Rethinking Redevelopment: Neoliberalism, New Urbanism and Sustainable Urban Design in Cleveland, Ohio

Julian Andrew Escudero Geltman

Oberlin College

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Rethinking Redevelopment: Neoliberalism, New Urbanism, and Sustainable Urban Design in Cleveland, Ohio

Julian Geltman
Oberlin College ’17
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Advising Committee:
Md. Rumi Shammin, Environmental Studies (main advisor)
Peter Minosh, Architectural History
Greggor Mattson, Sociology
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Abstract:

This article explores unintended consequences of recent urban design initiatives in Cleveland, Ohio. Historically rife with environmental injustice issues, Cleveland’s built environment continues to exhibit issues of distributive justice across racialized spaces. In this research project, I first investigate whether and how New Urbanist aesthetics are geared towards a white spatial imaginary and subsequently deconstructing its whiteness. I seek to answer: is New Urbanism inherently racist? I then explore how New Urbanism in the U.S. has spread into circles of sustainable urban design, pushing space and place towards a homogenized normativity. Third, I examine the history of racial prejudice in urban planning in Cleveland. Lastly, I analyze census data surrounding neighborhoods in which sustainable urban design initiatives have been implemented or are underway. In analyzing how these neighborhoods are changing as a result of these initiatives, I look for the presence of New Urbanist aesthetics or the realization of some their principles and theory. I hope to uncover some of the indirect effects of projects deemed sustainable. The purpose of this project is to look critically at initiatives that are gauged as sustainable, widening the discussion of sustainability in planning and architecture to purposefully encompass factors related to social equity and justice, beyond the ones related to environmental sustainability.
Chapter 1 - Introduction

On August 24th, 2016, Cleveland Hustles aired on CNBC. The show, produced by NBA superstar LeBron James, focused on giving Cleveland based entrepreneurs an opportunity to compete for investment with their revitalization ideas. The show is prompt to depict how their inwards-focused programing gravitates on revitalization and not gentrification, but it is not difficult to see how an entrepreneurial, self-empowered spirit can sometimes be co-opted by ulterior forces (Morona 2016). It is going to take much more than LeBron James producing and inspiring individual action - this is the same celebrity who proclaimed: “In Northeast Ohio, nothing is given. Everything is earned. You work for what you have,” in an interview with Sports Illustrated on his decision to return to Cleveland (James 2014). While his quote may be representative of how professional sports regionalize identities, its application to environmental injustice reveals many parallels that depict how generational and entrenched hierarchical divisions among race are in Northeastern cities. Cleveland, Ohio, a city at the heart of the rust belt, has seen its reputation as an economic engine diminish into a legacy of blight over the past century. Peaking in the 1950’s with a population over 900,000 people, contemporary Cleveland with a population just under 400,000 has come to be associated with urban decay, white flight, suburban sprawl and a river that catches on fire. Those left in the “inner city”, mostly African Americans, live in the aftermath of redlining, discriminatory housing policies, and food insecurity among a decaying housing stock (Shammin 18).

Cleveland is exemplary when it comes to cities that exhibit environmental injustice and racism embedded in its built environment: Cleveland can be considered among the most segregated of cities, attributed to a history of redlining, which still confines individuals to certain spaces within the greater city based on race today. The Cuyahoga County Regional Planning
Commission even declared the city as the “second most segregated area in the nation” in the 1980s (Rose 1997). While institutional racism may indirectly govern who can be in which spaces and for whom certain places belong to, the police force of the city has been accused of physically reinforcing this segregation, not being afraid to use violence: it has been found multiple times by the Department of Justice in the last 15 years that the Cleveland Police Department has and does exhibit excessive and unnecessary uses of force (Cevallos 2014). The police force, being majority white, can come to be interpreted as a symbol for the inequality that exists and dictates the politics of space in a city that is majority black, depicting a systemic aspect of institutional racism.

Despite barriers to social and environmental justice today in Cleveland, grassroots organizing on local, neighborhood scales is working to improve the lives of citizens that the rest of the country has seemingly left behind. For instance, urban agriculture is on the rise in certain neighborhoods of Cleveland, exemplified by the Rid-All urban gardening project in the Kinsman neighborhood. This seeks to challenge the associations of food deserts by empowering residents with resiliency and self-sufficiency while continuing a history of neighborhood-scale local foods initiatives (Shammin et al. 27). Further, certain neighborhoods have come together and organized to work within the bureaucratic systems of power that exist in order to secure organizational longevity in the form of zoning: communities have gotten the city to recognize green space, parks and gardens in the same economic terms that they value other land uses, getting the city to become one of the first major cities in the country to recognize “garden zoning” as a viable form of land allocation for community gardens and market farms (Shammin et al. 47).

Urban planning has been used a tool in the past to promote a racist agenda, the lingering issues of which have plagued Cleveland for decades. However, urban planning can also
be used as a tool that intervenes at the policy and citywide level to reverse those trends and serve social and environmental justice. One such movement is called Smart Growth, codified in the Smart Growth Manual written by Andres Duany, Jeff Speck and Mike Lydon. Smart Growth hinges upon the ideas of walkability, urban villages, and planning density along transects. Seemingly, it all comes down to the idea of the “human scale”. It has become so universally accepted as a mode of sustainable urban development that even the E.P.A. promotes smart growth. While the manual promotes the notions of urban villages that are conducive to alternative modes of transportation besides cars, it is interesting to note that school of thought out of which it arose, New Urbanism, still exists today through the Congress of New Urbanism. Further, it is also interesting to note that New Urbanism arose from the minds of architects, confining its scope and scale of influence to a certain perspective. Although Smart Growth has learned from the mistakes made by New Urbanists, New Urbanism is still practiced widely across the United States, despite being heavily criticized for its continuation of practices that became commonplace under modernist planners. This includes neglect of the underlying pillars of social, environmental and economic sustainability that are configured by the physical environments in which individuals live and operate on a daily basis. In a sense, both space and place can serve as indicators for sustainability by studying their relation to the neoliberal post-industrial society that is Metropolitan Cleveland. Further, in understanding their relation to the triple bottom line of sustainability might one broaden the discussion of sustainability in architecture and for whom it serves.

Research Agenda

Space and place both have a context within post-industrial/ post-fordist society. Numerous scholars have studied the power inherent within both of these contexts, but I seek to
ask about the application of these concepts operating within a context of what is deemed to be sustainable urban development in Cleveland. More specifically, I seek to study the relation of these concepts to New Urbanism and Neoliberalism, both mechanisms that often result in the privatization of space and destruction of place. In my research I ask: is the neoliberalization of space and place using the aesthetics and politics of New Urbanism apparent in sustainable urban design initiatives going on currently or recently completed in Cleveland? In pursuing this broad research question I have broken down my work into sections on the important aspects of each concept and their implications on the daily lives of citizens today. First, I broach space and place, compiling different theories and criticisms in how urban space comes to be recognized and manipulated socially. Similarly, I conduct the same process for place. Next, I examine neoliberalisation and the reproduction of public spaces, asking the question: is New Urbanism inherently white? If so, is it thus perpetuating a normativity in the built environment? As I continue, I examine whether or not neoliberalist governing and economic tendencies have co-opted new urbanist aesthetics, using them to privatize public space and destroy places by converting them into “white” places, in the process advancing institutional, environmental racism. I ask: Is neoliberalism acting as a nexus between public governing bodies and indirect continuations of environmental racism? I theorize that what is deemed to be sustainable urban development in Cleveland is in fact a perpetuation of institutional racism, furthering inequality in the built environment by normalizing space and place and infringing on the citizen’s Right to the City

Methods

This research project is based on the synthesis of research and observation components. The product can be thought of as divided into two different segments: the first being research
based on which I establish a record of the intersection of New Urbanism as a design movement, neoliberal economic mechanisms and state of current urban design and planning initiatives, particularly those geared toward the public. I then broach what ultimately are the effects of New Urbanism on places and spaces, what the politics behind such design choices are, and from where historically have those aesthetics developed in regards to transforming the public realm. For the second portion of this project, I will use this lens to explore how neoliberalism has seeped into urban design by examining contemporary projects that are currently underway or have been recently completed in Cleveland, Ohio. This portion would entail compiling Master/Comprehensive plans for projects and project proposals, in conjunction with observation and photography of these spaces. With this approach, I seek to ask: are spaces and places in Cleveland being changed into white, normalized spaces/ places based on New Urbanist Aesthetics that have been co-opted by Neoliberal mechanisms?

First, I will explore the definitions of the concepts related to my research, space, place, neoliberalism, and New Urbanism. Much of my literature review consisted of this component of the project. I sought resources from a number of sources: for the first portion of this project, I consulted primary sources such as New Urbanist theory, architectural and design theory that precedes New Urbanism, in conjunction with secondary sources on experiences of racism in urban design and planning historically in the United States. To further expand upon these perspectives, I also researched secondary sources, such as criticism on New Urbanism, specifically as a design movement and not what it has grown into. Critical to this portion will be identifying and describing what exactly New Urbanist Aesthetics entail, and by what mechanisms it is being Neoliberalized. I also explored periodicals and encyclopedias of Cleveland’s history in order to paint a broader picture of the systems dynamics at play in the historical development of Cleveland. Slowly, I have built an image of certain areas of the city
across decades, spanning the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries

Secondly, I will analyze my core research questions in light of data, images and maps. This research project revolves around the sustainability of urban design initiatives that are currently going on in Cleveland: Tremont Pointe, Hub 55 and the Opportunity Corridor. Using sources such as projects discussed in previous Environmental Studies courses, I created a list of sustainable urban design projects. From this list, I narrowed my scope and selected 3 projects, all of varying scales, in order to get an understanding of how sustainability is broached in different architectural approaches. Upon selecting the project, I compiled resources around each and their specific neighborhood and surrounding area. This includes master plans and comprehensive plans (depending on the nature of the project), planning notes, and media, literature and publications on these projects. I visited them as well in order to experience firsthand the senses of both place and space. From these observations and collected materials conducted analysis through the lens of my research agenda.

Observational and sensory experiences supplement my analysis by grounding my research in the realities that Cleveland faces. I visited each site numerous times, taking copious photographs in order to better get an understanding of the dynamics of the public space, the sensations endowed by the architecture, and the realities on the ground in contemporary Cleveland. In conducting these site visits I specifically looked for aspects of blending of New Urbanist aesthetics into the existing fabric of these neighborhoods.

In considering how spaces function, I ask: How are spaces exclusionary? Inclusionary? Contributing to economic segregation? Styles confined to certain ethnic minorities? How do spaces perpetuate violent segregation? How do the aesthetics of New Urbanism in Cleveland cater to some and not others? Where does this aesthetic intersect with complex issues like gentrification and public housing? In order to conduct analysis I will:

- Examine master plans and comprehensive plans for sustainable urban design
initiatives, looking for aspects of neoliberalized New Urbanism
- Examine census data: how are neighborhoods and spaces changing in terms of:
  - Home prices
  - Average rent
  - What percentage of annual income is being spent on rent or housing
  - The percentage of household units renting vs. owning
  - Average income
  - Unemployment
  - Level of education: the percentage of individuals in the neighborhood that have not achieved a high school diploma or equivalent
  - Racial demographics

In summary, my analytical framework is built around a matrix of comparison that revolves around two objective observations and one subjective. I seek to find a correlation, if any, between trends in the data that I have indicated above, the relative GINI coefficients for a measurement in inequality, and the appearance of New Urbanist inspired aesthetics, both in formal realization of projects and their planning processes. Since neoliberalism is contingent upon inequality, more wage and capital inequality is better for it and thus can be seen as a component of analysis. I then compare with the averages of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and Ohio as a whole in order to gauge the general trends in inequality across all different spaces.

In compiling data, I have used only census data. I’ve indicated in following sections what census tracts I have chosen for each neighborhood, correlating the census tracts that Cleveland’s planning commission uses to identify a neighborhood with the census tracts with which urban design initiatives interact. Reality transcends census tracts, so I wanted to include all possible spaces that might be immediately affected by the sustainable urban design initiatives that I am investigating. For Tremont, this includes all neighboring census tracts to Tremont Pointe, which historically as Valleyview Homes has gotten its own census tract. For St. Clair Superior, I’ve included all census tracts designated by the city as its focus on redeveloping the area, in addition to census tracts that neighbor Hub 55 immediately as it is located on the
western edge of the neighborhood. Lastly, for Kinsman/ the Forgotten Triangle, I've included all census tracts that overlap with the city's Ward 5 Master Plan for the Opportunity Corridor. While this plan does include other areas of focus, such as University Circle and Slavic Village, I've chosen to limit my research into the areas that historically overlap with the spaces of the Forgotten Triangle.

Lastly, I have used Social Explorer to help understand visually how the data manifests itself spatially, taking some data that I could not find on the American Fact Finder from Social Explorer.

In the chapters that follow, I will first delve into defining space and place. Secondly, I will define New Urbanism and its relationship to neoliberalism. Third, I will define how this neoliberal nexus between public government and space/place is privatizing spaces using New Urbanism. Lastly, I will analyze projects and design initiatives to find out if Neoliberalism and New Urbanism have seeped into what is universally deemed to be sustainable urban design, having real and physical implications on society and the daily lives of countless individuals who live in a societal space outside of the political boundaries that would convey on to them agency in changing their built environment, further marginalizing such individuals and communities.
Chapter 2 - Space and Place

“Space is permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations but it is also producing and produced by social relations”

Henri Lefebvre

Space and Place have long been topics of study in urban sociology and geography historically in the United States. Geography and motion have always been central to the subjective experiences that begin to collectively define space and place. This can be exemplified by Ernest Burgess’ depiction of the Chicago school of urban development as expansion and motion across concentric circles, each having their own association with different uses, people and identities that overlap and interrelate. Michael Dear took development models further with the conception of the Los Angeles school of urbanism. This school sought to comprehend and record the geography of Los Angeles into a grid of categories in which certain places and spaces fell, with megastructures, dreamscapes and carceral cities being some examples of the pieces of a puzzle that fit into a more globalized school of urban form and development.

Space can be placed in a context of post-industrial society by synthesizing the work of certain scholars. Among these individuals are Henri Lefebvre and his seminal works on the production of space and its relationship to the state and society, Dolores Hayden in her work on the power of place in Los Angeles, and George Lipsitz in his work on the discrepancies between the black and white spatial imaginaries that are subtexts for contemporary urban spaces. In
understanding how these individuals have come to define space as created and experienced, one can begin to understand the contemporary condition that an individual might find themselves in Cleveland today. Further, in understanding the greater superstructures and political mechanisms that have historically configured space in society, one can begin to conceive of how inequality and injustice persists across generations, particularly among racial divides.

Henri Lefebvre, a French Marxian sociologist, has come to be regarded as a master of spatial theory. Certain ideas can be extracted from his book *The Production of Space*, and applied to postindustrial, neoliberal society so that that the conditions on the ground in certain neighborhoods might be better understood. In the second chapter of *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre posits that space is not produced as a commodity is produced, nor is it a measure of the locations of products: rather, space is a precondition to a superstructure, such as the state, and subsequently is controlled and organized by that state (Lefebvre 85). Space is ultimately a social relationship, but is “inherent to property relations” and subsequently “bound up with the forces of production (which impose a form on that or land)” (Lefebvre 85). Therefore, space cannot be separated from either the “social division of labor that shapes it” or “from the state and the superstructures of society” (Lefebvre 85). The implications of this definition operating in this context are numerous: first, that urban spaces can be read or understood as simultaneously configured by the superstructures that govern it and subsequently the force which configures the superstructure (which can be numerous here, but let us take for instance neoliberal market tendencies consolidating capital in certain spaces of Cleveland as one superstructure that operates symbiotically within the federal government and its devolution of power). Secondly, a marxian reading of this definition could involve a scenario which depicts current property relations as means by which the bourgeois of Cleveland pits the state against the proletariat in
order to seize power in the form of representative democracy. Therefore, one can read a
development scheme in which the City of Cleveland contracts a private firm to “redevelop” an
area as a means of configuring a space based on the extraction of the natural resources of the
area (being the labor force available in the area and the “local flavor,” or aesthetics, that would
attract suburbanites to come stimulate the economy of Cleveland).

However, returning to Lefebvre’s earlier definition of space as being “produced,” it
becomes obvious that the production of spaces in urban environments is an act of war on behalf
of the ruling class on those excluded by an attempt to gain control over their spaces and places
as a means of controlling resource flows. Essentially, this production can entail the perpetuation
and manipulation of the white spatial imaginary by spreading it to encompass spaces that
typically are under the sphere of the black spatial imaginary. These notions will be expanded
upon later in this essay. This is where the nexus of place lies: while place can configure space, it
can be understood as the “forces of production,” or rather the natural resources, that might be
extracted for the benefit of individuals elsewhere, as exemplified in place-based real estate
development or community building through place-making.

The power of place is well depicted in Richard Lloyd’s sociological study on Wicker Park,
Chicago’s process of gentrification. Power of place as developed here by Lloyd can be placed in
a context of the circulation of capital between global cities as cities in the rust belt emerge hubs
at the center of networks of flows of people, information and ideas. Despite being much larger in
scale than Cleveland, much of Lloyd’s Chicago study is relevant to urban dynamics in Cleveland.
In Wicker Park, a historically working-class neighborhood in northwestern Chicago, Lloyd
experienced first-hand how a neighborhood transitioned from a “dodgy” one into a place known
nationally as an artistic hub: “the pattern of post-industrial decay that set in during the
immediate postwar decades has given way to a new style of redevelopment, combining its
celebrated arts community with residential gentrification by white collar professionals, the injection of new media and design enterprises, and a thriving entertainment economy,” writes Lloyd, depicting simply how a few place-based factors such as the arts can be manipulated by those with the means to access exceptional amounts of capital (Lloyd 14). Using Lefebvre’s ideas, Lloyd describes Wicker Park as how it’s urban spaces are controlled and changed by their social production, reflecting not only a legacy of fetishization of previous means of production (sweatshops) but those that have superseded them, being the “global dispersal of production and the heightened aestheticization of the economy creating the context for former Chicago sweatshops being turned into coffee shops…” (Lloyd 27). In the age of late capitalism, it is evident that David Harvey’s notion of “flexible accumulation” is apparent in the renovation of downtown through urban renewal, while capital is invested into the commodification of neighborhoods (such as Tremont or Ohio City in Cleveland). Ultimately, Lloyd saw in Neo-Bohemia a means of transformed spatial practices that depicted the neighborhood as the ultimate building block at which cultural production could be manipulated (Lloyd 244). Similarly, the Congress for New Urbanism and the Smart Growth movement also see the neighborhood as the key building block of a sustainable urbanism, leaving much to be desired when analyzing the intention and effect of (re)development strategies.

An analysis of the components of place building can be conducted through studying the works of Kevin Lynch, Dolores Hayden and Jane Jacobs. Kevin Lynch famously dissected the components of an urban environment in his seminal work The Image of the City, analyzing the aspects of an environment’s imagability in an Arcadian manner. Using Boston, Los Angeles and Jersey City as his case studies, Lynch sought to understand urban spatial form as an aggregate of images. More specifically, Lynch saw the legibility of these images into a coherent whole as the first means of directing urban redevelopment. Similarly to how Jane Jacobs responded to
modernist planning with contempt, and whose theory was ultimately used as a tool of
galvanizing a new form of capital investment (urban redevelopment), Lynch’s work too could be
deconstructed. It can be understood as another tool by which developers can apply spatial
forms into coherent, yet deluding urban developments that masquerade as environmentally just.

Lynch purported five elements that composed the image of the city: paths, edges,
districts, nodes and landmarks. While his descriptions of these elements and their interrelations
to the image as a whole (both graphically and analytically) are quite developed and coherent,
one single concurrent theme runs through the entirety of his study: the importance of lived
experience to place. Lynch promoted exploration as a means of urban development, and one
might easily become swept up in his study and lose focus of its implications on planning with the
ubiquitous use of street, neighborhood and landmark names that are so integral to place
building. In understanding the interrelation of these elements, compounded with insider
knowledge on how they are perceived, one could use Lynch’s book as a how-to guide on
creating and implementing development plans. It is understanding the meaning of place that a
place can be changed: “if the environment is visibly organized and sharply identified, then the
citizen can inform it with his own meanings and connections,” writes Lynch in describing the
use-value of his study (Lynch 92). However, consider if the word “citizen” was swapped for any
title more sinister, perhaps developer or consultant.

Stephen Cairns responds to Lynch in his deconstruction of the notion of the primitive hut
in western architectural history. He poses the question of how the hegemony of the “primitive”
can be read Lynch’s work in understanding place before manipulating it. He posits that it is
politically essential to address a concept so seemingly antiquated as “primitive” in architectural
theory and practice, similarly to the way that place and space should be broached in sustainable
urban design initiatives. Often the aesthetics of architectural projects are not scrutinized in
charrettes and design submission by community members who have come to understand their context as one that operates in the classical sense of western architectural beauty (such as in proportion). However, subtext must be examined and criticized in order to truly deconstruct the hegemony that has come to be in urban development aesthetics. This applies to New Urbanist inspired HOPE VI projects and refurbishing industrial spaces, which recycle previous uses in the name of a fetishism that rejects the inherently politicized nature of architecture. It is imperative not only to understand the dynamic factors in play underlying urban design initiatives that deem them “sustainable,” but to also consider the process of participation and secondary effects that seek to alter urban environments towards a form-based, normalized utopian vision.

Jane Jacobs saw place as a concept dialectically opposed to what modernist planners held as dogmatic in her observation of the dynamics of her Greenwich Village. Once the cornerstone of BoBo (bourgeois bohemian) culture in the U.S. this neighborhood could be considered a throbbing example of loft renovation for living. Similarly to Lynch, Jacobs’ theory can seen in postmodernist approaches to planning, namely New Urbanism. Providing the groundwork for what can be understood as urban villages or enclaves, Jacobs sought to preserve place not only as the main configuration of urban space but also in such a way that idealized urban environments as those that catered to the “human scale,” as opposed to the regional, grid-centric planning that modernists following Le Corbusier’s adoration of the machine adhered to. Not only is Jacobs’ theory also born out of the same “Arcadian primitivism” on which Lynch’s cognitive mapping relies on, but it also conceives of the urban environment as a primitive landscape that must be molded in classical senses of order that stretch all the way back to Laugier’s 18th century treatise on the primitive hut that has disseminated rather ominously into normativity. In fact, Jacobs in her conclusion attacks the notion of the “noble savage,” admitting to its existence within society, yet goes no further as to deconstructing the lowest of castes and
where they fall in the advancement of smart cities that integrate both the natural and the urban.

In studying Dolores Hayden’s conception of place does one begin to ground oneself in a critique of Jacobs’ theories, examining the role that the built environment has in supporting certain identities and seeking to destroy others. Hayden, founder of The Power of Place, a non-profit company based in Los Angeles, seeks to explore some of the perspectives and experiences of marginalized groups in urban areas and empower them through projects that lead to urban preservation through collaborative art projects in public space (Hayden Preface).

