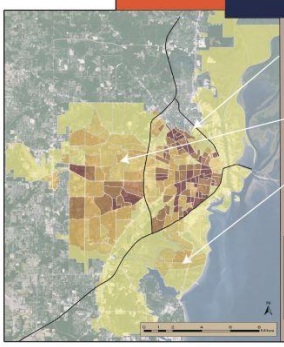
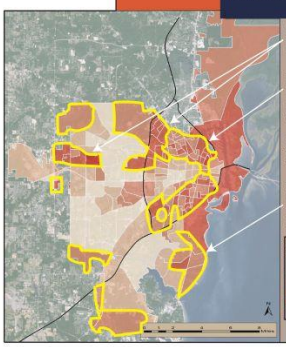
Understanding the City of Mobile, Alabama

Population Density



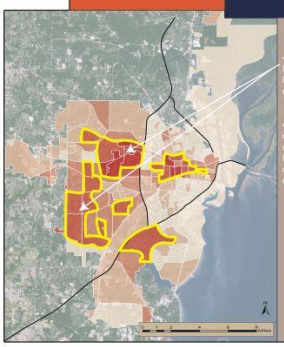
- The densest parts of the city lie on the north and south sides of downtown.
- Western Mobile is much less dense, showing a suburban pattern typical of post-World War II development.
- The Mobile Peninsula is more sparsely populated than many other areas of the city.

Adults Without High School Diploma



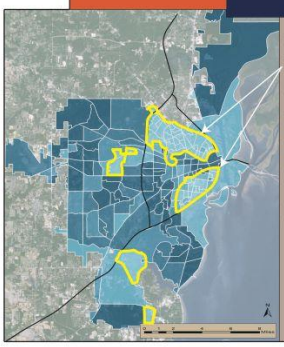
- Significant parts of the city show low levels of high school completion.
- Some inner city areas have populations where less than 35% of adults have high school diplomas.
- The lack of education is an extreme hurdle in securing a job.
- The eastern edge of the Peninsula also shows very low completion rates, which can hamper development.

Bachelor's Degree or Higher



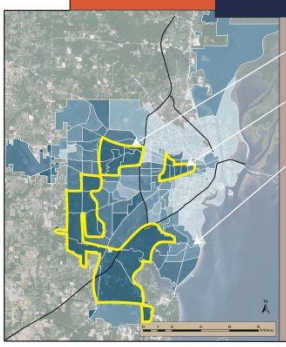
- Areas of western Mobile have the highest levels of college education.
- These areas are clustered around the universities and hospitals, two of the city's largest employment sectors.

Racial Diversity Index



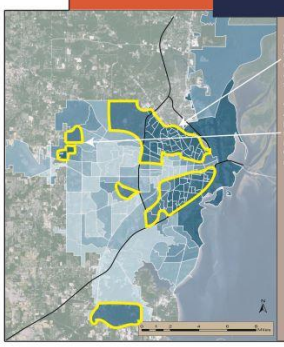
- Mobile shows the least diversity in the areas north and south of downtown. These areas, which are strongly African-American, show many signs of economic distress.
- The western areas of mobile are, for the most part, much more diverse. The presence of significant minority populations suggest Mobile's stratification has economic as well as racial elements.
- The Peninsula shows high levels of racial diversity in each of its block groups.

White Population



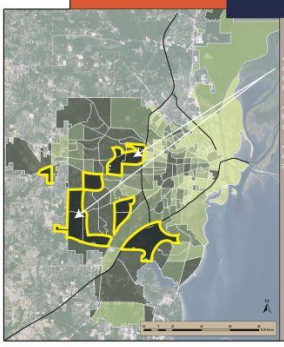
- Most of Mobile's white population is found in the western suburban areas.
- Areas of higher white concentration extend toward downtown in the wedge that runs between Spring Hill Avenue and Government Street.
- White residents of the Peninsula are much more concentrated along the Dog River and Mobile Bay blocks than inland.

