The Potential for Land Use and Housing Reform to Address School Segregation and Educational Opportunity

Genevieve Siegel-Hawley
Virginia Commonwealth University

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National Education Policy Center

School of Education
University of Colorado Boulder
nepc.colorado.edu

Acknowledgements

NEPC Staff

Faith Boninger
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Margaret Balch-Gonzalez
Academic Editor

Elaine Duggan
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Alex Molnar
NEPC Director

Kevin Welner
NEPC Director

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I. Executive Summary

Housing, land use, and zoning policies are often siloed in such a way that they are considered and addressed separately from school segregation and students' opportunities to learn. But these policy areas can interact in powerful ways. The wealth required to purchase homes in neighborhoods created by discriminatory land use planning and zoning regulations is intricately connected to an array of public goods, including schools. Neighborhood-based school assignment creates a direct link between segregated housing and segregated schools.

More positively, zoning initiatives in recent years have proliferated to roll back the use of land for exclusionary purposes (e.g., a community only allowing single-family homes on large lots)—with important implications for schools.

Less segregated schools are linked to greater social and economic mobility for historically marginalized students, which is reason enough to consider education when reforming housing policy. Moreover, an important goal of public education is to prepare all young people, no matter what their background, for active, equitable engagement in the pressing matters of the day. Such goals are advanced when students interact on equitable terms across lines of difference in racially and economically diverse, well-resourced schools.

This policy brief attempts to break down the siloes separating land use and zoning policies from school segregation discussions and interventions. Drawing on multiple bodies of literature, it explores what we know about the potential of housing and land use policy reform to address school segregation—and why doing so matters. The research reviewed here illuminates the close historical and legal relationship between school and housing segregation and the clear links between land use policy and school and housing segregation. Studies also show that where land use or housing reforms have enabled greater access to less segregated

schools, historically marginalized students' outcomes have improved. Although the reforms and, by extension, the research, are somewhat limited, it suggests that land use and housing policy has the potential to more broadly reduce school segregation and improve student outcomes.

Recommendations

The research evidence suggests that basic principles for policy design should flow from an understanding of how land use, planning, and development shape and are shaped by access to less segregated schooling, and how school segregation negatively impacts student outcomes. Design should prioritize intentional efforts across metropolitan regions to offer pathways to diverse, well-resourced schools for historically marginalized families. Oversight and enforcement that considers school-housing interrelationships is also necessary. Although either federal or state officials can undertake many of the necessary actions, efforts would be strengthened if both levels of government undertook similar strategies. The most important element is leadership from a non-local governmental level.

Specifically, it is recommended that:

Federal and/or state policymakers:

- Establish grant programs to support regional efforts to fund affordable housing development near diverse, well-resourced schools.
- Mandate or incentivize an end to exclusionary land use policies such as minimum lot and unit sizes, minimum parking requirements, and single-family zoning.
- Define and regularly assess school and housing segregation to inform policymaking that takes into account links between the two sectors.

Federal and state civil rights officials:

- Use regular assessments of school and housing segregation recommended above to monitor school, land use, and housing reforms for their impact on racial and economic isolation in schools and neighborhoods.

Federal, state, and/or local policymakers:

- Adopt multi-sector reforms and remedies with interrelated goals, for instance by forming "children's cabinets" such as those in Maryland and Virginia, that regularly convene personnel from agencies connected to child well-being, to organize planning and policy.
- Require developers to select sites for affordable multi-family units in close proximity to racially and economically diverse and well-resourced schools and to submit proposed school sites for review and approval.
- Ensure that pro-density land use and housing reform explicitly provides minimum requirements for deeply affordable housing (i.e., housing that targets people earning

less than 30% of the median income in a community).

- Streamline onerous permitting requirements and expedite multilayered feedback processes for new development.
- Develop alternative sources of funding for public education to reduce dependence on property taxes.
- Require that officials evaluate any proposed expansion of market-based school choice for its impact on housing and school segregation, based in part on the newly established assessments recommended above.

