



**CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Acknowledgement of the City of Glendale’s Historical Contributions to Racism

1. Resolution Authorizing Staff to Prepare and Issue a Request for Proposals to Complete a Historical Context Statement for the City of Glendale
2. Resolution Acknowledging the Racially Exclusionary Past of Glendale, California as a “Sundown Town”

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Action Item

Approved for September 15, 2020 **calendar**

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Submitted by:

John Takhtalian, Deputy City Manager

Prepared by:

Nicole Pasini, Assistant Director of Library, Arts and Culture
Bradley Calvert, Assistant Director of Community Development
Christine B. Powers, Senior Executive Analyst

Reviewed by:

Michele Flynn, Director of Finance
Gary Shaffer, Director of Library, Arts and Culture
Philip S. Lanzafame, Director of Community Development
Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., Assistant City Manager
Michael J. Garcia, City Attorney

Approved by:

Yasmin K. Beers, City Manager

RECOMMENDATION

Staff respectfully recommends that City Council direct staff to prepare and issue a request for proposals to complete a historical context statement for the City of Glendale. Staff also recommends that City Council adopt a resolution acknowledging the racially exclusionary past of Glendale as a “sundown town.”

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

On July 21, 2020 in response to the nationwide dialogue on race and equity, and as part of a long-term effort to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion, City Council approved the City’s membership in the local and regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE). GARE is a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. Joining GARE provides staff with access to the organization’s resources, network, and staff to develop and present an action plan for consideration and discussion by City Council. Concurrently, the Police Department is reviewing its use of policies based on recommendations that were made by Attorney General Xavier Becerra, and will bring a report back to Council at some point.

Part of the request from Council on this topic included an acknowledgement of Glendale’s past with regard to race. As such, staff has been reviewing available historic documents to identify and understand Glendale’s history as it pertains to its racist past.

The City of Glendale was incorporated as a charter city in 1906. In 1920, the U.S. Census reported that the African American population of Glendale was 0.16%, and that population was likely comprised of live-in domestic workers. In 2019, the U.S. Census reported that the African American population of Glendale was 1.6%. Comparatively, the African American population for Los Angeles County was 9.0% in 2019, according to the U.S. Census. This disparity in racial makeup warrants an exploration of the history of Glendale.

James Loewen, sociologist, professor, and author of *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, defines sundown towns as “any organized jurisdiction that for decades kept African Americans or other groups from living in it and was thus ‘all-white’ on purpose,” through formal and informal methods. Loewen identified over 100 sundown towns in California in his research, including Glendale.¹

Informal methods to exclude Black people and other people of color from Glendale included intimidation and violence. Harassment of Black people who moved into Glendale, or who were visiting Glendale, is well documented with hate crimes reported

¹ Loewen, James W. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.

in newspapers from the 1900s through the 1990s.^{2 3 4} Contemporaneous accounts and oral histories from Black people who worked in or lived near Glendale consistently note hostility and discrimination.^{5 6 7 8 9 10} Additionally, individuals who were not white were prohibited from being buried in Glendale's Forest Lawn Memorial Park until the 1960s.¹¹

Formal methods that kept Glendale all white are most clearly represented by racially restrictive covenants in housing. In the 1910s and 1920s, racially restricted housing was noted in advertisements for Glendale homes,^{12 13} and by the 1940s, Glendale was noted as a model for other communities that wanted to racially restrict housing.^{14 15 16} In 1940, Glendale was cited by the California Real Estate Association (CREA) "as being worthy of singular praise in its utilization of measures to keep it a '100% Caucasian Race Community'" due to the promotion of a pledge by homeowners which read, "I will not sell or rent to any person or groups other than the Caucasian Race." In 1942, the Glendale CREA chapter formed Race Restriction Committee "to establish perpetual race restrictions on all parcels of property in Glendale."¹⁷ As late as 1949, Glendale Realtors proudly declared their city a "100% Caucasian Race Community" in the CREA's annual directory.¹⁸ Debate continued on the issue of "open housing" through the 1960s,^{19 20} and controversy ensued when Black people did move into Glendale.²¹

² "Threat in Glendale: Negro Family is Ordered in Anonymous Communication to Leave Town." *Los Angeles Times* (1886-1922); Apr 2, 1907; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times. P 1110.

