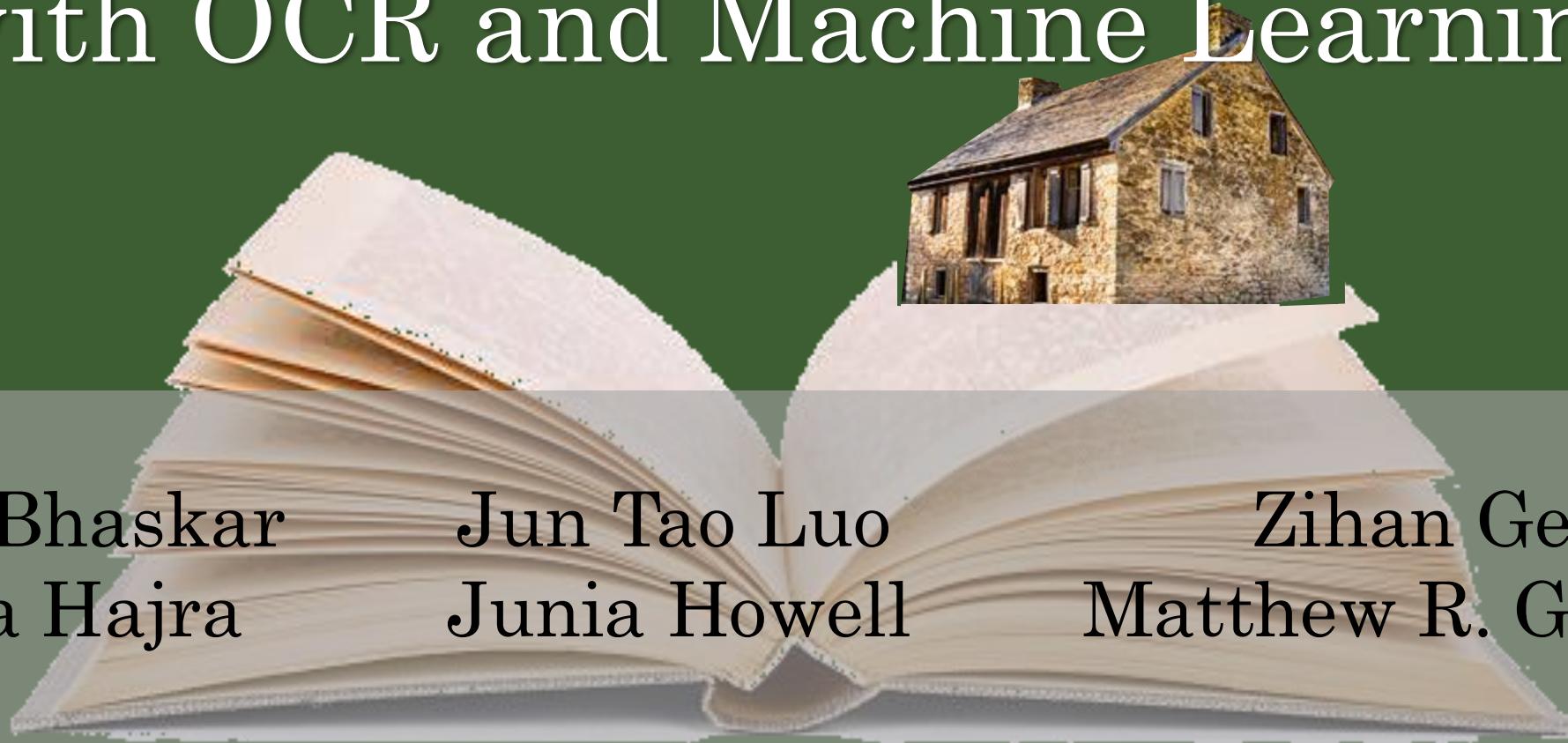


Predicting the Past: Estimating Historical Appraisals with OCR and Machine Learning

Mihir Bhaskar
Asmita Hajra

Jun Tao Luo
Junia Howell

Zihan Geng
Matthew R. Gormley





\$900,000

\$290,000

\$90,000





The Increasing Effect of Neighborhood Racial Composition on Housing Values, 1980–2015

Junia Howell¹ and Elizabeth Korver-Glenn²

¹University of Pittsburgh, ²University of New Mexico

Neighborhoods, Housing, and Racial Segregation

ABSTRACT

Beginning in the 1930s, neighborhood racial composition was a factor in the evaluation of U.S. home values. This deliberate practice was discontinued in the 1960s and 1970s, but the correlation between neighborhood racial composition and home values persists. Using Census Bureau data from 1980 to 2015, this article examines the changing relationship between neighborhood racial composition and home values, as well as the mechanisms that drive it. Contrary to what one might expect, neighborhood racial composition was a stronger determinant of appraised home values in 2015 than in 1980. Results suggest this is primarily due to contemporary appraisal methods. Specifically, the use of the sales comparison approach has shifted from using sales in predominantly white neighborhoods to drive appraisal methods. These findings suggest that the persistent racial inequality is driven in part by perpetual deviation from the appraisal industry's stated practices. The authors conclude that further regulation is required to foster equity in the appraisal industry.

Neighborhoods, Race, and the Twenty-first-century Housing Appraisal Industry

Junia Howell¹ and Elizabeth Korver-Glenn²

Abstract

The history of the U.S. housing market is bound up in systemic, explicit racism. However, little research has investigated whether racial inequality also persists in the contemporary appraisal industry and, if so, how it happens. The present article addresses this gap by centering the appraisal industry as a key housing market player in the reproduction of racial inequality. Using a census of all single-family tax-appraised homes in Harris County (Houston), Texas, the authors examine the influence of neighborhood racial composition on home values independent of home characteristics and quality; neighborhood housing stock, socioeconomic status, and amenities; and consumer housing demand. Noting that substantial neighborhood racial inequality in home values persists even when these variables are accounted for, the authors then use ethnographic and interview data to investigate the appraisal processes that enable this inequality to continue. The findings suggest that variation in appraisal methods coupled with appraisers' racialized perceptions of neighborhoods perpetuates neighborhood racial disparities in home value. The authors conclude with suggestions for future research and policy interventions aimed at standardizing the appraisal process.

Appraised:
The Persistent Evaluation of White Neighborhoods as More Valuable Than Communities of Color