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II. Introduction

In December of 2018, Minneapolis became the first city in the country to legalize duplex and triplex homes in areas previously zoned only for single-family ones. At the time, exclusive single-family zoning occupied about 70% of the city's geographic footprint, limiting the availability of affordable housing in a city which, like the rest of the nation, desperately needed it.[1]

The Minneapolis City Council eliminated single-family zoning as part of its long-term urban planning process. Though the end of single-family zoning garnered the greatest attention nationwide, it was only one part of a package of land use, zoning,[2] and housing reforms. The City Council's plan included an inclusionary zoning law requiring new developments to set aside 10% of units for affordable housing—and allocated more money for affordable housing overall. It eliminated requirements for a certain number of parking spaces associated with new buildings, a little-noticed impediment to construction permits.[3] The land use and zoning plan also encouraged taller buildings containing more housing units downtown. Finally, it facilitated new development, or "upzoning," along key transportation corridors.

The politics surrounding land use, zoning, and housing reforms too often tap into "Not in My Backyard" (NIMBY) sentiments pushing back on measures that aim to create more racially and socioeconomically diverse communities.[4] Yet Minneapolis leaders were able to build an intentional coalition across racial and class lines called Neighbors for More Neighbors.[5] The coalition-building was facilitated by heightened community awareness of historical housing discrimination. Several years before Neighbors for More Neighbors formed, the University of Minnesota's Mapping Prejudice project mapped thousands of housing deeds containing restrictions preventing non-White groups from buying or living in homes in the city.[6] The Mapping Prejudice project aimed to draw attention to the structural racism fueling Minne-

apolis's racial disparities, particularly in home ownership.[7]

What happened in Minneapolis is a modern-day story of a community resisting exclusionary and discriminatory zoning. Zoning is a legal tool that permits localities to designate how land is used—as in, for residences or commercial enterprises—as well as rules around the kinds of structures that can be built on it.[8] But as the history of Minneapolis illustrates, zoning is about far more than tools and rules. It is a race-evasive[9] method of spatially separating groups of people by race, ethnicity, and wealth. The legacy of race-based housing and educational segregation has kept alive the close relationship between race and wealth. And the wealth required to purchase homes in the neighborhoods created by land use and zoning regulations is intricately connected to an array of public goods, including schools.[10] Neighborhood-based school assignment creates a direct link between segregated housing and segregated schools.

Still, as Minneapolis residents waged battles over ending exclusionary zoning, most stakeholders failed to explore the relationship between land use and zoning reforms in affluent parts of the city, and greater access to less segregated schools.[11] The Minneapolis debate over land use and zoning largely did not address the fact that building more affordable housing in affluent parts of the city stood to offer low-income families access to more highly resourced schools. The same oversight is true for most of the growing number of housing and land use reform conversations across the country.

This policy brief attempts to break down the siloes separating land use and zoning policies from school segregation discussions and interventions.

Less segregated schools are linked to greater social and economic mobility for historically marginalized students, which is reason enough to consider education when reforming housing policy. But an important goal of public education is to prepare all young people, no matter what their background, for active, equitable engagement in the pressing matters of the day. Zoning, itself, is just one example of such a matter. Both purposes are better served when students interact on equitable terms across lines of difference in racially and economically diverse, well-resourced schools.[12] As land use and zoning reforms gain steam, they can be enhanced by including dialogue and effort to open access to strong, diverse public schools. Moreover, a strong understanding of how housing policy impacts schools, and how school policy impacts housing, showcases the need for closer linkages across the sectors.

This policy brief attempts to break down the siloes separating land use and zoning policies from school segregation discussions and interventions. Drawing on multiple bodies of literature, it explores what we know about the potential of housing and land use policy reform to address school segregation—and why doing so matters. The research reviewed here illuminates the close historical and legal relationship between school and housing segregation and the clear links between land use policy and school and housing segregation. Studies also show that where land use or housing reforms have enabled greater access to less segregated schools, historically marginalized students' outcomes have improved. Although the reforms and, by extension, the research are somewhat limited, it suggests that land use and housing policy has the potential to more broadly reduce school segregation and improve student outcomes.

The brief concludes with recent developments, an analysis of the literature, and recommendations for policy stemming from the research and analysis.

III. Review of the Literature

Historians of metropolitan development, as well as landmark legal decisions, document the reciprocal link between housing and school policy. Applying this historical understanding to current discussions is crucial to grasping how exclusionary housing policies and metropolitan fragmentation (the presence of numerous, smaller school districts in a single metropolitan area) have continued to drive school segregation and inequality. Research further shows that housing mobility policies offering historically marginalized students access to racially and economically diverse schools are linked to stronger educational outcomes. Finally, evidence suggests that changes in education policy can influence changes in housing segregation, underscoring again the reciprocal relationship between the two sectors.

