

Redistribution
Through Redevelopment

LUCINDA PITT, et al.

v.

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, VA.

Case No.: 2:02cv489

Research Conducted for Lawyers Committee for Civil
Rights Under the Law



Research Conducted by

Ann Moss Joyner, primary investigator,
Carolyn J. Christman, historian/anthropologist
and
Dr. Allan Parnell, demographer

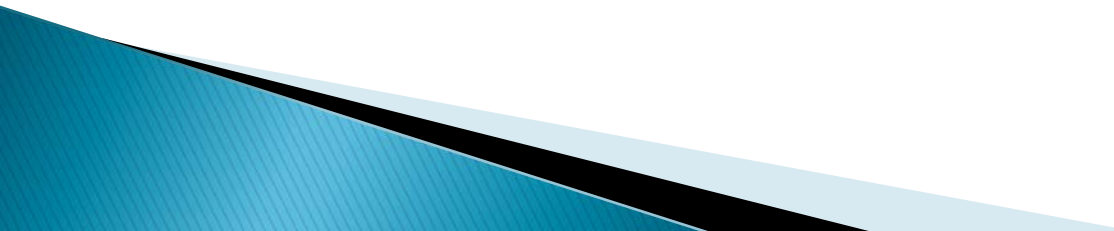
Maps made in collaboration with
Dr. David Marsh of Bucknell University

Mebane, NC 27302
(919)563-5899
ann@mcmoss.org

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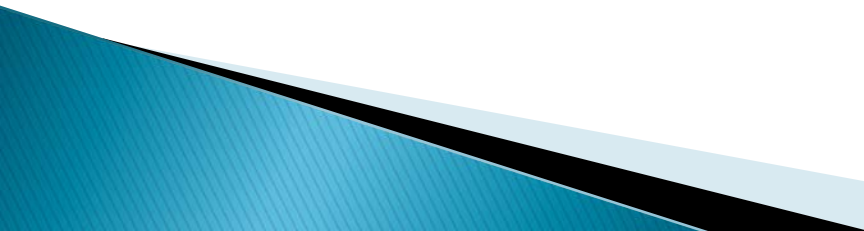


Decades of Funding Reports Analyzed:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for sewer, sidewalks, etc.
 - HUD Redevelopment funds
 - Housing Rehabilitation Funds, etc.
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Redevelopment:

For decades, Portsmouth, Va. used HUD CDBG funding:

- ▶ to apply code enforcement selectively;
 - ▶ to condemn and bulldoze properties inhabited by African Americans;
 - ▶ Withholding relocation monies;
 - ▶ Refusing to build affordable housing for the displaced.
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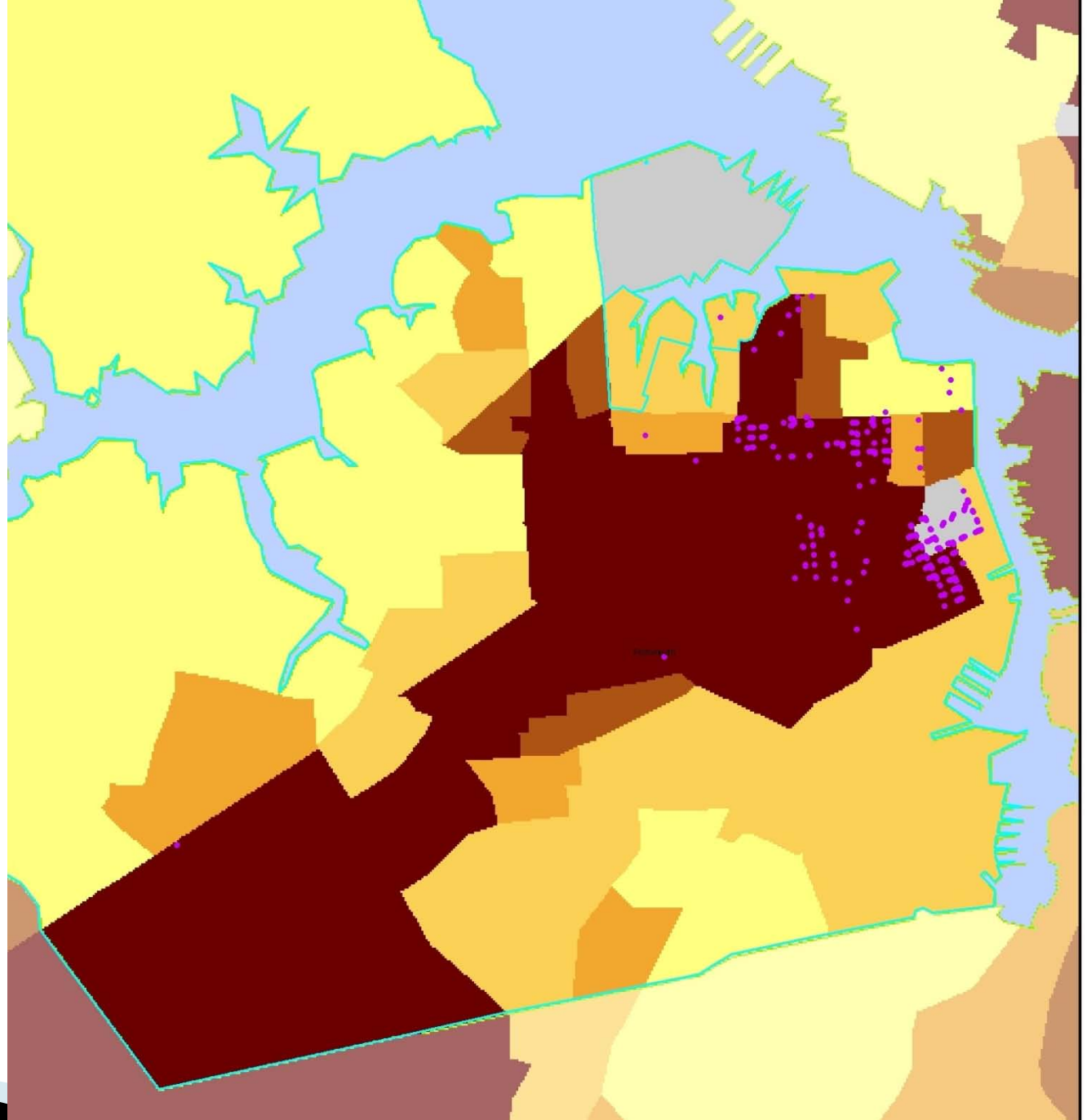
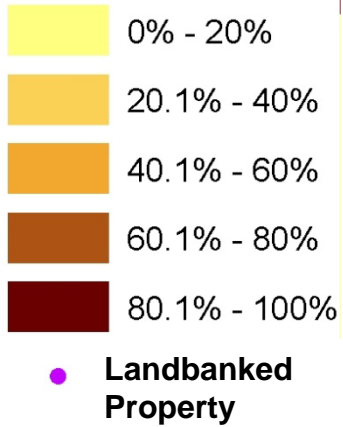
Between 1955 and 2004, the City spent