For example, while the North End in Boston has come to be known as a unique, resilient example of the triumph of the urban village, similarly isolated or truncated neighborhoods in Boston receive little promotion based on historically being non-white space. Hayden brings up the example of the City of New York’s historic landmark designation, where at the time of writing The Power of Place, was overwhelmingly aggregated in affluent, inaccessible portions of Manhattan, thus catering to one specific perspective of urban history. Hayden sees the power of place as “the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens’ public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory,” going beyond simple aesthetic indicators that a planner or architect might see. Hayden goes beyond Jacobs in citing Lefebvre, seeing how Jacobs was another step in the evolution of the planner as master builder, not envisioning space and place as reflections of deeply entrenched inequality in society. She even takes influence in Fredric Jameson, quoting postmodernism to convey the importance of new kinds of “spatial imaginations” (Hayden 9, 19). What Lynch misses, and Jacobs to an extent, is the dialectic of social means of production and urban space: “social life structures territory… and territory shapes social life,” writes Michael Dear and Jennifer Wolch, deconstructing how a planner might undermine a marginalized cultural way of life by spatially mapping then changing an environment to meet an academic standard of coherence. However, that is not to
say that Lynch’s work was nearsighted: it has the capacity to build sense of place and even raise political consciousness according the Jameson (Hayden 29). One salient take away point from the work of Hayden is to map and raise awareness of the mundane or counter-space (Lefebvre), such as decrepit tenements or casitas (community gardens) that speak more to spatial and place meaning than preserving the work of esteemed neoclassical architects. “Finding these buildings and interpreting their history is one additional way to fuse the social and political meanings of space with the history of the urban landscape,” concludes Hayden, speaking to the important deconstruction that must occur in studying the hegemony of aesthetics in sustainable urban design projects and their implications.

“‘Destruction, invasion and restructuring of places on an unprecedented scale,’ caused by ‘changing material practices of production, consumption, information flows, and communication coupled with the radical reorganization of space relations and of time horizons within capitalist developments’”

(Hayden quoting David Harvey on the importance of political economy to understanding place, 42).

Spatial Imaginaries

A spatial imaginary, as developed by George Lipsitz, can be understood as a means by which institutional and environmental racism is carried out by superstructures (state, media) in order to further extend the white spatial imaginary’s domination over the black spatial imaginary. Spatial Imaginaries can differ in the same space, which can be commonly exemplified by how the police might differently perceive community gatherings by different bodies in the
same space, or how certain bodies are deemed undesirable in quasi-public spaces, such as private developments (Crocker Park) or megastructures (public libraries, only accessible by car).

For instance, in his essay “The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race,” Lipsitz confronts how spatial imaginaries come to be privileged by neoliberal means of capital accumulation, compounded by deeply entrenched institutional racism that has prevented people of color from accumulating assets in the same way that white families have been able to in the expansion of the suburbs through amortized mortgages that prop up housing. Lipsitz begins his essay with an anecdote that is entirely relevant to urban development projects today:

“Systematic segregation and discrimination prevent (black people in New Orleans) from freely acquiring assets that appreciate in value, from moving to desirable neighborhoods with better services and amenities, and from reaping the rewards of homeownership built into the American tax code... Unlike their counterparts in the suburbs, who establish private governments that benefit from exclusionary zoning and tax subsidized privatism, inner-city residents do not and cannot control the uses to which their neighborhoods are put by the rest of the city, nor can they secure increases in the exchange value of their homes. Their only recourse... is to increase the use value of their neighborhoods by turning “segregation into congregation” and fashioning ferocious attachments to a place as a means of producing useful mechanisms of solidarity” (Lipsitz 11).

Lipsitz begins his essay on the discrepancies between the white and black spatial imaginaries with an anecdote about police clashing with a social club of black men that had gathered in costume in the Seventh Ward of New Orleans to celebrate Mardi Gras: the police viewed the group as inebriated, and violent, and thus it was in their realm of power to break up
the gathering on the public behalf. On the other hand, the leader of the Mardi Gras Indians saw this confrontation as another means of neighborhood destruction in addition to urban renewal, freeway construction and displacement. This incident in 2005 was the first during which these social clubs needed a permit in order to parade, after a century of regular organization without ever posing a threat to civic order (Lipsitz 10). Lipsitz then immediately contrasts this anecdote with one of similar revelry that occurs on a national level every Sunday for half of a year: officers, inclined to protect property values as an inherent right of man, need to keep thoroughfares open for business and can validate dispersing the group of black men. However, when large amounts of money are to be spent in state-authorized and subsidized facilities (such as the Louisiana Superdome), poising a much larger public threat, no police intervention will be seen as this "revelry produces profits for private businesses. Their rituals and traditions are important to wealthy whites" (Lipsitz 11).

Historically, as Lipsitz notes, a tax system that subsidizes home mortgage interest deductions, property tax inheritance and capital gains has come to reward a racist history in planning. For example, consider the positive feedback loop in school systems: this reinforcing feedback has the capacity to perpetuate inequality through social and cultural capital ties to jobs that come with a well-connected school. Those living in the school district, owning a home and benefitting from their class standing, tend to stay in their class and consolidate wealth. On the other hand, public schools that have been miring in the vacuum created by white flight to the suburbs lack the same social and cultural capital connections, impeding any climbing into the middle class through job acquisition. In this way economic structures can come to be read as maps or archives on which architectural history and practice are based. Even the Yeoman could be read as a misguided imaginary in its aestheticization of a close relationship with agricultural production and self-subsistence. Frank Lloyd Wright made feasible for the suburban consumer to
live in the yeoman ideal through Usonia, while the reality is that this imaginary configuration is the furthest thing from the reality of the economic system. The partitioning of property in the suburbs into the individual scale of the household has been made invisible by design choices that break up the monotony, namely natural backyards that are fenced in. In a sense, nature could be considered the phantasmagoria that makes one forget about labor, blocking both class formation and consciousness.

In contrasting Lipsitz’s white spatial imaginary with the black spatial imaginary, it is evident how the exchange value in the former is favored over the use value of the latter. According to Lipsitz, the white spatial imaginary is angled towards “convenience for investors, entrepreneurs and owners,” whereas black spatial imaginaries are based on social egalitarianism due to a legacy of necessary resilience against spatial racialization. Some examples of how these two spatial imaginaries are manifested spatially are as following: housing and lending discrimination (redlining), political boundaries (voting and school districts, private governments in the form of homeowner’s associations), policing practices (In Cleveland, the Justice Department has found that the police department repeatedly has used abusive and excessive force, in a city where the civilian population is 53%/37% black vs. white and the police department is 25%/65% black vs. white, Oppel 2014), zoning regulations (exclusionary practices in the suburbs that stipulate yards needing to be a certain size, lots having a minimum that they can be sold for in order to exclude an economic class) and design of transit systems and highways that have destroyed neighborhoods historically home to people of color - for instance, I95’s rejected in Jamaica Plain, Boston after a predominantly white grassroots resistance and subsequent placement in Roxbury, a predominantly black neighborhood). All of the previous are examples of indirect tools of racial discrimination embedded into the planning process, indicating how public space has been privatized in order to sidestep civil law.
Lipsitz argues that no public space exists anymore: sidewalks, once critical in Jane Jacobs’ vision to maintaining order, are now private, based on those who are tasked with their maintenance. Private space, in the lens of both the Jeffersonian Ideal and Thoreau’s romantization of nature, is an inherently white vision, manifested universally in the suburbs by economic systems that made them possible. This connects space and place as racially charged with Lefebvre’s analysis of the production of space in late capitalism. Whiteness frames the landscape, as seen in the oculus of unscathed wilderness that imagines the landscape as wild and savage, in the process erasing a history of the interaction of Native Americans with nature. The American Sublime and the new names of the National Park system create monumental objects in the western canon after Native Americans have been pushed out, “conserving” these spaces while development of quotidian, unnamed space occurs elsewhere. Even Environmental Historian William Cronon pushes for the reconsideration of the concept of wilderness, as it is predicated upon an inherently violent system of patriarchy and racism.

In manicured front lawns, backyards that need to be defended in order to maintain safety, and curving streets named after trees and political figures, does one begin to understand how the aesthetics of the suburbs, and subsequently New Urbanism and their HOPE VI creation, are a means of incorporating the white spatial imaginary into public, urban space. In public housing we can see a transition to private space seen in Oscar Newman’s seminal Defensible Space theory. Public housing in the past three decades has emulated private suburban development, using place building as formulated by large scale real estate development as a means of erasing or disappearing spaces and places that do not conform with the white spatial imaginary. “Space as a whole enters into the modernized mode of capitalist production: it is utilized to produce surplus value” writes Lefebvre, summarizing private means of production of space as it has seeped into public housing (Lefebvre 187). “Space has become for the state a
political instrument of primary importance. The state uses space in such a way that it ensures its control of spaces, its strict hierarchy, the homogeneity of the whole, and the segregation of its parts. It is thus an administratively controlled and even a policed space. The hierarchy of spaces corresponds to that of social classes, and if there exist ghettos for all classes, those of the working class are merely more isolated than those of the others” summarizes how state control of space has been transformed through the private realm, being neoliberalized in a sense (Lefebvre 188). Space in the city has been privatized in order to maintain hegemonic order, and as that privacy devolves we eventually see ourselves policing strangers as they interact with our own private space that had once been configured as public.

Returning to place building, we can see how a composite of social relations, or the illusion thereof, form influences on the use of a place, rendering place more than material. Consider Oberlin, Ohio, a town with a very unique sense of place. Tappan Square, a site of alumni nostalgia and community gathering, in conjunction with the Big Parade, a yearly event uniting town and college, both spatially create an identity, configuring place based on its uses while simultaneously influencing how people relate within the use of that space. Similarly, as Reinhold Martin articulates in The Art of Inequality, place is formulated by large scale real estate in emulation of the more organic method devised previously, creating a functioning tool for creating capital backed by local banks. The end of this process is the generation of profit by capturing surplus value. After giving copious examples on formulas used by developers to infuse their luxury dwellings with unique senses of place, Martin concludes with how the imagination of housing in the United States, “by correlating a certain lifestyle with a certain market... by helping to shape a particular type of ‘household’ as the primary socioeconomic unit from which wealth is built” forms the backbone of wealth inequality in which “architecture, together with housing policy and economic policy, helps to produce inequality by producing and managing
wealth, as real estate” (Martin, 125-7). “Architectural specifics, from floor plans to construction materials to styles to building names, also mix with social codes and regulating norms to shape the economics of inequality along racial and gender lines, with the household as their basic unit,” writes Martin, succinctly proclaiming how architectural theory, for instance that of the Congress of New Urbanism, can be used as a planning tool through which inequality spreads (Martin 127). Martin points out that according to U.S. Census, from 2000 to 2011, white households on average gained a 3.5% increase in median net worth, while on the other hand black households on average saw a 37.2% decrease in the net worth of their households. He concludes that based on these metrics correlated with the fact that the disparity between median net worth between white and black households being $525,000, real estate, and more importantly the household, correlates with socioeconomic status in the form of owning architecture (Martin 127).

To conclude, we can see similarities between Lipsitz and Lefebvre in how the segregation of spatial imaginaries can be broken down and inequality can be combatted:

“... A frontal attack on all the mechanisms that prevent people of color from equal opportunities to accumulate assets that appreciate value and that can be passed down across generations... and the embrace of a spatial imaginary based on privileging use value over exchange value, sociality over selfishness, and inclusion over exclusion” -Lipsitz (10)

“Turning the world ‘back on its feet,’ according to Marx, implies overturning dominant spaces, placing appropriation over domination, demand over command, and use over exchange” - Lefebvre (194).
Chapter 3 - Neoliberalism as the Nexus of the Private and Public Realm

“Inequality in housing is an intentional consequence of the real estate system, rather than a historical accident” (Martin 92).

While finding and applying a definition of Neoliberalism as it pertains to the built environment can be a rather nebulous task, declaring what is and is not “neoliberalism” can occur much more spontaneously. Traditionally used to refer to the resurgence and popularization of 19th century economic ideals i.e. laissez-faire economics, in this day and age neoliberalism can be understood to refer to the liberalization of markets through limiting the presence of government regulation. Developed by Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek as an alternative to fordist-keynesian economics, neoliberalism can be understood as the “resurgence of market-based institutional shifts and policy realignments across the world economy during the post-1980’s period” (Brenner, Theodore, 101-02). Brenner and Theodore have compiled a series of definitions of how neoliberalism operates, from which a synthesis of definitions can be used to extract one singular, encompassing definition as it pertains to this essay. According to Brenner and Theodore, neoliberalism is: 1). A process of market-driven processes of social and spatial transformations, 2). Articulated specifically according to space and place, 3). Dependent upon a relationship between state and economy, 4). A crystallization of institutional reorganization that reflects the legacies of earlier modes of regulation and 5). A condition that exacerbates the crises of contemporary capitalism by engendering forms of market failure, state failure and governance failure (Brenner, Theodore 102). As it can be seen, neoliberalism could
be broached in this essay from numerous angles, but I will attempt to summarize its impacts as a school of thought and realm of economic policy. For example, slashing of inner-city social service spending in favor of transit spending that mitigates traffic congestion could be considered a neoliberal policy move, in addition to a project that involves private development corporations developing said transit plans.

A blanket definition of neoliberalism that I will use is as follows: the privatization of development that would have occurred publicly in previous times in the United States. In other words, it is the contraction of the private realm using public funds to change, alter, or develop the public sphere, presenting as real estate development to one realm and urban renewal or sustainable urban development to the other. It is the “enhanced role for private-sector actors in (formally) public-sector mega projects” (Brennan and Theodore 104).

So how does neoliberalism relate to environmental injustice and sustainable urban development? More specifically, what effects does an abstract concept such as neoliberalism have on spaces and places in Cleveland? It is in the tools that it enables in private corporations and developers that allow racist policy to indirectly continue to pervade into the public realm, crystallizing environmental injustice. Neoliberalism is the nexus by which public governments can execute indirect environmentally unjust policies through manipulation of place and space. It does so through the union of real estate and policy, changing the built environment in favor of those who control spaces and places.

Copious examples of the tools by which neoliberalism spreads inequality can be extracted in the Buell Center at Columbia University’s GSAPP’s “The Art of Inequality”. These tools are entirely precipitated on economic inequality, the backbone of which any advanced capitalist society thrives: “Economic inequality, whether measured by income or by accumulated wealth, governs by submitting citizens of the global, neoliberal marketplace to a calculus that
guides the production and management of cities, suburbs, towns, villages, and buildings by projecting virtue at an abstract level while withholding concretely the possibility of genuine parity” (Martin 94). Real estate forms the basis by which inequality can pervade, using a plethora of tools at its disposal, being textbooks, schools, architectural renderings, zoning and land use code, and theory to name a few.

As Reinhold Martin explores in the art of inequality, the building New York by Gehry can be analyzed in the perspective of how inequality governs space, place and the urban fabric of cities across the country: “The market performance of New York by Gehry contributed to an overall portfolio against which shares in the developer’s parent company, Forest City Enterprises, Inc., traded... it is capital” and “...[a house] considered as a capital investment for their owners (rather than just as exchangeable commodities for the builders” summarize how different spaces (home, dwelling and the apartment building, place-made by the signature styling of a starchitect, Frank Gehry) incorporate aesthetics in order to capitalize on investment. This describes the parasitic benefiting off of the necessity of domesticity while simultaneously inflating what it does cost to live in certain areas (Martin 102, 111). Development of any form, when considered simply in terms of its relationship to the dialectics of social structures and economic movement, only exacerbates inequality, which must ultimately be considered and reconciled when development is deemed to be sustainable.

Thomas Piketty has described high inequality in capital ownership as being illustrated by 10% of a population owning 70% of wealth, and subsequently very high inequality occurring when the top 10% of a population owning 90% of wealth. Further, total inequality is when 10% of a population controls not only 60% of capital in conjunction with wages (Martin 104). While sustainable development projects such as Vía Verde in New York City have relatively successfully sought to minimize the factor by which urban development locally amplifies or
shifts inequality, often sustainable design projects unknowingly contribute to this issue while having equality at the core of their mission.

For instance, HOPE VI, the program that took over the torch from modernist housing projects as a model of public housing in the United States, has often been criticized as failing to meet the needs of the populations that it seeks to serve, despite its best intentions. "While HOPE VI was an effort to recast public housing specifically, two of its main tenets have become commonly accepted for all affordable housing development. First, the private sector - whether nonprofit or for-profit- has become the only acceptable lead actor in the field of affordable housing development. Second, affordable housing is not build to look “affordable,” per se, but integrated with and indistinguishable from market-rate housing “ describes how this neoliberal policy initiative has filled a vacuum using spatial tools as a means of governing space and place in urban centers (Martin 71). HOPE VI has drawn much criticism by further pushing those who relied on public housing further to the fringes of society while priming neighborhoods for gentrification through New Urbanist aesthetics

The theoretical background that can be understood to serve as the basis for HOPE VI urban housing projects can be traced back to Oscar Newman's influential Defensible Space Theory, often also equated with Broken Windows Policing in Urban America. With connection to Jane Jacob’s notion of security derived from eyes on the street, the Defensible Space theory postulated that in designing tiers of privacy and thus the sentiment of ownership and domain over a certain place, security could be endowed through confrontation of individuals navigating a space. Newman predicted the privatization of public housing, which can be read as a dissemination of the Jeffersonian Ideal so prominent in suburban development being transplanted into dense, urban environments. “Because of the location of residences, because of their social position, and because of the design of their housing, the poor are the most
consistently victimized of our urban population” describes the sentiment behind Newman’s rationale, in which all those who occupy public housing will be given a lawn, and communal lived-in space that was semi-public, being open to the pedestrian but ultimately being private through its architectural elements, such as fences, stoops, and low brick walls.

Similarly to Newman, the Congress of New Urbanism has been criticized in failing to reach the broad, sweeping social and economic sustainability that their organization promotes through comprehensive architecture and planning. At the scale of the Block, Street and Building, the CNU promotes a stance much different from the modernists that preceded them, trumpeting “architecture of place” that focuses on the human presence or scale.

For instance, take the example of Sullivan Station, a mixed-income public housing development in Chicago. “Those public housing applicants who make it through the screening gauntlet (lease compliance checks, housekeeping checks, criminal background checks, credit checks, employment verification, and drug testing) are allowed into the quiet isolation of places with bucolic names like Parkside of Old Town, the Villages of Westhaven, and Oakwood Shores” writes Maya Dukmasova in her piece “the Problem With Mixed-Income Housing” for Jacobin Magazine, examining the shortcomings of lofty social aspirations mitigated through architectural intervention. Sullivan Station is another example of public-housing adopting place-based development in order to attract a certain income bracket, turning public housing as an asset that does not create value into a space rendered as commodity with the sole purpose of producing a profit, with the social service of public housing being an afterthought.

Further, in order to experience this improvement of living conditions, one has to meet a very stringent list of requirements, allowing only a certain subset of those who had been previously living in public housing the opportunity of living among “mixed-income”. However, this social uplifting into the middle class comes at the expense of the inability to own, sell, or
gain equity on an asset that historically has been the foundation of the middle class in the United States. Low Income Housing Tax Credits only cater to those making above a threshold set unreasonably high, and those displaced through the destruction of housing projects often do not have a place to return to, despite receiving Section 8 vouchers (Narefsky). Some equate living at Sullivan Station to a prison, in that those living in the public-housing subsidized units need to have their units monitored by property managers, cannot utilize the spatial benefits such as gyms or grills, and cannot have friends or family visit freely (Narefsky). Despite this, those living in Sullivan Station do appreciate the spacious, well-lit dwellings, even though this change involves an erasure of the social capital built within public housing projects.

David Harvey builds upon how neoliberalism affects urban form and development in his essay “The Right to the City,” continuing many of the ideas of Henri Lefebvre. “Neoliberalism has also created new systems of governance that integrate state and corporate interests, and through the application of money power, it has ensured that the disbursement of the surplus through the state apparatus favors corporate capital and the upper classes in shaping the urban process,” he writes in the essay published in 2008 in the New Left Review. As I am broaching the subject, the Right to the City can be defined as the “right to change ourselves by changing the city” (Harvey 23). Considering these ideas, one might ask the questions: to what extent does the average citizen of Cleveland have the capacity to change their built environment for the better? And to what extent do marginalized groups have this right?

New Urbanism as a manifestation of postmodern ideals can be understood as a response to the failures of modernism that mass-produces a commodity that masks the deeply entrenched social issues at hand. Catering to individualism, little collective action and private political organizations, New Urbanism could be said to be a tool by which urban elite continue to consolidate surplus capital, leaving the urban poor and middle class little means by which
they can have control over the utilization and production of said capital. Once acquired, property and its defense henceforth form the basis of a judicial system in which private property is a right valued above all others, as seen the use of eminent domain to displace certain urban undesirables: according to the Supreme Court, increasing a tax base is more important than displacement (Harvey, 35). Neoliberalism, using the aesthetics endowed by New Urbanism, has been widely criticized as a further perpetuation of accumulation by dispossession, and its theoretical arguments cater to already existing power structures within metropolitan regions.

New Urbanism in North America is predicated on three levels, or scales, of design standards: the Region, the Neighborhood, and the Street. While coordination between all three scales is important (and is corroborated by a political and economic perspective in the development of smart growth), the neighborhood is by far and wide stressed above the others, being considered the building block of the city. The neighborhood is key to New Urbanism’s place-based approach, being clearly defined by edges while containing variety of self-sufficient uses, being introverted towards its civic center. The Charter created by the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) is heavily riddled with the rhetoric of New England town hall meetings, ultimately purveying “neotraditional” towns as idyllic. The form-based code that it upholds can be seen as paradoxical, romanticizing a historicist vision of colonial New England, ultimately placing power in the hands of the architects and those who pay for their work: “The economic health and harmonious evolution of neighborhoods, districts and corridors can be improved through graphic urban design codes that serve as predictable guides for change,” heads a chapter within the Charter, conveying how New Urbanism seeks to solve systematically entrenched institutional issues through design (Leccese and McCormick 109). To further convey their complacency in addressing social or economic issues: “Traditional building types and spaces offer more than architectural form; they also coincide with how our society works. If we
follow traditional principles of public and private domain - front yard, back yard, correct design of streets to promote neighborliness and discourage through traffic - we will avoid trouble. In general, you will find opportunities for crime... where these basic principles have been violated” (Leccese and McCormick 137). The charter later goes on to list the “surviving colonial areas” of Boston, Providence and Charleston as ideal standards of traditional design, as history means that something must have worked (Leccese and McCormick 156). By repackaging and organizing their design movement around what already was hegemonic urban design status quo (suburban enclaves), and compounded by defensible space theory and broken windows policing, one can easily extrapolate how New Urbanism is a tool by which those who control space and place in capitalist society can further manipulate urban environments at the expense of those marginalized or with little agency to their right to the city.