How School Construction, Housing Development and Real Estate Steering Worked Together in the Early 20th Century to Build Segregated Communities

Though scholars traditionally focus on how discriminatory housing and land use policies have shaped segregated metropolitan communities, a small cadre of historians recently have begun illuminating how education policies have influenced those same communities. Merging the history of how urban and suburban spaces developed with the history of school construction and student assignment, historians convincingly argue for an approach in which housing and school policy mutually shape one another.[13]

One historical study of influential urban planners at the turn of the 20th century found that school buildings were the center of planned neighborhoods. Planners designed the "neighborhood unit" with schools at the core, illuminating their spatial and theoretical importance.[14] Schools were at the heart of neighborhood planning efforts, just as planning and land use policies shaped the selection of school sites. And in the early 1900s, officials put constructing and maintaining segregation at the core of both school and planning policies.

In the metropolitan South, two additional historical studies highlight the influential role school construction played in segregating neighborhoods. Raleigh, North Carolina school officials used school siting in the 1920s to facilitate segregated White suburban development, avoiding new school sites in racially mixed neighborhoods. School board officials also refused to build new schools for middle-class Black suburban communities across town.[15] Several decades later, Nashville, Tennessee relied on federal housing and urban renewal policies in tandem with pro-suburban federal school siting guidelines to influence local construction of segregated suburbia. New school construction in the Nashville area economically benefited suburban real estate developers and further segregated Black families locked into cities by discriminatory housing policy. These policies helped construct the "unequal metropolis."[16]

Evidence from the affluent suburbs of Hartford, Connecticut, from the 1950s onward indicated that real estate officials worked alongside public school leaders to ensure that perceptions of segregated White school quality boosted housing values. Reminiscent of "block-busting," an exploitative market tactic that deployed White racial fears to spark the sale of White homes on a residential block once a Black family moved in, "school busting" shifted the racial composition of entire school districts.[17] Relying on similar White racial fears, real estate agents sounded warnings to prospective White buyers about declining school quality as suburban neighborhoods desegregated. These warnings helped resegregate suburban school districts as agents steered White and Black families toward different parts of suburbia.[18]

Court Rulings Once Recognized the Relationship Between School Segregation and Housing

The aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education* in Alabama further illustrates the close and deliberate link between housing and school segregation policy. In an earlier case, local officials in Eufaula, Alabama, had relied on federal housing assistance money from the 1949 Housing Act to raze a thriving Black community situated in a White residential enclave. They did so explicitly in order to create and maintain segregated "neighborhood schools."[19] Though Black residents sued and ultimately won decent compensation for their lost property, the litigation allowed both school and housing segregation to stand.

In response to some of these dynamics, a brief but important spate of judicial decisions in the late 1960s and early 1970s demonstrated the federal courts' awareness of the reciprocal link between school and housing policy. As federal desegregation enforcement efforts gained steam,[20] courts had the opportunity to weigh in on the school-housing segregation relationship. The maneuvering of Eufaula officials was but one of many examples of local reliance on neighborhood segregation to reify school segregation—and vice versa. A 1971 case brought by Black plaintiffs in Charlotte-Mecklenburg included a clear judicial finding of some of the more common methods to maintain school segregation: As more Black families moved into formerly White neighborhoods, school authorities would close schools in that neighborhood and sometimes construct new schools in White suburban areas that were the farthest from Black population centers.[21]

Another case from the same period, *Davis v. Board of School Commissioners* (1971),[22] recognized the role highway construction played in maintaining school and residential segregation in a large Southern district in Mobile, Alabama. The Supreme Court ruled that geographic barriers, such as interstates, could not be used as rationales for avoiding desegregation or promoting school segregation. Lastly, in *Wright v. Emporia*,[23] a 1972 case from part of southwest Virginia, the justices ruled that municipalities were prohibited from carving out new, separate school districts to thwart desegregation. All three rulings made clear that federal courts would no longer accept residential segregation, whether engineered by housing, school, or highway construction policy, as a rationale for maintaining school segregation.

