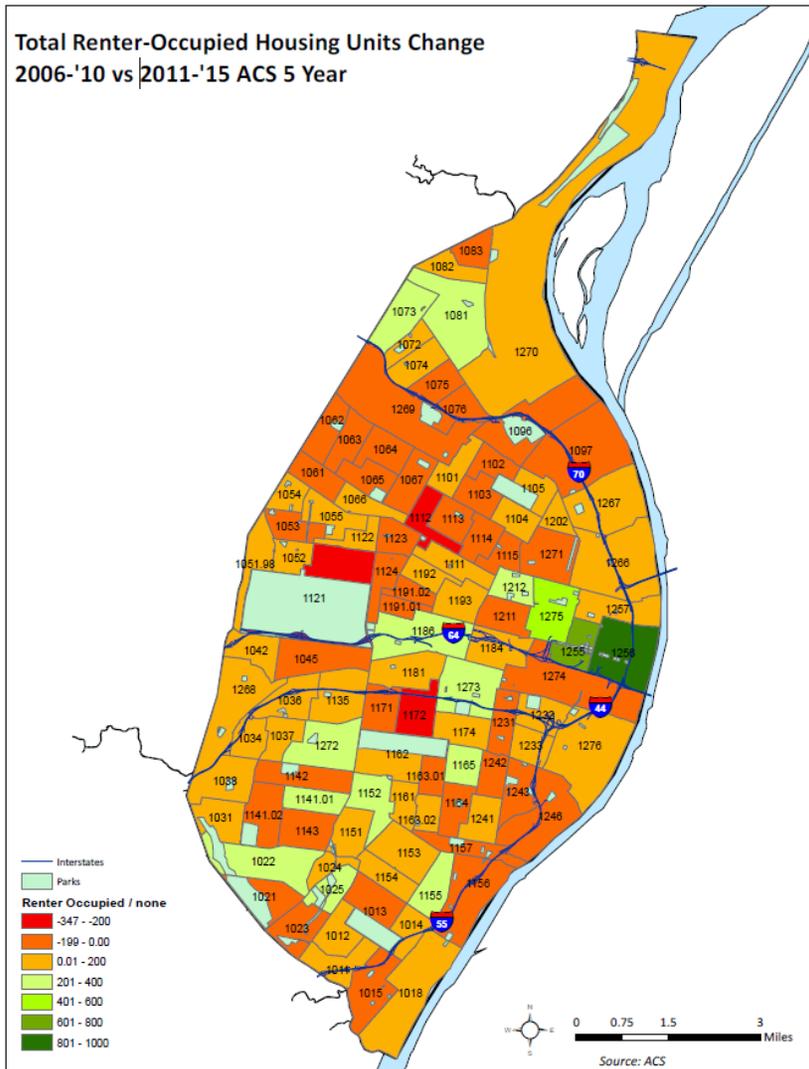
⁴² 15.5% of the population lives in concentrated poverty according to ACS 2011-'15 data

