



# South Bend Reparatory Justice Commission

**INTERIM REPORT**

**JUNE 2025**

For Additional Information visit: <https://www.sbpreparations.org/>

# COMMISSION MEMBERS



**Trina Robinson,  
Chair**



**Judith Fox, Esq,  
Vice-Chair**



**Jay Lewis, Esq**



**Conrad Damien**



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**Aladean DeRose, Esq**



**Richard Warfield**



**Pastor Gilbert  
Washington**



**Cassy White, MPH**



**Takisha Jacobs**



**Regina Williams -  
Preston**

# ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

## Additional Contributors:



• **Dr. Darryl Heller, Inaugural Chair**



• **Pastor David Buggs**



• **Wilner Cusic**



• **John Duffy**

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**BILL NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_-2023**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOUTH BEND ANNOUNCING  
THE FORMATION OF A REPARATORY JUSTICE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBERS  
THEREOF**

*Whereas*, earlier this year, a proposed resolution calling for reparatory justice in the City of South Bend; and in response to a proposed resolution calling for reparatory justice in the City of South Bend, the President of the South Bend Common Council promised the formation of a reparatory justice commission; and

*Whereas*, that proposed resolution recommended many remedies to past wrongs, including the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission made up of representatives and members of affected communities to be responsible for advising the City on how to make financial reparations to impacted communities; and

*Whereas*, although the proposed resolution was not passed by the Common Council, it opened the way for a much broader discussion of the need for reparatory justice in South Bend and what that need consists of; and

*Whereas*, in response to the proposed resolution, Council President Sharon McBride promised the formation of a Reparatory Justice Commission to study various aspects of Reparatory Justice in South Bend; and

*Whereas*, that promise is being fulfilled through this Resolution; and

*Whereas*, this commission will operate independently of the Common Council, will select its own chairperson, determine its own direction in the discussion of reparations in South Bend and related matters, and have the flexibility to restructure itself as an entity other than a commission, if necessary to facilitate the goals of this resolution; and

*Whereas*, it is expected that the commission will take whatever time is necessary to provide to the Common Council its written findings and any suggestions for possible future actions by the Common Council; and

*Whereas*, the members of the commission are David Buggs, Wilner Cusic, Conrad Damian, Aladean DeRose, John Duffy, Judith Fox, Darryl Heller, James Lewis, Cordell Martin, Alma Powell, Trina Robinson, Gilbert C. Washington, Cassandra White, Regina Williams-Preston.

*Now, Therefore, be it Resolved by the Common Council of the City of South Bend, Indiana, as follows:*

**Section I.** The South Bend Common Council hereby establishes a reparatory justice commission for the City of South Bend.

**Section II.** The commission is to take whatever time is necessary to provide to the Common Council its written findings and any suggestions for possible future actions by the Common Council

**Section III.** the members of the commission are David Buggs, Wilner Cusic, Conrad Damian, Aladean DeRose, John Duffy, Judith Fox, Darryl Heller, James Lewis, Cordell Martin, Alma Powell, Trina Robinson, Gilbert C. Washington, Cassandra White, Regina Williams-Preston.

**Section IV.** This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage by the Common Council and approval by the Mayor.

*Approved this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September 2023*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon McBride, President South Bend Common Council

**Attest:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn M. Jones, City Clerk

**Presented** by me, the undersigned Clerk of the City of South Bend, to the Mayor of the City of South Bend, Indiana on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of September 2023 at \_\_\_ o'clock \_\_. m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn M. Jones, City Clerk Office of the City Clerk

**Approved and signed** by me, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of September 2023, at \_\_\_ o'clock \_\_. m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Mueller, Mayor City of South Bend



This interim report is a summary of the Commission’s work thus far and not intended as our final product. It does not document all our findings in detail. Instead, it is meant to inform the South Bend Common Council, as well as the community at large, about our investigations thus far. The commission's reparatory justice suggestions are based on this preliminary research and, as our work continues, we expect some of these recommendations to change. At the end of our work, we will present a final report that will include all our findings and recommendations and the evidence that backs up those findings and recommendations. Because the Commission has no authority to enact any recommendations, we view our forthcoming final report as the beginning and not the end of the reparatory justice process. True reparatory justice will require ongoing investigation, monitoring, policy review and action by the City of South Bend and a wide range of community members and business leaders.