Over \$100 Million

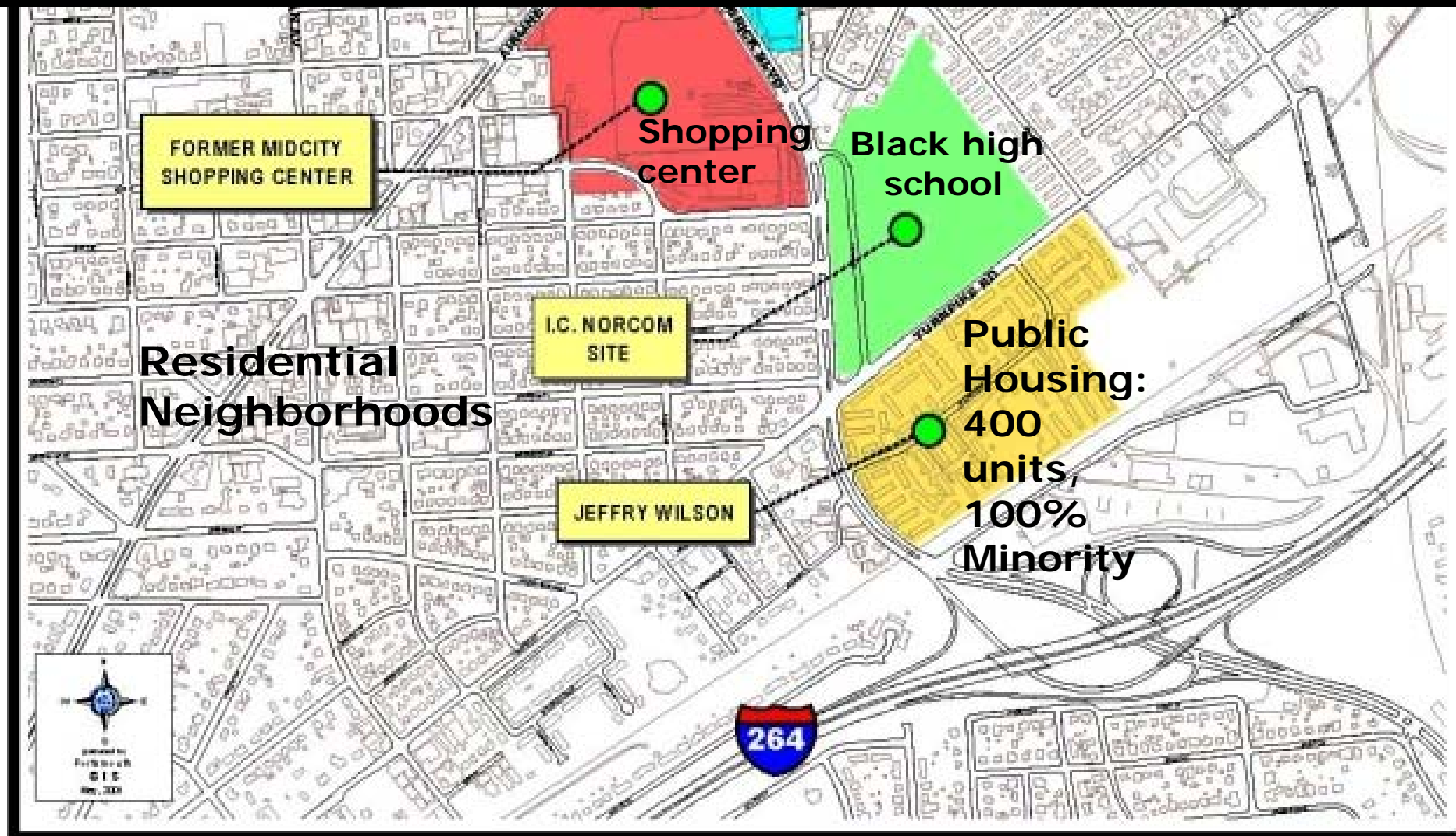
- ▶ 80% on Clearance
 - All in Black neighborhoods
 - Except one waterfront neighborhood
- ▶ Less than 5% spent on Rehabilitation
 - All in White neighborhoods