³ Alexander, Pat. "Postscript." *Los Angeles Sentinel* (1934-2005); Dec 11, 1947; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Sentinel. P 7

⁴ Man Admits Racist Action Against Black: [Home Edition]. *Los Angeles Times* (pre-1997 Fulltext); Mar 26, 1987; Global Newsstream. P 15.

⁵ "Negro Leader Assails Conditions in Glendale." *Los Angeles Times* (1923-1995); Jul 16, 1963; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times. P 2.

⁶ Merritt, Bruce G. Faith and Fair Housing: An Episcopal Parish Church in the 1964 Debate over Proposition 14. *Southern California Quarterly* (2013) 95 (3): 284–316. <https://doi.org/10.1525/scq.2013.95.3.284>

⁷ Central Avenue Sounds: Lee Young. Interviewed by Stephen L. Isoardi, 1991. UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁸ Central Avenue Sounds: Clara Bryant. Interviewed by Stephen L. Isoardi, 1990. UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁹ Central Avenue Sounds: William Douglass. 1990. UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research, University of California, Los Angeles.

¹⁰ "Local relations group to reform" Richard Swearingen, R. 1986, Sept. 12, Glendale News Press.

¹¹ "Integrating the City of the Dead: The Integration of Cemeteries and the Evolution of Property Law, 1900-1969." Vol. 56:4. *Alabama Law Review*. P 1153. August 7, 2005.

¹² ADVERTISEMENT. *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume XXXIX, Number 116, 13 February 1913. P 24.

¹³ Display Ad 220 -- No Title. *Los Angeles Times* (1886-1922); Apr 3, 1921; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times. P V4

¹⁴ "Ask Sign-up on Restrictions of Property Use." *La Habra Star*, Volume XXIX, Number 51, 27 July 1945. P 1.

¹⁵ "Start Plan to Make Race Restrictions," *La Habra Star*, April 20, 1945, 1.

¹⁶ "Would Limit Residents to Caucasian Race," *La Habra Star*, December 22, 1944, 1

¹⁷ Goodman, George. "Bigotry of Fair Housing Act Opponents Rooted in Past." *Los Angeles Sentinel* (1934-2005); Aug 27, 1964; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Sentinel. pg. A12.

¹⁸ Hosang, D. (2010). *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California*. University of California Press.

Although no official record of a Glendale sundown law has been found to date, there is ample documentary evidence that Glendale was a “sundown town.” For example, in 1938, Los Angeles City Park Commissioners refused to allow the Civilian Conservation Corps to house a company of African American workers at Griffith Park because the bordering cities of Glendale and Burbank had ordinances which prohibited Black people from remaining after sun down.²²

Additionally, Glendale has a history as home to white supremacist organizations that alone would have made the city hostile to African Americans. It is well documented that the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was active in Glendale as early as the 1920s^{23 24} when it was noted to be a “strong” organization including many of the business' men of the suburban city [as] members of the masked brotherhood.”²⁵ The KKK was active in Glendale into the 1960s.²⁶ Other white supremacist organizations established themselves in Glendale, including the American Nazi Party in the 1960s and 1970s²⁷²⁸, the League of Peace Amendment Advocates in the 1980s²⁹, and various Aryan nationalist groups in the 1980s and 1990s³⁰³¹.

Another method of racial exclusion existed in the form of redlining. The term comes from federal government maps from the New Deal period, in which maps of every metropolitan area in the country were color-coded to indicate where it was considered safe to insure mortgages. Anywhere African Americans lived were colored red to indicate to appraisers that these neighborhoods were too risky to insure mortgages.³²

Redlining was a means to classify neighborhoods worthy of investment or lending. The Home Owner’s Loan Corporation (HOLC) developed redline maps in the 1930s to determine the level of risk associated with neighborhoods. As part of this initiative, the

¹⁹ Goodman, George. “Bigotry of Fair Housing Act Opponents Rooted in Past.” *Los Angeles Sentinel* (1934-2005); Aug 27, 1964; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Sentinel. P A12

²⁰ Barber, Mary. “Pasadenan Warns Glendale League: Open Housing Not Easy.” *Los Angeles Times* (1923-1995); May 1, 1969; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times. P SG5

²¹ “Mixed Marriage Eviction Halted.” *Los Angeles Sentinel* (1934-2005), May 04 1967, p. 2. ProQuest. Web. 14 Aug. 2020.

