

Cleveland Group Paper

Executive Summary

This paper serves as a proposal to the City of Cleveland to solve some of the major issues plaguing it. These issues include the following: segregation, inadequate housing, excessive crime, lackluster transportation, predatory lending, an inadequate public education system, and problems with the voting system. Our four proposed solutions to combat these issues include: greatly reduce segregated housing, improve the crime rate, improve monetary equity, and improve the voting system. Written below are both the histories and current standings/statistics regarding the aforementioned topics and the proposed solutions to solve them. Also included is information on how to fund these proposals.

Introduction

Cleveland is a city with a rich history and it was once a powerhouse for industrialization and innovation. It has since lowered in rank in the national spotlight, but there are many things being done to improve the city. The Mission Statement for the City of Cleveland is: “We are committed to improving the quality of life in the City of Cleveland by strengthening our neighborhoods, delivering superior services, embracing the diversity of our citizens, and making Cleveland a desirable, safe city in which to live, work, raise a family, shop, study, play and grow old.” There are many goals the city can try to achieve that would not only help the city regrow but would also solve many of the issues plaguing the city and follow this mission statement. In order for Cleveland to propel itself into a more equitable and sustainable future, the city needs to implement programs that would greatly reduce segregated housing, improve the crime rate, create more economic equity, and redesign the voting system.

History of the City

Cleveland has a long and deep history that has played an important role in industrialization and transportation in the United States. The current region of Cleveland was occupied by Erie Native Americans until other tribes known as the Iroquois drove them out during the 17th century and in the 18th century the French established a trading post (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). Later, a few years after the American Revolution, Ohio was open for settlement and Connecticut had some claim to the land in NorthEast Ohio since it was apart of the Western Reserve, lying at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, while also having direct shoreline access to Lake Erie, where a settler named Moses Cleaveland surveyed and founded Cleveland in July of 1796 (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). Cleveland's proximity to Lake Erie was found to be very valuable to the city, ultimately allowing them to have early mobility, and access to the things such as the Walk in The Water steamboat which was the first steam boat to vogue any great lake, departing for the first time from Buffalo New York in 1818 (Walk-in-the-Water, 2019). However, even though Cleveland had some early success with transportation routes due to being able to harness some of the natural waterways they had access

to, it was not until they began to construct different man made infrastructures, such as channels and canals that Cleveland would really be able to reach new heights of growth in the transportation realm (Transportation, 2018). One canal in particular that can be attributed to much of Cleveland Ohio's early growth was the creation of the Ohio & Erie canal, which was constructed from 1825- 1832, (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). Once the canal was completed it was reported that people could successfully travel from Cincinnati Ohio to Cleveland in only 80 hours, which was very fast at this time since in the past this same trip would've taken multiple weeks (History of the Ohio & Erie Canal, 2021). Ultimately the canal boomed Cleveland's economy tremendously within the first decade, resulting in a 360% higher increase in land value in areas located close to the canal (History of the Ohio & Erie Canal, 2021). Then in the 1850's, there was an increase in railroads which in turn benefited Cleveland and brought more commercial and industrial activity (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). Cleveland, at this time, was now booming in terms of economic development. The Civil War brought business to Cleveland and the iron and steel processing, metals fabrication, oil refining, and chemical manufacturing; John D. Rockefeller founded Standard Oil during this time (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). At the end of the 19th century, suburban trains were implemented into Cleveland and by the 1930s Cleveland was a "modern metropolis" (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). Cleveland suffered tremendously during the Great Depression. However, there was a brief comeback during World War II, but then again suffered a rapid decline over the next 60 or so years. Since then Cleveland has been pretty stagnant ever since (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023).

The first black settler arrived in Cleveland in 1809 and in 1860, 799 black people resided there mostly on the east side (Kusmer, 2023). Unlike other northern states, most black citizens were fairly well off socially and economically (Kusmer, 2023). Cleveland was fairly integrated early on, by the 1840s' most schools, theaters, and hotels had little to no segregation (Kusmer, 2023). The black community at this time faced less occupational oppression than other black folks residing in other cities (Kusmer, 2023). In fact, 1 in 3 black residents were employed in skilled labor which helped accumulate wealth (Kusmer, 2023). However, black newcomers were not as fortunate.

It was not until the Great Migration that segregation and oppression in Cleveland really came into play, which occurred during 1910-1970 with around 10,000 black residents migrating there (Kusmer, 2023). The black newcomers settled near poor Italian and Jewish immigrants and conditions continued to quickly deteriorate for them regardless of the integrated schools (Kusmer, 2023). Segregation in hotels and other businesses was becoming a more common practice when it was not prior to the Great Migration (Kusmer, 2023). Socially, segregation in Cleveland skyrocketed by 1915, the Young Women's Christian Association banned black women from joining their group and hospitals no longer allowed black doctors and also segregated black patients (Kusmer, 2023). It only continued to get worse and the sector that was most affecting inequality in Cleveland for black residents was in the economic sector; as briefly touched on before, Cleveland had a booming manufacturing industry, however, black residents were often

excluded from participating (Kusmer, 2023). Steel mills fueled Cleveland's economy but black residents were typically not hired, instead they were employed as service workers, and in turn by 1910 only about 10% of Cleveland's black population was employed in skilled trades (Kusmer, 2023). By the 1930's and into the 1960's, redlining had been implemented in Cleveland, which the effects are still prevalent today. The Home Owners Loan Corporation pressed real estate agents in Cleveland to only sell to white families and citizens forcing black and other residents and families of color to move to redlined areas or areas with strict deeds that were related to race (Bibb, 2023).

During the Great Migration, a lot of the white community began to move to the suburbs as jobs continued to disappear leaving the rest of Cleveland to struggle and deteriorate (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). Economic hardship began to hit the black community as well as other factors. The 60's and 70's were a tough couple of decades for the city of Cleveland having racial violence and pollution due to a fire on the Cuyahoga River from floating chemical wastes (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). Racial violence in the 1960s broke loose in Cleveland because of the Civil Rights Movement. One of the most notable riots, the Hough Riots which occurred in the Hough neighborhood that was predominately black post the 1950's, lasted for 6 days in July of 1966 after a white bar owner denied a black man's request for a glass of water (Michney, 2020). This riot also occurred because of the oppression the black community was facing at the time in all walks of life. There was some hope though for Cleveland. In 1967, the first black mayor of Cleveland, Carl B. Stokes, and in any major United States city; he and others started to rebuild the city during this time and by the 1980s they had taken the environment into serious consideration (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). This helped give the city some hope, but not enough. By the 1980's, Cleveland had begun to suffer and could not keep up with the rest of the country and there was not much economic turnover. By the 1980's, most businesses were downsizing and investing their money elsewhere (Hammack, 2018). This caused many people to leave. The economy fell apart in 1983 but was able to start to make a transition upward in 1985 and in 1989 the employment rate was back up to where it was before the economy crashed and was considered a "comeback city" (Cleveland: Four Perspectives on America's 'Comeback City' a Proceeding of the Crisis Cities Symposium 2022). Cleveland has had some hope since but still faces inequality, segregation, and could be a more prosperous city like it has been in the past.

History/Current Situation of Housing

There has been reports that before the start of the civil war, the city of Cleveland's black American population amounted to a total of 10,000, however by the 1920's it is noted that this population had now tripled and amounted to 34,451 which would only continue to increase in the coming years (Immigration, and Migration 2019). The Great Migration was the movement of people, a majority of which were African American, from southern cities to northern, and midwestern ones that took place approximately between 1910-1970 in the United States of America (Great Migration, 2021). Originally it was noted that cities, including Cleveland, began to witness the first large wave of migration occurring between the year 1910 and 1930 (Sanchez,

2018). Due to the fact that the city of Cleveland was home to booming industries, as well as large railway systems, specifically that of the Pennsylvania railroad, they ended up witnessing a large surge in their African American population during the first wave of the migration (Sanchez, 2018). As a result, a large number of African Americans began to arrive in the city of Cleveland ultimately ending in them being disproportionately placed into inner-city houses that were considered slums, ultimately leading us to note the formation of the black-ghetto (Sanchez, 2018). The way in which the city was able to disproportionately force their African American populations into these neighborhoods was through the deployment of specific laws, and policies. The deployment of these early laws and policies have led to much of the inequities currently present in Cleveland's modern day housing industry. To thoroughly grasp the deployment of these different techniques that were used to unjustly discriminate against a particular race in the housing industry, the introduction of different techniques historically deployed throughout the city of Cleveland is a good place to start.