## **South Bend Reparatory Justice Commission History and Statement of Purpose**

The Reparatory Justice Commission was empaneled by the South Bend Common Council on September 28, 2023, to study aspects of reparatory justice for the harms and injustices experienced by African Americans and other Black people of African descent, as individuals and as a group. These harms have been physical, economic, psychological, and emotional, and continue to burden Black people in the present. They span generations and for some, represent lost opportunities and potentials that can never be regained. We recognize that the federal and state governments bear great responsibility for many of the discriminatory practices outlined in this report. However, the resulting harms were experienced by local residents and, in many cases, exacerbated by local action or inaction.

The Commission created five subcommittees to focus on specific areas of harm to the African American community. These include:

- Economic System
- Policing and the Criminal Legal System
- Public Education
- Public and Mental Health
- Housing

Each subcommittee holds monthly meetings to hear discuss research findings, hear from experts, and develop strategies for engaging the public. Community members are welcome to attend these meetings and share their experiences and stories related to the topic of the subcommittee. While each subcommittee holds separate meetings and engages in independent research in its area of concern, many of the areas of harm overlap and are interrelated. One harm may create or exacerbate other harms. For example, health outcomes cannot be disaggregated from housing discrimination that

relegates Black residents to areas where environmental hazards are present. Nor can educational inequities be separated from economic outcomes, which in turn, are generationally connected to policies restricting home ownership for large segments of the Black community.

The full commission hosts monthly public meetings. Community members are welcome to attend these meetings as well. Additionally, the Commission has held and will continue to hold, public forums around the city to illicit comments and input from the community. To date, public forums have been held at the Charles Black Community Center, the Charles Martin Community Center, Olivet AME Church, the South Bend Public Library, and 1 Roof Community Center.

Through research, public testimonials, and input from scholars and other experts, the Commission is working to identify both the historical causes of harms to African Americans and their continued effects. It will make recommendations for the repair of those harms and propose remedies to ensure the harms are not repeated in the future. These may be harms or injustices perpetrated by explicit city policy or indirectly through structures or institutions under municipal authority. Inevitably, these will also include harms and injustices that were perpetrated by private and other non-governmental entities over which the municipality may have no authority, but which nonetheless should be addressed.

The Commission has set 18 months as a timeframe in which to carry out its duties. The Commission will continue to research the historical records of past inequities that have caused current harms and hold regular public forums and meetings to gather stories and statements from the public. There will be regular opportunities for assessments and ongoing feedback from community participants. The Commission is committed to its work being transparent and inclusive. Public input is not only desired but necessary for the legitimacy of its recommendations to have effect. The public may reach the commission with comments, suggestions, or stories at its public event or privately at <https://www.sbpreparations.org/>



## Education Report

### South Bend Reparatory Justice Commission

The education subcommittee’s goal is to document the history of systemic injustices in the field of education. The harms need to be identified and acknowledged. The committee offers recommendations which establish a foundation to end policies and practices that continue to cause racial disparities in education outcomes.

### **History**

South Bend Schools were explicitly segregated by race until 1981, almost thirty years after the Supreme Court, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, ruled such discrimination illegal. Schools for black children were under resourced and educational opportunities were not the same for students in majority black schools as opposed to those in majority white schools. A consent order was signed between the United States justice department and the South Bend Community School Corporation on February 8, 1980. The School Corporation agreed to adjust its policies to insure that” [e]ducation and extracurricular programs shall be equal for each school serving similar grade levels and similar student needs” The promise of the consent decree has never been fully realized.

The committee found evidence of continued disporportiant treatment between students of color and white students. Black children are disproportionally labeled learning disabled and disproportionately placed in special education. Conversely, black children are rarely recommended for honor programs. Teachers have not been properly trained in the knowledge and understanding of Black life and culture.