1995 CDBG
Inventory:
651
Landbanked
Properties

**Black population
as % of total**

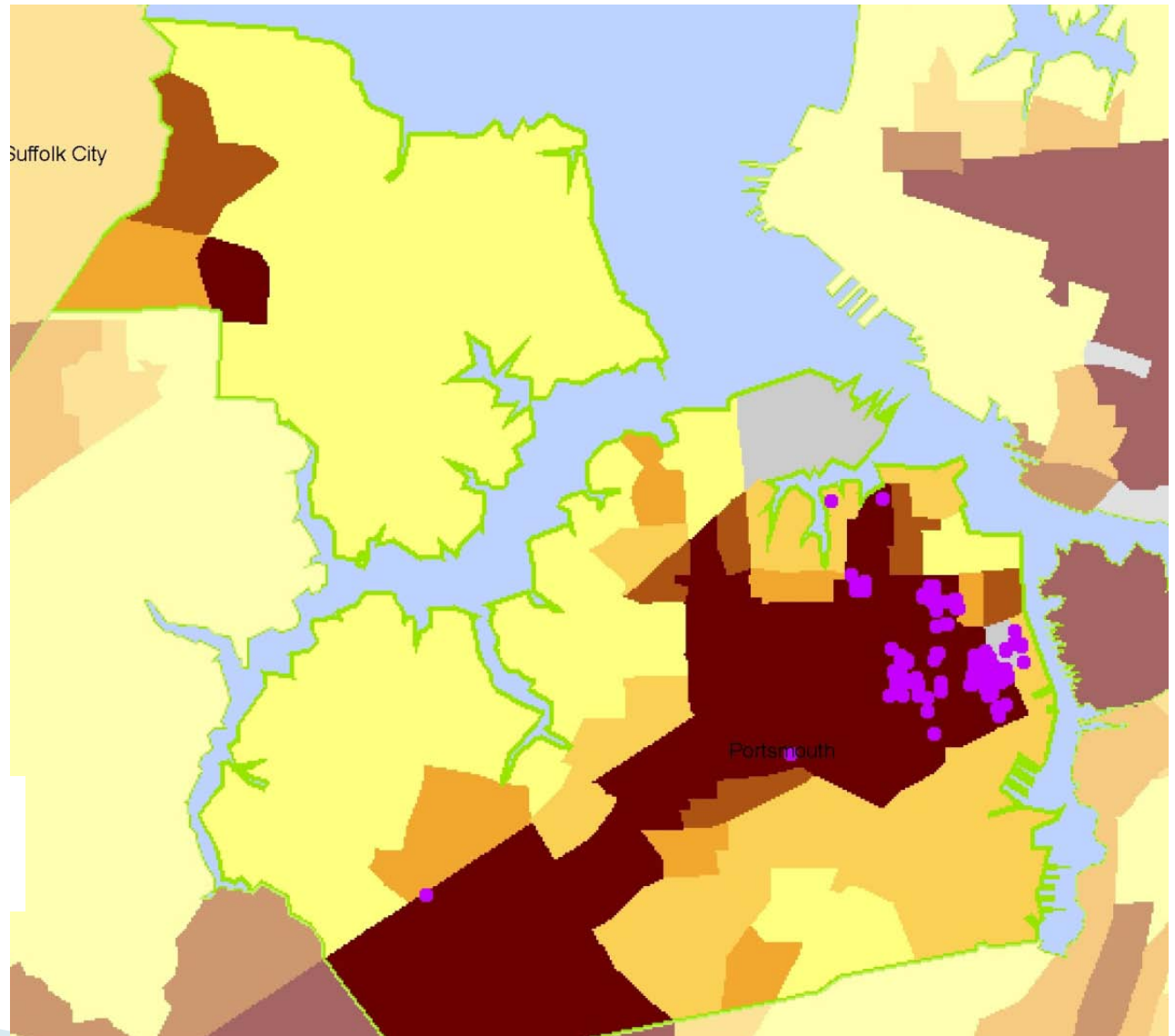
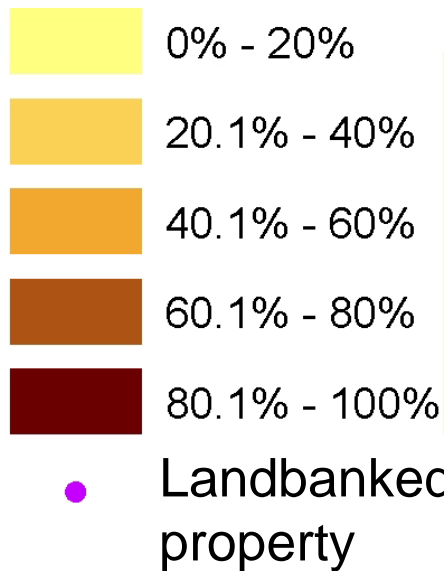


