

# Community Development Research and Place-Based Equity

Committee of the Whole

November 6, 2019



# Community Development Research

## Mission

*Metropolitan Council's Community Development Research Team advances a better Twin Cities region for all by delivering trusted, useful information.*

## Vision

*We envision equitable policy, planning, service, and investment decisions at the regional and local level that result in tangible benefits and opportunities for all residents of our region. We see our skills, creativity, and platforms as resources that further shared understanding about regional issues that matter.*

# Activity: The stories maps tell

*“The stories we tell ourselves matter. Narrative plays an important role in defining whose voice gets heard, how issues are framed, and what solutions are developed.”*

*~ Nelima Sitati Munene*

## **SHELTERFORCE**

THE VOICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



### Speaking Up On Race, Housing, and Opportunity in Minnesota

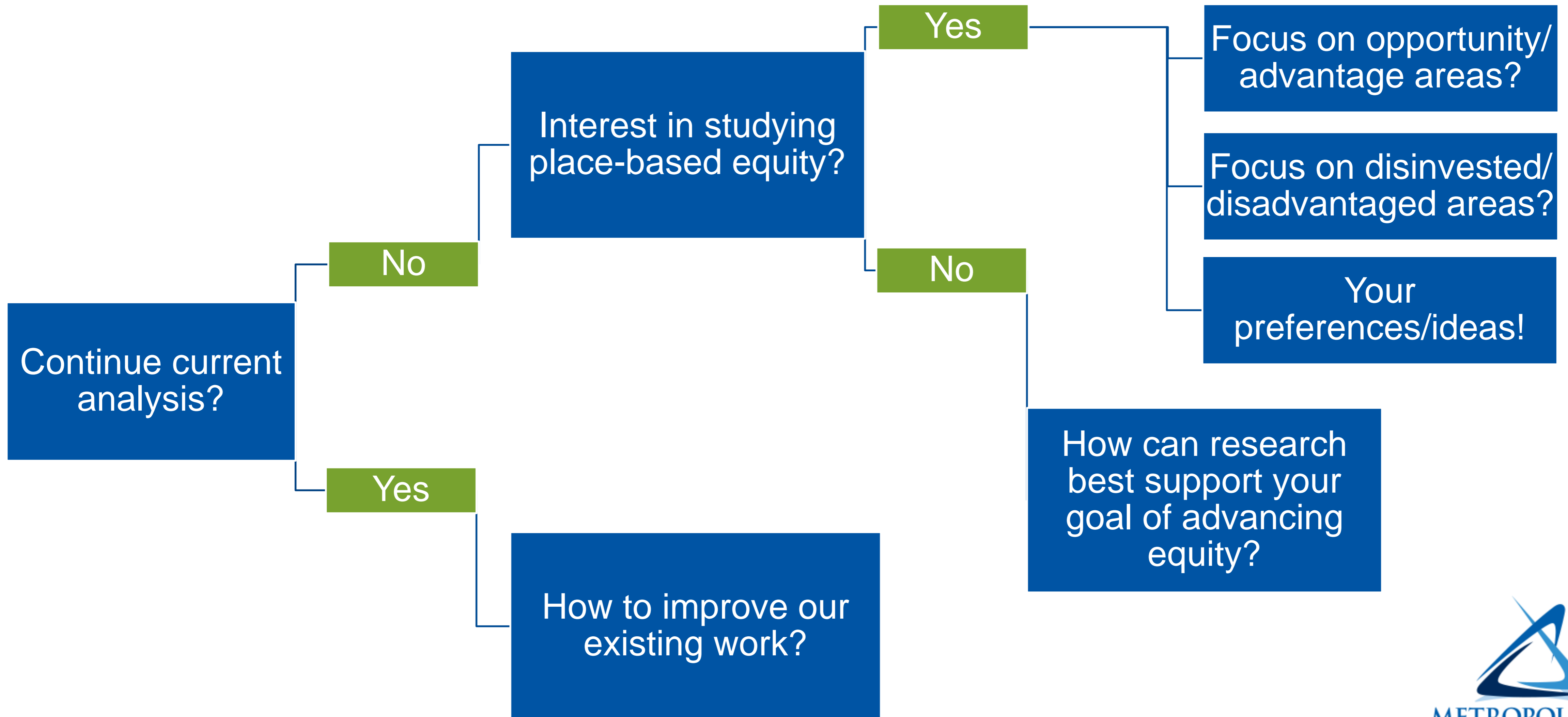
**Housing** Nelima Sitati Munene - January 11, 2019

In the housing world, narrative plays an important role in defining whose voice gets heard, how issues are framed, and what solutions are developed. This is especially true in Minnesota.

# Today's presentation

- Why have we studied Areas of Concentrated Poverty?
- How is the Council using Areas of Concentrated Poverty?
- Why are we rethinking studying Areas of Concentrated Poverty?
- What are some alternatives for thinking about place-based equity?
- Discussion

# Today's discussion goal(s)



# Why have we studied Areas of Concentrated Poverty?

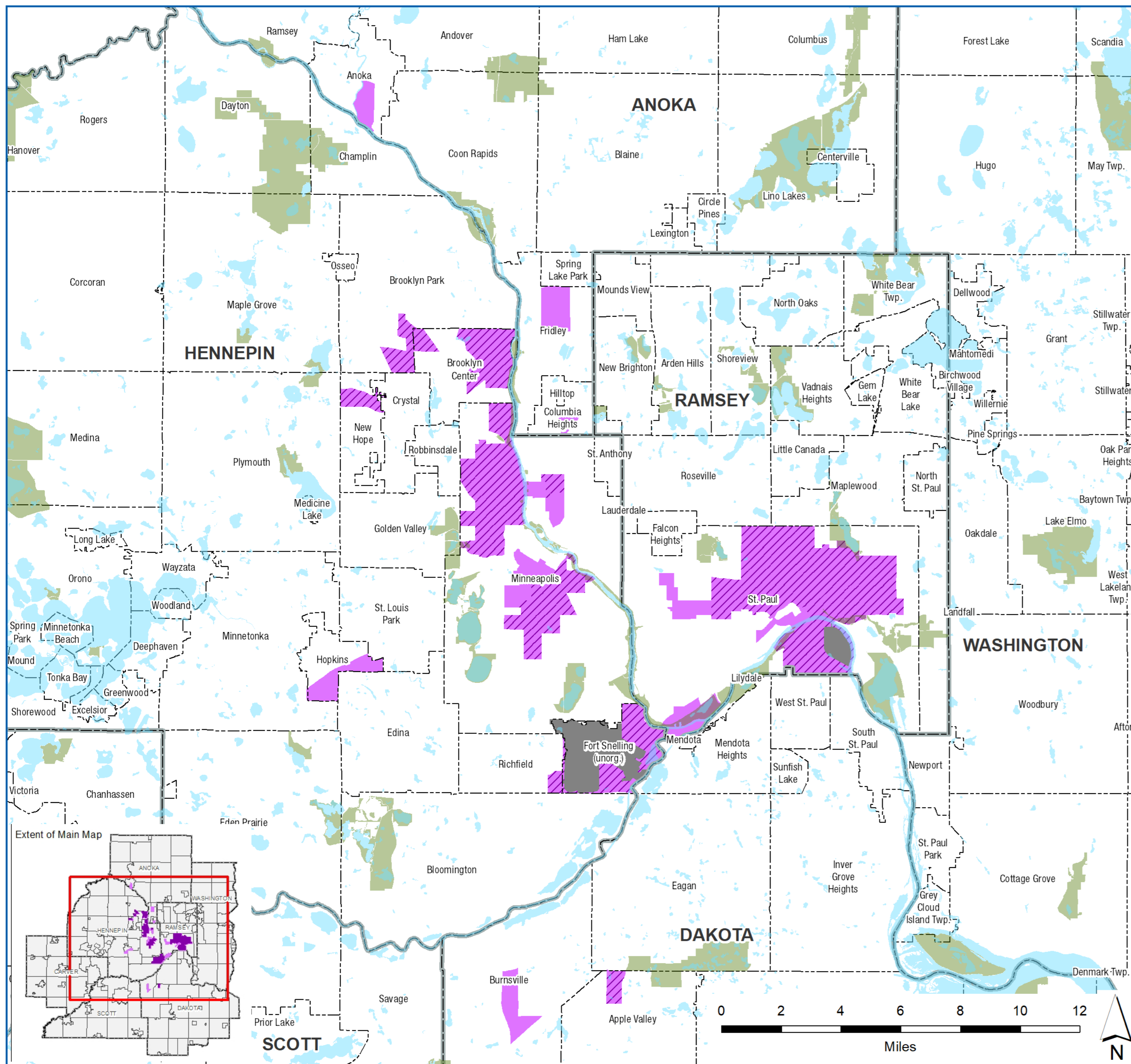
# Areas of Concentrated Poverty (ACPs)

- Census tracts where at least 40% of residents have incomes below 185% of the federal poverty threshold\*
  - \$45,510 for family of four in 2017
- ACP subset: where majority are residents of color
- 2013-2017 mapped

\* - This is the definition of poverty used throughout unless otherwise noted.



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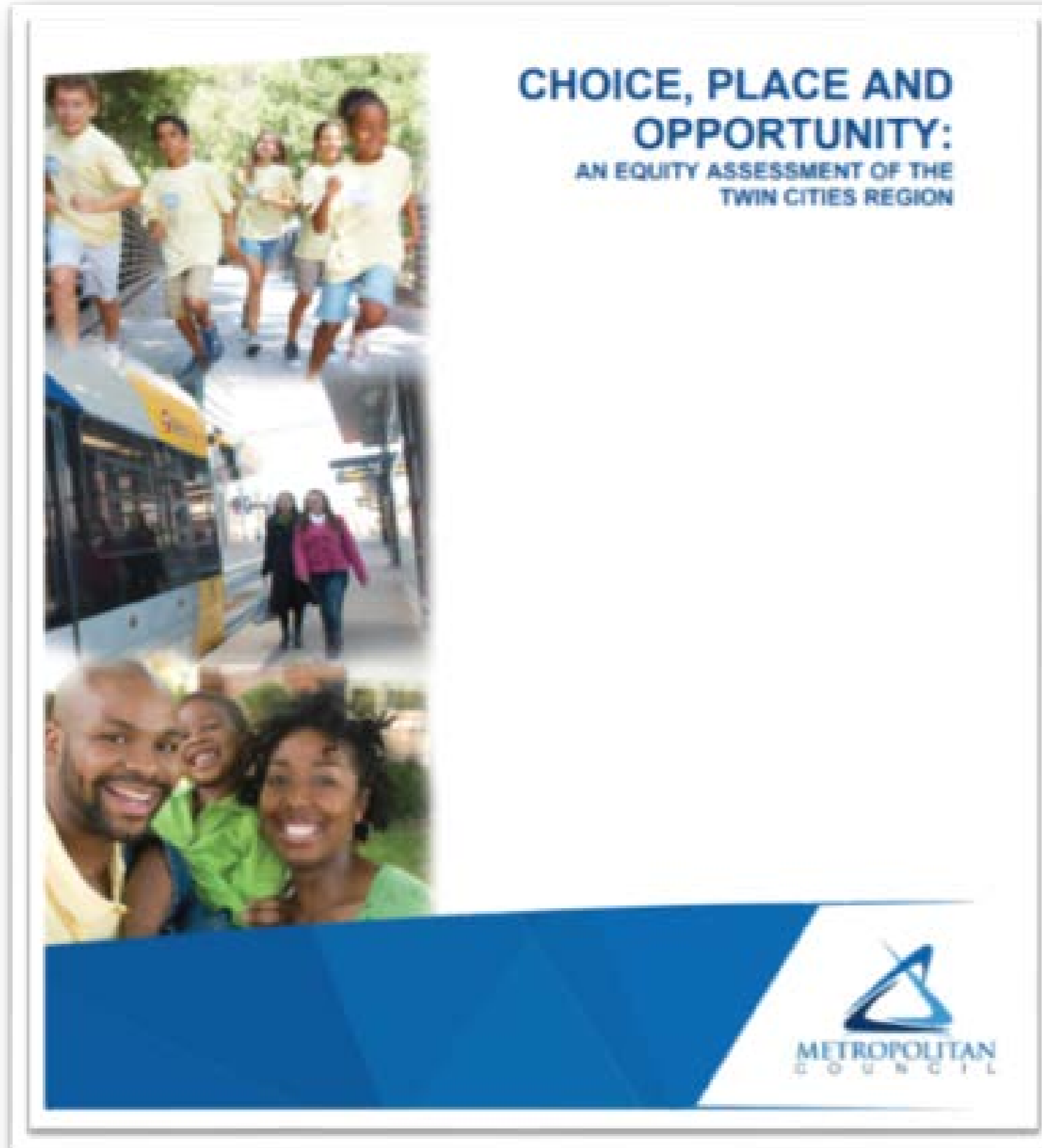


# Place is an important dimension of equity

- Residents of high-poverty neighborhoods experience:
  - Higher crime victimization rates
  - More aggressive policing
  - Worse physical health
  - Worse mental health
- Effects are strongest on children
  - Lower scores on tests of letter/word recognition, reading comprehension, and math calculations
  - Lower rates of high school graduation and college attendance
  - Lower economic mobility

**Place-based equity: Where you live shouldn't affect your life chances.**

# Concentrated poverty in the region

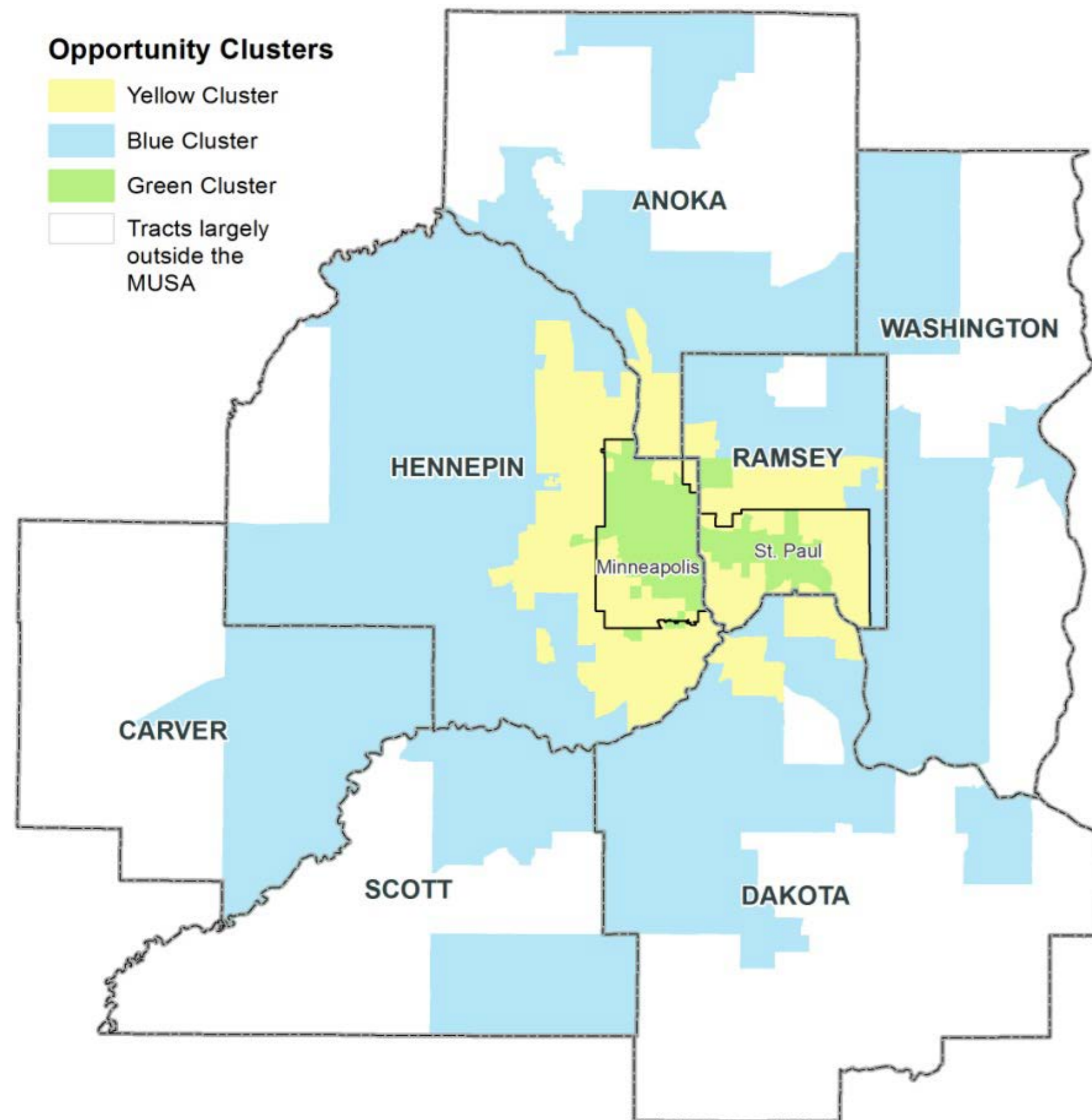


- Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA) as specified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Specific data and analysis requirements
- Informed by community organizations, housing advocates, and regional stakeholders