So effective and punctual was the organization of the Congress for New Urbanism that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under the Clinton administration turned to the CNU for leadership and direction of urban redevelopment. Instead of tackling the issue of poverty, the response was to spread it out so that it became invisible, or assimilated into what they deem to be their vision of societal norms. This was accomplished, or attempted, through the development of the HOPE VI program for HUD, or Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere. It was so captivating that HUD would award grants specifically to local governments that included New Urbanism principles in their proposals (Leccese and McCormick 93). The key elements of HOPE VI, as laid out in the Charter of New Urbanism, are as follows:

- New Developments are designed to human scale.
- Civic uses such as recreation and medical facilities, village centers and shops and small businesses are included in the neighborhood.
- Resident incomes are mixed; united are rented or owned by middle-class,
working-class, and publicly subsidized households.

- Homes are close to the street, with front windows.
- Residents have street addresses rather than project addresses.
- Back and front yards belong to individual units, creating “defensible space.”
- Parks are small and placed where they can be observed closely by residents.
- New streets that break up “superblocks” are designed to be relatively narrow and have on-street parking and traffic-calming devices like crosswalks.
- Tenants are carefully screened, and rules are strictly enforced.

I italicized what I think to be pillars that stick out, reinforcing how place-building techniques of New Urbanism only perpetuate a normalization of the built environment, supplanting suburban aesthetics using public and private capital in order to further marginalize individuals. One can easily extract the influences of Jane Jacobs and Oscar Newman, bringing into question the power by which this rhetoric has become the status quo for urban development. One could even go as far as to say that, based on the application of New Urbanism by HUD, the Aesthetics and ideals of New Urbanism, or Neotraditional town-planning, could be considered state-sponsored gentrification, furthering the extent by which institutional racism is entrenched in American society.

In considering how New Urbanism is applied by neoliberalism, and how neoliberalism is changing cities across the globe, I seek to ask: what is happening to spaces and places in Cleveland, Ohio? Are they being “whitewashed” by form-based codes implemented at the regional level, and executed by private development firms taking public capital using neoliberal tactics as a conduit (density bonuses, inclusionary zoning)? Are New Urbanism theories and aesthetics being used to perpetuate this normalization and further marginalization of groups,
especially those historically prejudiced against by racism in urban planning?

I theorize that what is deemed to be sustainable urban development in Cleveland is in fact a perpetuation of institutional racism, furthering inequality in the built environment by normalizing space and place and infringing on the citizen’s Right to the City. I will examine and explore this question by examining a number of projects, having studied the demographic changes and trends before and after these projects were implanted. Additionally, I have observed first hand and through research where New Urbanist aesthetics come up in project implementation and production (the planning process: master plans, design proposals etc.).

Chapter 4 - History of Racism as Manifested in the Built Environment in Cleveland

In 1938 Lewis Mumford saw the ways in which modernist planning could disrupt social progress for generations through architecture: “In the city, time becomes visible: buildings and monuments... leave an imprint upon the minds even of the ignorant or indifferent. Through the material fact of preservation... habits and values carry over beyond the living group... Layer upon layer, past times preserve themselves in the city until life itself is finally threatened with suffocation: then, in sheer defense, modern man invents the museum” (Mumford 19, 20). Mumford understood how social progress could not keep up with either the means or the forces of production, creating what he called a “crystallization of chaos” in which disorder prevailed through social disruption and disorganization. It is easy to see the influences that Mumford had in sustainable urban planning, particularly in the work of Jane Jacobs, but what is troubling is
that the progression of these anti-modernist ideals could be reconfigured to give rise to a new
form of planning that merely sidestepped the issues at hand in New Urbanism.

Cleveland is exemplary in regards to Mumford’s declarations about past minds and
hegemony being preserved in the crystallization of the built environment. One only needs to
look at census data, which conveys the level to which the city is segregated spatially by class
and wealth inequality. Cleveland, like other industrial Midwestern cities, received a great influx
of migrants during the Great Migration of African-Americans traveling northwards to seek jobs
from the rural south. Due to restrictive covenants and redlining practices, these newly settled
migrants faced housing discrimination which confined them to certain spaces within the city,
leading to both decaying housing stock through overcrowding and the consolidation of cultural
and social capital in these areas, creating black ghettos.

Richard Wright, author of Native Son, saw this overcrowding, particularly in kitchenettes
in Chicago’s Black Belt, as a means of spreading the geography of the carceral system into urban
environments, legally confined African American citizens to certain spaces in the cities. As
Rashad Shabazz puts it in his book Spatializing Blackness, particularly on his focus on the work
of Wright, he makes it clear how “geography makes social and political inequalities visible by
situating them within physical space” (Shabazz 45). The body politic comes into play here, as
these spaces, once deemed trendy and modern to the white spatial imaginary, soon become
physical manifestations of carceral power once African Americans were forced to move into
them. This exertion of societal power extended beyond the kitchenette into modernist housing
projects: “continued economic and spatial disenfranchisement of Black residents also
contributed to the failure of the housing projects and produced, in many instances,
intergenerational poverty based on geography,” Shabazz writes on the use of housing policy as a
tool by which planners sought to manage populations and communities (Shabazz 56).
A history of spatial racism is well demonstrated spatially today in Cleveland as well, leaving lasting relics to an age in which racism in city planning was more overt. Cleveland has a history of competition among ethnic populations for space within the city, with many groups being displaced at the behalf of another. As a means of implementing municipal control and subverting the ethnic population vote, middle and upper class Anglo-Americans turned to education, adopting a strategy of luring Central European away from private schools into the public education system. Settlement homes were often established as a means of socializing and assimilating European ethnic enclaves into American culture, but often the result was opposite of intent. Inversely, interaction between Anglo-Americans and European ethnic populations often spawned cultural preservation and celebration of their diversity in the name of cultural pluralism. The interwar and postwar period in Cleveland was one for growth for ethnic populations, but this assimilation and celebration of diversity was not extended to African American populations moving to Cleveland during the Great Migration. Deeply entrenched prejudice and racism prevented African Americans from the same opportunities as European ethnic immigrants. As noted by the Encyclopedia of Cleveland History at Case Western Reserve University: “The economic consequences of discrimination made it impossible for African Americans to accumulate the resources for community development on a par with the white ethnic communities” (Rose).

Relations between black and white populations worsened during the 20th century significantly. Increasing job discrimination, in conjunction with spatial patterns of housing segregation such as redlining, “whites only” policies and restrictive covenants constricted black populations in a way that white ethnic populations were not subject to. Similarly to how Shabazz highlights Richard Wright’s documentation of the confinement of black populations in Chicago into substandard, slum-like conditions in kitchenettes, black populations in Cleveland also
experienced overcrowding, which spurred housing crises. Cleveland’s black population increased by 300% between 1910 and 1920, and white populations through institutional racism and violence resisted the dispersal of this population into white neighborhoods. Black leadership in these communities in the following decades united to fight for equality in politics and the courts, expanding into politics as a battleground. However, the defeat of certain racist policies and practices strengthened anti-black racism, raising fear in white populations of the “specter of a black political takeover” (Rose).

This legacy of tension is very apparent in Cleveland, the outrage over which is legible in the Hough riots of 1966. The neighborhood located between Downtown and University Circle became a highly concentrated residential area for African Americans during the early to mid twentieth century for a number of racially charged reasons: restrictive covenants and mortgage lending were discriminatory in deciding who was allowed to live where, and landlords were quick to react to this positive feedback loop by subdividing two family houses into multi-unit apartments, advancing the rate of the decay. The city government of Cleveland was complicit as well: while promoting the rate of suburbanization by building freeway infrastructure and inducing certain mortgage lending through income tax subsidization, city infrastructure was expanded to cater to a certain white
majority that was now fleeing the slums that were forming downtown (sped up by blockbusting). Further, in order to intentionally deem the Hough neighborhood as blighted, the city participated in numerous criminal and racist policies: “housing codes and prostitution laws went unenforced for years; garbage pickup slowed and even halted for months at a time; police harassment and abuse became a regional strategy; and Mayor Locher initiated “Operation Demolition” to clear abandoned properties through burning,” Paul Hanson points out in his research on the riots (Hanson 158). Despite the election of Carl Stokes in 1967 as the city’s first African American mayor, white ethnic populations that saw these new focuses on racial identity and cultural pride as threats to their neighborhood identity resisted the results of desegregation during the civil rights era tenaciously. In fact, the NAACP filed a suit in 1973 against the public school system, which was convicted of segregating black students in schools. Some even see the resistance to the civil rights movement in Cleveland as an example of a new ethnic consciousness in the 1970s and 1980s (Rose)

Map depicting redlining in Cleveland in 1936. Sourced from the Ohio State University Library’s Maps and Geospatial Data Collection

In Hanson’s work we can see clear ties to Lipsitz’s notion of the discrepancies between
the white and black spatial imaginaries. One can easily make the association between how police interact and govern the space of a predominantly black neighborhood in Lipsitz’s anecdote on New Orleans with how Cleveland’s planning committee has historically focused on certain demographics over others. Even more salient is how Lipsitz’s white spatial imaginary, defined as one geared towards “convenience for investors, entrepreneurs and owners,” is apparent in the contemporary urban fabric of certain neighborhoods in Cleveland, and even at the regional level as a whole. For instance, consider Tremont Pointe, a HOPE VI housing development in the Tremont Neighborhood of Cleveland. After demolishing the previously existing public housing complex in 2001 (previously named Valleyview Homes), the City of Cleveland “engaged” a private development corporation, McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc. to develop a master plan for the area in order to integrate the public housing community into the neighborhood, eventually receiving a federal grant which the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority supplemented in order to build the $43 million project. Currently, this private development corporation manages and oversees the public housing project. This public space is being governed by the “nation’s leading for-profit developer, manager and asset manager of economically-integrated neighborhoods”.

Cleveland still faces a range of environmental justice issues, ranging from decaying housing stock of rental units (from which certain populations have little mobility) to a lack of fresh food in extensive urban areas. The Environmental Health Watch notes that in certain neighborhoods historically redlined in Cleveland, chronic asthma, obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes are found in black children at overwhelmingly higher rates than their white counterparts. With high population numbers in these areas renting from landlords living outside of Cleveland, it is evident how it can be difficult to pick up and move when lead is discovered in wall paint. To further compound the issue, the City of Cleveland has no such database or registry
of homes that are lead safe. Stigmatization of these public health issues that are correlated spatially with housing can also be traced back to institutional racism: in the 1950’s the Cleveland Plain Dealer publically placed blame on lead-poisoning not on housing conditions, but on parents that would let their kids “nibble” on peeling paint. It has even been pointed out that, at the same time, trade-associations within the lead-pigment industry called “negro and Puerto-Rican” children as the culprits of national lead poisoning scares in order to dampen fears (Dissell and Zeltner).

In regards to distributive justice, it is still evident that on the neighborhood scale public participation and architecture seem to reside across a boundary impermeable to the ordinary citizen. As Jeremy Till posits in his essay Negotiations of Hope, public participation in architecture presents a threat to the normative architectural values that have become canon in western architecture. Till points out that the status quo of participation is to get the presumed support of citizens, placating them by conveying the “feeling” that their needs are met while in reality actions of built interventions have already been determined.

In his essay, Till depicts a spectrum of democratic participation in the architectural process, ranging from pseudo to partial to full participation. While full participation is impossible, Till argues, anything on the less democratic side of the spectrum offers a “socially acceptable shield behind which the authors can develop their technically determined ideologies” (Till 4). Politics is impossible to remove from participation, and the denial of its inherent presence is a means by which the architect and planner spreads environmental injustice in spatial production. This is evident in reading the works of many prominent New Urbanists, such as Leon Krier and Robert Stern. The perfection achieved in the mind of the architect is challenged and suspended at contingent reality, and thus participation can be a means by which normativity in space can be undermined.
Till promotes the idea of transformative participation, breaking down the role of architect as specialized, alienated expert: “architectural knowledge should not be applied as an abstraction from the outside, but developed from within the context of the given situation” he writes, a similar concept to Antonio Gramsci’s organic intellectual. “To develop this knowledge from within, the architect must project themselves into the spatial context, physical and social, of the user,” he continues, “the architect becomes ‘an activist, working on behalf of and as a dweller’” (Till 7). “All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals” writes Gramsci in The Prison Notebooks, a close parallel that Till seeks to make in breaking down the dialect between the architect and the citizen (Gramsci 9). On the other side of the dialectic of participation is the user, the dweller, those for whom the space is produced, produce the space and occupy the space: “the user should have the opportunity to actively transform the knowledge of the architect,” writes Till demonstrating that the architect as intellectual, or as master builder in the classicist, western canonical sense, can arise organically out of a population from within through education and interaction with other intellectuals (Till 8).

In current material and sociopolitical conditions of urban America, all of this theory on how urban form through architecture and planning can seem like a tenuous connection to environmental justice. However, recent protest movements, such as Black Lives Matter, can use this form of participation, negotiating hope, as a heuristic model when broaching urban (re)development of public spaces and places that are historically integral parts of marginalized identities.

Charles Davis II builds upon this idea in his essay Black Spaces Matter, elaborating on the idea that race and place are mutually reinforcing entities, per both Booker T. Washington and Robert Robinson Taylor. Similarly, so too did redlining reinforce the idea that race and place are
interconnected. Just as the Black Lives Matter movement forces us to challenge anti-black racism in this country and the imagery associated with it, so too should it challenge us to “situate these subjectivities within a material reality that safely maintains their livelihood.... It means considering black space as a conceptual site of social protest” (Davis 3). Using poet June Jordan and her work *His Own Where*, Davis explores how an alternative form of modernism manifests itself in architectural writing, one that “thrives on found spaces and seeks opportunities to influence the city from the bottom up,” a notion that is diametrically opposed to the modernist dogmatic planning of the city from the top down as a machine, while also allowing those marginalized to participate in social/spatial projects (Davis 5). Much of Davis’ essay is focused on the scale of architecture, but there are some interesting takeaways that have the capacity to build community in a resilient, inward focused manner that transformative participation would enable. What would happen if young boys and girls were “redirected to reforming the interiors of inherited and neglected spaces”? Davis asks us, calling into question that superficiality of the mindset of the noble planner or developer seeking to invest in an area (Davis 7).

The historical reality in cities in the Northeastern United States is that postmodernists who promote New Urbanism as a means of disappearing poverty have further neglected spaces already neglected most by city planning officials. Public housing only came into prominence in the 1950’s as a result of a housing crisis for the poor. While it may be a tangential point, I think it is interesting to note that less than 100 of the 67,000 mortgages issues under the G.I. Bill after World War 2 went to black veterans. In order to combat white-flight to the suburbs, cities sought to attract businesses and middle class families back in, and decided that the slums that often ringed downtowns needed to be demolished in favor of middle class housing. Cleveland is no exception, as exemplified by the demolition of Hough and neighborhoods surrounding downtown in order to attract those commuting the suburbs back. In conjunction, parking lots
were built downtown and transportation infrastructure was expanded. The result of this mass disappearance and displacement of poverty was its concentration in large-scale high rise apartment buildings, the root of which can be traced back to Le Corbusier’s theories on social housing in *Towards an Architecture*. As Newman points out, any middle class neighborhood would unify in order to keep out the poor (or the elderly for that matter) from occupying small-lot infill sites if they were proposed, so the converse tended to happen: the middle class came to the poor neighborhoods in both the form of gentrification and New Urbanism.

Further compounding this issue is the government’s failure to invest in public housing, a trend of decline that began in the 1970’s. This point can be attributed to when the private realm took on the market for working class and lower class housing. As seen in some of the densest cities in the country like New York and San Francisco, a trickle down approach to housing shortages is taken. Housing development is highly restrictive in New York, but developers can get around these codes through meeting stipulated requirements for affordable units. However, these units are often not integrated with the rest of the luxury development, seen in architecture that exhibits different entrances based on unit location. The argument is that the creation of any luxury units will entice the wealthy to move into them, freeing up middle class housing. As pointed out by Karen Narefsky on her article on trickle-down gentrification: nowhere do city officials address lower-income or public housing addressed. Gone is the age when Eisenhower could tax the top earners 90% of their income in order to fund socially interested projects, such as the interstate highway system (which ultimately would be the bane to cities as it enabled suburbanization). Further, subsidized housing vouchers have been stigmatized among politicians as handouts, confounding those who believe rightfully that an investment in the well being and economic stability of working class neighborhoods is beneficial as an indirect subsidy. As Michael Pyatok points out in his article *Unpacking the Problem: Is affordable housing*
capitalism's hopeless quest?, published in Architecture Boston (winter 2016), attempts at solving the paradox of affordable housing in a society predicated on inequality (and further, that those who do not achieve are to blame and not the system) is one that has yet to be answered. However, Pyatok believes that architecture cannot shy away from the challenge of operating under capitalism; in fact, he believes that "through good design, we are making it seem like the United States is solving its housing problem when nothing of the kind is happening" (Pyatok).

The private realm has filled this vacuum, often by using community development corporations using low-income housing tax credits or section 8 vouchers. However, the definition of affordable housing is also murky. The usual indicator of 30% of the median income of a neighborhood is usually set as the floor, excluding those most in need. Current development conditions cater towards luxury apartments and condos, and any space freed up by such projects usually stimulates more of them, pushing working class housing further to the fringes. Friedrich Engels pointed out succinctly: “in such a society the housing shortage is no accident; is it a necessary institution,” summarizing the direction that housing shortages are headed in (Pyatok).

The production of spaces as both form and relationships has transformed itself due to its inherent relationship to superstructures at the scale of the city. While there has been a governmental response to meet the needs of urban poor, their approaches mirror those of the modernists: to disappear the poverty by whatever means necessary. While not as blunt as neighborhood demolition for urban renewal, New Urbanism is considered by many as just as sinister in its intentions.

"Participation is not a worthy sop to our political masters; it is not an excuse for mediocrity; it is not distraction from supposedly higher values. Participation is the space in which hope is negotiated. What is clear is that this hope refers not just to a better future for the users
Chapter 5 - New Urbanism

“I suggest that new urbanism has succeeded in effectively framing the popular discussion about how to plan the good community. In that process, it has narrowed the debate and limited consideration of social justice issues” - Jill Grant

Numerous origin stories have been proposed to explain the phenomenon of New Urbanism, as distinct from new urbanism. Some might argue that Leon Krier’s theoretical work and polemic criticizing modernism in the 70s provided the academic backing that the movement needed to gain traction. Others would argue that it wasn’t until the realization of New Urbanist projects, such as Seaside and Celebration, Florida, that the movement had moved into the realm of a development paradigm. Others would say that Jane Jacob’s modernist criticism in the 60’s was the tipping point. The demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex in St. Louis in 1972, so often cited by Newman as exemplary of poor design, is included in discussions on the death throes of modernism as well.

This research project takes into consideration criticism of New Urbanist projects as a specific design movement located at a certain point in time. While it may be evident that aesthetics that became popular through the expansion of New Urbanism are apparent in almost all projects today that are considered sustainable, this essay considers their social and
theoretical origins. New Urbanism is a design paradigm specific to the United States and Canada, while new urbanism is often associated with European design of the same origin. Further, this essay acknowledges that the ideas and theory of New Urbanism have evolved in a self-conscious way, paving the way for their expansion into the widely acclaimed Smart Growth Movement, a more comprehensive, realistic and just mode of urban growth. Examining Smart Growth would be too large in scope for the scale of this project, so my research has focused on the ideology and practice of a certain group of architects and planners during a certain period of history.

Criticism of New Urbanism is widespread and plentiful. It is easy to find the hypocritical and utopian aspects in their design practices, while simultaneously the prominent figures in the New Urbanist movement have often taken public stances on issues that can be considered classicist, historicist, and ultimately racist. Diametrically opposed to modernist distaste and disregard for previous modes of planning and thinking, New Urbanists simultaneously reject this dogma while idolizing the same principles that modernists promoted in theory. “New Urbanism tales a selective look at history, drawing its lessons primarily from the classical traditions of Greeks, Romans and Europeans,” writes Jill Grant, summarizing some of the aesthetic inspirations of the movement. Similarly, the same infatuation with western classical architecture occurs in Le Corbusier, as apparent in Towards an Architecture: “Haven’t most architects today forgotten that great architecture is at the very origins of humanity and that it is a direct function of human instincts?” Pens Le Corbusier, just after relaying his origin story on the beauty of the necessity of primitive man (Jeanneret 135). It is clear that the influence of neoclassical architecture figures prominently in both modern planning and New Urbanism, and the ways that these design principles disregard the social and political implications of this architecture figures similarly.
In defining New Urbanism, one needs to look no further than key early developments done by DPZ, an architectural firm founded by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. Seaside and Celebration, both unincorporated towns in Florida, can be examined in regards to the principles of New Urbanism operating in a vacuum, creating an urban fabric on a clean slate. Seaside is on Florida’s panhandle coast and Celebration 20 miles to the southwest of Orlando in Central Florida. Seaside, principally designed by DPZ and founded in 1981, was popularized by its appearance as the set in The Truman Show (Katz 4). Duany and Plater-Zyberk “consciously asserted the primacy of public over private space” in design, but one has to ask the question of how truly public this space is based on the immediate market-adjustment for real estate prices in Seaside (Katz 4). Seaside exemplifies how shortsighted some of the well-intentioned socially just moves in the New Urbanist playbook really are. For instance, while originally intended to be an “inexpensive” beachfront vacation community, lot prices increased tenfold in the first decade of its existence, compounded by a feedback loop that attracted developers to the town. One principal aspect of Seaside’s signature place-building, community-strengthening moves was to include walkways between houses on the interior of blocks, covered in sand so that neighbors could walk to the beach together. One might not question what these paths would be called elsewhere, but in Seaside they are referred to as “Krier Walks,” after architect and New Urbanism spokesperson Leon Krier (Katz 9).

Celebration, developed between 1987 and 1997, offers a similar package to Seaside, albeit having a larger name behind the planning and development. The Disney Corporation sought to establish an “example for development,” contracting Robert Stern along with other esteemed New Urbanists to build the “largest American planned suburban town ever” (Stern and Davidson 44). Rather than promote infilling, or preservation of green space outside of cities, Celebration championed so-called sustainable planning through the implication that growth
needs to continue outwards, and that growth conflicts with ecological preservation.