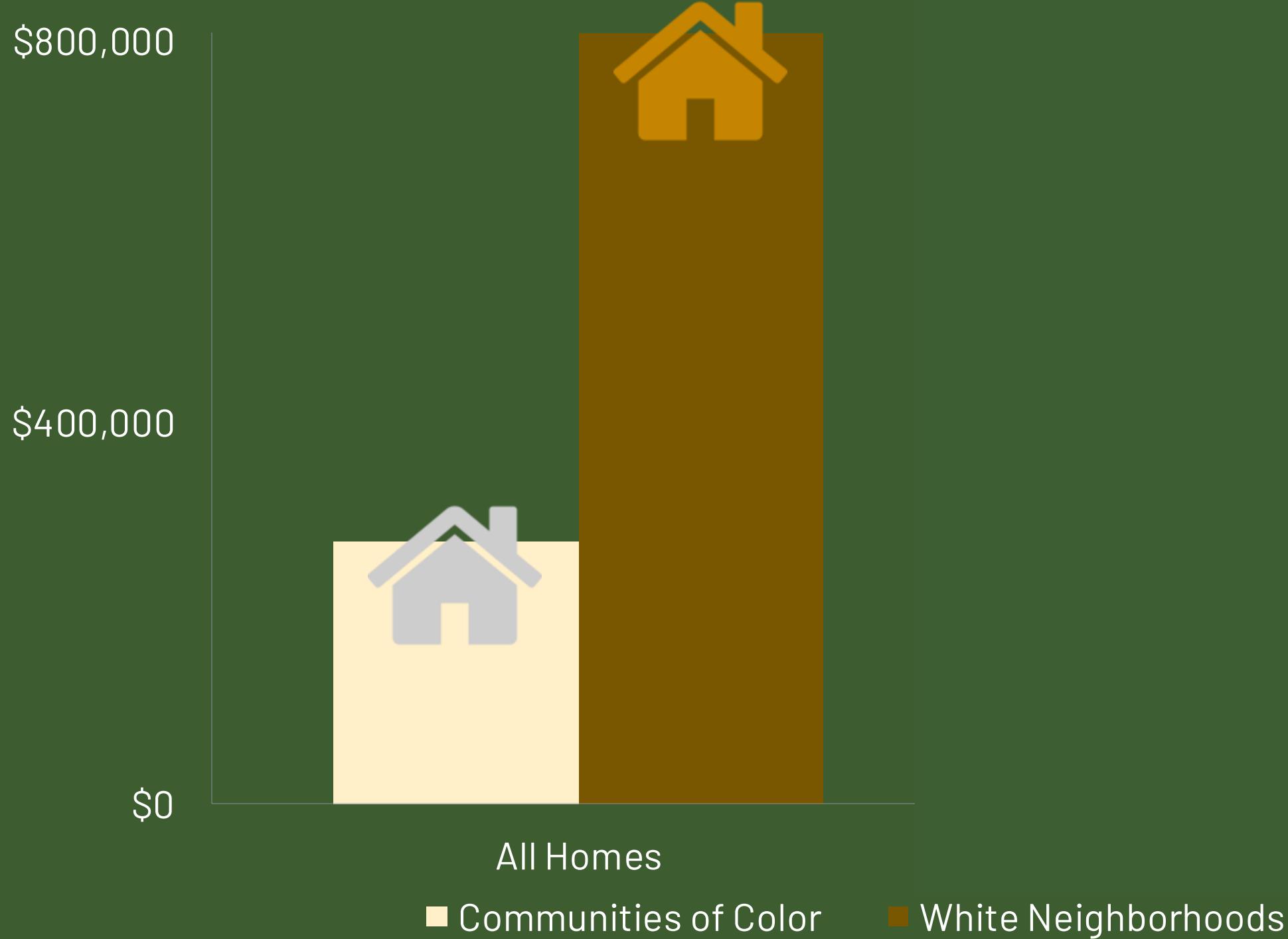
JUNIA HOWELL
ELIZABETH KORVER-GLENN

NOVEMBER 2022

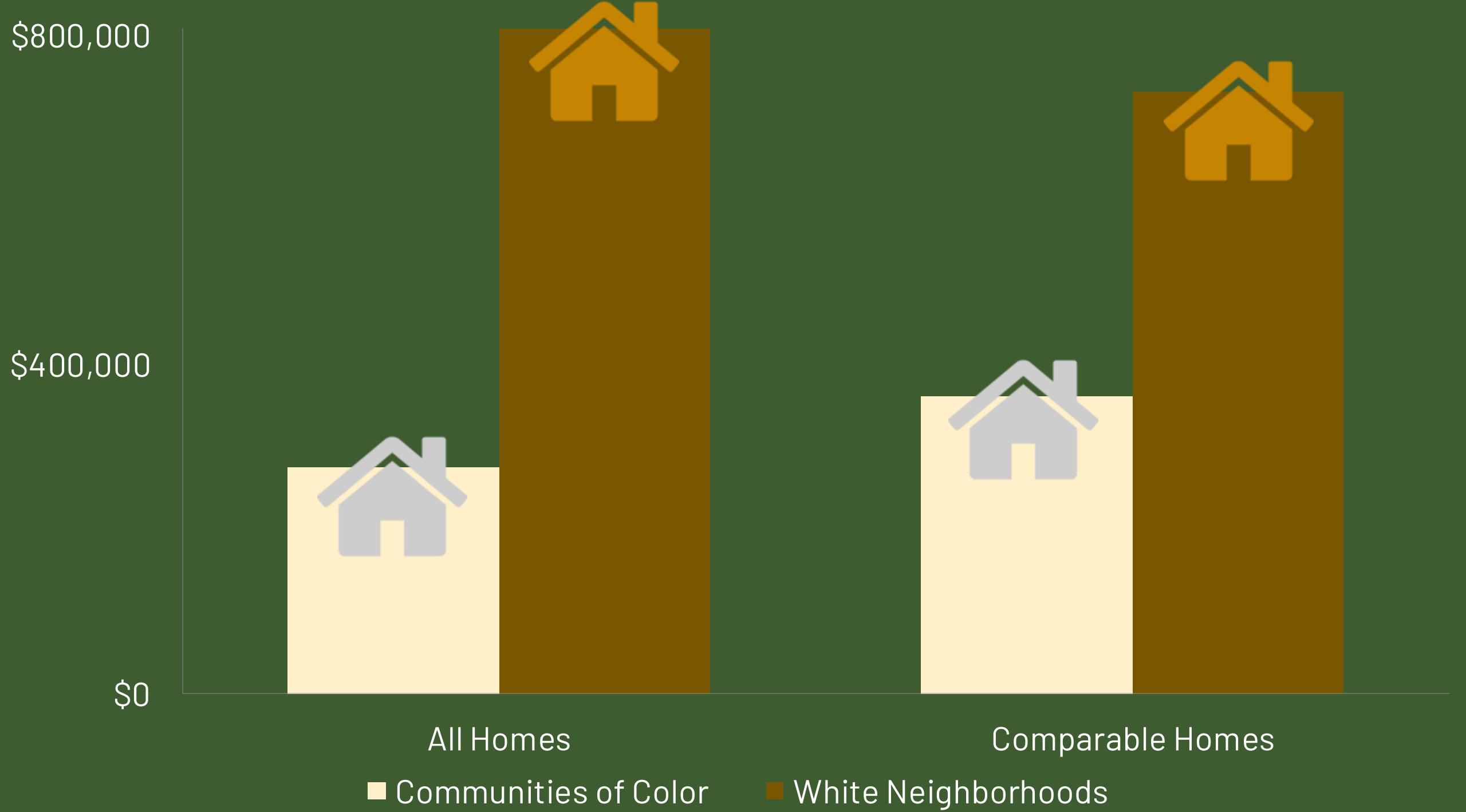


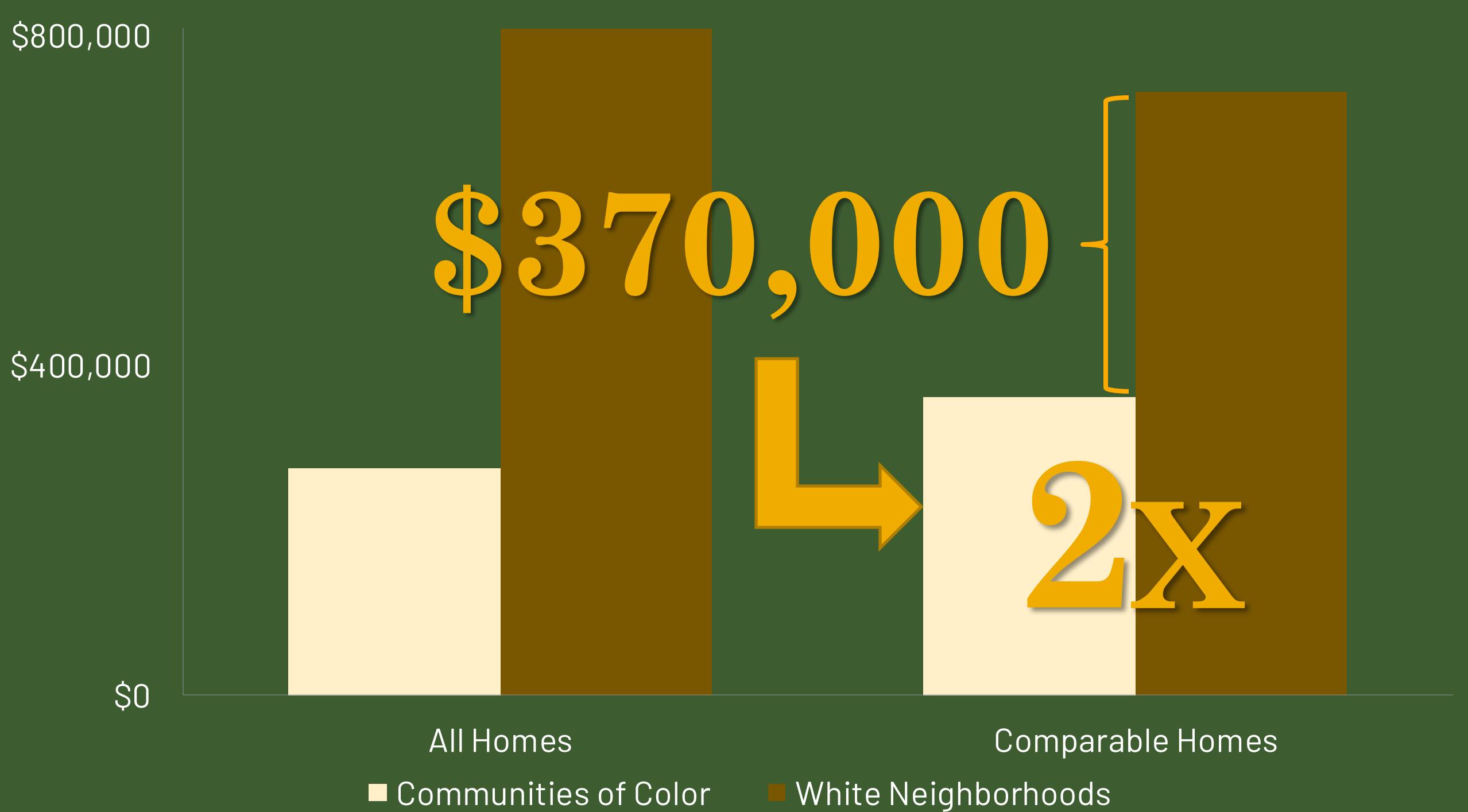
Sociology of Race and Ethnicity
2018, Vol. 4(4) 473–490
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DOI: 10.1177/232649218755178
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Appraised:

*The Persistent Evaluation of White Neighborhoods
as More Valuable Than Communities of Color*

JUNIA HOWELL
ELIZABETH KORVER-GLENN

NOVEMBER 2022

Social Problems, 2020, 0, 1–21
doi: 10.1093/socpro/spaa033
Article

OXFORD

The Increasing Effect of Neighborhood Racial Composition on Housing Values, 1980–2015

Junia Howell¹ and Elizabeth Korver-Glenn²



¹University of Pittsburgh, ²University of New Mexico

ABSTRACT

In the 1930s, neighborhood racial composition was an explicit determining factor of U.S. home values. This deliberate practice was outlawed in the 1960s, but the correlation between neighborhood racial composition and home values remained. Using U.S. Census Bureau data from 1980 to 2015, the present study investigates the relationship between neighborhood racial composition and home appraisals, a practice that drives home value. Contrary to what is often presumed, neighborhood racial composition was a stronger determinant of appraised values in 2015 than it was in 1980. This is primarily due to contemporary appraising practices, such as the sales comparison approach, which has allowed historical racialized appraisals to influence contemporary values and appraisers' racialized assumptions about neighborhoods. These findings provide strong evidence that persistent racial inequality in home values is driven in part by perpetual devaluation of communities of color and that regulation is required to foster equity.

Keywords: racial inequality; appraisals; housing market; neighborhood inequality; racial bias; appraisal methods

Neighborhoods, Race, and the Twenty-first-century Housing Appraisal Industry

Junia Howell¹ and Elizabeth Korver-Glenn²

Sociology of Race and Ethnicity
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Abstract

The history of the U.S. housing market is bound up in systemic, explicit racism. However, little research has investigated whether racial inequality also persists in the contemporary appraisal industry and, if present, how it happens. The present article addresses this gap by centering the appraisal industry as a key housing market player in the reproduction of racial inequality. Using a census of all single-family tax-appraised homes in Harris County (Houston), Texas, the authors examine the influence of neighborhood racial composition on home values independent of home characteristics and quality; neighborhood housing stock, socioeconomic status, and amenities; and consumer housing demand. Noting that substantial neighborhood racial inequality in home values persists even when these variables are accounted for, the authors then use ethnographic and interview data to investigate the appraisal processes that enable this inequality to continue. The findings suggest that variation in appraisal methods coupled with appraisers' racialized perceptions of neighborhoods perpetuates neighborhood racial disparities in home value. The authors conclude with suggestions for future research and policy interventions aimed at standardizing the appraisal process.





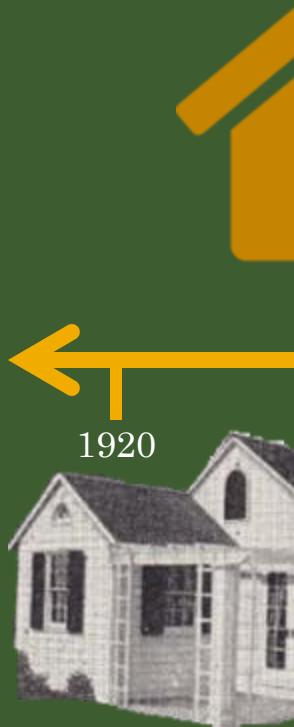
1920

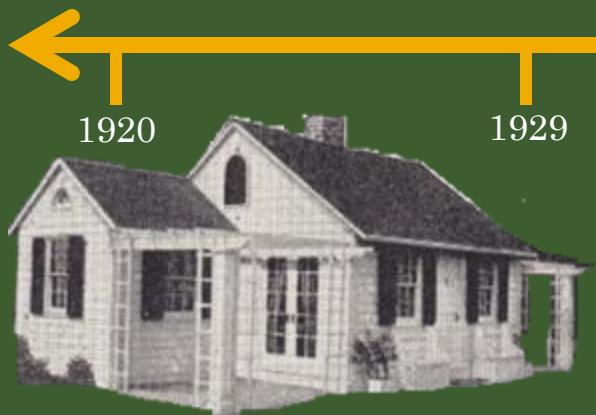




One Story Single Family Homes

square feet	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed	5-bed	6-bed
under 100	\$1500	\$1600	\$1700	\$1800	\$1900	\$2000
100-200	\$2000	\$2100	\$2200	\$2300	\$2400	\$2500
200-300	\$2500	\$2600	\$2700	\$2800	\$2900	\$3000
300-400	\$3000	\$3100	\$3200	\$3300	\$3400	\$3500
400-500	\$3500	\$3600	\$3700	\$3800	\$3900	\$4000
500-600	\$4000	\$4100	\$4200	\$4300	\$4400	\$4500
600-700	\$4500	\$4600	\$4700	\$4800	\$4900	\$5000
700-800	\$5000	\$5100	\$5200	\$5300	\$5400	\$5500
800-900	\$5500	\$5600	\$5700	\$5800	\$5900	\$6000
900-1000	\$6000	\$6100	\$6200	\$6300	\$6400	\$6500





1920

1929







1932



1920



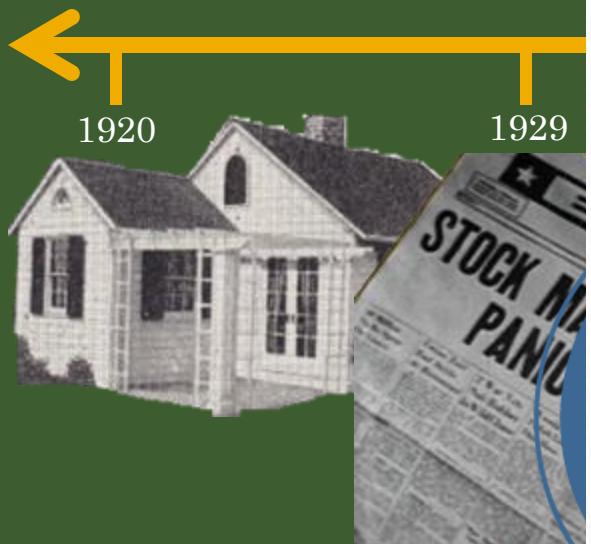
1929

1934





UNDERWRITING
MANUAL
UNDERWRITING AND VALUATION PROCEDURE
UNDER TITLE II
OF THE
NATIONAL HOUSING ACT
U. S. GOVERNMENT
FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION
With revisions to April 1, 1936
WASHINGTON, D. C.



UNDERWRITING
MANUAL

UNDERWRITING AND VALUATION PROCEDURE
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NATIONAL HOUSING ACT

FEDERAL
HOUSING ADMINISTRATION



With revisions to April 1, 1936

WASHINGTON, D. C.