One technique that was deployed early on that would have long lasting effects of the racial demographic makeup of neighborhoods in Cleveland Ohio was the deployment and usage of discriminatory zoning ordinances. A zoning ordinance is in essence a tool that is deployed when one wants to define specifically how a particular piece of land can be used (Kenton, 2022). The usage of racial based zoning ordinances were originally ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme court in 1917, and essentially barred from usage (Meyersohn, 2023). However, even after this ruling Cleveland continued to use zoning ordinance to create neighborhoods that only allowed for the construction of “single-family” homes, meaning no apartment building could be built in these neighborhoods which would ultimately result in the landmark supreme court case *Village of Euclid Ohio v. Ambler Realty Co* in 1926 (Meyersohn, 2023). Ultimately the Supreme court ruled in favor of allowing zoning ordinances to continue being used in the manner that they were currently being deployed in Cleveland Ohio (Sanchez, 2018). This meant cities could restrict the creation of apartments, and the areas that they were allowed to be developed in (Meyersohn, 2023).

Discriminatory practices of zoning ordinances were not the only technique that were witnessed being deployed in the city of Cleveland to segregate neighborhoods in the city based on racial makeup. It has been reported that another technique that was utilized historically in the city of Cleveland Ohio was that of redlining, which was utilized to such a high degree throughout the 20th century in the city, that even though it is currently banned from usage, neighborhoods in Cleveland continue to grapple with the effects of it today (Best, & Mejia, 2022). The birth of redlining occurred in the United States of America in the 1930's with the creation of two federal government programs the Home Owners Loan Corporation, and the Federal Housing Administration which they claimed were created to “help” with homeowners finances (Rose, 2022). Ultimately, the creation of the Home Owners Loan Corporation came first in 1933 and was charged with creating maps of different urban cities neighborhoods in order to infer how likely a mortgage borrower was to pay the government back their loan (Rose, 2022). Shortly after this in 1934 we note the creation of the Federal Housing Administration was

created replacing the HOLC as the permanent agency, only allowing for loans to be given to those neighborhoods on the map that had a higher ranking would receive an A or would be outlined in green, on the other hand, those area deemed predatory and dangerous to lend to were rated a C, or D, or had a redline drawn around it (Rose, 2022). Oftentime it was found that those being given these low ratings were those with a large black, and brown population, making it nearly impossible under the HOLC and FHA for black and brown people to receive home loans (Rose, 2022).

In 1968 with the passage of the Fair Housing Act by the United States of America's federal government would officially note the outlawing of redlining, yet the outlawing of it could not undo all the damage that it had been done to cities across the United States of America (Redlining Was Outlawed in 1968, 2020). It has been estimated that during this period hundreds of redlined maps were being deployed throughout cities in the United States of America (Best, & Mejia, 2022). When examining current neighborhoods today we note that those areas that were redlined and rated lowly continue to be demographically made up of mainly black and brown people, whereas those who were outlined in green continue to be made up of predominantly white communities (Best, & Mejia, 2022). The city of Cleveland models these effects/ trends with exceptionality, since when we examine maps from the past that were denied housing loans they tend to be the same neighborhoods today that we witness drowning in poverty, health issues, and high levels of crime/criminal activity, specifically the East side of Cleveland which was redlined more than another area in the city of Cleveland (McEwen).

History/Current Situation of Transportation

Cleveland Ohio's ability to adapt and implement innovative means of transportation early on, has been noted as one of the major driving forces that resulted in much of the city's early success and growth (Toman, & Blaine, 2019). It will ultimately be our job to expose to you a few of the ways in which these transportation infrastructure have been historically manufactured, constructed, and implemented in such a manner that has disproportionately affected certain racial groups, resulting in major inequities today. We will look at specific policies that have historically shaped these inequities in transportation infrastructure, before shifting to how these policies have impacted the modern day system of transportation that currently exist in the city of Cleveland today. After we have completed this we will finish with suggestions we believe if made to the city's transportation system could possibly lead to an overall more equitable Cleveland Ohio.

The historical section has already discussed the ways in which water transportation affected the development and growth of transportation in the city. Therefore allowing us the opportunity to analyze some of the earliest forms of transportation being constructed outside of the city's water-ways. It has been cited that one of the first popular modes of transportation to appear in Cleveland during the early 1800's was the stagecoach, which became particularly popular in Cleveland in 1818 after the city had developed a weekly schedule providing more reliable routes that people could use to travel from Cleveland to Painesville Ohio (Stagecoach Routes in Northern Ohio, 2018). In 1826 it was noted that you could go to Erie Pennsylvania

from Cleveland Ohio for a total of \$3, keep in mind this trip was estimated to cover about a 140 mile radius (Stagecoach Routes in Northern Ohio). It is estimated that the value of \$3 in the 1800's is equivalent to around \$72 today (Inflation Rate Between 1800-2023). Even though the cost of the stage coach depends on how far you are traveling, meaning a smaller trip would not cost as much as a longer trip, stagecoaches have still historically been noted as a relatively expensive means of travel (Williams, 2022).

The first steam locomotive reached the United States of America in 1829, yet the railroad era would not officially begin in Cleveland Ohio until 1849 when we witnessed the operation of the CC&C's formally known as the Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati, which was Cleveland first operating locomotive (Railroads, 2018). Construction of railroads after the creation of this one did not slow down, and the railway system would continue to be developed at a rather rapid pace in the city of Cleveland(Railroads, 2018). Railroads offered to be a good means of intercity travel in the city of Cleveland, as well as a good way for people to ship early goods at this time, since it was universally recognized that water transportation was slower and subject to more unruly weather conditions (Transportation, 2018). In 1907 it was recorded that if you were to use the rail line known as the New York Central, which was the most popular one at this time, you would pay \$3.25 to travel from Cleveland to Toledo (Interurban, 2018). Much like what we witnessed happening to the popularity of stagecoaches, steamed powered railways system, or one pulled by horses, would begin to see a decrease in popularity following the introduction of the electric interurbans system, which were formally introduced to Cleveland in the late 1890's (Transportation, 2018).

Interurban railways were developed through the electrification of railway lines, and were essentially small trains like structures that could be used by passenger's to travel efficiently throughout the city (Chang & Mecchi, 2021). Citizens of Cleveland quickly began to expand their usage of the interurban systems, since it was seemingly cheaper and faster than steam power railways, which was the primary alternative use of transit at this time (Change, & Mecchi, 2021). In 1895 Cleveland was able to boast that they had one of the first intercity traction lines ever developed in a city in the United States of America (Transportation, 2018). The line was formerly known as the Akron, Bedford, and Cleveland railways, yet this was just one of many interurban systems to be offered in Cleveland, spanning all over the west, east, and south side of the city (Transportation, 2018). It has been cited that Interurban travel was much cheaper than steam locomotive rail lines, citing that the lakeshore line only charged customers 1.75 to travel from Cleveland to Toledo (Interurban, 2018).

Starting in 1908 the The United States of America witnessed the very first mass production of the Model T which was a gasoline operated car that we're being sold for only 850 USD, which even back then was considered to be relatively affordable (Kennedy, 2022). This automatically led to Gasoline powered automobiles ultimately gaining major traction and usage in Cleveland, with it even being reported that by 1916 Cleveland had over 61,000 registered automobiles operating within their cities line, and this amount would only triple in size in the coming decade (Transportation, 2018). The creation of the gasoline automobile would in turn

lead to the expansion of more modern roadway systems (Transportation, 2018). This would not only lead to an increase of automobile usage, but would ultimately lead to Cleveland deploying their very first city buses in 1925 (Transportation, 2018). In 1936, Cleveland would also witness the construction of their very first trackless trolley's (Cleveland Railway Co., 2018). Ultimately in 1956 the United States of America, decided to pass the Federal Aid Highway Act in an attempt to help fund the building of interstate highways across American cities (King, 2021). This led to the hiring of planners who were in charge of deciding where the highways would be placed in cities, ultimately this allowed them to segregate neighborhoods in cities, since many planners would simply design highways to be placed on top of black and brown communities, or on old boundaries lines that were originally utilized during racial zoning (King, 2021).

The next and last large infrastructure of public transportation to be created in the city of Cleveland Ohio is the Healthline. The Healthline officially began operation in 2008 on Euclid Avenue (History of Public Transit in Cleveland). The Healthline is Cleveland bus rapid transit system which is made up of 24 electric vehicles, stopping 36 different places throughout the city of Cleveland, connecting residents to some of the largest employment areas in the city, with routes that service streets in east Cleveland as well (RTA's Healthline). The origin of the BRT actually comes from the fact that it has routes that take people to and from the Cleveland clinic (Then & Now Street cars, 2015). Since its initial opening in 2008 it has been charged with serving over 44 million passengers in the city of Cleveland Ohio. Ultimately it has been cited as the highest turn on investment when compared to any other transportation infrastructure in the city of Cleveland (RTA's Healthline).

Between the years 1913-1920 it is noted that Cleveland witness the official creation of Cleveland's very first rapid transit system after the development of the blue and green light rail lines, which were created by two brothers known as O.P and M.J Van Swerigned, who wanted to connect the terminal tower to the suburbs of Shaker Heights (History of Public Transit in Cleveland). Light rail systems are different than heavy rail systems, since light rail are typically street cars that can potentially run on city streets, or through the usage of right of ways, which is different from heavy rail since they are more of the stereotypical trains that need railroads in order to operate (Heavy Rail, and Light Rail, 2019). In the case of the blue and green light rail lines, they operated through the usage of a private right of way, rather than through the operation on public roadways. In 1913, Cleveland would witness the very first official operation of their light- rail train system (History of Public Transit in Cleveland). At the time, it was reported that fare only cost passengers 3 cents to ride (History of Public Transit in Cleveland). In 1996 the light rail was expanded with the creation of the city's waterfront line (Cleveland City Planning Commission).

In 1910 we witnessed the creation of Cleveland's public franchise formally known as the Cleveland Railway Co (Then & Now Street Cars, 2015). In part the creation of the Cleveland Railway Co came after increased need for electric streetcar/interurbans lines was cited to take place in the city (Cleveland Railway Co.). Historically, the Cleveland Railway Company was known to be relatively important since it acted as Cleveland Ohio's public transportation

franchise from 1910-1942 (Cleveland Railway Co, 2018). This development and formation came after the Cleveland Electric Railway Co. and Municipal traction Co, which were both private entities at the time, decided to merge together ultimately resulting in the creation of the Cleveland Railroad company (Cleveland Railway Co, 2018). During their reign they operated a total of 1, 702 streetcars and buses (Then & Now Street Cars, 2015). With in the first 20 years of their creation we noted a serious increase in yearly ridership with, going from 228 million in 1910, to 450 million in 1920 (Cleveland Railway Co, 2018).

The early success and growth of automobiles and buses in Cleveland began to slow down in pace during the early 1940's due to WWII which was gravely impacting the auto industry at time due to the implementation of gasoline rations, leading people to rely on the city's transportation system once again, resulting in a reported ridership of 439 million in 1946 (Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, 2022). It is important to note that during this time period, specifically, in the year 1942, we witnessed the formation of the Cleveland Transit system, informally known as the CTS, which was at the time put in charge of operating the city's transit system (Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, 2022). The CTS formation came after the city purchased The Cleveland Railway Company, who as we noted formally acted as the city's main public transit carrier (Greater Regional Transit Authority, 2022). The company would witness grave monetary issues in the late 1930's following the increase of car ownership, integration of buses and trackless trolleys, ultimately leaving the city no choice but to bail the company out by purchasing them, leading to the creation of the Cleveland Transit System (Cleveland Railway Co., 2018). Under the operation of the CTS Cleveland would witness the creation of the red line in 1955 which provided services from the west side to W.117th, eventually in 1968 extending services to Hopkins international airport, resulting in Cleveland being crowned the first city in the western hemisphere to have a rapid transit system connecting their downtown to their airport (Urban Transportation, 2018). Keep in mind the CTS would not stand as the permanent and final operator of Cleveland transportation system.

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority was created in 1974 after the CTS noted some grave budget issues as ridership began to decrease by the 1950's and the 1960's and the organization depended solely on the fare revenues (Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, 2022). When the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority was created the operation of their system depended on the integration of 1% sales tax citizens in Cleveland would be subjected to (Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, 2022). The approval of this tax depended on voters, so in order to gain support the board promised them that fare to use service would only be 0.25 cents (Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority,2022). In 1982 we would witness the first climb in these fares prices after the city suffered reduction in federal subsidies (Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority,2022). In 1995 it would be recorded that the 1% sales tax accounted for 66% of the city's budgetary revenue, yet we would continue to see a hike in fare/ ticket prices (Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, 2022).

Now that we have learned about the history of the Cleveland transportation infrastructure we can discuss the ways in which it operates currently and issues that need to be addressed in

order to create a more equitable Cleveland. To start, it is important to note that transportation in Cleveland continues to be operated by the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority commonly referred to as RTA (Overview Facts about The Greater Cleveland RTA). One interesting development in the Greater Cleveland Regional Authority that has arisen since its original establishment was the development of their very own police department, which initially began operation in July of 1977, and continues to service Cleveland, and greater Cleveland today (Transit Police). As of 2020, it was reported that the number of officers working for the GCRTA is more than a hundred, and that the police force receive more than 14,000,000 million dollar in funding for just that one fiscal year (Transit & Racial Equity, 2020).

Currently, under the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority the public is offered access to an extensive system of buses along with rapid transit lines (Connecting Cleveland). It is estimated that the RTA on average serves 45 million people in the city of Cleveland alone (Overview: Facts about the Greater Cleveland RTA). The specific services they currently offer as outlined by the RTA's official website include BRT which is known as the health line, Park-N-Ride bus services, the redline, the blueline, green line, and waterfront line, trolleys that service the downtown area, and paratransit services (Overview Facts about The Greater Cleveland RTA). When looking to use transportation you have a few options regarding how you can go about purchasing your ticket/ pass needed in order for you to be able to utilize these public transportation services. Riders can purchase cash fares, which would be done when your on the service you would like to use, these cash fare prices differ depending on a number of different factors such the services you looks to utilize for example paratransit, and park- n- ride service are \$2.75, which is 25 cents more than the simple bus/rapid/brt pass, and your age since seniors and K-12 students also are noted to have discounted fare price (Fares). RTA offers a ride array of different passes available for the public to choose from including 1 trip, 2 trip, 5 trip, 7 day, and monthly, again the pricing for each of these passes will differ depending on certain circumstances such as whether or not your looking to utilize certain service and your age, also keep in mind that each one of these would offer you the ability to use any of the services offered under RTA (Fares). The current amount for a normal monthly pass, that offers you access to the city's buses,brt, and all their rapid transit service is \$95 USD (Fares). Before 2016, it was reported that you could purchase a monthly pass for \$85 USD, meaning there has been a \$10 increase in the past 7 years alone (Shaw, 2016). Overall it was as of 2022 that just in the past 15 years alone Cleveland Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority has doubled the price of their fares (Kraynyak, 2022).

One of the main ways in which the Greater Cleveland Transit Authority/ the RTA continues to fund the operation of the city's transportation system today is through the implementation of a 1% sales tax in Cuyahoga county (Kraynak, 2022). Ticket/ fare sales also make up a big portion of the RTA yearly revenue, which they then put back towards funding the operations of the transit system (Birdsong, 2023). In 2023 alone it was recorded that Cleveland's RTA revenue budget amounted to around 299.9 million dollars, with 86.4% of this revenue coming directly from the sales tax placed on Cuyahoga county (Birdsong, 2023). It is important

to note that sales tax seemed to be the overwhelming number one contributor to the RTA revenue, with approximately 259 million dollars coming from just this alone in 2023 (Birdsong, 2023). This was an increase from the 254 million they reported coming from it in 2022 (Birdsong, 2023). Fares also play a small role on the impact of the revenue budget, making up a total of 8.6% of the revenue we witnessed Cleveland exhibiting in 2023 (Birdsong, 2023). This 8.6% translates to an ultimate total of only 24.7 million coming from the revenue fare/ ticket sales alone, which was actually a subtle increase from what they witnessed in 2022, where ticket/ fare only brought in 22 million (Birdsong, 2023). The other areas the city of Cleveland's transportation revenue budget comes from includes things such as investment income, reimbursement expenditures, advertising/ concessions, preventive maintenance reimbursements, and other incomes, however these areas are relatively insignificant since when put altogether they only made up an estimated 5.4% of the 299 million dollars in revenue budget the city reported having.

In 2021 Ohio governor Mike Dewine presented a new state transportation budget that amounted to 70 million dollars every year for the next two years, which will then be broken up and allocated to different cities throughout the state of Ohio which they must reinvest into their transit service/ operations (Kowalski, 2021). Cities in the state of Ohio are also provided transportation funding by the ODOT, which is formally known as the Ohio Department of Transportation (Citizens Guide to Transportation Funding, 2020). It was reported in 2022 alone that the city of Cleveland received 11.5 million from the ODOT, which they would apply 8 million of to their rail car replacement and 3.5 million of to their bus improvement programs (Meyer, 2022). It is noted that funding from the ODOT alone in the past three years has accounted for 21.4 million dollars that has gone directly to the funding of Cleveland's rail replacement program (Meyer, 2022).

Note that the city of Cleveland also received some federal funding such as grants and set aside, which is essentially money that you are told how you are going to use it, usually in regards to a special type of equipment (Patton, and Jackson, 2017). In 2023 alone the city of Cleveland Ohio received 56 million dollars from the bipartisan infrastructure law (Eaton, 2023). This funding is intended to be used on a number of projects in Cleveland, such as the improvement of their light rail system, buses, and the city's railcars (Eaton, 2023). This funding is intended to be used on a number of projects in Cleveland, such as the improvement of their light rail system, buses, and the city's railcars (Eaton, 2023). They were also granted 4 million from the federal transit administration in order to upgrade the city's buses and facilities (Birdsong, 20). It is important to note that during the covid- 19 era the city did receive some funding from the federal government through CARE Act, the CRRSAA, and the ARP, which helped the transportation system stay afloat (Birdsong, 2023).

It was reported by data released in 2023 that about 22.4% of all households in Cleveland Ohio do not have access to a singular motor vehicle (Smith, 2023). This is not a surprising finding since in 2021 it was also reported that the city of Cleveland Ohio is one of most impoverished cities in the whole United States of America, with 29.3% of its population being

recorded as living currently below the current poverty line (Kraynak, 2022). Findings suggest that many of the impoverished people living in Cleveland depend on affordable means of transportation, with \$19,556 USD being the median reported income for those who are utilizing transportation means in the city, meaning the average person attempting to buy a monthly \$95 transportation pass in the city of Cleveland would be spending a reported 5.80% of their yearly income on transportation services alone, which is very high when you consider that in some of the most affordable public transportation system in the country citizens report to be spending only about 1-2 % of their income on purchasing public transit (Kraynak, 2022). Ultimately data released in 2017 that analyzed different cities across the United States of America revealed that the city of Cleveland Ohio currently sat at 4th place amongst cities considered to be reported as the least affordable (Kraynak, 2022).

Even when people in Cleveland are looking to purchase these public transportation passes in Cleveland it is not guaranteed that they will find a reliable way to get to where they need to go, seeing as it was reported in 2015 that only $\frac{1}{3}$ of the current jobs available in the city could be reached (Kowalski, 2021). The issue of getting to jobs has only increased for people in Cleveland who rely on public transportation as jobs are being taken out of the city and into the suburbs (Kowalski, 2021). Even when once you have found a way to harness the public transportation currently being offered that gets you to where you need to go you will likely see your travel time be much higher than if you would have driven (Barry, 2021).

Note that these issues occurring within Cleveland's transportation system that are disproportionately affecting Cleveland's poor population due to their high cost, and lack of reliability are not the only issues occurring with the city of Cleveland Ohio's transportation system. The RTA has noted some major infrastructure issues that need to be addressed, however following the covid 19- pandemic, the RTA is currently noting some serious issues with their budgets (Kowlaski, 2022). In 2019 before the pandemic it was reported that 32.5 million people had used some form of the RTA public transit system in the city of Cleveland (Birdsong, 2023). Following the covid- 19 pandemic in 2020 we saw a 46% decrease in ridership in the city of Cleveland, in 2021 this number only increased leaving ridership in the city at a decreased 50% from what it was seeing in 2019, as of 2022 it was reported that there was about a 43% (Birdsong, 2023). As of 2023, analysis estimates that ridership in the city of Cleveland should return to about 18.7 million people (Birdsong, 2023). Hopefully this is seen to be true since those being affected most by the decrease in ridership in the city of Cleveland the most are those who are lower class that heavily rely on its services as their primary form of transportation (Kowlaski, 2021).

History of Education in Cleveland

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) was founded in 1836 and has continued to grow; there are currently 107 schools for students in kindergarten to 12th grade, with construction in place to build the 108th building. The district serves over 36,000 students and makes approximately \$650,000 in revenue per year (CMSD 2023). However, providing

education to such a large population has led to failings within their education system. The effects of poverty on education make further gains a daunting challenge. Cleveland is one of the poorest major cities in the country, and research shows that family income level predicts school achievement and career success. In 2011, the CMSD's CEO, Eric Gordon, founded a plan to better the overall learning experience at the CMSD that focused primarily on raising the percentage of students graduating. The plan was initiated during the 2011-12 academic year and involved the closure and replacement of underperforming schools, with some being converted into charter schools. Additionally, it aimed to grant greater autonomy to principals in terms of curriculum, budgets, and policies, necessitating a tax increase to support this endeavor, and ensuring that high-quality preschool education was accessible to all children. The plan was working and attracted a national college-promotion program called "Say Yes" to help the efforts of the CMSD in 2019. The program pays the balance of public college tuition for every student who graduates from the district, and provides support services to help them get to college — after school programs, tutoring, help with food, mental health and medical services. By 2020, graduation rates improved from 56% in 2011 to 81%. College-going rates increased from 44% to 49% percent after joining forces with Say Yes. Younger students also experienced advancements in education. The enrollment of children in high-quality preschools nearly doubled, the number of reputable preschool providers tripled, and there was notable improvement in kindergarten readiness (Yoder 2023). Although the plan is slowly working, the district only earned 2.5 stars on a 1-5 star scale in the state of Ohio's 2022-23 school report cards and has students across the district performing under the state's average in both reading and math (Dyches 2023).

Proposal 1 - Greatly Reduce Segregated Housing

The city of Cleveland Ohio is clearly struggling with severe inequities present in several different realms of the city and the infrastructure in which it operates today, and how it has operated historically. One of the major issues that has been noted as plaguing the city of Cleveland Ohio, that has led to severe inequalities in several fields stems from segregation in the housing realm. In order to adequately find a solution that greatly reduces segregation in the housing markets we cannot only look at the issues plaguing the housing industry but must also explore and explain how the remodeling and fixing of other fields will in turn lead to less segregation in Cleveland's housing industry. This proposal walks through the benefits of offering a free transportation system in the city of Cleveland, making housing more affordable all throughout the city, and improving the education system; all of these factors could work together to achieve a more equitable housing market, and neighborhoods in the city of Cleveland Ohio.

As of 2023 it was recorded that 22.4% of people living in the city of Cleveland did not have access to an automobile, and 35% of people who lived in East Cleveland did not have any access to automobiles (Smith, 2023). In 2018 the poverty rate in East Cleveland was recorded to be 42% with a small population of only 17,000, 93% of which are African American (East Cleveland, 2022). This is important to note It has been recorded that those who rely most heavily on transportation services in the city of Cleveland have a reported median \$19,556 USD meaning the purchase of a monthly RTA pass of \$95 transportation pass eats up 5.80% of their yearly

incomes (Kraynak, 2022). Seeds, which is a literacy tutoring resources that attempts to help uneducated residents living in Cleveland get their GED cites that they have had students express that when deciding whether or not they were going to attend class they had to complementate whether they wanted to eat that week, or buy a bus ticket (Kraynak, 2022). Seeds along with other literacy organizations throughout the city of Cleveland have been given a limited amount of free RTA passes in the past that they were aloud to distribute amongst people using that were using resources, however, they have cited that the demand for them is too high to meet the supply they are given (Kraynak, 2022). The towards employment, which helps Cleveland residents locate jobs have reported that people have even called and asked if they could receive a free bus pass in order to make a job interview (Kraynak, 2022).

In the past while testing out their next NEXT GEN busing plan Cleveland offered free weekend bus trips, waiving all fares that were normally in place (Durbin, 2022). This waiver of fares ultimately resulted in the city seeing a 13% increase in ridership of buses just in that on weekends alone (Durbin, 2022). The city also has a U-Pass program already in place where students who attend Tri-C college receive a free RTA pass that they can use on any of the city's public transit sources (Kraynak, 2022). Having free reliable transportation in the city of Cleveland Ohio would improve the lives of citizens living in the city of Cleveland Ohio in several different ways. For one it would allow people in living neighborhoods described as a food desert accessible transportation that they could then in turn utilize to travel to grocery stores that offer fresher and healthier options (Kowalski, 2020). Note also that in different neighborhoods throughout the city of Cleveland not every area is going to be in walking distance of a hospital/ medical facility meaning that people who do not have access to cars will in turn have no means or way in which they can easily travel to one in case of an emergency (Kowalski, 2021).

In order to make transportation free for all in the city of Cleveland, analysis in 2020 estimated that it would cost the city approximately 40 million dollars, which pre- covid was how much the city was witnessing their services make in revenue from fares (Durbin, 2020). Yet in 2023, fares accounted for only 24.7 million dollars of the RTA's total revenue, with sales taxes representing far more, accounting for approximately \$259 million USD dollars of the city's revenue budget (Birdsong, 2023). Cutting fares would only decrease Cleveland's current revenue budget to \$274.3 million dollars or in other terms 8.2% (Birdsong, 2023). Currently with the sales tax in place as well as the fare charges riders are required to pay, residents living in Cuyahoga county are essentially paying twice to use the city's public transportation services which is why fare should be waived.

Several cities in the United States of America have already begun to dissolve fares for certain types of transportation (Tu, 2022). One city in particular that we have witnessed waiving all their bus fees, essentially making their city bus transportation system free to all is Kansas City Missouri (Tu, 2022). The city initially created the program which is better known as ZeroFare KC in 2020, and has already seen many positive effects (Tu, 2022). Since its creation, the city has cited that 92% of all people now have reliable access to grocery stores, 88% having access to

healthcare, and 82% of people being able to reasonably reach a place of employment (Tu, 2022). Ultimately, seeing the positive effect that Kansas city has already made following the creation of free public bus service, further strengthen this idea that public transportation could heal and remedy some of the inequity plaguing the system currently.

One way to help fund this free public transportation is by utilizing federal grant money that is allotted to transportation like what was in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. This act “increased the federal government’s annual support for public transit through 2026” (Federal Financial Support for Public Transportation, 2022). This type of funding is very useful, but not sustainable because there is no certainty that it will be renewed upon the expiration date. Therefore, funds from grants should be used as almost “bonus spending” where the money can be used to fund things like bus/train upgrades, new routes/tracks, and updating infrastructure or maintenance. In terms of the yearly expenditures, it is predicted that it will cost approximately \$40 million per year to run as mentioned above. Those funds will be paid for by slightly raising the income tax of the city. Currently, the yearly income tax is 2.5% for all Cleveland residents and those who work in the city as well, and that results in a revenue stream of \$470,400,000 (2023 Budget Book, 2023). By raising the average rate to 2.72%, the city would gain an extra \$41,395,200 which would be enough to create a system where public transit would be free.

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) earned 2.5 stars on a 1-5 star scale in the state of Ohio's 2022-23 school report cards. This is due to the inadequate funding of \$16,712 per pupil in the 2022 school year; this is a major decrease from the \$21,238 per pupil in the 2021 school year (CMSD Tax Budgets 2021-2022). However, when looking at the spending breakdown only \$3,021 of the \$16,712 goes towards academics. Schools with more per pupil funding that goes primarily into academics received higher rankings. For example, Pickerington Schools in Ohio received 4.5 stars and has a \$7,341 per pupil funding that goes directly into the classroom (Pickerington Tax Budgets 2023). Establishing a set of standards of how the CMSD is expected to use their funds will help remedy the problem of a lack of funding going into the classrooms. In this plan the CMSD will be expected to use 45% of their annual funding towards resources and programs that will aid students and teachers in providing the best education possible. This will increase the funding from \$3,021 per pupil towards academics to \$7,520. More funding and resources would allow teachers to have increased access to teaching supplies and students a better learning environment and experience. This will lead to an improvement in grades and overall star rating in the yearly report cards. Improving the education system will create a more integrated schooling system because according to CMSD’s Fast Facts, 63.9% of district students are Black, 17.2% are Hispanic, 14.5% are white, and 4.4% are of another race (CMSD 2023). However Cleveland's racial makeup has about 38.6% of residents being white (US Census). This is because a large amount of white students are either attending private schools or public schools outside of their home district in Cleveland. This is due to the inadequate education of the CMSD compared to other schools. By fixing the education system it

would also bring back the students who have left and would create a more integrated schooling system which is beneficial for the whole community.

To increase the school funding to be equivalent to Pickerington, Cleveland should reallocate its funds per student so that \$7,520 goes directly into the classroom. This redistribution is important because the school district already has enough money coming in to improve the education to the desired amount, so by increasing the amount per pupil to be more education based, the quality of education will be the emphasis. By making this redistribution, Cleveland schools will always have this amount dedicated to the classroom and will ensure there will be sufficient funding in the future. This reallocation means that \$155 million will be taken away from anything that's not classroom supplies. One way to make up for this is by getting businesses and individuals to sponsor school sports and have more community fundraising events to help bring the funding up to the previous amount. Another way to make up for this is by issuing a municipal bond. Cleveland already has a \$220 million municipal bond in place from 2014 that helps fund projects like improving buildings, bussing, and other important infrastructure (Bond Accountability, 2023). Since this was passed in 2014, another one should be issued with at least \$300 million to provide a new source of funding that will focus on this infrastructure. One more way to help make up this funding is from the new tax on sports betting. Ohio just legalized sports betting this year, so the state implemented a 20% revenue tax on it where 98% of funding will go toward improving education in Ohio (Play Ohio, 2023). Since this is so new, there are no predictions for how much funding will go directly towards Cleveland schools, but regardless it will be a new source of funding for Cleveland public schools. The city should consider putting their own additional 2-5% tax on sports betting and apply it towards the education budget to give the schools even more funding.

Additionally, one of the major constraints on the people of Cleveland's ability to integrate with each other based on where they live is simply the price of housing. The median rent on the west side of Cleveland ranges mostly from about \$800 to about \$1100, while the rent on the east side of Cleveland ranges mostly from about \$300 to about \$600 (Opportunity Atlas). Obviously, this causes a divide between those who can afford to live wherever they want within the city and freely choose the west side and those who cannot afford to live wherever they want and are forced to live on the east side of the city. A division between those who can afford to live on the west side and those who are forced to live on the east side provides a powerful obstacle in the way of separate groups co-existing within the same city while enjoying the same positive opportunities the city will have to offer. In order to overcome this obstacle, it is important to provide an opportunity for anyone who lives in the city to be able to live in any part of it. To do this there will be a limit placed on how many homes can be bought to use for any purpose by corporations or any group besides a landlord or family intending to live there, place constraints on how much rent can increase, and drastically increase the grace period tenants are given to pay their rent without punishment along with decreasing late fees.

Outside corporations have been buying single and multi-family homes in Cleveland at an increasing rate. This problem is most seen in East Cleveland, where the most low income

families reside, which has increased from 30% to over 45% since just 2018 in the percentage of 1-3 family homes that were bought by businesses (Heisig, 2022). The west side of Cleveland is not exempt from this problem either as the same statistic has increased from under 15% to over 25% since 2014 (Heisig, 2022). When outside corporations buy these homes, they can pay more money than most citizens can, forcing the citizens to rent from them and be at their mercy. Laws must be passed that restrict how many homes companies can buy, especially outside companies. The percentage of homes bought by businesses will no longer be permitted to exceed 10% in each area within the city of Cleveland. This value is significant because the west inner suburbs have the lowest of this value within Cleveland and it already sits just below 10% at about 9% as of 2020 and we are committed to treating every area of the city equally (Heisig, 2022). This change, as enforced by the local government, will lead to citizens being able to purchase their own houses and set roots in Cleveland. Along with this, this measure will decrease the price of houses as there will be less competitive bidding, leading to a decrease in rent prices for rental properties as well.

Another obvious problem with citizens being able to afford rent is how much it can actually increase. The month-over-month rent growth in Cleveland is 0.7%, while the national average is -0.7% (Apartment List). Cleveland is also in the top 10 of largest cities in the United States of highest month-over-month rent growth (Apartment List). This makes it hard for many citizens who may already be struggling to make their rent payments to keep up with the increasing rent each month. The proposal is a new law that will restrict the amount rent can increase each month to a maximum of keeping up with inflation. This idea will combine with the previously mentioned idea by continuing to make housing more affordable to everyone throughout the city.

Finally, there is no mandatory tenant grace period in the state of Ohio, nor is there one in Cleveland. Only if stated in the lease agreement will there be a grace period for tenants. There will be an implementation of a mandatory grace period given to tenants of one month per missed payment. The current late fee policy is that no more than 5% of monthly rent or \$25 can be charged, whichever is higher (Cleveland Municipal Court, 2023). It is assumed that rent prices will be lower by the time this is enforced regularly, so there will be a new maximum late fee charge of \$15 no matter rent. So, along with the increased grace period, there will be lower late fee charges for the entire city.

The ultimate goal of these changes to the housing situation is to bring people together. Right now Cleveland is effectively a segregated city. Those who can afford to live wherever they please choose to live on the nicer west side of the city, while those who do not have the luxury to choose, mostly minorities, are stuck living on the less-than-ideal east side of the city. By providing a more equal opportunity for everyone to afford living in any location in the city, the income groups who are forced to live amongst themselves will be more free to live in other locations and with other groups. Ultimately this new opportunity and integration will echo from the housing situation throughout the rest of the city. People from every income or racial group

will be able to feel comfortable and accepted in areas that they would never have been able to afford to live in the first place. Cultures will combine and equity will blossom.

History/Current Situation of Crime

To understand Cleveland's criminal landscape as it stands today, it is important to consider historical facts and statistics that may provide insight into why the city struggles to foster a sense of safety within its residents. Since its earliest days, the city of Cleveland has struggled with excessive crime, a fact that has only maintained its truth as time has passed. The first real and documented problems regarding crime in Cleveland began in the early nineteenth century as tensions between Indian and White cultures grew around the issue of alcohol consumption. Residents complained that "too many liquor licenses caused too much drinking," which turned the city into a lawless, drunken free-for-all (Crime: Encyclopedia of Cleveland History 2023). By 1812, Cleveland had already created its first jail and carried out its first public execution. Twenty years later, by 1836, a City Watch of volunteers became the group responsible for policing Cleveland from sunrise to sundown, acting as an intermittent police department until the Cleveland Police Department was officially created in 1866. This initial police department consisted of 35 officers and a superintendent, and by 1872 the city housed 7 police districts with only 60 officers to accommodate a rapidly growing city (Crime: Encyclopedia of Cleveland History 2023). As Cleveland grew closer to the bustling city we know today, crime became more complex and statistics grew exponentially. By 1905, Cleveland officers were arresting approximately 27,000 individuals annually, a stark jump from just 9,000 20 years prior in 1882. Drunkenness, automobile offenses, and prostitution accounted for the most crime in these years, and 18 people were arrested for murder. By 1920, many Cleveland residents felt "insecure about their lives and property," and the beginning of prohibition brought with it mob violence, gang slayings and hijackings (Crime: Encyclopedia of Cleveland History 2023). During these early years, Cleveland's high crime rate can be attributed to a rapidly growing population countered with a lack of police presence, mostly due to the fact that there were not enough police to adequately combat crime. Post WWII, social conditions and crime formed a new relationship as racial tensions rose and crime continued to increase. Racial factors became a greater emphasis in crime statistics as suburban commuters felt victimized by violent crime in the city. Many residents blamed "black-on-black crime" for the overall general increase in crime in Cleveland.

Today, Cleveland remains a city plagued by crime. As of 2023, according to police statistics, homicides are up 30% and car thefts are up 98% compared to 2022. To put Cleveland's current issues into perspective, its crime index as of 2020 was a 421.3 (421.3 crimes per 100,000 individuals), compared to that of New York's which was a 256.3, meaning Cleveland has a significantly higher crime rate than other similarly sized metropolitan areas (Cleveland, Ohio Crime Rate and Safety 2020). Property crimes such as burglary, vandalism, and larceny are the most prevalent types of crime in Cleveland, and violent crimes follow as a close second.

When looking at crime in Cleveland, it is not only important to consider what crimes are being committed, but to whom they are being committed against and how they are being

addressed by both the community and law enforcement. As of the last several years, there has been a stark increase in gun violence in Cleveland, which has disproportionately affected black men between the ages of 18-29. Just between 2019-2020 alone, there was a 76% increase in gunshot wound hospital visits in the city (CDPH 2021). Additionally, Cleveland averaged 704 assault related hospital visits each year from 2017 through 2021, and young, black residents were more likely to be victims of assault (CDPH 2021). From these statistics, it can be concluded that crime in Cleveland disproportionately affects African American residents. After considering these statistics, the next points that should be addressed are: what can be blamed for Cleveland's high crime rate and what current efforts are being employed by city officials to combat it? First, Cleveland's socioeconomic conditions could hold partial blame for the city's high crime rate. As of 2021, Cleveland held a poverty rate of 29.3, making it the second poorest large city in the country behind Detroit (The Community Center for Solutions 2021). Poverty and crime rate have a direct relationship as those faced with economic hardships are more inclined to engage in criminal activity. Another possible cause for Cleveland's high crime rate is lack of adequate education. In a 2018 ranking of the 604 school districts in Ohio, many schools towards the bottom of the list held average grades of Fs and Ds, and most of these schools were located in Cleveland (Cleveland.com 2018). When a school as a whole is performing this poorly, it is usually an indication of improper education and not a reflection of students' intelligence or academic ability. As of recently, Cleveland's mayor, Justin Bibb has highlighted a Prevention Strategy to combat criminal issues and provide at-risk individuals a chance to improve their circumstances. In his plan, Mayor Bibb seeks to "deploy more police officers to walk the streets and solve crimes, invest in education and after-school programs to keep children and young people engaged, and crack down on illegal guns and keep weapons out of the hands of criminals" (City of Cleveland 2023). It is important to consider Cleveland's current efforts to combat the epidemic of crime in the city, but also to explore additional ideas that might benefit Cleveland and foster a sense of safety and community within its residents.

Proposal 2 - Improve the Crime Rate

In addition to Mayor Bibb's plans to combat crime in Cleveland, there are several other ideas that might also suit the city's needs. As stated in the previous paragraphs, Cleveland has had a significant increase in gun violence in recent years. The 76% jump in gunshot wound hospital visits between 2019-2020 alone proves that something must be done to take any number of guns off of the street. A tactic other cities have used to get guns off of the street is an anonymous gun drop off box. Putting anonymous drop-off boxes in central locations around Cleveland and in neighborhoods with the highest crime rate could help get a significant number of guns off of the street. Many individuals that own guns, whether legal or illegal, choose to store their guns or sell them to others when they no longer have use for them. Setting up drop-off boxes could be beneficial for the city not only because they will help get guns off of the street, but also because they can be converted for police use, which costs nothing. As stated before in Mayor Bibb's prevention strategy, deploying more officers to patrol the streets is of top priority,

and being able to use weapons that don't come out of the city's budget could be beneficial. Another tactic to reduce crime involving guns is to raise the sales tax on guns and ammunition. Currently, Ohio's sales tax rate is 5.75%, meaning an individual who purchases a gun for \$500 pays just short of \$30 in sales tax (Pelzer, 2023). As of recently Cleveland officials are considering exempting firearms and ammunition from sales tax altogether in a new bill called House Bill 189, putting them in the list with feminine hygiene items and baby products. Representative Josh Williams has stated that the bill would be "helping protect the individual's right to exercise their Second Amendment (rights)" (Pelzer 2023). However, with the recent increase in gun violence in Cleveland, it is important to not only maintain the current sales tax for guns and ammunition, but to possibly raise up to 10% it as well and use that money to fund the police department, create reentry programs for ex felons, and reach the goals that Mayor Bibbs has laid out in his Prevention Strategy.

Another, more slightly ambitious way to combat crime in the city of Cleveland is to use Blue Light street lights. While the actual validity of this method has been questioned by skeptics, certain companies have found that using blue light has a positive effect on people's mindsets. One company in particular, a Japanese train company, used blue lights in certain locations and a subsequent study showed that in these particular locations, suicides decreased by 84% (Barkley, 2023). After this study, several other companies worldwide have tried switching to blue lights to prevent suicide and crime, and the results "have been favorable" (Barkley, 2023). In as early as 2000, Glasgow, Scotland introduced blue street lights to improve the city's landscape and the crime rate in illuminated areas decreased significantly after they were installed" (Shimbun, 2008). If blue light truly does mitigate people's violent tendencies, then installing them in neighborhoods in Cleveland could prove to be beneficial. While this is not a concrete solution, it is relatively cheap in comparison to other crime reduction methods and does have some statistical basis for being effective. While replacing every single street light would be both expensive and unrealistic, using blue street lights in neighborhoods with the highest crime rate is plausible. On average, an entire street light costs between \$2,000-\$5,000 before installation costs. However, replacing a street light-grade lightbulb costs roughly \$200. Replacing 500 street lights in the city with blue light would only cost ~\$100,000, a worthwhile investment if previous studies are correct.

Another method the city of Cleveland could employ to not only reduce crime, but stimulate the economy and create jobs is to create occupational re-entry programs for individuals leaving the criminal justice system. Many ex-felons struggle to find employment after being released from prison, and with a current crime rate in Cleveland, many will continue to struggle in the future. A quick google search is enough to find that employment, or at least steady employment, is difficult to find as an ex-felon in Cleveland. Some of the ex-felon jobs listed in Cleveland are Catering Assistant (\$18 an hour), Logistics Associate (\$17.50 an hour), and Snow Plow Operator (\$20 an hour), to name a few (Indeed 2023). While there is absolutely nothing wrong with these occupations, many ex-felons resort back to illegal activity because it either makes them more money or doesn't require the manual labor or stress of some of the jobs listed

above. There is little point in having a criminal justice system if it becomes cyclical in nature: Felon commits crime, is arrested, serves time, is released, resorts back to crime. This is not efficient. One possible idea to assist ex-felons into gaining better employment is to provide companies with tax breaks or other financial incentives if they are willing to hire an ex-felon. This would not only benefit the company, but it could help some genuinely hard working individuals find suitable employment. In addition to this, many incarcerated individuals spend years behind bars without learning marketable skills. If places like the Cuyahoga County Jail, perhaps once a week, could bring in a skilled tradesman to teach inmates about their job and lifestyle, they might be better suited to find employment once they are released. When it comes to tax breaks, it seems fair to give businesses a 2% tax break if they hire a certain amount of ex-felons based on the size of the company. To make up for this cost, the city can use the additional taxes put on for guns and ammunition.

Keeping children from resorting to crime or drug use is not only the responsibility of the guardian(s) at home, but the education systems as well. It is no surprise that students who have access to resources do better in school. Educating children on the dangers of crime and drug use are vital in setting students up for a successful life. There are already education platforms that are addressing the drug and crime issue among the youth that can be implemented. One being the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E) program. The D.A.R.E program is a “a police officer-led series of classroom lessons that teaches children from kindergarten through 12th grade how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug and violence-free lives” (D.A.R.E America). Programs like these have been found to reduce drug use and crime among school age children.

Community run programs have also been a solution in decreasing youth crime rates. Recreation centers help keep children from turning to crime and gangs. Many have youth sports leagues as well as mentorship programs that help young people find themselves and figure out what they want to do in the future. The most successful of these programs also offer tutoring sessions that aid children in their schooling, pushing them to pursue higher levels of education. Better relationships between the community and police starts with repairing damage done in the past that has led to distrust in each other. One solution would be to have police host community events that allow residents to come out and meet the officers and start to form personal relationships. An example of one of these events would be a yearly Trunk or Treat event where police officers decorate the trunks of their police cars as a theme and pass out candy to the neighborhood children. This would allow children and adults to speak to each officer while also giving children the meaningful memories of trick or treating and forming a positive association with the police.

Economic History and Current Situation

Grasping how African Americans in Cleveland have become economically disadvantaged and the disparity between them and White Clevelanders must begin with a brief history of Cleveland’s economy. Cleveland’s position and subsequent access to the Erie Canal provided

access to other markets along with allowing for cheap transportation of goods early on. The late 1800s saw a growing steel industry within the city, and by the early 1900s the city's economy was built upon steel and iron, electrical motors, machine tools, meatpacking, clothing, paint, and varnish (Warf 1997, 210). John D. Rockefeller also put the headquarters of Standard Oil Corporation in Cleveland and brought in crude oil which made Cleveland "for a time, the largest oil-refining center in the world" (Hammack 2018). Companies creating goods that used iron and steel benefited from how cheap it was in Cleveland. Following the growth of the automobile industry in Detroit; Cleveland produced many components needed for automobile construction such as tires, steel, and paint. Cleveland's biggest industry entering the 1900s and following the manufacturing boom after WWII was steel. Labor was heavily made up of immigrants and later, African Americans who migrated from the South.

African Americans were not included in the prosperity that came from the steel industry in Cleveland, they "were not hired to work in the steel mills and foundries that became the mainstay of the city's economy" (Kusmer 2023). Unions rarely accepted African Americans and "by 1910 only about 10% of local Black men worked in skilled trades" (Kusmer 2023). WWII and the new demand for industry allowed for African Americans to acquire industry jobs. As discussed in the section on housing issues, Cleveland's African American community was kept in poor housing within the city while there was white flight to the suburbs. When deindustrialization hit Cleveland in the late 1900s the African American community bore the brunt of it. As companies downsized, shut down, and moved, African Americans were unable to move somewhere with better employment opportunities. Wages and employment declined just when "the national civil-rights movement secured equal employment opportunity for African Americans" (Hammack 2018). Closing in on the present day, Cleveland began to shift their economy towards new sectors such as the service industry, scientific research, and tourism along with a revival of the steel industry. African Americans still didn't benefit from this shift. A study on Cleveland's economy showed in the 1990s, "forty percent of Clevelanders, half of whom are black, remain below the poverty level" (Warf 1997, 219).

Currently Cleveland has a very diverse economy, with the biggest areas of employment being education and health services, trade, transportation, and utilities professional and business services, and government (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). The median household income by age 35 currently for African-Americans in Cleveland is \$22k and the poverty rate ranges from 30% to as high as 88% in the highly segregated areas of East Cleveland (opportunityatlas.org, 2023). The median household income by age 35 for Cleveland as a whole is \$32k and the median poverty rate is 22% (opportunityatlas.org, 2023). Unemployment is around 26% for African Americans in Cleveland as well whereas the median for the city as a whole is 24% (opportunityatlas.org, 2023). The economic struggles Cleveland African Americans faced in the past are still being dealt with today. Cleveland currently has a goal of revitalizing the East side and one specific step they have taken is "investing \$10M in ARPA funds to grow the number of local workers in infrastructure, construction, lead abatement, brownfield remediation, broadband deployment, and clean energy projects" (mayor.cleveland.gov, 2023). Mayor Bibb has also

planned to launch a Center for Economic Recovery that will devise ARPA funded plans for economic policies. One priority of Mayor Bibb's plan is for inclusive economic recovery which emphasizes investment over managing decline in Cleveland's impoverished neighborhoods. In the area of predatory lending, an organization founded by Inez Killingworth called Empowering and Strengthening Ohio's People has worked to attack and weaken predatory lending in Cleveland (Cain, 2023).

Proposal 3 - Improve Monetary Equity

The history of Cleveland and its continued segregation has created a dearth of beneficial financial institutions. Redlining and housing discrimination create communities that "continue to be under-served by mainstream financial institutions" (Rugh, 2010). On top of being under-served, "those financial institutions that do exist in minority areas are likely to be predatory" (Rugh, 2010). When the city attempted to discourage predatory lenders through an ordinance in 2002, "the banking industry threatened to stop making loans in the city and then lobbied state legislators to prohibit cities in Ohio from imposing anti predatory lending laws" (Kotlowitz, 2009). Predatory lending hurts the unbanked and underbanked through high interest rates and fees, and often is used for "short-term credit needs" (Baradaran, 2023). According to a study presented to the Cuyahoga County Council's Community Development Committee, when it comes to housing African Americans are rejected for loans "more often than white borrowers" and are "four times more likely to be given higher priced loans, with higher interest rates than white homebuyers" (Durbin, 2023). Cleveland's segregation creates "a natural market" for these predatory lenders, and because of this fixing the financial institutions should be left to the city as opposed to the private banks looking to make a profit (Rugh, 2010). The proposal for fixing the issue with financial institutions in Cleveland is instituting postal banking.

Postal banking would involve the post offices within the city "offering financial services" (Baradaran, 2023). Postal banking takes advantage of a readily available location that can be found in low-income communities where commercial banks have abandoned, and it can "leverage the reliability of the Postal Service" (Nadeau, 2020). For those that are unbanked and underbanked, commercial banks can be intimidating, but the post office is a known institution in low-income areas. This familiarity will help overcome informal barriers for the unbanked and underbanked. Post Offices are also already equipped with the tools needed to provide banking services. They benefit from economies of scale and are able to "reduce costs by using its existing infrastructure and clientele", lower collection costs by enlisting "the help of the IRS and other federal enforcement mechanisms that can easily garnish wages or tax returns", and "offer smaller individual loans that yield smaller margins by doing so at a greater volume" (Baradaran, 2023). There wouldn't be unpredictable fees as is expected when predatory lenders are used, and more money would be going back into the community as opposed to the pockets of the predatory lenders.

The intended side effect of introducing postal banking is that it would remove the "natural market" that allows for predatory lending to thrive. As mentioned earlier, this also

removes “the ability of predatory lenders to strip wealth out of Black communities” (Baradaran, 2020). It is estimated that predatory lending costs people 1.8% of what they take home, and it can reach as high as 4% for the “most expensive check cashers” (Anderson, 2023). Postal banking would improve the financial literacy of these low-income communities by providing a reliable and trustworthy service in areas that have become “accustomed to exploitation” (Rugh, 2010). After predatory lending no longer can find a market within these communities and people can accumulate more wealth because they aren’t losing considerable amounts of their wages; commercial banks might become enticed to move back into these low-income areas and offer their services. This could provide another aspect that helps with our first proposal for reducing housing segregation. An area where predatory lending has created a formidable barrier to integration and home ownership for African-American communities in Cleveland.

There are already some pilot programs for postal banking going on in four different cities at four specific post offices for a fee of \$5.95. These programs allow people to cash “payroll or business checks of up to \$500” and have that money “put onto a single-use gift card” (Dayen, 2021). Some critics of the program have pointed out that few people have actually used the program since its inception. That ignores a few factors about these programs that prevented them from having widespread impact. These programs were foremost a way for USPS to test out the “technical systems and customer service workflows needed to cash the checks” (Anderson, 2023). The programs were also not widely marketed; the only marketing done was putting “signs in the windows” of these locations (Anderson, 2023). The fee of \$5.95 is also higher than what was originally proposed and can be lowered (Dayen, 2021). Implementing postal banking in Cleveland wouldn’t be limited by these factors and thus higher usage would be expected. The postal banking system in Cleveland would be highly marketed to the people through the news and social media, and the fee can be lowered to a more feasible price in the range of \$2 much like a money order.

Another major problem area that the city of Cleveland faces is major joblessness. Most areas of Cleveland have an employment rate at age 35 of less than 70% (Opportunity Atlas). If people in the city are unable to find work, they will never be able to afford to live in even the most equitable city. Without this solution, the rest of our project of bringing people together within the city of Cleveland is much tougher to accomplish. In order to bring more jobs to the city, 1% to 5% tax breaks shall be offered to businesses who bring new jobs into the city, employ enough Cleveland residents, and/or employ enough Cleveland citizens living close to, at, or below the poverty line.

This aspect of our plan to bring equity to Cleveland involves taking advantage of capitalism. Although this system is partially responsible for how the city got to where it is, it is still important to use what is given to you and in this case that is the system that exists. In this system, businesses are striving to maximize profit, an obstacle in the way of profit is the duty to pay taxes for a variety of reasons. If this obstacle can be lowered, businesses would have incentive to continue to do whatever it is that gets the obstacle removed. For the city of Cleveland that would mean bringing new job opportunities to the city, reaching a quota of

Cleveland residents as employees, and/or reaching a quota of employees that are Cleveland citizens that are living near, at, or below the poverty line. The effect of this new policy will be that citizens of Cleveland who had struggled to obtain jobs in the past will now not only be able to find jobs more easily, but they will be who the businesses are actively pursuing, making it much easier for them to attain these jobs. While these changes will reduce the income of the city from taxes from businesses that fit this criteria, they, and the other improvements suggested, will stimulate the economy of the city enough so that the city will end up making enough money to cover these tax breaks. This stimulated economy will result in more revenue for the city from existing taxes and fees like sales taxes, parking, etc.

Proposal 4 - Improve the Voting System

Issues surrounding the voting system and election day plague not only the city of Cleveland but America as a whole. Cleveland should be a city where its voters are engaged and have a desire to be more involved in making their city better, but the many issues with the system prevent the desired level of civic engagement. Some of these major issues include the winner-take-all system, lack of ease to vote, low pay for public officials, and the difficulty for people of lower income to run for office. Therefore, the fourth proposal to improve the City of Cleveland is fixing the voting system by implementing ranked-choice voting, creating a system with same-day voter registration, and creating a public funding pool for people looking to run for office.

Ranked choice voting (RCV) is not a new concept, but it has recently gained popularity because it helps solve the issue of America's winner-take-all system. Many Americans appear to be disenfranchised to vote because they think their vote doesn't count or think they have to vote a certain way for their vote to matter. However, "with RCV, voters can sincerely rank candidates in order of preference. Voters know that if their first choice doesn't win, their vote automatically counts for their next choice instead. This frees voters from worrying about how others will vote and which candidates are more or less likely to win" (Ranked Choice Voting, 2023). If Cleveland were to adopt RCV for local elections, voters would be more inclined to vote because the fear that voting for their actual preferred candidate would make their vote not count is now nonexistent. Citizens would now have an incentive to vote for people they actually would want in office, which in turn might incentivize more candidates to run who might not have otherwise.

Another reason why citizens are not as engaged in voting in local elections is because of the difficulty of registering to vote. One solution proven to work is allowing for same-day registration (SDR) for voting. The State of Ohio currently does not have SDR in place, so implementing it would be a good way to encourage people who do not typically vote to do so. By allowing for SDR, people do not have to plan in advance to vote, they are allowed to just show up at the polls (or online) and register which creates a lower barrier to voting. Additionally, this will create more equity between groups that typically have a lower voting turnout rate. In fact, a recent study found that "Black voter turnout is on average 2-17 percentage points higher in states with SDR than in non-SDR states, and that Latinx voters in SDR states turned out at

rates that were on average 0.1-17.5 percentage points higher than Latinx voters in similar non-SDR states they studied” (Sharpe, 2021). Therefore, in order to encourage more people to vote, SDR should be implemented in the city of Cleveland and should also be pushed to be adopted in the entirety of Ohio because it will increase the turnout rate for minorities. Having less of a barrier to voting will create more equity and hopefully allow for underrepresented groups to have their voices heard more.

The third solution for fixing the voting system in Cleveland is to create a public funding pool for people looking to run for office. Wealthy people are at a huge advantage for running for office because they are more likely to have the resources to cover the large amount of expenses that come with running a campaign. This means that those who run for office are typically wealthy individuals who are more privileged and may not have the same life experiences as most of their constituents. In order to create a more level playing field, Cleveland needs to adopt public funding for electoral campaigns because it will provide a pool of funds for candidates to draw from. This will allow people who may have never been able to run for office because of a lack of monetary funds to now run since they will have access to more campaign money. According to a study done by Demos, some of the benefits of public campaign funding include greater racial and class diversity among donors, more women running for office, increased number of donors, and more quality time with constituents (Navarro-Rivera and Caicedo, 2017).

To provide for these funds, Cleveland should adopt a grant-based program where full funding is provided for candidates. In order to qualify, candidates will need to receive 500 \$5 contributions to show that they have widespread support in the community. Once this is achieved, each candidate will receive a lump sum to campaign with and they will not be allowed to use outside funds in order to make sure each candidate has equal resources with which to campaign. One way these grants will be funded is through donations. Since donors will not be allowed to donate directly to a candidate, they can contribute to the full program where the money will be distributed evenly. Since amounts will vary between election cycles, there needs to be a guaranteed amount of funding for the candidates. The majority of funding will come from an additional charge on fines, forfeitures, and settlements which are collected from convictions of misdemeanor, felony offenses, parking, and non-waiverable traffic violations. In 2023, the total projected revenue for this is \$6,247,552, so by increasing each fine by 10% there will be an additional \$624,755.20 (2023 Budget Book, 2023). This should help even the playing field between candidates and make it more accessible for people to run for office.

By implementing these fixes into local elections, Cleveland will become a place that encourages more citizens to get involved in voting. These changes will create more of an incentive to vote, make it more accessible for anyone to vote, and encourage minorities or people who lack resources to run for office to do so. By fundamentally changing the campaign/election system in Cleveland, there is an opportunity for a different voting block to be heard and for them to elect different candidates that align more closely with their values.

Conclusion

So although Cleveland has been a prosperous and industrious city, there have been some challenges and inequalities, especially for black and brown citizens, existing holding the city back from its true potential. However, to recapitulate, there are four proposals to help integrate the city and make it a more equitable place. The first proposal, greatly reducing segregated housing, will have a few conditions that will allow it to be possible. As iterated on, allowing for free transportation will help increase housing equality and give residents more access to other resources that are hard for them to get to otherwise. A second method that segregated housing would be combatted is by better education availability as it would help bring other students in to make a more diverse school. Cheaper housing and more mixed income neighborhoods also need to be available for the first proposal to work. This will be done by implementing laws that limit the number of corporations that can buy homes and allow for more families and landlords to purchase or rent, placing rent caps, and allowing for more time for tenants to pay their rent without extra fees. Proposal two, whose main goal is to reduce crime, will do so by implementing anonymous gun drop boxes, D.A.R.E programs or something alike, community run programs, and events with the police to increase education and develop more trust with police. The 3rd proposal, improving monetary equity will be implemented through bringing back banks to neighborhoods; which will help create jobs, postal banking, and providing loans to small businesses. The 4th proposal, improving the voting system will be executed through RVC, allowing for same day voter registration, and a public funding pool that will allow for candidates that might not be able to afford to run a chance to do so. All of these things will be expensive, but we will be able to fund them through things like donations, using grant money, and increasing taxes. The budget to make all of these proposals happen is just above \$200 million dollars. If these funds are able to be raised and the proposals are able to thrive, then Cleveland will have a more prosperous and integrated future.

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