

## Memo on ownership patterns in Trenton, NJ

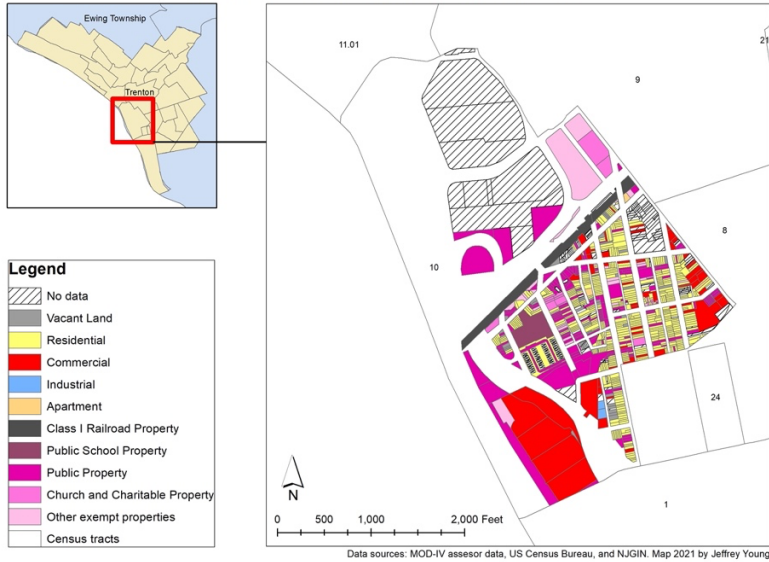
Jeffrey Young – Intro to GIS (34:970:591:02), Fall 2021

The following maps aim to reveal a spatial pattern of investment that helps explain why parts of the city of Trenton are wealthier or poorer. Using tax parcel data from the New Jersey Office of GIS paired with the MOD-IV (Tax Assessor's) table, the maps depict the lowest and highest median income census tracts in Trenton. In tract 10, the median income is about \$17,000, compared to about \$77,000 in tract 13 (according to ACS 2019 data). Tract 10 is in South Trenton along the waterfront, close to downtown but cut off by a highway and railroad. Tract 13 is on the city's northwestern edge and contains the neighborhoods of Hiltonia and Cadwalader Heights, which are more suburban in character. There is a legacy of disinvestment in tract 10; using data from the [Mapping Inequality](#) project, I created a map (not included below) showing that tract 10 was redlined in 1935-40, i.e. given a Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) grade of D. Meanwhile, parts of tract 13 received HOLC grades of either A or B.

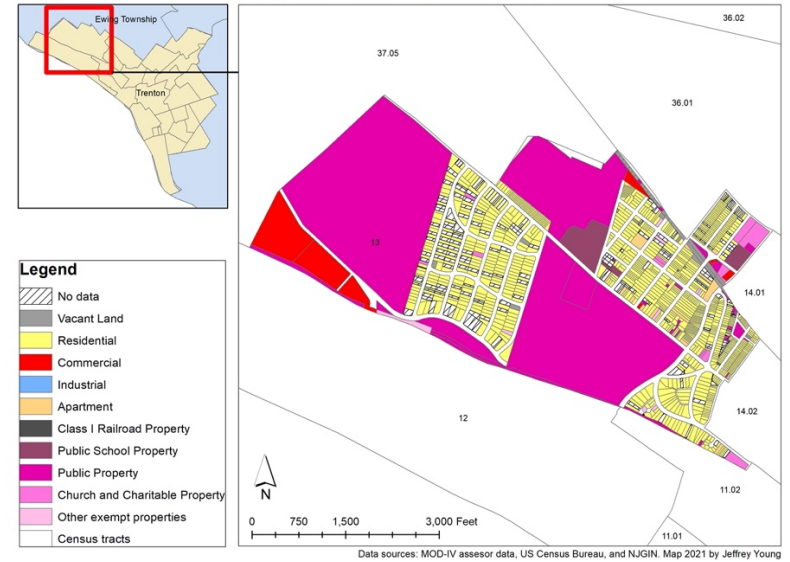
On the left top of the page below, we see in tract 10 that residential parcels are interspersed with a significant number of tax-exempt parcels (various shades of pink/maroon) – many of them found to be vacant land when examining the area using Google Maps in satellite or street view. The presence of the railroad and an industrial facility suggest that the neighborhood faces environmental and noise pollution. The right top map below, on the other hand, shows that in tract 13, the residential area is fundamentally intact, particularly the westernmost residential section of the tract, which contains just three tax-exempt parcels. That section is cordoned off from surrounding areas by tax-exempt land, including the grounds of the Trenton City Museum to the east and a psychiatric institution to the west. Note that there are many parcels listed as having no data; in this neighborhood, that tends to indicate a single house straddling two tax parcels, and property information is only associated with one of them.

To create the maps at the bottom of the page, I ran two SQL queries on the MOD-IV data, one looking for entries where the owner's address matched the parcel address, and one looking for entries that did not include Trenton (or a misspelling of Trenton) in the owner's address. These searches served as proxies for owner-occupied parcels and parcels with owners from outside the city. The searches do not cover every parcel, as there are also parcels with owners elsewhere in Trenton. In the left bottom map of Tract 10, parcels with non-Trenton owners outnumber owner-occupied parcels, with 375 of the former (with owner addresses as far away as Puerto Rico and Israel) and 158 of the latter. This is a renter-occupied neighborhood. In the right bottom map, of Tract 13, we see the opposite, with relatively few (241) non-Trenton-owned parcels (none of them with owners outside the lower 48 states) among 661 owner-occupied parcels. This is an owner-occupied neighborhood.

Trenton, Census Tract 10 Tax Parcels



Trenton, Census Tract 13 Tax Parcels



Trenton, Census Tract 10 Tax Parcels By Owner



Trenton, Census Tract 13 Tax Parcels By Owner