(4)

UNDERWRITING MANUAL

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HOUSING ADMINISTRATION



With revisions to April 1, 1936

WASHINGTON, D. C.

14

UNDERWRITING MANUAL

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HOUSING ADMINISTRATION



With revisions to April 1, 1936

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WASHINGTON, D. C.



UNDERWRITING MANUAL

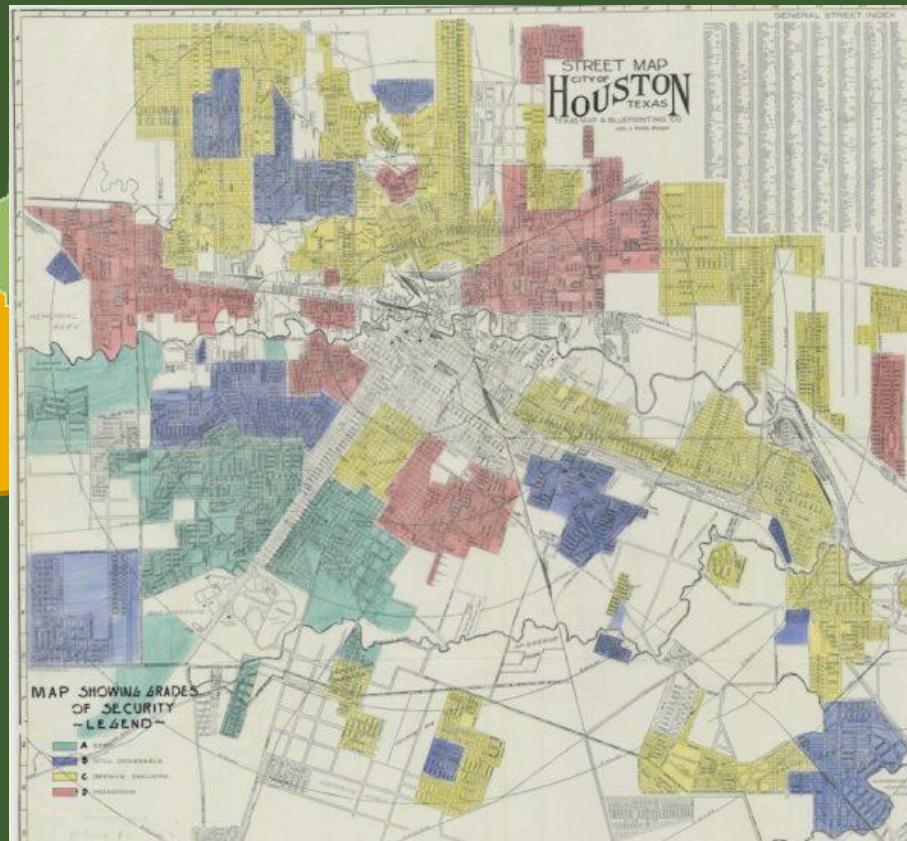
UNDERWRITING AND VALUATION PROCEDURE
UNDER TITLE II
OF THE
NATIONAL HOUSING ACT

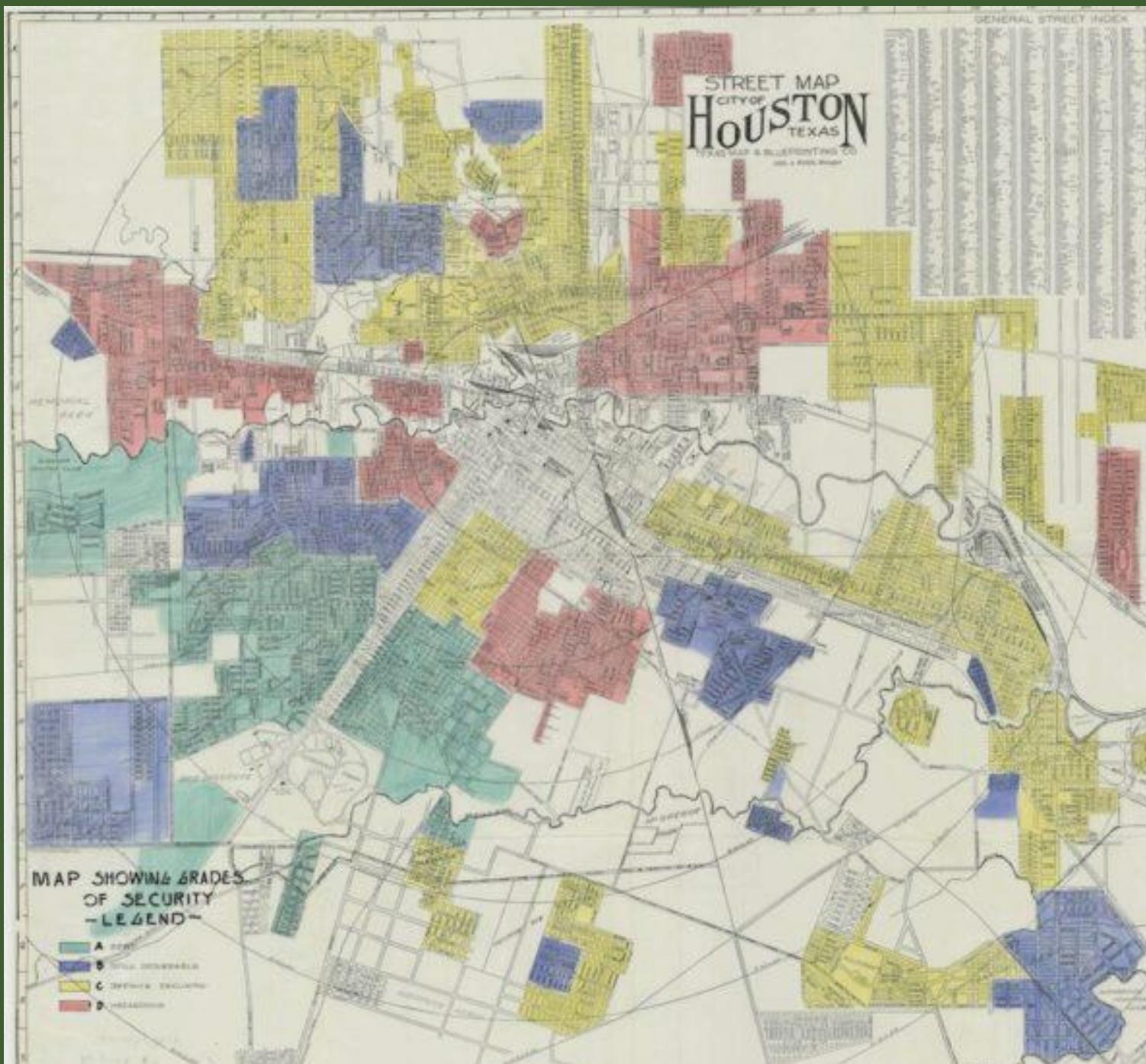
FEDERAL
HOUSING ADMINISTRATION

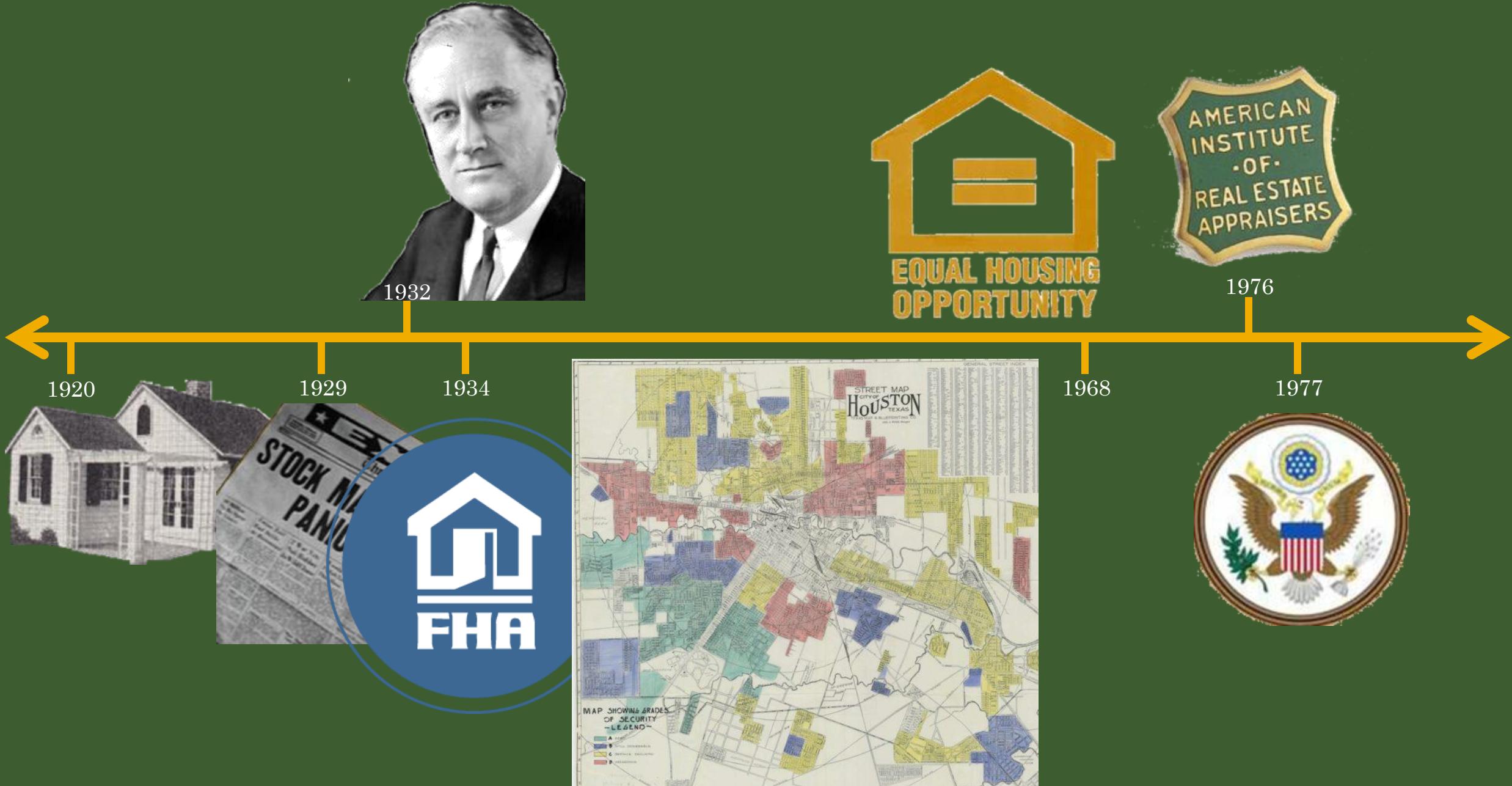


With revisions to April 1, 1936

WASHINGTON, D. C.









**EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY**



1976

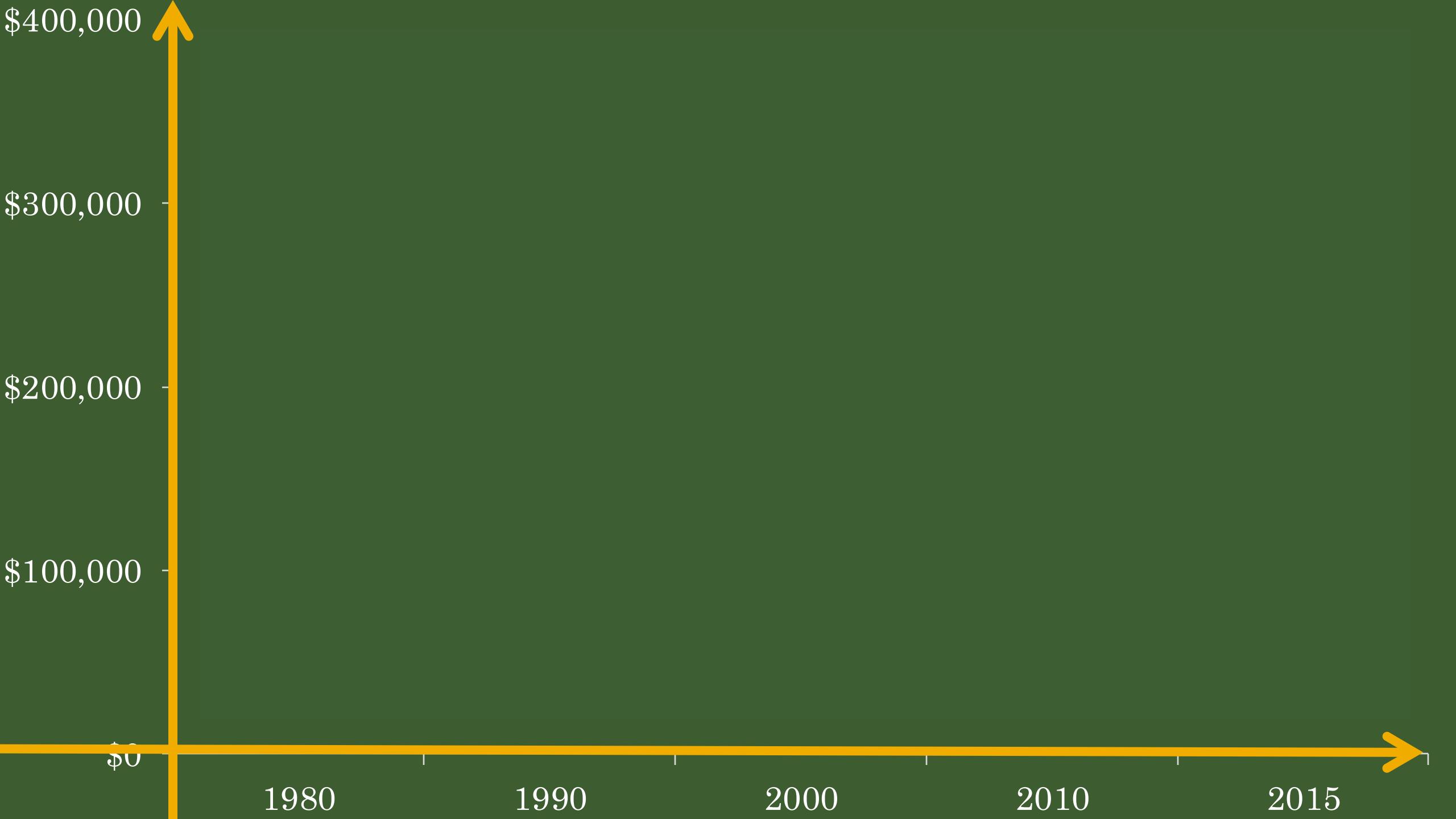


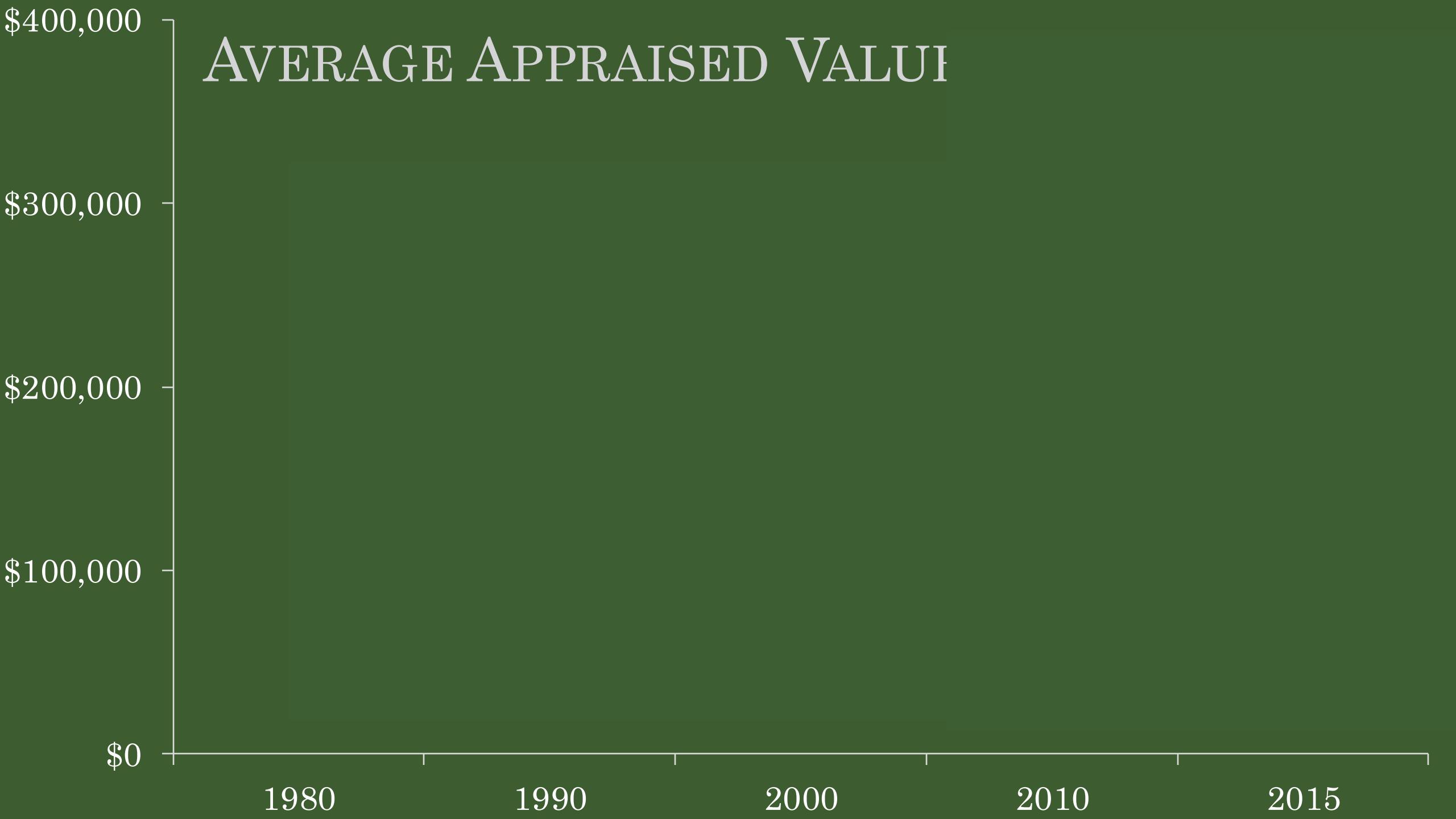
1968

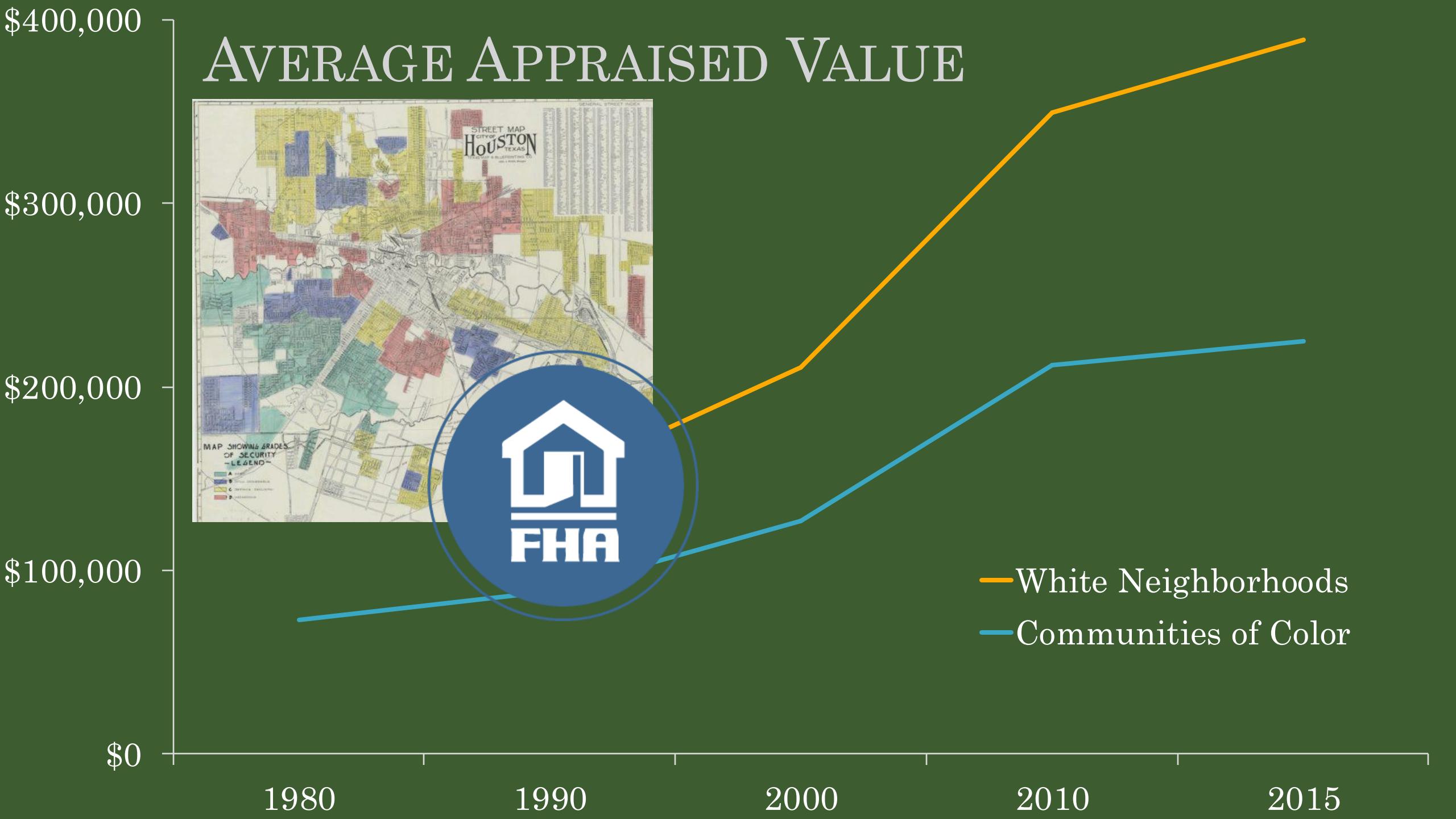
1977

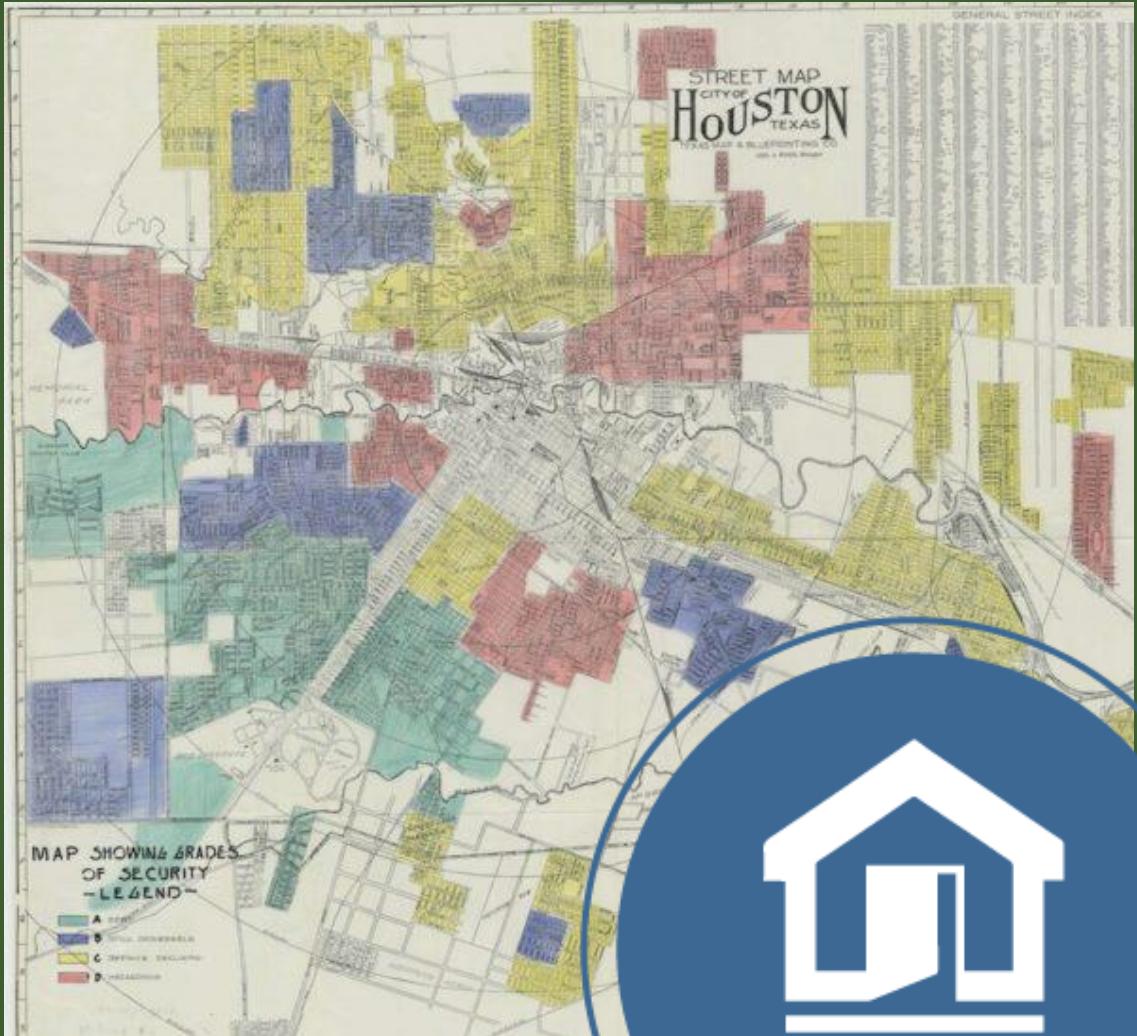












good
news





good
news



good
news

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10 3	41	LOHAUS HERMAN & ALBERTA M LODDER									
4 26	45	OSTENKAMP, ETHEL M.									
10 13	74	OSTENKAMP, PAUL J., & ETHEL M.									
1 11	79	OSTENKAMP, ETHEL M.									
12 19	80	JONES, WAYNE G. & MARILYN K.									
TAX CODE											
BOOK	PLAT	PARCEL									
DATE	CUT UPS	BALANCE	VALUATIONS	CHANGES							
MO.	DA.	YR.	PARCEL	FEET OR ACRES	LAND	BUILDINGS	TOTAL	DISCOUNT	NO.	REMARKS	
					690	1460	2350				
					720	1460	2380				
					70	150	220				
					780	1680	2400				
					820	1420	2660				
					810	1900	3710				
					720	3460	4780				
					780	1390	5170				
					520	1220	6500				
					1020	6900	8600				
					1020	9900	10,890				
						1,590	1,570	19,801-28			
					1070	11490	13560				
					1410	6250	7660				
					1410	7050	8460				
REAL ESTATE TAX LIST											
GEO. GUCKENBERGER, AUDITOR											
HAMILTON COUNTY, O.											
Form No. 1-1937-28M											

good news



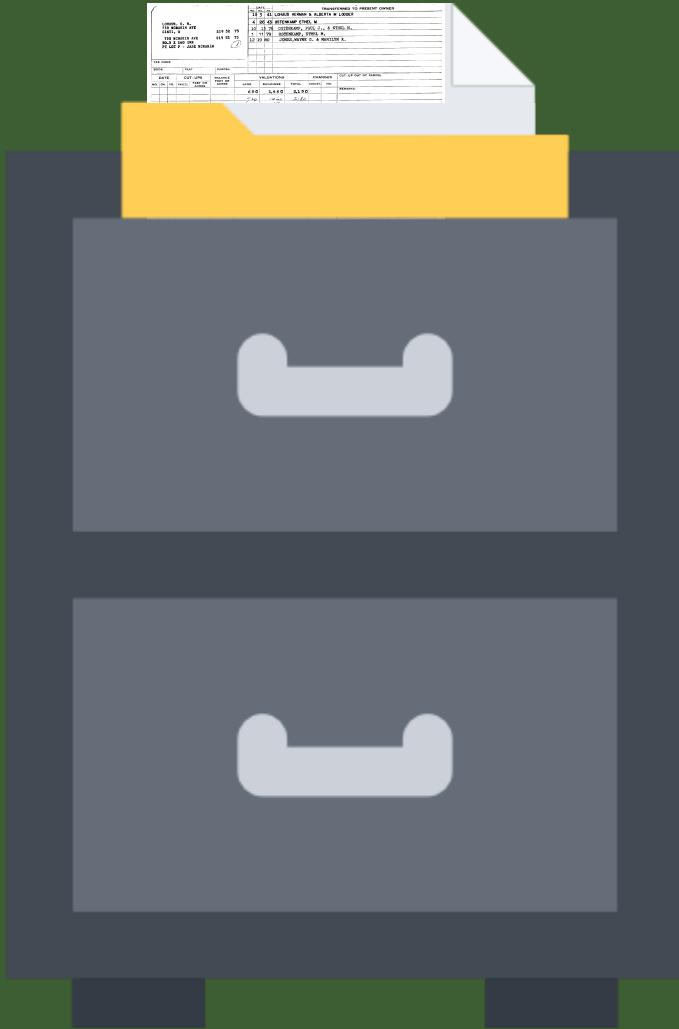
good
news





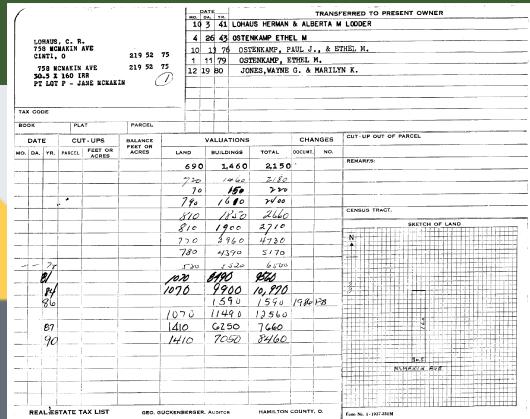
good
news

bad
news



bad
news





bad news



LOHAUS, C. R.
758 MCMAKIN AVE
CINTI, O

758 MCMAKIN AVE
30.5 X 160 IRR
PT LOT P - JANE

219 52 75

219 52 75

1

TAX CODE

REAL ESTATE TAX LIST

GEO. GUCKENBERGER, AUDITOR

HAMILTON COUNTY, O.

LOHAUS, C. R.
758 MCMAKIN AVE
CINTI, O

758 MCMAKIN
30

219 52 75
219 52 75

tabulation