The adoption of Plan Z and School Choice during the late 1990s and early 20002 offered black students’ fewer opportunity to qualify for the specialized, magnet programs. High stakes testing and tracking became the norm. These “high stakes” tests are used to make major decisions such as a student’s educational placement, advancement (promotion or retention), awards, or teacher compensation. Research shows, however, that standardized tests are often normed on a specific, white population. This can lead to bias against students from different cultural backgrounds. The language,

content, and cultural references used in standardized tests may not be familiar or relevant to all students, creating an unfair advantage for those with similar backgrounds to the test developers.

### **Identified Harms**

The chief solution of the consent decree - busing Black students to predominately White schools - had unintended consequences, including loss of neighborhood cohesion that neighborhood schools provided, the loss to Black students of Black teachers, and Black student placement with White teachers who at that time had little knowledge and understanding of Black life and culture and often reacted to Black students with stereotypical perceptions. Within these schools that were “integrated” by the consent decree, Black students were often segregated by their socio-economic conditions. The parents were not able to communicate with teachers as well as they had been when their child’s school were nearby.

Black students who have been mislabeled and inappropriately tracked experience higher dropout rates and lower educational outcomes. Harsher discipline feeds a school to prison pipeline. Students in predominately black schools obtain a lower quality of education and fewer curricular choices, which ultimately limit their choices in life.

Teachers have not been given the proper training to understand how to teach black children whose cultural references differ from their own. Fewer black teachers and counselors leave students with fewer role models they can identify with. Educational content that lacks inclusion of the student’s culture will potentially lead to a lack of understanding of what is being taught. When Students who cannot see themselves in the educational content may disconnect from the learning environment. Training must also address the learning styles of all students recognizing that a “one size fits all” approach will not meet the unique needs of students. A higher majority of Black students are kinesthetic or “hands on” learners.

Finally, neuroscience research has shown that exposure to discrimination and disparate treatment can actually alter the brain. It can delay brain development which can cause physical illness.

### **Reparatory Justice Recommendations**

1. Local universities add to core curriculum courses in cultural competency
2. Design programs that address equity in placement of Black students in GT and honors
3. Schools will have equity in assignment of certified teachers in schools with high percentage AfAm students
4. Implement programs that address racial disparity in discipline referrals
5. Early childhood education programs become compensatory
6. SBCSC to develop additional reading, language arts and math enrichment assistance
7. SBCSC offer no cost GED programs
8. Offer state tests preparation programs
9. Clemente course
10. High school credential training

## **Research:**

### **Documents Reviewed:**

- SBCSC Consent Decree
- Thought Bridge Reports
- Department of Justice communication
- IDOE data on SBCSC
- NAACP documents on racial disparity
- Injustice and its Neurological Impacts

### **Interviews and other Public Input:**

- Howard Edwards, Director of School Learning at the South Bend Community School Corporation (SBSCS) and oversees the Rise Up Academy of South Bend.
- Oletha Jones, former member of the SBCSC Board of Trustees, now Education chair of the South Bend NAACP
- Oliver Logan education chair for 100 Black Men of South Bend.
- Public Input on Educational Disparity
  - Mr. Lonnie Hosea
  - Several unnamed respondents



## **Employment / Economic Opportunity / Wealth Gap Report** **South Bend Reparatory Justice Commission**

The Employment and Economic Opportunity / Wealth Gap subcommittee began as two separate subcommittees: Employment and Economic Opportunity / Wealth Gap. Due to the tremendous amount of overlap, we combined these two subcommittees into one. On the Employment side of our work, we have focused upon how racial discrimination has harmed African American employees and their families. On the Economic Opportunity / Wealth Gap side, we have focused upon how racial discrimination has harmed Black business owners and professionals, as well as the resulting wealth gap in our community.

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### **History**

The post-Civil War era brought over six million African Americans up north and west to find better jobs and living conditions. This Great Migration brought many Black families to South Bend, drawn by employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector. Fleeing Jim Crow, these Black families were surprised to find more subtle forms of discrimination that limited their opportunities for work, wages, business development, along with lost social opportunities arising from South Bend businesses who refused to serve Blacks or who served them separately in a segregated area.

