

# Asher Kaplan

## MUP '21



### My Research Interests

I am in my final year of the Master in Urban Planning program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. I arrived at the GSD after working two jobs in affordable housing. First as the Resident Outreach Coordinator for a community development corporation in New Orleans, then as a paralegal with the Foreclosure Prevention Project at the Legal Aid Society of NYC. Seeing firsthand the many ways that existing housing policies disadvantage vulnerable renters and homeowners led me to an interest in using the communicative tools of urban planning to advocate for better outcomes for individuals and a more just housing system.

### Highlights of my time at the GSD

- Receiving a Community Service Fellowship from the Joint Center for Housing Studies last summer to support my work with the City of Providence. I worked on developing an updated version of the 2015 EveryHome Initiative, a plan to bring each of the city's vacant and abandoned residential properties back into productive use.
- Researching and visualizing historical GIS data to better understand the long-term impacts of redlining in Los Angeles during the 2020 GIS Winter Institute at the Harvard Center for Geographic Analysis.
- Using the tools of critical cartography to map the social and political consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the U.S. food industry in Professor Malterre-Barthes' seminar "[Mapping the Political Economy of Space.](#)"
- Supporting students and studio faculty during the transition to remote learning in Spring 2020 as a member of the [Second Semester Core Urban Planning Studio](#) Class Council.

[akaplan@gsd.harvard.edu](mailto:akaplan@gsd.harvard.edu)

#### Area of Focus

Housing and Neighborhood Development

#### Home

Los Angeles, CA

#### Education

BA, English, Oberlin College

#### Work Experience

The Legal Aid Society of NYC  
Providence Community Housing  
AmeriCorps VISTA



## Thank you

The opportunity to work with and learn from a group of incredibly thoughtful and talented peers and professors has been the greatest benefit of my time at the GSD. I couldn't be more grateful for the assistance that has helped me take a seat among them. Your support through the Stockard Fund has allowed me to broaden my understanding of the many moving parts that together shape our cities. I am deeply appreciative of the wealth of knowledge and experiences offered to me through my time as a student here. Thank you again for your support.

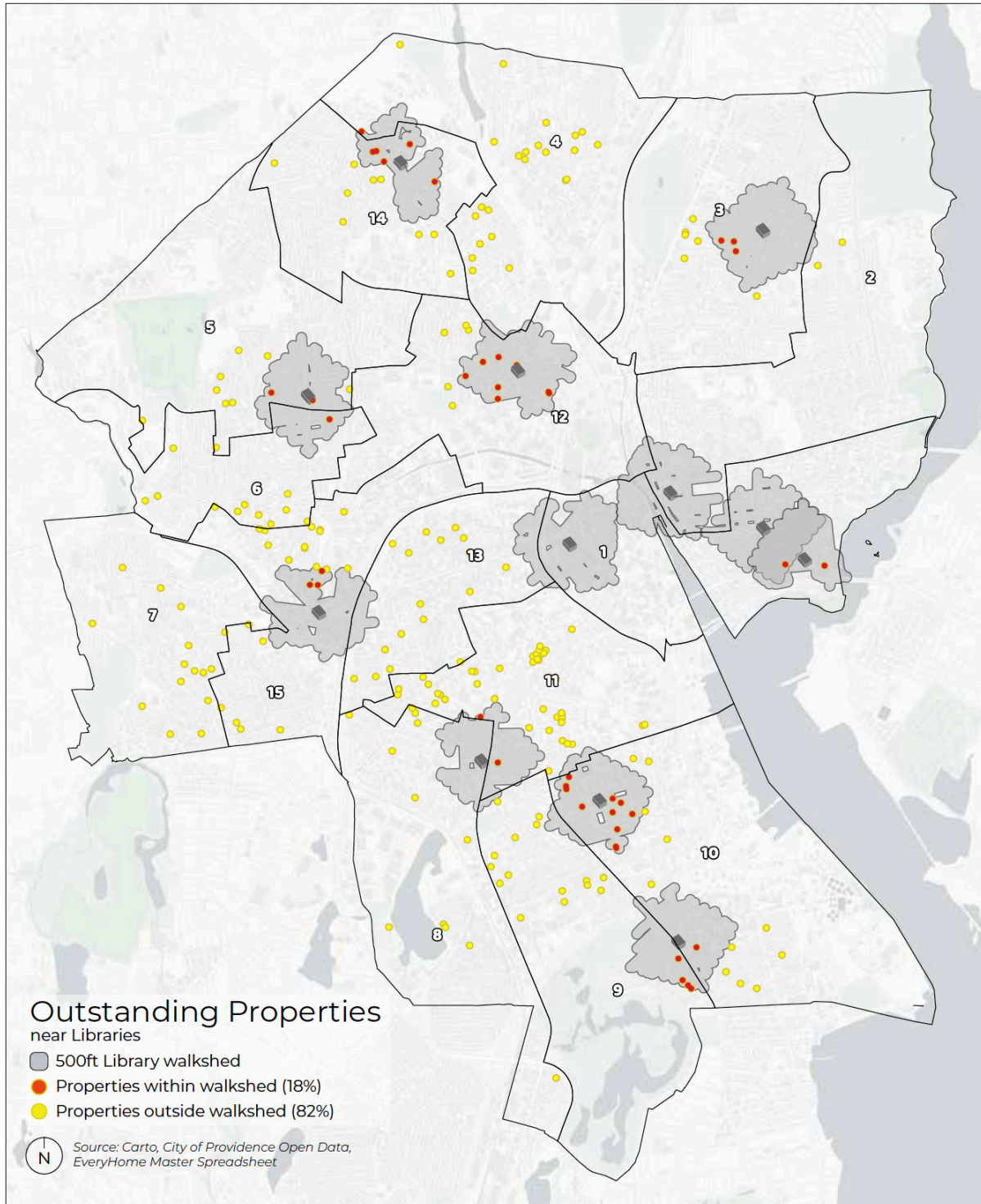
## My Work

The following pages contain samples of my work.

Below is the cover of a report on Redlining in Los Angeles. My analysis of historic redlining maps and contemporary data demonstrated ways that public policies and private-sector practices beginning in the 1930s continue to define the social and physical character of neighborhoods in Los Angeles today, continuing to mark divisions of race, income, and housing type and density.



Below is a sample of work with the City of Providence to develop an updated version of the 2015 EveryHome Initiative. I used QGIS' Network Analysis and Buffer tools to visualize abandoned properties in Providence within a 500ft walking distance of a school. You can read more about my experience on the [Community Service Fellowship Blog](#).



Using techniques learned from a fellow MUP, I visualized three “layers” of the Back Central neighborhood in Lowell, MA, separating its green space, transportation network, and building footprints.