# Choice, Place and Opportunity in two maps

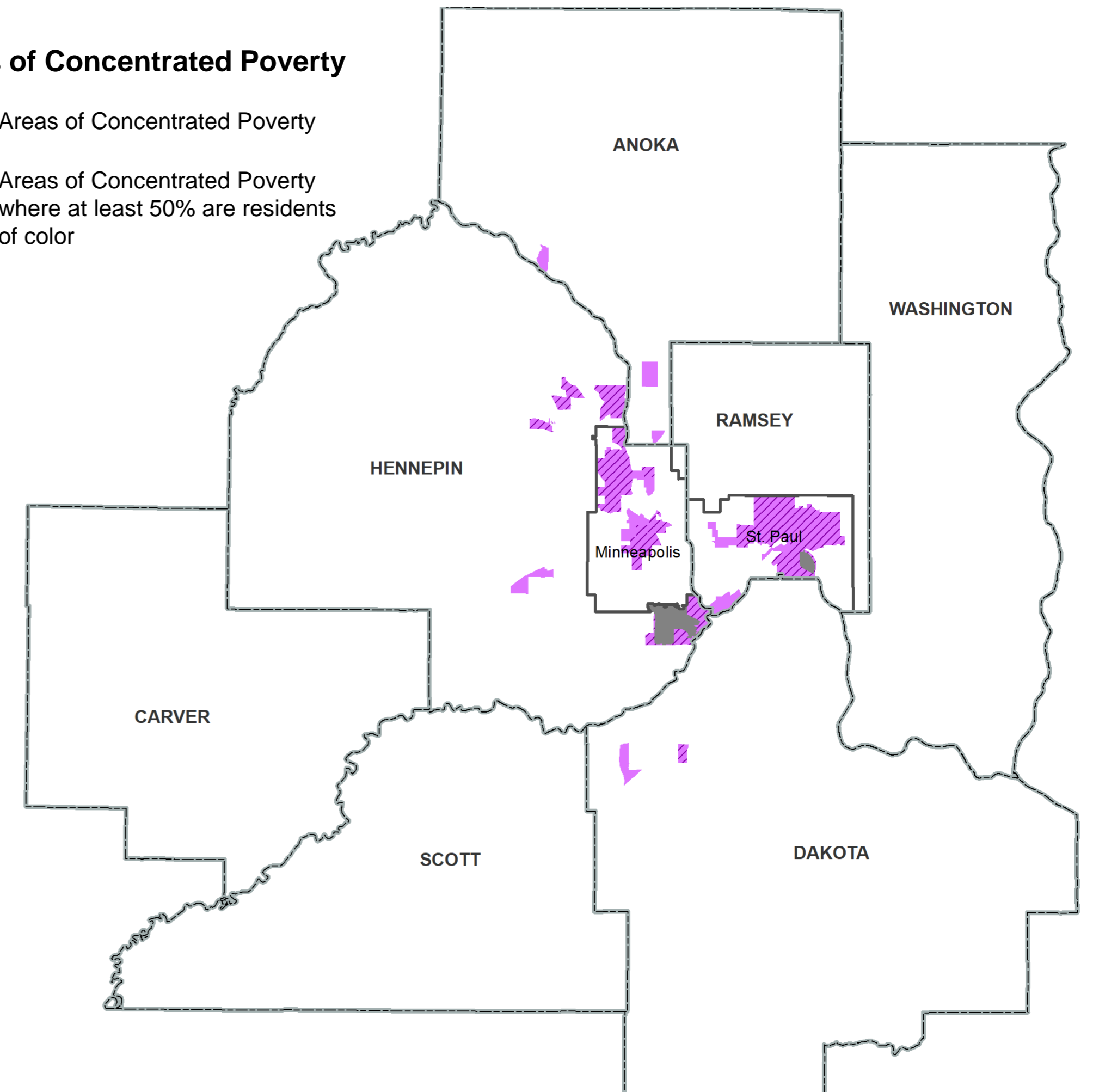
*Published in 2014 report*

*2013-2017 American Community Survey*

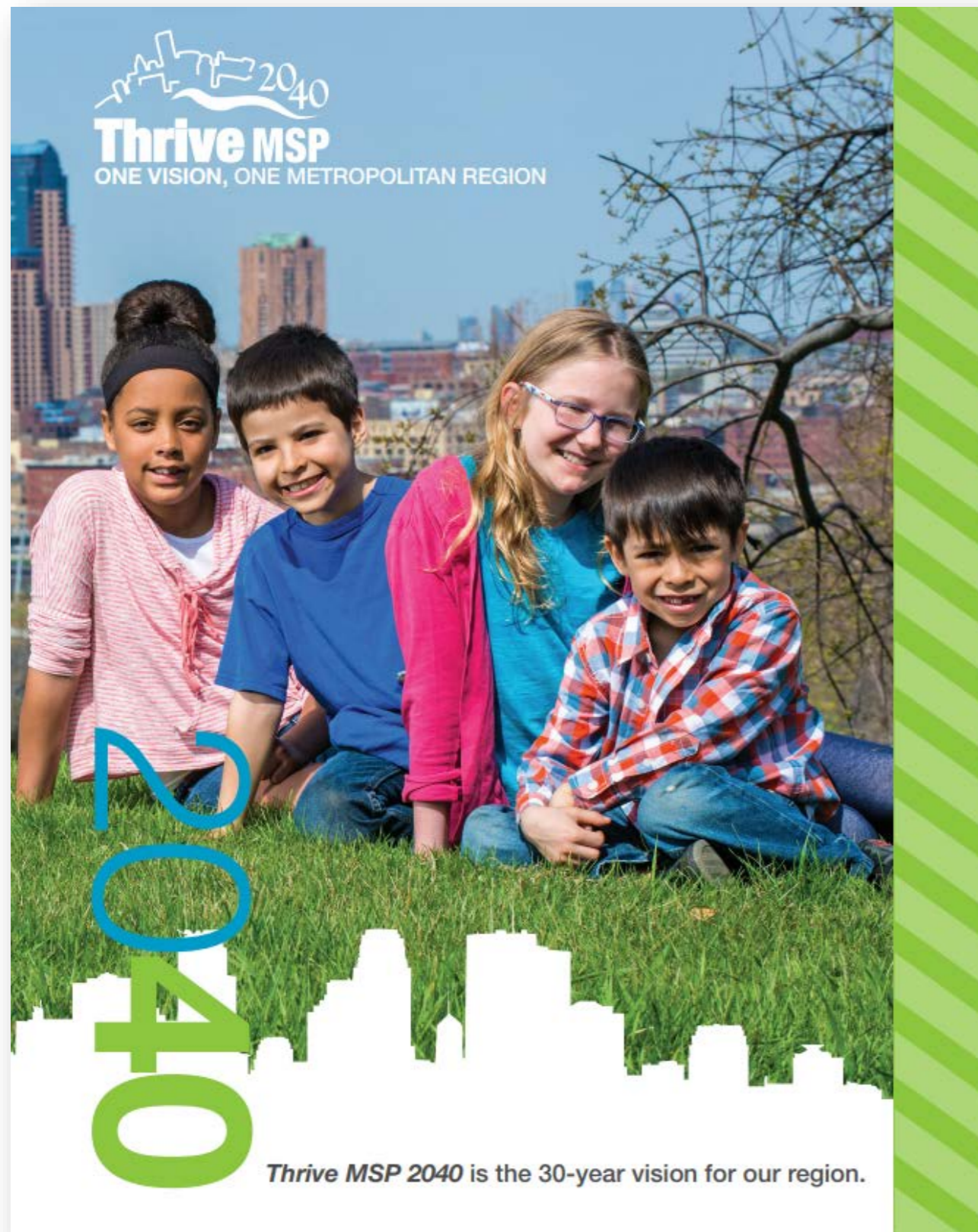


**Areas of Concentrated Poverty**

- Areas of Concentrated Poverty
- Areas of Concentrated Poverty where at least 50% are residents of color



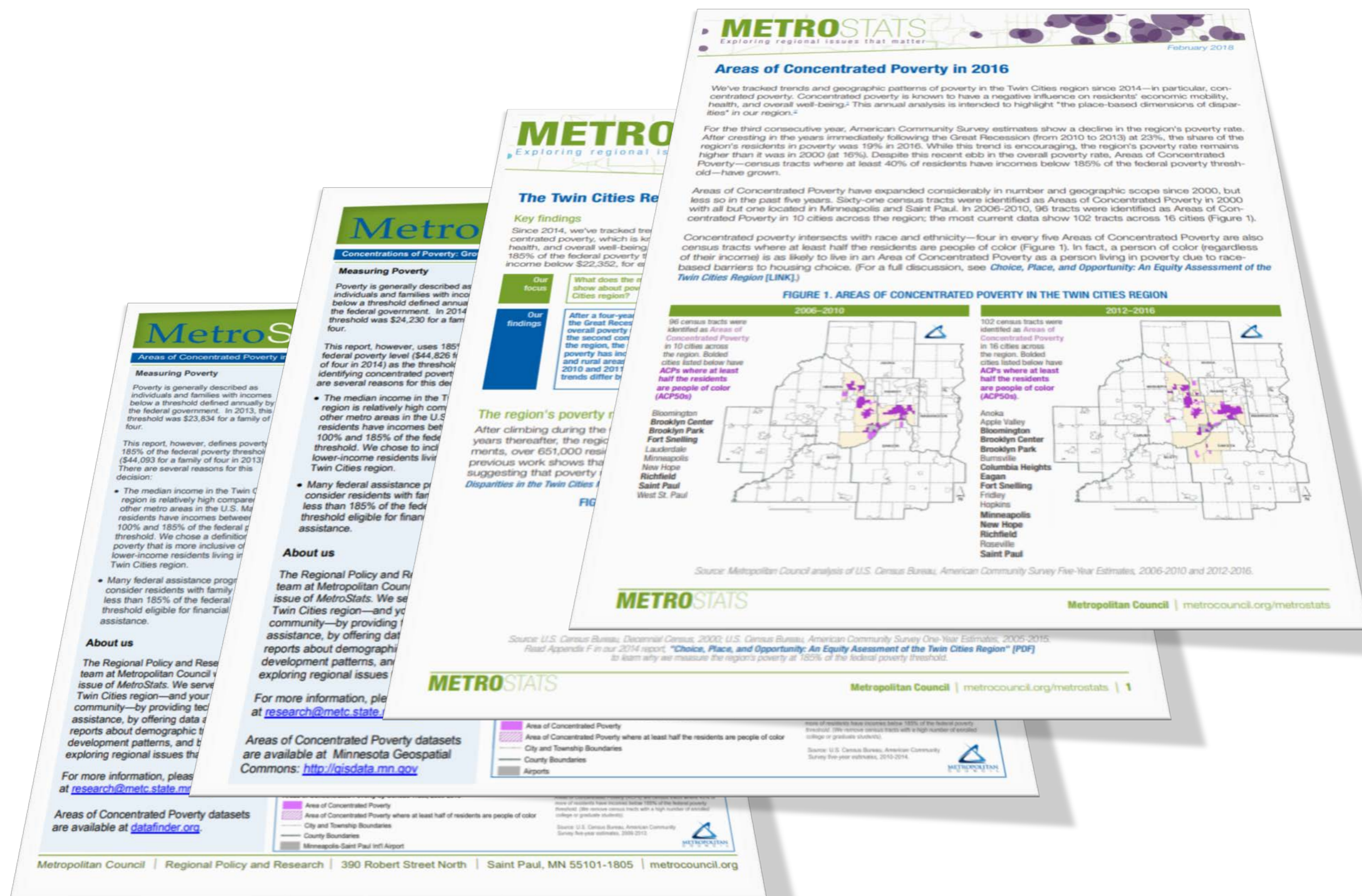
# Areas of Concentrated Poverty in Thrive



- Special Feature in *Thrive MSP 2040*
- Pillar of Thrive's Equity outcome

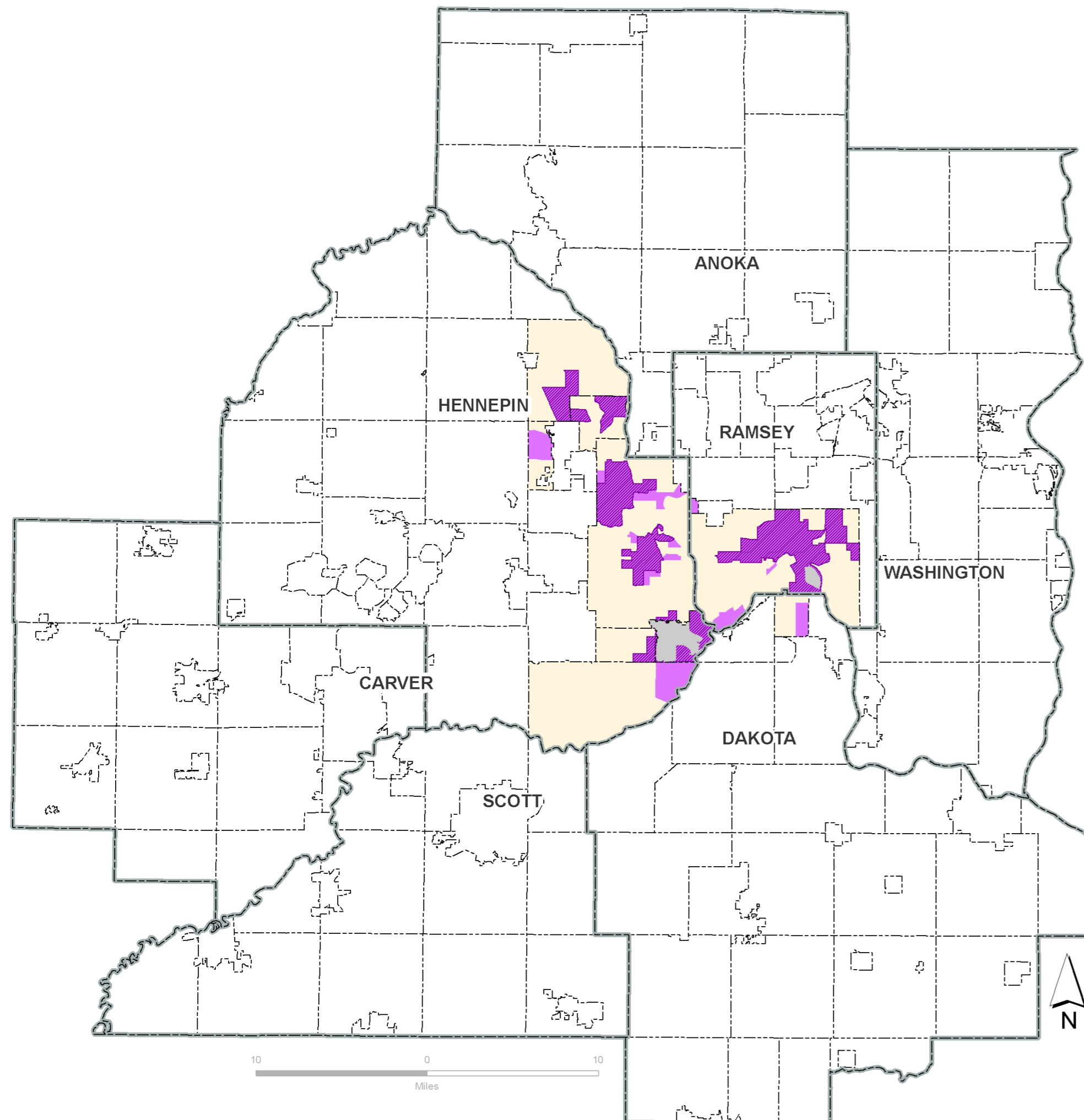
# Annual analysis of concentrated poverty

