

March 2018

# Policing the Riverfront: Urban Revanchism as Sustainability

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Policing the Riverfront: Urban Revanchism as Sustainability

by

Jared J. Austin

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Geography  
School of Geosciences  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

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Date of Approval:  
March 2, 2018

Keywords: Military urbanism, neoliberalism, capitalism, new Jim Crow, race, and class.

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## Abstract

An unnoticed shift is underway in the revanchist model of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2005) that is rebranding the neoliberal reorganization of space and economic growth. I call this shift “Urban Revanchism as Sustainability,” following Mike Davis and Daniel Monk (2007). In this study, I describe how Tampa elites, led by Democratic Mayor Bob Buckhorn, use politically popular discourses of ‘sustainability’, ‘walkability’, ‘bike-ability’, among others, to coopt the rhetoric and symbols of social and environmental justice as cover for urban capital accumulation. I describe how in the wake of 2008 which devastated Tampa, and in the context of the subsequent gentrification of downtown Tampa, this sustainable urban revitalization strategy is being used to legitimize accumulation by dispossession of the most sought-after land on the downtown waterfront. This ‘green’ mode of enforcing urban revanchism is a politically charged, class-based process that is based on the prior militarization of the city police and securitization of urban space, contradicting the principles of social and environmental sustainability (Agyeman, 2003). Based on ethnographic observations, interviews, newspaper reviews, and document analysis, I show how an environmental facade is being layered over exclusionary forms of racial displacement and class exploitation. As such, the rebranding of a system of militarized exclusion and displacement which amounts to a selective neo-liberal “right to the city” is being normalized across the downtown riverfront. The resulting new waterfront city valorizes individualized entertainment and consumption for elites and privileged business professionals, at the same that

it discourages collective solidarity and care among the dwindling middle- and working classes and enforces private competition among the poor and unemployed.

*“Urbanisation was and still is a revolutionary process. In the present city, however, assorted ruling classes play the revolutionary role. They initiate the drive to totalize the productive forces that colonize and commodify land”*

-Andy Merrifield (2017). Fifty Years On: The Right to the City.

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **Introduction**

An unnoticed shift is underway in the urban revanchist model of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2005) that is rebranding the neo-liberal reorganization of urban space and economic growth. This shift, which is the subject of this study, will be termed “Urban Revanchism as Sustainability,” following the work of Mike Davis and Daniel Monk (2007). The hypothesis of this study is that Tampa’s elites are using discourses such as ‘sustainability,’ ‘walkability,’ ‘bike-ability,’ and so on, to coopt the rhetoric and symbolism of social and environmental justice as a way to disguise their capital accumulation strategies. I contend that in the context of Tampa’s current wave of gentrification these elite discursive strategies are being used to legitimize urban revanchist regimes of accumulation by dispossession along the downtown riverfront. This mode of enforcing urban revanchist accumulation projects is presented to the public as a politically neutral project, but it is a blatant, class-based initiative that is predicated on the militarization of the city police and securitization of urban space which contradicts the principles of social and environmental sustainability (Agyeman, 2003). To that

end, a progressive face is being imposed on a series of policies and programs of racial domination and class exploitation. One expression of this development is the rebranding of militarized social exclusion and spatial displacement which allows for the differential neo-liberal “rights to the city” (Lefebvre, 2000), based on highly preferential forms of consumption and entertainment. This represents the final nail in the coffin of Fordist urbanism which was predicated on relatively standardized modes of consumption and entertainment in the city. Under neoliberal urbanism, the emphasis has shifted towards private competition and possessive individualism, especially among the poor and working classes (Swanson, 2007).

To ground this study, I will work at the intersection of several geographical literatures related to urban revanchism (Smith, 1996), military urbanism (Graham, 2009) and the new Jim Crow (Alexander, 2010). To that end, I will begin by analyzing the rhetorical rebranding of racial domination and class exploitation by neoliberal forces within the city through the naturalization of the removal of the poor and working classes from inner-city space and their dispossession of the “right to the city” (Lefebvre, 2000). The specific rebranding discourses I will focus on include ‘sustainability,’ ‘walkability,’ and ‘bike-ability,’ among others. The goal of these discourses is to naturalize the individualization of neoliberal class oppression and racial domination among city residents.

I draw mostly from the work of Neil Smith (1998), Mike Davis and Daniel Bertrand Monk (2007), among others, to develop a historical geographical context for the production of the revanchist city by focusing on who benefits materially and who is displaced by so-called urban sustainability projects. Davis and Bertrand’s (2007) text, *Evil Paradises: Dream Worlds of Neoliberalism*, is particularly relevant in this context. It contains several case studies of urban revanchism which are useful for exploring riverfront gentrification in Downtown Tampa. I will



also apply Neil Smith's (1996) widely acclaimed study, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, on New York City. This work is especially relevant to West Tampa, where the demolition of the city's oldest public housing complex is in progress for the sake of an ambitious downtown riverfront 'green' revitalization project. I also draw on Stephen Graham's (2009) conception of "new military urbanism" which explains how the militarization of urban space is functional to the enforcement of regimes of capital accumulation by dispossession. Against this general theoretical background, I will then explore how new military urbanism has become the dominant mode for policing the production and consumption of urban space in the revanchist city (Wilson and Sternberg, 2012). In this context, I turn to the work of Michelle Alexander (2010) to link urban revanchism to what she terms "new Jim Crow." This concept is particularly relevant to the contemporary moment as it relates to a syndrome of racially discriminatory impacts of revanchist urbanism on the civil and economic rights of minorities under neoliberalism. Finally, I briefly explore a few potential alternative futures to urban revanchism by highlighting the work of Julian Agyeman, especially *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World* (2003). His work offers the beginning of a progressive agenda for environmental sustainability, and social and economic justice in the city in contrast to the revanchist "urban sustainability" model of neoliberal urbanism that is being promoted and implemented in Tampa.

The above literatures will serve as the foundational guideposts for my research on the gentrification of the downtown Tampa riverfront under Mayor Bob Buckhorn, specifically as it relates to a single site, namely, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. This riverfront park has been anointed the heart of the "center city" in the city's new long-term master plan, the *InVision Tampa* (2012) Center City Plan. Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park is a particularly good illustration

of Tampa's emergent urban revanchism as sustainability model which places Tampa firmly within the contemporary neo-liberal moment.

As one of the most under-researched major metropolitan regions in the U.S., a Tampa case study could serve as a vital bridge for understanding neoliberal urbanization from the local to the global and the deindustrializing Northeast and Midwest to the economically booming South and Southwest U.S. Moreover, a Tampa case study has the potential to introduce fresh new insights into the extant urban literatures on "actually existing neoliberalism" (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) which is not focused on the Northeastern U.S. Tampa may yet emerge as a cautionary tale for other Sunbelt metropolitan regions that are currently dispossessing the poor of their right to the city while privileging the already rich under the guise of "sustainable urbanism." From this perspective, the case of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park might shed fresh new light on how 'sustainability' and its various conjugates have become such popular discourses for the production of entrepreneurial cities (Harvey, 1989) in the interests of neo-liberal "creative-classes" (Florida, 2002). Hopefully, the framework developed in this study will contribute to the development of alternative urban planning theories and economic models.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **Literature Review**

As mentioned above, the following literatures help to contextualize important topics such as urban revanchism, neo-liberalism, military urbanism, and new Jim Crow. The literature is organized around the central themes discussed in each work, beginning with the broader concepts of neo-liberalism in the city, and then narrowing down to policing race, space, and class in the city. These theoretical pathways serve as foundational guideposts to understand how actually existing neo-liberalism manifests itself materially in the built environment through urban revanchism as sustainability. Based on this theoretical foundation, a suitable methodological strategy and research plan was designed to study Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park as a showcase of revanchist urbanism.