²² Cole, Jr., Olen. *The African-American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999.

²³ “Ku Klux Klan Will Be Seen on Glendale Streets.” *Glendale News-Press*, June 30, 1921. P 1.

²⁴ “Klan Handbills Distributed.” *San Pedro News Pilot*, Volume 12, Number 250, 23 December 1939. P 11.

²⁵ “LOS ANGELES SEEKS HIGHER-UPS IN INGLEWOOD NIGHT RIDERS OUTRAGES.” *Hanford Sentinel*, Volume 70, Number 41, 29 April 1922. P 1.

²⁶ “Interracial Couple Gets KKK Warning,” *Glendale News Press*, April 28, 1967.

²⁷ “Hahn Opposes Nazi Hdqtrs.” *Los Angeles Sentinel* (1934-2005); Dec 17, 1964; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Sentinel. P. A4

²⁸ “Documentation of Nazi Activity Vowed at Rally,” *Glendale News Press*, May 6, 1965.

²⁹ O’Donnell, Santiago. “Glendale Group of White Supremacists May Move.” *Los Angeles Times* (1923-1995); Apr 14, 1989. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times. P VY10.

³⁰ Romney, Lee. “Police Investigating Source of Leaflets with Racist Messages.” *Los Angeles Times* (1923-1995), Jan 28 1993, p. 2.

³¹ Brian Lewis, “Racist Groups May Rally at Library,” *Glendale News Press*, July 30, 1987.

³² Gross, Terry. “A ‘Forgotten History’ of How the U.S. Government Segregated America.” *Fresh Air*. National Public Radio. May 3, 2017.

HOLC created maps using local real estate agents to determine that level of risk. These maps factored in proximity to noxious uses, such as industrial development, but the primary determining factor for classification was racial composition. The more minorities that lived in a neighborhood the lower the grade it was given, decreasing the likelihood that a finance company would lend to a prospective home buyer or builder. Maps were color coded into four classes: green (best), blue (desirable), yellow (declining), and red (hazardous). Yellow areas were seen as declining based on the what was described as a “subversive racial element” which was labeled as a threat. Redlined communities were seen as rapidly declining due to a high presence of minorities. Both yellow and red communities were deemed as high risk lending areas. Areas deemed as “best” and “desirable” earned this rating based on the presence of racially restrictive deeds and covenants. This essentially created two official barriers to entry for minorities into more wealthy neighborhoods: redlining maps and covenants.³³

In combination with the HOLC redlining maps, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) also used subjective criteria based on race. Yellow and red areas were often not eligible for loans, which stifled development and encouraged urban decay. This was particularly damaging to older neighborhoods where even loans for repairs were difficult to obtain. The FHA would not provide insurance backing for mortgages in redlined and some yellow classified neighborhoods. Without FHA backing, most could not afford the alternative of high down payment, high interest rate, short term loans. Ultimately this led to redlined, and some yellow classified communities, unable to acquire loans for new purchases or even home improvements. This was further reinforced by the FHA’s own *Underwriting Manual*, which stated “If a neighborhood is to retain stability it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes.” The *Underwriting Manual* served as a field guide when determining if a loan was FHA eligible.^{34,35}

Staff has found evidence of original redlined maps of Glendale that indicate risk of lending to particular neighborhoods in south Glendale based on the presence of minorities. The redlining map included as Exhibit 1 of this report, “Redlining Security Map,” was issued by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board in 1939. It should be noted that the green (best) and blue (desirable) communities were favored for lending based on their ability to restrict access to these neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were most prevalent in north Glendale, where their racially restrictive deeds were deemed as a positive tool to restrict opportunities for minorities, based on review by the HOLC. These maps and racially restrictive covenants were legal to use until 1968, cementing over three decades of economic and housing inequality. During this period, favored