- Census tracts identified annually (American Community Survey)
- Council publishes map and report; uploads GIS shapefile to MN Geospatial Commons
- Available at <https://metro council.org/metrostats>

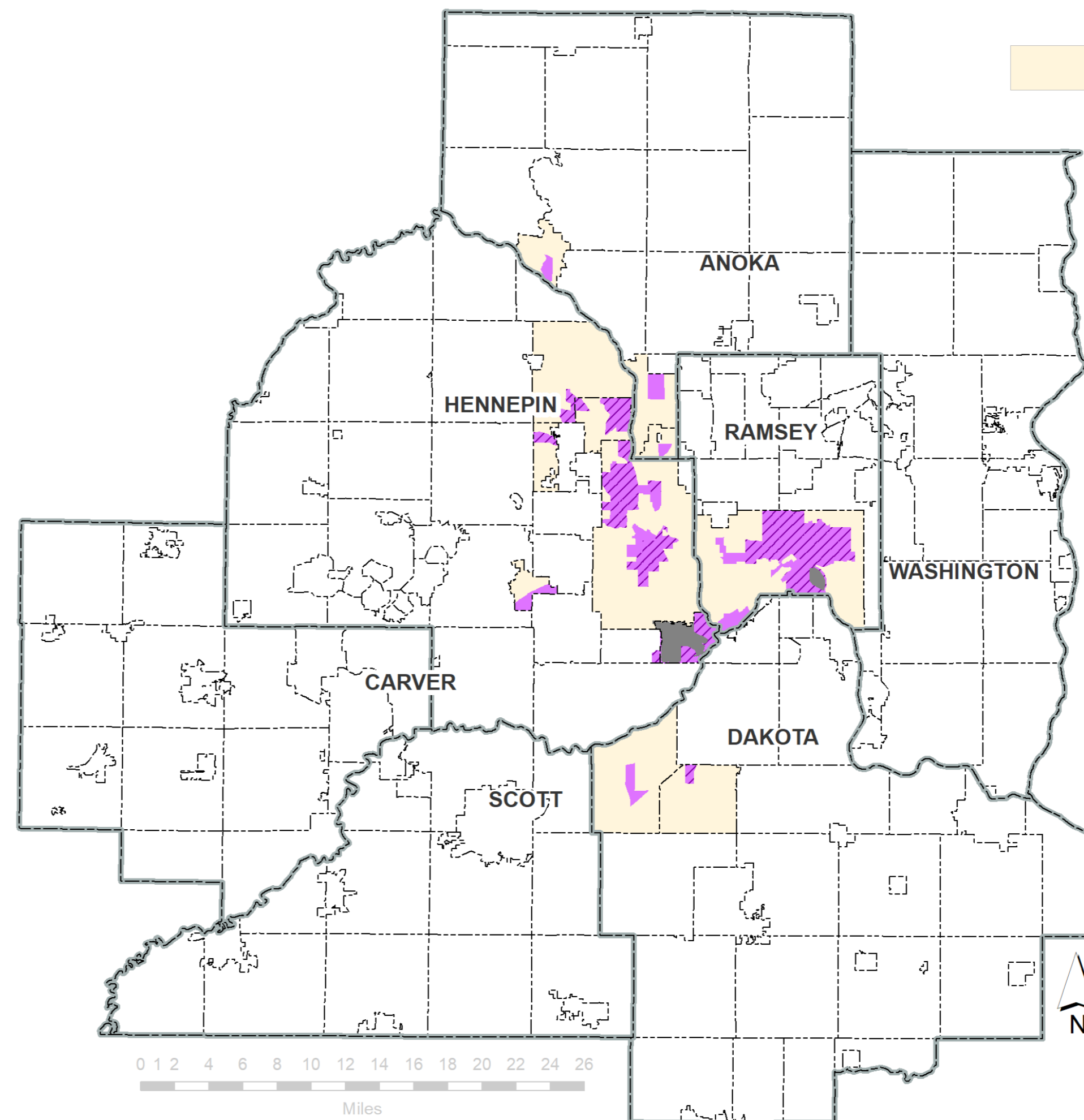



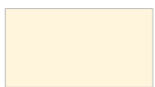
# Recent findings on concentrated poverty

2006-2010



2013-2017



-  Area of concentrated poverty (census tract)
-  Area of concentrated poverty (city highlight)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey five-year estimates.

# How is the Council using Areas of Concentrated Poverty?

# Conversations we've had (so far)

- Community Development
  - Policy & housing team
  - Livable Communities
  - Regional Parks & Natural Resources
  - Metro HRA
  - Local Planning Assistance
- Metro Transit
  - Service Development
  - Strategic Initiatives
- Metropolitan Transportation Services
- Regional Administration
  - Engagement
  - Office of Equal Opportunity
- Council's Equity Advisory Committee (April, July)
- Many thanks to all!



# Planned engagement (2019 – 2020)

## Inreach

- Council Members
- Council Executive Team
- Environmental Services
- Broader Council staff survey ←

## Outreach

- Communities directly affected by our maps ←
- State, county, city stakeholders

# Themes from inreach on concentrated poverty

- Staff are familiar with the term, even if they're not actively using Areas of Concentrated Poverty day-to-day
- Federal definitions related to “equity areas” differ (for example, Federal Transit Administration Title VI requirements)
- Strongly (but not exclusively) associate Areas of Concentrated Poverty with housing
- Not widely embedded in Council actions

# How the Council currently uses the analysis

## Community Development

- Metro HRA's Community Choice program (eligibility)
- Livable Communities Grant programs (scoring)

## Metro Transit & Metropolitan Transportation Services

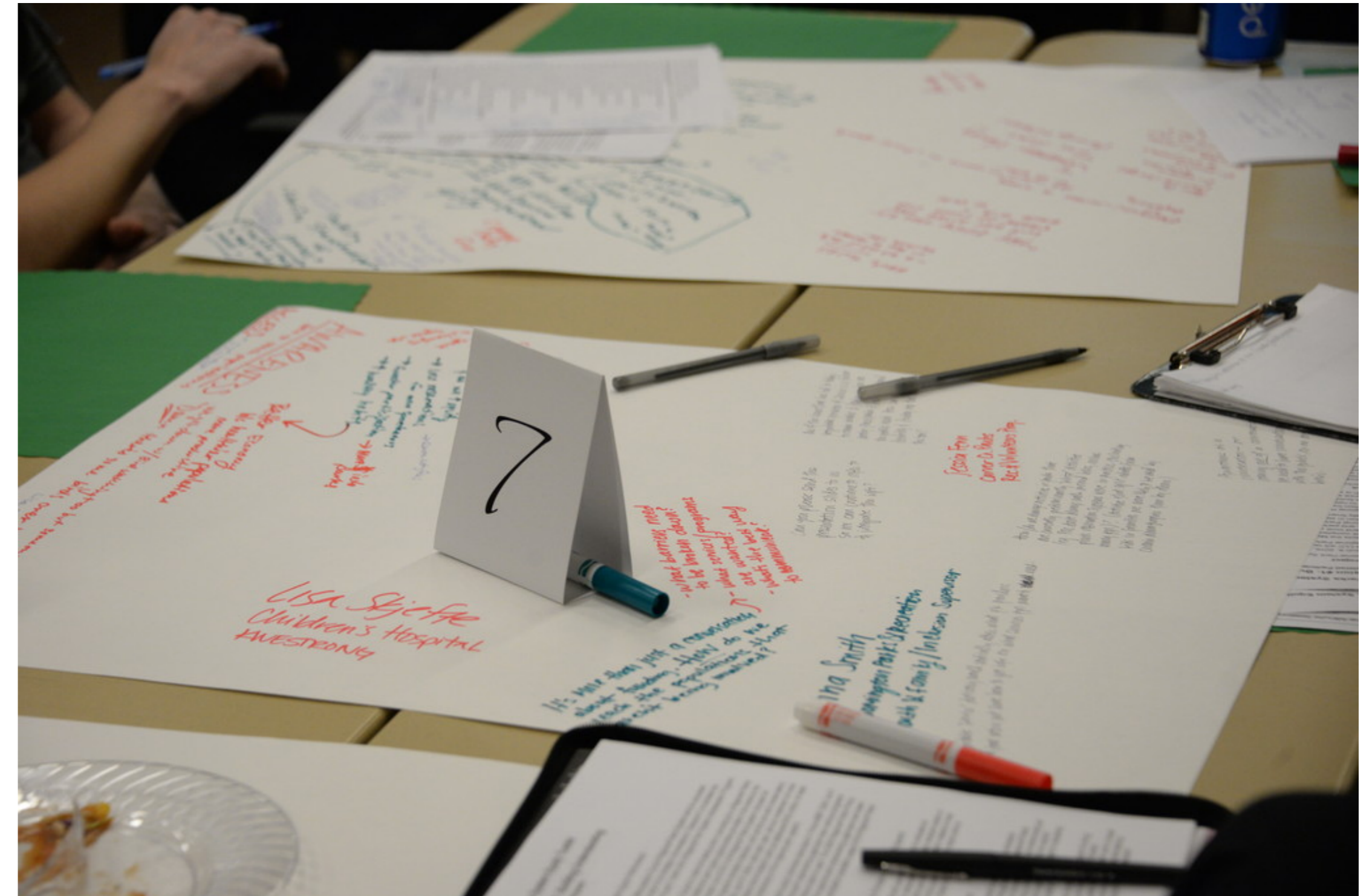
- Better Bus Stops program (defined focus area)
- Regional Solicitation (scoring)

## Indicators & measures

- Thrive Indicators
- Housing Policy Plan Indicators
- Metro Transit's Key Performance Indicators

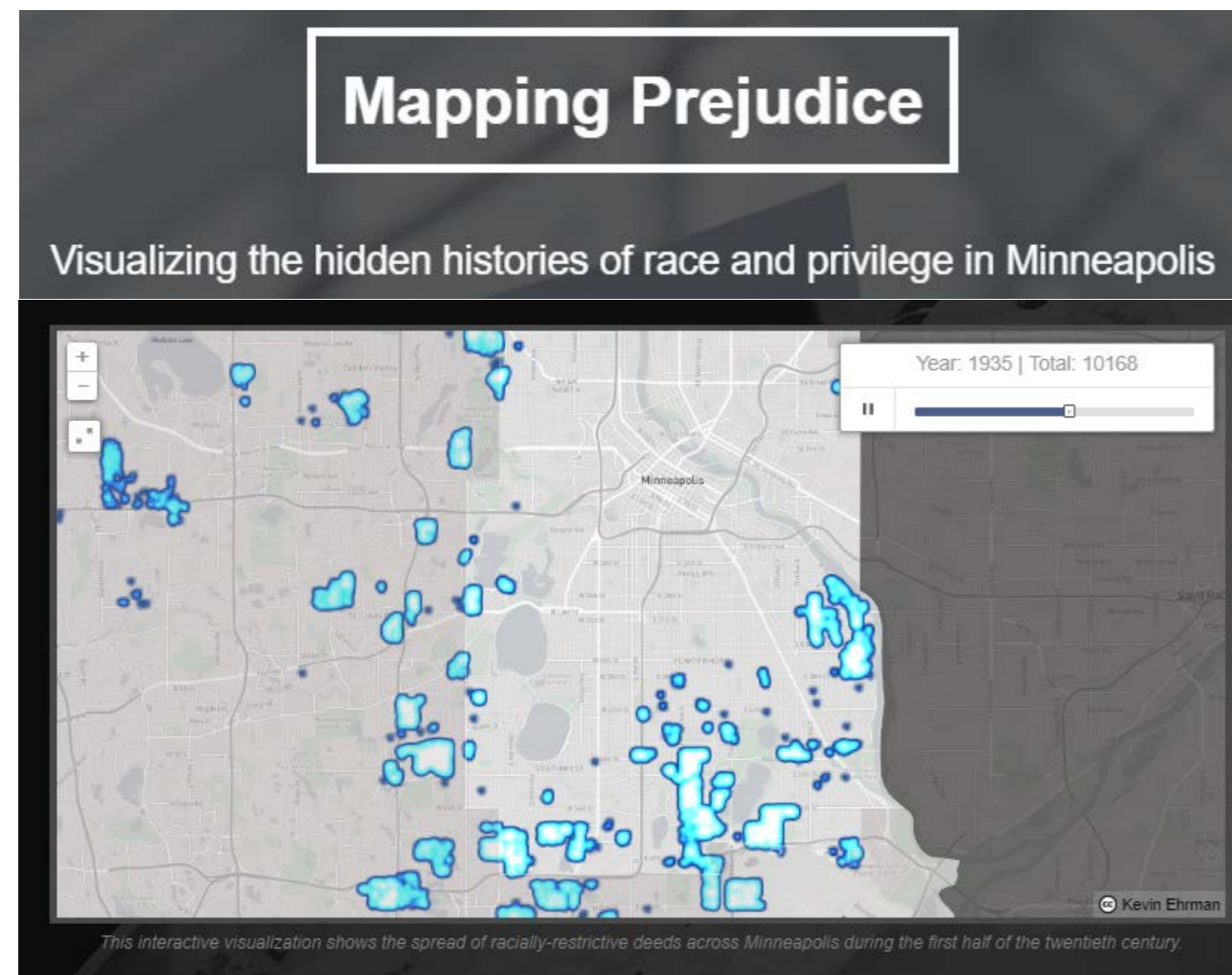
# Community Conversations

- 2016 to 2018
- Partnered with advocates for housing, community, and equity
- Supplemented initial feedback on formal document
- Key themes:
  - Assets versus deficits
  - Impact of deficit measure
  - Investment alone isn't opportunity and related impacts of investment
  - Who defines opportunity matters
  - Building capacity for leadership, involvement