#### **The Revanchist City**

In order to ground the concept of Urban Revanchism as Sustainability, it is necessary to define what is meant by the “revanchist” city. Neil Smith defined (1996) the concept as follows:

It [the revanchist city] is a divided city where the victors are increasingly defensive of their privilege, such as it is, and increasingly vicious defending it. The revanchist city is more than the dual city, in race and class terms. The benign neglect of “the other half,” so dominant in the liberal rhetoric of the 1950s and 1960s, has been superseded by a more active viciousness that attempts to criminalize a whole range of “behavior,” individually defined, and to blame the failure of post-1968 urban policy on the populations it was supposed to assist (1996, p. 222).

It is only by understanding urban restructuring in these clear terms that it is possible to appreciate how the revanchist city is one of the central achievements of the neo-liberal world order (Harvey 2012). Building on Smith's understanding, Davis and Monk (2007) identified a variety of revanchist city models mushrooming across the globe, but which all share a common structural feature which is that they are produced specifically as oases for capital accumulation and luxurious consumption for elites and business professionals, on one hand, and as dystopia to criminalize and discipline the poor and working classes (Davis and Monk, 2007). This is how Timothy Mitchell, a contributor to Davis and Monk's typology of neoliberal cities, described urban revanchism in the city of Richmond, Virginia:

What [The Supreme Court] has made clear is not only that the privatization of public space is a compelling good, but also that while citizens might have some rather restricted rights to political activity in public space, they have no right to simply hang out in the city. At minimum, we must always have a "legitimate business or social purpose"; and even then if the owners of the (formerly public) streets we wish to traverse on our way to business--delivering diapers, socializing with family--do not like us, then it is just too bad: we have no priori right to be on the streets at all. Not only did the Supreme Court trounce on the rights of Kevin Hicks; it took our rights away as well: welcome to the antiurban city in its ultimate neo-liberal glory (Mitchell, 2007, p. 218).

In other words, the neo-liberal revanchist city is a place that has commodified access to its urban spaces, policing privileged access and soliciting the agency only of those classes with sufficient social and financial capital to enjoy the right to the city and all its associated resources and infrastructures. This, I argue, is made possible through the strict codification and enforcement of anti-loitering and poverty-related bylaws and city ordinances which have led to the criminalization and the punitive policing of the urban poor. This in turn has fueled to the reemergence of Jim Crow-like (re)segregated and unequal cities of which Tampa is a paradigmatic case, albeit under the anodyne cover of 'sustainable urbanism,' as manifested in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park

## The New Military Urbanism

In order to further understand urban revanchism as sustainability, it is also necessary to go beyond policy rhetoric to make sense of the substance of how actually existing neoliberal urbanism is produced and enforced. This is where Stephen Graham's (2009) concept of "new military urbanism" is useful. This concept is only 'new' in the sense that it charts the globalization of older systems and practices of colonial militarization and brutalization of 'Third world' urban populations. These practices and supporting institutions are now emerging and intensifying under the conditions of neo-liberalism and post-racialism in 'First world' cities like Tampa. Drawing on the original conception of this process by Aimé Césaire (1972), by way of Michael Foucault (2004), Graham argues that old systems and practices of colonization and Apartheid during Cold War imperialism in the 'Third World' have created a series of "boomerang effects" back into Western metropolitan centers. Graham puts it this way:

The new military urbanism feeds on experiments with styles of targeting and technology in colonial war-zones, such as Gaza or Baghdad, or security operations at international sports events or political summits. These operations act as testing grounds for technology and techniques to be sold on through the world's burgeoning homeland security markets. Through such processes of imitation, explicitly colonial models of pacification, militarization and control, honed on the streets of the global South, are spread to the cities of capitalist heartlands in the North (2009, p. xvii).

Thus, the boomerang effects of "new imperialism" (Harvey, 2003) in the cities of the global North are a artefacts of the growing nexus between the logic of colonial era physical and market violence and the structural needs of contemporary neo-liberal cities through state violence and corporate gentrification. Simply put, it is in this manner that actually existing neo-liberal urbanism is being produced and enforced across global urban space. To this end, city police departments essentially act as the domestic foot soldiers of new military urbanism, the enforcers of revanchist practices, and the "muscle m[e]n for Big Business" and "racketeer[s] for

capitalism,” to adapt the words of Marine Corps Major General Smedley D. Butler (1931). As clear beneficiaries of these boomerang effects, the police are directly complicit in the various policies and programs of class and race making in the revanchist city (Gamal, 2016).

### **Policing and the New Military Urbanism**

What Graham’s concept of new military urbanism highlights is that in order for a revanchist city to successfully reproduce and regulate itself, it must be able to guarantee the interests of its elites and the city’s physical and infrastructural security through ever-greater police actions and surveillance programs. Thus, in the current era of urban revanchism, state, county and city police departments, as well as private security and surveillance firms, have become the foot soldiers of urban elites who are obsessed with ‘cleaning’ and ‘greening’ cities in the interest of global competitiveness and the expansion of new investment and tourist markets (Wilson and Sternberg, 2012). David Wilson and Carolina Sternberg have documented how this type of policing operates in the context of Chicago’s “global city” strategy. They state: “Under the banner of pursuing global competitiveness,” the push to promote gentrification, downtown upscaling, and cultural polishing continues unabated” (2012, p. 979). In addition, they observe:

Thereby, city actions to further regulate, confine, and isolate the racialized poor to ‘purify’ and defend downtown and gentrifying spaces was stepped up (Colias, 2004). Policing in Chicago, increasingly militarized in its strategies and tactics in the mid-1990s, came to deploy a new centerpiece—sting and shakedown tactics in Chicago’s poor communities (ibid., p. 986).

This example and among many others of intensified policing of the poor and working classes in the global revanchist city qualifies as a good definition of new military urbanism. Wilson and Sternberg also highlight two forms of violence enacted by the revanchist city which is relevant in the current context. The first is market violence that is enacted by cities elite to gentrify urban spaces and thereby make urban facilities and infrastructures financially inaccessible to the poor.

The second is physical violence by the police against poor residents. These two forms of violence are central features of the reigning methodology of new military urbanism. As I intend to show, this combination of market and state violence is central to Tampa's gentrification of the downtown riverfront and indispensable to its global city strategy. The only difference is that in the case of Tampa, market and state violence are masked by the policy discourses of "sustainable communities", "economic progress", and "market opportunity" (*InVision Tampa*, 2012).

