**Planning for Equity and Social Justice**

Matias Valenzuela, PhD.

Director, Office of Equity and Social Justice

King County, Washington

Equity is a fundamental element of a fully functioning democratic society. Our communities cannot thrive unless everyone has access to the power and resources that are necessary to be self-sustaining. King County, Washington facilitated a shared community vision that collectively established a set of values to achieve a goal of equity and social justice for all of its residents. The County government began by engaging the community at the onset of a process to dismantle the systems that have served to promote privilege and withhold opportunities for large segments of their population. A *Pro-Equity Policy Agenda* was crafted as part of the six-year *Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.* This document focuses on six-goal areas -- ranging from leadership, operations and services to workforce/workplace equity – for advancing and implementing equity practices as an organization.

The plan also outlines specific objectives to improve child and youth development, economic development and jobs, environment and climate change, health and human services, housing, information and technology, the justice system and transportation and mobility. The County has placed special emphasis on developing transportation options for all residents and equitable transit-oriented development. The *Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan* serves as a blueprint for transformation. Planners, non-profit organizations, public officials and residents committed to pro-equity practices can learn from this approach and apply them in their own communities.

**Sustainable Regional Planning by Developing High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes**

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**Abstract**

Carpooling is a common method of reducing traffic congestion and emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases. Which types of incentives are most effective at encouraging carpooling, and what magnitude of reductions could be achieved by applying such incentives? To answer these questions, we develop a statistical model relating High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and potential cost-related and socio-demographic factors to carpooling propensity in 58 California counties. We find HOV lane- kilometers together with higher-than-average travel time to work positively impact carpooling rates for individual counties. For a hypothetical scenario where existing HOV lane-kilometers are expanded based on daily travel time to work in each county, California could reduce 0.34 MMT carbon dioxide equivalent

(CO2e) annually. The results of the study assist city policy makers in optimizing infrastructural investments. These results also underscore the potential for city-level data collection, analysis, and modeling to inform regional decision-making regarding the potential effectiveness and magnitude of vehicle emission reductions that might be achieved through expanding HOV lanes.

**How does the monetary and/or political value of a neighborhood or area impact the recovery services provided following a natural disaster and what effect this has on overall recovery?**

Terri Clay

Assistant Professor

HSEM Program

Savannah State University

 **Abstract**

This research is designed to look at the types, amount, and timeliness of recovery efforts following the destruction of a natural disaster. The timeframe of investigation is from Hurricane Katrina to Present and will focus on hurricane and/or major storm damage receiving federal assistance. Areas of particular study will include Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy. The assumption is that if the higher valued political and financial areas receive more and quicker response will lead to a perception of a faster recovery, when in fact those areas may be smaller in size and there would still be a larger volume of area that was in need of assistance.

**Savannah State University’s Position of Outreach in Areas of Educational, Social, and**

**Economic Development of Savannah, Georgia**

Angela Wilson, Assistant Professor
Savannah State University
 Journalism & Mass Communication Dept.

 **Abstract**

 Savannah Georgia offers a rich culture of diverse people and economic opportunity. The city has positioned itself as a popular tourist destination and thrives in the area of business development and opportunity. Savannah also the home of Savannah State University; a prospering institution of higher learning that plays a significant role in city’s educational and economic development sustainability in areas of education as well as employment. The Journalism and Mass Communication student panel will present a case-study analysis of Savannah State University’s impact on its present and future position of the educational, social, and economic growth & development of Savannah, Georgia’s minority communities. Discussions of inquiry into contributing factors of unemployment rates, literacy rates, and
socio-economic disparities amongst minorities will be addressed. Thus a city that has shown significant economic growth and success in tourist attractions, vacation destinations, vast community partnerships, festivals, and development unfortunately still exhibits significant needs of improvement amongst employment and socio-economic rates amongst minorities. Furthermore the assessment and analysis will be presented to examine the impact and effect on the statistics of disenfranchised and inequities of marginalized minority groups of the city of Savannah, Georgia. Essentially Savannah State University can continue to play a significant role in educational, social, and economic development amongst diverse populations in relation to its present and future educational programs and initiatives.

 **Filling in the Gaps: A Discussion of Community Engagement Tools to Provide Resource Education and Help Preserve Affordability on Atlanta’s Westside**

David De Leon

Graduate Student, Master of City and Regional Planning '17; Georgia Institute of Technology

**Abstract**

The provision of affordable housing is increasingly a concern in Atlanta, particularly in neighborhoods on the city’s Westside. The investment in several high-profile developments has resulted in widespread increases in rents. For instance, median rent prices have risen between 9% and 14% between December 2015 and July 2016.[[1]](#footnote-1) Many of these predominantly African American neighborhoods are impoverished; therefore increasing the cost of living, and making existing residents susceptible to displacement. How can affordability be promoted as a cornerstone of equitable development and community stabilization in the Westside? The Westside Communities Alliance is a network of academic and community partners working together to tackle local challenges such as housing affordability. Through research and engagement, the WCA is working to increase awareness of housing programs and services available to Westside residents. The absence of clear educational material for Westside residents reveals both a significant resource gap, and an opportunity for an entity such as the WCA to fill this void. The following paper discusses the development of WCA’s affordable housing info graphic—as both a research endeavor and educational tool -- and seeks to provide insight on how this method of community engagement has the potential to serve as one instrument in toolkit of strategies aimed at helping residents make evidence-based decisions to preserve affordability and remain in their communities.

**Clarkston Speaks: Planning for Refugee and Immigrant Integration**

Primary Authors: Dr. Anna Joo Kim and students Ashley Bozarth, Ani Debnath, Richard Duckworth,

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*School of City and Regional Planning, Georgia Institute of Technology*

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**Abstract**

The small suburban city of Clarkston, Georgia has garnered national attention as “The Most Diverse Square Mile” in America. Over the last decade it has become a resettlement point for refugees and immigrants from all over the world – in 2015 more than 58% of city residents were born outside the United States. This shift has dramatically changed the culture of the town, impacting both the socioeconomic makeup of Clarkston and the way the city government interacts with its residents. Leaders have officially aligned Clarkston with the Welcoming America network of cities, but the local government has encountered challenges in meeting the needs of these new Americans and engaging them in civic processes. In fall 2016, the City of Clarkston partnered with the School of City and Regional Planning at Georgia Tech to better understand its constituents through an extensive study and outreach campaign dubbed “Clarkston Speaks.” Over the course of four months, students worked under the guidance of Dr. Anna Kim to survey over 600 city residents from 42 different countries and conduct focus groups with refugees of all ages. In December 2016, the students presented key findings and recommendations to city officials and community members. The results of the study have implications for how the local community engages in planning and how the city attempts to connect with Clarkston’s refugee and immigrant populations. Linguistic barriers and cultural differences were found to be stumbling blocks for engagement and collaboration across ethnic groups, and these same issues also combine with limited educational attainment to hinder upward socioeconomic mobility. Almost 70% of survey respondents indicated they disliked the schools in Clarkston and move to better school districts when they are able. Likewise, Clarkston’s existing business community is vital to the success of the community, but provides comparatively fewer employment opportunities than surrounding towns. Foreign-born individuals are underrepresented among business owners, but almost half of respondents indicated that they were interested in starting businesses, suggesting untapped potential in the community. Additionally, while language barriers are a key deterrent to successful civic engagement, foreign-born and native-born residents alike are interested in knowing their government better. Key findings from “Clarkston Speaks,” along with best practices from Welcoming America and the White House Task Force informed recommendations that promote inclusivity and equity for all Clarkstonians *and* enhance policies set forth in the Clarkston 2040 comprehensive plan.

Primary recommendations for the City of Clarkston include: providing appropriate translations for city resources; explicitly engaging current residents and stakeholders to build a culture of welcoming; building upon the network of existing resources to connect residents to available services; increasing transparency of and accessibility to the city’s police force; incorporating affordable housing strategies into future plans for growth; and declaring Clarkston as a sanctuary city.

This study and report is vitally important given the current political climate. Within many American communities, deep divisions exist over whether this nation has an obligation to accept those fleeing other parts of the world. Cities are at the forefront of this issue, with many taking principled stands in favor of this obligation. In the face of many state governments and the new federal administration that have positioned themselves against refugee resettlement, multiple cities have explicitly declared they are places that welcome refugees. Being a welcoming city, however, means more than accepting new arrivals. It means creating a strategy and meeting people where they are, so that their needs can be met and their talents tapped. It means that everyone, and especially vulnerable populations, has the right to engage in the planning process and influence decisions about how their government functions and what happens in their home.

**Savannah State University's Commitment to Creating Better Entrepreneurs**

Khadijya Kemp-Master

Student of the Master of Science in Urban Studies and Planning program

Savannah State University

**Abstract**

The school store, the most basic method for providing students items at a convenience. Can an idea so simple be transformed into a teaching method? That not only teaches the proper way to run a business. In addition to providing outlets for young entrepreneurs the tools to assist their own business. The answer is yes, Savannah State University’s Advancement of Creativity and Entrepreneurship Center does just this. The center provides first-hand experience at is personal economic development. This unique experience gives the opportunity to students to market and expand themselves economically through their self-ran businesses. Which in return allows them to gain real world experience. Small business success rates are at record low and many don’t survive their first few years. That raises the question as to if the efforts of the ace space are proven to help student businesses be successful in their first years.

Savannah State University has always been a university on the rise. From its academics, athletics and on to its successful alumni network. Savannah State University has always been at the forefront with providing its students with the necessary tools to be successful in today's society. The College of Business Administration has developed a student-run school store known as the Advancement of Creativity and Entrepreneurship Center or the ACE Space. What the ACE Space does is provides a avenue for students to explore their entrepreneurial ventures. Not only does the center sale snacks and various other college student necessities. It also teaches students marketing and management through promotional events and other various workshops. In addition to the day to day operations of the store, the Ace Space offers professional advice for students who run their own businesses. For students who may be trying to start a business the center offers free assistance in planning and promotion.

This study’s purpose will seek to examine Savannah State University’s commitment to molding future entrepreneurs. It will go through the model of the Advancement of Creativity and Entrepreneurship Center. As well as its calculated success of Savannah State University’s student entrepreneurs. The data will consist of interviews with students and faculty involved in the Advancement of Creativity and Entrepreneurship Center. In addition to collected calculations provided by the Advancement of Creativity and Entrepreneurship Center. The ACE Space study will be conducted by Khadiyja Kemp-Masters a Urban Studies and Planning Graduate Student at Savannah State University. The duration of the study officially began February 1, 2017 and will conclude on March 24, 2017.

**Reverse Gentrification**

Joseph Fleming

MPA Student

Savannah State University

**Abstract**

 The research aims to outline the consequences of urban gentrification affecting African Americans, and other ethnic diverse communities. This paper will transition to articulate a new theme called Reverse Gentrification as a recommendation for rural and white southern cities. Gentrification is understood as the transformation of a community in terms of marketability. In most cases, black communities that have economic value are rebuilt and renewed. “In the postwar period, American cities entered a program of urban renewal. While this program cleared blight, it also drove displacement among the cities’ poorest and was particularly hard on minority populations clustered in downtown slums” (Gharipour, M. & Knight, J.,2016). This causes an increase in the cost of living in these communities, housing rates increase, and commercial stakeholders arrive in these communities. Due to the increase, in the cost of living the natives of these communities can no longer afford to live in the communities that they grew up in. In sum, the very fabric and culture of the black communities wither away. Also, local ordinances, and other legal aspects in communities are introduced. The laws are written to protect the new economic investments and or the new culture that develops from gentrification.

 Reverse gentrification can be conceived as the opposite of gentrification. Reverse gentrification would purpose itself to transform traditional southern communities. There are numerous case studies and details of traditional southern communities that desperately need to culturally transform. Specifically the nostalgia of white supremacist culture should wither away, because it is harmful to the social welfare of the culturally diverse. As well, the tradition to consciously or unconsciously exclude citizens from their communities should be revaluated and safeguard by ordinances that promote inclusiveness. Gharipour and Knight wrote that “whether well-intentioned or motivated by personal gains, powerful agents have consistently employed top-down solutions to what they identified as blight and slums” (2016). The same can be said in respect to the cultural environment of white southern cities. The aspects of white supremacist nostalgia, antebellum vestiges, and other racially offensive artifacts are preserved via top-down initiatives.

**From Bogotá to Bull Street: Reclaiming city streets as places for people**

John R. Bennett, DPA

Adjunct Professor, Valdosta State University

Executive Director, Savannah Bicycle Campaign

**Abstract**

Since the 1970s, Bogotá Columbia’s weekly Cyclovia events have invited residents to walk, skate, ride bikes and be active on car-free streets. Every Sunday and on major holidays, more than 70 miles of roadways are closed to cars, allowing millions of residents to use Bogotá streets as places for beneficial physical activity, socializing, and civic engagement. In recent decades the concept has spread to cities around the world. This paper focuses on the application of Open

Streets concepts in Georgia, obstacles to implementation, and the potential to deliver lasting benefits for neighborhoods and entire communities. While so-called Open Streets events are intended to be temporary, they can generate ongoing conversations about access to recreation facilities and other public spaces, traffic safety, public safety, public health, access to cultural and educational resources, economic development, health disparities, and environmental justice — which can lead to lasting changes. This paper examines the origins of the concept in Columbia and its application in other cities, especially in Georgia.

Obstacles to the implementation Open Streets programs and the inherent limitations of temporary events are identified, along with discussion of how these barriers can be overcome to initiate lasting changes that improve neighborhoods and shift perceptions about the public realm. Best practices from successful programs are examined along with evidence of measurable benefits to residents, neighborhoods, and businesses. Similar movements, including the nationwide observance of Park(ing) Day – during which artists, designers and citizens transform metered parking spaces into temporary public parks — are also noted.

Case studies from Atlanta, Savannah, and Macon explore the potential for Open Streets in Georgia and their usefulness in making streets safer; providing access to recreational, social, and cultural resources; and empowering residents to reclaim city streets as welcoming public spaces.

**The Importance of S.T.E.M. and Community Planning Sciences**

**Education in Fostering Uplift in Underserved Communities**

Panelist 1- Timothy King, Director, SEAL Savannah, Camp Explore/SCPSS

Panelist 2- Jeremy Hughes, Student Director, SCAD

Panelist 3- (to be named)

**Abstract**

The increasing gaps and disparity in STEM education and curriculum resources between educational networks has a direct link to both neighborhood scale and community-wide health and vitality. This gap and shortfall affects not only employment and employability components of community context which prohibits community stability and increases the likelihood for detrimental societal outcomes, it also negatively influences environmental and societal sustainability. This fosters community social and economic inequity by restricting knowledge transfer of technology and buy-in related to energy, water, green infrastructure, transportation and solid waste reduction. All of which are derivatives of a lack of enhanced STEM and Community Planning Science familiarity and proficiency. Early elementary STEM curriculums can provide hands on practice of the basic elements of urban and rural form and context and neighborhood social fabric.

The panel dialogue will speak to the ways in which STEM and Community Planning Science pedagogy at the early elementary level can provide a foundation for greater societal and community spatial awareness. How does a young child’s identification with their surroundings spatially (through model building exercises and mapping) functionally link directly to STEM subjects and how do STEM engagements (STEM experiments) reinforce his or her grasp of how science and community fabric interrelate to their sense of place? Not only how this grasp of a spatial frame links to immersion in science, technology, engineering and math, but how “free thinking” STEM and Community Science topics positively un-restrict it and un-define it. How a stimulated imagination enhances readiness for the student’s own academic future. The panelists will focus their dialogue on ways this early advocacy and access to resources helps them strengthen the vitality, diversity, cultural heritage and positive trajectory of their own neighborhoods.

**Sea Level Rise and its Impacts on Cultural Landscapes and Underserved Populations in the Low Country**

Todd D. Holloway, Founding Principal, HollowayEPI/sc and EVOKESavannah

**Abstract**

According to the consensus of statistically reliable models sea level will continue to rise along the Atlantic Coast. This increase in sea level in combination with increases in storm frequency and intensity and elevated recurring “King Tides” will impact low lying communities first and most severely. Many of our most disenfranchised and already vulnerable populations live and work in these areas. They not only live here, their cultural history and sense of place and identity is directly tied to these lowlands and has been for generations. Thousands of families and institutions are facing displacement or significant modifications to their way of life. Currently, financial resources do not exist to shelter them; Low Country people in the path of rising seas. In addition to severe stresses on already crumbling infrastructure and sub-standard safeguards these elevated sea levels and severe weather forces are projected to have significant and potentially catastrophic effects on coastal ecology within the coastal marsh biome by drastic degradation and loss of fisheries habitat. Projections point to as much as a 60 percent (60%) loss in essential coastal salt marsh habitat. The affect of such loss will be felt as crippled commercial fishing, tourism, and seafood restaurant industries eliminating thousands of jobs right along with the loss of subsistence family table fare for many families.

This presentation will focus on a brief overview of the areas identified within the low country where already underserved populations live that are in the path of imminent peril using recognized climate science geospatial data set and models. To answer the questions “whom?”, “where?”, “how?” and “when?” the data set models will be presented linking (1) population identities/cultural critical mass, (2) landscape position, (3) existing stresses from current tidal conditions, (4) sea level rise projections for the future on these populations, and (5) numerical scale. To better assist policy makers and community advocates in proactively serving these communities in addressing this threat, it will present these baseline determiners and will directly contrast them to likely change scenarios to be addressed through community planning and implementation focus. How this knowledge and early advocacy and access to planning resources will help shelter the underserved and help to stabilize the cultural heritage of these communities and way of life. It is perhaps the most pressing environmental justice scenario of our generation for the Low Country.

**Relationship between Public Policy Requirements and Affordability for Low—Income Housing in the United States**

Dr. Behrooz Kalantari

**Abstract**

Growth management states in the USA require their local jurisdictions to plan for adequate supply of housing for all current and future residents including low-income households. Advocates argue that successful growth management can expand the supply of housing for low-income households through good comprehensive planning and adoption of appropriate land use and housing policies. This study explores the mechanism that is involved in making public policy concerning urban issues mainly in large urban cities in the United States. In addition it examines where state-mandated planning for housing results in improved housing affordability for low-income household.

## **Housing Challenges in Sandy Springs**

Catherine Mercier-Baggett, AICP, Senior Planner & Louisa Tovar, Planner

The Collaborative/City of Sandy Springs

**Abstract**

**Proposed Presentation**

Staff will present the City’s progress in producing the Assessment of Fair Housing, and its efforts to understand housing needs in general, aided with the results of the public engagement program and with case studies from across the nation illustrating innovative and best practices. The presentation will be tailored for the learning level of graduate students. It will include demonstrate the application of data analysis (including geospatial), extrapolation from case studies (Athens-Clarke, Nashville, Palm Beach, etc.) and implementing lessons learned.

We are at the drafting stages of the AFH and the results of the public engagements are not ready yet, but by the time of the conference, we will have data available to present.

**Background**

The City of Sandy Springs, a thriving city of 100,000 located north of Atlanta and only ten years old, recently completed a major update of its Comprehensive Plan and is in the process of creating a new Development Code. Coinciding with these efforts is the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) report, a requirement of the CDBG program from HUD. Through data analysis and public participation, Sandy Springs seeks to identify fair housing issues and contributing factors in order to set housing goals that affirmatively further fair housing.

**Issues and Challenges**

In conjunction with a steady population growth, the price of homes and land has soared in recent years, and the community has diversified its needs: the average household size, the poverty level and the proportion of elderly and children are all increasing. Market-driven redevelopment is attracting new affluent residents, but is also displacing some of the least fortunate segments of the population.

While large single-family homes abound within the City limits, it can be difficult for those at and below the regional median income and those with other housing to find a residence. There is a lack of variety and affordability.

Sandy Springs is in high demand and redevelopment pressure is mounting. Older but stable neighborhoods are seeing homes torn-down for bigger homes or townhouse infill, and mixed-use complexes with upper-scale apartments are replacing strip commercial. The existing rental stock is aging and in some instances becoming obsolete.

**Potential Solutions**

In response to this complex challenge, the elected officials, City staff and the community are collaborating on identifying the obstacles to providing alternatives to the traditional suburban model of single-family homes and on ensuring the affordability of housing.

**Eliminating Chronic Homelessness: The *Housing First* Approach to Permanent Supportive**

**Housing in the City of Atlanta**

**Ashley Bozarth**

*Second-year master’s student, City and Regional Planning, Georgia Institute of Technology*

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**Abstract**

Empirical evidence demonstrates that *Housing First* (HF) permanent supportive housing programs with integrated wraparound services and limited barriers to entry result in higher rates of housing stability for chronically homeless populations compared to emergency sheltering and intermediate transitional housing, which often require sobriety and treatment interventions. The Housing First approach prioritizes permanent supportive housing for the highest-needs homeless populations with the notion that everyone is “housing ready” regardless of having disabilities, substance abuse disorders, or histories of housing, financial or criminal problems. In 2009, the federal government fully embraced the HF model by prioritizing homeless assistance funding for Housing First permanent supportive housing projects through the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH). In parallel to this addendum, the 2010 *Opening Doors*: *Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* set an ambitious goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2015 (now extended to 2017). In 2013, the City of Atlanta approved a nonprofit, *Partners for Hope,* to oversee the City’s continuum of care for homeless services. Two of the nonprofit’s top priorities are adopting a Housing First model and providing permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless single adult males. Atlanta currently has limited permanent supportive housing that targets its chronically homeless population and, until how, has lacked a coordinated effort to increase this type of housing stock.

The first part of this research paper defines the determinants and implications of chronic homelessness in the United States. The paper then synthesizes best practices from Housing First permanent supportive housing programs in San Francisco, Seattle, Washington DC, Charlotte, and Cleveland to determine components necessary for a comprehensive city-wide Housing First approach that effectively reduces chronic homelessness. Program components include client prioritization, client choice, ongoing wraparound services, long-term affordability measures, program capacity, and political support. These factors inform recommendations for the City of Atlanta’s continuum of care, *Partners for Hope,* as it transitions to prioritizing the Housing First model and permanent supportive housing. This final section of the paper contains an analysis of the City’s current chronically homeless population relative to the amount of existing and planned Housing First permanent supportive housing units. It concludes with short- and long-term measures to shape a comprehensive Housing First approach that will provide long-term housing stability for Atlanta’s chronically homeless residents.

 **“Fostering Greater Economic Inclusion in Metro Atlanta and Beyond”**

Nathaniel Smith, Founder and Chief Equity Officer, Partnership for Southern Equity

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**Abstract**

The Atlanta region is characterized by magnificent diversity! With non-Whites comprising more than half of the region’s population, it is home to an exciting mix of people of color representing many races, nationalities, and cultures. Among the non-Whites, Black or African American residents are the largest population group, followed by Hispanic or Latino residents and Asian residents. Indeed, the region has become a magnet for people from diverse backgrounds. This is largely due to Atlanta’s excellent reputation for quality living and decades of success in job growth.

However, as can be observed elsewhere in the nation, this growth has not translated into economic opportunity for all. Here in the Atlanta area, a person’s potential for social and economic success can still be linked to their zip code. Our imbalanced growth and development patterns have resulted in communities of opportunity and communities of neglect throughout the region. Greater economic inclusion is an imperative for ensuring the long-term viability of the Atlanta region.

What is economic inclusion? The Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE) defines economic inclusion as: “Increasing equity in the distribution of income, wealth building, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities for vulnerable populations.” In this definition, equity is a step beyond equality because it takes into account that people may not start from the same place and, therefore, “equal” treatment may not resolve the gap that exists. When people are given a chance to succeed, they are more likely to pursue education, participate in the workforce, contribute to or build businesses, and invest or engage in other activities that lead to economic growth and prosperity. They are also more able to contribute to the tax base which yields public service dividends for all.

Atlanta has the exciting opportunity to leverage both its growing multicultural heritage and its preeminence as the economic capital of the American South and become nothing short of a national innovation model for economic inclusion. As the birth home of Martin Luther King, Jr., Atlanta is no stranger to resolving cultural and systemic inequities through dynamic and diverse partnerships. Not only is it the right thing to do again, but it is the only thing to do for Atlanta and her people to realize our full potential.

The Great Recession exacerbated widespread inequity as it related to job creation, wealth building, and fiscal policy throughout the nation and these impacts are felt in Atlanta today. A recent report by PSE, *Growing the Future: The Case for Economic Inclusion in Metropolitan Atlanta*, makes the case for fostering a more inclusive economy in the Atlanta region. The report identifies six key principles for fostering more inclusive growth and discusses best practice models for advancing these principles.

**Savannah Chatham Mobility Advisory Committee:**

**A Public Private partnership engaged in Equity Planning**

Paula Kreissler,

Director of Healthy Living and Community Development, Healthy Savannah

**Abstract**

The mission of the Mobility Advisory Committee is to promote safety, health & wellness, and ease of mobility for all residents and visitors, using non-motorized and public transportation, in and around the City of Savannah and Chatham County.

**Goals**

• Inform and guide a comprehensive approach to municipal policy, infrastructure design, and decision-making related to mobility and urban connectivity.

• Ensure compliance with City of Savannah Complete Streets ordinance and make recommendations for improvements as necessary.

• Coordinate with state and federal policies, regulations and funding sources to ensure support for non-motorized transportation and transit projects

Healthy Savannah works with ten local Title I schools to eliminate barriers keeping community kids from walking and biking to school and play. This work led to the City of Savannah passing a Complete Streets Ordinance, and the local school district updating school design guidelines to insure walking and biking connectivity is part of the plan. In addition, it led to the City and County implementing plans to build the Truman Linear Park Trail, a six-mile non-motorized transportation trail connecting eighteen neighborhoods between two major recreation centers. This trail when completed will provide much needed transportation options to many of our residents that rely on walking and biking to get to school and work. To ensure the sustainability of this work, the Mobility Advisory Committee was formed in May 2016 as a public-private collaborative team. This team, based on community engagement and professional insights, establishes planning priorities around mobility and health equity. This session will review the origins, progress, future plans, as well as lessons learned along the way.

**Equity Planning: Creating Diverse and Inclusive Communities**

Phoebe Mayor

*Neighborhood Revitalization and Housing Affordability*

**Abstract**

The challenge in achieving both successful neighborhood revitalization and preserving housing affordability is an increasingly common topic of discussion in the community development and housing fields. Is it possible to have “healthy” revitalization without mass displacement of existing residents? The nebulous nature of revitalization, however, makes analyzing its efficacy and impacts a challenge. In order to explore this multifaceted relationship, this analysis zooms in on Georgia Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties awarded in 2009 and 2010 that received community revitalization points, a discretionary point category in the Qualified Allocation Plan used to score LIHTC applications. Since it was established under the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the LIHTC program quickly became and has continued to be the primary vehicle for supply-side affordable housing development and rehabilitation in the United States. This is one of the few vehicles through which private developers engage in affordable housing development. Despite increasing income disparities and housing costs throughout the United States, there is limited availability of public and non-profit funding for affordable housing nationwide making the role of the private sector all the more crucial.

Tax Credit properties have been selected for this study as one avenue through which to research the complex relationship between community revitalization and housing affordability. Georgia is a particularly relevant setting for this research as Atlanta consistently ranks in the top bracket for cities with drastic income inequalities. This research consists of both a qualitative review of revitalization plans and strategies, as well as a multiple regression analysis. The regression analysis investigates whether or not significant changes in socio-economic factors, such as poverty, race, and median rent have occurred between years 2010 and 2015 in select Metropolitan Atlanta census tracts where revitalization plans have been implemented and whether those changes have a significant relationship with community revitalization Tax Credit properties built in 2010.

## **Mobility Matters: Investigating the Link between Public Transportation and Income Equality in Major U.S. Cities**

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**Abstract**

##

In light of increasing income inequality and wealth disparity in the U.S., what can be done to improve the financial stability of low- and moderate-income households, who currently spend 60% of their income on housing and transportation? Transit advocates purport that greater access to public transit improves access to employment opportunities and services, and therefore improves economic mobility and reduces income inequality. However, few studies have demonstrated this effect empirically. This paper leverages emerging data on transit levels of service in major metropolitan areas in the U.S. to examine the link between robust public transportation (in terms of investment and accessibility) and decreased income inequality and increased economic mobility at the metropolitan level. It seeks to answer several policy-relevant questions, including:

* Do metro areas that invest more in mass transit, improving mobility and accessibility to economic opportunities and reducing transportation costs, have higher household incomes?
* Is area income inequality reduced by transit investment?

Benefits associated with public transit access include ability to travel to one’s workplace and ability to engage in other daily activities and necessities such as shopping, recreation, child care, and health services ([Sanchez, 2002](#_ENREF_8)). Other benefits include time savings and reduced operating and capital costs such as fuel, parking, and automobile insurance (Dajani and Egan, 1974). Such studies often focus on a single metropolitan region, or conduct a comparison of several areas, complicating broader generalizations.

Our initial analysis of the 37 largest metropolitan areas with rail service shows a statistically significant correlation between transportation costs generated by the Center for Neighborhood Technology and higher levels of inequality using both the Gini coefficient of income inequality and the 90/10 income inequality ratio (the ratio between the lower limit of the highest quintile and the upper limit of the lowest quintile of income). This paper will extend these findings in a statistical model of income inequality outcomes.

**Introduction to New Urbanism**

Nick Helmholdt and Savannah Chapter of New Urbanism Members

**Abstract**

The Congress for New Urbanism, a national event, will take place in Savannah in the spring of 2018. This session provides a crash course in New Urbanism for students and professionals. The panelists will discuss the origins of the New Urbanism movement, the current state of practice, and directions for the future. The panel will discuss ways that students and young professionals can get involved in New Urbanism locally.

Discussions of New Urbanism often cite historic Savannah as a model of high quality urban design. In fact, the origins of New Urbanism trace back through many colonial-era cities including Savannah. However, New Urbanist principles have not been embraced in regional development. The panel will discuss the barriers that New Urbanist developers face locally and ways to address these challenges.

The principles stated in the *Charter of the New Urbanism* address several of the topics emphasized for this conference. For instance, the *Charter* states, “Within neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.”

Other aspects of the *Charter* address food systems, historic preservation, and transportation. Each principle represents a general statement to guide policy, development, planning or design. The panel will provide a brief overview of each principle in the *Charter*.

Panelists will represent a wide variety of backgrounds and expertise. Each panelist will discuss how he or she first learned about New Urbanism and how these principals affect their professional work.

[Panelists will be drawn from the CNU Savannah Chapter: <https://www.facebook.com/CNUSavannah1/> ]

**New Urbanism and Equity**

Nick Helmholdt

**Abstract**

Since the first New Urbanist communities were built in the 1980s there has been an ongoing debate about the societal effects of these places on their residents. This presentation will examine how the *Charter for New Urbanism* relates to social equity, evaluate case studies, review research conducted on New Urbanist communities, and present opportunities for future developments to enhance equity outcomes.

The presentation will focus on three specific principles in the *Charter* that touch on issues of equity:

#4 – “Development patterns should not blur or eradicate the edges of the metropolis. Infill development within existing urban areas conserves environmental resources, economic investment, and social fabric, while reclaiming marginal and abandoned areas. Metropolitan regions should develop strategies to encourage such infill development over peripheral expansion.”

#13 – “Within neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.”

#25 – “ Civic buildings and public gathering places require important sites to reinforce community identity and the culture of democracy. They deserve distinctive form, because their role is different from that of other buildings and places that constitute the fabric of the city.”

Case studies of New Urbanist communities will be examined through the lens of equity planning. These case studies will be compared to conventional development patterns within each region. The presentation will also review academic research conducted on New Urbanist communities specifically as it pertains to housing affordability, transportation, and economic conditions. Finally, recommendations for ways to improve equity in these communities will be discussed.

**One Car Family**

Nick Helmholdt

**Abstract**

Questionable assumptions about transportation choices have influenced decades of urban and suburban development in North America. One of these assumptions is that families prefer to have two or more automobiles. Zoning ordinances translate this assumption into requirements for parking at homes and businesses. This leads to wasteful and inequitable development patterns. However, data shows that this assumption deserves scrutiny. Many families rely on a single automobile and seem to be in no hurry to procure a second. So why should our zoning ordinances and development standards assume that multiple-car households as the default?

This presentation will examine the data about one-car families and community features that support these families. Furthermore, this presentation will examine how supporting one-car families helps overall transportation equity for a wide variety of groups including people with disabilities and the poor.

Community support for one-car families can lead to financial, health, and social benefits to individuals. The presentation will highlight stories of several one-car families who have found unexpected rewards from this decision.

By questioning assumptions about vehicle ownership, planners and policy makers can find ways to increase local investment and property values. One-car families also have reduced impacts on local environmental conditions – over time a shift to one-car families can benefit air quality and reduce fossil fuel dependence. Finally, by reducing parking requirements, planners can find ways to increase housing supply and improve affordability. The time is ripe for a new generation of planners to question past assumptions. Nowhere is this more salient or important than the intersection of transportation and land use.

**Savannah’s Assessment of Fair Housing: A Case Study in the Use of a New National Framework for Equity Planning**

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**Abstract**

City, county and state recipients of certain federal community development grants are required by regulation to complete a new type fair housing study known as an assessment of Fair Housing (AFH). The City of Savannah’s AFH is one of the nation’s first and studies patterns of integration and segregation; racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty; disparities in access to opportunity; and disproportionate housing needs. Each of these fair housing issues is approached through analysis of datasets or application of prescribed methodologies developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) specifically for use by grantees in their fair housing assessments. These quantitative techniques were paired with public input derived from a variety of sources to contextualize the findings and inform policy recommendations.

The study found levels of racial and ethnic segregation in Savannah, as measured by a dissimilarity index, to generally be at a low or moderate level. The greatest degree of segregation existed between Black and White residents in both the city and region. Hispanic/White and Asian/White segregation was considerably less pervasive. The study used a methodology that combined demographic and economic indicators to identify racially concentrated areas of poverty. Six Savannah census tracts, all in or adjacent to the downtown and midtown areas, were found to contain racial concentrations of poverty. Roughly 11% of the city’s African American population lived in one of these tracts.

To measure disparities in access to opportunity, the study assessed school proficiency, poverty, labor market engagement, jobs proximity, transportation costs, transit trips, and environmental health by census block group. Overall, non-Latino Whites were found to live in areas with lower poverty and higher school proficiency and labor market than minority population segments, both in the city of Savannah and in the region. Finally, four housing needs were designated for analysis of disproportionate impacts: cost burden, overcrowding, dwellings lacking complete kitchen facilities, and dwellings lacking complete plumbing facilities. Nearly one-half of households citywide had one or more of these housing needs. African American, Native American, and Latino households experienced housing needs at disproportionately higher rates than Whites.

Based on the findings of this research, the AFH proposes six strategies to overcome the identified fair housing issues. These include development of a strategic, regional blueprint for affordable housing; facilitation of mobility for low-income residents wishing to relocate to neighborhoods with greater opportunity; advocacy for increased fair housing protections through the City’s ongoing zoning code update; support for local fair housing education and enforcement efforts; improvements to existing low-opportunity areas; and providing information and services to increase housing options for people with disabilities. For each of these strategies, the AFH proposes milestones, timeframes, and responsible parties to be tasked with implementation.

**PLANNING WITH NATURAL DISASTERS** LAND **USE ANALYSIS USING GIS AND REMOTE SENSING** CASE**: LA GUAIRA, VENEZUELA**

Eduardo J. Rendon

B.S. in Geography - Central University of Venezuela

GIS Certificate Program - University of North Georgia

Master in Environmental Planning and Design - The University of Georgia

Eduardo is a geographer with 10 years of solid experience working with Urban Planning, Geodesign, Geographic Information Systems, (GIS), Remote Sensing, and Conservation projects.

Mr. Rendon is currently working as GIS Planner for APD Urban Planning and Management in Atlanta,GA.

**Abstract**

Cities in the developing world are facing increased risks of disaster. Potential human and economic losses from natural hazards are now frequently observed in unplanned urban areas. In December 1999, debris flow inundated coastal communities in La Guaira, Venezuela and caused severe property destruction and a catastrophic death toll of approximately 15,000 people. This research focuses on land use analysis through the identification of the most vulnerable areas using geospatial techniques. This process directed the evaluation of the most suitable areas for development. The study also combines literature reviews, precedent studies, remote sensing for urban applications and design strategies addressing disaster resilience. Information obtained from the satellite images processing shows that 27.5% of the residential land use in the study area was affected by debris flow during the atypical rainfalls. The serious consequences have significantly affected the society, economy and even the landscape and urban developments. The land use analysis performed covers a set of actions undertaken to redesign and restore communities affected by this natural disaster. La Guaira could be reimagined and revitalized through a combination of resilience measures, including protected areas and green corridors.

**Examination of the Atlanta, Georgia Region Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Factors of Connectivity, Quality of Networks, Propensity for Venture Creation and Socio-Political- Cultural Influences**

Alan C. Peterson, II, M.P.A.

Doctoral Candidate Texas Southern University (Houston, Texas/ USA)

Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland

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**Abstract**

**Aim of Research**

For a region to thrive economically in the new economy, that region must develop its Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, defined as a system of interrelated pillars that impact the speed and ability in which entrepreneurs can create and scale new ventures in a sustainable way (World Economic Forum, 2014). The aim of this research is to develop an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Building Tool customized for the designated Atlanta, Georgia Region. This research identifies the Atlanta, Georgia Region as Fulton County, Gwinnett County and DeKalb County. To best develop an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Building Tool, the research addresses and examines how the elements of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem interact, evolve, and impact community development, social capital, economic development and entrepreneurship within communities of the Atlanta, Georgia Region.

**Problem**

A study of the Atlanta, Georgia Region Entrepreneurial Ecosystem is important for two primary reasons. First, this study will address the entrepreneurial research gap. Entrepreneurial research should focus on networking practices rather than the description of network characteristics such as size, density and connectedness (Mack, 2016). Additionally, regional entrepreneurship systems of ecosystems (REES) research has not provided workable toolkits for REES practice (Qian, 2016).

Secondly, a practical and functional process is essential in addressing entrepreneurial ecosystems. Traditionally, economic developers have focused primarily on financial incentives as a way to help new businesses, retain existing ones, and foster long-term investment (Girdwood, et al., 2015). However, there exists a growing consensus that entrepreneurial support systems may be a better way to create jobs and expand the tax base (Girdwood, et al., 2015). Regarding the Atlanta, Georgia Region, the Fulton County Strategic Plan does not address the entrepreneur ecosystem and seems more geared towards growth rather than development. The DeKalb County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan specifically states that while some organizations exist within the county to support entrepreneurs, they are poorly organized and largely ineffective (Angelou Economics, 2014).

**Methodology**

The methodology strategies applied are mixed methods (convergent parallel), side by side comparison and grounded theory. This research utilizes three types of data sets. The first data set is obtained from surveys involving entrepreneurs wherein their business venture locales are in the Atlanta, Georgia Region. The second set of data is generated from analysis of the alignment of elements of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for the Atlanta, Georgia Region. The third data set is obtained from interviews with individuals from local governments, state governments, special authorities, public-private partnerships, chambers of commerce and other business associations.

**Expected Contribution**

This research contributes to the understanding of the Atlanta, Georgia Region’s Entrepreneurial Ecosystem. This study provides a framework in support of economic development at the state, regional, national and global levels. Furthermore, this research provides a designated structure and model for assisting governments regarding policy implications, community development and entrepreneurial initiatives in support of economic development in the Atlanta, Georgia Region and regions with similar demographics. Additionally, the examination, dynamics, and intersection of the elements of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem provide valuable information for stakeholders involving entrepreneurial forecasting, strategic planning, and policy implications.

**“Passing the Torch: Forcible Evictions Preceding the 2016 Summer Olympics”**

 Tyesha Redden

**Abstract**

Increasingly, developed countries in Europe and North America are shying away from hosting mega-events citing their exorbitant development costs. As a result, developing countries are more commonly hosting events such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games. These events are widely perceived as premier venues in which a host country can showcase its emerging status and court foreign investment on a global stage. However, marginalized residents of the host cities often find themselves paying the price of transformative development in the form of massive forced displacement. The “Marvelous City” of Rio de Janeiro, host of the 2016 Olympic Games, was no exception.

Residents of Vila Autódromo *favela*, an informal urban settlement, were forcibly evicted by the thousands from the highly desired waterfront property chosen as the 2016 Olympic Village site. Wealthy elites and politicians justified the evictions as a necessary part of the structural development required to modernize the city and improve the housing conditions of the impoverished. This case study examines the social impacts as experienced by residents and the role of urban planners in combatting state-sanctioned displacement. Data collection was conducted by the means of semi-structured interviews of key informants, content analysis of Olympic publications, and non-participant observations of protests, site visits, and Olympic imagery. Redden Abstract

The findings revealed a systematic assault on the daily lives of the *favela* residents and the deliberate collusion of the government tasked to protect them. Despite contrary political will, urban planners from two local universities aided residents’ resistance efforts and created an international award-winning upgrading plan. An alliance of social scientists, led by urban planners, created an exportable coalition model for academic activism to combat social and urban segregation. In short, the 2016 Summer Olympics were precipitated by the violent struggle of disenfranchised residents forced to the margins of society and urban planners who refused to stand for inaction.

**Formal Neighborhood Associations will create better opportunities for**

**Diverse and inclusive community participation**

Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP

**Abstract**

In the context of community planning or capital planning, citizen participation is a key element for its successful implementation. Today, much of the participation in these efforts are by individuals with little or no constituency other than themselves and their personal interest. Their involvement is likely sparked by being impacted in some way, and not by a broader interest or specific understanding of the plan or program. The composition of participants, thus, are not representative of the broader community members’ views and are not likely to include a diverse cross-section of the citizenry. Formal Neighborhood Associations could overcome these shortcomings. An association with organization, rules, open membership, communication processes and designated representatives can be a better way for information about community and capital planning activities to be known, and a medium to provide input with a broader participation from diverse members of a neighborhood.

Formal Neighborhood Associations working with entities such as cities, counties, or private developers, can engage earlier, study and communicate to its members, develop longer-term relationships and create trust among the participants on both sides of the discussion. The city of Savannah has about 100 neighborhoods of which about 60 have some form of association. Implementing a Formal Neighborhood Association program would require registration that would ensure setting minimum standards: including registration, Bylaws, annual elections, membership drives, communication tools and regular meetings. In return, the city would ensure notice of its activities affecting one or more neighborhoods and provide information and an opportunity for the neighborhood(s) to provide input. Formalizing the neighborhood association process would increase the likelihood that more residents and diverse populations can be heard. The presentation would review status of neighborhood associations in the area, present examples from other cities, and outline the components of a Formal Neighborhood Association program.

**Stigmatized low-income segregation: The history of Savannah’s Yamacraw District**

Robin B. Williams, Ph.D.
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This presentation will look at the history Savannah's Yamacraw district as a case study of a struggling economic area that evolved from a racially and ethnically diverse low- and medium-income area to a FHA-sponsored racially segregated federal housing project that was to be a model of renewal to its present state of stigmatized low-income segregation due in part to its urban and architectural design

**Faith-based Organizations and Development of Social Capital for Elementary School Students:**

**A community-based approach towards equitable development**

Terrance Grasty

The widening gap between prosperous communities and those that are not prosperous can be attributed, in part, to the inability of disenfranchised communities to create a sufficient proportion of well-educated and informed members within their communities. This condition can be best addressed by considering the lack of sufficient levels of social skills among younger community members. To facilitate the production of the required proportion of well-educated and informed members in a given community, the process must begin with the youngest members, creating a culture that strongly values teaching and learning as a strategy for self-sufficiency and sustainable social and economic development. However, there appears to be a lack of adequate social capital among elementary school students in many less prosperous communities, which is essential for allowing the teaching and learning process to be effective in creating the required proportion of well-educated and informed adult community members.

This presentation will discuss how constant distractions, disruptions, and disciplinary actions can sabotage the teaching and learning process among students in grades 3 through 5, and propose how existing faith-based organizations (FBOs) can help close the equity gap in housing, living conditions, transportation and economic opportunities by creating effective youth character education programs. If the programs are effective, it is expected that students will develop the social capital that will allow the teaching and learning process in schools do what it was designed to do - create positively contributing adult citizens. The aspect of social capital addressed in this exploratory case study focuses on the level of empathy students display during the teaching and learning process and how their behavior effects the levels of trust and social expectations necessary to form crucial networks between families, teachers, and school officials. It has been observed that the lack of empathy can result in disrespect for teachers and an alarming number of unnecessary classroom distractions, disruptions and disciplinary actions during lessons. These interruptions can significantly reduce the amount of academic material teachers can cover during a lesson, undermining the process of preparing young community members to learn what they need to know to successfully progress through the primary and secondary levels of the education system. Existing neighborhood FBOs can play a key role in increasing academic performance and achievement starting with the youngest community members. Their contribution is expected to increase the probability of creating the required proportion of well-educated, well-informed, social and civically engaged adults who are capable of positioning themselves to be successful in helping to create a more equitable social and economic playing field among communities.

**EXPLORING POVERTY IN CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA BY AGE, GENDER, RACE AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: THE CHANGES FROM 2009 TO 2015**

Md. Soriful Islam1

MSUSP Student at Savannah State University

**BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Poverty is an universal human situation of being unable to get or afford a standard level of food, water and shelter (America’s Debt Help Organization). It exits all over the world but in different degrees. The United States is one of the richest country in the world but still many of its residents are living in poverty level. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2015, the official poverty rate is 13.5 percent. That year, an estimated 43.1 million Americans lived in poverty according to the official measure. Many reasons are responsible for increasing poverty in USA. Some of the causes are poor economy, lack of affordable housing, lack of education, medical expenses, lack of markets, poor infrastructure, poor leadership, bad governance, under-employment and lack of skills, capital and others. Some researchers did study for finding out the reasons of poverty and the relationship of different variables with poverty. According to some research, poverty is strongly correlated with race and ethnicity (Hilary W. Hoynes, 2006). In addition, she also stated that education is also a strong predictor of poverty status. She took less than a high school education category for identifying the relationship of education with poverty. Gender is an important factor which is related to poverty. The relationship between gender and poverty is a complex and controversial topic (UNDP). According to this article, women are poorer than men. Another research shown strong correlation with poverty and gender, age (Esther Dermott). She described the relationship between gender and poverty in Britain and changes between 1999 and 2012. In this paper, she tried to find out the relationship of poverty with age and gender.

Chatham County is one of the county of Savannah which is struggling for solving poverty problem. Race, gender, low wage levels, income inequality, and low educational attainment are key issues for poverty in this county. If the incongruity is not reduced in Chatham County, poverty will impact economic growth negatively in the future. For that reason, this study will try to find out the relationship among gender, age, race, educational attainment in relation to poverty from year 2009 to 2015 for Chatham County and will also discover which regions are lagging in respect of higher poverty rate in relation to above factors. For identifying relationship among these variables, data will be collected from American fact finder. This study will be valuable for the policy makers for identifying regions those are still struggling for reducing poverty in respect of above all variables. Furthermore, this study will be very useful for developing Chatham County as an economically prosperous and functionally efficient with other cities in USA.

**METHODOLOGY**

For this study, all of the variables data will be collected from the American Face Finder of the US Census Bureau. Variables like (gender, age, race, educational attainment) will be collected from American Community Survey (ACS) year 2009 to 2015. The study will analysis the changes of poverty in terms of age, gender, race and educational attainment in Chatham County for 2009 to 2015. Those variables will be analyzed by GIS and SPSS. In addition, the study will also apply statistical analysis to identify the association between poverty and above all variables.

**Transportation and Social Equity as a Way to Alleviate Poverty**

**The Case of Low-Income Neighborhoods in Savannah GA**

**Vishanya F. Forbes[[2]](#footnote-2)**

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**Abstract**

The lack of reliable and affordable transportation in low-income neighborhoods enhances severe health issues and makes it difficult for these residents to access the basic opportunities offered by society. The politics associated with transportation planning in urban neighborhoods hinders transportation equity and facilitates poverty. As stated by (Garrett, 1999), “transit policy has tended to focus on recapturing lost markets through expanded suburban bus, express bus, and flued rail systems.” …. While, “at the same time, comparatively less attention and fewer resources tend to be devoted to improving well-patronized transit service in low-income, central-city areas serving a high proportion of transit dependents.” If poor people acquire access to reliable and affordable public transportation that is in close proximity to their homes, social equity wouldn’t be characterized as an incommensurable case and the need to maintain social equity of the haves may no longer need to come at the expense of the have-nots.

The focal point of this research is to analyze how the social equity of resident living in the low-income neighborhoods of Savannah, GA is affected by urban transportation planning. It is to gain communities/neighborhoods shape health practices and determines the overall social equity of the community/neighborhoods; and how social equity of the poor is determined by their access to good public transportation. “With new jobs emerging further and further away from central-cities, many low-income workers often have difficulty accessing jobs, training and other services such as childcare because of inadequate transportation.” (Criden, 2008)

This research will use the survey to residents of seven low-income neighborhoods in Savannah GA. The survey was conducted in August – December 2013 with 369 residents in terms of walking assessment, eating habits, health history, and built environment. We observed a higher percentage of the residents in these poor neighborhoods falling within the categories of overweight to obese, a higher percentage of residents who travelled to work or school via the bus than owned motor vehicles, higher percentage who spent two hours or more travelling to and from work on a daily basis.

In the continuation of this research we ultimately aim to show how low-income residents are being vilified for measures beyond their control, why they are forced to develop an unhealthy eating practice being boxed into food deserts. This research will use the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and collect public transportation data including bus routes and the location of bus stops. This research attempts to uncover how combing social equity and transportation plans for poor neighborhoods and communities within Savannah, GA will increase the quality of life of the residents living there by solving numerous issues the residents of these poor neighborhoods are faced with on a daily basis, how with transportation equity we can close the social equity gap in Savannah, GA, and aid in reducing the poverty rate.

**Enriching a Quality of Life through Connectivity, Resourceful Social Impacts, and Redevelopment Design Concepts:**

**The Case of Savannah’s Historic Yamacraw Village**

Kellie D. Fletcher

**Abstract**

This thesis serves to demonstrate that the infrastructure and design of a community through redevelopment, providing fair resources that create positive social impacts, and connectivity through inclusion to Historic Savannah can progressively alter an inherently pathological cycle for a community that has experienced exclusion for generations. Scholars and researchers have expressed conflicting opinions in regard to a change of culture, behavior, and inclusiveness resulting in an improved quality of life. One author proposed that the idea of changing a neighborhood to positively impact the residents, insinuates that a less affluent neighborhood is in fact dysfunctional. While another argues that a community’s behavior is a response to their situation. These two focuses provide significant perspectives that should be considered. Through the procurement of insight on the history of Yamacraw Village, the City of Savannah’s housing trends, and the history of U.S. public housing a respectable summary on the progress, or lack thereof, for this community is provided. The research method of snowball sampling through interviews and observations, will offer a true perspective from the residents that can effectively indicate the current status in addition to future movement. A discussion on the obtained research, in collaboration with the new ideas of Mixed-Use and Mixed-Income, can positively impact the community.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)