scanning



DATE	TRANSFERRED TO PRESENT OWNER		
MO.	DA.	YR.	
10	3	41	LOHAUS HERMAN & ALBERTA M LODDER
4	26	43	OSTENKAMP ETHEL M
10	13	76	OSTENKAMP, PAUL J., & ETHEL M.
1	11	79	OSTENKAMP, ETHEL M.
12	19	80	JONES, WAYNE G. & MARILYN K.

REAL ESTATE TAX LIST GEO. GUCKENBERGER, AUDITOR HAMILTON COUNTY, O.

Form No. 1-1937-250M

Building Dataset

Predicting Values

Building Dataset

<p>LORHAUS, C. R. 758 MCMAKIN AVE CINTI, O</p> <p>758 MCMAKIN AVE 30.5 x 160 IRR PT LOT P - JANE MCMAKIN</p>		<p>219 52 75</p> <p>219 52 75</p> <p>(1)</p>	<p>DATE MO. DA. YR.</p> <p>10 3 41 LOHAUS HERMAN & ALBERTA M LODDER</p> <p>4 26 43 OSTENKAMP ETHEL M</p> <p>10 13 76 OSTENKAMP, PAUL J., & ETHEL M.</p> <p>1 11 79 OSTENKAMP, ETHEL M.</p> <p>12 19 80 JONES, WAYNE G. & MARILYN K.</p>																																																											
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DATE	PARCEL	F																																																												
MO. DA. YR.																																																														
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CINTI, O
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30.5 X 160 IRR
PT LOT P - JANE

219 52 75

219 52 75

1

10

1

TAX CODE

REAL ESTATE TAX LIST

GEO. GUCKENBERGER, AUDITOR

HAMILTON COUNTY, O.

Form No. 1-1937-250M

LOHAUS, C. R.
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30.5 X 160 IRR
PT LOT P - JANE

219 52 75

19 52 75

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2000

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TAX CODE

REAL ESTATE TAX LIST

GEO. GUCKENBERGER, AUDITOR

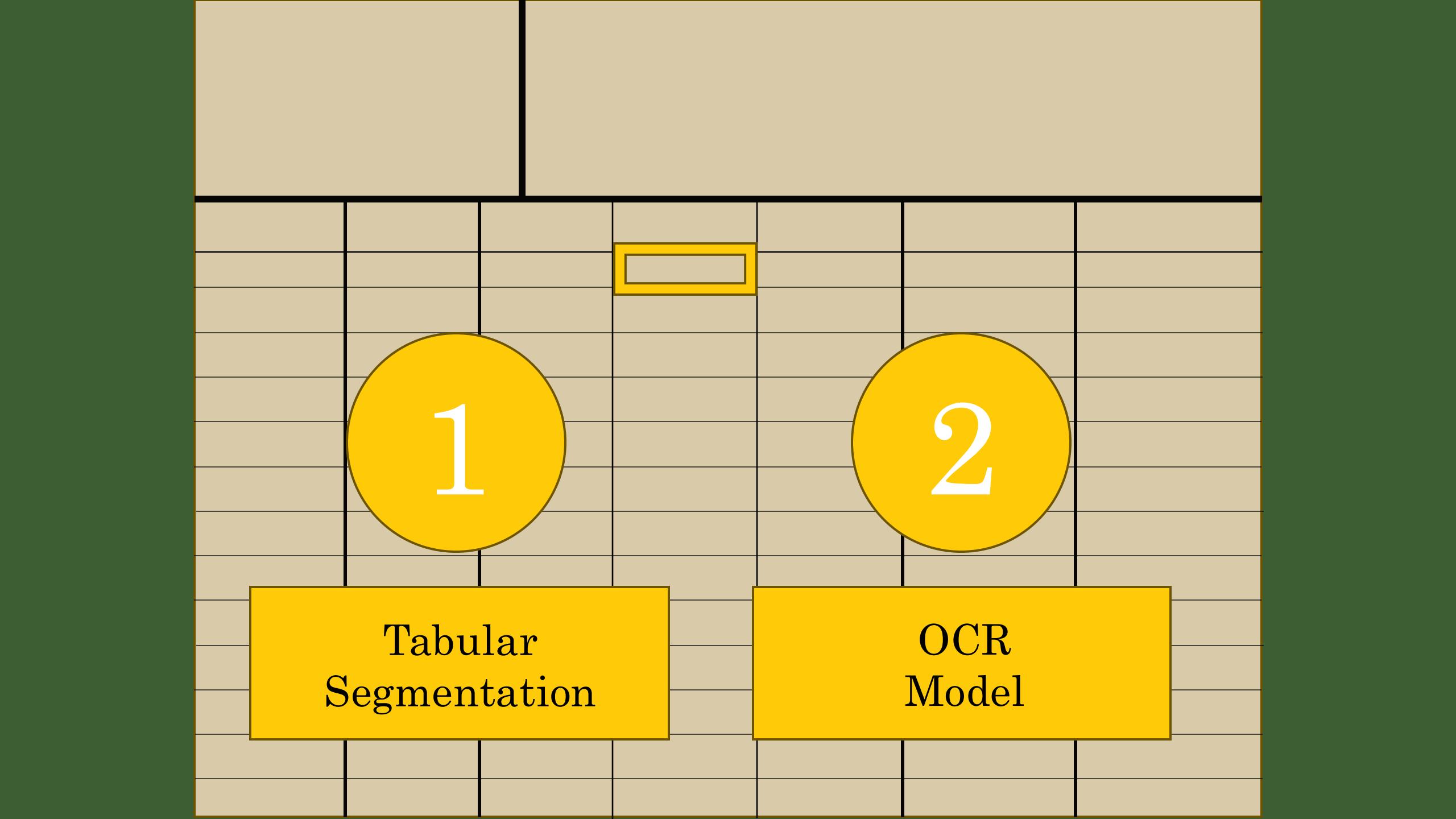
HAMILTON COUNTY, O.