In the context of police militarization, the finer details of implementing actually existing neo-liberal policies and programs must be understood in terms of the police themselves as "race makers" (Gamal, 2016). Beginning in the 1990's with what Neil Smith (1998) called "Giuliani Time," an entirely new method of creative destruction was employed in New York City by Mayor Rudi Giuliani. This strategy has since become an international template for other revanchist cities (Smith, *ibid.*, p. 9), including Tampa. Beginning with *Police Strategy No. 5*, Giuliani implemented what would eventually spawn a series of urban strategies and tactics for the police to "reclaim the public spaces of New York" based on their best judgement about what was exactly considered threatening to New York City's public spaces (Smith, 1998, p. 2). *Police Strategy No. 5* is best explained by Smith (1998, p. 3) himself:

*Police Strategy No. 5* was two things: first, a visceral identification of the culprits, the enemies who had indeed stolen the city from the white middle class; and second, a solution that reaffirmed the rights of the white middle class to the city. Rather than indict capitalists for capital flight, landlords for abandoning buildings, or public leaders for a narrow retrenchment to class and race self-interest, Giuliani led the clamor for a different kind of revenge. He identified homeless people, panhandlers, prostitutes, squeegee cleaners, squatters, graffiti artists, 'reckless bicyclists,' and unruly youth as the major enemies of public order and decency, the culprits of urban decline generating widespread fear. 'Disorder in the public spaces of the city' presented 'visible signs of a city out of control, a city that cannot protect its space or its children.'

Consequently, the NYPD was empowered with an enormous injection of hard power to crackdown with “zero tolerance” on any perceived threat to New York City’s “quality of life” (Smith, 1998, p. 4). Based on Giuliani’s clear imprimatur as expressed by the adoption of *Police Strategy No. 5*, the police were essentially empowered to act as physical enforcers of urban revanchism by using their “best judgement” to determine what elements among New York City’s inhabitants were “threatening the quality of life” in the city. As such, the police became direct makers and frontline enforcers of class and race-making in the city (Gamal, 2016), selectively targeting groups that were considered too poor or too ‘deviant’ to meaningfully contribute to New York City’s ‘global competitiveness.’ Through this institutional race and class making process, the police effectively ‘cleansed’ and ‘greened’ the city for the benefit of urban elites and the “rights of the white middle class to the city.” The results of this revanchist project enabled Giuliani to boast to investors that he had “demolished the last Shantytown in Manhattan” (Smith, 1998, p. 4). It was through this willful strategy of urban police militarization and securitization through a organized strategy of race and class making that Manhattan, especially districts like Times Square, eventually became the Panopticon of New York City for the poor and an oasis for the rich, thus birthing a global model of urban revanchism.

### **The Neoliberal City and the New Jim Crow**

In the context of Tampa, Stephen Graham’s (2009) notion of urban militarization against the poor and working classes resonate with discussion about removing ‘impurities,’ personified by the poor and unemployed within the downtown area, especially in coveted urban spaces such as Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and its pleasant surroundings. The presumed economic and cultural solvents for these particular social ‘impurities’ are various images and actors representing cosmopolitan whiteness, cynically wrapped in the language of ‘clean and green’



urban space. One of the mediums by which to accomplish this objective is “new Jim Crow” re-segregation (Alexander, 2010) through the dual strategy of market and state violence. Such is the origins of the urban revanchism, branded and marketed as urban sustainability. In order to accomplish this race and class project, however, the police, as the primary agents of urban militarization and securitization, are empowered to act as frontline enforcer of the specifications of urban revanchism as sustainability by ensuring that particular social ‘impurities’ are either kept out sight, or are at least firmly under control.

I contend that new military urbanism, a system that aims to exclude poor and working communities of class and color from enjoying their rights to the city, is internally related to what Michelle Alexander (2010) has termed new Jim Crow. This concept seeks to describe a series of laws and policy initiatives that actively seek to criminalize poor communities of class and color and on that basis, remove them from desirable urban spaces and residential markets and entertainment districts, without explicitly expressing or making any reference to race and/or class (Alexander, 2010). This is how Alexander described this racial re-segregation process in relation to Ronald Reagan’s 1980 presidential campaign which, according to David Harvey (2005), facilitated U.S. neo-liberalism:

In his campaign for the presidency, Reagan mastered the ‘excision of the language of race from conservative public discourse’ and thus built on the success of earlier conservatives who developed a strategy of exploiting racial hostility or resentment for political gain without making explicit reference to race. Condemning ‘welfare queens’ and criminal ‘predators,’ he rode into office with the strong support of disaffected whites—poor and working-class whites who felt betrayed by the Democratic Party’s embrace of the civil rights agenda. As one political insider explained, Reagan’s appeal derived primarily from the ideological fervor of the right wing of the Republican Party and ‘the emotional distress of those who fear or resent the Negro, and who expect Reagan somehow to keep him ‘in his place’ or at least echo their own anger and frustration (Alexander, 2010, p. 47).

Similarly, by focusing on the rhetorical recoding of otherwise racist practices by the Reagan administration, it is possible to understand how politicians under the sway of neo-liberalism have and are coopting and rebranding progressive buzzwords such as ‘sustainability’ to advance nakedly revanchist and segregationist agendas in cities. I intend to show that this is precisely what is currently happening in a neo-liberalizing, new Jim Crow city such as Tampa, Florida.

### **Urban Revanchism as Sustainability in Tampa**

Finally, in order to apply Michelle Alexander’s work to the concept of ‘urban revanchism as sustainability,’ I will briefly review one of the original definitions of sustainability, as well as how it has been coopted and redefined by neo-liberals to advance their economic and political interests. To that end, a useful starting point is the edited volume by Julian Agyeman, Robert Bullard, and Bob Evans entitled *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World* (2003). One of the contributors to the volume, Duncan McLaren, defined sustainability as “a rights-based approach that conceptualizes sustainable development in terms of access for all to a fair share in the limited environmental resources on which healthy quality of life depends” (p. 25). The editors of the above volume defined the concept more broadly. I will be using their definition to analyze ‘sustainability’ as it relates to gentrification in Downtown Tampa, and more specifically, as it relates to Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. Their definition is as follows:

Sustainability is clearly a contested concept, but our interpretation of it places great emphasis upon precaution: the need to *ensure a better quality of life for all, now and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, while living within the limits of supporting ecosystems*. In addition, we fully endorse Middleton and O’Keefe’s (2001, p. 16) point that ‘unless analyses of development begin not with the symptoms, environmental or economic instability, but with the cause, social injustice, then no development can be sustainable.’ Sustainability, *we argue*, cannot be simply an ‘environmental’ concern, important though ‘environmental’ sustainability is. A truly sustainable society is one where wider questions of social needs and welfare, and economic opportunity, are integrally connected to environmental concerns (Agyeman, et. al., 2003, p. 2).

How ‘sustainability’ ultimately materializes within Curtis Hixon Park is not only through an aesthetic rebranding of park space that gives the illusion of ‘clean’ and ‘green’ community space, but also through the rhetoric related to the maintenance and accessibility of the park itself. According to the *City of Tampa Annual Sustainability Report April 2017 Update* regarding Curtis Hixon Park, “Drainage improvements help control water runoff near the river and reduce turf damage that would require increased fertilizer use. Other improvements include better walk and drives within the park and an improved stage set up area. LED lighting was added to improve energy conservation efforts along the walkways and railings.” (2017, p.13). The city’s conception of ‘sustainability’ is precisely what Agyeman et al caution against, namely, that “sustainability cannot simply be an ‘environmental’ concern” (ibid.). Specifically, sustainability is a lot more than simply ‘walkability’ and “bike-ability’ within and around the park; it is more than the lighting of parks paths and horticultural efforts to maintain the park’s apparent greenness. Moreover, ‘sustainability’ is much more than this bit of rhetorical ‘greenwashing’ by Visit Tampa Bay:

The new eight-acre Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park features a unique urban design, *sustainable construction*, and operational features including reclaimed water for irrigation and LED lighting. Park amenities include the Great Lawn with flexible perimeter seating to accommodate a wide range of programming and performances, a dog run, a kiosk with restrooms, and a pavilion building with restrooms, park offices and space for a future vendor. There are also two interactive fountains: The Louver fountain and the Mist fountain (“Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park”).

