

# RALEIGH'S BIGGEST COMMERCIAL PROJECTS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO EQUITY & RACIAL MOVEMENT

I chose to research equity in terms of Raleigh's built environment and its commercial growth because, as an aspiring architect, I am fascinated by the urban metamorphosis of cities and how it affects communities: the silent power that 'brick and mortar' holds and its impact on the people around it. In particular, I investigate new-build development and its relationship to Black and African American population change. As previous scholars have noted, new-build development can constitute "gentrification when it creates upscale

developments that are designed and priced to attract a new middle class, while indirectly excluding lower-income groups in the process" (Payne and Grainer 2017). It is through this lens that I investigate Raleigh's urban growth and the potential impacts that this growth has on surrounding communities. For this work, I leverage American Community Survey estimates for Black and African American (BAA) population and median household income (MHI) levels from 2011 to 2018. Additionally, I include a layer of information on

the biggest commercial projects that have either been recently proposed, are currently under construction, or have just been completed in Raleigh. In particular, I identify two specific areas in Raleigh that have attracted commercial growth: the Midtown and Downtown areas. From the bivariate color map, we are able to observe change in both BAA population and MHI simultaneously. Multiple areas in the Midtown and Downtown areas show increases in MHI levels and decreases in BAA population.