Form No. 1, 1937-250M



1

Tabular
Segmentation



1

2

Tabular
Segmentation

OCR
Model

1

Tabular
Segmentation

1

Preprocessing:
Lighting conditions
taken into account

DATE
MO. DA. YR.

TRANSFERRED TO PRESENT OWNER

TAX CODE

BOOK	PLAT	PARCEL	CUT-UPS	BALANCE FEET OR ACRES	VALUATIONS	CHANGES	CUT-UP OUT OF PARCEL
MO. DA.	YR.	PARCEL	FEET OR ACRES	LAND	BUILDINGS	TOTAL	DOCNT. NO.
CENSUS TRACT.							
SKETCH OF LAND							

REAL ESTATE TAX LIST GEO. GUCKENBERGER, AUDITOR HAMILTON COUNTY, O. Form No. 1-1937-290M

2

Detect keypoints, compute
descriptors using **ORB**

3

Match descriptors with
BFMatcher and **Hamming**
distance, retaining top 5% of
5,000 matches

Filter enforcing
quadrant consistency

DATE
MO. DA. YR.

TRANSFERRED TO PRESENT OWNER

LEWIS, LUCILLE - RUTH M. GREENE
1290 USA 278
73 Y 190
DAVID RUN CRK 120 USA 278
H. S. RAIL RD. RUN 214.95 FT. W.
OF WEST OVER CRK 225. EXTD.

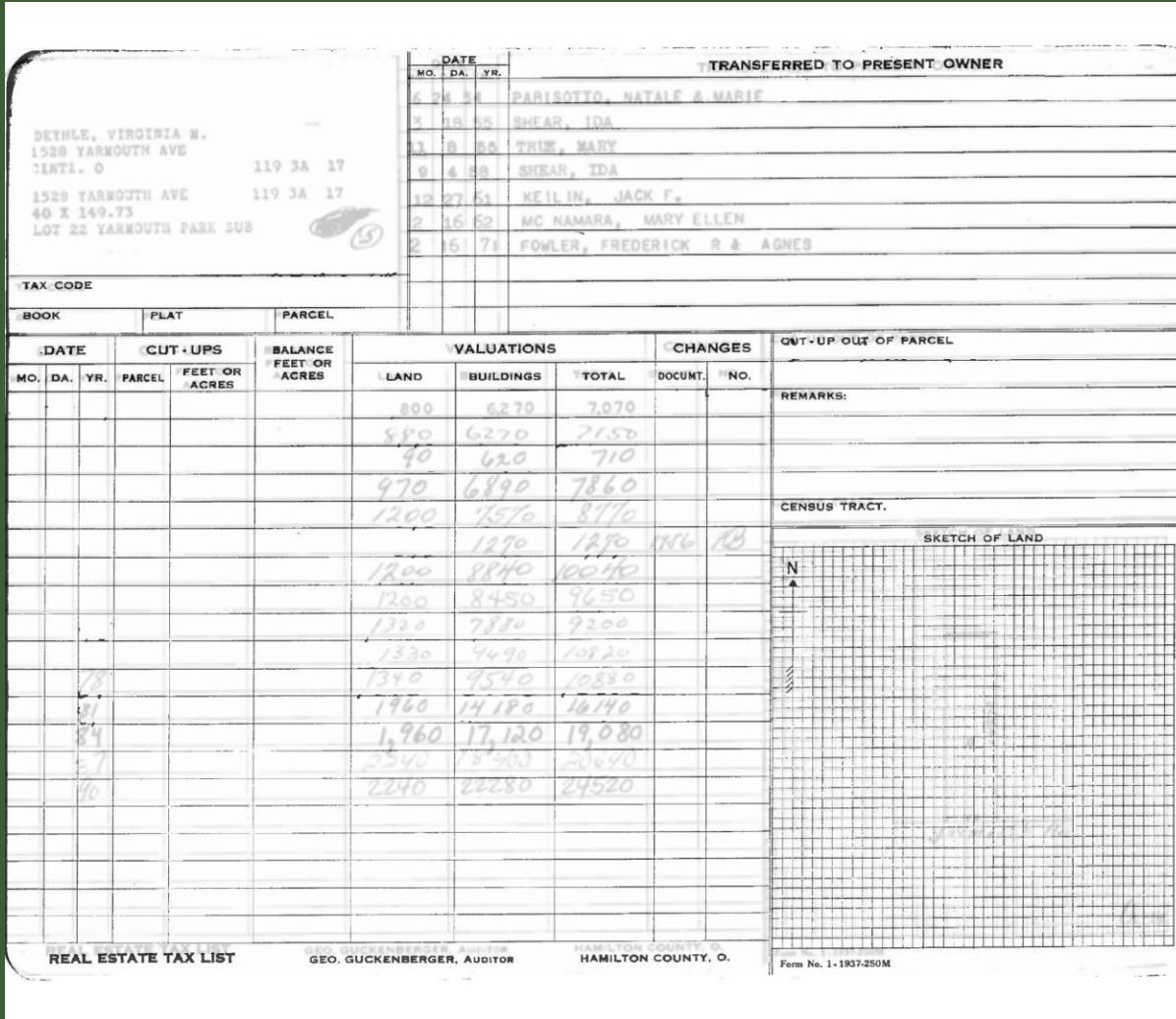
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BOOK	PLAT	PARCEL	CUT-UPS	BALANCE FEET OR ACRES	VALUATIONS	CHANGES	CUT-UP OUT OF PARCEL
MO. DA.	YR.	PARCEL	FEET OR ACRES	LAND	BUILDINGS	TOTAL	DOCNT. NO.
7/14/76				1,290 5610	6,900	214 5510	
				130 560	690		
				1420 6170	7590		
				1710 6810	8580		
				1770 6500	8170		
				2240 6140	8370		
				2240 1380	1380	1380 1380	
				2240 4760	7000		
				2250 7920	10180		
				2350 7390	2640	2350 2350	
				2720 8950	14670		
				3100 14350	17550		
				3200 15890	19090		
				4080 19450	23570		
				4080 21730	31310		

SKETCH OF LAND

N

REAL ESTATE TAX LIST GEO. GUCKENBERGER, AUDITOR HAMILTON COUNTY, O. Form No. 1-1937-290M



4

Compute **Homography** **Matrix** from matches with **RANSAC** algorithm

5

Transform image using
matrix to align to
template!