These ‘sustainable’ projects, however, serve dualistic functions, not only to maintain the apparent sustainability of the park, but also to police it accordingly. This is highlighted by the “Riverwalk Project Frequently Asked Questions” report which states

As safety is a critical factor to the success of the Riverwalk, the Master Plan incorporates the proper lighting and design to make the Riverwalk safe. Currently, Tampa Police Officers and Tampa Downtown Partnership guides patrol the completed sections.

Provisions for surveillance cameras are being made to keep the Riverwalk a safe environment (2014, p. 6).

In this regard, the ‘sustainable’ LED lighting and navigable walkways provide visibility for Tampa’s ‘sustainable’ bike police (*City of Tampa Annual Sustainability Report April 2017 Update*, 2017, p. 79) and as I will later show, the implementation of Tampa Guides and Clean Teams which act as “Space Patrols” for key elite urban space (Eick, 2006, p. 266)

Another supposedly major ‘sustainable’ aspects of the park, according to the *City of Tampa Annual Sustainability Report April 2017 Update*, is its ability to link to the various parts of the 2.6-mile Riverwalk, providing LED lighted walkability, bike-ability, and ultimately access, to the various restaurants and activity spaces reserved for Tampa’s well to do residents and guests. (2017, p. 12-13). In this context, the park is central to the broader *InVision Tampa* (2012) redevelopment plan which seeks to position the Riverwalk, specifically the downtown urban core, as an easily walkable, bike-able, and thus ‘sustainable’ urban paradise Tampa’s consumption classes.

While the city’s conceptions of sustainable urbanism sound promising, both within the context of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and the broader *InVision Tampa* project, unfortunately, they are predicated primarily on economic interests, needs, and desires of Tampa’s elites. This approach to ‘sustainability’ falls far short of Agyeman et. al.’s (2003) conception. Actually, Tampa’s blatantly neo-liberal conceptualizations of sustainability economize the term. As such, they illustrate the critique of the political theorist Wendy Brown (2015) of corporate sustainability. She writes: “For firms and the state alike, competitive positioning and stock or credit rating are primary; other ends—from sustainable production practices to worker justice—are pursued insofar as they contribute to this end.” In other words, words like ‘sustainability’ and

'justice' are nothing more than strategies to carve out new "market niche[s]" (Brown, 2015, p. 27). This neo-liberal reformulation of sustainability enables revanchist interest groups to justify the re-allocation and re-segregation of urban space by rebuilding business districts, displacing existing residential neighborhoods, demolishing inner-city public housing complexes, and revitalizing downtown infrastructures and facilities for the benefit of affluent classes and 'new economy' business professionals. The 'green' promises which are sold to the general public is that the benefits of park revitalization and urban restructuring will eventually trickle-down to poor sections of the city and in this way contribute to the creation of sustainable urban futures for all. This process and its associated promises, I intend to show, are currently in advanced stages of implementation in Tampa in the form of multi-billion-dollar urban revitalization projects, such as Jeff Vinik and Bill Gates's "Water Street Tampa" mega-gentrification project in the Channel District waterfront and other *InVision Tampa* projects on the northern end of the Riverwalk in Tampa Heights. These ambitious gentrification projects are all being retailed to investors and high-income residents of Tampa and beyond in the name of affordability, bike-ability, sustainability, and walkability. As I will show, in reality, they are actually leading to the criminalization and displacement of the homeless and poor communities of class and color along the downtown riverfront and triggering privatization of former inner-city neighborhoods adjacent to Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park that have being rebranded and re-positioned as the putative centerpieces of a new 'sustainable,' 'walkable' and riverfront Tampa.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### Central Research Question

Against this background, the following research question was formulated to explore the neoliberal production of urban space with special reference to the revitalizing and rebranding of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. To that end, the central research question is as follows:

1. How has actually existing neo-liberalism in Tampa adapted the discourse of ‘sustainability’ as a means to encourage downtown gentrification, and how is Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park a representation of this gentrification strategy?

This question is then further explored through the following sub-questions:

1. What methods of policing, spatial or otherwise, are being used to enforce the gentrification of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park?
2. Who is directly affected by these policing methods in and around Curtis Hixon?
3. How is ‘sustainable urbanism’ being used to facilitate the gentrification of the park?

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### Methods

To operationalize the theoretical signposts outlined above and to answer the central research question and sub-questions, I employed a mixture of qualitative methods to conduct my research. They included but were not limited to interviews with private business interests that are involved in the promotion and utilization of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, and the adjacent Riverwalk.



Figure 1: Riverwalk Daytime, by Jared Austin (06/17/2017)

In addition, I interviewed a public relations officer of the Tampa Downtown Development Corporation, which is the primary institution promoting the gentrification of downtown Tampa since the mid-1980s. The Downtown Development Corporation is a key stakeholder in *InVision*

*Tampa*, the city's master plan for revitalizing the entire downtown. I also interviewed a precinct Major for the Tampa Police Department who is responsible for developing and implementing police patrols in and around Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and any adjacent spaces where riverfront development is currently occurring. The idea was to explore the nature of the relationship between riverfront revitalization and changes in policing priorities and tactics along the riverfront, and vice versa. I also relied extensively on public documents and news reports to provide a fuller context for the ongoing process of riverfront gentrification across downtown. Finally, open-ended interviews were conducted with citizens and park users to assess the impact of the gentrification of the park on their everyday lives. In order to further contextualize the qualitative interviews and my field observations in and around the park for several weeks, historical and secondary sources were also extensively used. Moreover, newspaper interviews with members of Occupy Tampa and Tampa Food Not Bombs were also used to shed additional light on the contested spatial politics of 'urban revitalization' in Downtown Tampa, what 'clean' and 'green' development means to different urban stakeholders, and who has rights of access to the newly emerging riverfront city.

## **Interviews**

For city elites (investors and developers) and policy enforcers (city planners and the police), I designed a series of questions, based on the literature outlined above, to obtain answers about the changing nature of policy and practice under *Invision Tampa* (2012) and riverfront development in particular. The questions were semi-structured in order to gain as much detailed information as possible on the regulation and governance of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. The questions were designed to maximize respondents' answers. As Kallio et. al. (2016) point out, semi-structured interviews are best employed when interviewers and respondents already have



some previous knowledge of the area and subject of study, and when interviewers are seeking to gain more formal understandings based on respondent's own knowledge, involvement, opinions, complex and perceptions of study areas (p. 2959).

Semi-structured interviews are not without their limitations, however. According to Schoenberger (1991), “[t]he respondent may also be frustrated by questions or a range of possible answers that (where these are proposed) do not apply to his or her own experience.” (p. 183). To overcome this limitation, I tried to design particular questions in such a way that they were geared to specific businesses, or organizations, in order to gain a clear understanding of their involvement in the gentrification of the study area. This strategy necessitated research on the history of each organization or business to ascertain their history in the city and their connection to the area of study. The questions were organized in such a way as to allow a coherent conversation. In some instances, I had to either re-word questions, or allow the interviewees to reinterpret questions in order to keep the conversation going.