Despite a growing judicial recognition of the school-housing relationship, President Nixon's

opportunity to appoint four conservative justices in a short period of time shifted the Court's positioning.[24] Ensuing Supreme Court opinions, beginning in 1974, posited that housing segregation was caused by "unknown, perhaps unknowable factors" even with an extensive lower court record to the contrary. Still, an increasingly conservative Court did seem to understand some of those factors when in the early 1990s, it blamed private choices and actions for residential segregation fueling school segregation in DeKalb County, Georgia.[25] But classifying all drivers of housing segregation as private sharply circumscribed judicial remedies just as the Supreme Court issued a series of early 1990s-era decisions relaxing and ending school desegregation requirements.[26]

The Role of Land Use Policy in Reinforcing Segregation

Land use policies governing cities have deep historical roots in discrimination, shaping the development of cities in segregated ways. In 1932, for example, a federal document called "Planning for Residential Districts" called for local governments to rely heavily on zoning to "secure the best social and economic conditions." White political leaders drafting the document at the behest of President Hoover understood the "best social and economic conditions" at the time to be segregation.[27] "Planning for Residential Districts" reflected a growing consensus that dividing metropolitan communities into areas for single-family, two-family, and multiple-family housing was the most effective "race-neutral" strategy to create and maintain segregation.[28]

Fast forwarding to the present, a landmark study found that White homeowners use land use policy to protect home values and control access to public goods like schools, especially in fragmented metropolitan areas containing many different school districts.[29] The study drew on data related to the number of elementary school districts in a metropolitan area and from a prominent land use survey of 2,700 municipalities. Analyses of the data showed that metropolitan areas with more elementary school districts and stringent suburban land use regulations—such as multi-family home restrictions and minimum lot sizes—reported more racial and economic segregation across school districts.

Consistent with that finding, new research drawing on school district boundary changes and Zillow data from 150 million land parcels between 2018 and 2022 found that school districts with higher shares of single-family parcels contain a higher proportion of White students than districts with more variation in housing parcels.[30] Schools also became less racially diverse when districts shifted boundaries to include neighborhoods with more single-family home parcels.

In short, exclusionary land use policies facilitate the sorting of families of different racial/ethnic and economic backgrounds into separate school districts. Those separate districts come with separate local tax bases providing the bulk of education funding.[31] When municipalities make it difficult to build anything other than large, single-family homes, the price of those homes increases.[32] Homes attached to higher performing schools and districts also cost more than homes attached to lower performing ones.[33] The high cost of homes in well-resourced, higher performing school districts then makes it very difficult for low-wealth families to gain access.

Evidence points to a causal relationship between anti-density land use policies and housing segregation for Black families.[34] Again, anti-density zoning reduces the supply of affordable housing in affluent, White communities over time, locking lower-wealth Black families out. Another key land use policy related to density and underlying residential segregation is a requirement that developers pay jurisdictions for education infrastructure like the cost of building a new school.[35] That expense is enough to restrict growth, fueling a shortage of affordable housing in communities with high opportunity schools. In the other direction, land use planning and zoning policies allowing for more densely populated communities can reduce segregation. One study found that in metropolitan areas with greater allowable density, residential segregation was lower for Black, Asian, and Hispanic residents.[36]

A different study exploring the relationship between land use regulations and income segregation in 95 metro areas found that density restrictions segregated affluent households into wealthy enclaves.[37] When housing development approval is contingent on multiple factors such as community, school district, and budget feedback, the permitting process is more onerous. Seeking to avoid or unable to overcome a difficult permitting process, developers slow or halt projects. This then restricts housing supply and exacerbates income segregation.[38] The study showed that income segregation was also higher when housing development approval had to go through multiple reviews from different stakeholder groups.

Importantly, though, not all land use approval or oversight processes were associated with higher income segregation. Processes that had no impact on or helped reduce income segregation included: local meeting requirements prior to rezoning land use and state court oversight of fair share affordable housing requirements, exclusionary zoning, and community impact fees. The study also explored the relationship between state involvement in development and growth management and income segregation. Stronger state political involvement centered on ending exclusionary land use restrictions was associated with lower metropolitan income segregation, suggesting that state policy and intervention can help reduce segregation.[39]

Finally, a qualitative study exploring the intersection of school segregation with school and non-school factors such as land use and zoning highlighted the limits of addressing school segregation without attending to state and local land use policies and regulations. Through case studies of two growing Maryland counties, researchers found that redrawing school attendance boundaries was a weak policy mechanism for reducing segregation if not accompanied by clear, multisector desegregation goals and attention to state and local land use policies and regulations facilitating development.[40]