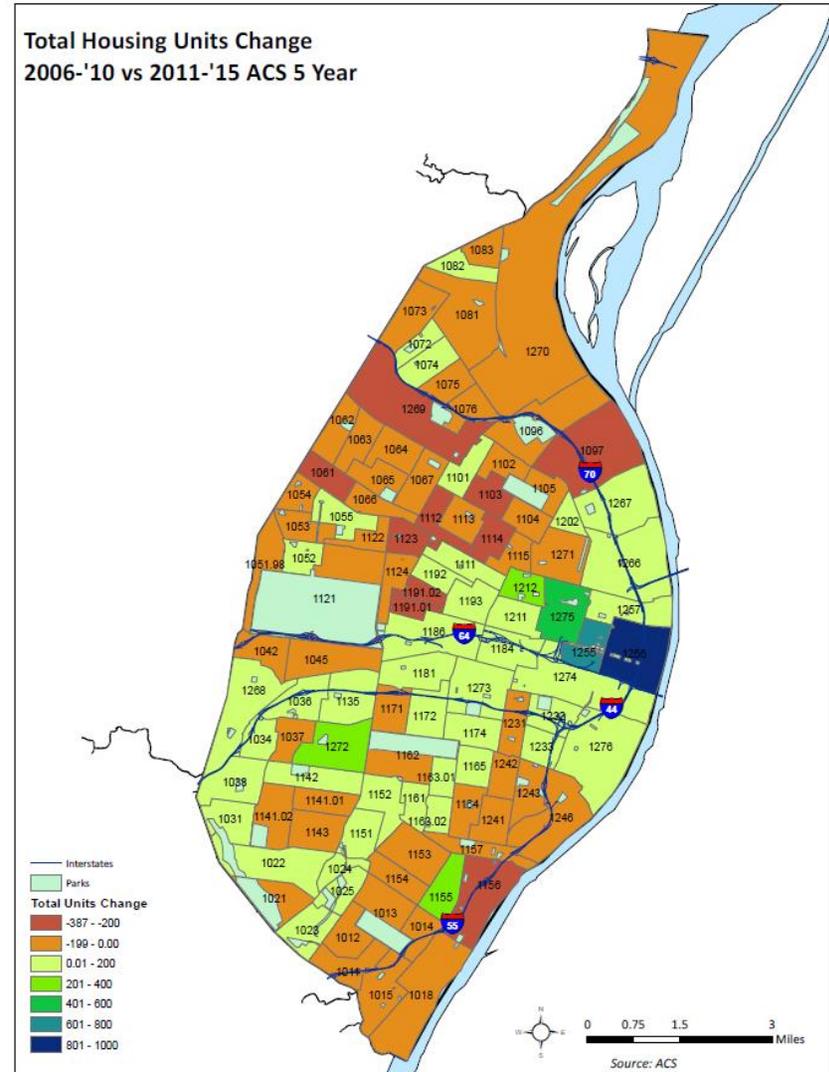
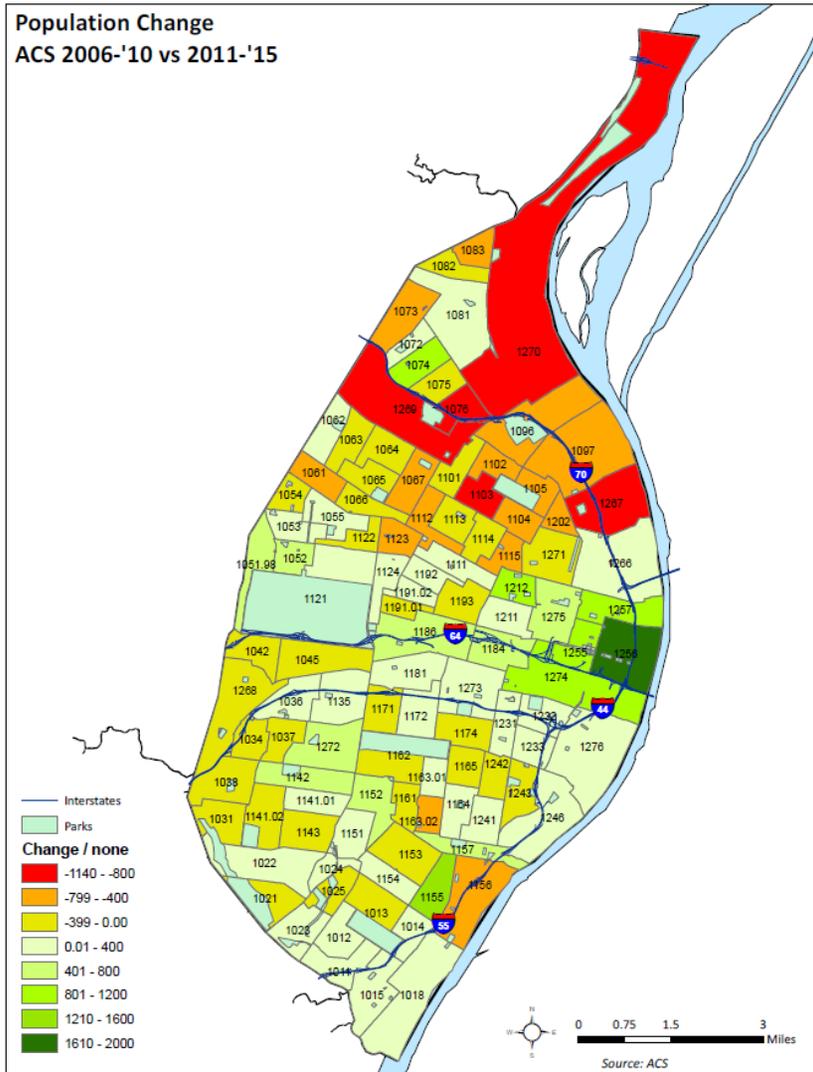
neighborhood and many factors go into selecting appropriate policies. In the context of St. Louis, more analysis and data collection will likely be necessary to develop and employ an effective gentrification strategy in the coming years.

Appendix A: Maps of Selected Demographic and Housing Trends – ACS 2006-'10 – ACS 2011-'15









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