Other limitations of semi-structured interviews “...center on the issues of interpretation, language, and meaning” (Schoenberger, 1991, p. 183) and the fact that “...interviews necessarily rely on the participants' own interpretations of these experiences and processes. The researcher is, then, necessarily placed in the position of interpreting these interpretations” (ibid., p. 183). It is for this reason that I formatted my semi-structured interview questions to be specifically geared to the occupation, industry, or institution that various respondents represented. This strategy allowed respondents to answer questions regarding the area of study in a way that reflected their institutional knowledge and involvement with the area of study. I then used the literature to interpret the meaning behind respondent's answers.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to private businesses, policy makers, and police, I also interviewed other social groups to gain a broader understanding of the impacts of gentrification, revanchism as sustainability, and policing in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. These groups included two groups of homeless residents and downtown residents who regularly patronize Curtis Hixon's amenities and other recreational and entertainment activities. The questions for these individuals were open-ended, with a series of follow-up questions. The goal of here was to gain as much information as possible about people's varied uses of the area of study.

Most of the interviews commenced with a question about how long park patrons had lived in Tampa. This allowed me to gain a sense of how much knowledge and experience respondents have in relation to certain events and actors, including the Mayor of Tampa, who is a central player in the gentrification of downtown Tampa. A similar open-ended interview protocol was employed by Hoffmann (2007) who assessed the dynamics of power relations in the workplace. She discovered that by asking open ended questions about workplace injuries across various occupational categories, she was able to determine not only the nature of the workplace for workers, but also the power relations that existed within the workplace based on how different workers grievances were handled (328-329). I employed a similar logic in my open-ended questions, which encouraged more meaningful dialogue about respondents' day-to-day engagement with Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and, as Hoffmann again points out, allowed me to gain deeper insights into various systemic issues related to how different groups were treated in the park. Based on this strategy, I discovered that it was the homeless, not other park visitors, who were the most knowledgeable not only of the park, but of the policies and practices of the Mayor of Tampa and the police department.

Some of the potential limitations of open-ended interview questions is that respondents might go off topic in a way that does not always yield useful data. In order to mitigate this as much as possible, I made sure to ask questions that would yield answers that in some significant ways were tied to the history and literature about urban spaces like Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and urban development, city policing, and the politics of sustainability in Downtown Tampa. Moreover, I also tried to find relevant issues to ask as follow-up questions based on respondents' answers and to adequately transition so that the interviews remained as concise and on topic as possible.

## **Secondary Sources**

As mentioned earlier, I also used secondary data such as government documents and reports, news articles, and relevant historical documents to contextualize and to cross- validate qualitative data collected from the field. Secondary data, as St. Martin and Pavlovskaya (2010) point out, are particularly useful for providing scale and legitimacy to a particular area of study. In conjunction, secondary data are also readily accessible for little to no cost to researchers (ibid., p. 176-179). In regards to scale: "Most secondary data, because of its extensive spatial coverage and masses of information collected, simply has no substitute. Individual researchers or even research teams could not possibly produce datasets of comparable size or scale" (St. Martin and Pavlovskaya, 2010, p. 176-177). The scale that secondary data, specifically historical documents and government resources, provided about the area of study was especially useful for contextualizing the various developments in and around Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park across various temporal and spatial scales. In terms of legitimacy and accessibility, secondary data was useful for accessing information about activists who had been policed out of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and other nearby parks Downtown. Here I am specifically referring to Occupy

Tampa which for a brief moment in 2011 tried to occupy Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. This group was difficult to interview because of a lack of organized leadership which made finding points of contact for interviews especially difficult.

Some of the limitations of using secondary sources include narrowing or reducing information related to respondents and areas of study. St. Martin and Pavlovskaya (2010) point out that “[s]econdary datasets are fundamentally partial representations. They only contain information about selected phenomena or their aspects and, therefore, always omit information about other phenomena or their aspects. The result is the effective silencing and disempowerment of processes, people, or places that are not represented.” (p. 182). This was true for my research area as well as it related to my reliance on secondary data to gain insights about the activists who occupied the area of study at the height of the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011. The same limitation applied to Food Not Bombs activists who occasionally wage campaigns in Downtown Tampa. Both Occupy Tampa and Food Not Bombs are important their interactions with the police in downtown serve as important moments in the ongoing enforcement of downtown revanchism.

### **Ethnographic Observations**

I also conducted extensive ethnographic observations of everyday activity on the riverfront surrounding Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. These observations provided me with invaluable insights regarding the day-to-day rhythms of public life in the park. They also allowed me to gain first-person information about the behavior of the police in and around the riverfront area. These observations provided useful insight into the relationship between the structure and design of the park and the nature of urban policing which sought to maintain the illusion of a

well-kept, 'clean,' and 'green' public space for and by environmentally hip urbanites. My ethnographic observations of the park were informed by my theoretical framework. This framework disciplined my observations and served to prevent visual overload about day-to-day activities in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. Allsop et. al. (2010) state that “[t]hat’s a big part of this kind of research. You have to keep re-arguing your point and reason for doing it.” Otherwise “[y]ou often feel like your research is falling apart” (p. 212). This is precisely why I kept on referring to my theoretical framework, the context of the park, and the history and literature of gentrification and urban revanchism before entering the park.

Given the overwhelming nature of ethnographic observations, other potential limitations for this form of research are primarily ethical. Li (2008) states: “Given the pros and cons of participant observation, it is difficult to draw a clear line between the ethics and the politics of ethnographic fieldwork (Murphy & Dingwall, 2002; Punch, 2000). This is because when a study aims to supply both empirical evidence and seeks to contest existing social prejudices, the research automatically becomes both praxis and advocacy (Lather, 2004)” (p. 110). Li offers a solution to this limitation by stating that:

From this standpoint, I feel that in order to conduct an ethical study, researchers must always prepare themselves psychologically and technically for the unexpected, willing to make adaptive changes in mobile field settings. The ethical and moral responsibilities of ethnographic research should not be simply aimed at eliminating covert research to avoid ethical dilemmas, but to take full consideration of the sensitivity of the research topic, the vulnerability of the researched population, and the plasticity of field membership roles (p. 110-111).

I tried to take all of these ethical concerns into consideration before entering the field. To that end, I had asked myself questions like: “While visiting the park if I were to see a homeless individual ticketed, reprimanded, or worse what would I do? How would I document this, if at all?” I also had to be constantly aware of the repercussions of my engagement with, and

observations of, homelessness in the park. The reason is that several park dwellers suffered from severe mental illness as documented in my findings. I had to consider how I might react, or document, the characteristics or episodes these individuals exhibited during my research so as to not jeopardize their anonymity, and/or lead to police crackdowns on the homeless because of my research.

Many of these questions did not have easy answers, or answers I could readily come up with on the spot, without careful consideration before entering the field. However, I ultimately decided that for the purpose of this research all respondents, interviewed, or observed, would remain strictly anonymous. Accordingly, I decided that my ethnographic observations would focus primarily on the park itself, the types of people the park attracts, homeless or otherwise, the activities they engaged in or did not engage in, and why this appeared to be the case. I also decided to observe the policing of the park, how police and policing exist within the park, and why this was the case. Finally, I made notes about park architecture and design, the role they play in how the public and the police interact with the park, as well as why the area of study is designed the way it is. In following this strategy, no mention was made of personal identifiable characteristics of any observed groups and/or individuals. I also determined that if I were to see the police engage with a patron in the park, homeless or otherwise, I would document it, but I would not engage with the activity. In addition, if an arrest was made, the date of the observation would be omitted from the research entirely to protect the anonymity of the persons involved.