# Why are we rethinking studying Areas of Concentrated Poverty?

# Other regional actors are going beyond poverty



## THE DIVERSITY OF GENTRIFICATION:

### Multiple Forms of Gentrification in Minneapolis and St. Paul

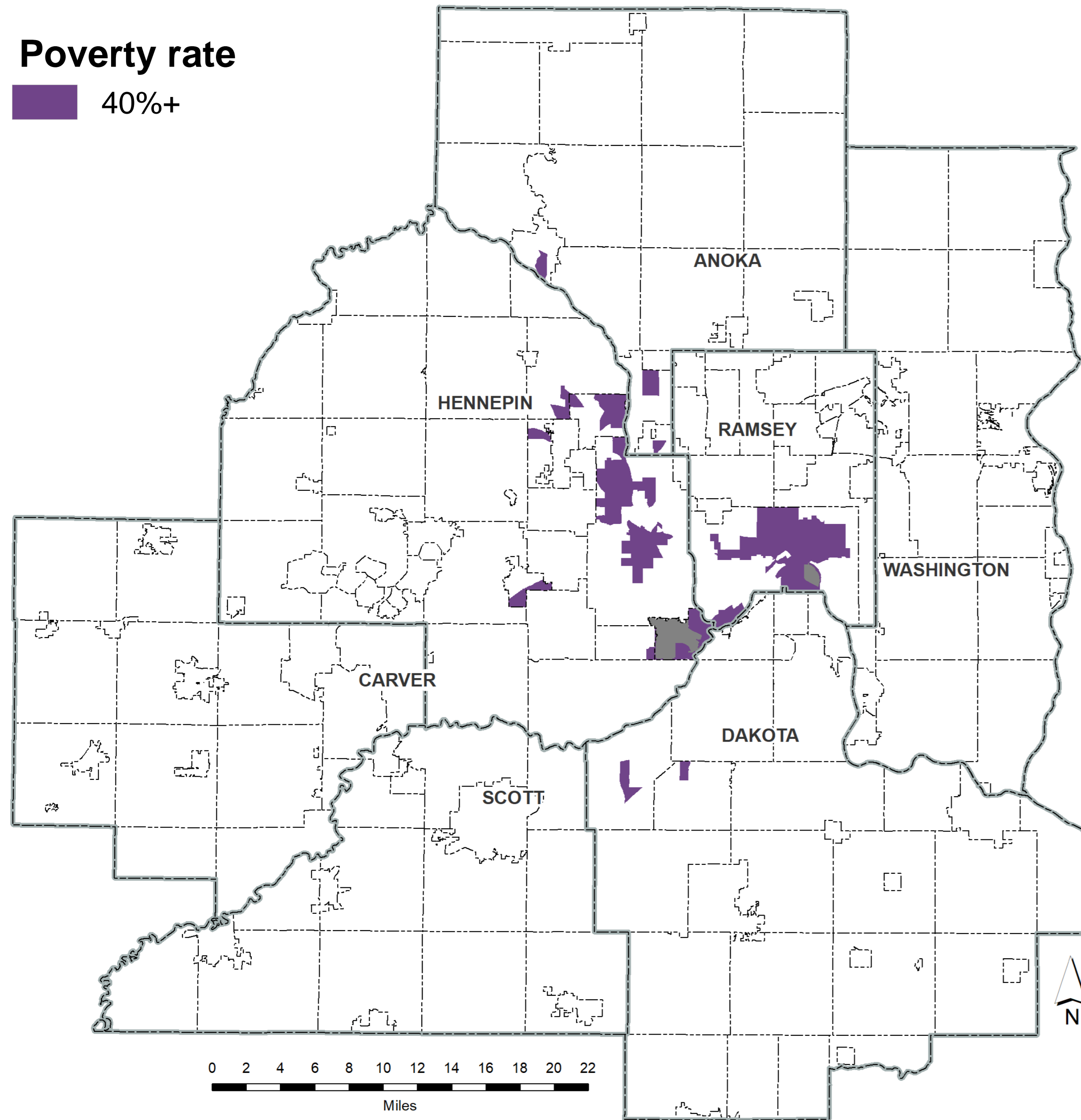
Edward G. Goetz, Brittany Lewis, Anthony Damiano, Molly Calhoun

Center for Urban and Regional Affairs | cura  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



## Poverty rate

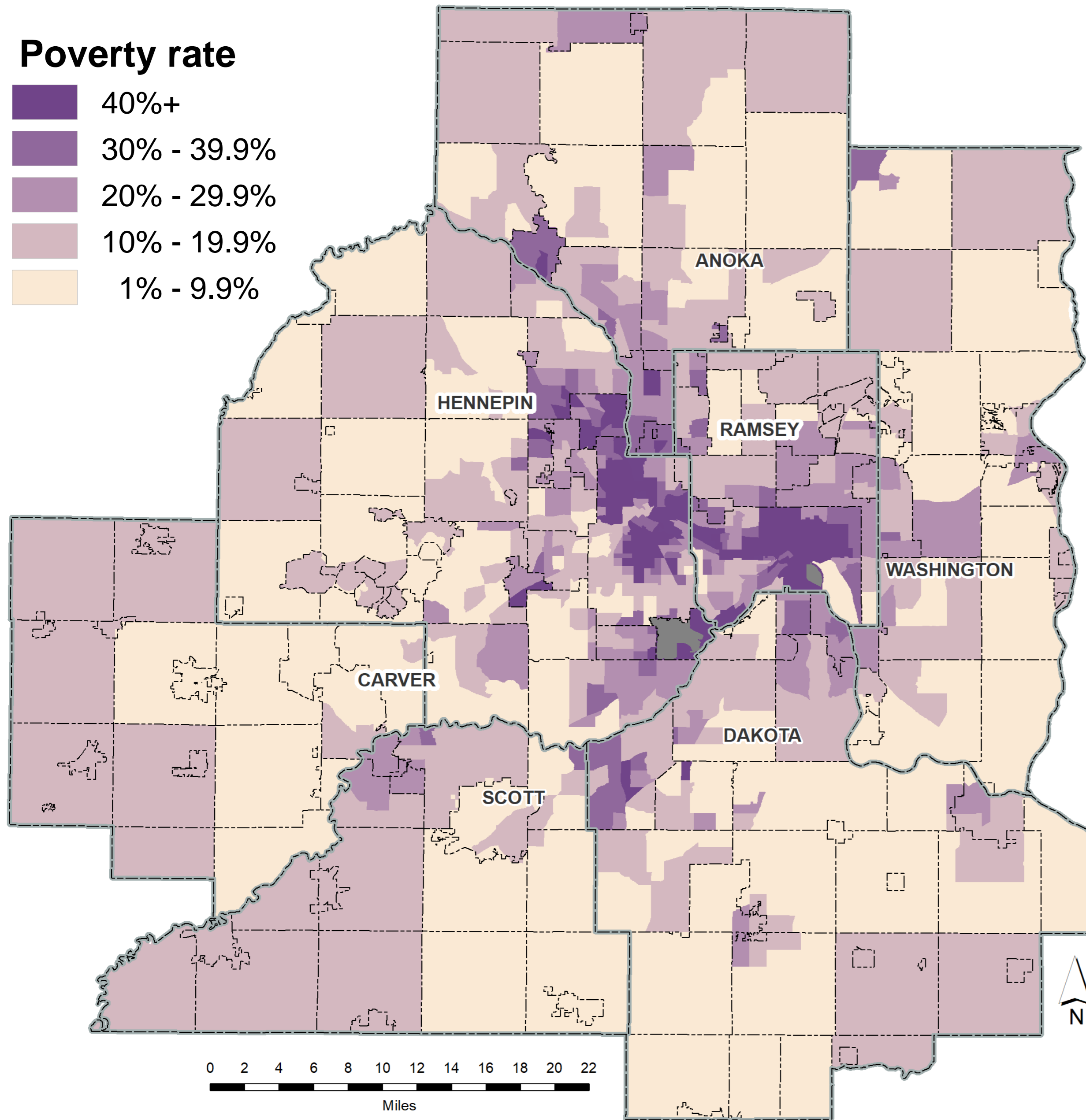
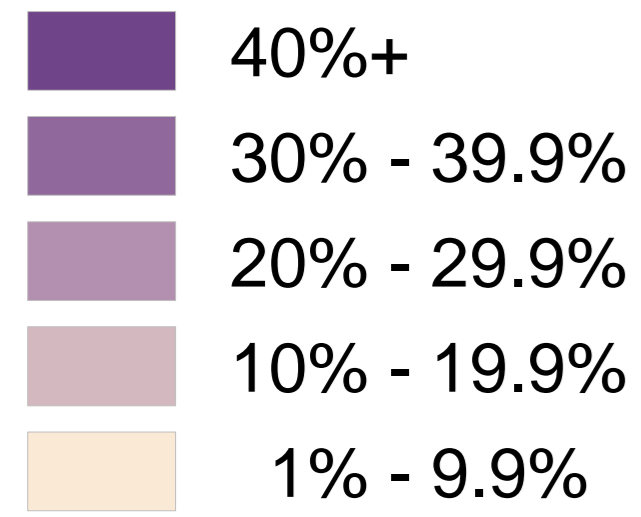
40%+



# Analysis narrows scope of region's poverty

If we're trying to influence the lives of *people in poverty*...

## Poverty rate



# Analysis narrows scope of region's poverty

If we're trying to influence the lives of *people in poverty*...

***Most people in poverty (71%) are not living in an Area of Concentrated Poverty***

If we're trying to influence *places with high poverty*...

***Why the hard cutoff at 40%?***

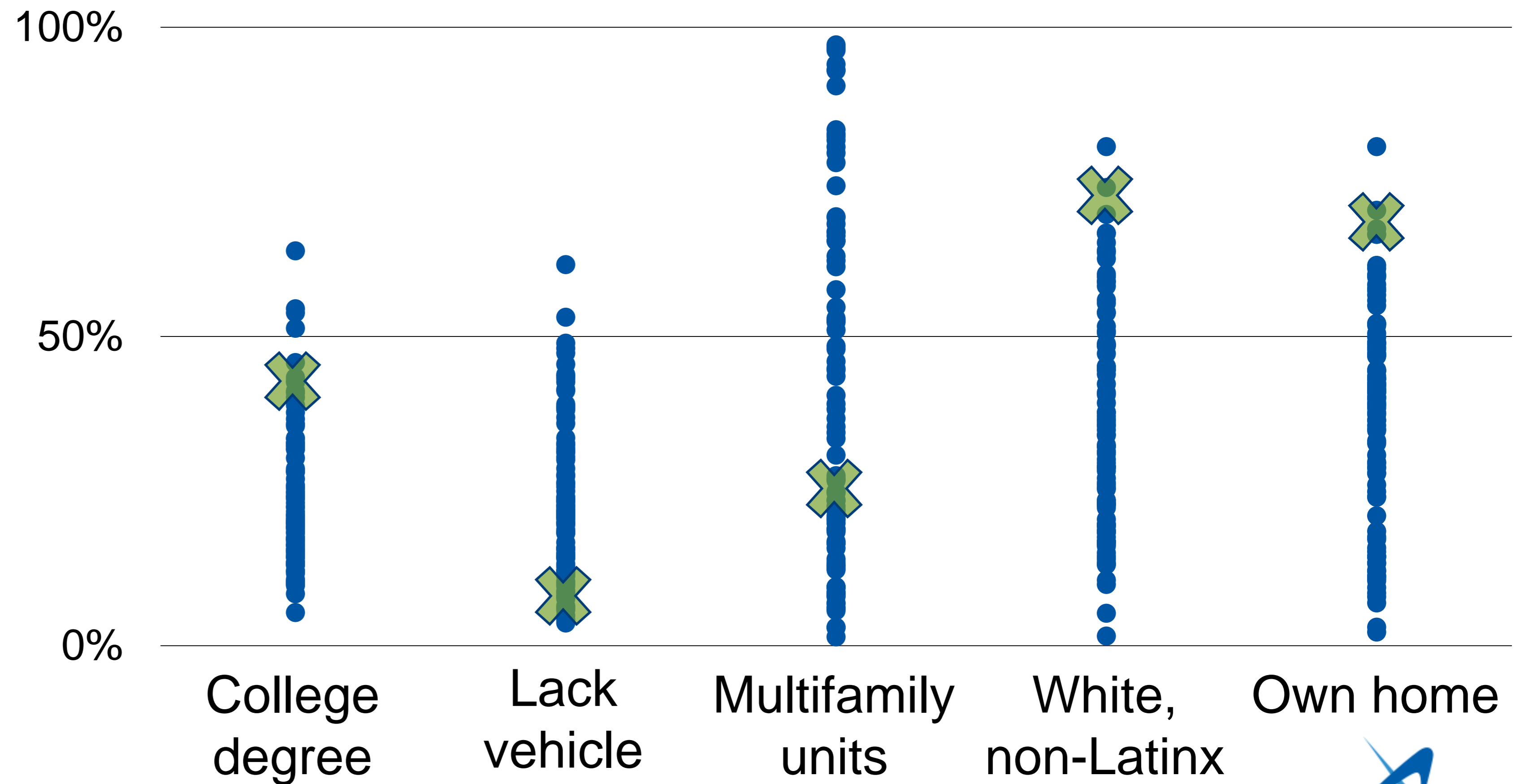


# Analysis ignores wide variation across areas

ACP tracts share a poverty rate but not much else:

- Widely varying characteristics
- Some are lower than region; some are higher
- Different histories

● = *One ACP census tract*  
✕ = *Twin Cities regional average*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey five-year estimates

# Demographic data doesn't tell the full story

## Demographic data can't capture lived experience

- Community / culture
- Politics

## If we're looking at place-based equity, what about:

- Buildings/ownership
- Environment and natural features
- Institutions and infrastructure
- Employers

*“In the early days of opportunity mapping... it was standard to simply map race and/or poverty and call low-poverty or predominantly white neighborhoods “opportunity” areas.... Such practices confuse the idea of a geography of opportunity with the geography of people.”*

*~ Edward G. Goetz*

## SHELTERFORCE

THE VOICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Your “Opportunity” Map is Broken. Here Are Some Fixes