The experiment of Celebration has drawn lots of attention, both as praise and criticism, largely due to its relationship with the movement behind its ideals. It is no coincidence that New Urbanism and its principles arose in the same context as U.S. neo-conservatism, and that it’s aesthetics are now being marketed as a trend in real estate development. Michael Vanderbeek and Clara Irazabal, both Professors at USC in planning and urban design, have criticized the movement in its relation to the shortcomings of modernist planning: “Like modernists, New Urbanists have expressed high hopes of serving the disadvantaged, yet after a quarter century of practice, they have done more to suppress cultural differences, reduce social diversity, serve the interests of developers, enable sprawl, and reduce housing affordability and public housing” (Vanderbeek and Irazabal 47). Celebration, despite setting a stratification of house prices, does not serve an equitable social agenda at all, disregarding the difficult to attain changes in socioeconomic and environmental aspects in favor of an aesthetically perfect planned town.

New Urbanism has also drawn much criticism as many have seen it has a continuation of modernist thinking in planning, ultimately falling short of social and ecological sustainability. Celebration certainly falls into this category. Contradictions arise in its promotion of communitarian values: its extensive public and communal space is juxtaposed with the pre-modernist and traditional values embedded into the architecture: namely, an embrace of patriarchal and racist values that can be traced back to the Jeffersonian ideal. Individual liberty, proximity to nature and defensible space all resemble their counterparts in the suburbs, and while pedestrian walkways are very well lit, little is done to tackle the hegemony of female domesticity embedded in these traditional types of architecture (colonial, colonial revival, Victorian, coastal and Mediterranean to name a few). These values point to a specific period of American history: deriving the pioneer spirit from colonialism as the dominant form of
governance. It is specifically this desire compounded by a desire to participate in Disney's experiment that self-selected a homogenous group of dwellers, capable of paying for the lifestyle: “Celebration's builders and designers projected a myth of diversity and inclusion, but the community as built proves relatively homogenous” (Grant 193). The planning of Celebration as a sustainable community is based on highly exclusionary practices, reaffirming a history of social inequality and violence in the United States.

Much of the criticism surrounding Celebration revolves around one of the central criticisms of New Urbanism: that being a project that sprung from the collaborative minds of architects, its focus is on the aesthetics of the space derived from form. In limiting scope, this disregards many of the other aspects of sustainability that planning entails. This means a top down process: negligence and outright antipathy towards public participation. Robert Stern, the architect who was contracted to make the master plan for the town (and also founding member of the congress of New Urbanism) has said that among the influences for the design of the town was a collaborative project that he created for Venice Biennale in 1976 called “Subway Suburb” (Stern 44). Taking influence from his time spent at the Yale graduate school of architecture with peers like Andres Duany, Stern saw the suburban enclave as an answer to the blight that most inner city areas faced at the time. Stern sought to create this hybridization of urban density and town form through a new kind of hybrid suburb that is Celebration, made possible by the Disney Corporation. He designed a compact, New Urbanist town center, with neighborhoods that “radiate out from the town center in a warped grid plan” (Stern and Davidson 45). While Stern ultimately saw the success of the suburb as made evident by the ubiquity of sprawl, he sought to tweak it in an experimental way to perfect its form. His plan style contains problematic aspects of sprawl, namely the grid pattern that allowed for both easy orientation and privacy of individual space that curved street patterns conveyed. Further, connectivity was not privileged
over these social spaces as streets always “terminate at parks, waterways, or natural woodlands (Stern and Davidson 45).

This prevalent mindset focusing on physical aesthetics and not of the indirect social effects has perpetuated and exacerbated these issues, marking Celebration as a failure in regards to sustainability. As Jill Grant points out in her book on New Urbanist theory and practice, diversity is seriously lacking in Celebration: initially, only a “handful” of black residents moved into the town (Grant, 187). Further, the only stores for its initial first few years were ones that catered to tourists. Much of this development comes at the expense of ecology: “the desire to squeeze out extra building lots led the company to drain wetlands, build lakes, and cut large trees” (Grant 190).

Additionally, it is interesting to observe the hybridization of suburban and urban space in Celebration. When considering where the majority of the population came from in order to fill homes, suburban mindsets dominate. However, the spaces were so meticulously curated by designers in order to have a more urban style of living. This hybridization and discrepancy across modes of living, political organization and their relation to spaces created is interesting to observe, as the informal modification of the intention is visible in residents driving out of town to do their big-box shopping.

In his discussion on Celebration, it is evident that Stern believes in two tiers of planning and participation: According to Stern, architect is the master builder, and has complete control in regards to design and construction. However, that is not to say that he does not believe in the power of social connectivity: lot sizes were purposefully made small to encourage outdoor socialization in public spaces, front porches were included as guidelines in the pattern book, and parking was placed in the center of all blocks to remove the individualism of this form of transportation. While mingling among the individuals wealthy enough to live here is promoted,
mingling with those who created and govern these spaces they created artificially has no arena. Stern refutes the idea that he is a romantic, instead calling himself an “idealistic,” mixed with a little pragmatism, claiming that the suburb will save the city as not every part of the city is the loop (Stern and Davidson 46). Stern is not afraid to apply the Arcadian primitivism trope to cities that have crumbled under urban renewal: “a few strong-willed entrepreneurs with bold vision will transform still unexplored wilderness of our urban decay into thriving communities based on the great tradition of the invented town” (Stern and Davidson 46). In promoting a colonial approach to city redevelopment, Stern neglects the long history of racism and inequality that has pervaded in city planning and created urban conditions that he saw as wilderness. He even goes as far as to claim that the “invented” town is what will save those left behind, erasing a history of resiliency against men like him.

One doesn’t need to go far beyond Robert Stern to find other ideological issues with New Urbanism. Leon Krier, an architect whose theory and architecture were integral to the consolidation of the New Urbanist movement, just as recently as 2013 published a book on Albert Speer, arguing for a separation of his architectural work from his political context. “Both Krier and Stern believe that architectural form must be assessed without reference to its ‘content,’” writes Barbara Miller Lane in her review of Krier’s book, pointing out Krier’s take that Speer’s legacy of neoclassicism must be interpreted outside of his political beliefs and workings at behalf of the Nazi party (Miller Lane 224). She goes on to quote Albert Speer himself: “My buildings were not solely intended to express the essence of the National Socialist movement. They were an integral part of that of that very movement” (Miller Lane 225). Speer cannot be considered a neoclassical architect, as Krier and Stern would have us believe, despite the Nazi party’s desire to trace their roots back to the ancient Greeks. Speer was a modernist, adopting a methodical approach to social program that would ultimately advance the Nazi war machine
and holocaust.

If it is not already alarming that such strong proponents behind the ideology of New Urbanism have promoted the study of Nazism in order to learn how to better critique modernism (and not that we should learn how not to commit great evil ever again), it should instill fear that these dogmatic principles have been adopted by the United States’ Housing and Urban Development department in order to redevelop urban decay. So successful and desirable were the neoclassical elements embedded into Seaside and Celebration that the Clinton administration contracted the Congress for New Urbanism to develop its HOPE IV program. Krier promotes a building code that prohibits the “classical language” from private development, reserving columns, pediments and friezes for civic monumentality, in order to truly express the harmonious and beautiful nature that the government keeps in order, again relating the control of spaces to abstract structures above the ordinary citizen (Leccese and McCormick 163).

The pillars of New Urbanism are rooted with normative undertones, and one can read the white spatial imaginary in both their manifested works (Seaside, Celebration) and their theoretical work (the Charter). “Traditional building types and spaces offer more than architectural form; they also coincide with how our society works. If we follow traditional principles of public and private domain - front yard, back yard... we will avoid trouble,” writes Ray Gindroz in his chapter of the Charter, succinctly summarizing New Urbanism’s prescriptive whiteness that could be interpreted as revisionist (Leccese and McCormick 137). Similarly, it could be said that this perspective is the theoretical underpinning of Broken Windows policing.

In adopting defensible private space, dominion over nature, and a certain, normative and nuclear household, one can avoid “trouble” as that is how our society just works. Such a disposition promotes violence onto the bodies on which the United States was built - reimagining a period of traditional planning in which slavery and colonialism were not existent,
disappeared from architecture just as New Urbanists seek to normalize environments today. One could argue that these tenets of New Urbanism are driven by private information and capital flows in a period of flexible accumulation, reconstituting a history of whiteness in planning and architecture that is predicated on “beauty, order and coherence” (Grant 11).

It is in this manner that New Urbanism is inherently racist, which can be deconstructed on two scales: the architectural (style), and in planning. In regards to architecture, one can look back to seminal works that promote neoclassical design. In an age of scientific racism, such as the separation and hierarchy of race based on phrenology (cranium sizes), one can trace the roots of whiteness to the notion of racial dominance and purity in Europe. In establishing a paradigm of the white spatial imaginary in western architecture, one can start by examining the writings of Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremere de Quincy and Marc-Antoine Laugier, both French architectural historians writing in the 18th century. In supplementing their writings with the paradigm of the primitive hut, as deconstructed by Stephen Cairns, one can begin to deconstruct the styles and relationships apparent in western architecture that deleteriously promote the dissemination of a vision of beauty in whiteness, as configured by the otherness of racism.

In criticizing what he saw as “grotesque extravagance,” Marc-Antoine Laugier, an architectural philosopher, published his rules to architecture in 1753, in which he saw certain architectural practices among contemporaries as capricious. In his rules, Laugier famously depicts the hut of primitive man, writing about how, in imitating the natural process, primitive man creates art: “All the splendors of architecture ever conceived have been modeled on the little rustic hut,” writes Laugier, eventually decreeing the column, entablature and pediment as the elements essential to the architectural order (Laugier 12). Columns are to be engaged minimally, never used as pilasters, and are never near each other. Entablatures and their lintels must have no projections, cannot be broken with angles and cannot support an arch, as that
would convey heaviness. Lastly, the pediment, located only along the width, should be triangular and never stacked. When stacking these orders, one must eliminate what represents the roof from lower eves, as it will disrupt the harmony. According the Laugier, the columns are to have a structural purpose, the entablature is to convey the inner volume and space, and the pediment is to stand for the gable of the noble savage. All of these principles of Laugier are apparent in the Pantheon of Paris, a work that Laugier based much of his writing on.

In breaking down Laugier’s rules, and the rustic hut on which they are predicated, one can begin to read a whiteness that has become canonized in western classical architecture. It begins with primitive man building structures based on his needs: shelter from nature while still allowing a connection with it. The primitive were the furthest from God in this sense, but were closest in their structures as it is the natural process that dictates the materials that house the savage. It is the escape from the sun and elements while maintaining proximity to fresh air that drives the noble savage to erect four posts with four across, above which sits two rows of branches lined with leaves (column, entablature, pediment – Laugier 12). In reading the influence of Laugier in Quatremere’s work, one can see how it is only the noble savage that can create architecture, as the hunter (the Egyptian) is the nomad and thus they have no form, and the shepherd lives in a tent, thus not catering to carpentry and stone.

In his writings on architecture in the Encyclopedie Methodique D’Architecture, Quatremere, an important figure and thinker in the separation of the arts from the French monarchy, promoted a radical new theoretical direction and approach to architecture. In challenging the status quo by building off of the work of Laugier, Quatremere attacked the notion that Egypt was the “cradle of the arts,” instead dogmatically promoting Ancient Greek society as an alternative model to emulate. Architects operated within the realm of imitation, and thus, in emulating Ancient Greek proportion, their art would approach perfection in the
contemporary metropolis. Quatremere built off Laugier in that he considered the Greek style of building predicated on carpentry to be an evolution of the primitive hut myth, tying Western European building styles to a historical line of stylistic development that can be traced back to perfection in its relationship to nature.

Not only does Quatremere’s theory create a racial hierarchy of styles, but also it denigrates styles that are typologically different from classical ones as inferior and impure. Quatremere sees classical style as predicated on the imitation of carpentry, as this tectonic quality of being both “light” and solid” allowed for perfection in elevations and proportions. In a historicist manner, he purports that carpentry paved the way for architecture to be elevated to the level of art, and that if a society could trace its tectonic origins through stone back to timber, they would be of a higher culture. Stone, according the Quatremere, could only copy the qualities of timber, and in doing so would be enriched by their imitative material quality that invoked the path along which Nature directed primitive man to construct the rustic hut. On the other hand, the Egyptians, in not being truly democratic and in their use of stone that copies nothing but itself, created art that is “cold, monotonous and insipid” (Quatremere 30). In short, it was the liberal Greek society that allowed for art to flourish, and thus they must be imitated: “It was without a doubt, only up to the Greeks to discern the degree of liberty which was agreeable to architecture, and gave to it this happy constitution, equally far from the license of Asia and the despotism of Egypt,” writes Quatremere. The Ancient Greeks achieved an imitation of nature by depicting the body, and in doing so have elevated their styles (the Doric being Man and the Ionic being Woman) based on the white body to harmonious perfection. This is to say: the Greeks were beautiful and we are descended from them, the Egyptians are not and thus we are not descended from them, a violent history which can be read all over the Western world in architectural style.
One can compound this derivation of stylistic beauty based on phenotype from other social scientists operating in the 18th century who sought to classify humans based on a superiority of races. Johann Joachim Winckelmann comes to mind in his influence of establishing the superiority of Ancient Greek art, informing other Western European thinkers. In corroborating and deconstructing the progression of art history in Western Europe, one can begin to understand how the canonization of classical style was configured by what it isn’t. Rather, it is predicated on how white bodies are beautiful (and subsequently the art which imitated it), and those nonwhite in this hierarchy (the Egyptians) were anything but beautiful. Therefore, Egyptian style had no history and could not continue to evolve, so to speak. For instance, take the important theory of Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc that purported that the human body is the primary “metaphor for style in architecture” (Davis 341). Viollet-le-Duc took French architectural theory at the time, which had already established the imitation of the proportions of the body in architectural style (column into Doric as man and Ionic as woman) to a theoretical standpoint on which “emulation of the body’s processes of formation paralleled the analytic import of race types in the natural sciences” (Davis 342). Just as Linnaean categories “attempted to arrange mankind in certain varieties by means of their external characters,” (Davis 342) so too did Viollet-le-Duc purport that the sense of style of a work of art issues from the organic development of the race: “the work of art must issue forth out of their intelligence; the work of art must arise in embryonic state in keeping with their possession of the faculty of reasoning” (Davis 342). According to Charles Davis, Viollet-le-Duc’s architectural theory is consistent with the findings of race science at the time. Davis demonstrates how Johann Friedrich Blumenbach’s belief that “inner teleology continued to direct physical development through its life cycle” corresponds to Viollet Le duc’s notion that “race was also a perfect harmony between the results obtained (race types) and the means employed (formative forces)
to achieve them” (Davis 343). And so, the styles of French classical architecture, obviously superior based on its historical development, were based on the supremacy of Greek Culture and its forms (Davis 343). Following Davis further, in the interpretation of the primitive myth “lay the relationship between inherent racial instincts and the historical development of primitive culture” (Davis 344). Per Viollet-le-Duc, the climate of Europe that surrounded the primitive hut “conditioned the response of the primitive Aryans” in their architecture, expressing nature’s creative forces. Through historical development, the Aryan would replace carpentry with stone (consistent with Quatremere), guided by the same teleological processes that internally guided racial forces making some superior over others, according to Europeans (Davis 344-45). It is in this history of colonization and otherness does the notion of classical beauty arise, cementing itself into canon.

In not acknowledging its racist history, New Urbanist theory of promotion of neoclassicism takes on an entirely new meaning with the perpetuation of violence in styles of white bodies over those non-white. Jill Grant writes in her book on New Urbanism about how style, and what was regarded as architecturally beautiful, is not only predicated on a whiteness that evolved in Europe, but also was utilized historically with purposes of submission: “New Urbanism takes a selective look at history, drawing its lessons primarily from the classical traditions of the Greeks, Romans, and Europeans... The Greeks and Romans, and later the colonizing Europeans nations, built planned settlements as a way of achieving individual or imperial ambitions... classical principles served the interests of power. Urban form became a vehicle for conditioning submission” (Grant, 9). Further, seminal New Urbanist architect Leon Krier similarly sought to emulate and imitate these classical styles, coopting socialist language, as a means of reincorporating democracy back into urban form: “As Krier wrote in 1978, this movement sought to reinforce the rationalism of the enlightenment” writes Grant in criticism of
Krier (Grant 52). One needs not look further to understand how New Urbanists promote a whitewashing of a violent period of colonialism that was based on the submission of the non-white world to European colonial powers, during which the superiority of their styles was established as standard. This myopic vision of cultural hegemony on why we prefer classical columns seems to run contrary to true equality that New Urbanists purport, creating a fabrication of what is perfection out of whiteness.

To summarize, as Gayatri Spivak points out, the phenomenon of the primitive hut continues to be something touched on in self interest in the West: “the West turns to the primitive only in order to manage its heterogeneity and to confirm and enrich its own identity” (Cairns 87). The idea of the primitive hut cannot be broached, as “to broach the primitive is to raise fundamental questions about architecture itself,” tying the notion of primitive back to Till’s ideas of questioning architectural hegemony (Cairns 90). Doing so would require a reevaluation of all of architectural history through a lens on which beauty in the classical sense is configured by a sense of both superiority to the other (the architecture without the artist, the primitive, savage dwelling) and the fact that what is to be considered good architecture or the good society inherently relies upon the notion that there must be an inferior, other culture’s beauty. This complacency can be seen in New Urbanist text: in seminal theoretical essays, one can see the parallels between New Urbanist thinking and the myth of the primitive man from which good or beautiful architecture and cities are built:

“In the American urban tradition, the cutting of a grid is the first presence of urban structure in the landscape. In this act of making a place, space is allocated for both public and private use - for buildings and for open spaces. Shaping this void in the city is an act of democratic responsibility. A plan is laid down by a governing body regulating private and public
initiatives in the construction of its parts. Public bodies, citizens and entrepreneurs slowly generate streets, squares and parks. Single buildings incrementally introduced into blocks eventually determine the character of the open spaces. It is at this most elemental scale, every day in a myriad of fleeting and poignant moments, that architecture and urbanism define each other. This very simple American city-making model has been virtually abandoned in recent years.” xxi

This quote, pulled from an essay on the Street, Block and Building by Elizabeth Moule and Stefanos Polyzoides in the Charter for the New Urbanism, can be read in a similar critical manner to Quatremere’s or Laugier’s use of the primitive in configuring beautiful art. Here too does a divine, teleological process guide the American, uniting landed citizens in a democratic manner in order to develop what is traditionally the good society. Nowhere in New Urbanist theory does the notion of colonialism factor into the determination of the character of spaces, nor does the notion that the wilderness out of which the traditional American city sprung and conquered wasn’t always wilderness. Wilderness is the other to the city, another artificial construct that configures what is urban and what isn’t. New Urbanist theory embraces tradition in the historical sense without acknowledging the violent and racist past on which this material precondition of the city was built.

Moule and Polyzoides go on to describe individual building form and fabric, ultimately conveying that the dialectic between building and street is paramount. It is in emphasizing the public nature of the street that architecture finds a purpose, but in form must relate to its surroundings in order to form a cohesive, navigable environment (think Kevin Lynch). For the New Urbanist, the building is not an object but an important factor in contributing to place and space, and must be designed in consideration of historical styles and regional characteristics
compounded by their intended uses. It is building type, monumental or fabric, which defines style, “organized by reference to dwelling, employment or institutional uses” (Leccese and McCormick xxiii). This is almost as if to say that there exists a historicism in which a society will reach through development - in other words, the perfect form of society as realized in the city, towards which a demos is always moving, some ahead than others. In this case, the United States before modernism, in essence the yeoman and Jeffersonian ideal, was this peak in the beautiful society, and just as the Greeks and Romans were to be emulated by the neoclassical Europeans, so too must this society be emulated by contemporary planning and architectural practices.

Nowhere in New Urbanist text is there reference to the means of slave production on which this preindustrial agrarian society was built. Nothing is new with New Urbanist theory; it merely repackages pre-existing ideas as visionary and idealistic. For instance, in criticizing the functionality of modernist planning, a New Urbanist might lament how this led to extensive zoning regulation, which has impeded “natural” suburbs, while encouraging suburbs without character. The same New Urbanist would then go on to explain how lots would be zoned based on building type, still governed from a pattern book and regulated extensively in setback and architectural detail. All of this in order to realize an invigoration of suburban architecture, the purpose being to “force greater attention to detail” (Leccese and McCormick, xxxv). The politics have been removed from architecture, leaving in its wake empty symbolism.

In the section underneath Neighborhood one can find a chapter written by Bill Lennertz on the importance of urban design codes. Its evident in this chapter how New Urbanist invoke a normativity in the urban environment, seeking to regiment order and social control through architecture: “one underpinning of the New Urbanism is the compatibility of building types - or buildings with the same relative mass, height and architectural styles, regardless of their uses” (Leccese and McCormick 109). New Urbanists believe in the extent to which social control and
wellbeing can be purveyed through what they deem to be good design, even going as far as to say that they seek to design prescriptive codes based on histories of evolving colloquial styles. Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk has said that she seeks to design codes so that streets “feel and act a certain way,” which I interpret as suburban and private. Further, New Urbanists do not seek to abolish codes, covenants and restrictions established by private governments in the name of homeowners associations, but to leverage their way into the negotiating process so that their needs are met in shaping urban environments. Only the New Urbanists are capable of designing what is to be the good society, as they haven’t “lost track of how collectively to construct a proper public realm” (Lecesse and McCormick 125). No different than Laugier depicting his rules to proper architecture based on inspiration from classical models, so too do the New Urbanists seek to enforce their rules: “setbacks imply that buildings are perceived... as sculptural objects. Build-to-lines... make buildings parts of larger ensembles defining the public realm” (Leccese and McCormick 126). The extent to which New Urbanists seek to realize their elitist image of what a good society and urban fabric can be is appalling in how it utterly lacks self-consciousness.

“The architecture of our time is dominated by obsessively self-referential, isolated projects.... They endeavor to express in stylistic terms the mood of a cultural instant when they were designed and built,” writes Polyzoides in the Charter, in intent attempting to attack modernist architecture as removed from, and thus at bouts with, context (Lecesse and McCormick 127). Similarly to Lewis Mumford, Polyzoides argues that the architecture of time induces chaos, whereas the architecture of place, as separate from time, induces harmony. In doing so, the New Urbanist guides the builder and architect to understand what design already exists in context, to which they should reference, as opposed to pursuing avant-garde design options. In short, the New Urbanist respects the traditions of the pre-industrial society, towards
which they seek to design environments in resemblance. Polyzoides even goes as far as to say that he wants his architecture to be “timeless,” evoking language or subjection and domination through the control of public space through style and fabric (Lecesse and McCormick 132).