2002 City Document Shows Some Demolition Targets

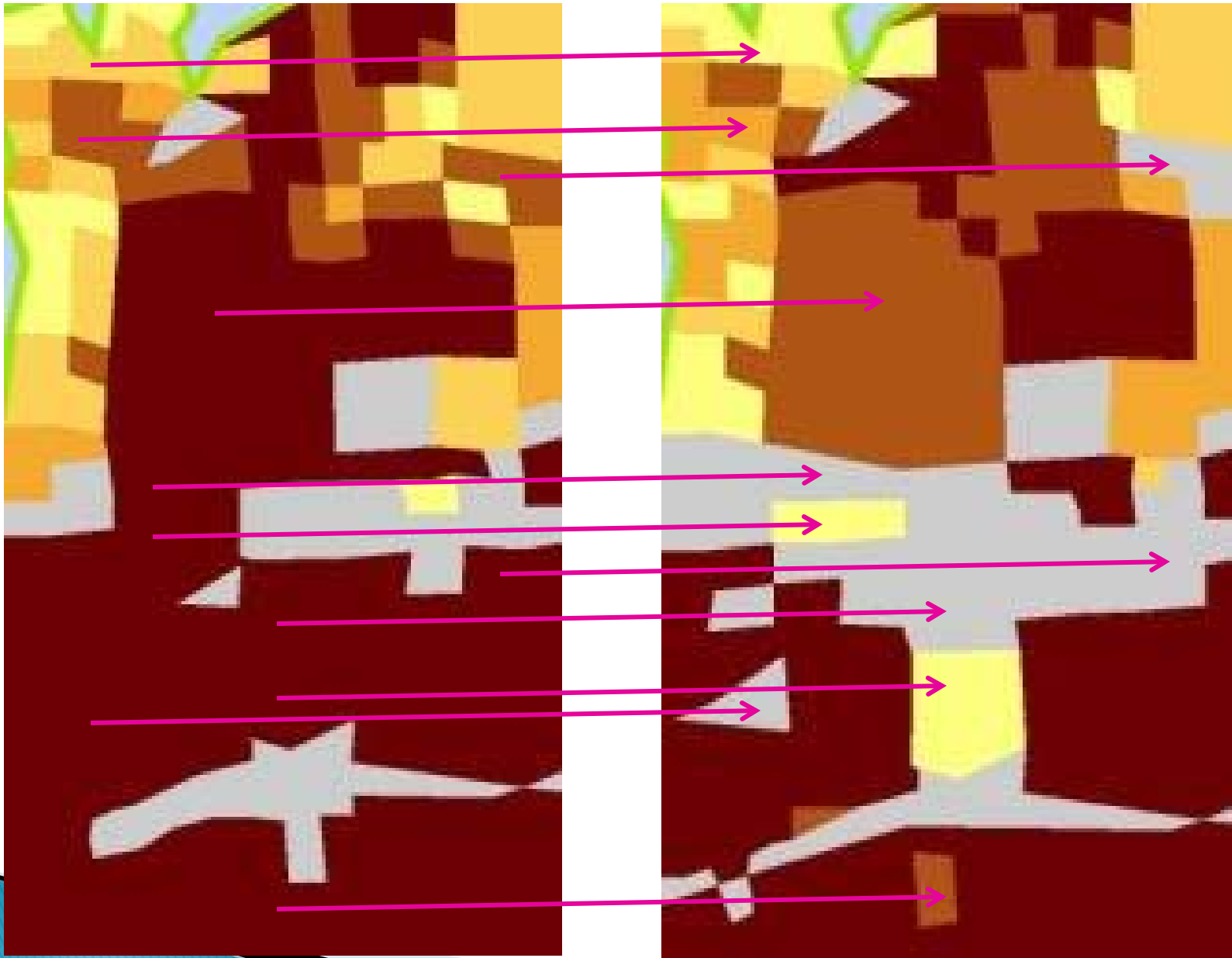


List of Addresses of City-Landbanked Properties with Racial Attributes of Neighborhoods