Community Development Field Edward G. Goetz - November 16, 2017

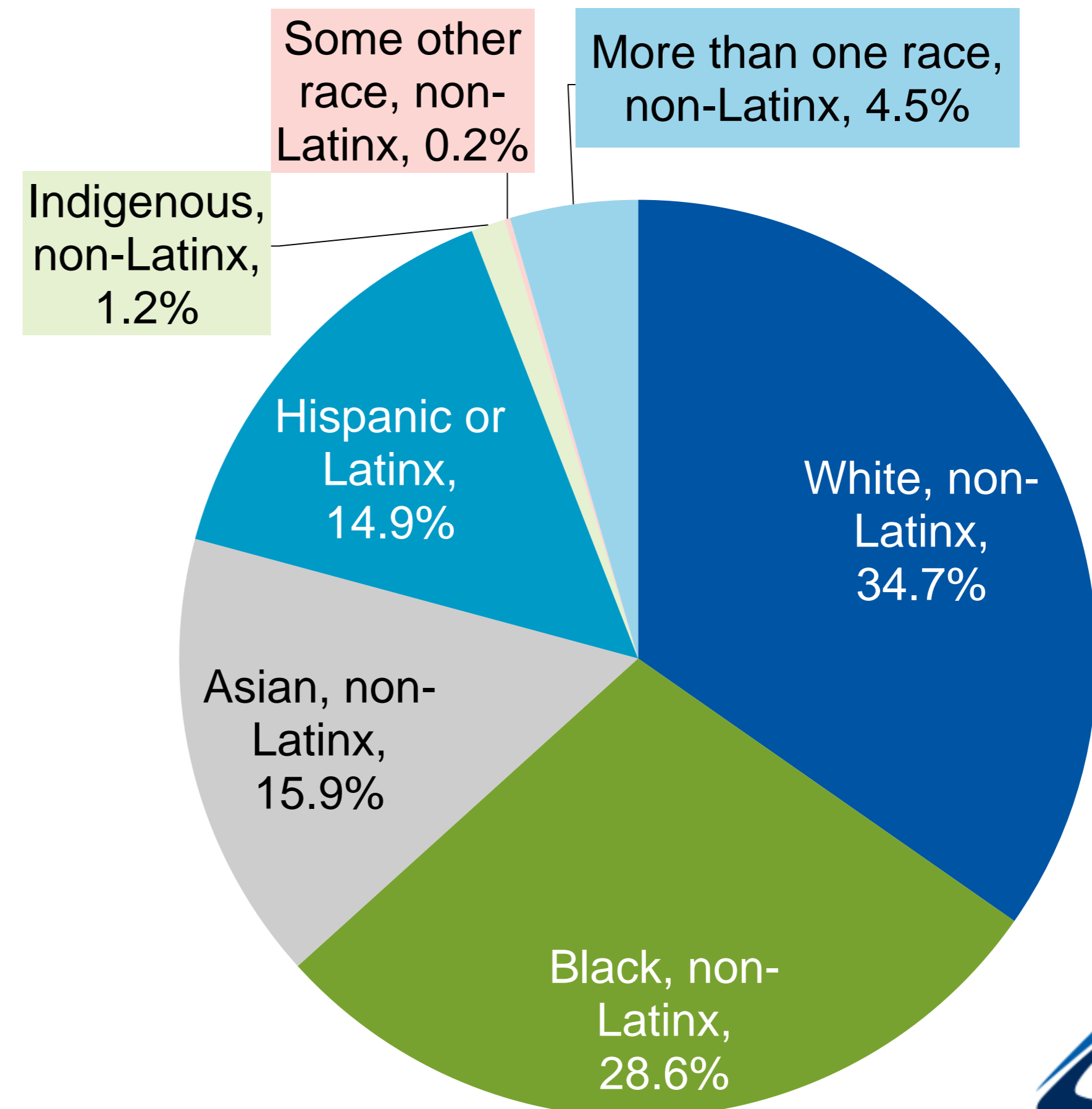
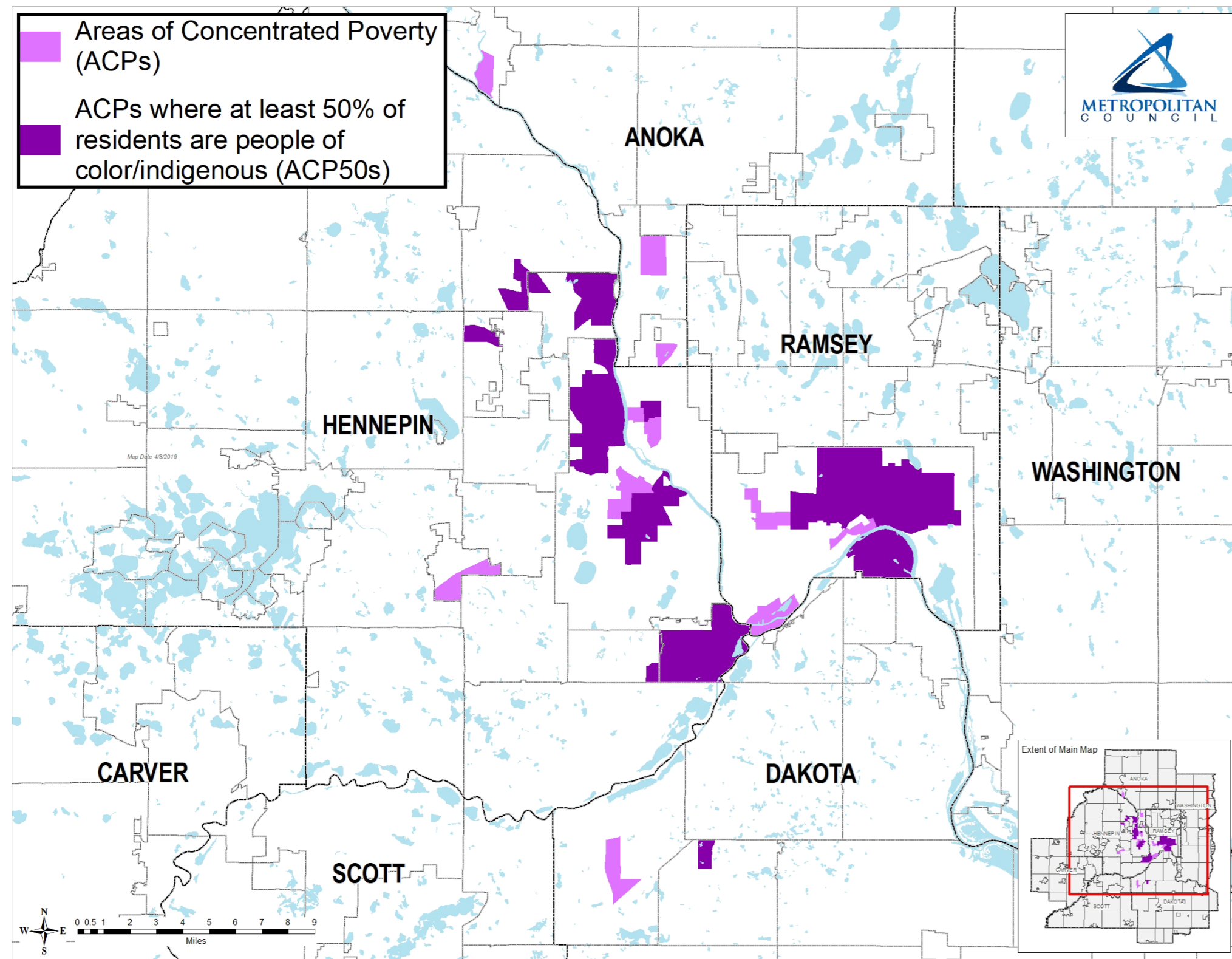
If we are truly going to reduce our housing policy objectives to the realm of goals related to “opportunity,” I would like to offer some guidelines for its proper use.



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# Analysis suggests concentrated poverty = people of color

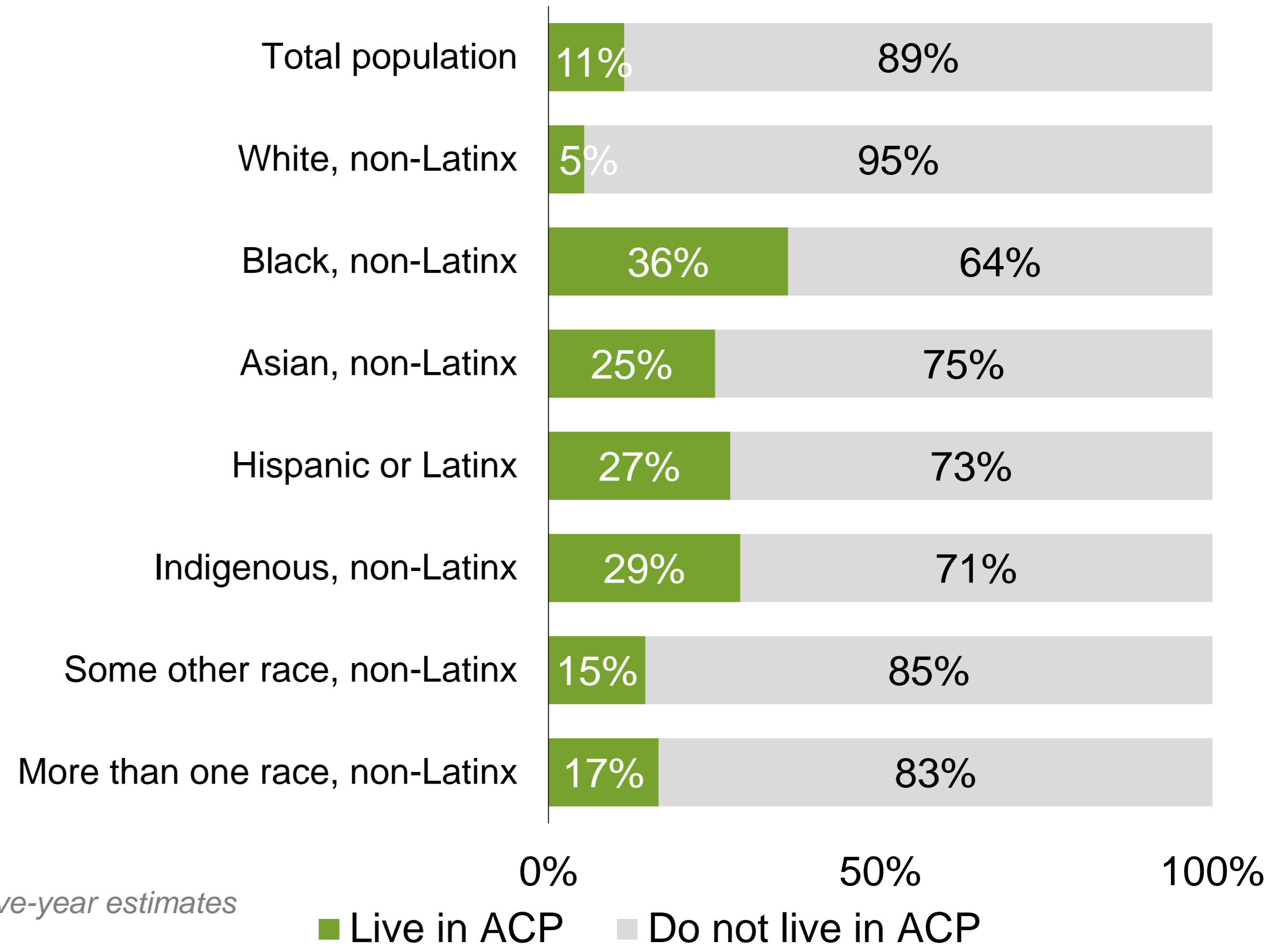
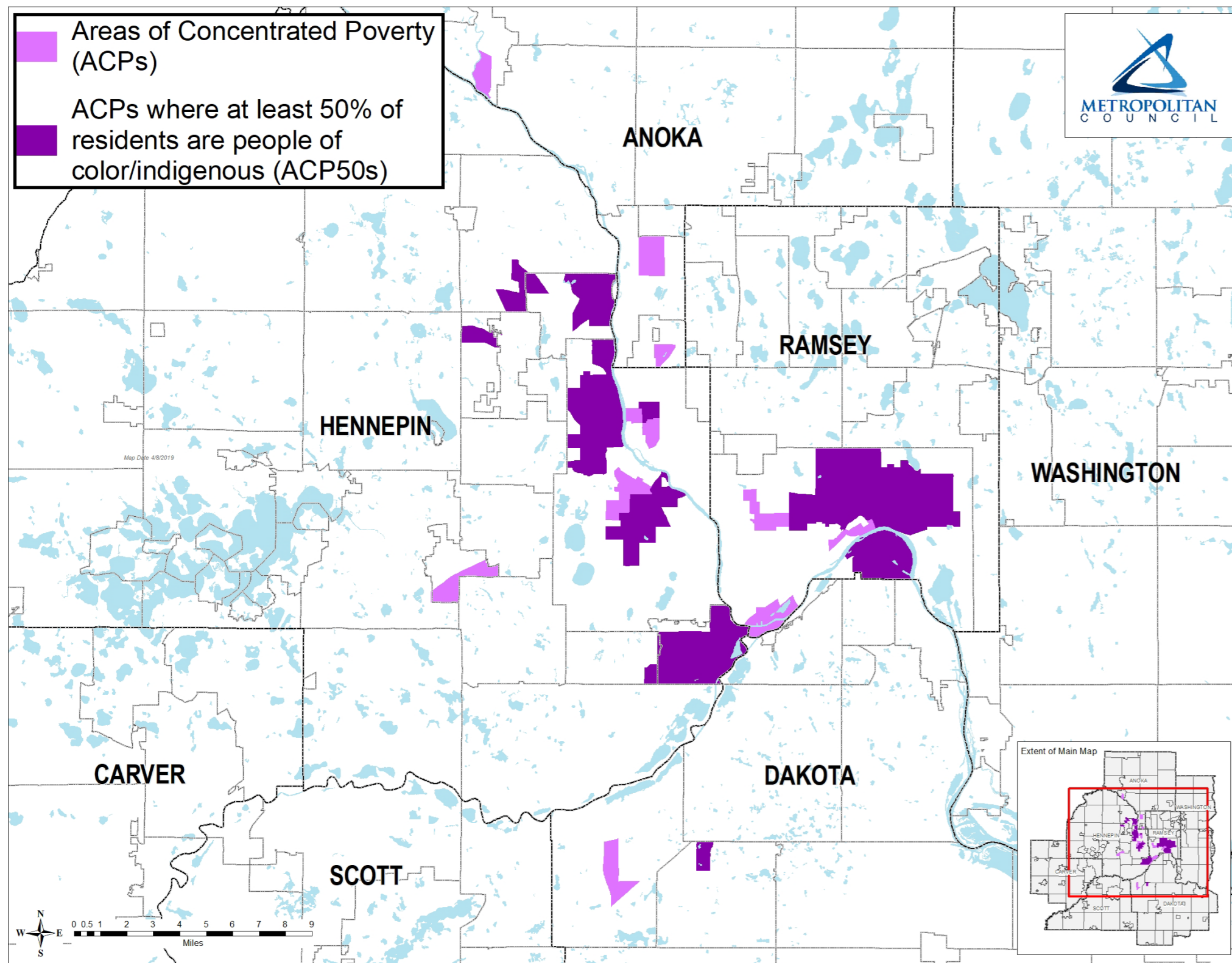
*Residents are racially/ethnically diverse*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey five-year estimates

# Analysis suggests concentrated poverty = people of color

*Most people do not live in ACPs*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey five-year estimates

# Analysis harms communities

We hear (and share) concerns that our analysis of concentrated poverty...

- Focuses only on poverty (not concentrated wealth)
- Omits decades of discrimination and disinvestment
- Fixates on problems, neglecting community assets

Consequently, our analysis could promote...

- A deficit-based narrative: Low-income people/places are the problem, not the systems that create them
- Investments that don't reflect the needs/wishes of residents and risk displacing them
- A focus on deconcentrating poverty (not ending it)

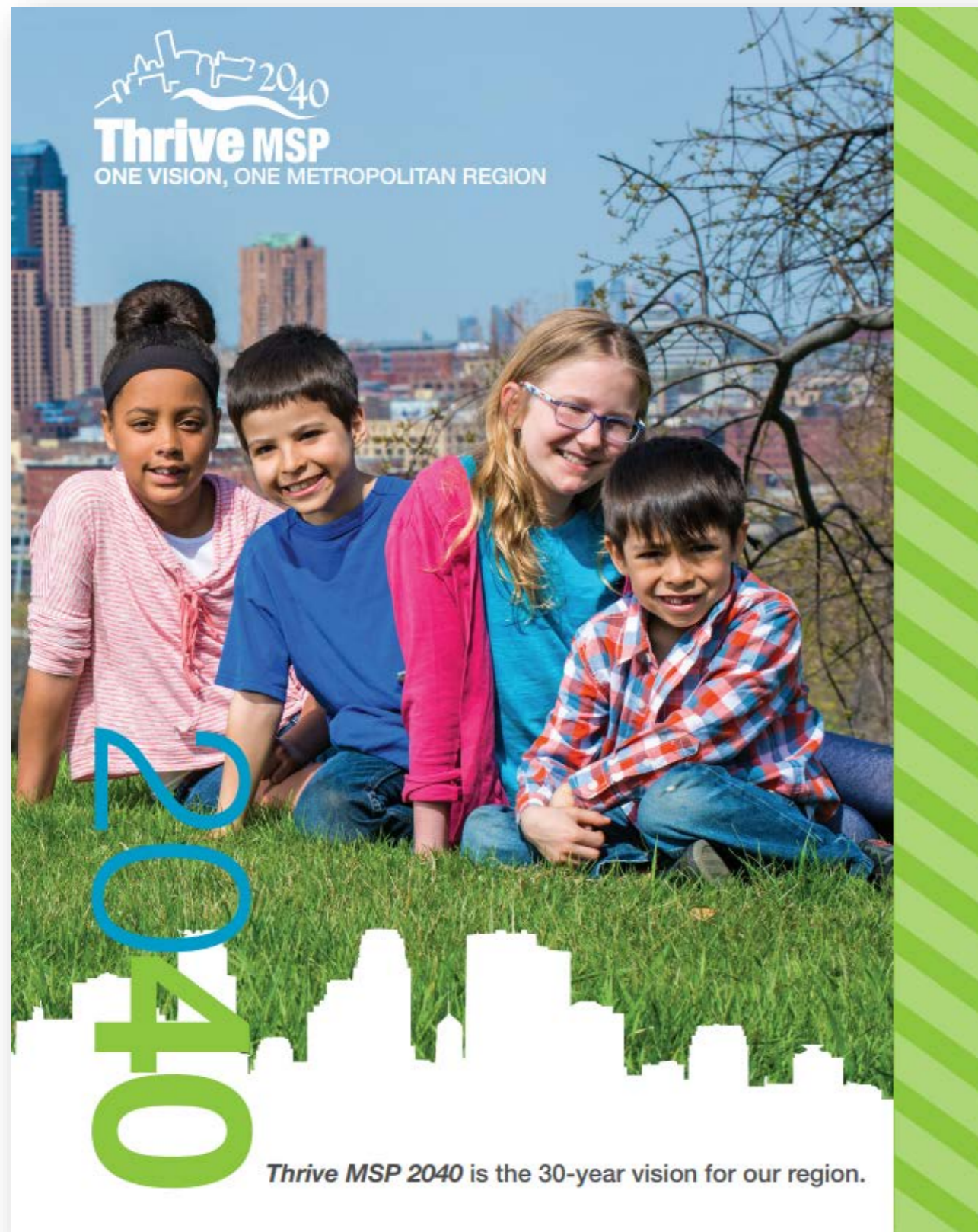
*The implicit message:*

*“Areas of Concentrated Poverty need saving, not a seat at the table”*



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# Concentrated poverty in our own words