The language of control and submission continues into the next chapter, in which Ray Gindroz writes about defensible space as safe, ordered space. Gindroz advocates for design that is outwards facing to the street, creating defensible space to both the front and rear axes so that a stranger would know whether or not they are welcome based on the presence or ability for others to watch them. “Traditional building types and spaces offer more than architectural form; they also coincide with how our society works. If we follow traditional principles of public and private domain - front yard, back yard (etc.), we will avoid trouble,” writes Gindroz, writing in blunt language about the society that a New Urbanist envisions (Lecesse and McCormick 137). In following tradition, as in the colonial order of spaces based, trouble will be avoided. Avoiding trouble by creating public spaces that are to be defended not only seeks to bring suburban mindsets into cities, but also envisions a society in which people are afraid of difference and diversity. New Urbanist architectural code caters to whiteness in its built environment to encourage the further racialization of space.

Once described as having “porch police,” Celebration displays a pattern book of architectural elements that not only depict human present on the street but also reflect a history of spatial practice determined by economic realities. Colonnades, arcades, and other vernacular moves reference and point to some of the notions put forward by Fredric Jameson in his essay The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. In this essay Jameson references how pre-modernist designs are as of recent decades so inflated and reproduced to the point that one is overwhelmed in absorbing the reproduction of high art that contradicts the minimalism of modernist design. In essence, “aesthetic production today has become integrated into
commodity production generally,” that is to say, Celebration is to be consumed, and in order to maintain its aura of novelty in an age of endless innovation, it must look to past eras in order to appropriate their aesthetics and configure them into a nostalgia (Jameson 5). The lack of depth that the surface speaks to can be seen in the fake chimneys, the blacked-out but inaccessible spaces underneath porches, and required shades that cover all street-ward facing porch windows, privileging appearance without essence. Similarly, it is easy to see Jameson’s notion of pastiche in the pattern books of Celebration: “the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style” is built upon and compounded in its mandated house styles, similar enough to resurrect a dead language while also severing any connection to their significance in their “over stimulating ensemble” of nostalgia (Jameson 17, 19). In summary, the “history of aesthetic styles displaces ‘real’ history,” which is nowhere to be found (Jameson 20).

Douglas Kellner poses the question of the extent to which postmodern is dominant in western society, as Jameson purports in his classic essay. Kellner asks: is postmodernism a truly dominant manifestation of late capitalism’s tendencies, or is it merely an “emergent” form of culture that only arises holistically in “certain groups and social sectors but which is not yet a dominant for any society as a whole” (Kellner 29). New Urbanism and its theory and practice, as exemplified both in entirely private developments (Seaside, Celebration) or in public and civic developments (Kentlands, Park DuValle), can be read as a form of spatial manipulation that has crept into hegemony not only based on its necessity (sustainability) but on the development of late capitalism as dissolving subject altogether in its historical march towards crisis. It takes cognitive mapping, per Lynch, and incorporates time as a dimension by which space and society can be mapped, projecting onto public spaces a history of domination in a manner contradictory with environmental participatory justice. However, as Robert Tally Jr. postulates in his criticism on Jameson, postmodernism necessitates a hollowing out of images of the past, constantly
refashioning them to fit current conditions, in effect creating the “nostalgia for the present” (Tally Jr. 93). It is in this privileged perspective of ironic embrace of classical symbolism that whiteness pervades, masquerading its aesthetics as the “good society” while eliminating any room for alternatives or dissent in regards to atavistic anachronisms that has no meaning whatsoever.

One can further explore the problems with New Urbanist theory in examining the writings of Walter Benjamin, specifically in regards to his essay The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. “That which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art” writes Benjamin, eventually ending at war and fascisms as the products of rendering politics into aesthetics (Benjamin 221, 241). While that reading might be a little extreme in this case, and while similarly it may be easy to accuse New Urbanists of evoking fascism in the built environment, what is important to note is that any aura of authenticity described by New Urbanists in theory is lost in its constant reproduction, generating truly hollow suburbs in place of authentic ones that would endow such aura. In this hollowing out by rendering it into nostalgia to consume the inauthenticity renders itself concrete without acknowledging the continuation of prescription of Jeffersonian ideals that purport the propertied, white male as the dominant citizen.

One also does not need to conduct in depth readings of New Urbanist principles realized in planning to understand how racist it can be when it is applied at the planning scale. New Urbanist development projects have been argued to be assimilationist, seeking to enforce an order on space through architectural style and arrangement of space. “New urbanism offers a normative vision that Talen believes planning requires,” writes Grant on this normativity, even going as far as to point that New Urbanists promote gentrification through dispersing poverty (Grant 73). Some would even say that New Urbanists cater to a very specific niche of urban elite,
disregarding the history of real estate that has configured urban environments as so.

In fact, “few new urbanist projects have proven affordable,” points out Grant in her criticism of New Urbanism. In Seaside and Celebration, no such affordable housing was included, and the New Urbanist policy of dispersing poverty through HOPE VI destroys more affordable housing than it creates. This begs the question of who is truly benefitting from Hope VI developments: those who might move up the socioeconomic ladder through assimilation into the middle class, or the developers of such market driving housing and those who own property around such developers? Andres Duany, key architect to the New Urbanist movement, has often argued in favor of gentrification, encouraging planners to seek routes of gentrification as means of pumping hope into neighborhoods (Grant 189). This utter discrepancy in the social values in New Urbanist text and practice are apparent in Celebration, a town in which there is no planning vision beyond residential and commercial. Celebration caters to a very specific demographic with a meager range of uses. Further, one can read indirect environmental racism in the use of defensible space theory in Celebration: “New urbanism seeks to operationalize the panopticon as Foucault explains it, creating spaces in which everyone believes that someone may be watching, and adjust their behavior accordingly,” writes Grant, evoking Jacobs’ notion of Eyes on the Street which endow safety onto a neighborhood.

New Urbanist aesthetics have been repackaged to bring suburban sprawl into cities, serving private developers that seek to extract the capital available in public housing markets through real estate development. This turns landscapes of public space into private ones, evident in the New Urbanist HOPE VI public housing development Park DuValle in Louisville, Kentucky. A primary component of New Urbanist planning is attracting private investment and high-income residents through design practices, which “necessitates the physical redevelopment of a public housing site into an architecturally appealing and marketable product” (Hanlon 82).
What this effect of mixed-finance objectives is to focus on the physical, environmental aspects of sustainability endowed in New Urbanism and skirt around the social and economic aspects that are briefly and shallowly alluded to in New Urbanist Theory. Hanlon summarizes: by revoking HUD’s “one for one” rule of replacing public housing units in New Urbanist developments in 1996 in conjunction with the inclusion and goal of attracting high income residents have in effect decreased on a new scale the number of public housing apartments available, and tangentially, public spaces within the metropolis. This, as pointed out again by Hanlon, who states that this trend represents David Harvey’s notion of the shift in urban governance from managerialism to entrepreneurialism, exemplified by the partnership of public and private sources in creating stakeholders.

The effects of this private/public partnership that arranges itself and spaces to meet the needs and demands of capital investment are on showcase in Celebration and Seaside, as planned as anti-urban, self-policed and self-selected utopian communities of privilege. In their assimilationist approach to disappearing poverty, or simply excluding it in the first place, New Urbanists promote self-policing so that the poor who might be lucky enough to find themselves embedded within a suburban, middle-class enclave will begin to emulate their peers, destroying diversity as opposed to celebrating it.

Celebration and Seaside, both homogenous, wealthy communities, have made no attempts at diversity, catering to defensible private space in their planning. Both have no affordable housing, and the sense of community so carefully crafted by designers contains no true aspects of sustainability. Seaside, designed in the Beaux Arts style with its focus on rational geometry of public space has seen rapid real estate inflation in property values, with homes selling for hundreds of thousands of dollars (Grant 83). Celebration, with its “plastic columns and faux windows,” only had a “handful of black residents,” move in initially, a trend which has
continued: its website officially declaring this percentage as 1.5% of the population (Grant 187). These two examples of New Urbanist deployment display the normative vision that New Urbanists have: Emily Talen, pioneering New Urbanist with a focus on planning believes that “designers trained in an understanding of a good urban form should identify the better principles for citizens” (Grant 72). This blatant elitism contradicts all notions of environmental justice in both the distributive and the participatory senses. In essence, the architect and their financiers are in the driver’s seat of shaping cities and public spaces, allowing a huge margin for environmental injustice to persist in urban planning. New Urbanism is merely a continuation of modernist planning as the power lies in the expert and their vision and not the people whose spaces they are destroying.

Chapter 6 - New Urbanism Inspired Urban Design Initiatives

Since its conception, New Urbanism has evolved based on feedback to become the more widely accepted Smart Growth movement. The most successful aspects of its theory and practice, for instance Transit Oriented Design, designing along the transect, neotraditionalism and focus on the street as public, pedestrian space, were consolidated and repurposed under a lens that was configured by city and regional economics. The product of such feedback-oriented systemic change was Smart Growth, an arguably more equitable, realistic and sustainable model and paradigm for design, from the scale of architecture to regional urban planning. However, this research project considers New Urbanism as its own, independent movement and the
circumstances and politics around its inception that have persevered. New Urbanist as it coalesced can be argued to represent the physical and material manifestation of the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. Not only in how successful aspects have been rebranded as Smart Growth is it apparent that it was a theoretical movement symbolizing abstract neoliberal policies, but its dissolution into sustainable urban design discourse represents just how tenacious its policy was in writing itself into the socioeconomic fabric of urban political ecology as it existed as global cities emerged. With that being said, though, some would argue that the action on behalf of sustainability is better than no action at all, with good reason. New Urbanist lifestyle centers market themselves as trendy, desirable places to live, attracting homogenous, affluent suburban dwellers in the same manner that Seaside and Celebration self-selected their populations. Any action that gets those who would normally be living in single family homes with multiple cars into dense, urban-like housing networks that consolidate infrastructure is better than no action whatsoever, and so should not be in the ire of non-proactive criticism. However, in New Urbanism one can read neoliberalism in its necessity of hierarchy and inequality, and its perpetuation acts as an engine of late capitalism flexible accumulation.

An exemplary deployment of this inequality that tends to benefit those at the expense of those socioeconomically beneath them is the Park Duvalle HOPE VI public housing project in Louisville, Kentucky. It is in this project that the federal government’s promotion of aspects of the normalization of New Urbanism into sustainable urban design is most salient. The de-concentration of poverty from its consolidation in public housing and subsequent erasure in the adoption of suburban aesthetics not only maintains the illusion that “social engineering” can solve poverty and bring about the good society, but seemingly it also reveals its neoconservative leanings in its lack of self-awareness for similarity to paradigms in modernist housing theory (Hanlon 83).
Park Duvalle is no different in plastic appearance from other New Urbanist deployments: it exhibits a place-sensitive design complimented by regional northeastern residential design styles (craftsmen's, colonials, Victorians), winding, Olmstead-like boulevards and street wards-focused facades with standard setbacks (Hanlon 84). However, what is particularly noteworthy of this example are the dynamics behind the redevelopment process and subsequently those effects on the residents who had dwelled in the public housing project that existed before, Cotter-Lang. Hanlon points out on his study on the transition of Cotter-Lang into a HOPE VI project that only 75 of the original residents were readmitted for Park DuValle, with over 400 former Cotter-Lang households being relocated without assistance and were ultimately unaccounted for. Hanson notes that in Louisville, 2/3rds of renters with incomes less than $20,000 qualify for housing assistance, and almost all of Cotter-Lang’s households were among that population (Hanlon 89). Again, one can see the strict re-admittance policies of HOPE VI projects compounded with the lack of creation of equal housing opportunities as ultimately hurting those in society who are in the most need.

The criteria for Park Duvallle as following:
- No lease violations within last three years
- No late payments within last year
- Met all housekeeping inspections within last three years
- Head of household must either be employed or a full-time student
- All members of household (at least 18 years old) must pass criminal record checks.

Regulations like these cut off much of the population that had previously dwelled in public housing projects in favor of assimilating those most well off into a hard to define middle class. Further, one could consider that they aren’t ultimately geared at helping those who are readmitted, but as posturing and appearance in order to attract more affluent residents to the
population by removing visible signs of poverty (Hanlon, 90). Further, along the lines of posturing, it is worth noting that along Algonquin Parkway, a route designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, are the most New-Urbanist neotraditional buildings, filtering out from the public eye portions of the development that are not “cut from the same cloth of New Urbanism” (Hanlon 91). To quote Hanlon on how New Urbanism has spread into mainstream sustainable urban design: “The aestheticization of HOPE VI revitalization conceals the human cost of its implementation. Park DuValle’s success, and indeed that of any HOPE VI project that is carried out as the program intends, is predicated upon physical transformation. Where HOPE VI is successful, it is successful above all by design” (Hanlon 93). In essence, HOPE VI is a galvanization of neoliberal gentrification by physical transformation of blighted neighborhoods into cozy, prosperous and private suburban eco-villages. Nowhere is structural adjustment targeted that seeks to get at and eliminate the persistence of poverty.

Contemporary sustainable design initiatives exhibit the normativity of neotraditionalism by catering to a sense of nostalgia and aura for a pre-modernist period that is better suited to fit the U.S. average consumer. They reconfigure the public realm into private, divided control, exemplified in the theory of Oscar Newman, and can be seen similarly to how traditional suburbs developed, such as Levitt-Towns based on production capabilities. Neoliberal policy coupled with New Urbanist theory has further commodified public space into owned space not only in the name of safety but also in the name of sustainability as form-based codes have become culturally dominant. From the Congress for New Urbanism’s connections to federally sponsored urban development in the United States to regional and city-level influence in the Smart Growth Manual, place-based approaches to plastic manipulation of aesthetics have become the battleground for sustainability in contemporary urban landscapes. Reinhold Martin Summarizes well in the Art of Inequality of how the ball is in the private sector’s court in regards
to promoting further public housing development: the private sector has become to only acceptable source of funding, and thus appearance of public housing is indistinguishable from market-rate housing. In effect, code and policy are changed to entice private development of public housing, offering precious commodities in the form of real estate for the concessions of meeting density bonuses and inclusionary zoning for prescribing certain percentages of housing being “affordable” (a term that gets rid of the stigma by merely not acknowledging it, removing the lexicon entirely from public discourse – Martin 71). In the end, it is private management that gets to decide who gets to stay and who has to go, which one could argue is configured by a larger market but in fact is a tool embedded within contemporary urban political landscapes to enforce hierarchy through real estate.

As fallacious as modernism is in prescribing its values as a cure for the social blight wrought by previous hegemony in design and planning, New-Urbanism can be considered a continuation of the same environmental injustices that racked modernist planning. New Urbanism merely repackages plastic aesthetic representations of the good society as one that is controlled top-down, leaving very little room for interpretation in the non-homogenous environments that it seeks to determine. New Urbanism, in promoting diverse communities that celebrate “traditional values,” in fact spread a nostalgic vision for an elitist and racist period in United States history, believing in environmental determinism as prescribed through distributive injustice as to how space is imagined, configured and used. This can be seen on a citywide level in Cleveland, as the City Planning Commission moves towards a form-based zoning code that New Urbanists promote. This also can be seen in the Opportunity Corridor development, a Transit Oriented Design initiative that seeks to economically rejuvenate an area in Kinsman by connecting the end of I-490 to University circle with a new roadway.

Just as Broken Windows policing was predicated on the notion that the disappearance of
visual blight signified a safer community, so too does New Urbanist inspired design rely on visual signs as an indicator for “solving the structural and social problems facing black Americans” (Knoblauch 2). As Joy Knoblauch points out in her essay on the merits and problems with Defensible Space Theory, she notes that Newman’s theory similarly purported that a dilapidated environment does not inspire self-policing, or that individuals should care about their space and therefore not feel territorially inclined to defend against intruders and neighbors alike (Knoblauch 5). The difference, though, between Defensible Space theory and New Urbanist thinking that it influenced is in intention: while neither are mal-intentioned towards environmental, Defensible Space theory was about preserving open society, eliminating bystanders of a homogenous population through self-policing. In interpretation, though, visual privacy and the aesthetics of architecturally defined spaces have “yielded a private, gated world that has not decreased fear or increased trust” (Knoblauch 7). This trend of spatial intervention continues in sustainable urban design projects by endowing the aesthetics of suburban privacy into public housing and resilient spaces.

In the Forgotten Triangle, and its stylized Opportunity Corridor redevelopment plan, the Ohio Department of Transportation has promoted and is carrying out a project that envisions that area not as one that can attract individuals and development dollars through an attractive highway. Nowhere in the plan is land-use reconsidered, or the root of the problems that plague the area addressed. Instead, the project moves forward with little consideration of whether or not benefits to the neighborhood will actually come. How these effects will spread outwards has simultaneously been neglected.

*Smart Growth promotes the design options of New Urbanism, but adds government policy and incentives to accommodate and encourage growth. If the population keeps growing, as the
smart growth advocates insists it must, and materials consumed per person keep increasing as they seem to do, then how can we hope for sustainable cities? At some point, we will exhaust non-renewable resources” -Jill Grant 191

Chapter 7 - Neoliberalism and its Application in Sustainable Urban Design Initiatives

“A design movement that places shopping facilities at the heart of the neighborhood, as a ‘village center’ for people to meet each other and create community bonds, suits the times. The community becomes the ultimate commodity of the consumer society”

It is fitting that New Urbanism's first design projects, namely Seaside and Celebration, were utopian development projects in previously untouched wilderness. Being privately financed, the design catered to the developer’s whim, creating a microcosm of wealth that reimagined a time in which spatial segregation was law. More fitting, DPZ, key architectural firm to the movement, had one of their first design projects considered New Urbanist to be the redevelopment of a shopping mall on Cape Cod. Mashpee Commons was intended to rejuvenate the town economically in a part of Massachusetts that was entirely dependent economically on seasonal tourist travel through the area. Trends become apparent in New Urbanist development: initially capital driven, their aesthetics benefit few while displacing many, leaving many deluded in the process.

New Urbanist practices being used as savior-like design interventions has reformulated what urban renewal means in the United States, often predicated on the same notion that urban
renewal was built upon in the 60s: in a similar vein to how cities sought to entice wealthy residents back from the suburbs, so too do cities now need to seem trendy and vibrant as products in order to attract the “creative class”. They are competing for these educated laborers who would choose from a number of global cities in the geographical network in which said city is embedded. Philadelphia, Boston, New York and even Washington D.C. all compete for similar businesses and labor, from one perspective through policy but another through developing their urban environment to cater to a certain image. More acutely, Cleveland and Pittsburgh compete for labor and businesses, each being configured by the policy that restricts but differentiates their businesses climates across state borders. Just as Hough was razed decades ago to entice federal aid to come to Cleveland, so too is Cleveland now attempting to redevelop. Its image and place making has been taken to another level: Public Square has been redesigned by prominent architecture firm James Corner Field Operations, The Arcade has been reopened under private ownership as a hotel, and LeBron James has taken to producing a television show in order to promote neighborhood entrepreneurship.

As Reinhold Martin points out in *The Art of Inequality*, the model that New Urbanism came up with for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has become entrenched across all levels of public redevelopment. “The urban design and architectural paradigm articulated by the Congress of the New Urbanism was linked to the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)’s initiative to promote a real-estate model that minimized, on the surface, direct public involvement in housing, and instead prioritized private financing, ownership, and management of mixed-income housing,” writes Martin, succinctly depicting now neoliberalism now governs the public realm (page?). This is particularly pertinent to Cleveland, where the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority has placed the revitalization and redevelopment of public housing in the hands of private developers. For instance, take
Riverview Towers, a public housing apartment building built in Ohio City in the 1960s. The building has become so decrepit that public outcry has emerged in regards to the city’s inability to maintain and repair the property: the elderly get stuck in elevators, the building lacks air conditioning, and the property is slowly sliding into the Cuyahoga river valley below (Walsh, Naymik). With that being said, the CMHA in the past decade received a grant from HUD as part of HOPE VI in order to redevelop the property and the surrounding area’s vacant buildings along Detroit Avenue as one of the few HOPE VI grants that the city has received. After jumping through numerous bureaucratic hoops, the CMHA was awarded $12.4 million in HOPE VI funds for the project, and the design consulting firm Goody Clancy and Associates was awarded a contract to study the feasibility to renovating and redesigning the space. One resident has called the design firm’s charrettes aimed at integrating public opinion “charades,” while the director of the CMHA has gone on record to reveal some of the insidious mechanisms driving the project: the grant proposal initially only included a “ten percent low income component” and a “ten percent moderate income component” (Naymik). With some of the best views of downtown, Riverview is a contested property, one prime for private development. The city lacks the initiative and the funds to redevelop it for the sake of maintaining and committing to public housing, and only the private market can fill that void. “Our mission is to do affordable housing, not market-rate. But there are some economic realities here,” then-CMHA director Terri Hamilton-Brown said in a public meeting around the time that redevelopment plans were shaping up (Naymik). In response, Cleveland City Council Member Joe Cimperman of Ward 3 retorted that “60 percent” is the place to start for low-income designation.

Playing out in this drama are numerous global network factors described by Martin. First, that the goals of affordable housing developing in the name of benefitting the public realm cannot be reconciled with private-for-profit development return on investment goals. Secondly,
one can also see the spatial realities of displacement, in which those kicked out would receive section 8 vouchers to apply to rent from private landlords elsewhere, testing the water so to speak as undesirable tenants (Martin, 70-72). In essence, New Urbanism relates to neoliberalism in that its spatial and formal visions correlate with what society has conflated with the white spatial imaginary to be the good society, leading the two to become irrevocably intertwined.

One can read other aspects of neoliberalism in theory that would be influential to New Urbanist thinking in Oscar Newman’s *Defensible Space Theory*: in the sense that public space needs to be divided into private space in order to make it safe, rationalized by a notion of an inherent in all middle and lower class people the desire to escape into the suburbs. In a staunch support of suburbanism, Newman writes in his chapter on the Capacity of the Physical Environment to Create Perceived Zones of Territorial Influences: “By its very nature, the single-family house is its own statement of territorial claim. It has defined ownership by the very act of its positioning on an integral piece of land buffered from neighbors and public street by intervening grounds... reinforced by symbolic shrubs or fences” (Newman, 51). To Newman, the good community is one in which one segregates population into community and intruder, based on the prospect of owning landscaped real estate. Earlier, Newman writes “the well-off citizen, by isolating himself in a secure fortress, by restricting his own ventures into the streets and by demanding authority assume all responsibility for ensuring the safety of the streets, has effectively set the stage for the defeat of his own demands” (Newman 15). In providing room for his theory to be interpreted both in the sake of promoting suburbia while simultaneously attacking it leaves it open to interpretation and reincorporation into what can be deemed good design, as seen in New Urbanist principles.

In the same way that Jane Jacobs promoted eyes on the street, so too does Newman. The issue though, is what if there aren’t enough eyes in the first place? What happens in a
neighborhood like Kinsman that has consistently been dropping population, in which people truly don’t want redevelopment or help from those who abandoned their neighborhood? Inherently lies here both the stigma and isolation of the urban poor, who are to be saved by extrinsic forces of good design and private investment that will negate the effects of broken windows policing. So too does New Urbanism work to “emphasize the public realm of the street,” setting it as a space for intervention that would either reinforce the positive feedback loop of modernist planning and thus broken windows policing or suburbanization and subsequently gentrification (Martin, 70).

