TITLE: What’s Redlining got to do with Resilience?

ABSTRACT: Nearly every American community has been shaped by historic racial/ethnic segregation resulting from overt discrimination in the real estate, lending, and development industries (“redlining”). These preexisting patterns have been shown to be critical predictors of both damage and recovery, since they influence not just hazard exposure, but also both physical and social vulnerability. Van Zandt will show how this structural racism has been manifested over many decades in communities’ land development patterns, infrastructure investment, and overall maintenance, which has led to disparities in damage, which in turn exacerbate inequities in recovery. Over time, these forces—originating with racial discrimination dating back to the 1930s and 40s—appear to contribute to the permanent displacement of more vulnerable residents and redevelopment of previously affordable housing into less affordable housing types, favoring affluent stakeholders but limiting the availability of much-needed housing.

BIO: Shannon Van Zandt's scholarship is at the intersection of affordable housing with disaster impacts, resilience, and recovery, with particular interest in how residential land use patterns exacerbate or mitigate exposure to natural hazards, specifically flooding. She focuses on pre-disaster planning that prevents the exorbitant costs, both financial and on individual lives, that recent hurricanes have wrought on coastal communities, as well as how to mitigate these events in the future.

She has served as PI or co-PI on nearly $6 million in external funding from the NSF, the National Institute of Standards & Technology, the Army Corps of Engineers, and others. She is an author of the 2020 book, Engaged Research for Community Resilience to Climate Change,

In Texas, Van Zandt serves on the board of Texas Housers, one of the nation's premiere advocacy organizations for low-income housing, and as an active advocate for housing recovery after Hurricanes Ike, Dolly, and now Harvey.

For the past five years, she has been Professor and Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, but was recently named Executive Associate Dean of in the College of Architecture at Texas A&M. She also is affiliated with the Hazard Reduction & Recovery Center, Texas Target Communities and the Center for Housing and Urban Development. She holds courtesy appointments with the Texas A&M School of Law and the George H.W. Bush School of Public Service Administration.