Housing, Land Use, and Education Policies Can Reduce School Segregation and Improve Student Outcomes

Because U.S. neighborhoods have been systematically segregated for so long, evidence describing the impact of land use and housing policy reform on school segregation is somewhat limited. Still, studies of a handful of court-ordered efforts in places like Chicago, Maryland, and New Jersey, as well as a federal housing mobility experiment, point to clear educational benefits for impacted students. Those educational benefits flow from access to less segregat-

ed schools and neighborhoods, with evidence suggesting that schools have a greater positive impact than neighborhoods.[41]

One of the clearest illustrations of how housing policy can reduce school segregation and improve student outcomes comes from a 2010 study of Montgomery County, Maryland. The county operates one of the nation's oldest inclusionary housing policies, requiring developers to set aside one-third of homes in new subdivisions for publicly subsidized housing that blend with the surrounding neighborhood. (where less than 20% of students qualified for free or reduced-price meals). During the period of study, the school district in Montgomery County also invested heavily in its higher poverty schools (where 35-85% of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunches), including full-day kindergarten, extensive professional development, smaller class sizes, and specialized instruction focused on literacy and math. Montgomery thus provided an opportunity to investigate whether economic school integration related to the inclusionary housing policy produced stronger academic results than the evidence-based extra resources provided to schools of concentrated poverty. It did. The results showed that low-income children attending the lowest poverty schools as a result of the housing policy performed far better in math and reading over time than children attending the higher poverty schools receiving additional resources.[42]

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A series of earlier, Chicago-based studies related to a court-ordered, race-conscious housing mobility program underscores similar educational advantages related to housing policy that provides students with access to less segregated schools. Over a roughly 20-year period, between 1976 and 1998, 7,000 low-income Black families participated in the Gautreaux assisted housing program, named after the plaintiff in the litigation that prompted it.[43] By order of the consent decree, suburbs where Black residents exceeded 30% of the population were excluded from the mobility efforts. Chicago public housing residents (and those on the waitlist at the time of the Supreme Court decision in 1976) were allowed to choose between staying in predominantly Black and Latinx city neighborhoods or moving to predominantly White suburban ones. Of those families, more than half moved to predominately White suburban communities.[44]

The remaining families used housing vouchers to move to different communities within the city of Chicago. Research designs comparing outcomes for the two groups of families found that children who accessed predominately White suburban schools through the mobility program were significantly more likely than children who remained in the city to graduate from high school and attend four-year (versus two-year) college.[45] While the curriculum in Chicago's suburban schools was more challenging than in urban schools, mothers of children who moved to the suburbs through the mobility program reported that suburban teachers provided additional support.[46]

Influenced by Gautreaux, the federal government funded a mobility program in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City called Moving to Opportunity (MTO).

Beginning in 1994, MTO was designed partly to help researchers account for selection bias, or the idea that families that participated in mobility programs were different from families who did not (in terms of characteristics like access to information). MTO randomly assigned 4,600 low-income families to three groups. The first group moved to low-poverty census tracts, the second received a voucher and chose which tracts to move to across a given metropolitan area, and the third remained in high-poverty tracts.

Though random assignment meant that MTO had a stronger experimental design than Gautreaux, participating MTO families were less likely than Gautreaux families to move to neighborhoods with significantly stronger schooling and employment opportunities. Early research with MTO families (five years after participation) found no difference between families who moved and families who did not move when it came to test scores, drop-out rates, or school engagement.[47] However, subsequent analyses of MTO that tracked participating children over a longer period of time found that the duration of childhood exposure to low-poverty neighborhoods mattered a great deal for educational outcomes. Children of low-income families who moved to low-poverty neighborhoods before the age of 13 showed improved college attendance and 31% higher earnings than children in a control group.[48]

Note that research on mobility programs tends to show student-level benefits related to access to less racially or economically segregated schools, but little about the overall impact of housing mobility programs on school segregation. This is a departure from the literature on land use reform and segregation patterns, but likely relates to the fact that housing mobility programs have been relatively small-scale. Offering several thousand students access to less segregated suburban schools in metro areas containing millions of students is unlikely to influence school segregation in substantive ways, though the research outlined above suggests it profoundly influences the lives of impacted students.

The Impact of School Policy on Gentrification and Other Housing Patterns

A growing body of research on gentrification, a profit-driven shift in the racial and socioeconomic makeup of a neighborhood,[49] illuminates how school policy can influence housing patterns, and vice versa. In deliberately segregated and divested urban cores, separate and unequal schooling too often remains the norm, and even when it is not, individuals considering moving to a gentrifying neighborhood are likely to perceive it as such.[50] Recently, a pair of researchers explored how the presence of robust school choice options, such as open enrollment and charter, magnet, and private schools, influenced the pace of gentrification. Examining multiple federal datasets for the years 2000 to 2012, the researchers found that college-educated, White households were much more likely to move into previously divested urban neighborhoods when school choice options were plentiful.[51] In racially isolated neighborhoods of color, the likelihood of gentrification increased by up to 22 percentage points when school options expanded. The relationship worked the other way too, such that charter and magnet schools were more likely to proliferate in areas surrounding gentrifying neighborhoods.

A different study based on slightly more recent data reinforced the idea that school choice and gentrification are closely linked. Relying on student-level, school-level, and neighborhood-level data from 2014, the study found that families were more likely to exit assigned local schools in gentrifying neighborhoods when nearby schools of choice were available.[52] Recent movers were also more likely to exit assigned neighborhood schools for nearby schools of choice than more long-term residents. Because a substantial body of literature links market-based school choice to increased school segregation,[53] research tying gentrification to increased participation in market-based choice suggests school segregation may intensify over time.

Another body of research showcasing the influence of school policy on housing trends explores the relationship between school *de*segregation and housing segregation across metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas operating expansive school desegregation plans incorporating both city and suburban districts reported much lower levels of school and housing segregation than metropolitan areas limiting school desegregation to the city.[54] Underlying mechanisms were likely related to a more even distribution of school quality, both perceived and actual, in metropolitan areas with comprehensive city-suburban school desegregation plans. Schooling became less of a driver in family decisions about where to live, opening up housing choices and reducing neighborhood segregation across the metropolitan areas with city-suburban school desegregation plans.[55] Evidence from the end of city-suburban school desegregation in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, also shows that the reverse is true. When the desegregation plan ended, White families resegregated both schools and neighborhoods.[56] School policy, then, does influence housing patterns.

IV. Recent Developments Related to Land Use and Housing Reform

The confluence of housing shortages, pro-density advocacy related to environmental concerns, and increased attention to the history of racial discrimination in land use and housing has created a policy environment where land use and housing reform is possible, although it is important to note that it is not guaranteed.[57] In addition to the local reform efforts in Minneapolis, described in the introduction, this section highlights key state and federal steps toward land use and housing reform. To date, none of the efforts detailed here include an emphasis on access to diverse, well-resourced schools.

State lawmakers in California and Oregon recently passed legislation aimed at eliminating single-family zoning. Since 2017, California has been working on a number of statewide reforms. The state now allows for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) like garage apartments, as well as duplexes, in all residential areas.[58] In 2019, Oregon took a stronger stand, mandating the end of single-family zoning altogether. The state now requires localities of more than 25,000 residents to allow duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and “cottage clusters” on land formerly allocated to single-family homes.[59]

In 2021, the Biden administration held up Oregon’s statewide ban as a model and offered federal aid for implementation.[60] A year later, in 2022, the Biden administration offered competitive federal grant priorities to communities that reformed zoning and land use poli-

cies.[61] The same year saw Congress pass a modest $85 million for Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY) grants incentivizing state and local zoning reforms.[62] Moreover, President Biden has endorsed the HOME Act legislation, first introduced in 2019 and sponsored by Cory Booker and Jim Clyburn, that would require recipients of federal funding to reduce exclusionary zoning.

Massachusetts illustrates the influence of recent federal incentives for land use and zoning reform. In the summer of 2022, the state received nearly $200 million in federal funding for clean energy changes to its transportation network.[63] Earlier the same year, the state legislature mandated upzoning, or the construction of multifamily housing, in communities with mass transit or adjacent to it. The legislature also eliminated a local requirement for a supermajority to pass zoning ordinances, changing it to a simple majority. Because of these land use reforms, Massachusetts was eligible for the competitive priority points when it applied for the federal transportation grant.