Streetscapes are critical to real estate property evaluation, something that New Urbanists understand, and have resolved to build place out of un-place all across the country. In Ohio City and Tremont, one sees signs and walkways elaborating the point that one is now in their respective neighborhood, hoping to entice high income residents back in in the search of authenticity among unique spaces and artsy boutiques and craft breweries. “The urban fabric, with its multiple networks of communication and exchange, is part of the means of production. The city and its various installations are part of capital,” Writes Lefebvre on capitalist space, indicating broadly how spaces can be reproduced globally or regionally. Here, the state is ensuring its uniform control of space by allowing private investment to govern form and spatial appearance, and thus social relations that result and embody that means of consumption. Space is “pulverized” into private property, creating a contradiction of “center/periphery” (as pointed out by Lefebvre), which is constantly and dynamically shifting based on network flows. In doing so, the governing body decrees what is good space (New Urbanism) and what is bad space (modernism, urban environments). It is in this contradiction that economics have merged with politics (Lefebvre 190).
Chapter 8 – Analysis: What’s going on? Is all of this apparent and happening in Cleveland? What historically were these spaces like? How are they changing according to spatial imaginaries?

In this section I analyze three sites that display aspects of sustainability in their missions in order to understand where and how New Urbanist aesthetics are present. This list is as follows: Tremont Pointe, a HOPE VI housing project in the Tremont neighborhood, HUB 55, a mixed-use food oriented development in the St. Clair Superior neighborhood, and the Opportunity Corridor, a master plan for redeveloping a neighborhood known locally as the Forgotten Triangle in Southern Cleveland. At each project I have conducted site visits, walking through and around each neighborhood taking photographs of the developments. I sought to experience how the projects fit in with the fabric of the neighborhood (or alternatively, how the neighborhood has changed to blend with their images). I have paid particular attention to the borders and edges of these projects, how they fit relatively into their contexts, and in some cases, spoken firsthand with community members and stakeholders on their perspectives on each development.

I chose these three projects from a larger list of sustainable urban design initiatives as they focus on different aspects of sustainability on different urban scales. First, Tremont Pointe is at the block scale, encapsulating a portion of an entire neighborhood. It is an example of how the city of Cleveland is progressing its public housing, indicating the level to which the city takes sustainability at the residential level seriously. Secondly, I chose HUB 55 for its focus on food-related commercial aspects of sustainability. St. Clair / Superior has been considered a
“food desert,” and Hub 55 is an interesting development in that it attempts to spearhead sustainable initiatives in a neighborhood by acting as a role model for other commercial developments in the area. Lastly, I chose the Opportunity Corridor because it broaches sustainability on the scale of an entire neighborhood, not just block or building, sizing up in scope according to New Urbanist planning. It shows the ability (or lack thereof) to integrate successfully different levels and scales of sustainability across many different spaces within the same place.

I chose these three projects not only for their different characteristics but also for their geographies relative to each other. Cleveland is a very segregated city (even self-described for that matter), and each project could create a window into racially charged aspects of urban planning and design, shedding light onto whether or not sustainability in these projects is gauged along the triple bottom line. Tremont, in which Tremont Pointe is located, is historically a European ethnic enclave, but has recently been experiencing gentrification. HUB 55, also historically a European ethnic enclave, is located between downtown and East Cleveland, sandwiched between an Asian ethnic enclave and the predominantly African American East Cleveland. Lastly, The Opportunity Corridor is located to the south of Central Cleveland and the Hough Neighborhood. It is an area that has historically been the victim of racial prejudice and violence against its predominantly African American population. I hope that in choosing these three projects I gain an accurate cross section into the different aspects and means by which Cleveland is pursuing sustainability, and neoliberalism and New Urbanism are affecting space and place in the contemporary urban landscape.

**Tremont**

Census tracts: 1039, 1041, 1042, 1043, 1044, 1046, and 1048
Tremont on Cleveland’s near-west side is bounded on the north and east sides by the Cuyahoga River and Harvard Ave. to the south. The neighborhood was founded in the settlement and development of Cleveland University in the area in 1850, led by reverend and former Oberlin College President Asa Mahan. Folding after five years, the legacy of the college and streets named in scholarly manners (i.e. “College Ave., Literacy Rd., Professor St.”) left a spatial legacy, as its buildings were recycled for other civic uses such as academics or hospitals. The neighborhood had different names, such as University Hts., until the Tremont School was built in 1910. Due to its proximity to industry in the Cuyahoga Valley, it became a settlement for immigrants, including those of Irish and German descent in the 1860s, Polish in the 1890s, and Greeks and Syrians in the 1900s. More recently, the neighborhood has been home to a significant Puerto-Rican population and is peppered by a variety of churches and cathedrals of different theologies. Due to the disappearance of industry and a run-down housing stock, the neighborhood fell into decay due to its geographical isolation, losing more than 2/3rds of its population by 1980 (Van Tassel).

Valleymview Homes was one of the first public housing projects to be both built and managed by the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority. Built in 1939 overlooking the Cuyahoga valley in southern Tremont, the project initially consisted of two-story brick buildings, “barrack-style,” and is recognized as one of the oldest public-housing estates in the country. Initial features consisted of a craft shop, a community center and playgrounds, in addition to numerous works done by local artists commissioned by the Works Progress Administration (Rottman). Demonstrating the power of institutional racism welded by planning officials at the city level, Valleymview remained segregated until 1970, despite the 1949 ban on racial discrimination in public housing (Rottman). Further compounding the power of planning, the city
could not collect enough revenue to maintain upkeep, and being dependent on federal money in order to operate it, opted to demolish a portion of it so that a freeway could pass through the site. Spiraling into disrepair and abandonment, the final structures were torn down in 2004 when the city received a $19.6 million federal grant to develop a HOPE VI public/private housing development. Rebranded as Tremont Pointe, what has been constructed has been lauded by sustainability bulletins, demonstrating the distance that the place has come since 1978 when police refused to “enter Valleyview without two-person patrols” (Rottman).

In a quick examination of census data across multiple fields, it is apparent that the neighborhood is trending in a growth direction. More specifically, across the census tracts in which Valleyview and Tremont Pointe are located, in conjunction with their neighboring census tracts, one sees the dispersal of wealth with a brief foray into census demographic data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Avg. rent</th>
<th>Avg. Home price</th>
<th>% Renting</th>
<th>% Own Home</th>
<th>%+ on Rent</th>
<th>%+ on Housing</th>
<th>Median income</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Lvl of education</th>
<th>% pop Black</th>
<th>% pop white</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$167.20</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>52.40%</td>
<td>26.70%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$8,686.60</td>
<td>7.18%</td>
<td>37.05%</td>
<td>5.99%</td>
<td>75.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$268.70</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>57.80%</td>
<td>25.60%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$20,204.40</td>
<td>9.29%</td>
<td>59.58%</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
<td>68.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$438.00</td>
<td>$58,340.00</td>
<td>65.93%</td>
<td>34.07%</td>
<td>18.15%</td>
<td>34.40%</td>
<td>$21,761</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>37.59%</td>
<td>17.95%</td>
<td>58.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$638.40</td>
<td>$96,557.10</td>
<td>61.83%</td>
<td>38.17%</td>
<td>34.03%</td>
<td>52.00%</td>
<td>$25,261</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
<td>31.70%</td>
<td>18.32%</td>
<td>66.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$675.90</td>
<td>$110,685.70</td>
<td>67.02%</td>
<td>32.98%</td>
<td>23.94%</td>
<td>38.00%</td>
<td>$32,242</td>
<td>6.63%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>20.52%</td>
<td>65.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$508.70</td>
<td>$437.64</td>
<td>$438.00</td>
<td>222.90 75212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$52,345.70</td>
<td>$88,527.60</td>
<td>$96,557.10</td>
<td>272,080.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$23,555.40</td>
<td>$21,631.00</td>
<td>$21,761</td>
<td>0.06028 5599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$15.88</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
<td>$14.53</td>
<td>0.06109 8436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$2.66</td>
<td>$36.85</td>
<td>$16.51</td>
<td>0.05932 2315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Growth trends are apparent across some variables, while others depict not so resilient pictures. Average rent and home prices are increasing, while the percentage of the population spending over a third of their annual income on housing has decreased both across renters and homeowners since 2010. Further, median income has increased consistently while the percentage of the population with less than a high school diploma has decreased. In regards to racial demographics, the neighborhood has remained more or less stable across decades - the percentage of the population that is white has fluctuated around its mean, while the black population has slowly increased in percentage. This raises the question though, of who might be displaced if the white community remains relatively stable.

What is concerning in the census data is the percentages of renters versus homeowners. Trends show that the percentage of the population renting, currently around % of the population, has been steadily increasing, with a small standard deviation and coefficient of variance to match. Conversely, the percentage of the population owning homes is down from its peak in 2010, suggesting less and less individuals in the neighborhood are buying their own property. While I have no way to gauge my confidence, this could suggest development that caters to apartments, gutting and refurbishing old warehouse spaces for mixed-use developments. In regards to wealth inequality, less homeowners could possibly mean that less households and individuals are able to access mortgages in order to buy homes. Alternatively, it could possibly suggest a change in space towards homes and apartments with higher turnover, and landlords extracting property value as an investment, owning spaces while not living there. Again, while I merely speculating, this would neither benefitting those who built such projects nor those who live there. In order to better examine these possibilities, I pursued locating the changes in
percentage of homes vacant in the neighborhood to explore whether or not more and more people were moving into the neighborhood. This was to get a better sense of whether or not the neighborhood was growing. Further, in order to better explore this possibility, I wanted to examine whether or not people are buying homes for themselves or in order to rent to others, so I sought census data on the percentages of owner-occupancy in the area. Upon deciding to adjust my data collection for Tremont, I decided that I should explore these new categories for the other projects I am researching as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Owner Occupied</th>
<th>% Vacancy</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>15.92%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>36.10%</td>
<td>14.46%</td>
<td>49.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>31.45%</td>
<td>18.70%</td>
<td>53.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>32.98%</td>
<td>16.08%</td>
<td>49.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>4.24%</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>33.51%</td>
<td>16.29%</td>
<td>50.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>32.98%</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>49.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.023709653</td>
<td>0.017655698</td>
<td>0.022955074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coefficient of Variance</td>
<td>0.070749667</td>
<td>0.108367791</td>
<td>0.045164253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the data above, I calculated the percentage of owner occupied homes out of total homes in the neighborhood in order to get a better sense of whether or not those who own property actually reside in the neighborhood, as opposed to owning with the intent to rent as a landlord. For vacancy, I merely calculated the percentage of vacant homes out of total housing stock. Lastly, for tenure, I calculated the percentage of residents who have been in their homes for longer than 5 years in order to get a sense of the amount of turnover. First, owner occupancy has decreased between 2000 and 2015, which could be a possible indication that more owners
of property in the area intend to rent out their spaces. However, the percentage decrease is very small, in fact going up between 2010 and 2015, so I do not have much confidence in this speculation. Further, vacancy has remained relatively consistent around 15% of housing spaces in the neighborhood. This could be a possible indication that either those moving into the neighborhood are moving into new developments being built, or on the other hand, that those moving in the neighborhood are merely switching homes, as opposed to leaving entirely or more population moving in. However, this addition of this data does not lend much evidence to my speculation of advanced gentrification.

On a smaller scale, though, a close examination of certain census tracts reveals alarming changes across the decade in which Valleyview Homes was demolished and Tremont Pointe was constructed. Census tract 1047.01, containing parts of Valleyview, were over 90% Black or African American alone per the 2000 census, 4 years before the demolishing of the public housing project. However, in 2010, that census tract is absorbed into its neighbor to consolidate the area that Tremont Pointe covers. Somehow, the census tract has gone from 91% black alone in 2000 to only 24% in 2010. The conjoined census tract, though, only increases by 200 people. This change seems to evoke the common narrative of displacement of HOPE VI: a shift that drastic implies a huge change in character and memory, both of which are critical to a place. Shallowly, the CMHA has preserved art that it could salvage from the initial mural commissioned, which is now placed in a sealed box on the side of a building designated as a community center. I find this data indicative of the institutional racism that New Urbanism is conducive to.

One can observe a similar drastic change in median income in the area across the decade in which Valleyview Homes became Tremont Pointe. In 2000, Census tract 1047.01 is recorded as having a median income of $6,731. Its neighboring census tract that will absorb it is
$27,411. By 2000, the conjoined census tract has reached a median income above $30,000, while its neighboring census tract displays a median income above $40,000. Further, by 2015, the Tremont Pointe census tract has a median income above $35,000, while its neighboring census tract has a median income nearly at $75,000. Such a rapid increase in wealth in the area could possibly point to an area that has reached a threshold in gentrification where capital pours in, amplifying the rate of development at an exponential rate seen in neighborhoods like Wicker Park in Chicago. However, I have no way to gauge my confidence in this claim. Further, I find it tricky to criticize this metric - if the mission of the triple bottom line is to raise the standard of living for everyone, shouldn't this trend indicate progress?

In order to explore whether or not this data was an indication of a high rate of turnover in this particular area, I researched the tenure of housing across these two particular census tracts and their neighbors from 2000 to 2015. Once I had collected this data, I found that there was not much variation across the decade in which Valleyview Homes became Tremont Pointe. With a range around 4%, between 2000 and 2015 the percentage of the population that had been living there for at least a decade hovered around 50%. This could be interpreted in a number of ways: one possibility is that half of the population in 2010 had been there in 2000, and half of the population of 2015 had been there in 2010, which in turn could possibly mean that only a quarter of the population in the neighborhood remained in their homes between 2000 and 2015. This is merely speculation, but the data does suggest that a significant number of people are coming and going from the neighborhood on a consistent basis across the 15 years.

If the HOPE VI initiative in Tremont truly has dispersed poverty by disappearing it and attracting young, single individuals to rent, is this change compounded by aesthetics in the neighborhood? From walking through the neighborhood on multiple occasions, it seems very evident that the HOPE VI project, designed by City Architecture and both developed and
managed by McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc., in its place-building caters both to the consumption of space as a commodity and the aesthetics of a pastiche of industry. “The architecture complements the massing and the historic character of the existing neighborhood and includes green space and restored WPA art that was originally created for the Valleyview Homes Estate,” is a quote taken from literature on the finalization of construction. Here it is evident how the approach to reformulating this urban space into an urban village is both form-based and place-based, both moves out of the New Urbanist playbook, depicting the extent to which it has come to the level of hegemony in sustainable urban design.

In regards to its aesthetics and character that build place, one can see traces of the convergence of historicism and straight revivalism, creating empty signifiers out of nostalgia for a history that never happened. More specifically, at the convergence of these branches of styles one can see classicism, its vernacular being a pattern book of patchwork neo-shingle and craftsman style apartments stitched together in various massings. This aligns with the common criticism of New Urbanism as providing a strategy for stabilizing the suburbs by historicizing the symbolic spatially (Grant 77). Further, particular traces of elements that evoke defensible space are visible, from walls demarcating lawns to short setbacks to variations on porticoes and colonnades. Place-based approaches are based on an atavistic desire to return to golden era of Cleveland’s industry: namely, an age of prosperity after the first world war, when consumer goods became readily available to laborers. However, this atavistic vision must be reconciled with its prejudiced history: racial prejudice trumped class conflict, and most labor and craft unions carried white-only policies, restricting African Americans moving to the north to fill the void needed in production from the first world war from joining or benefitting from organization in labor (Harrison). Even the “preserved” WPA artwork is enshrined in a glass box on the side of an apartment building, existing as a modular add-on underneath two awkwardly placed
benches. Individuals are to sit and stare at a mural encased in glass on the side of an apartment building in order to feel a connection to place.

It was during this age that the production of homes was industrialized, which subsequently led to the means of financing them on a national scale in the form of federal amortized mortgages. An interesting dynamic plays out in Tremont Pointe: it sits over the Cuyahoga valley, home to some of the area’s only remaining steel plants. Tremont, a neighborhood that has historically been working class, garners a unique sense of place from this relationship. Today, it is as if the government is again sponsoring the consumption of homes on a national scale as private assets that benefit now development corporations and individuals wealthy enough to purchase private property. This sense of place, meticulously curated by architects, has been commodified and used as a means of generating capital from local labor and from a flow of local labor to the site in Tremont. The homes aren’t built in factories, but the plans are so formulated that they might as well be, despite coming from nowhere near the steel mills below.

The aesthetics of Tremont Pointe resemble a cut-out and reformulated pattern book: each building, whether standalone or connected in a patchwork, snaking string of townhomes, seems to be pieced together by seemingly random pieces of cladding and tiling that evoke industry: unfinished wood, brick facades, cladding of a variety of textures and colors, different shades of grey for roofing. Curves and skylines formed by roofs are erratic, and seemingly purposeless pergolas shade windows on upper floors. Aside from the proportions that instill a sense of Frankenstein-like combinations of neo-colonial, shingle and cottage style forms, nothing else is noteworthy of the space’s aesthetics. These public/private housing developments do not meld with the place-ness of Tremont, categorized by linear, walkable alleys and spontaneous, muddled cottages. Only in the pastiche that references a random coagulation of
mass-produced housing materials does Tremont Pointe preserve its working-class roots, celebrating the ethnic enclave that it once historically was. It is in this celebration that one can deconstruct how Tremont is configured by the white spatial imaginary: private homes and space, overseen by a private government, and no reference to the isolation and subsequent neglect of residents in the neighborhood as white flight took its toll.

These spaces, from which individuals were evicted and dispersed through the city, can be considered pure surplus value of usable square footage. As an investment property, Tremont Pointe does not benefit those who live in the area nor those who built the property directly, albeit indirectly through real estate speculation and gentrification. It follows a New Urbanist playbook, using their ideals of defensible space, designing for pedestrians and the street as public space, promoting civic and green space and history while respecting “tradition,” all in the name of making atavistic objects. These objects demand a pastiche appearance based on the white spatial imaginary: authenticity is desired as it is what is considered the urban experience, so a pastiche of industrial-themed neocolonial and craftsman style homes that convey a relationship to labor and the industrial revolution before any means of alienation has to be present in order to satisfy the individual’s propensity towards individual freedom and cultural homogeneity. However, these references have been reconfigured to fit the nostalgia of now in a globalized city, mixing eclectic but inherently American styles from New England white vinyl cladding to functionless pergolas and truss structures that evoke the American Southwest in material. An interesting addition is Corbusian-style pilotes that raise defensible space that protrudes into the street from the public realm itself. Anything else would be threatening in a public sense, and detract from the civic architecture and placeness of the residential space, detracting from the crisis that is an abject lack of authenticity in the nostalgia that the neighborhood purports. Homes come in either the “garden home” or townhouse variety, with
emphasis placed on the management team that will take care of gardening and landscaping for renter. In essence, a private government has been established to control land that was previously public housing, rented out to those with the capital available to rent here (seeking those returning from the suburbs) at the expense of those who were pushed out or have lived in and participated in community building previously. This private government controls who can and cannot live here, and takes pride in maintaining its lively and polished appearance as a counterfactual to broken windows policing: nice spaces means a nice neighborhood. Well-groomed lawns and front-oriented homes mean defensible space that is intruded upon, despite not being owned by the dweller.

In effect, the landscaping and efforts of sustainability in Tremont Pointe reduce landscape merely to image and object with value. Landscaping is not done by those who dwell in Tremont Pointe, but by outside hands hired by the private management firm to maintain a respectable and pleasant appearance. In this meticulous curation does Tremont develop its relationship to the good society: being anti-urban in privatized, defensible space and conquest over nature it loses its authenticity after being reconquered by the self-selecting commune. Whatever pulse Tremont had it loses in Tremont Pointe as this development can be read as an enabling of the amplification of gentrification.

Race, however, as it has changed across decades is curious in the neighborhood. Per the census data, the percentage of the population being white has decreased in recent years, while the percentage of the population being black has steadily increased. However, this can be contrasted with the specifics of certain census tracts, in which a 91% black population dropped to 24% in 2010. While this could speak to massive upheaval and turnover in housing, it also possibly speaks to dispersal in my mind, perhaps throughout the neighborhood on a broader scale. With the percentage of the population being white, though, fluctuating just around the
mean, perhaps it means that other ethnic groups have been pushed out of the neighborhood to make up for the lost percentages. While vacancy rates in the neighborhood do not suggest or indicate that newcomers to the neighborhood are filling empty housing stock, tenure statistics indicate that since 2000 a large percentage of the population has left the area or moved within the neighborhood. In 2000, around 50% of the population had been dwelling in the same home for at least 5 years. In 2010, this same trend is apparent in that 50% of the population again had been in their home for at least 5 years. Finally, this same percentage is apparent between 2010 and 2015. In sum, this could possibly signify that only 25% of the population in 2000 that had been tenured in the neighborhood remained in 2015. This could be a possible indication of turnover in the area that was caused by the Tremont Pointe housing project that dispersed the residents of Valleyview Homes.

Lastly, in regards to environmental sustainability, McCormack Baron Salazar lists Tremont Pointe under its grouping for sustainable properties. However, upon further investigation, I found that the management company’s metric for sustainability always comes back to an economic growth lens: it views sustainability as a viable “tool” by which it can market its properties. A third-party solar development firm is brought in to install solar panels, which MBS will subsequently manage as an asset, but no information could be found in regards to the extent to which solar provides energy to the project’s portfolio, nor if its existence inspires any sort of reduction in energy-consumption in lifestyle. This outside firm is also delegated with managing green building aspects, reconciled with cost, and has the responsibility of educating dwellers on sustainable choices. On the specific property’s website, certain green building aspects are included in their amenities section. Some of these aspects are as follows: energy and water efficient appliances, energy efficient insulated windows, and energy efficient central heating and cooling. Again, I cannot speak to the relative level of sustainability that this project
endows in comparison with other new building projects. It seems that their inclusion is a benefit to the project, but the lack of its preeminence and focus concerns me - in addition to the use of quotes around the word “green” when describing their landscaping.

Median income, housing prices, the percentage renting versus owning and the overall level of education are increasing consistently, in conjunction with average rent and housing prices. Unemployment is dropping as well. In all socioeconomic factors that I pulled data for, Tremont does better on a whole than the averages of Cleveland, sitting above the means in 2015 for all categories. These dynamic demographics conditions speak to a neighborhood undergoing rapid development and change, as a result of urban design strategies gauged around sustainability. However, the presence of New Urbanist aesthetics, in regards to urban design initiatives and projects calls into question for whom these projects are intended, perhaps setting the neighborhood up for more rapid gentrification in the future as the neighborhood becomes more and more spatially homogenized.

