

“Now is the time for steadfastness. Now is the ripe moment for the stalwart warriors and champions to show forth courage and to demonstrate their heroism in the arena of service, until such time as God will exalt His Cause, will remove the distress and anxiety of His friends and trusted servants, and glorify those who were brought low among His creatures, to make them spiritual leaders among men, and to make them God's heirs”.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Fire and Light*, p. 36

ERASED BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: RECLAIMING NORTH NASHVILLE'S LEGACY

INTERSTATE 40 INTERRUPTION
DETERIORATION OF COMMUNITY
POVERTY SETS IN
SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE
GENTRIFICATION

NORTH NASHVILLE

Sue Ballew St. Clair



Interstate 40 Impact

In 1957 there was an intentional decision for I- 40 system construction with deliberate calculation

“Black neighborhoods more disposable than white enclaves.” A cataclysmic event for North Nashville.

(Nashville Scene magazine)

“None of the plans nor their implications were discussed with local residents, even though the route would virtually disembowel North Nashville”.

(Historian, Benjamin Houston)



A bulldozer is busy cleaning the land of what once were homes in North Nashville-July 16, 1968 for the path of I-40 to come through. The Tennessean (Nashville News)

Interstate 40 Impact - Displacement

Land in 37208 zipcode was either bought at a fraction of the cost or was condemned and taken. The development led to the demolition of 650 homes, which displaced 1,400 residents. Real estate values for the remaining properties dropped by 30%, compounding the loss of family and communal wealth.

Nashville Scene magazine, 2018

The local and federal government's treatment of North Nashville for at least a century has ranged from neglect to outright racist hostility.

Nashville Scene magazine, 2018

Not surprisingly, today, North Nashville is one of the most economically precarious locations in the metropolitan area with rampant poverty.

Interstate 40 Impact - Poverty

Child poverty in 2018 in this ZIP code was a stunning 42%, compared to national rate of 14%. At the same time the 37208 zipcode had one of the lowest income rates in Nashville. Brookings Institute, 2018 report

The 2021 Census estimated that 37208 is 70% Black and has a poverty rate double Nashville's average. The rest of the city is 70% White.

By: [Eli Motycka](#) - April 29, 2021 TENNESSEE LOOKOUT



The 37208 zipcode ranked high compared to other zip codes for societal problems, including:

1. Families below the poverty level
2. Percentage of youth not enrolled in school
3. And total crime index,

Brookings Institute

HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT: DRIVING WHILE BLACK

tn.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/highway-development-video/driving-while-black/?student=true&focus=true

WHO definition of violence

“The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, **or against a group or community**, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”

Violent Impact of Gentrification

Black places and black people are disappearing again in North Nashville, demolished by development, raptured away by mass incarceration or in many cases, displaced amid gentrification causing a significant decline over the past decade. The black population dropped from 60 percent to 38 percent – the largest drop in Davidson County. The Tennessean

The influx of developers and home-flippers has acted as a new interstate, chewing up the vulnerable and putting immense pressure on everyone else.

Sekou Franklin, Professor MTSU and Community Activist

Mindy Fullilove, a professor of urban policy and health at The New School in New York calls what has been happening in North Nashville historically and currently, **“Root Shock”**.



Violent Impact of Gentrification

Gentrification refers to the urban planning projects that often displace working class families of color in order to open up residential and retail space for younger, wealthier, and whiter residents. These residents being pushed out are often long-term residents of the city living in historically underdeveloped neighborhoods. They face displacement because of rising property taxes and predatory companies which seek to develop these areas of town through aggressive real estate investment.

by Grace Refugee and Immigration editor, NOVEL HAND March 2020

Violent Impact of Gentrification

1. Forced displacement of residents
2. Loss of local livelihoods
3. Displacement of long term residents
4. Cultural Erasure - destruction of community's rich heritage and culture
5. Increased cost of living
6. Racial hostility and discriminatory behavior government and people in power
7. Focus on spaces that exclude low-income individuals and people of color.
8. **Gentrification leads to a 62% higher rate of firearm injuries over non-gentrified areas.**

Baha'i International Community

“States’ responsibilities to advance the well-being of their people...must be paramount in the formation of public policy. Decision-making... therefore, needs to be structured in ways that ensure active advancement of the common good over other, more limited concerns. Many spaces in which law and policy are determined today are heavily influenced by other actors motivated at least in part by interests such as the accumulation of financial profit or political power.”

Baha'i International Community(BIC),

Baha'i International Community (BIC): Engagement with Sustainable Development Goals

Intractable challenges : Material aspects vs intangible beliefs, values, norms and ethics

Social ills:

- Distortion of relationships and values
- Eradication of poverty of all kinds greatest challenge globally
- Need to transform personal values and qualities of relationship that allow poverty to exist in a world with sufficient resources for all - greatest challenge facing the planet

In the early 20th century, Black people in the Hayti community of Durham NC owned hundreds of businesses along Fayetteville, Pettigrew and Pines streets.

In 1958, the Durham Redevelopment Commission chose to run the 147 highway through the Hayti community demolishing 1000 families and 500 businesses, in the name of “urban renewal”.

This type of blatant sabotage happened in predominantly African American communities throughout the United States.





DIGGING DEEPER

REVITALIZING THE HAYTI DISTRICT

DURHAM



78°
6:14

IMPACT OF INJUSTICE

Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous quote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," emphasizes that any instance of injustice, regardless of location, undermines the pursuit of justice globally, as it creates a ripple effect impacting everyone.

“Racism, inequality, and indifference are a juvenile rebellion against the reality of this interconnection...”

Ruha Benjamin, Viral Justice p 10

“We are living in a world in which everybody and everything is interdependent”. James Baldwin

Microvision of Social Change

Ruha Benjamin

Living in a multi-racial community teaches us how to respect the views and beliefs of people of other races. We learn to be tolerant and to understand and appreciate the peculiarities of those who are not of our race. In this way, we learn to live in peace and harmony with those whose way of life is different from our own.

The relationships that develop do so from a common understanding that enriches the lives of everyone.

A photograph of three young children of African descent sitting on a swing set. The child on the left is wearing a white t-shirt with a colorful graphic and is pointing towards the camera. The child in the middle is looking slightly to the right. The child on the right is wearing a blue denim shirt and is looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred green field with trees. The text "WE ARE ONE" is overlaid in the center of the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

WE ARE ONE

Having a spiritual community can help people to live healthier lives, with greater longevity, less depression and suicide, and less substance use.

COMMUNITY BUILDING PROCESS:

- **links personal growth with social transformation**
- **rekindles the soul's connection to its Creator**
- **fosters friendship and intimacy beyond barriers of race and class**
- **weakens prejudice**
- **inspires neighbors to think about each other's needs and earnestly search for solutions to shared problems**

Parents respond to new spiritual program

A Rich
Tapestry

Terms In Video

Institute process: A structured, systematic learning process to develop spiritual insights and practical skills of service, empowering individuals to engage in acts of service to humanity.

Systematic pattern of action: a cycle of consultation, action, reflection and study for continuous improvement in community-building as identified needs by the community itself.

Protagonist(s): individuals and groups within a community who identify their own needs through continued action, reflection and consultation on their part that they will learn to read their own reality, to see their own possibilities, make their own resources, and develop capacity to transform their community life.

Building Spiritually-based Communities

Begin by forming relationships with members of community of all religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, particularly parents with children and junior youth (11 to 14 years)

Invite community youth to train as children's class teachers or Jr Youth animators (an animator assists junior youth to develop their capacities for service-based leadership rooted in spiritual principles, encourages them to question the world around them, and accompany them in considering ways they can contribute to the betterment of their community)

Children are taught the power of living as spiritual beings by learning to practice spiritual virtues in their daily lives, such as truthfulness, compassion, kindness, etc., memorize prayers, learn songs, arts and crafts, and acts of service.

The long ages of infancy and childhood, through which the human race had to pass, have receded into the background. Humanity is now experiencing the commotions invariably associated with the most turbulent stage of its evolution, the stage of adolescence, when the impetuosity of youth and its vehemence reach their climax, and must gradually be superseded by the calmness, the wisdom, and the maturity that characterize the stage of manhood.

(Shoghi Effendi, from a letter dated 11 March 1936, in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 202)

“The experience of the Baha'i community may be seen as an example of this [an] enlarging unity. It is a community of some [8] million people [in 2020] drawn from many nations, cultures, classes and creeds, engaged in a wide range of activities serving the spiritual, social and economic needs of the peoples of many lands. It is a single social organism, representative of the diversity of the human family, conducting its affairs through a system of commonly accepted consultative principles, and cherishing equally all the great outpourings of divine guidance in human history....If the Baha'i experience can contribute in whatever measure to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race, we are happy to offer it as a model for study”.

Universal House of Justice, “The Promise of World Peace”. 1986

Never lose thy trust in God. Be thou ever hopeful, for the bounties of God never cease to flow upon man. If viewed from one perspective they seem to decrease, but from another they are full and complete. Man is under all conditions immersed in a sea of God's blessings. Therefore, be thou not hopeless under any circumstances, but rather be firm in thy hope.

Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha p 205