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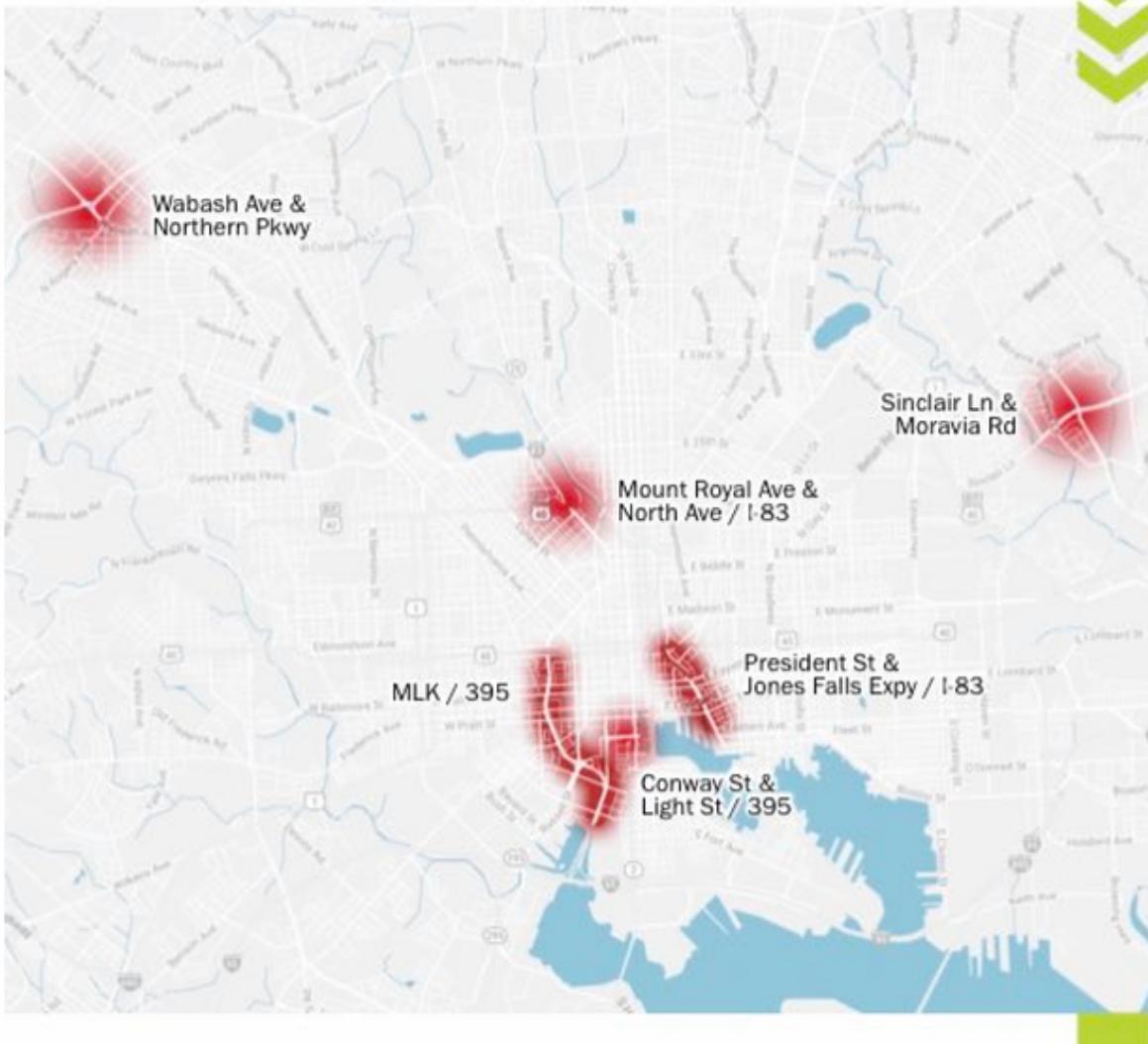
Baltimore City escalates racist attack on squeegee workers and Black youth

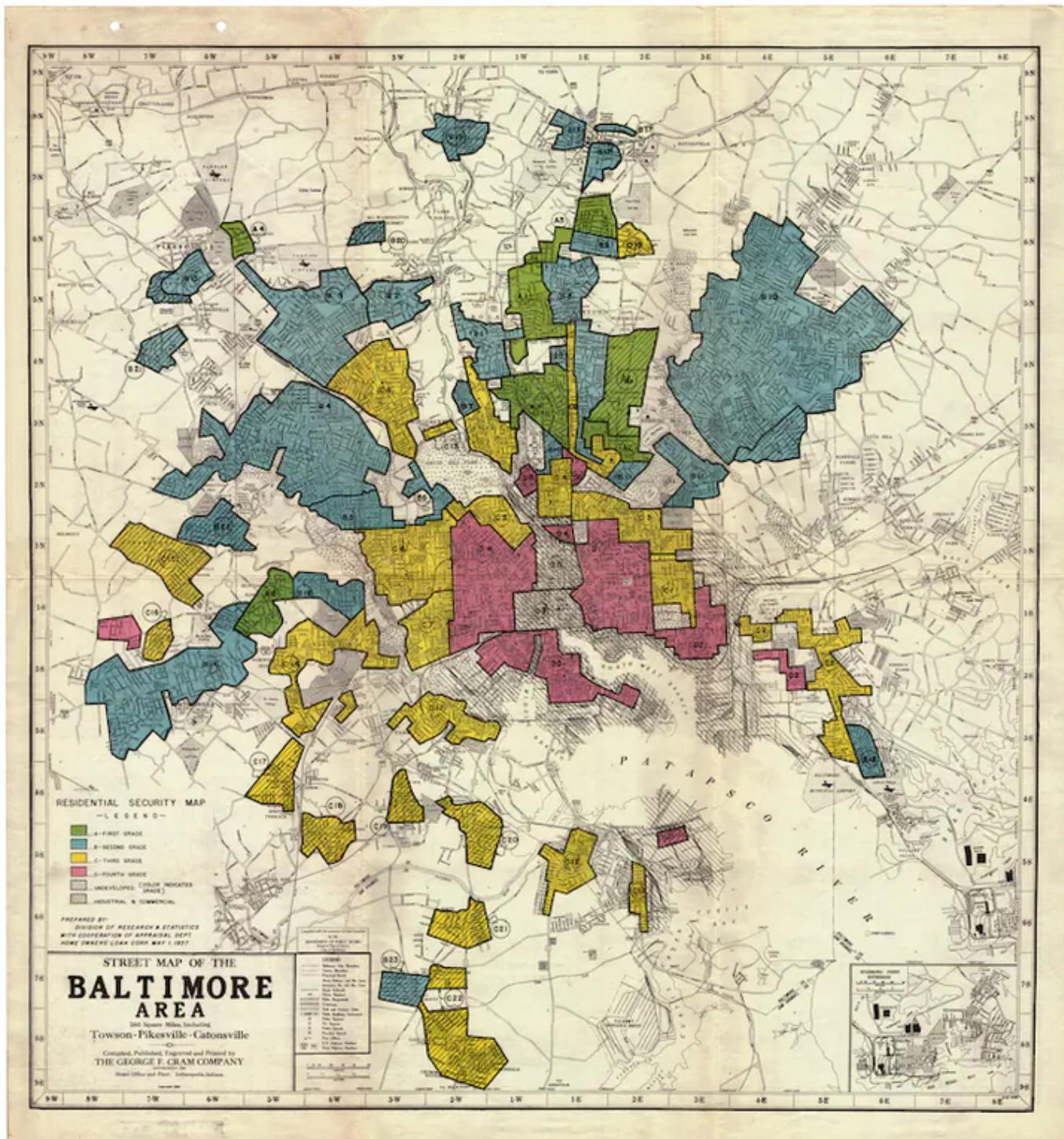
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Squeegee Map Disallowed Zones

The Collaborative selected six pilot zones to disallow panhandling and solicitation activity based on traffic data, accidents, 311/911 calls, reported incidents and community feedback.

These locations will be monitored by a quick response team to ensure no squeegeeing activity continues and to connect youth in these zones with services as quickly as possible. Our priority is safety for both youth and motorists.





Baltimore 1930s redlining map.

Earlier this month, Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott's "Baltimore Squeegee Collaborative" task force announced an [action plan](#). This plan claims to address the socioeconomic and cultural issues associated with the phenomenon of street laborers, usually in their teens or early 20s, known as "squeegee workers." These workers aim to supplement their family's income through cleaning the windshields of cars as they are stopped at intersections.

In reality, this plan simply escalates police crackdowns on the Black community and demonstrates that the Baltimore City government is firmly in the grip of local business owners and the investment banks behind them.

Scott's plan comes after months of racist and repressive outcry from the business community in Baltimore since a Black teenage squeegee worker killed a 48-year-old white man, Timothy Reynolds, in self-defense.

The fatal shooting occurred when Reynolds exited his car, crossed nine lanes of traffic, and proceeded to swing a baseball bat wildly at a group of squeegee workers, all of whom were Black teenagers. Fearing for his life and that of his friends, one of the teens discharged a firearm and killed Reynolds.

Judge rejects plea deal

As Struggle-La Lucha has [previously reported](#), the prosecution of this 15-year-old Black teenager has continued since the teen was charged with first-degree murder in August. The teen's indictment included seven other charges. He was charged as an adult on all counts, despite being 14 years old at the time of the alleged crimes.

The case took an unfortunate turn on Nov. 17, when a Baltimore City Juvenile Court judge rejected a plea deal that would have allowed the case to permanently move under the supervision of the juvenile justice system.

The teen's persecution has not only played out in the courthouse, [but also in the](#)

media. Local television stations, radio programs and newspapers have depicted the accused youth as a monster who represents the criminal and violent nature of the Black community.

This propaganda blitz had one clear goal: to whip up a racist panic and place pressure on the city government to enact harsher “law and order” policies.

As a part of this blitz, Timothy Reynolds’ family retained local reactionary attorney Thiru Vignarajah. When the plea deal was announced as a possibility, various members of the Reynolds family, with Vignarajah by their sides, spoke to the press to express their feelings of betrayal at the idea of a plea that would allow the teen to be prosecuted as a juvenile.

Without knowing the defendant, the Reynolds family nonetheless depicted the young squeegee worker as a monster and career criminal.

According to members of the defendant’s family present at the plea hearing, the Reynolds family repeated these lies in their victim impact statements before the judge. One individual went as far as to accuse the defendant of being a gang member. It was after this testimony, filled to the brim with racist tropes and stereotypes, that the judge issued his ruling that the 15-year-old be prosecuted as an adult.

Mayor, prosecutor make intentions clear

Mayor Scott’s proposed “squeegee action plan” is the exact product of the aforementioned prosecution and its corresponding media campaign. At the heart of the plan is a series of “panhandling” bans on intersections identified as squeegee worker hotspots.

Under Scott’s program, all “panhandling,” which includes squeegee work, will be prohibited at six major intersections/corridors throughout the city. This brazen plan

comes on the heels of incoming Baltimore City State's Attorney [Ivan Bates' announcement](#) that he will pursue broader criminal action against squeegee workers.

Bates further asserted that he would press Scott to release restrictions that currently prevent police officers from approaching squeegee workers without a supervisor's approval.

The trial, the plan - it's all part of a deliberate Baltimore City policy effort to expel the Black community, and in particular Black youth, from the majority white gentrified areas and the downtown business corridor.

Nothing demonstrates the corner clearing plan's racist nature more than the fact that the banned corridors seem eerily similar to 1930s Baltimore city [redlining maps](#), which drove interest rates sky high for would-be Black homeowners.

Squeegee workers should not be met with prosecutions and character assassinations. The individuals who should face accountability are those who attack groups of teenagers on a street corner. Baltimore City and other cities like it don't need bans on panhandling. They need a genuine jobs program and an end to racist police terror.

Drop all the charges! Self-defense against racism is not murder! Community control of the police now!



<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2022/12/04/baltimore-city-escalates-racist-attack-on-squeegee-workers-and-black-youth/>