In conclusion, there is reason for optimism in a close examination of the direct and indirect impacts of Tremont Pointe on the neighborhood as a whole. Census data indicates broadly that diversity is increasing in the neighborhood in conjunction with the quality of life across certain metrics, such as housing, employment and education. Tremont is a dense, isolated neighborhood, and Tremont Pointe builds upon that history by further developing dense, albeit suburban housing. The only aspects of sustainability in Tremont that trouble me are the high rate of turnover in tenure, and the lack of public accountability in what was once public housing. One could make the assumption that Tremont Pointe dispersed a population most in need of support and attention, with little regard to adequate replacement of the housing destroyed in the turnover. However, data is not conclusive in this regard, and further in-depth investigation is required in order to understand whether or not Tremont Pointe, as a private development that
has taken over the reigns in driving public housing creation and management, is providing the support that the public realm deserves in Cleveland in a neighborhood historically isolated. I find that sustainability is not the highest priority in Tremont Pointe, and politically there is very little room for discussion in regards to who can belong to the neighborhood, for whom housing is built, and from where the technical expertise and styles of said building come. However, I hope that moving forwards, the increased quality of life in the area can be refocused in a more inclusive manner to better incorporate a range of perspectives and needs that current development methods might not be considering.

**St. Clair Superior**

Census Tracts 111202, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1118, 108201, and 111902. This includes the neighborhood designated by the city planning commission as St Clair Superior and the census tract that is adjacent to Hub 55. For the 1980-2000 data that I’m taking from social explorer, I used census tracts: 1082, 1111, 1112, 1113, 1114, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1118, and 1119.

Located on Cleveland’s near-east side, St Clair Superior is a neighborhood that sits between two historic ethnic enclaves nuzzled between Downtown and University Circle. The neighborhood is defined rather well spatially, per Lynch’s imagability, being bordered by Lake Erie and interstate 90 to the north, and both Gordon and Rockefeller Park to the east. The neighborhood is further defined by the major routes of travel that divide the neighborhood: E 55th St, running north to south, can be considered the neighborhood’s western edge, while Superior Avenue, a major east-west thoroughfare and ½ of the neighborhood’s namesake, sits as the neighborhood’s southern edge. This avenue defines the neighborhood from Hough to the south. Bisecting the neighborhood is St Clair Avenue, the other part of the neighborhood’s
namesake and also similarly important thoroughfare. Today, St Clair Ave serves as the neighborhood’s cultural arterial, around which redevelopment has been focused. The avenue has been a point of study by the planning commission of Cleveland in regards to points of intervention, around which the city would like to consolidate infrastructure and retail.

Historically, the neighborhood has been associated with ethnic enclaves. In the final decades of the 19th century, large numbers of Eastern European immigrants clustered and settled in the neighborhood as it was in proximity to industry established on St Clair Ave and near the Lake. Of these Eastern European immigrants, large portions are Slovenian and Lithuanian. The area contains the Slovenian National Home, a historic landmark, expressing Slovenian character and influence to this day in the architecture. To the west of the neighborhood is the city’s historic Chinatown, which has since become a large ethnic enclave of mixed East Asian communities.

The neighborhood has experienced in recent decades blight along with many other of Cleveland’s neighborhoods surrounding downtown. The neighborhood’s predominantly residential southern section has experienced little new construction as housing stock decays, and the northern portion is characterized by vacant and abandoned spaces in the absence of industry. The area is home to many vacant and abandoned homes, some of which have been demolished by the city but not cleaned up, while others are home to squatters (Dissell). St Clair Superior boasts the city’s highest percentage of vacant distressed properties in the city at 12%. Similarly, other neighborhoods receiving D or F grades in housing stock from the Western Reserve Land Conservancy’s Thriving Communities Institute property survey are the neighboring Glenville and Hough, and Kinsman to the south (Dissell).

Retail and adaptive reuse characterize sustainability initiatives in the neighborhood. The city has taken a stance that infilling is preferable to demolishing large tracts of houses to open
parcels for new redevelopment, despite taking action in demolition - it is their vision for the neighborhood that commercial spaces with space above become “live-work” spaces, warehouse space is repurposed and urban design initiatives on St Clair Avenue help to attract new retail while bolstering existing businesses. This can be seen in the Tower Press Building’s renovation into loft-style apartments, and the Kent State CUDC’s Design/REbuild house, which seeks to become a model for strategic reuse of vacant housing. The retail aspect is most apparent in Hub 55, a mixed-use, commercially oriented development on the eastern edge of the neighborhood. As it is located on the border of St Clair Superior, I have included the census tract immediately to the west as part of my study on the area in order to get a better understanding of how this project could have impacted the neighborhood surrounding it.

“HUB 55 is a mixed-use redevelopment plan that will bring a mix of artisans, makers, food purveyors, and entrepreneurs together in a truly collaborative environment. With an indoor and outdoor year round Market, Café, Brewery, Flex Space and Office, HUB 55 will be a destination for Clevelanders to shop, eat and drink in a truly unique way,” is how Hub 55 self-describes itself on its website, creating imagery of its comprehensive combination of uses. Most important among those uses is the food hub notion - the area can be considered a food desert, as no fresh food vendors exist within a half-mile radius. The space, molded together by brick and metal panel facades, boasts the Goldhorn brewery, Cafe 55 and is home to a farmers market in warmer months. Not only does the project seek to deliver fresh food to the area but is also seeks to teach individuals in the area how to eat well, providing healthy and sustainable options while perpetuating and celebrating a history of Eastern European tradition. Goldhorn brewery seeks to focus on traditional Eastern European brewing traditions, and is placed in the heart of the repurposed industrial space (can confirm that the beer is pretty good too – DeMarco). It seeks to catalyze more food retail development in the area as an “agripreneur,” and
its goals are described on the St Clair Superior Development Corporation’s website:

- Create sustainable employment and business opportunities
- Increase access to affordable, local, healthy food in Cleveland
- Develop a healthy food distribution system
- Implement strategies that promote and encourage healthy food education and consumption

Rick Semersky, owner of VIP Construction, fronts the project. Semersky also owns the adjacent Lakeshore Banking and Trust building, E 55th St City Fire Station, and the St Clair Cleveland Public Library branch and Sterle’s Country House, a tavern/family-style Slovenian restaurant adjacent to Hub 55 to the south. For the first two, Semersky plans renovations, maintaining outwards appearances to continue place building while simultaneously attracting businesses and people back into the area where Semersky grew up. Semersky acknowledges that E 55th street is a heavily traversed route, and hopes to focus on street level redevelopment that will build “critical mass” in the area (DeMarco). Funded in a private/public coalition, Semersky was able to secure an $800,000 federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, funding the rest of the project himself. While being commercially oriented, the space has civic uses embedded within it, such as a planned kitchen for teaching purposes - per Michael Fleming of the St Clair Superior Development Corporation, many are intimidated with the prospect of cooking with raw ingredients which the project seeks to deliver.

It is evident how much pride Semersky finds in the area and vows to return it to a golden-era-like age of prosperity. Alienated by the city’s ability to redevelop and invest in the area, he took it upon himself to make the area spatially and architecturally attractive while maintaining character and promoting sustainability. Biking to work, Semersky understands that in order to reach sustainability in the neighborhood, investment is needed in the built
environment, and feels frustrated with the city's inability to do so. Therefore, in the absence of public investment, Semersky has taken it upon himself to return the area to the prosperity he knows from his youth, and Hub 55 is the first initiative in his plan. Since October 2014, the site has been the home to a food market that occurs every other Thursday from 4 to 8 pm (DeMarco).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>St. Clair / Superior</th>
<th>Avg. rent</th>
<th>Avg. Home price</th>
<th>% Renting</th>
<th>% Own Home</th>
<th>%+ on rent</th>
<th>%+ on housing</th>
<th>Median income</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Lvl of education</th>
<th>% Pop Black</th>
<th>% Pop White</th>
<th>% Asian Pop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>60.17%</td>
<td>39.83%</td>
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<td>36.89%</td>
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<td>31.67%</td>
<td>57.68%</td>
<td>41.90%</td>
<td>$20,385</td>
<td>22.01%</td>
<td>30.33%</td>
<td>66.14%</td>
<td>24.52%</td>
<td>2.92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In analyzing the data, certain trends are apparent. Similarly to Tremont, indicators point to a potential increase in quality of life in the area. On the other hand, certain trends across other categories imply no growth whatsoever in any regard. It is difficult to discern whether or
not the neighborhood is progressing or regressing, but some conclusions can be drawn. Average rent has been increasing steadily, which could be good, but this statistic compared with the fact that home prices have been decreasing in the area does not leave one optimistic in the sense that the neighborhood is developing. The percentage of individuals around Hub 55 renting as opposed to owning their own space has remained relatively consistent around its mean, roughly equaling just over 2/3rds since 1980. Similarly, the percentage of individuals owning has remained constant as well at 1/3rd.

The percentage of individuals in the area spending more than 1/3rd of their annual income on rent and housing respectively does not indicate or suggest that this neighborhood is becoming less impoverished. Around 40% of homeowners and just over 55% of renters around Hub 55 are spending more than 1/3rd of their annual income on housing, which to me indicates that quality of life in this area has been neglected by those in power in Cleveland, as this area has seemingly been forgotten about, but yet does not receive the title or colloquial nickname of “forgotten”. Further, since 2010, median income has decreased while the levels of education and unemployment in the area have improved.

Statistics around Hub 55 in St Clair Superior paint a disparaging picture: while data collected can suggest that homes are absolutely not appreciating in value on average, less are spending over 1/3rd of their annual income on housing. However, homeownership as a whole is down, as more and more individuals in the area are renting. This could suggest that either individuals are leaving the neighborhood or the housing stock decaying in the area is not being replaced, a fact that could be supported by the Land Bank’s rating of the neighborhood as one of the worst areas in Cleveland in regards to upkeep. In regards to its mission, Hub 55 seems like a well-needed investment into the area that higher powers such as city government have yet to make.
Further, racial demographics in this area have taken an interesting turn since 1980. Then, the population was split nearly 50/50 black vs. white. Since that decade, though, the percentage of the population as white has steadily decreased while the black population has increased, reaching at its peak 75% of the population. While the border of the area may be known locally as “Asiatown,” St Clair Superior was under 3% Asian in its population, suggesting that this community either exists farther away from Hub 55 or is relatively small in actual population numbers.

While Tremont exhibits some aspects of positive growth that could indicate gentrification, no such indicators are apparent in St Clair Superior. In an area where most are living in poverty and have been for generations, which has compounded that poverty spatially, private investment that seeks to attract more private investment might not be a bad thing. It focuses on place-making in the right way as built inwards, and seeks to improve the lives of the individuals in the community by bringing visibility of business and fresh food to an area that is blighted with decaying houses and empty, abandoned warehouses. I personally find it hard to criticize this project as gentrification was not going to happen in this area regardless, and development that supports humans by bringing fresh food on a regular basis is specifically the kind of intervention that the neighborhood needs in order to jumpstart further growth. While the place-making attempts focus on white, Central and Eastern European ethnic history in the area where that population is dwindling, one could find cause for concern in the consolidation of such benefits for a neighborhood depending on the relative level of segregation in the area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>St. Clair / Superior</th>
<th>% Owner Occupied</th>
<th>% Vacancy</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>39.62%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>36.02%</td>
<td>15.72%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>33.92%</td>
<td>18.10%</td>
<td>49.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>35.96%</td>
<td>32.50%</td>
<td>61.65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examining the data on vacancies and owner occupation in the area reflects this speculation that quality of life is not steadily improving in the area. Vacancy has shot up since 1990, increasing from roughly 15% of available housing stock to almost 40%, a stark difference which speaks volumes to amount of development going on in the area. Further, owner occupancy is down since 1980 from roughly 40% to roughly 30%, a change that suggests that those in the area who do own are shifting towards renting. It is interesting to note, also, that while housing prices decrease, rent has been steadily increasing in the area, jumping up to almost $700 a month from roughly $170 in 1980. These statistics lead me to speculate that individuals in the area are pitted against themselves in housing competition: those in the area are trapped in decaying housing conditions with little opportunity for movement, while those benefitting from owning homes cannot appreciate their assets, so need to turn to ever-increasing rent from other individuals in order to generate income.

Further, tenure in the area is higher than in Tremont, suggesting to me that less people are leaving the area due to extrinsic forces. It leads me to believe that people in this area are stuck - unable to move out and unable to find adequate housing and support from the city. The city has been known to demolish vacant and decaying homes, but that designates the extent to which the city is acting in order break away from the images of blight that plague this area. While the Kent State CUDC is exploring how to refurbish and infill, the city demolishes then leaves the remains often for those dwelling here to deal with the cleanup. On the other hand,
this area could be prime for gentrification: it’s location between University Circle and Downtown coupled with cheap and extensive real estate could render it a sight for rapid inflation if it were to become, attracting capital in the form of developing galleries, coffee shops and bars. Its public transit prospects further amplify this possibility. However, for now, Hub 55 is exactly the kind of intervention needed in the neighborhood in order to improve the lives of those dwelling here.

Michael Fleming of the St Clair Superior development corporation sees the key to revival in the neighborhood a matter of filling vacant homes, and aims to do so by make the neighborhood attractive through a mix of promoting legacy through businesses and building character by catering to an arts and crafts population. The neighborhood has become home to a monthly flea market, drawing people in the thousands, and Fleming has been directing an initiative to pioneer the area as a hub for “upcycling,” which can be described as the process of recycling construction materials and items into useful objects, as showcased in various storefronts and art initiatives in the area (Litt).

In regards to aesthetics, one can see much of the same nostalgia and aura preserving a proximity to industry on which the neighborhood depends. While the transition between certain segments of Hub 55 is made apparent in texture, one central aspect of the character ties the entire site together: a sense of a proximity to labor via the presence of unalienated labor. Three portals are apparent upon entering either the Cafe 55 or the Goldhorn Brewery, both creating windows and connections between the sites of production of each segment and the space of consumption. Cafe 55 features a window into its kitchen, connecting those who make the food personally with those ordering. The Goldhorn Brewery features an open plan that builds its seating area and bar around a central brewing area, separated from the dining area through extensive ribbon window. Through exaggeration in their height by extending to the ceiling
endow the space with a warehouse-like quality.

Each portion of the E 55 St oriented portion of Hub 55 displays a certain feature to extend the purpose of the space outwards into the public space of the street. On the Goldhorn side, located predominantly on the northern portion of the premise, there exists a cozy “beer garden,” a space accessible to the street that serves as an extension of the brewery. Picnic benches are arranged along the brick walls of Goldhorn and the offices of Semersky’s VIP Construction, the southern facade of which is punctured by two large grids of glass bricks. A banner of gold paint with the Goldhorn label is painted across the tops of all 3 enclosing brick faces, at a level at which it is interrupted in certain spots along the top of a wall, lending an unfinished quality to the space. A weaving string of lights hangs above the space, and garage doors mark entrances: one, all white, marking the entrance to the actual space of production, and an almost all glass garage door demarcating the portal to the dining/drinking space.

On the other side, Cafe 55, the facade separating the cafe from the small, accessory parking lot is dominated by floor to ceiling windows, punctuated by one set of double doors. The cafe is clad in wooden boards, which blend perfectly into the pergola that extends the cafe into the streetscape. While there was no seating under the pergola when I conducted site visits, understandable for February and March in Cleveland, what was noticeable were the planters that frame the exterior space. These adding another realm of defined space between cafe 55 and the street.

Inside Hub 55, the architecture seeks to evoke a connection, or conversely, a lack of alienation with labor. One can eat and drink in proximity to the labor that they’re consuming in the first place, creating an image of cultural consumption almost as palpable as the food and drink being consumed in the first place. I find this similar to why an independent coffee shop could be considered successful in providing views to the process, with access to interact with the
barista, and the sensory experiences that coffee endows. With a skyline surrounding the site punctuated with massive brick warehouses and factories, Goldhorn brewery mimics the same tones and forms, displaying not only its industrial inner workings but the functioning aspects of the building itself in pipes, wiring, and air ventilation shafts. The ducts that exist in the lofty brewhouse are curved and ornamental, demonstrating a willingness to go to great lengths to achieve a nostalgia of the now, gravitating around industrial and working-class imagery. The bar looks like it is assembled out of reclaimed wood, plywood crates sit stacked as ornament, I-beams are exposed, and all aspects and components of the brewing process are made visible so that one could experience drinking at the bar as one would experience meandering around a warehouse or factory (any site of production, really) without any direction.

Taking a critical stance on the aesthetics of Hub 55 and of their relation and influence to New Urbanist theory is a complicated and somewhat difficult process. On one hand, the same nostalgia for a white, European ethnic enclave that existed in the area is certainly celebrated in Hub 55, especially in its relation to Sterle’s next door. In the same way that one can read Jameson’s stance in the *Cultural Logic* in Tremont one can similarly read in Hub 55’s aesthetics: it refashions unalienated, European labor as a cultural commodity to fit the nostalgia of now, using material and place-making as a stand in for *Aura* in a Benjaminian sense. What this suggests to me is that street-wards appearance, and subsequently form as understood of the neighborhood as whole, is central to Hub 55 in creating successful images that cater to a white spatial imaginary. It is in these gestures that New Urbanism’s influences are most apparent. However, on the other hand, one has to consider the ecological realities and dynamics at play that have real, concrete effects on the people living in St Clair Superior: while it could be easy to criticize Hub 55, it is providing food and jobs to an area that was receiving very little public help and support from the city. As a private venture that eventually gained federal backing, Hub 55 is
valiantly attempting to provide relief to an area miring in poverty, caught in the same miasma of the Forgotten Triangle. I feel as though no critical stance on the aesthetics of Hub 55 can be taken as it only seeks to benefit a neighborhood receiving little extrinsic help, doing so by successfully catering to late-capitalist consumption of images in attracting individuals to move back into the neighborhood.

Despite its private orientation, the fact that public funds were used to create a project that seeks to return industry, jobs and people to a neighborhood deemed blighted is a just move that builds on place in what could be considered a more authentic manner than Tremont Pointe. Hub 55 is a project that may not be the most inclusive, but has lofty goals in terms of sustainability for the entirety of the St Clair Superior neighborhood, leading in action behind rhetoric that the neighborhood development corporation purports. Being completed in the last few years, it is difficult to gauge this early the effects that the project has had on the neighborhood. However, in understanding the demographics and trends that the neighborhood was heading in, one can look at Hub 55 as a good case study for how to incorporate successfully both public and private stakeholders in a reality in which the private realm, and subsequently, devolved private governments, dictates much of the participatory and policy approach to development.

**Kinsman and the Forgotten Triangle**

Census Tracts 113500, 113600, 113801, 114100, 114300, 114501, 114600, 114700

Kinsman is a neighborhood located in Central Cleveland, just south of Hough, with strong boundaries and edges based on transportation routes. Kinsman as a place historically has been subjected to countless issues of environmental injustice, acutely experiencing the negative
effects of environmental racism and distributive injustice. It wasn't always this way, but today Kinsman is known as one of the most blighted, poverty-stricken neighborhoods in Cleveland; its essence is aptly summarized in its nickname, “the forgotten triangle”. The remnants of redlining exist prominently in this area, austere and foreboding in its emptiness upon first pass through. Further, as Paul Hanson notes in his article on the Hough Riots of 1966, Kinsman was engulfed in violence during the riots as a result of neglect and frustration on behalf of the city’s white politicians, and racial tension led to the destruction of many white-owned businesses and buildings but not black-owned ones in the area (Hanson 162-163).

The population numbers in the Forgotten Triangle have been dropping significantly since World War II, but issues of vacancy in the area have been exacerbated by the recent foreclosure crisis. Neglect is evident across numerous statistical categories: the poverty rate in the neighborhood exceeds 50%, vacancies are high, and the Land Bank rates the housing stock in the area among the worst in Cleveland. A good example of this neglect was played out on the political stage in 60’s, under the tenure of mayor Ralph Locher, whose term lead to the Hough Riots. The Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland (CEO) was established in 1964, and upon its enforcement under the 1964 Economic opportunity Act (Lyndon B. Johnson), push back occurred: the mayor initially installed many of the primary board members of CEO, receiving pushback from civil rights leaders, and city councilmen were “disturbed” by the fact the existence of CEO made their lives more difficult. “CEO employees were creating political problems for them by fostering demands for services among the poor,” is how an encyclopedia describes the climate, which is absolutely shocking and explanatory as to why violence erupted in this area in the 1966 riots (Van Tassel, 301).

Kinsman became an enclave for Jewish families immigrating to Cleveland during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, establishing vibrant communities in the neighborhoods of Central
Cleveland despite restrictive covenants. However, by 1980 this population had largely moved east to areas such as Cleveland Heights, leaving behind a predominantly black and overwhelmingly poor population. According to the Ward 5 Forgotten Triangle Master Plan, 2200 people live in the area, over half of them being children or elderly. Galvanized by the Ohio Department of Transportation, the city has come together with community development corporations, such as Burton Bell Carr, a non-profit, and the Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio in order to redevelop the area. What these stakeholders have come up with is titled the “Opportunity Corridor,” an apt title for capturing the potential in the area based on the sheer amount of vacant land and transportation infrastructure.

Playing off of the model developed and deployed in the Health Tech Corridor, the Opportunity Corridor is a $331 million project, and can be considered a glorified highway that connects the end of a highway to University Circle, traversing “large swaths of vacant land, multiple rail corridors, and a few remaining neighborhood job centers” (Kruth 2). As Jeff Kruth of the CUDC bluntly points out, this project amounts to over $100 million of taxpayer dollars spent per each mile of roadway. Among the issues that the project seeks to address through economic development are brownfield reclamation, multi-modal transportation development, and storm water retention through the development of grey and green infrastructure. However, this project is riddled with distributive and representative justice issues, as its large-scale and top-down planning approach compacted into such a small window for implementation has created chaos among the numerous stakeholders and community development corporations across the wards that this project spans (Kruth).

The Opportunity Corridor plan designates five spaces to focus on intervening in: they are titled the New Economy Neighborhood, Core Job Zone, E. 79th St. Transit Oriented Corridor, Urban Agriculture Zone, and Slavic Village/ Hyacinth TOD. Of these components of the project, I
will be focusing on the Core Job Zone, E. 79th St. Transit Oriented Corridor, and Urban Agriculture Zone as these aspects of the projects overlap with the Forgotten Triangle and are mostly specific to Kinsman. The other two components to the project are targeted at different areas in different neighborhoods, deploying some sustainable aspects of design with no regard to a bigger picture.

The planning commission of Cleveland self-describes the Core Job Zone as the following: “The Core Jobs Zone is expected to be home for light manufacturing and distribution businesses that require entry-level to mid-level skill sets. These businesses will create opportunities for competitive jobs that can be absorbed by a local workforce that has taken advantage of specialized training programs offered by Tri-C. Buildings will be placed to front the corridor with a green buffer from the public right of way. Parking will be situated to the rear. This configuration will create an environment that reflects the urban context of a 21st century job center, unlike a suburban style campus”. It is divided into four quadrants, each characterized by abundant vacant land, much of it owned by the Land Bank. Anchored by one business, Orlando Bakery, the development is to attract other employers to the area through the implementation of a form-based “zoning district target zone”.