It should be noted that for my research interviews, I recorded all interviews with a digital recorder and transcribed these interviews verbatim. These interviews were then coded based on the particular bracket a respondent fell under, that is, business, police, public, etc. The results were then stored on a personal laptop in password protected folders that only I, the principal

researcher, had access to. The only person the transcribed interviews were shared with was my advisor. For my ethnographic observations, I documented notes into a field journal that was stored in a secure space in my office at home. The typed documents were also stored on a password protected folder and the contents were only shared with my advisor.

Before delving in to my findings and analysis, including the information collected via interviews, secondary sources, and ethnographic participant observations, it is necessary to provide a brief history of the area of study, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, including its architecture and landscape. This is essential for providing context to the data I have collected on the park and its various actors.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### **Tampa's Riverfront Development: A Brief Historical Analysis**

“The City of Tampa has been consistently shaped over the decades by its relationship with water.” (“The Tampa Riverwalk Master Plan”, 2006, p. 7) This is how a 2006 Tampa Riverwalk Master Plan began what has become the magnum opus of riverfront investment in the City of Tampa since the idea of riverfront development began in the 1970's. As the above quote indicates, the Tampa riverfront which runs along the Hillsborough River that channels through the downtown metropolitan region has long been considered a central economic resource in Tampa's urban core. Beginning in 1975, then Tampa, Mayor Bill Poe, proposed the idea of a Riverwalk that would be aesthetically pleasing to Tampa residents, while simultaneously encouraging private investment along the riverfront (“A Brief History of the Riverwalk”). Accordingly, Mayor Poe sponsored the development of a Riverwalk which was initially constructed with wooden planks that were funded by wealthy donors whose names were inscribed on each plank (“A Brief History of the Riverwalk”). Due to competing municipal interests, however, the project was halted, and the riverfront revitalization project was effectively abandoned until 2003 (“The Tampa Riverwalk Project Frequently Asked Questions”). This was when Pam Iorio mounted her mayoral election campaign to reenergize riverfront revitalization (“Pam Iorio - 57th Mayor Of Tampa”, 2014). On April 1, 2003, after winning the mayoral election, Iorio inaugurated a new era of riverfront development under her direct leadership.



The major goals of the Mayor Iorio administration were defined by five strategic goals that were formed the basis of her election promise to revitalize the city of Tampa (“Pam Iorio - 57th Mayor Of Tampa”, 2014). These goals were as follows: “investing in neighborhoods, economic development of our most challenged areas, creating a residential community downtown, efficient city government focused on customer service, and establishing Tampa as a city of the arts.” (“Pam Iorio - 57th Mayor Of Tampa”, 2014). Interestingly, Iorio’s first measures to “invest” in Tampa neighborhoods and to economically “develop” the most challenged areas of Tampa were incredibly revanchist measures. Mimicking some of the most revanchist neo-liberal exemplars in the U.S., such as in Giuliani’s New York City (Smith, 1998), Iorio authorized crackdowns on petty drug crimes through “aggressive” community policing in an effort to first “clean up” the city (“Pam Iorio - 57th Mayor Of Tampa”, 2014). As her own official biography on the City of Tampa’s Mayoral History webpage states:

Since her first month in office there had been a crackdown on street level drug dealing. The chief of police implemented aggressive community policing, which resulted in a dramatic improvement in the crime rate. The city was cleaned up through invigorated code enforcement and there was an emphasis on neighborhood improvements. (“Pam Iorio - 57th Mayor Of Tampa”, 2014).

The objective of these measures was to brand Tampa as a destination for big investments that otherwise would not have been possible while poor, disenfranchised communities inhabited public spaces and resided in prime downtown locations close to the waterfront that Iorio had earmarked for riverfront revitalization.

Shortly after Iorio’s war on drugs and related efforts to “clean up” Tampa’s urban spaces and residential neighborhoods, the process of economically ‘revitalizing’ began. Again, according to her biography on the City of Tampa website, after her citywide crackdown on drugs and a program of aggressive community policing:

Tampa had continued to grow, attracting new businesses in a highly competitive environment. Mayor Iorio had made the attraction of new business a priority. In 2004, working with the Tampa Chamber of Commerce, the county and the state, Tampa was selected for the expansion of Depository Trust and Clearing Corporation, a major Wall Street firm. 2004 also saw AACSB, the international association responsible for accrediting college and university business schools, select Tampa as their new home. (“Pam Iorio - 57th Mayor Of Tampa”, 2014).

By embracing a downtown revanchist template, the Iorio regime started to seriously promote and develop the riverfront in a way that continued to attract massive capital inflows into the city. Certain segments of the public were also courted, especially those deemed ‘fit’ to enjoy the emerging riverfront with aesthetics that appealed to patrons of the arts and environmental constituencies. This strategy finally culminated in a new cultural approach that prioritized riverfront revitalization projects under the guise of ‘arts and riverfront environmentalism.’

At the center of what was branded as Tampa’s “Cultural District” in Iorio’s 2006 Riverwalk Master Plan was a new district that was intended to showcase Tampa’s historical, cultural, and artistic capital. The lynchpin of this new district was Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park (“Riverwalk Master Plan”, 2006). While the process of connecting the park to the Hillsborough River and to the rest of downtown and eventually to the old industrial Channel District on the southern end of downtown was not completed until after Iorio’s successor, Mayor Bob Buckhorn, took office in 2011, the primary vision for connecting the riverfront through an aesthetically pleasing arts district with open green spaces and blue waterfront spaces began with Iorio’s riverfront vision of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park (“Riverwalk Master Plan”, 2006). Iorio did everything in her power to ensure that the park was fully redesigned and reconstructed during her tenure as Mayor. Indeed, she would later take credit by stating: “Curtis Hixon ... was our big project, the Tampa Museum of Art, the Glazer Children’s Art Museum, all of that.” (Moody, 2016). The two museums were encompassed within the grounds of Curtis Hixon Waterfront

Park. It is a telling historical irony that the park was renamed after the 45<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Tampa who, like Iorio, made it a point to crack down on street crime after assuming office in 1943 (“Curtis Hixon - 45th Mayor Of Tampa”, 2015). During his tenure, Mayor Curtis Hixon increased the training of city police even though the treasury could not keep up with the demands of its citizens (“Curtis Hixon - 45th Mayor Of Tampa”, 2015). This is a fitting back story to a park that under Iorio, but especially under her successor Bob Buckhorn, became the center of Tampa’s revanchist neo-liberal policies.

Mayor Iorio’s legacy can best be summarized as the mobilization of private investment on behalf of Tampa’s riverfront which then laid the groundwork for her successor, Buckhorn, to intensify the privatization and gentrification of the riverfront. To be sure, Iorio’s efforts were focused on the formulation of and reinvestment in riverfront development that culminated into the completion of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. Bob Buckhorn, on the other hand, has led the charge of turning Tampa into a feeding frenzy for private investors and land developers. To that end, after becoming mayor in 2011, Buckhorn successfully streamlined the permitting and regulatory process to entice private investment (“Report from the Mayor’s Economic Competitiveness Committee, 2012, p. 4-5). This strategy attracted more than \$3 billion of new capital investment (Flamer, 2017) into downtown Tampa, opening the city up to international markets under the guise of international investment in “small businesses” (“Mayor Bob Buckhorn Biography”, 2017). A key moment in this investment strategy was Tampa Bay’s hosting of the 2012 Republican National Convention (RNC) which Iorio and a metropolitan growth coalition managed to lure to the city. This mega-political event not only broadcast the city’s plans for a new riverfront to the world, it also served as a massive promotional campaign for further privatization schemes across downtown. Significantly, the RNC provided Tampa with

military grade police hardware and surveillance technologies that was intended to crush any resistance from Republican Party protesters and to shape a future investment landscape.