6

Now we know exact pixel
locations for all cells

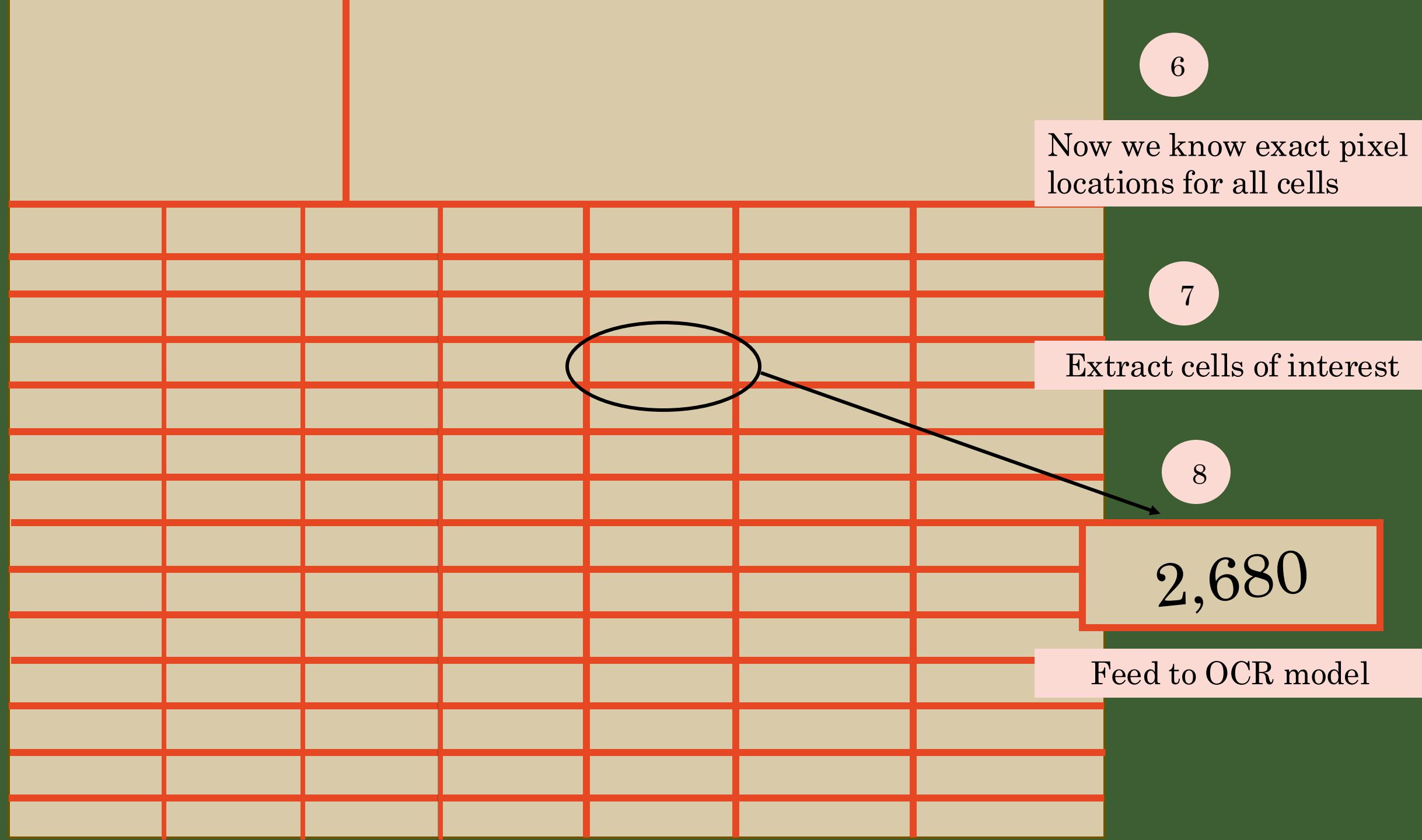
7

Extract cells of interest

8

2,680

Feed to OCR model





1



2



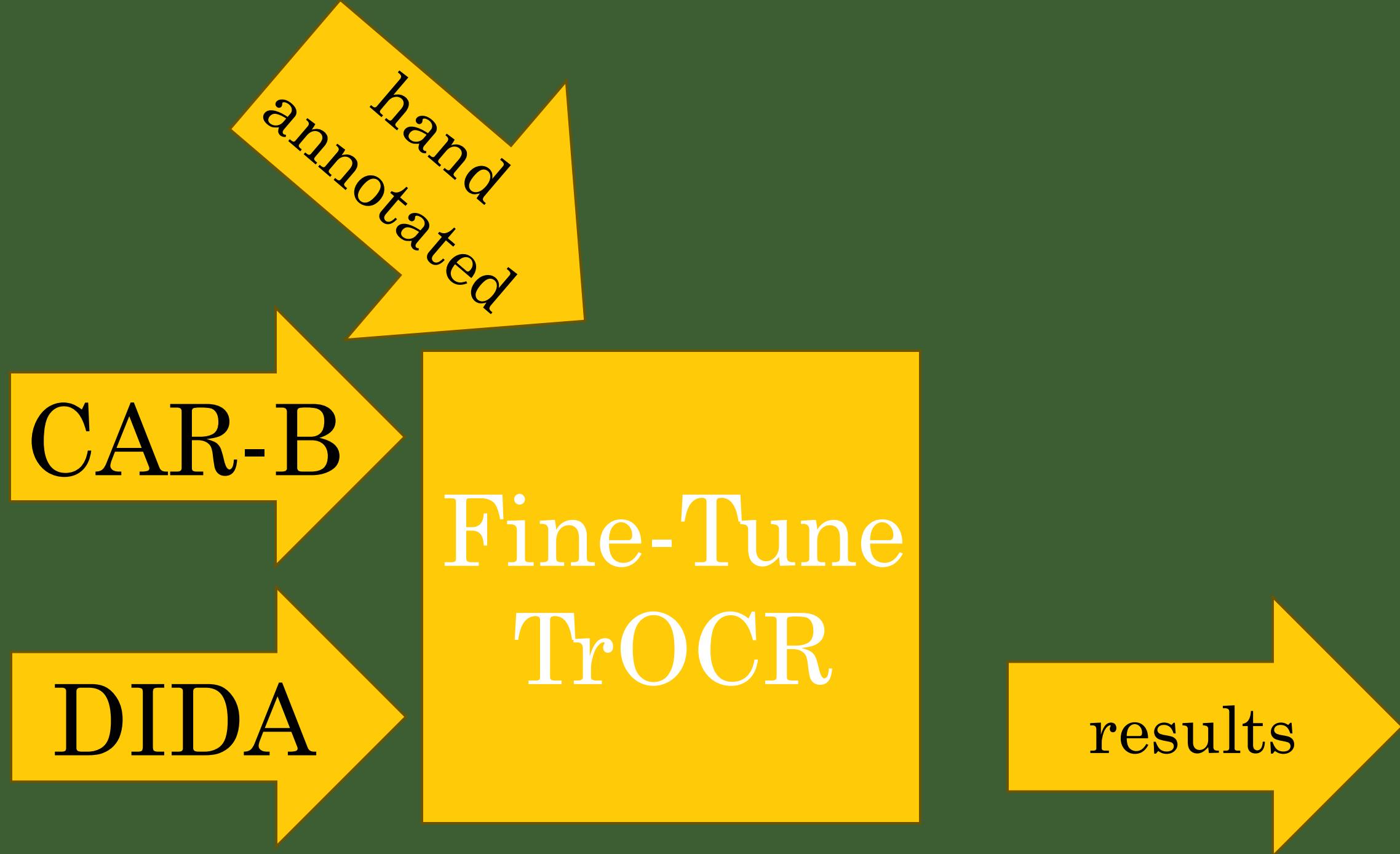
Tabular
Segmentation



OCR
Model

2

OCR
Model



How we evaluate performance

Segmentation

3 Step Alignment

- Homography matrix match count (>15 matches, max reprojection error $\leq 6\text{px}$)
- Increase ORB match pairs (5,000 \rightarrow 7,000 \rightarrow 10,000) across 3 attempts
- Manual inspection

99.7%

On 836 property cards

How we evaluate performance

OCR Model Results

R² (Coefficient of Determination)

How well predicted values approximate actual values.

0.76

MAPE (Mean Absolute Percentage Error)

Average absolute percentage difference between predicted and true values.

3.25%

RMSPE (Root Mean Absolute Percentage Error)

Similar to MAPE but penalizes larger errors more.

36.59%

MPE (Mean Percentage Error)

Indicates bias (over- or under-prediction tendency).

0.36%

How we evaluate performance

OCR Model Results

Confidence-Based Accuracy

Within 5% of True Value

96.52%

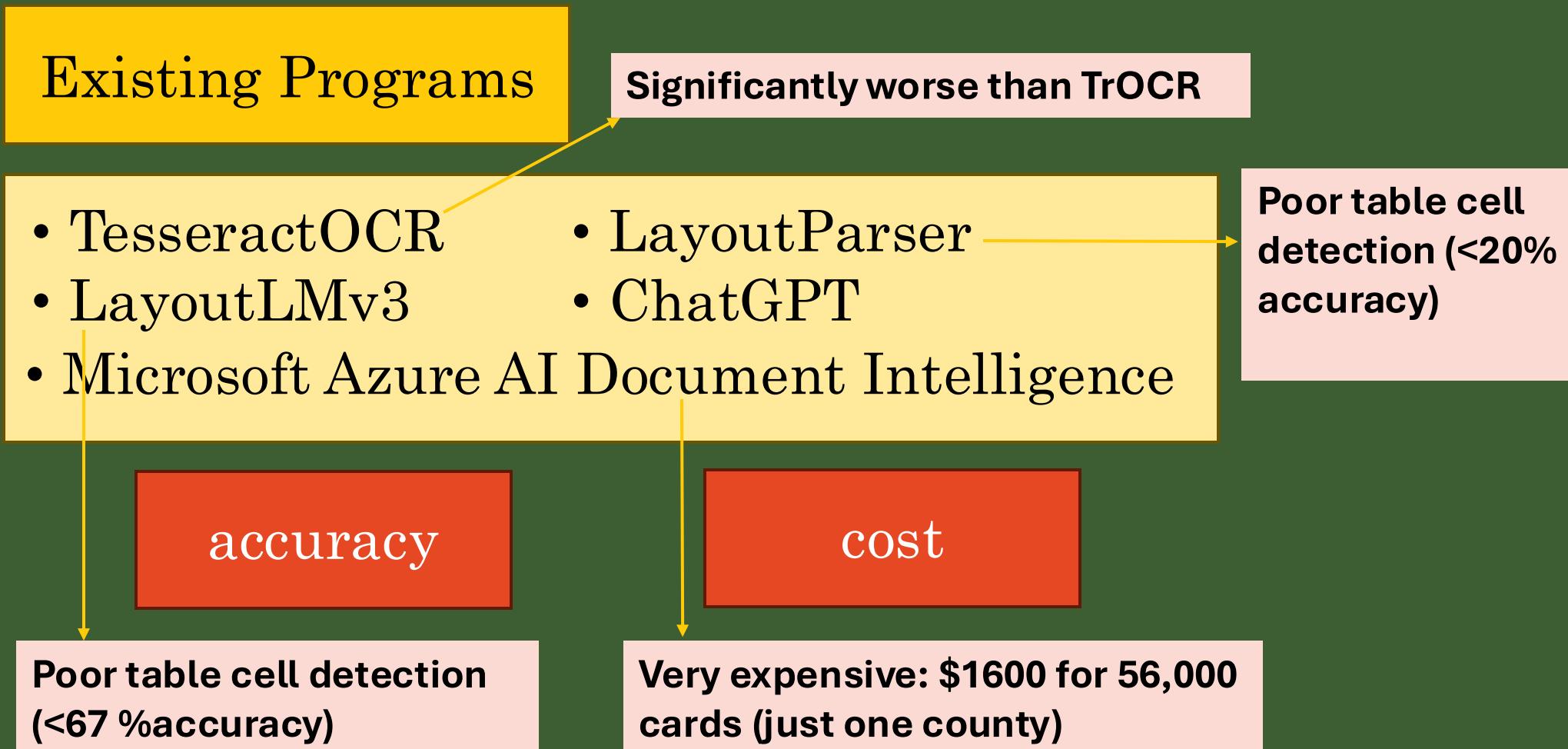
Within 10% of True Value

96.98%

Within 20% of True Value

97.38%

Why off-the-shelf solutions failed



Why off-the-shelf solutions failed

User-friendly GPT4o

Accuracy

Great for **Single-cell OCR** → Matches TrOCR performance

Unreliable for **Whole-card OCR** → Needs heavy prompt engineering

Latency

10–20 sec per image

1 county (56k cards): \$600

100 counties: \$60k

v/s

Scales linearly

Cost

Effective for very small datasets

Scales poorly

1 time investment of
hiring for model
development:
~\$5000

Building Dataset

Predicting Values

Predicting Values



1933



square feet	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed	5-bed	6-bed
under 100	\$1500	\$1600	\$1700	\$1800	\$1900	\$2000
100-200	\$2000	\$2100	\$2200	\$2300	\$2400	\$2500
200-300	\$2500	\$2600	\$2700	\$2800	\$2900	\$3000
300-400	\$3000	\$3100	\$3200	\$3300	\$3400	\$3500
400-500	\$3500	\$3600	\$3700	\$3800	\$3900	\$4000
500-600	\$4000	\$4100	\$4200	\$4300	\$4400	\$4500
600-700	\$4500	\$4600	\$4700	\$4800	\$4900	\$5000
700-800	\$5000	\$5100	\$5200	\$5300	\$5400	\$5500
800-900	\$5500	\$5600	\$5700	\$5800	\$5900	\$6000
900-1000	\$6000	\$6100	\$6200	\$6300	\$6400	\$6500





1933



VALUATIONS

BUILDINGS

1,460

Rooms

10



$$y = b_0 + b_1 X + b_2 X$$

Sq. Ft.

850





Rooms

10



1933



$$y = f(b_0 + b_1X + b_2X)$$

VALUATIONS

BUILDINGS

1,460

Sq. Ft.