The E. 79th Transit Oriented Corridor will focus on redesigning and emphasizing certain aspects of streetscape in order to create an environment that is “safe and aesthetically pleasing for people, current and future, traveling along E 79th Street using multiple modes of Transportation: walking, biking, auto and bus”. Through manipulation of the street and public landscape, the city hopes to catalyze further investment, seeking to attract small businesses or office buildings that are scaled to the neighborhood. This portion of the plan seeks to capitalize on the two RTA stations along the avenue, hoping to use them as nodes to attract further development, both commercial and residential along a New Urbanist Transit Oriented Design
model. In essence, the city seeks to make this street an attractive avenue to combat the notion of blight and promote ridership among its shrinking RTA stations in the area.

Lastly, the Urban Agriculture Zone seeks to repurpose much of the brownfield and vacant land into serviceable agricultural land. Rid-All, an urban agriculture initiative in the area already exemplifies what the city imagines in this portion of the redevelopment plan: empowering and incubating farming programs that enable individuals to grow and sell their own food, with focuses on community education and reclamation of history. Among the physical and social infrastructural developments included with this stage of the plan are as follows: “Urban Ag Zone Greenhouse Training Program, which will include a food preparation kitchen, a retail store, interior urban gardens, a second aquaponics system, and training for those interested in urban agriculture careers”. Essentially, these different projects embedded within the Opportunity Corridor project seek to carpet-bomb the area with different moves out of the Charter of New Urbanism, consolidating infrastructure while repurposing vacant land into attractive, productive sites of agriculture under the guise of sustainability in order to validate a glorified highway. The Ohio Department of Transportation describes the project as the following: “The Opportunity Corridor is a planned boulevard that will run from East 55th Street at Interstate 490 to East 105th Street in University Circle... Outside of transportation benefits it could bring the Cleveland area, this effort opens the potential for new economic development, new jobs and a new identity for the community”. I personally do not understand how the construction of an extensive, highway-like boulevard in one of the most depressed and neglected areas in the city is going to open potential for a new identity in the neighborhood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forgotten Triangle</th>
<th>Avg. Rent</th>
<th>Avg. Home Price</th>
<th>% Renting</th>
<th>% Own Home</th>
<th>%+ on Rent</th>
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<td>Mean</td>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<td>Forgotten Triangle</td>
<td>% Owner Occupied</td>
<td>% Vacancy</td>
<td>Tenure</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$37,400.00</td>
<td>$37,400.00</td>
<td>387.00</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>23.71%</td>
<td>98.55%</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td>3.65%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$73,200.00</td>
<td>$73,200.00</td>
<td>$73,200.00</td>
<td>387.00</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>28.95%</td>
<td>69.87%</td>
<td>30.28%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$50,043.00</td>
<td>$50,043.00</td>
<td>$50,043.00</td>
<td>387.00</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>28.92%</td>
<td>71.08%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>2.79%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite being stuck in early stage, it is not hard to be struck by the futility of such a
nearsighted project in such a blighted area. I find it personally infuriating that the Ohio Department of Transportation is so narrow-mindedly pursuing their own agenda with very little regard to the realities of the spaces of the Forgotten Triangle. Since 2010, both average rent and home prices are down - comparatively though, the rent is higher on average in St Clair Superior, but home prices are higher on average here. Well over 2/3rds of the population are renting their homes, and it is alarming that the percentage of individuals renting who are spending more than 1/3rd of their annual income on housing is increasing, reaching 50% in 2015. Over 50% of homeowners are spending their annual income on housing costs as well, and when one considers the decrease in median income in the area in recent years, the resulting picture is stark and depressing. The average rent, $470, multiplied out for a year’s worth of payments comes out to $5640, and when that value is subtracted from the median income, one is left to wonder how an average individual in the neighborhood can survive in such a barren area on less than $9000 for one year. Then one should take into account that children and the elderly compose half of the population in this area, which are groups not necessarily disposed to take care of themselves.

On a more positive note, other indicators of social infrastructure are doing well, but are still relatively poor when compared to other parts of the city and to Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and Ohio as a whole. In regards to the unemployment rate and the percentage of individuals living in the area without a high school diploma or equivalent, both exhibit trends in positive directions since 2010. Unemployment has dropped to roughly 17%, down from nearly 30% at which it peaked in the past 4 decades, and the percentage of individuals with less than a high school educational attainment has dropped from 35% to 30%. This shows much improvement from 1990, when almost 60% of the population in the area had less than a high school educational attainment. However, this area is not in a vacuum, and both of this statistics, while
optimistic, reveal stark realities about conditions and fabric of the Forgotten Triangle. I find it
very troubling to read about the issues that plague this area and have persisted for decades, and
to find that the pursuit of rejuvenation is not in providing further social infrastructure and
services but to create an attractive, form based roadway system.

Data on racial demographics in the area confirm that the area has been composed of an
over 90% black population since 1980, and one has to ask questions of how much participatory
justice was exhibited in the planning of this process. Per a fact sheet from the ODOT, the project
has the potential to displace up to 123 residents in the area, which has led some to lose hope all
together in the city’s ability to help its citizens who have been neglected for decades (Guevara).
The public leader of the project is Terri Hamilton Brown, former head of the CHMA and current
representative of the Greater Cleveland Partnership. An article published in Cleveland Scene in
2010 depicts the scene at a town hall meeting that occurred at the Elizabeth Baptist Church on
Holton Avenue, in which residents voiced their dissent and frustration with the plans and lack of
transparency: one couple added to the feedback that they know that “all of this is designed for
people out of town,” and one community member asked the audience and participants whether
or not the Greater Cleveland Partnership had ever done anything in their neighborhood, to
which none responded affirmatively (Guevara).

Others involved in the planning process are more optimistic about the outcomes of this
project for the public realm. For instance, for executive director of the Opportunity Corridor
Partnership, sees the evidence that the project will be a success in IBM Corp.’s pledge to build a
43,000 square foot site for one of their data analytics companies along the route, suggesting a
trend away from the “wasteland of payday lenders, fast-food joints and gas stations” that many
envision to populate the new scenic boulevard (Litt). However, despite this promise of a
large-name global company coming to the area and declaring its support, one does not gain
hope by skimming through the Forgotten Triangle Ward 5 Master Plan renderings, which provide more detailing on store fronts than on streetscapes, reinforcing the insight that many have on the project as one that is business oriented, community second. What is even more striking about such renderings is the fact that an image dominated by a turret resembling a public library along Kinsman avenue is the crowning architectural moment of place-making above a strip mall featuring both a Subway Restaurant (brand name used in renderings) and a “dollar mart”.

Other alarming aspects stick out in the Ward 5 Forgotten Triangle Master Plan. For instance, the plan states early on that it was generated from suggestions and ideas extrapolated from meetings with community members. The plan seeks to “reinforce residential areas that are shielded from adverse impacts of industry,” and does so by implementing sound walls and dead-end streets with low connectivity in order to better segregate highway usage and its connections from the zones designated as residential, in effect creating a “high-speed bypass” through the area (CUDC). I can imagine this move further isolating individuals in the area. By capitalizing on Red, Green and Blue RTA line stops, the plan also seeks to create a “better setting for market-rate residential development,” a move that can most certainly be based on motivation to help and improve the lives of others living in the area, but in vain attempts to perpetuate the New Urbanist myth of disappearing poverty. It will do so by partnering with the CMHA to create public housing in a “more neighborhood-oriented, less institutional character” (Master Plan 11).

Other aspects of sustainability through the plan are conflicted: for instance, the plan sees repurposing vacant land as the perfect opportunity for creating an arbor, creating both an orchard and a hardy environment in which tough street trees can be grown then transplanted around the area. However, surrounding such developments would be low density housing, which coincides with the vacant, sparse character of the neighborhood. Not only does this conflict with
New Urbanist Transit Oriented design visions and transect principles, but it also goes against the missions of the corridor as a project of consolidating infrastructure and focusing on resiliency and sustainability through community, instead promoting an Arcadian vision. Elsewhere throughout the plan other New Urbanist features appear, such as the axial, grid like planning that is punctuated with parks and civic uses that celebrate the public realm. However, one has to ask the question of whether or not providing the public amenities for higher density dwelling is jumping the gun in actually responding to the wants and needs of a high density community, and if such development is actually geared towards the residents of the Forgotten Triangle.

Elsewhere, aspects of Defensible Space theory are present in the suggestions of duplex-community development of a “marketable” housing type in order to both increase RTA ridership and reinforce an image of safety in the neighborhood (Master Plan 17). Lighting and safety are designated as priorities for the project, along with establishing neighborhood identity and creating opportunities for new development. Renderings depict strong, multi-use buildings taking places on corners, and further drawings seem like they could come right out of a pastoral setting. “New and existing green spaces along the street also enhance the pedestrian and vehicular experience,” notes the plan, also adding that “street trees and banners” would reinforce neighborhood identities. However, this design move seems to contradict with other renderings of the Opportunity Corridor project, which is extremely vehicle oriented in its presentation. Despite the placement of parking lots behind buildings scaled to industry and large-scale commercial uses, one cannot help but wonder how safe pedestrians might feel in this so-called multi-modal transportation model that privileges 35 MPH, 11 foot wide lanes over bike lanes and complete streets (Lefkowitz). Nowhere in the plan can complete streets be discerned, and vehicular traffic is mostly segregated from other modes of transportation, which can only lead to this project becoming an artery for traffic from I77 to University Circle. This in
Further criticism from the CUDC at Kent State University questions the means by which design missions and goals are to be achieved. They see the plan as “highway inspired,” which will make the roadway function as a “high speed bypass, rather than an integral part of the surrounding neighborhoods”. They suggest complete and green street standards along with improvements to all intersections along the Opportunity Corridor, in conjunction with a more integrated plan for the 5 portions, as “proposed green infrastructure projects are scattered, not designed as a green space system”. In short, it is as if city planners and stakeholders picked which aspects of sustainable planning and architecture they found visually pleasing, and sporadically placed each around the Opportunity Corridor in a lackluster attempt at addressing the public health concerns that run rampant throughout the Forgotten Triangle.

Many of the criticisms of the Opportunity Corridor Project and New Urbanism as a whole are founded on their promotion of form based design codes, something in consideration for implementation in Cleveland. It is interesting to note that areas known for their reputation as gentrified, Tremont, Ohio City and Gordon Square, were Cleveland’s Urban Form District, where form based code was first implemented in Cleveland. This would seek to change zoning codes to only coincide with “compatible” development, again prescribing a good urban form from the top down. Even Jeff Speck, renowned New Urbanist, has criticized Cleveland’s bike infrastructure, and has even called upon city leaders to “rethink the design of Opportunity Corridor to produce a vibrant, urban place” (Lefkowitz).

Despite finally giving the neighborhood the attention it lacks and deserves, the Opportunity Corridor project is a near-sighted development that has the interests of those living in the area as secondary to developing more market-rate, New Urbanist inspired places. In considering the project, the question arises; do the people of the Forgotten Triangle even want
anything built in the first place? If schools and jobs were to come to these areas, whom would they benefit? And if market-rate housing synthesized with public housing is the goal, what policy moves will be made to ensure that all residents of the Forgotten Triangle get to both stay in their homes and also benefit from the increase in property values that New Urbanist aesthetics have the capacity to endow? I see potential in this project for the Land Banks to permanently remove land from real estate markets so that it can forever be deemed affordable, but the project as it is moving forward comes across to me as Smoke and Mirrors by the powers that be at prescribing planning and architectural forms as cures for social ills. Still apparent are continuing issues of environmental injustice that have persisted beyond modernist planning in the built and social fabric of the Forgotten Triangle today.

Kinsman is an extremely impoverished and neglected neighborhood that deserves a better development project than what the Opportunity Corridor proposes and will build. Median income is extremely low; average rent is increasing while home prices are decreasing. Only roughly a quarter of the population in this area occupy housing that they own, while the percentage spending more than 1/3rd of their yearly income on rent sits at a stark 50%. The Opportunity Corridor is a project that lacks a comprehensive approach to sustainability in this area, privileging form and appearance over infrastructural and systematic changes that would truly seek to help those who for decades have been confined to this area of abject poverty. In conclusion, I only foresee inequality being exacerbated by this project, but it is still too early in the development process in order to gauge what its direct effects are besides the negative impacts of the homes that will be destroyed in the construction process of this boulevard.
Chapter 9 – Conclusion and Future Directions

As a third part of my metric of comparison, beyond studying the underlying statistical data and comparing my findings with the aesthetics and appearances of these spaces, I wanted to compare inequality as a whole across these neighborhoods in conjunction with Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and Ohio’s median incomes. A large focus of this thesis project was how architecture as applied through sustainable urban design could mask the inequality and neoliberal tendencies on which it is predicated. I wanted to explore general societal inequality, and how architecture and sustainability as a whole broached this subject, sometimes conflicting in politics and practice with the missions they espoused.

As the third metric of my spatial analysis of inequality, I chose to use the GINI coefficient, a metric often used in comparing the relative inequality across populations, often in regards to income. Developed by Italian statistician and former fascist Corrado Gini, the Gini coefficient provides an index by which distribution of income in a society compares relatively to a utopian society in which there is no income inequality. It is measured from 0 to 1, with being most egalitarian and 1 being the most unequal. The coefficient can then multiplied by 100 in order to make that scale from 0 to 100. More specifically, the Gini Index can be thought of as the area underneath a Lorenz Curve, “which plots the proportion of the total income of the population (y axis) that is cumulatively earned by the bottom x%”. The space above the Lorenz curve is capped by the line of equality, modeled on an egalitarian society/ population.

While it is a good metric to get a sense of the picture relative inequality among populations, one criticism of the metric is that it is “over-sensitive to changes in the middle, and under-sensitive at the extremes,” so in response newer metrics have been developed, such as the
Palma ratio, which is currently used by the United Nations and OECD.

To give context to how Gini coefficients work and what income inequality looks like in the developed world, I’ve downloaded data from the OECD on Gini Coefficients in OECD countries, and have presented some of the data in a table below: Immediately below that is the table of Gini Coefficients that I calculated, using median income across Tremont, St Clair Superior, Kinsman, Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and Ohio as a whole. The OECD will only calculate Gini coefficients for its member countries, which is already difficult to draw conclusions from based on the abstract comparisons on which it is based.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.322 (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.354</td>
<td>0.358 (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.465 (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>0.285</td>
<td>0.252 (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.302</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gini Index - Ohio Inequality</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>22.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>21.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>19.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>22.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One can make a few speculations on inequality as a whole across these 6 populations. First, that the coefficients were trending in a good direction until 2010, before regressing entirely in 2015. The index got smaller across the decades, reaching its low in 2010 at 19.44. This seems strange to me, as one could speculate that the global recession of 2008 would have exacerbated inequality as whole. On the other hand, without delving into that data, I could see as plausible any inequality shifts being offset by negative trends overall in wealth. But then again, this conception would contradict with the systems dynamics of asset accruement in the United States, in which families that have had assets appreciating across generations and thus have generational wealth would lead these families to fare better than their counterparts in weathering recession. This calls into attention again the history of redlining and the equality denied by racist planning policy in the past.

Between 2010 and 2015, though, all of that progress disappeared as inequality reached its biggest measurement across the decades at 22.47. In comparison with the United States, as a whole, these populations score almost twice as better. This could be for a number of reasons: that Ohio, in comparison to the rest of the country, is relatively more equal in income but overall less well off, or perhaps the inverse (equal AND well off). In terms of future directions, though, I think that this metric could be explored more in depth, as it could be even more detailed by taking into account the median income for each individual census tract, as opposed to using neighborhoods as a whole as data points. However, how helpful this data would be, though, would need to be reconsidered and compared with well known neighborhoods and populations in order to get a better sense of how relatively unequal they are in terms of income, for instance by comparing them to Lakewood, Ohio City, Tremont, and Cleveland Heights, and then against other control cities outside of Ohio.

I have many takeaways from this project and plenty of future directions that I would like
to take this work in. As apparent in my progress, as I continued with the project, the scope consequently went through cycles of widening and focusing, and I feel as though I would need to conduct a much more thorough data collection and analysis in order to draw stronger conclusions. It is one thing to have strong data that backs up or proves a hypothesis; it is another to speculate on the indirect and political effects of style and aesthetics embedded into architecture and the built environment. With that being said though, I am concerned for what is happening to space and place in contemporary Cleveland’s urban landscapes. In looking at these three projects, there is reason for both optimism and pessimism. For instance, one could see the positive growth going on in Tremont, and pose specific questions of whether or not these benefits are truly coming to the neighborhood and community or reflect gentrifying populations flooding in from the suburbs. In Hub 55, one could call into question the celebration and aestheticization of white, European ethnicity in labor and industry by creating of images and empty auras that are detached from historical reality in an area that has for decades faced recession, foreclosure, vacancy and transitioned into a predominantly black neighborhood. However, one also could question whether or not the fact that this project seeks to bring fresh food and subsequently people back into an area that desperately needs them can ethically be questioned or criticized in the first place as it is one of the sole aspects of sustainability initiatives in a blighted area. Lastly, in the Forgotten Triangle, it is clear to see how the deployment of New Urbanist principles and theory are meant to drastically change a neighborhood through form and space based interventions. However, in an area where statistics have been trending in the wrong direction for decades due to neglect and environmental racism, one has to question how valid these methods of sustainability are, and whether or not they will inspire and bring about the true good society as envisioned by planners and architects.

I leave this project with optimism for what can happen in Cleveland, and hope that this
project has helped to widen discussions on sustainability and architecture, creating room for resilient, vibrant communities to partner with practicing experts to truly realize visions of neighborhoods that are designed by neighborhoods for neighborhoods. It is a difficult position to navigate – one in which the consultant, trained with outside expertise is to embed themselves in a neighborhood to which they do not belong and do not identify. In transformative participation and negotiating hope there lies a utopian, idealistic model for urban development in which the citizen as the organic intellectual has complete control over the right to the city in order to change themselves by changing their environment. However, operating within a superstructure predicated on inequality, it is difficult to find hope that such a vision could be realized. It is demoralizing to consider under the material realities of today how the public realm must collaborate with private stakeholders in order to change the built environment, perhaps with less power in the hierarchies allowed legally. However, that is not to say that all hope should be abandoned. There exists good models and case studies of just, ethical, and inclusive development that incorporates a plethora of perspectives, needs and knowledge, and one can begin to extrapolate such aspects but studying sustainable urban design initiatives such as Tremont Pointe, Hub 55 and The Opportunity Corridor in order to better understand the dynamic relationship of society, economy and environment.

Appendix - Photography

The following photographs I took on site visits that I made to each neighborhood and project in order to get a sense of place and better understand some of the dynamics around each initiative. The photographs selected represent, in my opinion, the visual aspects and
aesthetic sensibilities of the themes that I build upon previously, and should be both considered individually and as a compound of images, leaving a cohesive, singular image or meaning in the mind of the character of these projects.

Tremont - Tremont Pointe and Valleyview Homes

Across the street from the Cathedral above, this section of Thurman Avenue resembles one of the older alleyways characteristic of the neighborhood. Cottages with front-facing features crowd the cozy streetscape.

St. Theodosius Russian Orthodox Cathedral, one of many parishes organized around the turn of the 20th century. Constructed in 1896, this church is an emblem of neo-Byzantine style, depicting one of many Eastern Europe cultures in the neighborhood.

Some of the homes in the area that one might consider naturally occurring, with quaint, suburban aspects of defensible space.
Placêbe ufirs is the playboe thé
among the homel of The Tomite.
Pointt de styde insts rule
alone int act esible wilelday
futhirally ditering choicendity
off from tho wose who migb hae
the power to change it.
Lampposts and cladding displa
variation.
Looking northwards from the site where the photograph was taken above, new development abounds around the initial public housing project. This development displays Tremont’s geography. It was hard for the author not to write “campus,” as this is the take-aura. The pillars make no cemeteries nor homes together, and the pergolas serve no function.

The skyline of Cleveland visible behind the attached homes of Tremont Pointe. A novel play on shapes is apparent here in creating variation of aspects that extend the home into the street.
Above: works initially commissioned by the WPA are preserved behind glass on the side of the apartment building on the previous page.
A shot of the far southwestern corner of where Tremont blends with Tremont Pointe. Again, notice the seemingly random distribution of industrially produced cladding features protruding into the streetscape, and the meek attempts at galvanizing streetscape usage.

Another shot of the same block as above, but with the building that could be monumental cathedral seen in considered integral to the character of the area adjacent to anchor to the neighborhood, Tremont Pointe. While a New Urbanist would argue for cohesion in form, I see no such reference here.
The entrance to the Goldhorn Brewery, with a small portico. The building in its massing resembles VIP Construction to the North, allowing a visual continuity between the two.

St Clair Superior - Hub 55
A similar shot of Goldhorn Brewery at Hub 55 and its neighboring VIP construction, to which it is joined. Semersky seeks with his buildings to evoke the sense that people actually do live and work in this area.

The beer garden is one move that references nostalgia for a European ethnic enclave. The purposefully unfinished quality to the space conveys a sense of gritty authenticity and age.
A shot depicting the transition between Goldhorn Brewery and VIP Construction. This area is designated as a beer garden, extending the realm of the restaurant further into the streetscape.
Another shot of the interior of the Goldhorn Brewery. Important HVAC and functional aspects of the building are left revealed as ornament, and a large ribbon window behind the bar allows sight into the brewery.

Space reserved for the farmer’s market in warmer months.

This shot is of a skyline on St. Clair Avenue. A warehouse with a smokestack towers over other unused or vacant properties, which blend together behind a Subway restaurant.
A shot from a parking lot across the street, looking at Hub 55 and the adjacent Sterle’s Slovenian Country Home, also owned by Semersky.

Sterle’s Slovenian Country Home.
A landmark in the area.

Local Art

Noticeable is a parking lot for Hub 55 across the street, characterized by emptiness.

pergola and exterior space that pertains to the café.
The interior of Café 55, accessible from the southern accessory parking lot or from the Goldhorn Brewery. Again, functional aspects are revealed, and portals exist into sites of production.

Kinsman, Forgotten Triangle - Opportunity Corridor
Numerous churches dot the area, punctuating the neighborhood as landmarks among ample empty space.

This public library is a component in this strip-mall-like development. Binton, Bell, Carr, the community development group, occupies an adjacent office space. This turret was reimagined in the Master Plan and named after the street it sits upon. CHMA organized the Harold and Harriett project.
Vacant, abandoned space along Kinsman Road.

Another similar public housing project that exists around what could be considered the western edge of the opportunity corridor. This building represents the aesthetics that public housing emulates in order to attract the middle class.
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