Nothing, however, was as monumental in recent Tampa history than Mayor Buckhorn's *InVision Tampa* (2012) master plan. This plan has intensified the redevelopment of the downtown riverfront across three areas, namely, The Center City, The West Hillsborough Corridor, and the West River district. The most important of the three is The Center City Plan which is not only the hub of Tampa's riverfront business district, it also integrates the greater *InVision Tampa* project as a whole, allowing for an easily navigable playground for big business and gentrifiers alike. The implications of this vision of downtown's future, however, is conspicuously absent from local policy discussions or news coverage. The reason is quite simple: the success of *InVision Tampa* is predicated on the displacement of poor communities of class and color that have historically lived in neighborhoods adjacent to the riverfront. In order for Iorio's Cultural District, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, as the City Center Plan to bear fruit, these communities would have to be completely banished from the downtown riverfront. One-way Buckhorn and the downtown elite are doing this is through rebranding their riverfront gentrification plans under the guise 'sustainable urbanism' and the cover of 'the arts' and a concern for 'the environment.' This integrated discursive strategy has effectively obscured the deeply discriminatory impacts of riverfront 'revitalization' on the urban poor by taking a progressive conception such as 'sustainability' and twisting it into a revanchist one.

In the broader historical context of Tampa's riverfront redevelopment, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park has got to be one of the most, if not the most, insidious element of Tampa's urban revanchism. As previously stated, it is not insignificant that this park bears the name of a former Mayor who placed urban policing and 'cleaning up' Tampa's streets above far more

pressing public concerns during a recession. It is also worth noting in this context that Mayor Hixon was found to be personally invested with the mob, among other nefarious activities which were aimed at personally enriching himself, the then Tampa police chief, and other members of Tampa's elites (Pittman, 2016). Again, this is a fitting backstory for a park which currently serves as the centerpiece of downtown revanchism, except this time for the mobsters of big capital who have cleverly managed to mask their neo-liberal backroom deals with fig leaf of 'green' and 'blue' urbanism as embodied by Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. The park's revanchism is clearly visible in the treatment of non-elites by city police, ranging from the physical intimidation and eventual expulsion of Occupy Tampa activists in 2011 (Stevenson, 2011) to the official mistreatment of homeless people who on countless occasions have been forcibly removed to less desirable public parks such as Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park. However, even this park has now been demolished to make-way for additional riverfront multimillion dollar development projects such as Tampa Heights' "The Heights" project by SoHo Capital (Carlton, 2017). Other revanchist programs in this context include the unveiling of a downtown 'sustainable' bikeshare program into and among several downtown parks as part of the broader corporate push to rebrand Tampa's riverfront as a cyclist's paradise (Danielson, 2014). A telltale sign of the class nature of this biking program is the fact that patrons need credit cards to access the bikes which themselves are cheap to rent. This bike sharing program is particularly ironic for a city that was exposed through a scathing investigative report by two local journalists who documented systematic racist policing by the Tampa Police Department. The reporters documented how city police disproportionately ticketed black bicyclists at such an alarming rate and frequency that it prompted an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2015 (Polom, 2015).

The racist and classist realities lurking underneath the shiny surface of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park are troubling indicators of the deeply revanchist history of the park and how it has continued to be developed for the benefit of Tampa's elite interests. The park's placement within the context of the broader riverfront development project is perhaps the most significant element of its revanchist history. The park serves as an easily navigable node in the larger neo-liberal project that currently conditions *InVision Tampa*. Both the park's location and its putative environmental virtues and architectural aesthetics have allowed for a riverfront project that has effectively been emerging since the 1970's. It is now ready to assume centerstage on behalf of an increasingly classist and racist city elite that is only interested in generating investment opportunities and surplus value for Tampa's already wealthy elites. Their agenda is being promoted under the cover of trendy appeals to 'sustainability' and the urban aesthetics of cosmopolitan whiteness. Given the history of Tampa's riverfront development and Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park's role in that history, however, it is not difficult to see why the park has been and continues to be such an important Trojan horse with which to mesmerize the general public that Tampa is engaging in a genuine process of social and environmental justice, while city elites are busy stripping the poor of their actual right to the city.

## CHAPTER SIX:

### Curtis Hixon's Vigilant Architecture

Much like its history, the park's architecture and design are riddled with features that make it a perfect illustration of the intersection of neo-liberal investment and urban revanchism under the ideology and aesthetic of sustainability. The park was designed by Thomas Balsey, a New York based architect and founder of Thomas Balsey Associates, who has designed several parks in other metropolitan cores that seek to connect the various corridors of urban business elites under the guise of sustainable civic public space (2012 Award of Honor - Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park). In 2012, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park was given the Award of Honor by the Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects with this accompanying statement:

This project is a perfect example of the full range of sustainability measures (social, economic, environmental, and cultural) available to landscape architects. Here, the team has adopted familiar measures, such as the use of native plantings, greenwall, dark-sky initiative lighting, low-emission interactive water feature, locally harvested building materials, pervious paving, and high albedo paving; but also used the project as the city's first pilot for a reclaimed wastewater reclamation and treatment program. The team has demonstrated that downtown parks can reverse the forces of sprawl into our natural environment (2012 Award of Honor - Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park).

The award committee went on to state: "Why is this space so special? It has touched the lives of thousands and become the 'center' in which they meet and celebrate and to which they point with pride" (2012 Award of Honor - Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park). This so-called 'sustainable' architecture, however, does not make Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park a center of sustainability for Tampa as much as it makes it a center for unfettered capital accumulation. This is precisely why

Adrian Welch (2010) of e-architect declared Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park the “Crown Jewel” of Tampa’s waterfront revitalization (read: gentrification). The park is only ‘sustainable’ in so far as it fulfills the need for more revitalization of the riverfront in the hope that prominent appeals to environmentalism and cultural heritage will spur further investment and at the same time mask the expulsion of the poor not just from the park, but from all riverfront spaces that are considered vital to the broader interests outlined in *InVision Tampa* (2012).