On the other hand, Massachusetts illustrates some of the challenges linked to contemporary land use and zoning reform. Crucially, the state guidelines contain no requirements for affordability when it comes to upzoning near mass transit, though officials anticipate that affordable housing developers will be part of the mix.[64] Still, if developers who build deeply affordable housing (i.e., housing that targets people earning less than 30% of the median income in a community)[65] do not participate, upzoning will simply result in upscale housing development in close proximity to transit. Moreover, there are questions about enforcement if wealthier local communities refuse to comply with the state mandate. Massachusetts plans to withhold housing, capital, and infrastructure funding in the absence of local compliance. It is not yet clear if affluent communities will choose to forgo the funding rather than permit multifamily housing. And it is even less clear how courts would respond to local failure to comply with the upzoning mandate.[66] A final concern: Land use and zoning developments in Massachusetts underscore once again the general absence of schooling considerations in reform packages. Encouraging dense development near transit but not highly resourced schools ignores a potent, opportunity-extending dimension of reform.

V. Discussion and Analysis

Research and recent developments related to school segregation and urban and metropolitan history, land use policy, district fragmentation, housing mobility programs, gentrification and metropolitan desegregation yields several major takeaways.

The study of urban and metropolitan history and earlier iterations of school desegregation law tell us that school and housing development and segregation are intimately linked. In the early 20th century, urban planners deliberately placed schools at the center of segregated neighborhoods. Twentieth-century suburban developers and officials used racially biased school construction, urban renewal, and transportation policies to facilitate metropolitan school segregation. For a time after *Brown v. Board of Education*, federal courts also recognized the interconnected relationships between land use, housing, transportation, and school policies as part of a judicial effort to enforce school desegregation orders.

Though few and far between, in recent years some states have undertaken efforts to link different sectors connected to child well-being. Over the past decade or so, state agencies in Maryland and Virginia have formed "children's cabinets" that seek to coordinate policy among different agencies supporting families and youth.[67] But too often these coordinated efforts have excluded housing officials. Provided they include housing, children's cabinets offer a potential model for working across related agencies to reduce segregation and inequality.

Defining and assessing segregation in both the housing and education sectors would be an important first step to inform policymaking linking the two. For instance, two recent federal reports conducted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) offer examples of how government at different levels can define and measure school segregation.[68]

Next, the study of land use policy tells us that exclusionary zoning and metropolitan school district fragmentation are associated with and drive higher levels of between-district school segregation by race and income. The concentration of affluence linked to such policies fuels economic segregation across school districts. Because local property taxes fund the bulk of public education, more affluent localities can afford to direct additional funds to schools. Research shows that some land use regulations and processes, such as land use processes requiring multiple levels of approval from different governing bodies, increase segregation. Other types of regulation or oversight, such as local meeting requirements prior to rezoning land use and state court oversight of fair share affordable housing requirements, exclusionary zoning, and community impact fees, help mitigate segregation. Though nascent, research also indicates that metropolitan areas with greater allowable housing density—e.g., fewer exclusionary zoning policies—report lower residential segregation for Black, Asian, and Hispanic residents. However, if new inclusionary zoning efforts do not explicitly require new developments, for instance those near public transportation, to include deeply affordable housing, reforms to exclusionary zoning may simply facilitate the construction of multifamily housing that is prohibitively expensive. And without intentionally targeting racial/ethnic groups experiencing housing market discrimination past and present, as the Gautreaux litigation did, reforms may also miss the mark.[69]

The study of educational outcomes associated with housing mobility programs like Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity shows that educational outcomes for participating children improved in the handful of places that tried to open up access to less racially and economically segregated schools through housing policy. Longitudinal research regarding children from low-income and racially minoritized families who moved to less segregated areas indicated higher student test scores, improved teacher support, better study conditions, and greater access to educational resources such as libraries. Ultimately, children who moved to less segregated areas reported higher educational attainment in terms of four-year college attendance and graduation. Reducing residential and school segregation for historically marginalized children, in other words, reduces key limitations on life opportunities. To this author's knowledge, no studies specifically examine outcomes for children not participating in the housing mobility programs who are attending schools with participating children. A large body of desegregation literature explores educational outcomes for all children, however, finding multifaceted benefits that accrue across all racial/ethnic groups.[70]

Finally, research on gentrification and metropolitan school desegregation reminds us that school policy influences housing patterns. Research tying gentrification to increased participation in market-based choice[71] suggests a cycle in which more market-based school choices fragment the educational sector and lead to faster gentrification; and gentrification, in turn, intensifies school segregation over time.

