

*Twin Cities Campus*

**CURA**  
*(Center for Urban and Regional Affairs)*

*330 HHH Center  
301 - 19th Avenue South  
Minneapolis MN 55455*

*Office: 612-625-1551  
Fax: 612-626-0273  
www.cura.umn.edu  
Email: cura@umn.edu*

May 24, 2019

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council  
c/o Dan Ross, Chief GIO  
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office  
658 Cedar St., Room 300  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Council Members:

It is my pleasure to nominate the [Mapping Prejudice](#) project for a 2019 Governor's Geospatial Commendation. That project has done a remarkable job of documenting the nature and location of racial covenants that were inserted in deeds for residential properties from 1910 to the early 1950s. The project has made Minnesotans aware of their past blatant prejudice through wide media coverage and over 165 public presentations so far.

A typical deed covenant read "That said land or buildings thereon shall never be rented, leased or sold, transferred or conveyed to, nor shall same be occupied exclusively by person or persons other than of the Caucasian race." Other covenants listed African, Asian, and Semetic people to be excluded. Still others listed specific precluded races: Chinese, Japanese, Moorish, Turkish, etc. Already 17,518 racial or religious covenants have been identified in Hennepin County. These have been mapped and are shown on shown on the Mapping Prejudice website in an animation showing the spread of this poison from 1910 to 1955.

Through the Mapping Prejudice project, Minnesotans have gained awareness of our historic racism. We have all heard stories about residential prejudice and segregation. Pinpointing those stories on a map, and watching the poison spread, makes it more real and horrifying. Minnesotans are responding in very positive ways in our private discussions, our public policy, and in our real estate industry.

There is no question that Mapping Prejudice has yielded both exceptional results and tangible benefits. This project made new geospatial information available to the Minnesota public, which has responded with outrage at our past prejudice and positive moves to confront that wrong and make positive steps forward. In doing these things, Mapping Prejudice has achieved the following goals listed in your Commendation criteria::

- Development of geospatial data as a public resource, widely available at no cost
- Exemplary use of geospatial technology that affects positive change and/or improves the quality of life in Minnesota.

Mapping Prejudice has been widely covered in the media. Print stories have appeared in the StarTribune, MinnPost, Minneapolis Spokesman-Recorder, Southwest Journal, and the Minnesota Alumni Magazine. Video stories have appeared on Almanac, Fox 9 News, and TPT - Twin Cities PBS. The TPT story, [Jim Crow of the North](#), was an hour-long story premiering this past February. Coupled with the many public presentations, the story of past prejudice has become widely known. It has inspired Minnesotans to take actions that might partially atone for these past sins.

Two emerging public policies are worth highlighting. First, last week on May 22 the governor signed legislation that allows Minnesota property owners to declare covenants on their property void. Of course, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 had made the covenants unenforceable, but they remain a stain on individual deeds that many owners would like to proactively discharge. The bill was drafted by Representative Jim Davnie of Minneapolis after learning about covenants from Mapping Prejudice. The Minnesota legislature gave the bill strong bi-partisan support, passing 128-0 in the House and 63-1 in the Senate..

Second, the City of Minneapolis has also made changes due to exposure to Mapping Prejudice. Its new 2040 Comprehensive Plan increases multifamily housing options across the city as an intentional effort to integrate affordable housing opportunities into all of its neighborhoods.

Letters of support of this nomination are in my appendix. They include letters from:

- Minneapolis CPED Director of Long Range Planning Heather Worthington states that the city used “Mapping Prejudice extensively in our development of the Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan.”
- TPT Twin Cities PBS Senior Producer Daniel PieUce Bergin says Mapping Prejudice allowed him to create “one of the most impactful and important history films Twin Cities PBS has ever produced.”
- Minneapolis Area Realtors CEO Carrie Chang says Mapping Prejudice “helps us to understand so that we can create change...now we can be a force for good.”
- Minnesota Housing Partnership Director of Strategic Initiatives and Policy Elizabeth Glidden was on the Minneapolis City Council and confirms the roll Mapping Prejudice played in the city’s comprehensive plan. At MHP, she has partnered with the project a series of public presentations, all filled to capacity.
- Former Minneapolis StarTribune reporter Steve Brandt talks about his pre-retirement coverage of Mapping Prejudice and reasons for his current volunteer work on it: respect for project leaders, satisfaction of documenting history, atonement for the sins of our forebearers, and stimulating corrective discussions going forward. He provides links to published articles about both the project and his current involvement.
- Augsburg University history professor and department chairman Michael Lansing talks about the value of Mapping Prejudice in presenting this unique story to local citizens and other communities. He predicts cities across the country will be stimulated to investigate their own history of racial covenants using the Mapping Prejudice approach.

The Mapping Prejudice project began in 2016 after a manual search of Hennepin County property records discovered several thousand racially restrictive deed covenants. The project now uses OCR to read through deeds, nominating suspected ones to be read by humans. Over 270 citizens volunteer for this important work including Steve Brandt.

Verified titles with covenants are fed into a mapping system that shows their location. The online version of this map is animated to show the growing extent of covenants over time in Hennepin

County; see [www.mappingprejudice.org](http://www.mappingprejudice.org). Zooming in, the user can see individual lots and street-fronts becoming unavailable to whole groups of people. A subsequent version of the system will include interactive features, allowing users to search by address and explore the extent and language of the covenants for themselves.

The project is housed administratively at the John R. Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota. Besides the library, key individuals should receive the award: Project Director Kirsten Delegard, Project Co-Director Ryan Mattke, Project Records Specialist Penny Petersen, and Digital and Geospatial Director Kevin Ehrman-Solberg.

Mapping Prejudice is exemplary. It has made Minnesotans aware of their tainted past and inspired them to make a positive statement for moving forward. In doing this, we both teach our children about the sins of our past and become a model for other states to emulate in moving forward.. Mapping Prejudice is clearly worthy of receiving a 2019 Governor's Geospatial Commendation

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William J. Craig". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "W" and "C".

William J. Craig  
Associate Director Emeritus and  
MnGIS/LIS Lifetime Achievement Award Laureate

May 28, 2019

Dear Governor Walz:

I write today in enthusiastic support of the nomination of Mapping Prejudice and Professor Kirsten Delegard for the Governor's Geospatial Commendation Award.

The City of Minneapolis utilized the research and mapping of Mapping Prejudice extensively in our development of the Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan ([www.minneapolis2040.com](http://www.minneapolis2040.com)). Through our community engagement process of more than 200 community meetings, we drew on the visual representation of racialized and white supremacist policy that Mapping Prejudice shows through their mapping of racially restrictive covenants in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Minneapolis. While this practice was used throughout the United States to control and limit access to neighborhoods which were preserved exclusively for white residents, Mapping Prejudice is the first effort to show the impact on communities through the use of GIS.

Importantly, these racially restrictive covenants were used by the Federal Government to establish "redlining" maps that limited the availability of federally underwritten home loans to areas that were racially diverse; this practice led directly to single-family and exclusive zoning in high amenity areas of cities such as Minneapolis. In effect, the zoning codes in those cities took racialized policy and made it commonplace. This forever shaped the settlement patterns of our cities, and limited access to whites only in many desirable areas. This practice also represented a significant barrier to wealth creation for BIPOC communities, a condition which persists today.

The visualization of racially biased policies through mapping is an essential tool in helping our residents understand why today's racial disparities are persistent and deepening. The information that Mapping Prejudice presented in different forums was key to having a constructive, factual and data-driven discussion with stakeholders.

We have become strong partners with Mapping Prejudice through our shared commitment to racial equity, and driving better outcomes through the use of social history to inform better public policy. At several conferences, Professor Delegard has graciously invited us to co-present on the use of her research and data. Speaking for myself, it has been one of the most satisfying professional experiences of my career in local government. It is my sincere hope that Mapping Prejudice and the entire team will be honored with this award.

Warmest regards,

*Heather M. Worthington*

Heather Worthington, Director  
Long Range Planning  
Community Planning and Economic Development



Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council

I am honored to write in support of the Mapping Prejudice project. As a PBS producer/director, I have created several documentaries about our region's past. *Jim Crow of the North*, our recent collaboration with the Mapping Prejudice team at the University of Minnesota, immediately became one of the most impactful and important history films Twin Cities PBS has ever produced. From viewer feedback, online comments, and over a dozen screenings in community, the film's account of the insidious impact of restrictive covenants is adding clarity and context to conversations about equity. This would not have been possible without Mapping Prejudice.

I had worked with project lead Kirsten Delegard previously and knew of her commitment to diverse communities and multidimensional Minnesota history. We agreed that adapting the emerging results from the Mapping Prejudice project into a full length documentary would amplify this awareness effort and give Minnesotans an important insight how we got to now. During our production the team was great to work with and offered considerable support to our film project, from early R&D for the documentary, through several on camera interviews, coordinating and sharing research, data, visual elements, fact checking, and into outreach and engagement experiences. Simply put, we could not have produced this film without them.

The importance of absent narratives, engagement scholarship and relevant research continues to grow in acceptance in the field of public history. Few research projects, however, have had as incisive and irrefutable effect on the community as Mapping Prejudice. The impact continues with each passing month with an almost viral spread of screenings in settings including classrooms, campuses, and corporations.

As public media, we are able to harness the unique power of cinema to relate the past to the present. *Jim Crow of the North* has been seen by tens of thousands of PBS viewers and well over 100,000 viewers online. But without the singular work of the Mapping Prejudice team, the awareness of this crucial history would have remained buried in the obscurity of set aside documents.

Respectfully,

Daniel Pierce Bergin - Senior Producer

TPT - Twin Cities PBS | 651.229.1425 | [dbergin@tpt.org](mailto:dbergin@tpt.org)

172 East 4th Street Saint Paul, MN 55101

[Web](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

**TPT.ORG**

**P 651 222 1717**

**172 E. Fourth Street, St. Paul, MN 55101**

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Dear Council Members,

I am writing to support the nomination of the impactful [Mapping Prejudice](#) project for a 2019 Governor's Geospatial Commendation. Our association, which counts nearly 9,000 REALTORS® as our members, not only donated \$10,000 to this project, but also presented an overview of this work at our annual installation of our new Board leadership event held on January 24, 2019.

Mapping Prejudice's work is important and will continue to be referenced in the education of our members, because it brings to life in a visual and clear way the systemic racism present in our local real estate market. In Minneapolis, we have a large and persistent gap in homeownership with over 75% of white families owning their home, and fewer than 25% of African Americans who can say the same. This is rooted in our history, which the Mapping Prejudice project helps us to understand so that we can create change.

Minneapolis Area REALTORS® will leverage the Mapping Prejudice project work to help our local REALTORS be a part of the solution to inform homeowners about the presence of deed covenants and share the way to remove them for those who desire to do so. REALTORS and their professional Code of Ethics were once a part of the exclusionary practices but can now be a force for good to spread the knowledge of this tool and represent ALL current and prospective homeowners. This data and project deliverables will help us achieve this purpose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carrie Chang".

Carrie Chang  
CEO, Minneapolis Area REALTORS®

5750 Lincoln Drive  
Minneapolis, MN 55436  
952.933.9020  
[www.mplsrealtor.com](http://www.mplsrealtor.com)





[www.mhponline.org](http://www.mhponline.org)

2446 University Ave W, Suite 140  
Saint Paul, MN 55114-1740

p: 651-649-1710  
800-728-8916  
f: 651-649-1725

May 2019

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council  
c/o Dan Ross, Chief GIO  
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office  
658 Cedar St., Room 300  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Governor's 2019 Geospatial Commendation for Mapping Prejudice

Dear Council Members:

I write in support of the request for a Governor's 2019 Geospatial Commendation for Mapping Prejudice. I am the Director of Strategic Initiatives and Policy for the Minnesota Housing Partnership, a non-profit organization that promotes affordable homes through federal, state and local policy, original research, and technical assistance to rural and Native communities. Prior to joining MHP in February 2018, I was a Minneapolis City Council Member for 12 years, where I was first introduced to the Mapping Prejudice Project.

The work of Mapping Prejudice has influenced me personally, and influenced the organizations I have worked with and the public dialogue around our history of race and racism in Minneapolis and Minnesota.

When I first met Mapping Prejudice project director Kirsten Delegard, I had begun work with residents to provide historic designation status to the Tilsenbilt Homes in Minneapolis, one of the first racially integrated housing developments in the United States. City employees were eager to learn more and understand our city's history.

The Mapping Prejudice team met with employees from multiple city departments, who were eager to hear about the project and learn directly from the Mapping Prejudice team. Mapping Prejudice forever changed the way that some city employees approached their work.

The Mapping Prejudice project went on to directly influence major City of Minneapolis plans and initiatives, including the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. After learning from the Mapping Prejudice team, and citing its research in reports, city planning staff considered how desegregation could be an objective of the comprehensive plan; this led to the city proposal to increase density through all neighborhoods and remove exclusionary zoning for exclusively single family home use, a policy change that has received robust national attention.

The Mapping Prejudice Project has also changed the hearts and minds of everyday residents. The project's open source model invites residents to participate in the process of identifying racist covenants throughout the city (and now the county). As someone who has worked directly with community members for over a decade, witnessing the power of building a public narra-

tive and resident organizing, I think this is a uniquely effective and important part of the design of Mapping Prejudice.

My partnership with Mapping Prejudice, and awareness of the impact of its work, has been furthered through my time with the Minneapolis Housing Partnership. Just last year, MHP partnered with Mapping Prejudice on an event series, *Racism, Rent and Real Estate: Fair Housing Reframed*, to further educate and engage with residents on our history of covenants, redlining and structural racism. Each event was over capacity, a testament to the need for such community-centered conversations about our race and racism in our neighborhoods.

Thank you so much for considering this nomination. I am available for any further information you may need.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Glidden



Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council  
c/o Dan Ross, Chief GIO  
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office  
658 Cedar St., Room 300  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Council Members:

I am writing in support of the nomination of the Mapping Prejudice project for a 2019 Governor's Geospatial Commendation.

This project is accomplishing groundbreaking work in a national context, both is the breadth of its scope and the public awareness of its efforts. Effective and demonstrative use of GIS capability is at the heart of this effort.

I first encountered this project as a Star Tribune reporter, while researching another story that included a sub-element the presence of racially and religiously restrictive covenants in a Minneapolis neighborhood. As I was nearing retirement as I approached 40 years at the newspaper, I instinctively knew that this was one story I needed to tell before I retired. This story appeared four days before I retired: <http://www.startribune.com/mapping-prejudice-project-traces-history-of-discriminatory-deeds-in-minneapolis/402943496/>

I was impressed by the work of historians Penny Petersen and Kirsten Delegard, who I had known slightly from previous article research, and was bowled over by the addition of Kevin Ehrman-Solberg. He added the GIS element that made the pattern of tens of thousands of once dusty deeds, now digitized by Hennepin County, into a coherently visible pattern of historical ugliness.

So as I cast about for volunteer work to occupy me in retirement, I soon made participating as a Mapping Prejudice as a volunteer my highest priority. We volunteers peer at the digital images of deeds and other records to categorize them as racially restrictive or not, eliminating numerous false positives turned up by a scan for potential racially exclusionary language. We then categorize them by lot, block and addition, grantor and grantee, and date. This work then gets a rigorous review from project staff before it is incorporated into the GIS framework for mapping.

So far I have reviewed more than 4,000 deeds, spending an hour typically most days on the project. Why? First, respect for the project leaders. Second, this project is uncovering a mostly hidden and heretofore untold history of the Twin Cities, a history that we would have told ourselves couldn't have happened in a racially tolerant state before the evidence otherwise emerged, a history that needs to become part of school curricula and further historical research. Third, this is my small effort at atonement for the actions of our forbearers, from the systemic efforts this project uncovers to the casual racism I heard growing up. Fourth, this work provides a foundation for discussions about the appropriateness and scope of reparations for racially discriminatory housing practices. I summarize my reflections on the project in this column: <http://www.southwestjournal.com/voices/dateline-minneapolis/2017/09/tracing-the-legacy-of-prejudice/>

The work of Mapping Prejudice started as an effort to make Minneapolis the first city in the nation with citywide mapping of restrictive covenants. Due to the county-wide nature of the digitized database, the project is nearing the expanded goal of mapping all of Hennepin County for such deeds. There are now discussions of expanding to Ramsey County. This project has served as an inspiration and a technical resource for similar efforts in cities across the nation.

This project aces the award criteria established by the Council with tangible benefits, significant impact and accomplishment of multiple goals in the award criteria. I urge the Council to grant formal commendation of Mapping Prejudice.

Steve Brandt

Minneapolis

[Sbrandt51@gmail.com](mailto:Sbrandt51@gmail.com)

612-823-7793

24 April 2019

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council  
c/o Dan Ross, Chief GIO  
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office  
658 Cedar St., Room 300  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Colleagues:

Please accept the following as a letter of support for the nomination of the University of Minnesota's Mapping Prejudice Project for a 2019 Governor's Geospatial Commendation.

In her classic work, *On Doing Local History*, Carol Kammen defined local history as: "the study of past events, or of people and groups, in a given geographic area—a study based on a wide variety of documentary evidence and placed in a comparative context that should be both regional and national...using methods appropriate to the topic under consideration while following general rules of historical inquiry: open-mindedness, honesty, accountability, and accuracy." Mapping Prejudice not only meets but also exceeds this careful and thoughtful definition of high quality local, public, and digital history.

As an academic historian, my current work is focused on a book-length examination of the food industry in Minneapolis. From that angle, Mapping Prejudice's thoughtful use of historical sources stands out. As a public historian, I've done associated work in a wide range of venues across Minnesota. That means I know how hard it is to fully engage a wide range of citizens as a primary audience for a history project. Finally, as a fourth-generation Minneapolitan with family roots on that city's North Side, it is a pleasure to sing the praises of Mapping Prejudice. As a city resident who sees the daily outcomes of structural racism on a regular basis, I can think of few interventions as significant as Mapping Prejudice and its tight focus on race-based spatial inequality.

Besides showing intellectual and technical integrity, Mapping Prejudice utilizes pathbreaking methods in both digital and public history. Imagining regular citizens not only as a potential audience, but also as co-creators, the project makes the most of GIS technologies by combining them with public history methods and commitments. Indeed, it is the parts of Mapping Prejudice that might seem old-fashioned—the dozens and

dozens of presentations to neighborhood groups and real estate professionals and city planners, the TPT documentary, and the crowd-sourcing—that mark it as different. My colleagues at Mapping Prejudice have not simply created a digital map from a rich trove of historical data. They have created a dynamic visual learning tool that animates a wide range of programming as well as the knowledge we need to do anti-racist work. This is the genius of Mapping Prejudice. Yoking GPS and public history together makes for a transformative narrative, widely shared in difference-making ways.

Indeed, Mapping Prejudice’s direct influence on city policymakers is just one measure of its power and reach. Another is the significant interest among historians, geographers, lawyers, and policy makers in cities around the nation. Finally, I can assure you that digital and public historians are paying close attention to the success of Mapping Prejudice. In the months ahead, I expect similar projects to spring up around the country. In every case, imitation will be an especially sincere form of flattery.

All told, I am struck by the high quality of this project’s conception and design, as well as the ways in which the latest scholarship on the topic were used to render primary sources accessible and relevant to the general public and to policy makers. It has become a model for other historians and geographers across the nation. Most important, it is a project making a real difference—changing the nature of our community conversation about race and justice in the state’s largest city.

If you have any further questions about my support of this nomination, please contact me at 612.330.1665 or [lansing@augsborg.edu](mailto:lansing@augsborg.edu).

All best,



Michael J. Lansing  
Associate Professor and Chair  
Department of History  
612.330.1665  
[lansing@augsborg.edu](mailto:lansing@augsborg.edu)