Black Population



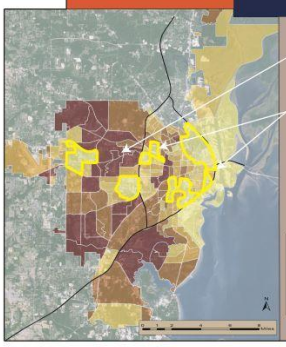
- Mobile's African-American population is distributed throughout the city but is most highly concentrated along the north and south sides of downtown.
- Other enclaves of dense African-American populations exist in southern and far western Mobile, in and around the Cody and Hillsdale neighborhoods.

Median Household Income



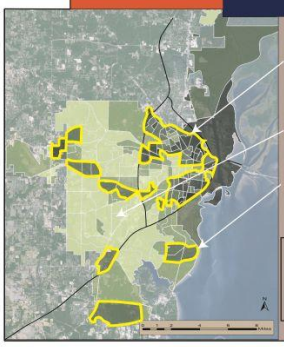
- The highest levels of income are located in western Mobile, directly relating education with income.
- The opportunities provided by high education yield substantially higher income
- These areas are located where crime and unemployment rates are the lowest.

Median Net Worth



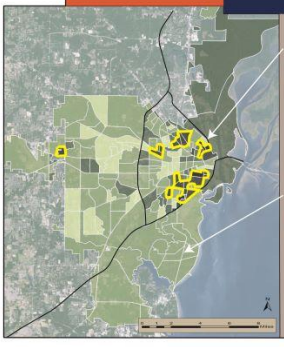
- Wealth in Mobile is located in the western part of the city where its most educated residents are most concentrated.
- Inner city areas have extremely low net worth, showing long-term unemployment trends where families are unable to accumulate anything but the smallest amounts of capital.

Households In Poverty



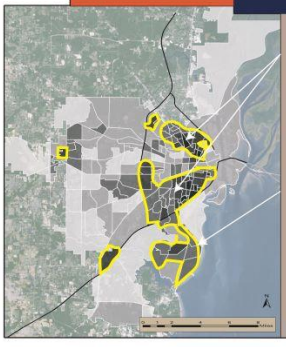
- A large number of Mobile families live in poverty, but much of it is centered in the north and south parts of town, where low education and unemployment are rampant.
- Most western areas show very low levels of poverty, showing that the city's poor are segregated in very specific neighborhoods.
- Residents in the central Peninsula are much more likely to live in poverty than their coastal or riverside neighbors.

Unemployment Rate



- Areas of north and south Mobile show extreme levels of unemployment. These areas overlap with areas of the lowest high school completion.
- With no job and few prospects, people in areas like these are at high risk of falling into a cycle of poverty where compounding factors create a dearth of opportunity.
- Despite its high poverty rate, the central peninsula has a moderate level of unemployment, implying jobs may be available, but they do not meet the needs of area families.

Crime



- Areas with very high rates of crime tend to be the areas that also offer very low levels of economic opportunity. This trend cleary plays out in north and south Mobile.
- Crime damages lives and property values while discouraging investment and encouraging emigration by the capable, further hurting areas where crime is most prevalent.
- The Peninsula shows high level of crime, possibly due to reduced economic prospects for many of its residents.

Spatial Demographic Trends

- Accoding to the U.S. Census, the City of Mobile currently has an estimated population of 194,675, down 0.3% from the 2010 census. Of that total population, whites account for 45%, blacks 50.6%, and a mix of other races making up the remaining 4.4%.
- Educational attainment varies throughout the city, with 86.5% having a high school diploma or higher and 26.2% having a Bachelor's degree or higher.
- The median household income stands at $38,644, while per capita income stands at $23,385. Nearly 24% of the city's population lives below the poverty line.
- The City of Mobile is roughly divided into two distinct areas: prosperous neighborhoods and areas experiencing widespread, systemic poverty.
- A "crescent" of poverty exists around the downtown, where neighborhoods show poor educational attainment, poor employment, and depressed property values.
- These forces are cyclical and self-reinforcing, preventing residents from accumulating intergenerational capital, creating a "poverty trap" as seen in many other U.S. inner cities.
- Areas west of the central city show higher levels of prosperity. Though these neighborhoods may show some trends of "White Flight", many are the most racially diverse in the city.
- Cyclical factors flow in the opposite direction in prosperous areas. Economic support drives educational achievement, which creates further wealth accumulation.
- Wealth is passed down from successive generations, creating a virtuous cycle of economic prosperity.

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