Lessons from an earlier era of city-suburban desegregation also show that it is important for cities and their suburbs (i.e., metropolitan *regions*) to address land use, housing, and school segregation together. Research found that metropolitan areas with school desegregation plans that covered large swaths of the city and suburbs reported lower school and housing segregation over a 20-year period.[72] In other words, regional fragmentation increases segregation; regional cooperation and joint planning reduces segregation. However, regional cooperation is limited by the United States' lack of a system of regional government. Partly as a result, cities and the suburbs that surround them often compete with one another for resources. Higher levels of government—federal or state—can ameliorate this problem by incentivizing regional cooperation.

Taken together, research related to land use, housing, and school policy and school segregation makes clear past and present interconnections between the spheres. Yet very few policy conversations or interventions have allowed us to explore what happens when we coordinate across them. A fledgling school-housing initiative from the Century Foundation, called the Bridges Collaborative, is a notable exception. Established in 2020, the Bridges Collaborative brings together leaders from dozens of traditional public school districts, charter schools, and housing organizations to learn and strategize with one another around integration.[73] It is a model that could be expanded upon or replicated in states around the country.

There is also much that civil rights advocates can do to support policymakers and bring these issues to their attention.

Recommitting to understanding the interconnected relationships today might also look like school finance reform that de-emphasizes local property taxes as a primary source of revenue for education. This would, in turn, help create more equitably resourced schools, making changes to how students are assigned to schools potentially more palatable to affluent families. This then creates a virtuous cycle for housing reform as affluent communities realize the construction of deeply affordable housing will not impact their ability to support well-resourced schools. And housing reform that opens up access to less segregated schools for historically marginalized students creates more diverse schools that prepare all students to work and live in a multiracial society.

Policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels can enact such reforms. And while this brief is designed mainly with policymakers in mind, there is also much that civil rights advocates can do to support policymakers and bring these issues to their attention. Projects like the University of Minnesota's Mapping Prejudice, mentioned above, can help advocates empower communities to understand the multi-sector legacy of racial discrimination and increase community buy-in for solutions. Advocates also have an important role in pressuring policymakers to adopt and enforce multi-sector reforms and remedies targeted to historically marginalized groups, such as the Children's Cabinets described earlier, along with other land use and school policy reforms.

VI. Recommendations

The research evidence suggests that basic principles for policy design should flow from an understanding of how land use, planning, and development shape and are shaped by access to less segregated schooling, and of how school segregation negatively impacts student outcomes. Design should prioritize intentional efforts across metropolitan regions to offer pathways to diverse, well-resourced schools for historically marginalized families. Oversight and enforcement that considers school-housing interrelationships is also necessary. Although either federal or state officials can undertake many of the necessary actions, efforts would be strengthened if both levels of government undertook similar strategies. The most important element is leadership from a non-local governmental level.

Specifically, it is recommended that:

Federal and/or state policymakers:

- Establish grant programs to support regional efforts to fund affordable housing development near diverse, well-resourced schools.
- Mandate or incentivize an end to exclusionary land use policies such as minimum lot and unit sizes, minimum parking requirements, and single-family zoning.
- Define and regularly assess school and housing segregation to inform policymaking that takes into account links between the two sectors.

Federal and state civil rights officials:

- Use regular assessments of school and housing segregation recommended above to monitor school, land use, and housing reforms for their impact on racial and economic isolation in schools and neighborhoods.

Federal, state, and/or local policymakers:

- Adopt multi-sector reforms and remedies with interrelated goals, for instance by forming "children's cabinets" such as those in Maryland and Virginia, that regularly convene personnel from agencies connected to child well-being, to organize planning and policy.
- Require developers to select sites for affordable multi-family units in close proximity to racially and economically diverse and well-resourced schools and to submit proposed school sites for review and approval.
- Ensure that pro-density land use and housing reform explicitly provides minimum requirements for deeply affordable housing (i.e., housing that targets people earning less than 30% of the median income in a community).
- Streamline onerous permitting requirements and expedite multilayered feedback processes for new development.
- Develop alternative sources of funding for public education to reduce dependence on property taxes.

- Require that officials evaluate any proposed expansion of market-based school choice for its impact on housing and school segregation, based in part on the newly established assessments recommended above.

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