850

VALUATIONS	
BUILDINGS	LAND
1,460	1,000



VALUATIONS	
BUILDINGS	LAND
2680	1,000

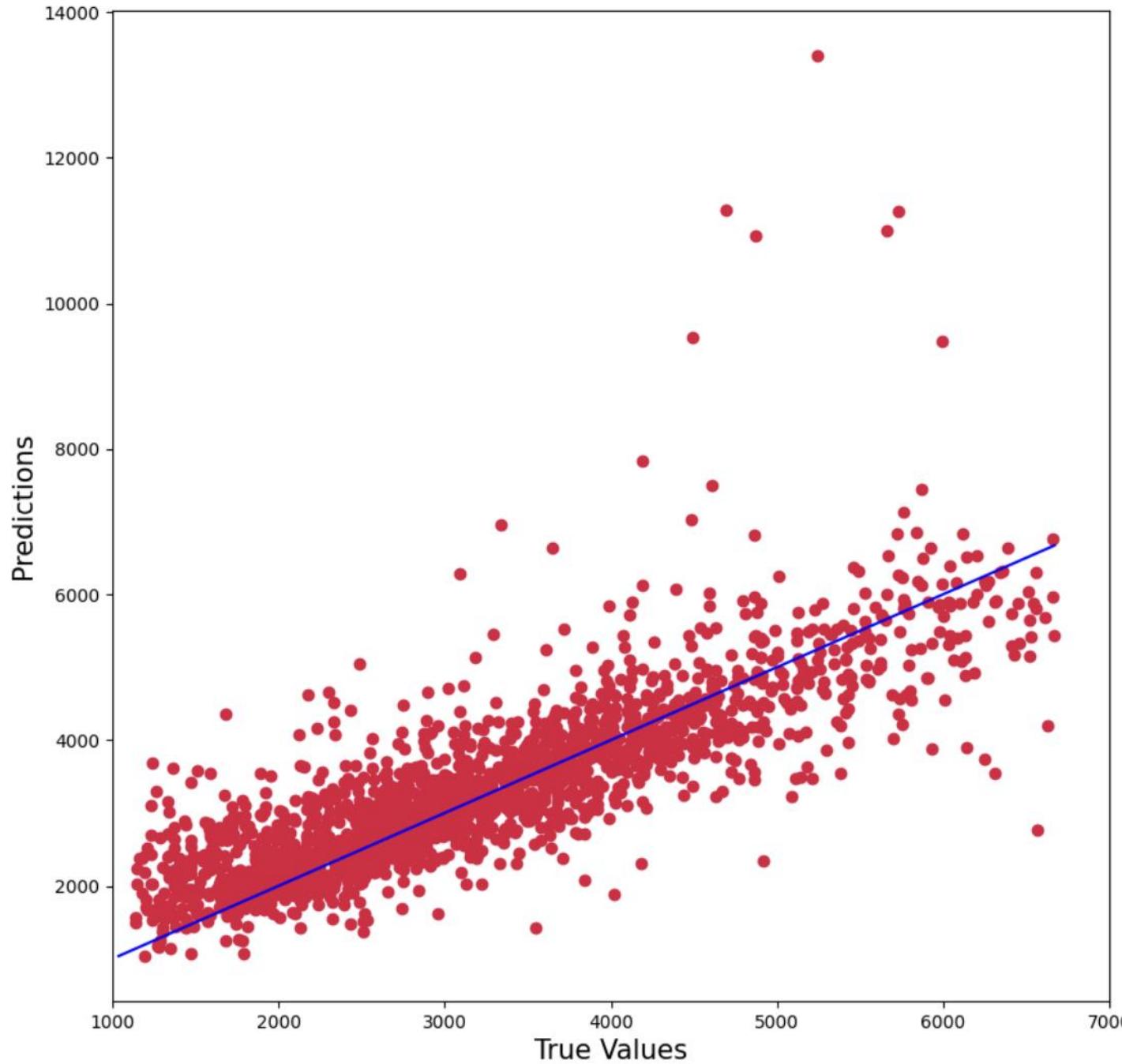


VALUATIONS	
BUILDINGS	LAND
1880	1,000



VALUATIONS	
BUILDINGS	LAND
2720	1,000





$R^2 :$
0.62

MAPE:
17.5%

OCR MAPE:
14.72%

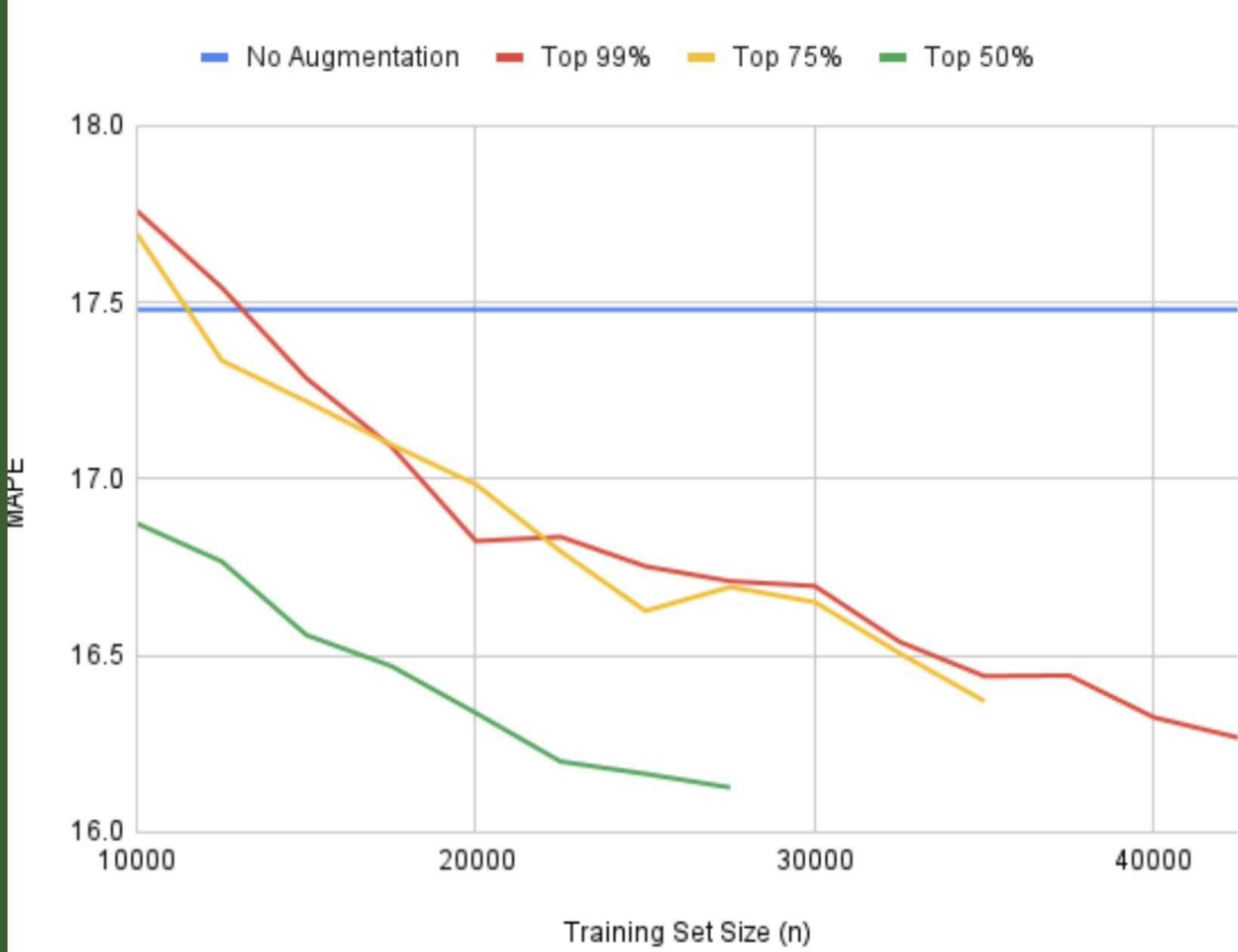
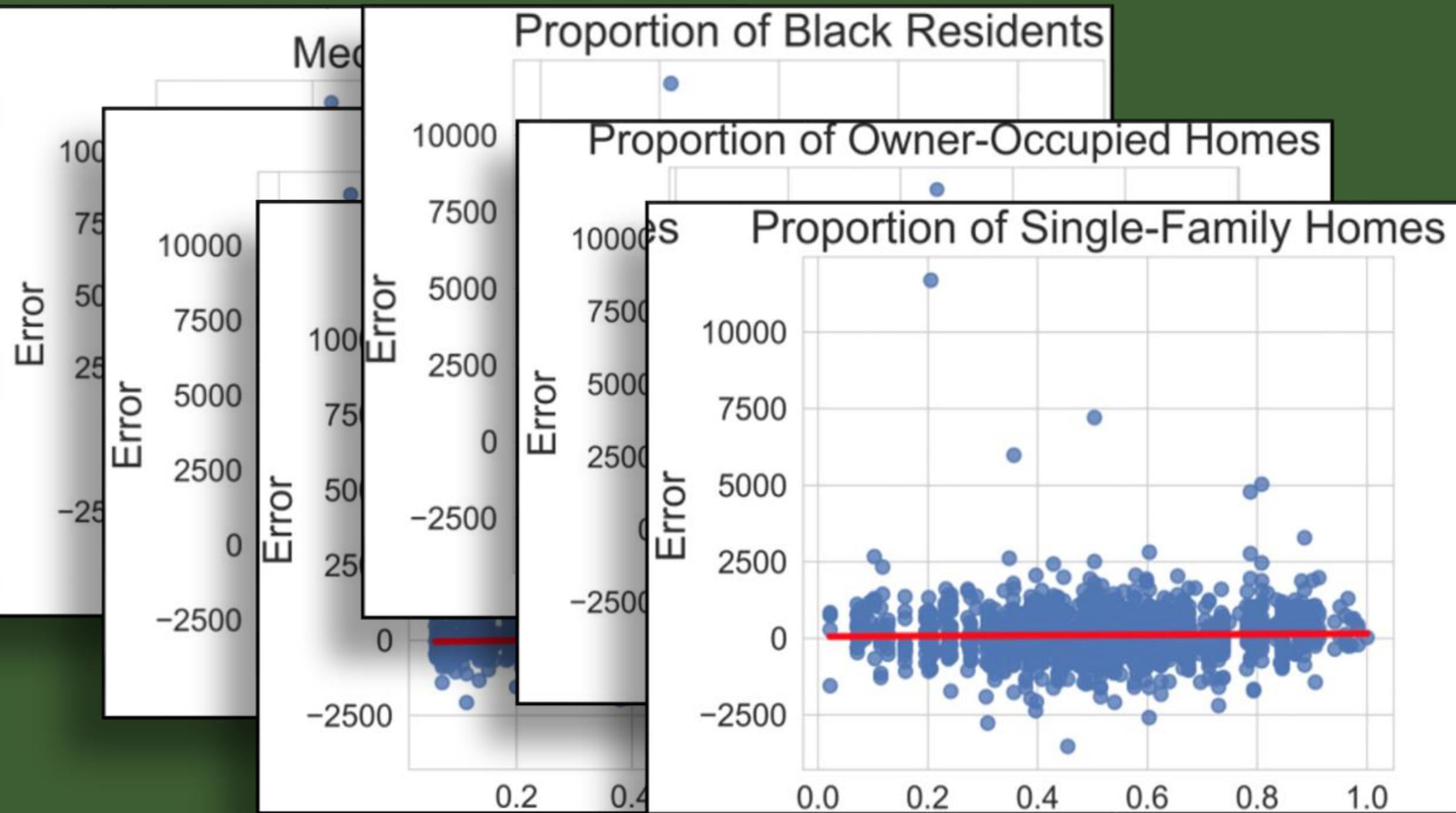


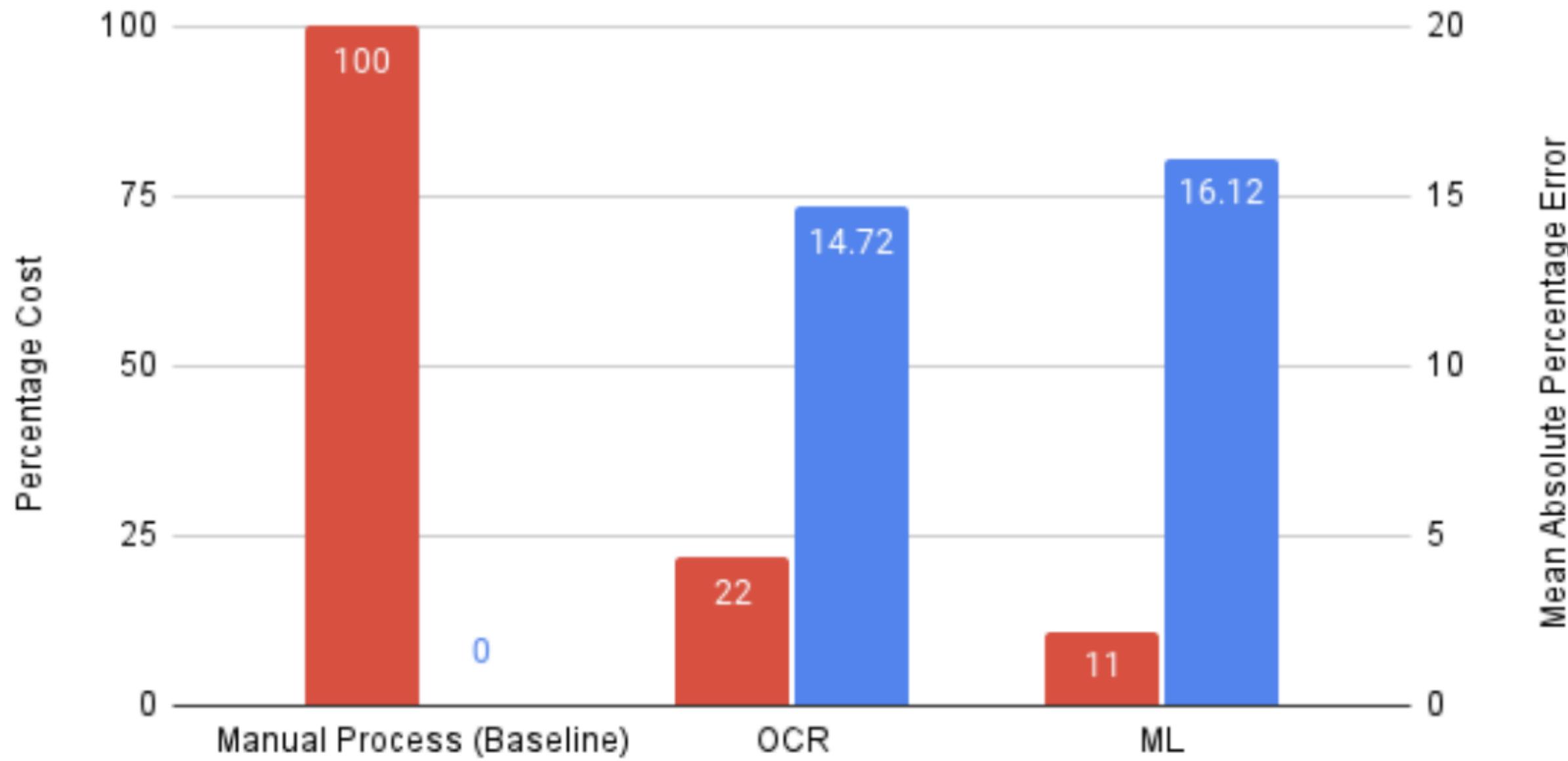
Figure 9: MAPE and OCR Confidence Threshold vs n



Building Dataset

Predicting Values

■ Percentage Cost (lower is better) ■ Mean Absolute Percentage Error (lower is better)



For More:

