

War on Poverty



The War on Poverty was declared by President Lyndon B. Johnson in his **State of the Union Address** on January 8, 1964.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and Urban Renewal

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 authorized the formation of local Community Action Agencies as part of the War on Poverty and many Great Society programs fell under the War on Poverty umbrella.

Urban Renewal

The mass exodus to suburbia after World War II left many major cities in poor condition.

Affordable, dependable housing was hard to find, especially for the poor.

To deal with escalating problems in urban areas, Johnson won passage of a bill establishing a Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Community Action Council (CAC) on Wooster Ave.



Businesses on Wooster Ave.



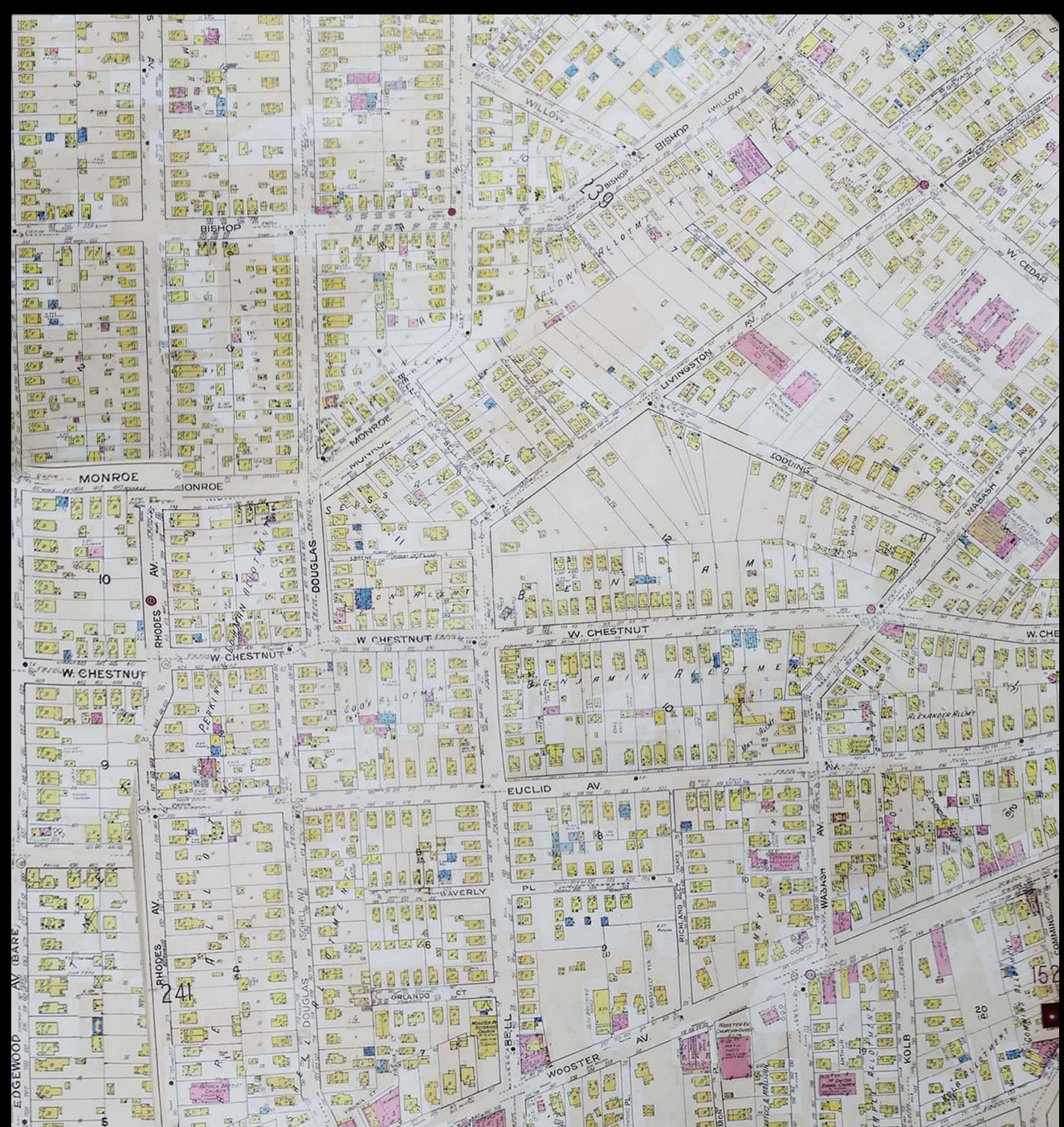
Photo of Businesses on Wooster Ave.

Proposed area for Innerbelt



Affected homes

The Sanborn map from the 1930s shows some of the homes and businesses that were affected decades later by the Akron Innerbelt construction from West Cedar Street to the northeast to Wooster Avenue to the south. -SANBORN





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The failed Akron Innerbelt drove decades of racial inequity

“The Devastation”

Akron Beacon Journal February 3, 2022

- The Akron Innerbelt tore through a Black neighborhood, destroying property values and hurting the people who lived there.
- Black families that had worked hard to buy houses — long the standard for accruing and passing on generational wealth — lost them overnight.
- Many became renters and entered public housing developments. Some were able to purchase homes in other parts of the city, though white flight followed them. Those who kept their homes also lost, as declining property values prevented them from being able to build equity.
- With so many families leaving the neighborhood, school enrollment also declined, which led to school closures, further depreciating home values.

“The Devastation”

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- A 1975 document compiled by the Akron Department of Planning and Urban Renewal notes that at least **737 households** were displaced during the highway’s first two phases of construction. But that figure does not account for two later phases lasting until 1987, and former city employees, displaced residents, advocates and local historians believe the number is higher.
- Although, incomplete records mean that the exact number of houses razed or individuals displaced by the Akron Innerbelt is unknown.
- To make way for the Innerbelt in the late 1960s, **city officials had been seizing property through eminent domain** and offering a small amount of cash to homeowners for relocation purposes. The payouts, which frequently were contested by homeowners, were often not enough to purchase new homes.
- In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the city was offering about **\$5,000** to each homeowner, though on rare occasions payments were as high as **\$15,000**.

Earlier CAC Locations



Community Action 1974

Current Location 55 E. Mill Street



Thank you!



Malcolm J. Costa
President and CEO