Black population as % of total

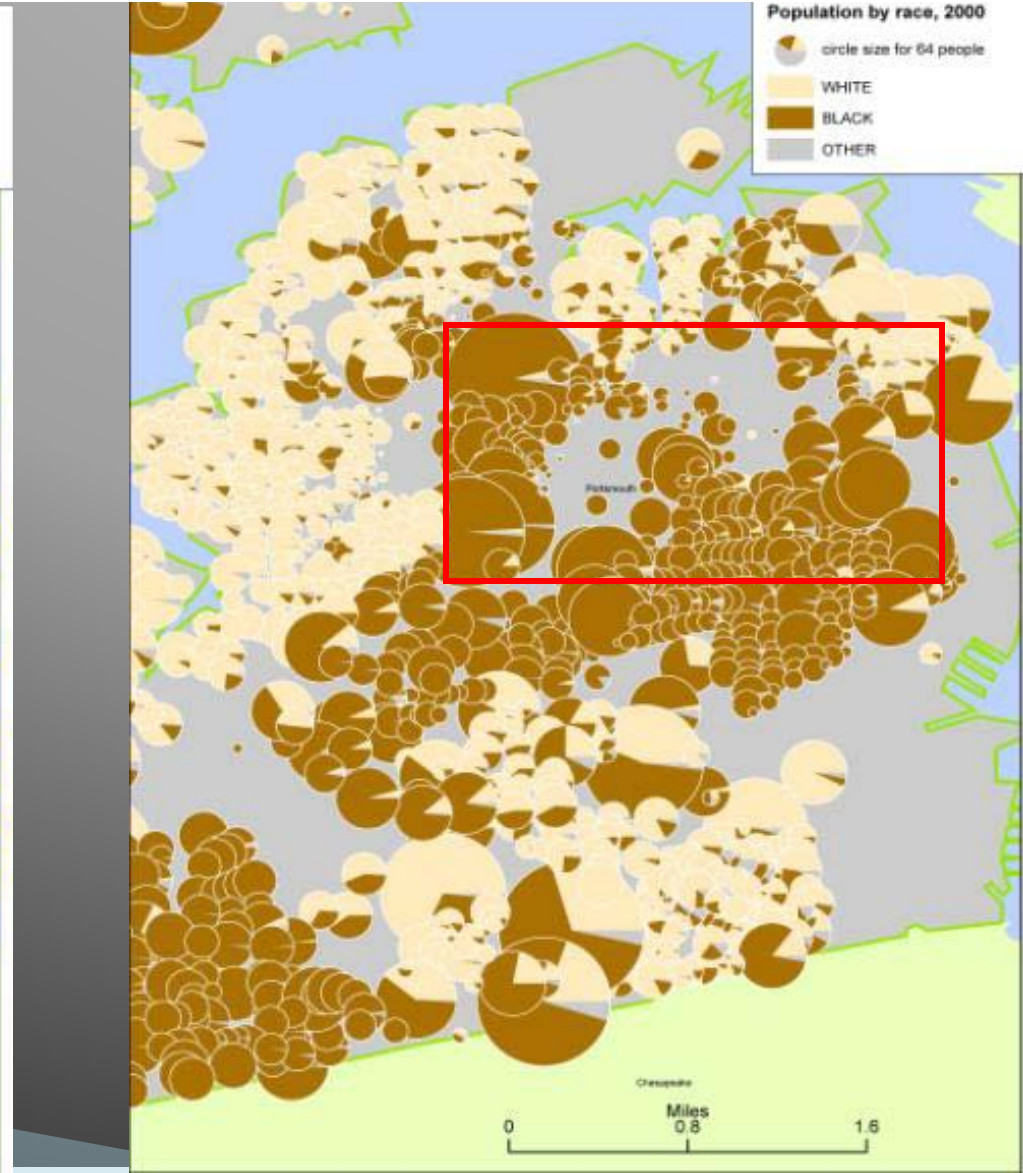
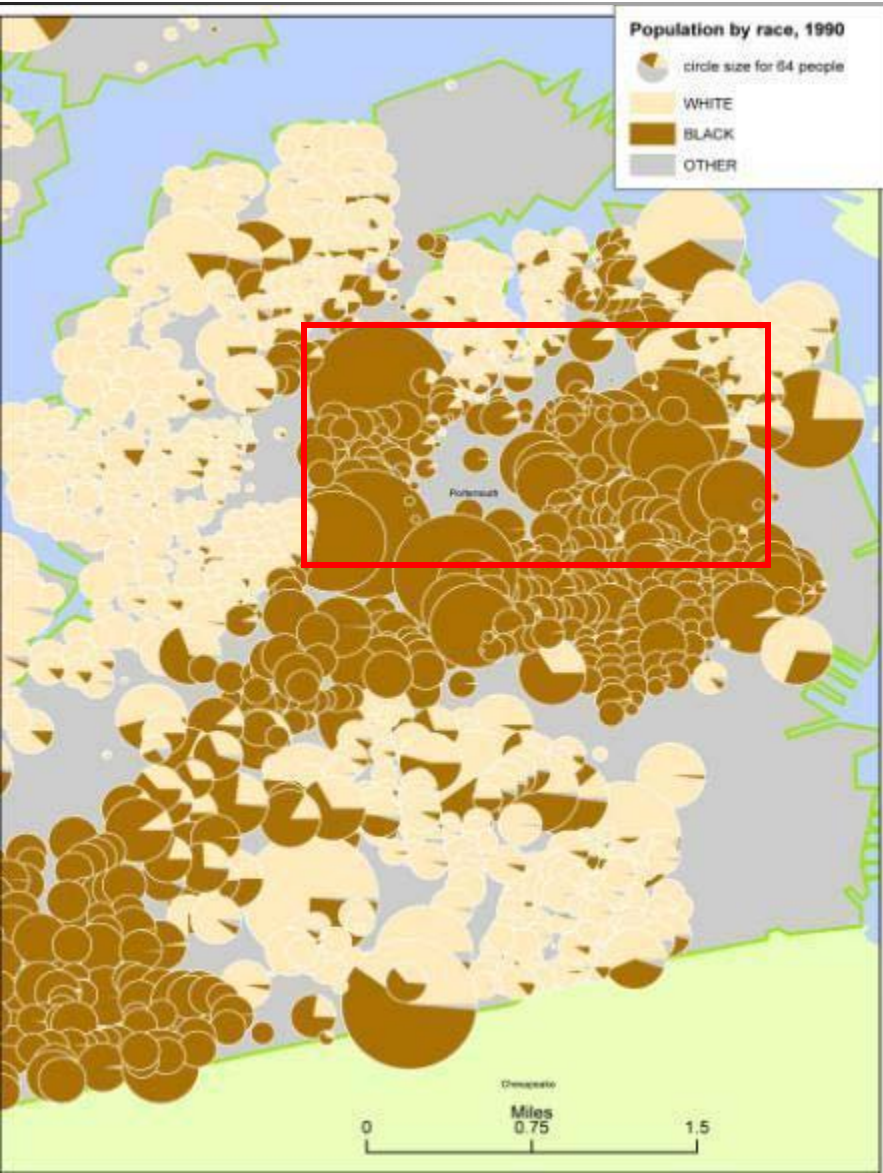


Shaping the Political Landscape of Portsmouth, Va. 1990-2000



Redevelopment of African American Residents: 1990 to 2000

Redeveloped Neighborhoods are Gutted



Local
Black-Owned
Businesses
Evicted

First K-Mart
Then Walmart

Redevelopment
“will provide
hundreds
of jobs”

Midtown Lands Portsmouth's First Wal-Mart Supercenter

Retail is finally returning to Portsmouth, and it is “super sized.” For several years Economic Development has worked hard to market Portsmouth to local, regional and national retailers. In May, the world’s largest retailer announced plans to purchase the 23-acre former MidCity Shopping Center site and build a Super Wal-Mart Center – a first for Portsmouth. The mega retailer will open a 204,000 square foot store in 2006 and stock the shelves with groceries, general merchandise, gardening materials and pharmaceuticals.

