

Information Item

Date: April 8, 2024

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Aaron King, Assistant City Manager
Chris Murphy, AICP, CZO, Director of Planning and Development Services

Subject: Mapping Prejudice Project Overview

Strategic Focus Area: Livable Neighborhoods

Strategic Objective: N/A

Strategic Plan Action Item: N/A

Key Work Item: N/A



Winston-Salem State University professor Russell Smith, PhD, is the faculty lead of the Spatial Justice Studio at the Center for Design Innovation. The Studio seeks to establish programs that bring faculty, students, and the community together across multiple disciplines to develop solutions to issues related to spatial justice (the fair and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities across the community).

The Spatial Justice Studio is currently undertaking the Mapping Prejudice Project, with local community support, to better understand the historic relationship between discrimination and housing in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. Using a methodology developed by the University of Minnesota, the project will utilize community volunteers to study deeds and other records to see which properties in our County included racial covenants (race-based restrictions designed to keep people of color from buying homes in certain neighborhoods).

The Studio believes this research will illuminate how racial covenants have contributed to present-day disparities between different parts of the community, and that documenting these issues will promote a fairer and more inclusive community where everyone has equal opportunities to live where they choose, regardless of their race.

Dr. Smith has asked to present an overview of the Mapping Prejudice Project to the Committee at its April 8th, 2024, meeting.