*“The Council will work to **mitigate** Areas of Concentrated Poverty... by better connecting their residents to opportunity and catalyzing neighborhood **revitalization.**”*  
(p. 42; emphasis added)

*“The Council intends to play a role as a regional convener to advance conversations around ... Developing integrated plans and investment strategies to **transform** Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty into **thriving mixed-income** neighborhoods.”*  
(p. 72; emphasis added)

*“While the Urban Center includes some of the region’s **wealthy and historically notable areas**, like Summit Avenue, it also includes **areas with significant challenges**, including many of the region’s Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty.”*  
(p. 96; emphasis added)

**What are some alternatives for thinking about place-based equity?**



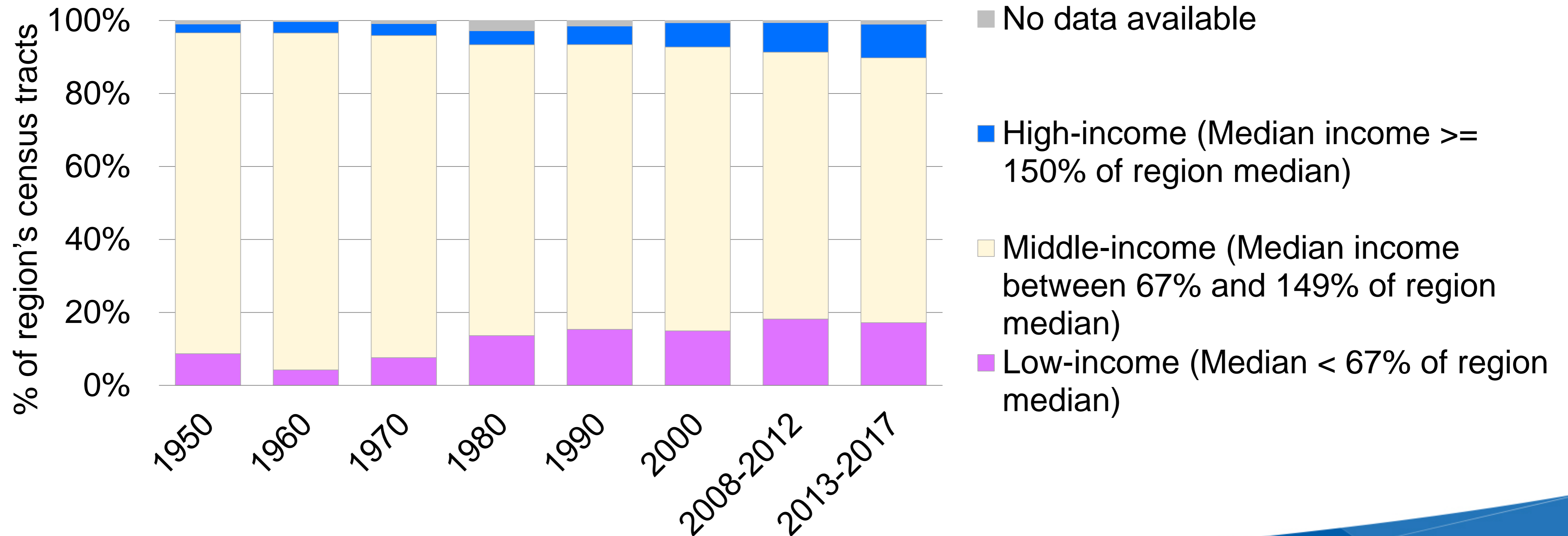
# #1: Focus on the full spectrum of inequality

The data

- Our region is characterized by low-income areas and high-income areas.
- Inequality is increasing across geographic areas, just as it's increasing across individuals and households.

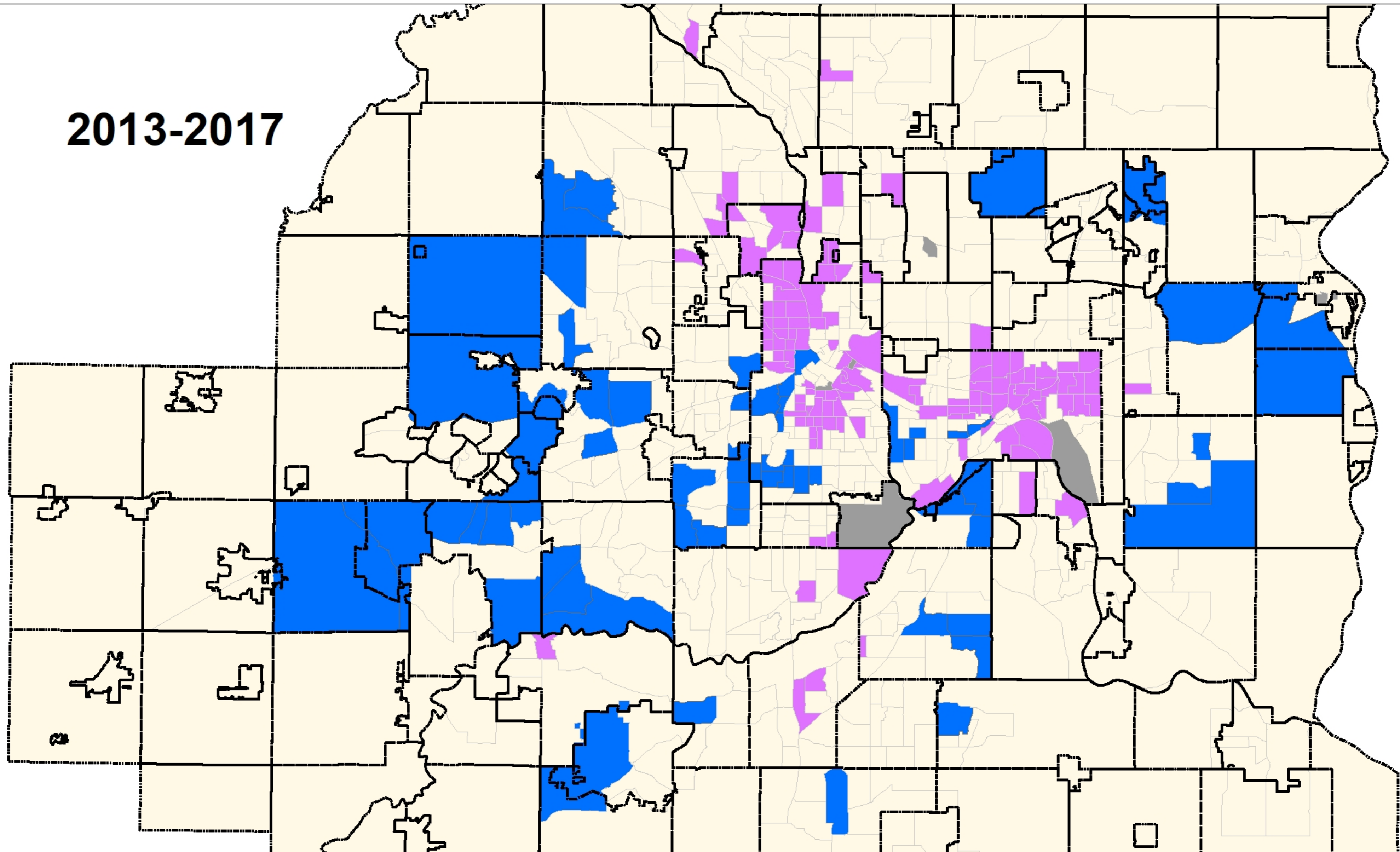


# Inequality across areas is increasing



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census data (1950-2000) and American Community Survey five-year estimates (2008-2012 and 2013-2017).

**2013-2017**



# #1: Focus on the full spectrum of inequality

The data

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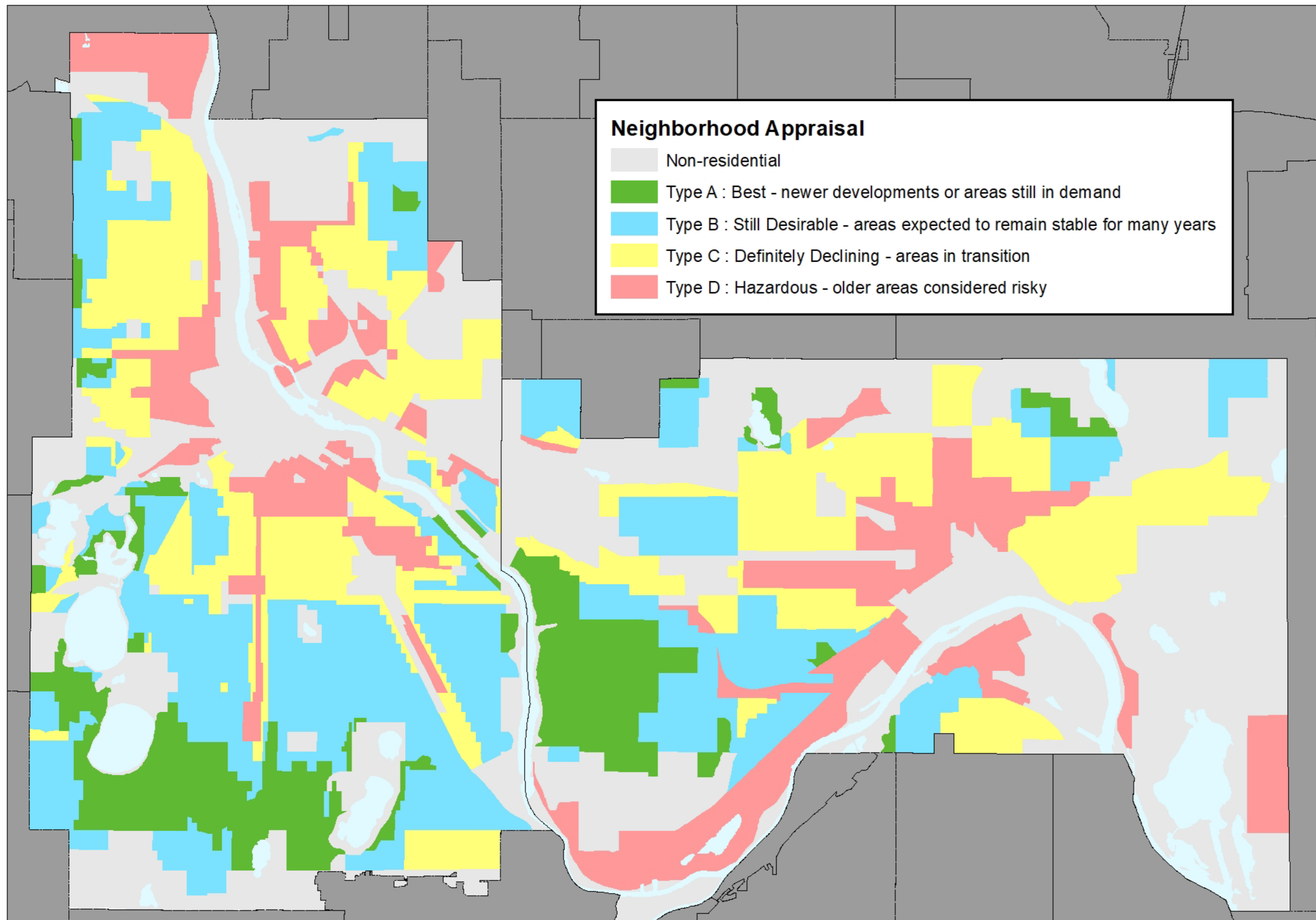
The story

- The issue is not concentrations of low-income people.
- The issue is the broader system that produces inequality.

## #2: Demonstrate the legacy of disinvestment

The data

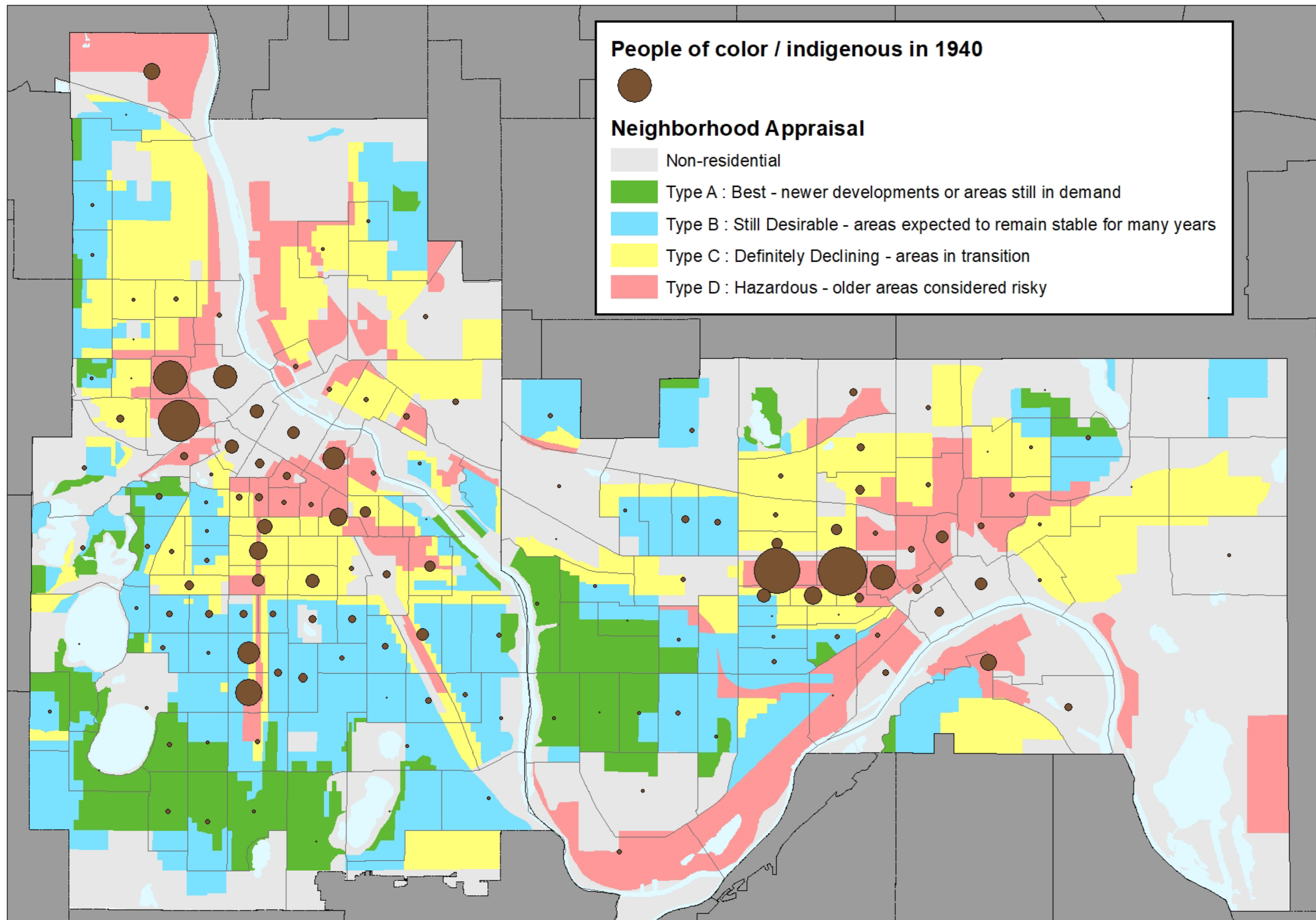
- Mortgage lending maps from 1934 privileged areas with White people over areas with people of color.
- Low-income and high-income areas emerged from these redlining maps.
- Gaps in housing-based wealth are evident today.



*This map was created in 1934 by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation.*

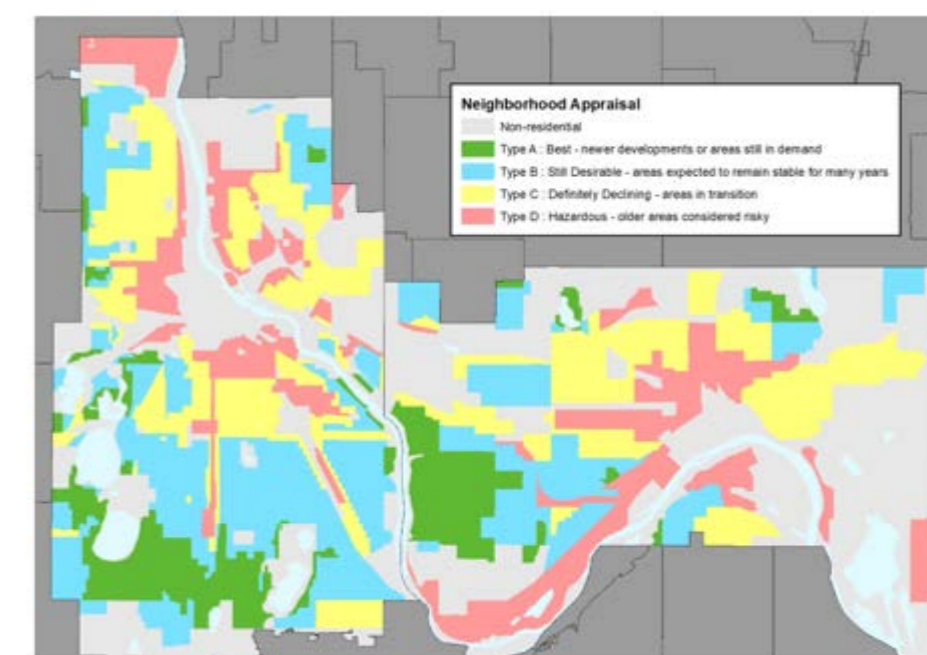
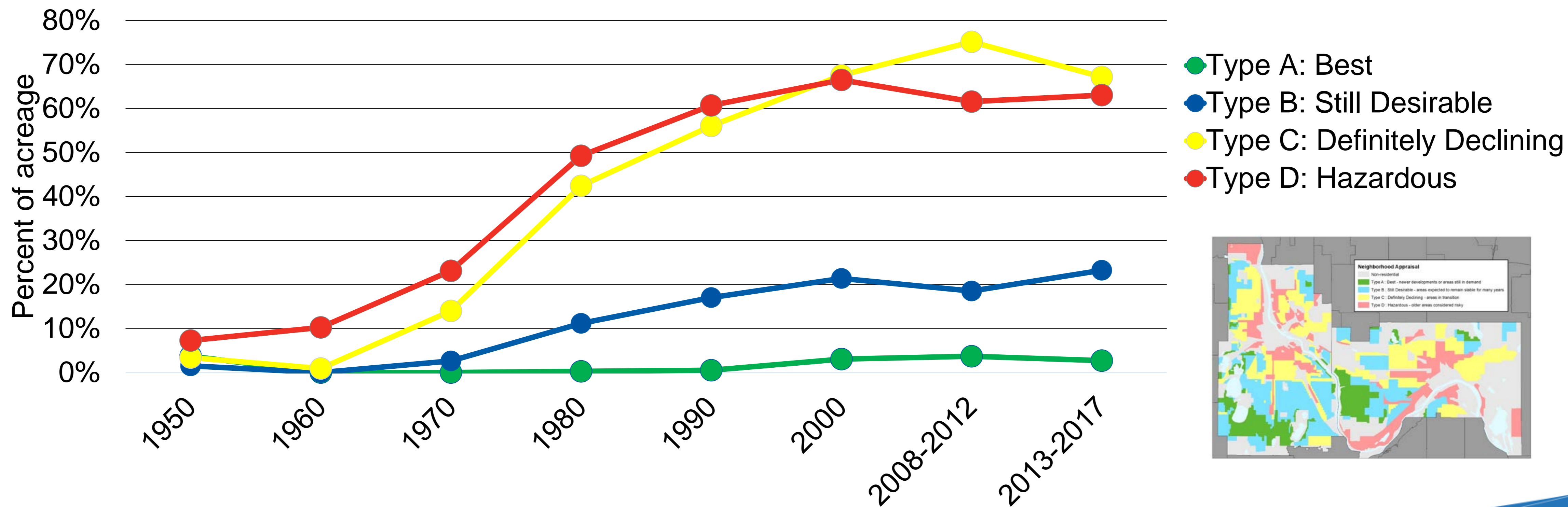
*Local real estate professionals rated how risky it would be to insure mortgage loans in each area.*

*It was difficult to obtain a mortgage in the red and yellow areas.*



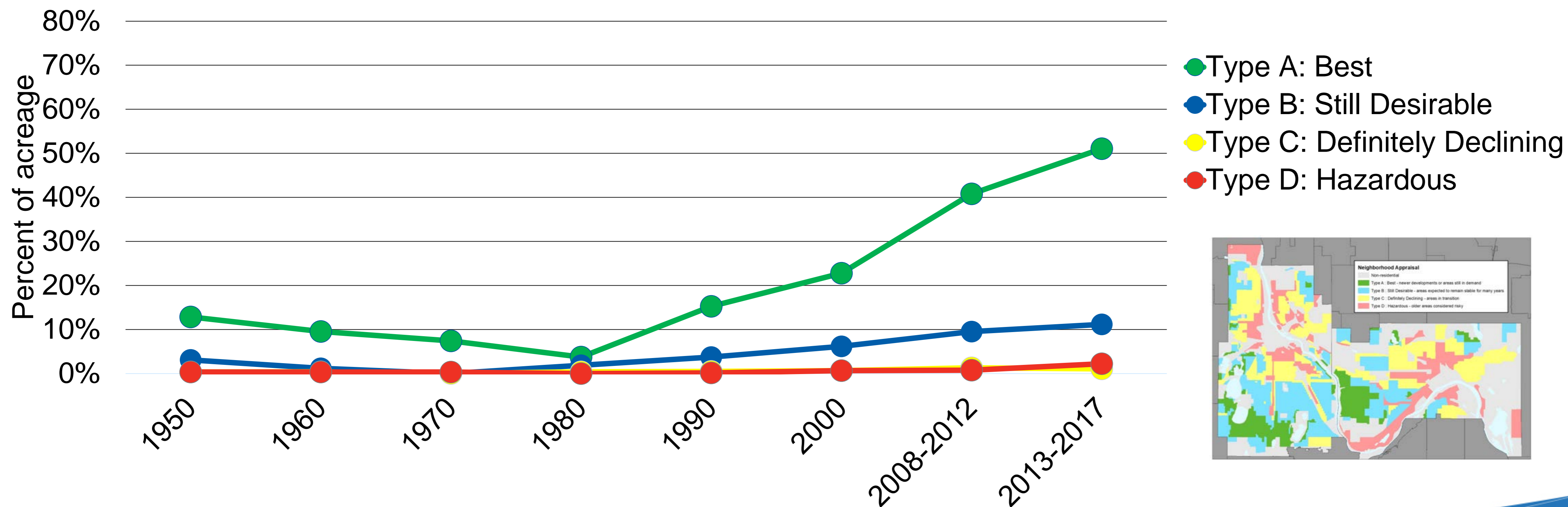
*Race was a key factor in their ratings.*

# Red and yellow areas became lower-income



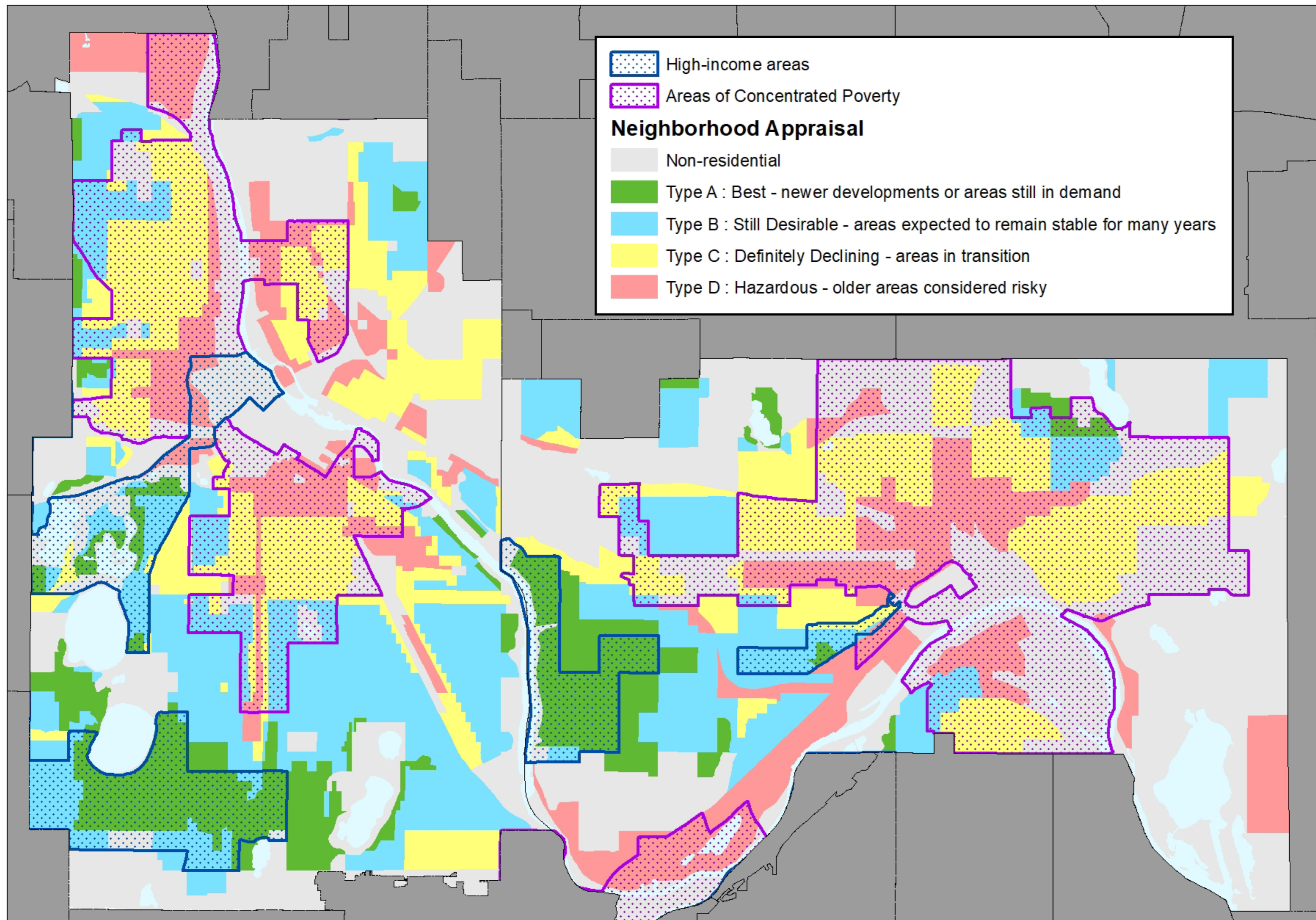
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census data (1950-2000) and American Community Survey five-year estimates (2008-2012 and 2013-2017).

# Green areas became higher-income

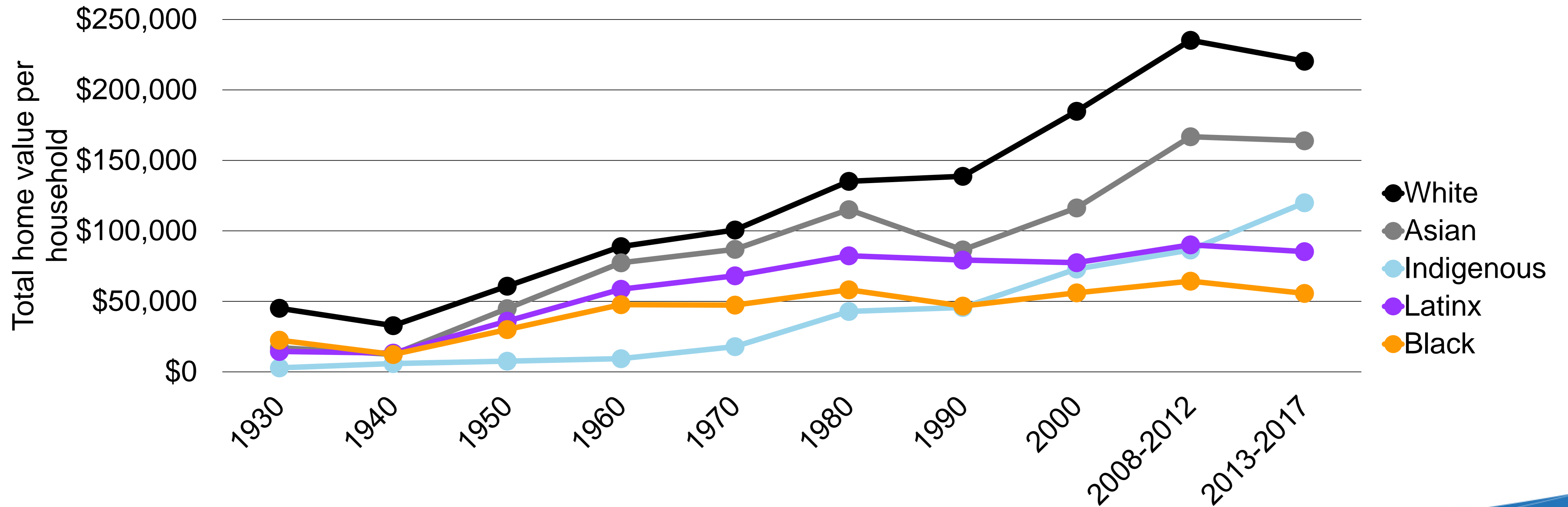


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census data (1950-2000) and American Community Survey five-year estimates (2008-2012 and 2013-2017).





# White households gained; Black households didn't



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census data (1950-2000) and American Community Survey five-year estimates (2008-2012 and 2013-2017). For 1950, data are not available, and the chart displays the linear interpolation between 1940 and 1960.

## #2: Demonstrate the legacy of disinvestment

### The data

- Mortgage lending maps from 1934 privileged areas with White people over areas with people of color.
- Low-income and high-income areas emerged from these redlining maps.
- Gaps in housing-based wealth are evident today.

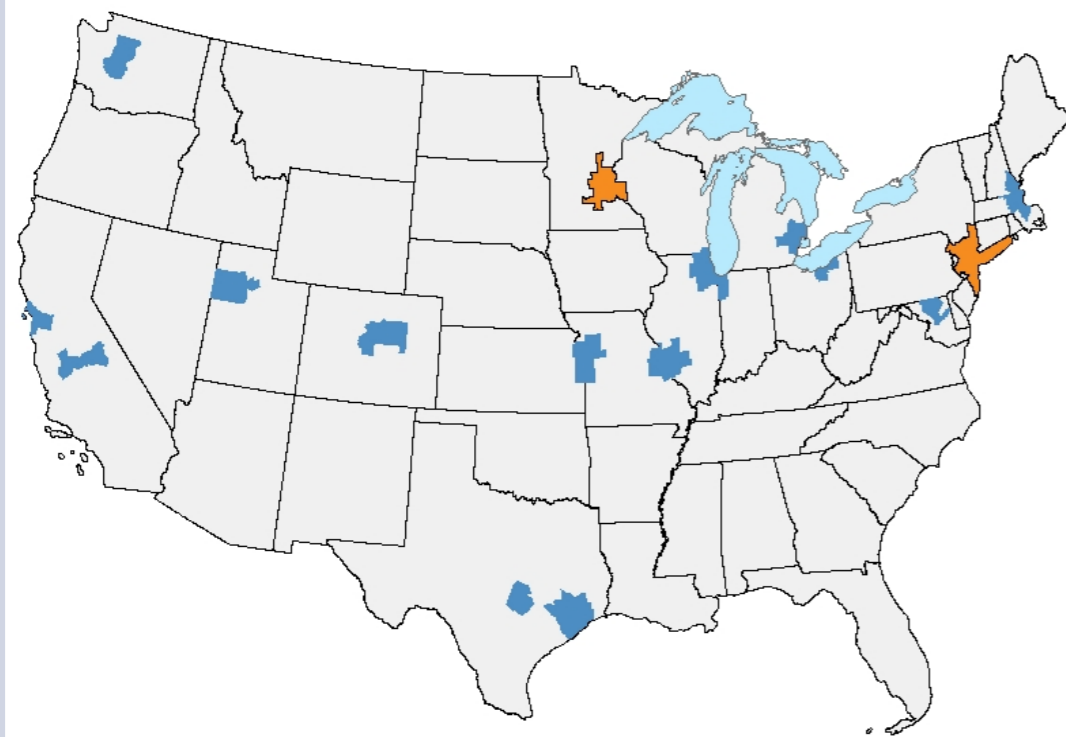
### The story

- Concentrated poverty came from federal government policy and the local real estate industry, not from “natural” market forces.
- The legacy of discrimination and disinvestment is still with us, and we should think carefully about our current actions.

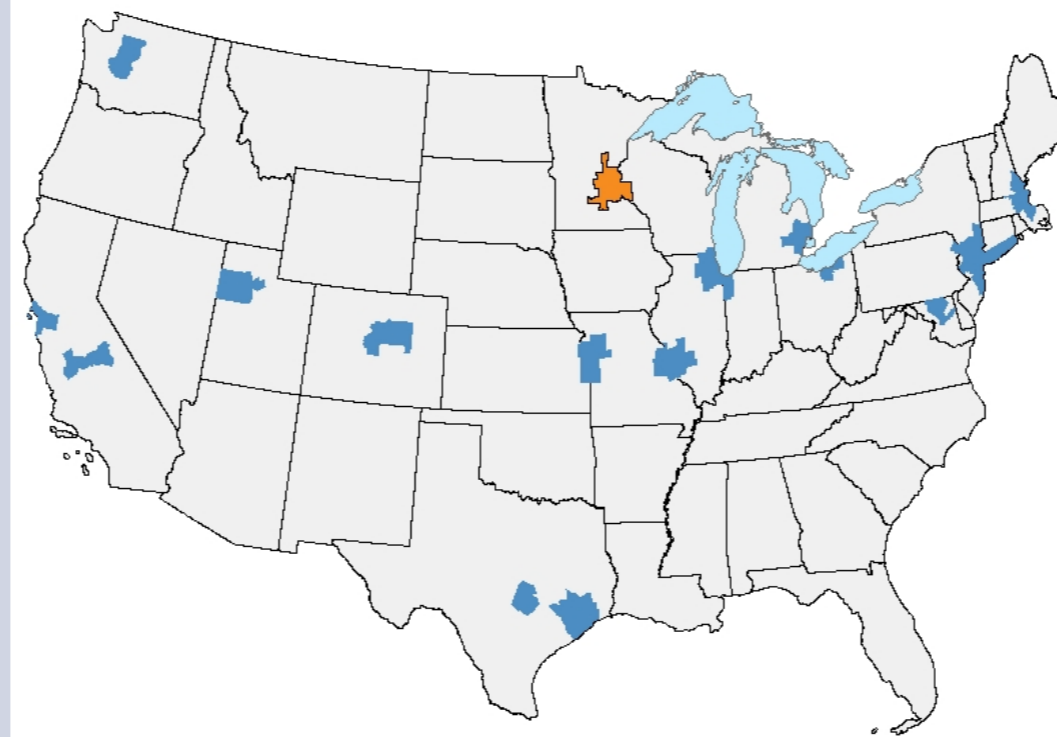
# #3: Examine other regions and organizations

- Fair Housing and Equity Assessments (FHEAs) in other large metropolitan areas
- Data publications and websites in peer regions (Greater MSP)
- National, regional, and local think tanks

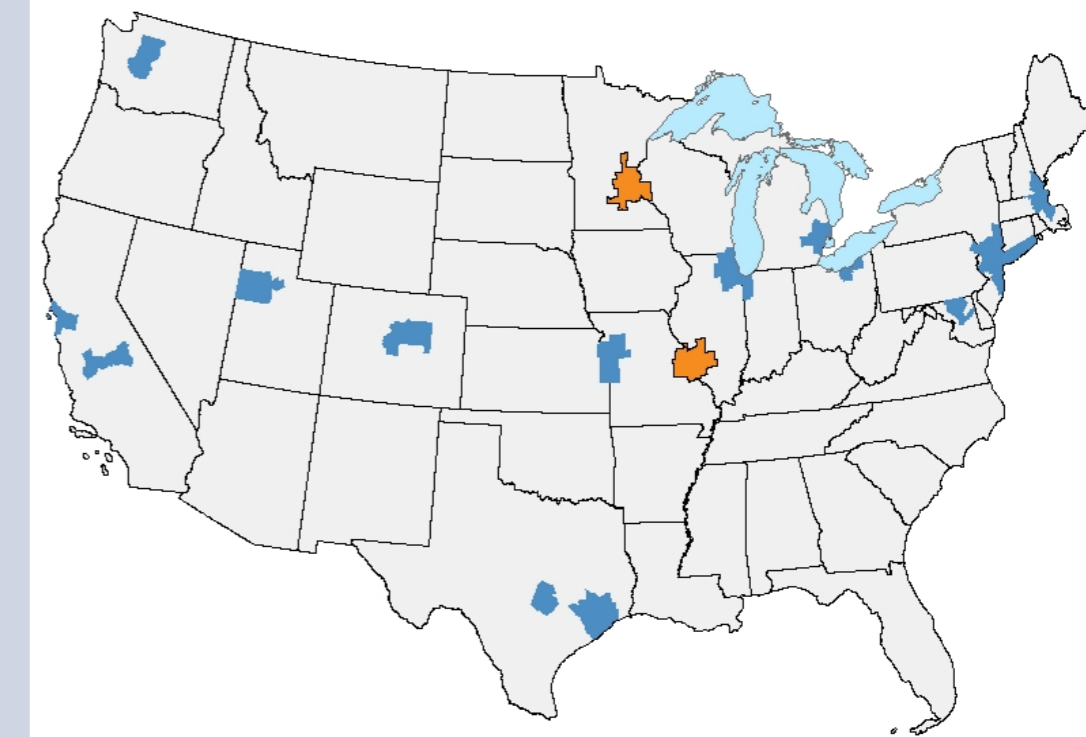
# Most FHEA regions have not continued researching concentrated poverty



Committed to update Areas of Concentrated Poverty as newer data became available



Published these updates on the Internet



Included concentrated poverty in regional indicators

*These metros published their own Fair Housing and Equity Assessments. Orange metros completed the action described in text.*

# Aside from FHEAs, most peer regions do not highlight specific neighborhoods for an equity focus



Puget Sound Regional Council

Data and Resources



[www.regionalindicators.org](http://www.regionalindicators.org)

Bay Area Equity Atlas

Home / Indicators / Neighborhood opportunity



# Highlighting areas without concentrated poverty

- “Communities of concern” (San Francisco, New Jersey)
  - Blend poverty with race, % without cars, % with disability, cost-burdened renters, etc.
  - Shifts focus to *our* responsibility to use special care when planning or developing
- “Disinvested areas” (Chicago)
  - Measure disinvestment directly
  - Shifts focus to the economic system
- Use different boundaries for different programs
  - For housing, look at housing cost burden rates or housing affordability
  - For transportation, look at carless households or “extreme” commuting

# Highlighting “opportunity”/advantaged areas

- “High-opportunity” areas (Opportunity Atlas, Kirwan, CPO)
  - Measures generally focus on jobs, schools, housing, transportation
  - Shifts focus: a more nuanced portrait, but caution with directionality and measurement
- “Racially Concentrated Areas of Affluence” (U of M)
  - Blend high incomes with % White
  - Shifts focus: the same economic system creates these advantaged areas



# Highlighting region-level economic segregation, but not specific areas

**BROOKINGS**

REPORT  
**U.S. concentrated poverty in the wake of the Great Recession**  
 Elizabeth Kneebone and Natalie Holmes - Thursday, March 31, 2016

**National Equity Atlas**  
 PERE PolicyLink

About the Atlas | Data Summaries | Indicators | Reports | Data in Action

Indicators

Select an indicator from the menus below: Enter a state, region, or city name:

Demographics | Equity | Economic Benefits

Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area **Explore**

**Neighborhood poverty** Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area

Breakdown:  
 Percent living in high-poverty neighborhoods by race/ethnicity: Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area, 2015

Race/Ethnicity	Percent
All	3.4%
White	1.5%
Black	14.6%
Latino	6.1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	9.4%
Native American	10.6%
Mixed/other	5.0%

U.S. Census Bureau; Geolytics, Inc.

**Children living in high poverty areas in Minnesota**

Change Indicator

Table | Map | Trends | Bar

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION  
**KIDS COUNT DATA CENTER**

Why This Indicator Matters  
 Concentrated poverty puts whole neighborhoods, and high rates of crime and violence, physical and mental health issues, unemployment and other problems.

This indicator is included in the KIDS COUNT Child Well-Being Index. Read the KIDS COUNT Data Book to learn more:  
[show more](#)

**SELECTIONS**

Year(s)	Data Type
2013-2017	Percent

Embed | Save Image | Raw Data (MN locations) | Raw Data (all locations) | Definition & Sources

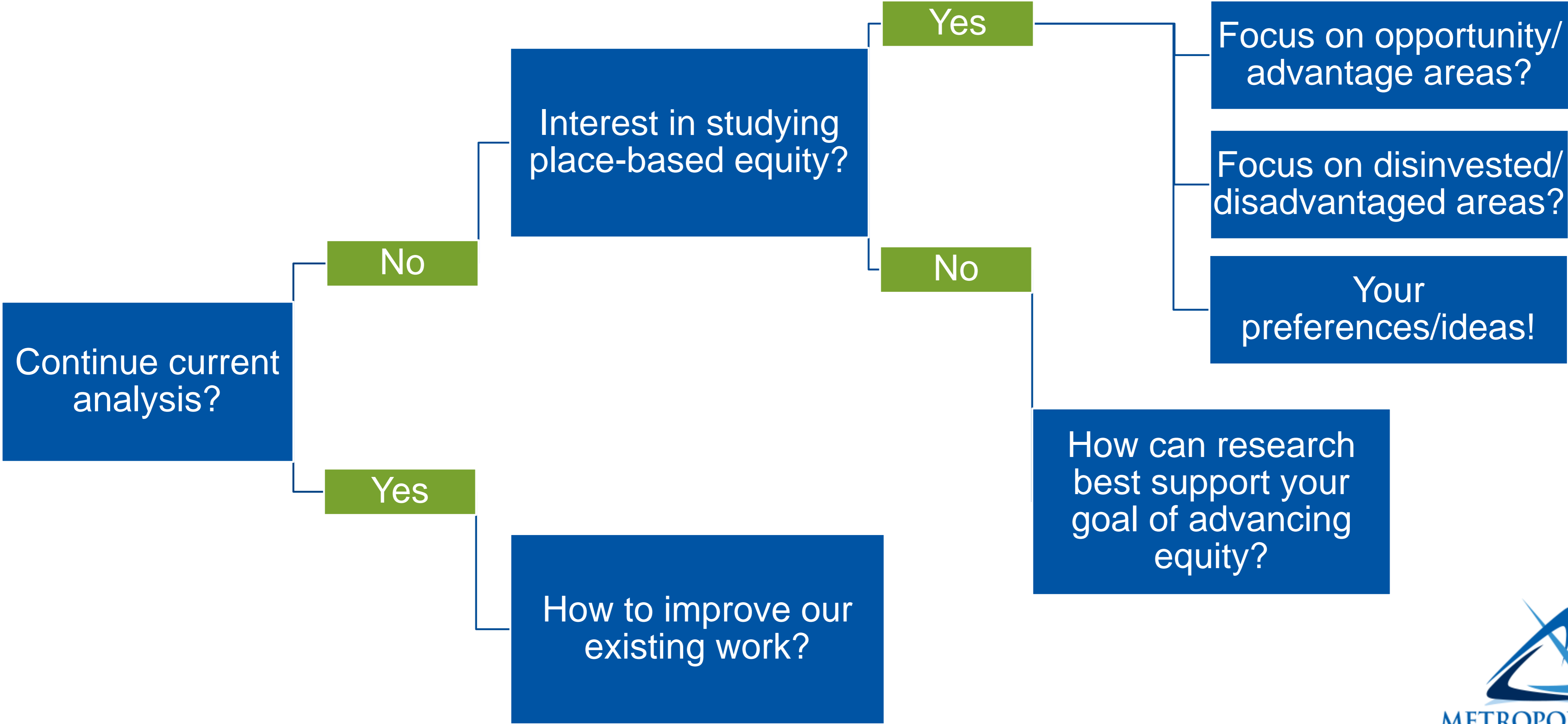
City	Percent
Atlanta	38%
Austin	14%
Boston	23%
Chicago	29%
Dallas	31%
Denver	11%
Minneapolis	27%
Portland	9%
San Francisco	6%
Seattle	7%

# Discussion

# Today's presentation

- Why have we studied Areas of Concentrated Poverty?
- How is the Council using Areas of Concentrated Poverty?
- Why are we rethinking studying Areas of Concentrated Poverty?
- What are some alternatives for thinking about place-based equity?
- Discussion

# Today's discussion goal(s)



# Decision #1: Continue what we're doing?

## YES: Revise them

Continue identifying and reporting on Areas of Concentrated Poverty, but tell the story differently:

- Change the name?
- Explain better why they're relevant (disinvestment)?
- Explain their origins?
- Highlight assets with community-created narratives?
- Provide context with additional data?
- Your ideas here!

## NO: Replace them

Discontinue analyses and publications about Areas of Concentrated Poverty.

Choose a different path for advancing equity.

# Decision #2: Interest in place-based equity?

## YES: Measure it differently

Continue focus on place-based equity, prioritizing:

- Disinvested/disadvantaged areas?
- “Opportunity”/advantaged areas?
- Region-level measures of economic segregation?
- Different boundaries for different programs?
- Your ideas here!

## NO: Shift focus

Concentrate on individual-level and household-level equity?

What kinds of research would best support your goal of improving opportunities for the region’s residents of color and indigenous residents?