“It’s the key to the development of Midtown,” Mayor James W. Holley III said. “We’ve been waiting for them to come. It’s going to be like a new beginning there for development.”

The new store will not only provide Portsmouth residents the shopping opportunity they’ve been asking for, it will provide hundreds of jobs, significantly increase the city’s retail sales tax revenue and increase traffic to the Midtown area, which

Economic Development Director Steven L. Lynch said Wal-Mart’s arrival would make it easier for the city to draw other retailers. “This is now our first step,” he said. “And it’s a pretty strong first step. Wal-Mart’s presence really does strengthen our ability to redevelop the I.C. Norcom site, and the whole retail corridor.”



As part of its Redevelopment Plan for Midtown, the Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority purchased the mostly vacant MidCity Shopping Center in 2004. Wal-Mart will purchase the property for \$3.5

million and spend an additional \$920,000 upgrading the site to include moving a sewer main and installing a new traffic light on Frederick Boulevard to accommodate the increased traffic.

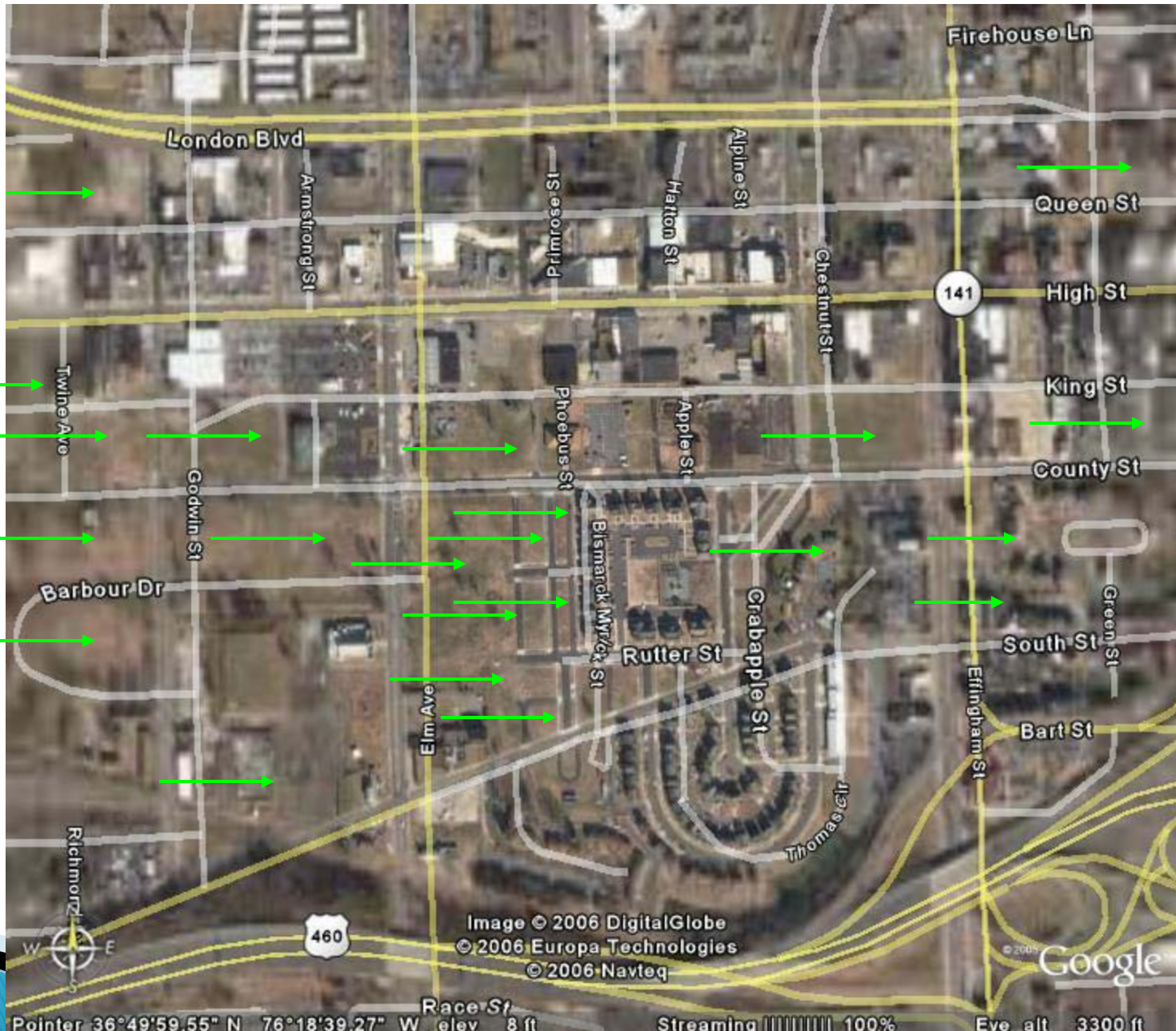
Demolition of the old shopping center is nearing completion, and Wal-Mart will begin construction in the fall.



Summer
2005

Aerial Photos Show Results of Clearance

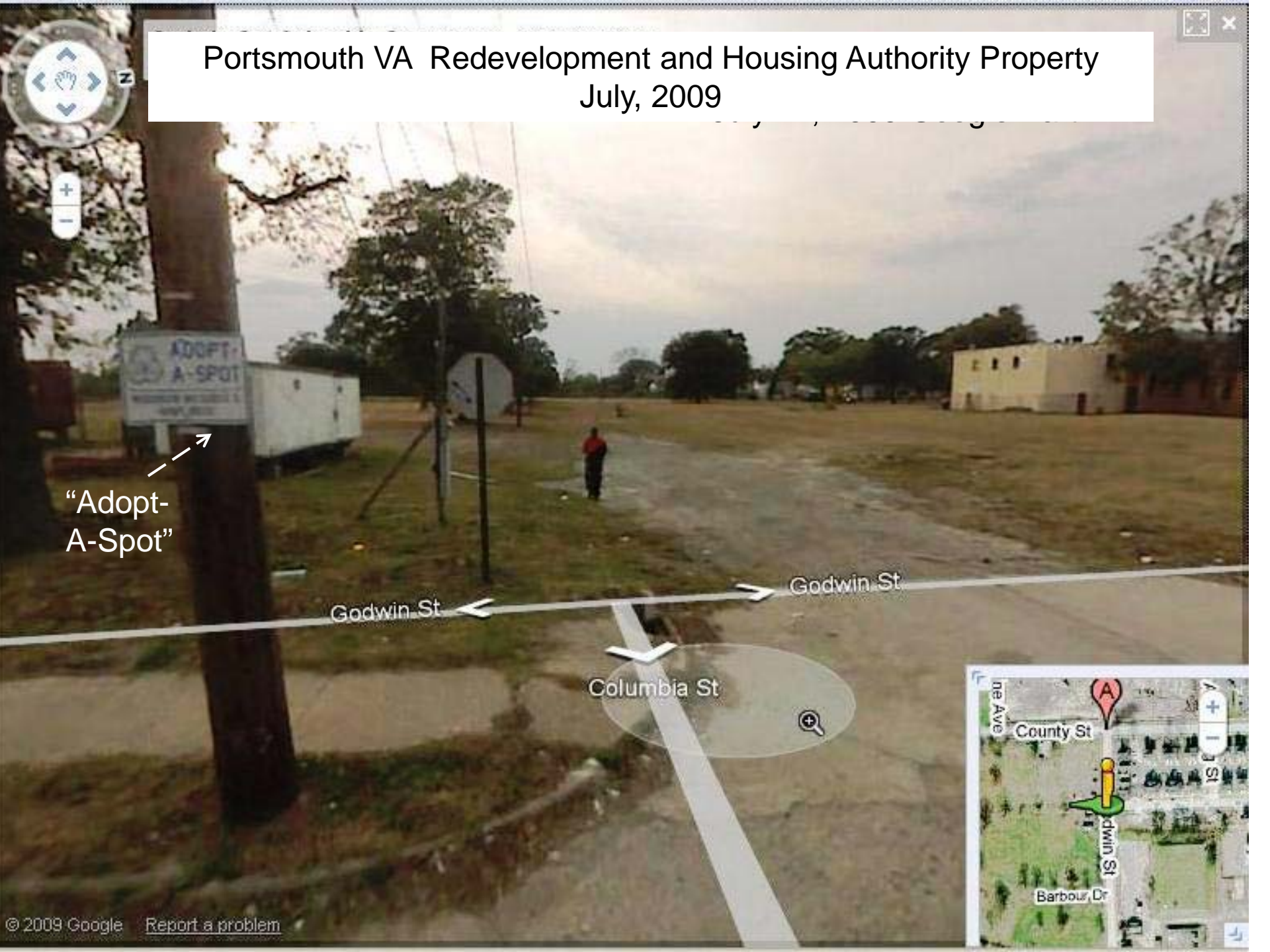
Empty Blocks
Illustrated
2006 Aerial
Photos from
Google Earth
(Can use USGS
Orthoquads)



Infrared Aerial Photograph Shows Bull-dozed Homes (Vegetative Layer) in Two Redeveloped Neighborhoods



Portsmouth VA Redevelopment and Housing Authority Property July, 2009



“Adopt-A-Spot”

Fairwood Homes

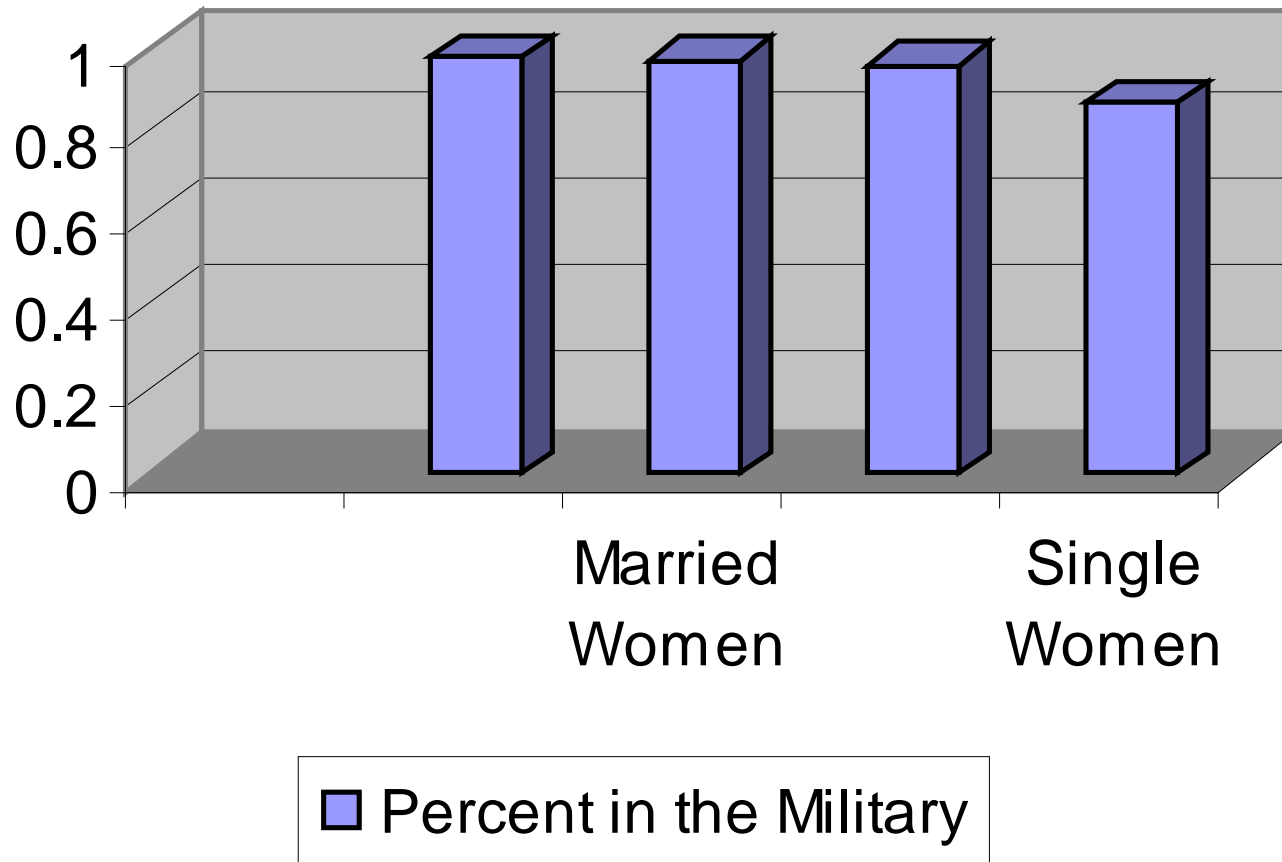
was a predominantly-minority neighborhood of 1500 affordable rental units. Purchased in 1984 for redevelopment to create new affordable homes, the new owners were thwarted when the City rezoned the property as office/commercial, *specifying* that it would not enforce Code. Eventually exposed by the local newspaper, the City then issued 4,964 citations in one day. Between 1980 and 2000, 22 people in house fires – the last a 7-year-old girl.



Photo: The Virginian-Pilot, 2001

Job Creation from Previous Efforts

Employed Residents of Redeveloped Neighborhoods in Military



Businesses in Redevelopment Area 2005: ABC Store, convenience store, closed fast-food restaurant



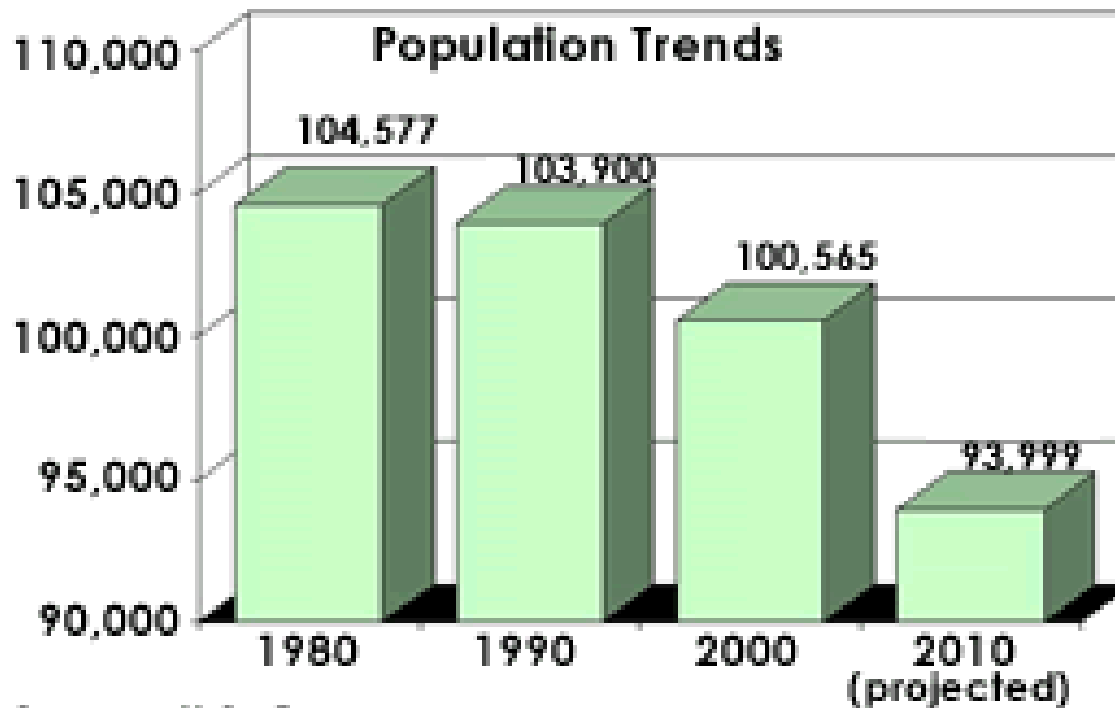
City Landbanked Lots 2005:

Mowing jobs outsourced to Suffolk, Va company



Redevelopment's Contribution to a Sustainable Community

Portsmouth, Virginia



Result for Minority Neighborhoods:

- Loss of homes;
- No moving expenses;
- Disenfranchisement;
- Lower property values;
- No new jobs;
- Threats to Public Health:
 - Stress
 - Crime.

Result of Law Suit:

- \$1.8 million settlement for displaced residents
 - Establishment of a fair housing center in a nearby Virginia city.
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