³³ Ryan Reft, "Segregation in the City of Angels: A 1939 Map of Housing Inequality in L.A.," KCET, Los LA. <https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/segregation-in-the-city-of-angels-a-1939-map-of-housing-inequality-in-la>

³⁴ United States. Federal Housing Administration. *Underwriting Manual. Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act, 1938.* <https://books.google.com/books?id=G0nVAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA970&lpg=PA970&dq=#v=onepage&q&f=false>

³⁵ William H. Brown, Jr. "Access to Housing: The Role of the Real Estate Industry," *Economic Geography*, 48, no. 1 (January 1972): 66-78.

neighborhoods and ethnicities were able to build and accumulate wealth through property ownership, while minorities were restricted in access to neighborhoods and the ability to build wealth. Restricted access to neighborhoods made finding employment more difficult, as well as restricted opportunities to higher quality education. Furthermore, redlined communities based upon race were often located closest to industrial uses and other noxious uses, creating disparity in public health as well as economic disparity.

Today, redlining maps are no longer used, but racial compositions and segregation in cities deeply follow the boundaries of these maps. Research has shown that most neighborhoods that were classified as green (best) and blue (desirable) typically have a racial composition of over 75% white today. Neighborhoods classified as yellow (declining) and red (hazardous) were majority-minority communities. While outlawed in the mid-20th century, redline maps created racial and economic division lines that have lasted through today.

Given the recent national tragedies that have sparked open, honest, and uncomfortable conversations surrounding race, it is appropriate and timely for the City of Glendale to understand, acknowledge, and confront its racial past in order to have conversations about race today. In an effort to fully explore and understand Glendale's history, staff recommends that City Council direct staff to draft and release a request for proposals (RFP) to complete a historical context statement for the City of Glendale. Many cities utilize historic context statements as an organizing structure for grouping information about historic properties that share a common theme, place, and time. A historic context statement is not intended to be a comprehensive history, but rather, it focuses on describing those historical development patterns within which the significance of resources can be understood. There can be differing themes for historic context statements, including race/ethnicity, and if directed to draft this RFP, the City of Glendale will request that the historical context statement focus on the theme of race/ethnicity, with the following subsections: African American, Latinx, Eastern Asian, and Western Asian. This is so as to not dilute the history and understanding of each group.

As the City works towards understanding and acknowledging its past, it has also launched a year-long series of educational programming through the Library, Arts & Culture Department. This series seeks to enhance and elevate culturally diverse artistic voices and bring additional focus on systematic racism by amplifying cultural voices through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. These programs will occur in conjunction with such commemorations as Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Armenian Genocide Remembrance, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, and the one-year anniversary of the 2020 racial justice protests. The series will feature authors, curators, historians, panelists, and speakers presenting exhibits and programming.

By understanding and acknowledging the past and confronting the present, the City of Glendale will be better equipped to move forward towards a future that is an antiracist

Glendale, and work alongside the community to gain a better understanding of what a safe, just, and inclusive community looks like for everyone who does (and does not) live in Glendale.

FISCAL IMPACT

Should City Council authorize the release of an RFP for a historical context statement, such funding would be derived from the General Fund reserve balance.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: The City Council may approve the motion to authorize the draft and release of a request for proposals for a historic context statement, and approve a resolution acknowledging the racially exclusionary past of Glendale.

Alternative 2: The City Council may choose to not authorize the draft and release of a request for proposals for a historic context statement, and not approve a resolution acknowledging the racially exclusionary past of Glendale.

Alternative 3: The City Council may approve the motion to authorize the draft and release of a request for proposals for a historic context statement, but not approve a resolution acknowledging the racially exclusionary past of Glendale.

Alternative 4: The City Council may choose to not authorize the draft and release of a request for proposals for a historic context statement, but approve a resolution acknowledging the racially exclusionary past of Glendale.

Alternative 5: City Council may provide any additional recommendations associated with either the historic context statement or the resolution.

Alternative 6: The City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

N/A

EXHIBITS

1. Redlining Map