However, during the mid twentieth century in South Bend, a Black business district prospered on the west side of the City. While residents today dispute the exact boundaries of this district, Indiana University at South Bend researchers pinpoint the center of this district around the intersection of Liston and Birdsell Streets. The National Urban League reported that approximately 81 businesses in South Bend were Black owned in 1958. Very few of these businesses continue in that area today

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## Identified Harms

As a result of racial discrimination in employment and economic opportunity, Black residents of South Bend have suffered the following key harms.

1. **Small Number of Black-Owned Businesses.** There are fewer Black-owned businesses and Black professional offices in South Bend than one would expect, given the demographics, especially in areas of the City where there are high percentages of Black residents.
2. **Few Young Black Professionals.** Young Black residents who succeed in business or graduate from business school, law school, medical school or other programs have not returned to South Bend to thrive and help grow our community but, instead, have followed opportunities in places like Chicago, Indianapolis, Nashville, and Atlanta.
3. **Wealth Gap.** The historic lack of access to higher paying jobs, advancement in the job market, and business ownership has stalled the careers of many African-Americans, causing them to have less access to money in retirement and less able to assist their families financially. These South Bend residents have also survived discrimination in housing, education, and policing as discussed in other sections. The combined effect has been a significant wealth gap between white and Black residents of the City.

## Reparatory Justice Recommendations

- Acknowledge systemic racism in the areas of employment and economic opportunity and the lingering harm suffered by African American residents
- Implement programs/resources to remedy the lingering harms from past discrimination, deliver true economic benefit to the Black community in South Bend, and be attainable, sustainable and long lasting
- Limit criminal history and credit checks on employment applications
- Stricter Tax Abatement Oversight (re promises of minority job creation)
- Educational programs (middle school) to foster increased participation of Black youth in higher skilled professions
- Business start-up and expansion grants
- Community Development Investments in Black-owned businesses

## Research:

### Documents Reviewed:

- Racial Wealth Divide in South Bend, *Prosperity NOW*, September 2017
- Financial Empowerment Blueprint, *The City of South Bend*, February 2023
- Black Lives Matter Black People's Budget
- South Bend Human Rights Commission
- Court Cases and Employment Discrimination filings
- Civil Rights Heritage Center Archives
- Records and information from other Cities where reparations have been successful

- Archive and interview data regarding black businesses and entrepreneurs that once thrived but no longer exist (e.g. Murdoch and Sons Construction)
- Victoria Foley, “*Historical Overview of African American Employment Discrimination Between 1910-1970 in South Bend, Indiana.*”
- Financial Literacy classes
- Co-Op style community ownership of neighborhood businesses

**Interviews and other Public Input:**

- Pastor Hardie Blake
  - Cynthia Simmons
  - Kay Farlow
  - Jordan Giger
  - Katheryn Redding
  - Dr. Elijah Anderson
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## **Healthcare & Mental Health Subcommittee Report**

### **South Bend Reparatory Justice Commission**

The health and mental health subcommittee was originally two separate subcommittees that were combined due to the substantial overlap in their research. The subcommittee focus is to address historical and systemic inequities that have disproportionately harmed black and African American populations in South Bend, Indiana.

#### **History**

Segregated hospitals and clinics have limited access to quality care for Black communities. Physicians who did attempt to set up practices were often hampered by racial restrictions in housing and businesses unwilling to rent office space to physicians of color.

Discrimination in medical research, such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, caused long-lasting distrust in medical care by African American community. The stigma of a mental health diagnosis, coupled with the mistrust of mental health services, has led to fewer Mental health care has been historically underfunded in black communities.

#### **Identified Harms:**

Black residents experience higher rates of chronic illnesses (e.g., diabetes, hypertension) than their white counterparts. Housing disparities result in more black families living in areas with environment issues that can cause illness. For example, there is a high incident of lead poisoning in black communities.

Mental health services are limited in our area due to both geographic and systemic barriers and patients often experience long waiting times before being placed with a mental health professional. Even when placed, they are unlikely to be placed with a black counselor due to a shortage of mental health professionals of color. People seeking services are often more comfortable discussing mental health issues with people to whom they feel a shared experience.

### **Reparatory Justice Recommendations**

- **Health Care Investments:**
  - Increase funding for clinics and hospitals in underserved areas.
  - Expand Medicaid and other health programs targeting vulnerable populations.
  - Subsidize health insurance and medical care for historically marginalized communities.
- **Mental Health Access:**
  - Establish community-based mental health centers.
  - Train more mental health providers from diverse backgrounds.
  - Create culturally tailored mental health services to reduce stigma and increase utilization.
- **Policy Reforms:**
  - Address environmental racism by mitigating factors like lead poisoning and pollution in low-income areas.
- **Education and Training:**
  - Integrate anti-racism and cultural competence into medical and mental health education for how providers treat patients and how they document in their records.
  - Support scholarships and training programs for minority health care workers.
- **Community Engagement:**
  - Include affected communities in planning and implementing reparative measures.
  - Continue to collect oral histories to document past injustices and inform future policies.
  - Have a committee of individuals who can serve as advocates to help patients navigate next steps when they feel discriminated against.
  - A person within each organization to be an advocate to go to intake sessions with them because it is very intimidating to go through that process.
  - A safe space to be able to come and be together and know you are not alone in your experience for People of Color.

### **Research:**

#### **Documents Reviewed:**

- 1941 Mr. Negro Facts About Your Health from the Board of Health News
- Oral history of Dr. Ronald Chamble
- Oral history of Alan Pinado.
- A 2014 Pearson Education textbook, [Nursing: A Concept-Based Approach to Learning](#)
- The 40-year experiment, Tuskegee Experiment, from 1932 that involved 600 Black men.

- 1989 EPA report on the Beck's Lake site
- [2022 Health Equity Report](#) published by the St. Joseph County Department of Health
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health.
- The St. Joseph County Fetal Infant Mortality Review team's annual report The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
- comparison of the 1930s Home Owners' Loan Corporation Graded Neighborhoods, the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index, and the Indiana Lead Census Tract Risk Map for South Bend
- The JAMA Pediatrics study of suicide rates of children from 1990s to early 2000s

**Interviews and Public Input:**

- Deb Stanley
- Dr. Carlton Lyons
- Derrick Perry
- Dr. Larissa Buggs (Mental Health)



## **Housing Subcommittee Report** **South Bend Reparatory Justice Commission**

The housing subcommittee has focused on documenting the United States' history of housing discrimination and how it has impacted home ownership and generational wealth in South Bend.

### **History**

Although slavery was not legal in Indiana, it was never a welcoming state for African Americans. In fact, the 1851 constitution barred blacks from settling in the state, making it a criminal offense to move from another state or territory into Indiana. Despite this, black families did begin to settle in South Bend in the 1840s and some were even able to purchase property.

While the cost of housing restricted the ability of early residents to buy homes, overt housing discrimination really began after World War I. Many more black workers had migrated to South Bend for the war industry, more than doubling the black population by 1920. At the same time, membership in the Klu Klux Klan expanded in Indiana, where it is estimated that nearly one quarter of all white men were members. As a result, overt acts of violence directed at blacks and those who supported them, the aim of which was to discourage blacks from settling into South Bend neighborhoods

Beginning in the 1920s, developers began to place racial covenants in deeds, restricting properties inside the developments to "members of the Caucasian race." The subcommittee located a substantial number of housing developments that contained these covenants. As a result many black families were forced into ghetto neighborhoods around industrial neighborhoods, specifically Maggie's Court, and Beck's Lake. The Supreme Court ruled that such covenants were unenforceable, but not unconstitutional, in 1948, but they continued to appear in South Bend housing developments into the 1950s (and perhaps beyond). The federal government exasperated the housing problems when the Home Owner's Loan Corporation created maps that discouraged banks from making mortgage loans in any neighborhood with minority residents. The maps circled these areas in red, creating the concept of

“redlined” neighborhoods.

The South Bend Housing Authority was established in 1941 to provide low income housing for the many workers needed for the second World War. These projects were segregated and white residents mounted efforts to keep these projects out of white neighborhoods. When homes were finally built for black families they were of shoddy materials and built in a way to make them more temporary and not feasible for long-term residency.

The 1954 Housing Act provided the city with money to redevelop the neighborhoods and eliminate blight. The result was the displacement of a disproportionate number of African American families who had been forced to live in these ghettos. Unfortunately, they were not relocated to better conditions. White residents applied a lot of pressure on the city during the 1950s and 1960s to keep white neighborhoods white, and the city complied.

The local real estate community also contributed to the discrimination against African American families. The National Association of Real Estate Boards “code of conduct” required its members to insure that they did not introduce black homebuyers to white neighborhoods. William Morris, South Bend’s first black real estate agent, tried repeatedly to join the South Bend Mishawaka Board of Realtors. Finally, in 1967, he went to court and won, in a way. The order required the group to admit Mr. Morris and give him access to the Realtors Multiple Listing Service, unless they had a valid reason not to. They had no such reason.

While the incidents of overt discrimination decreased after the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, it did not disappear. For example, one black resident and his former white landlord described their experience in the 1980s trying to obtain a mortgage to allow the tenant to buy the landlord’s property. The black renter was denied a mortgage because, according to the bank, the property was “redlined.” The white landlord went back to the same bank, using his tenant’s exact information, and was offered a mortgage. Blind testing of rental units by the Human Rights commission in the 1980s showed a pattern of housing discrimination against renters. Banks continued to deny loans for residents in certain neighborhoods. During the mid-1990s and early 2000s, banks targeted black neighborhoods for subprime mortgages, eventually wiping out housing gains in entire neighborhoods. As recently as 2024, eviction filings were shown to disproportionately affect African American families.

### **Identified Harms**

Decades of discrimination has resulted in a much lower home ownership rate for black families as compared to white families. The wealth of most families comes from the equity in their homes. The lack of home ownership by black families, combined with the loss of equity that disproportionately affected black families during the foreclosure crisis of the 2000s, has exacerbated the wealth disparity between black and white families.

Predominately black neighborhoods in the city lack investment. The streets are in worse condition and other services such as grocery stores lacking. At the same time, aggressive code enforcement in those areas has created financial challenges for black homeowners.

Residents of Beck's Lake were forced to live in a location heavily contaminated by industrial waste. Although cleaned up, the area recently still shows high levels of lead in the soil. Families living in this area have complained of high incidents of health problems.

Black families are more likely to face eviction.

Safe affordable housing has been linked to better health outcomes and higher educational attainment. Housing discrimination has contributed to worse health outcomes and lower educational attainment in black neighborhoods.

### **Reparatory Justice Recommendations**

- Acknowledgement of housing discrimination
- Investigation into and compensation for specific harms caused by exposure of Black residents to contaminated substances in concentrated Black neighborhoods or being forced to live in and then move from those neighborhoods due to redevelopments
- Efforts to increase the number of African American families who participate in South Bend's home ownership/home repair programs
- More aggressive and targeting lead poisoning identification and remediation related to families being forced to live in highly contaminated areas
- Improvements in largely African American neighborhoods relating to infrastructure and amenities

### **Research**

#### **Documents reviewed:**

- Maps created by the Home Owner's Loan Corporation
- Plats for sixty-eight developments that contain racially restrictive covenants
- William Morris Archive
- EPA reports related to Beck's Lake
- Stories and documents about Maggie's Court
- Code Enforcement documents from City of South Bend
- Studies and reports on the effects of the subprime mortgage crisis on black homeownership and the disproportionate mortgage foreclosure rate.
- Judith Fox & Katherine Wines, *Coding evictions: St Joseph County Court Watch*
- South Bend Tribune articles regarding Human Right's Commission evidence of discrimination in rental housing
- James Kelly, *Affirmatively Furthering Neighborhood Choice: Vacant Property for Fair Housing*, 460 Mem. L. Rev 1009 (2016)

- FOIA documents from City of South Bend:
  - list of all properties demolished in 1000 houses for 1000 days
  - criteria for demolitions
- Transcript of hearing on Code Enforcement Meeting (Sept 2015)
- List of vacant and abandoned properties 2008-2012
- Vacant and Abandoned Property Task Force Report 2013
- IACED Tools of Trade Report, Liz Maradik 10/13/2015
- Assessing the Legacies of Historical Redlining: Urban League, Jan 23
- Just, Smart: Civil Rights Protections and Market-Sensitive Vacant Property Strategies
- Human Rights Commission, Analysis of the Impediments to Fair Housing Racial & Ethnic Diversity & Change in the South Bend-Mishawaka Metropolitan Area, 1996
- Financial Empowerment Blueprint, 2/2023
- Racial Wealth Gap Report
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for St Joseph County, 2020-2024, St Joseph County Housing Consortium
- Becks Lake Superfund Site Information on EPA website
- Screening site Inspection Report for the Beck's Lake Site, June 7, 1989
- Progress report, July-Oct 1963 Mayor's Biracial Committee
- Analysis of HMDA data (ND students)
- Testimony from Fair Housing Hearing held in South Bend 1963
- Transcript of Public Hearing Concerning Discrimination in the Sale, Rental & Financing of Private Housing in South Bend & Mishawaka, March 1963
- Oral history: Roland Chamblee
- Coding Evictions: St Joseph County Eviction Court Watch (Feb 2024)
- Study of foreclosures in St Joseph County 2006-2012
- South Bend Tribune articles relating to William Morris

**Interviews and public input:**

- South Bend Reparation Group and Derek Webb who assisted us in the construction of a timeline of housing discrimination in South Bend
- Multiple older residents talking about their experience trying to buy or rent homes in the 1940s and 1950s and being told that the properties were for whites only.
- Caleb Bauer, City of South Bend
- Meeting with Black Lives Matters
- Meeting at the LaSalle Neighborhood Association
- Presentation of the EPA data on Beck's Lake
- Jimmy Johnson



## **Policing & Criminal Legal Subcommittee Report** **South Bend Reparatory Justice Commission**

The Policing and Criminal Legal System Subcommittee is charged with examining the history of the relationship between the South Bend police department (SBPD), the Courts, and the county jail in relationship to the African American community.

### **Historical Context**

There have been multiple incidents in South Bend of questionable police practices, as well as discrepancies in sentencing between Black and white defendants, and jail conditions. The NAACP provided a partial list of incidents that suggest disparate treatment of black encounters with the police department. In several, black residents sustained injuries disproportionate to their alleged crimes. In one example an officer broke the wrist of someone accused of shoplifting and the arm of another person accused of disorderly conduct. Three white officers who entered a black family's home without permission and handcuffed, punched and used a stun gun on 17-year-old. These officers were found guilty of a civil rights violations. In 2012, the same officers forced a mentally disabled 7-11 clerk to swallow dry cinnamon. One officer was suspended for 120 days for interfering in the investigation. In another incident a fleeing suspect was apprehended and found to be choking on bags of drugs and money. An officer put a Slurpee like straw down his throat in an effort to retrieve the drugs. The man died later that night at the hospital. In several separate incidents, mentally ill residents were shot by responding officers.

Other incidents suggest a lack of concern for certain residents. In one 2013 example, two policemen were at the MLK Center when a fight broke out. One called for help which the other ignored. The city

determined to provide backup did not merit discipline. In another incident an officer who had reported misconduct of fellow officers was not provided backup when needed.

Several officers have been found guilty of violating suspects' civil rights. Another group of officers was found to have misrepresented the circumstances of an arrest, according to a 2013 court of appeals. The city paid one resident \$15, 000 to drop his lawsuit when an officer followed him into his house and a struggle ensued that resulted in the suspect's hospitalization.

Many, if not most of the people in jail have not been convicted of any crime and are being held simply because they are too poor to post bail. This endangers many of them for losing their jobs, housing, or other quality of life necessities. These same people are often not permitted to attend their eviction or custody hearing because they are incarcerated, even though they have not been convicted of any crime.

### **Identified Harms**

There is a lack of trust in the police and the courts. People are afraid to turn to the police for assistance, even when it means reporting a crime, for fear of the interaction.

African Americans continue to be disproportionately arrested and continue to receive disproportionate sentences. The criminal justice system is not free. Released prisoners come out of jail with debts that further inhibit their ability to get on an economic footing.

Many of these incarcerations before a person is tried or convicted because the accused person does not have the economic means to pay for bail. These pre-trial detentions can cause people to lose their homes and their jobs. If convicted, released prisoners enter an environment ever more hostile to people with criminal records. There are few landlords who will rent to them and few people who will give them a job.

### **Reparatory Justice Recommendations**

- End money bail
- Promote more Black officers into positions of power and decision-making within the SBPD
- Make sentencing data more transparent and available
- Develop and institute a practice of community policing
- Identify and remove police known to be affiliated with white supremacist organizations

### **Research:**

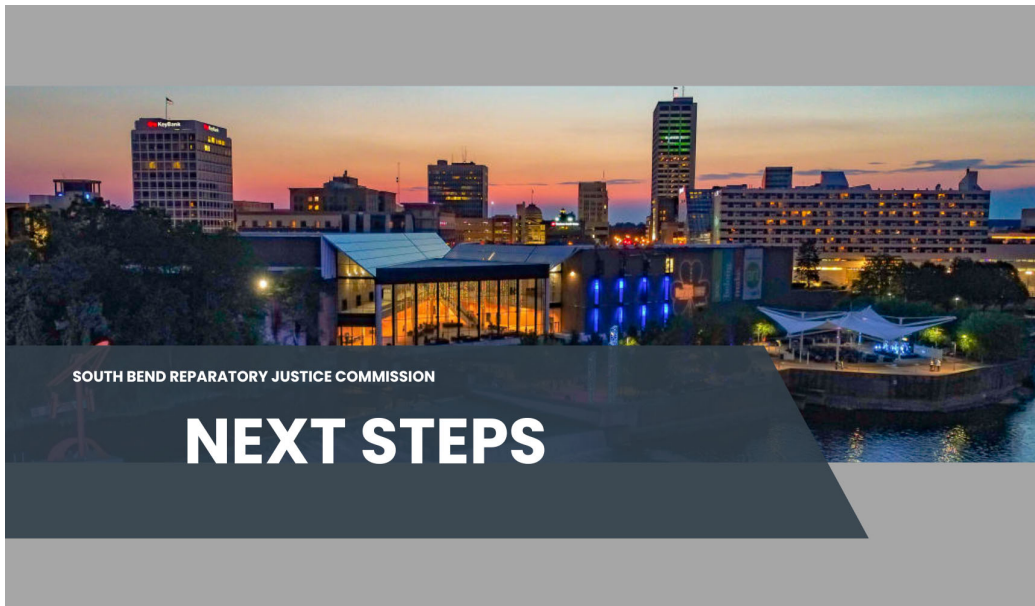
#### **Documents reviewed:**

- Reports from the NAACP of questionable police practices against the Black Community from 2004-Refusal of SBPD to release the tapes of racist police officers
- Challenges have persisted since the firing, re-hiring, demotion and ultimately retiring of the first Black SB Police Chief

- Challenges have persisted since the forced retirement of South Bend's first Black Fire Captain (2001-2011)
- At least 4 lawsuits were filed by Black police officers claiming discriminatory practices
- Over 8 Black officers have retired
- Over 10 Black officers have left the force, some with as many as 20 years of experience and some with master's degrees. Some of those officers have left to work at Casinos, other police departments, the housing authority and independent security officers.

**Interviews and Public Input:**

- Members of the public who spoke of experiences with police
- Sheriff William Redman
- Nathan Cannon



## South Bend Reparatory Justice Commission Next Steps

The South Bend Reparatory Justice Commission will continue working to prepare a final report which will be presented to the South Bend Common Council during a public meeting. We plan to hold this meeting prior to December 31, 2025. Over the course of the next several months, the commission will host additional public forums in its quest to continue to gather data and feedback from the community. Additionally, the commission will begin meeting with key stakeholder in order to share the goals and objectives of the commission and to build a coalition of support. We look forward to continuing this important work for the city of South Bend. We are hopeful our final recommendations will be the basis for improving the quality of life for South Bend residents harmed by the painful effects of slavery, discrimination and oppression. For more information about the commission, please visit: [www.sbpreparations.org](http://www.sbpreparations.org).