In addition to the ideology and aesthetics of ‘sustainable’ environmentalism in the overall design of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, the use of sustainable ‘cultural’ aesthetics also plays an important role in the overall architectural appearance of the park. Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park has often been described as the “front lawn” of the Tampa Museum of Art and Glazier Children’s Art Museum, implying that it is the architectural and cultural ‘green space’ to Tampa’s version of an art district (Welch, 2010). This so-called ‘art district’ includes the Straz Center for the Performing Arts which is connected to Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park via the downtown riverfront walkway, a walkway that itself is infused with architectural artistry and murals that show off a cultural aesthetic that is embodied by the park and ultimately by riverfront development as a whole. In conjunction with the park and surrounding area’s proliferating murals, elaborate design features, performing arts centers, manicured green spaces, and expertly curated art museums is a dedicated group of enterprising developers, planners, and businesses that are actively involved in the daily business of riverfront gentrification. At the center of this hive of activity is Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, ensconced in a typical neoliberal ‘stakeholders’ model of urban development, with an endless list of riverfront gentrifiers and “friends of the river” plaques adorning the length and breadth of the riverfront walkway as it snakes its way to Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. Beyond each light post which illuminates the walkway are



corporate signs declaring ‘brought to you by...’ which invariably references power elites or refers to some safely sanitized historical marker. This way, the architecture of the park creates the illusion among inhabitants not familiar with Tampa’s deplorable racial and economic histories, including the revanchist history of the Riverwalk project, that downtown riverfront gentrification represents the not only the celebration of the city’s glorious past, it also signifies a firm commitment to strengthening the city’s culture and promote its environmental sustainability. This culture of sustainability, however, is promoted only insofar as it serves the corporate and financial interests of those “stakeholders” whose names so prominently adorn the Riverwalk. Their names on the walls, benches and other architectural surfaces of the park and the Riverwalk serve as constant reminders to everyone else of their power and influence, that is, to whom the park and the adjoining waterfront ultimately belong.

This subtle narrative of power continues throughout the park itself. The amenities celebrate the revanchist history that led to the parks formation. Embedded within the park’s structures are footnotes of design that if not analyzed carefully do not stand out to park patrons as anything other than a modern artistic memory that is embedded in the park’s landscape for public consumption. However, if one takes into account the motivations behind the design of these structures, the park’s primary purpose becomes much clearer. Thus, along a section of the Riverwalk that coincides with the park, where one will typically find many of the park’s patrons enjoying a stroll, a run, or a bike ride, one will also encounter benches that have bars positioned in the center of them, these features are cleverly designed to create the appearance of arm rests for both leisure and rest. However, from personal experience and from my field notes this design makes for an uncomfortable experience as evidenced by frequent complaints from visitors about the odd positioning and the separation the bars impose on people sitting on the benches. Studies

show that this particular design is intended to keep homeless patrons from being able to stop and rest comfortably on the bench, or at all (Flusty, 1994; Davis, 1995; Gregory and Pred, 2007). The same design logic shapes the rest of the amenities in the park that could be used for restful leisure. In other words, the park's architecture is deliberately designed in ways that induce uncomfortable experiences so that patrons, especially the homeless, are encouraged to move quickly throughout the park, or leave the park altogether. So much for sustainable living.

In addition to these “interdictory” (Flusty, 1994) amenities, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park also features elements that are meant to create the illusion of cultural architecture. One unforgettable example of this was a chalkboard that was clearly intended to foster the appearance of “people’s art” to which patrons could regularly contribute. It was as if the park was not only designed by and for the public, but that the public itself was instrumental in infusing the park with its cultural content and artistic edge. Conveniently placed on both sides of the chalkboard, however, were two revealing metal signs that were bolted to the chalk board that read: “This area is under constant surveillance.” This sign was a pointed reminder to the public that the idea of the ‘cultural arts’ in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park by and for the people would be tolerated for just as long as the people did not appear too suspicious.

The conditions of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, both historically and architecturally, are neither unique to neoliberalism, nor are they the first of their kind even in Tampa. The degree to which both conditions coexist in the park, however, are important not only in terms of what they represent in the broader *InVision Tampa* project. They are also important in terms of the discourses surrounding a global phenomenon that urban geographer Asher Ghertner refers to as “Rule by Aesthetics” (2015). The relationship between Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and the neo-liberal *InVision Tampa* project fits neatly into Ghertner’s concept of “rule by aesthetics” in

the sense that making the park appear environmentally ‘sustainable’ with its ‘green’ architecture, or culturally significant with its ‘appreciation’ and incorporation of the arts, and its modern appearance and design conforms with “global city” narratives. This global aesthetic enables the appearance of a pleasing and progressive city while simultaneously connecting the most revanchist elements of the city’s development projects to one another in ways that separate the poor and vulnerable from their right to the city.

Curtis Hixon is also an example of “megamallification” (Sorkin, 1992). This concept refers to growing corporate strategy of connecting business and financial districts, gentrified neighborhoods, and pseudo-historic spaces to one ‘cultural’ center while creating the impression that they are accessible to the general public. The net effect, however, is the eradication of the traditional notions and uses of public space (ibid.). As Don Mitchell (2003) has stated: “The production of public space-the means through which the cry and demand of the right to the city is made possible-is thus always a dialectic between the ‘end of public space’ and its beginning” (p. 35-36). Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park through its history, architecture, and neo-liberal geography is a good illustration of this claim. In short, it represents the end of public space and the beginning of revanchist corporate spaces in downtown Tampa.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN:**

### **Results and Analysis**

#### **Ethnographies of InVision**

On June 30, 2017, I visited Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, eager to observe day to day social interactions occurring in the park and along the adjacent Riverwalk. This was the beginning of several observations during the Summer of 2017 to aim of which was familiarize myself with the material conditions of the park and the behavior of its inhabitants. It was a Friday evening, shortly after dinner time and a brief rain shower, and the park brimmed with young couples of all ages and cultural backgrounds. It is reasonable to assume that these couples had either just returned from enjoying dinner, or watching a movie and felt that Curtis Hixon Park was the best place to visit given its well-lit and walkable infrastructure. One couple I interviewed stated that “walkability” is what drew them to Tampa as a whole and that “the whole walking and everything” was something they really loved about the park and Tampa. This sentiment was shared by other couples in the park who from the time I entered the park till the time I left continued walking through the park, never sitting for more than a few moments.

This idea of ‘walkability’ that seems to define the park, however, is by design but not in a way that could reasonably be said to benefit patrons’ leisure. Instead, it encourages quick and effective movement through the park. As intimated earlier, this feat is accomplished by the employment of various amenities that are designed in ways that are exceptionally uncomfortable to sit in for more than a few minutes. The park’s structures deliberately encourage the movement

of the patrons throughout the park. This point became apparent one particular evening when I noted in my field journal that the seat I was sitting on while carrying out a portion of my observations was so uncomfortable that I was constantly shifting positions to the point where I even contemplated sitting on the pavement. Evidently, I was not alone in this sentiment as several couples and singles who sat near me on adjacent park benches left shortly after sitting down and continued walking around the park before leaving. As mentioned earlier, the benches have metal bars wedged in the middle, giving the illusion that they are designed for two people to sit next to each other undisturbed. However, for couples, it seemed to completely erases the possibility for intimacy based on the fact that I did not observe any couples throughout all of my visits who were sitting on benches in the park or on the Riverwalk. Strangely, they all seemed to ‘prefer’ walking instead of sitting in the park.



Figure 2: Riverwalk Bench 1, by Jared Austin (06/17/2017)



Figure 3: Riverwalk Bench 2, by Jared Austin (06/17/2017)



Figure 4: Curtis Hixon Bench 1, by Jared Austin (06/30/2017)

This type of enforced or coerced walkability that is embedded within the very fabric of the park is as I have suggested earlier engineered into the amenities and structures of the park for two primary reasons: to keep the public in a constant state of movement and consumption, and at the same time to prevent homeless patrons from lingering in the park for extended periods of

time. This example is but one instance of neo-liberal fortress urbanism (Davis, 1990) that defines Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park's infrastructure. It forces its patrons to be in a state of constant motion so that they are only inhabiting the park for the amount of time it takes to get to another restaurant, art museum, or perhaps pay for a ride on the Pirate Water Taxi service. This expectation is even reflected in the type of parking around the park, which is either pay by the hour in the adjacent parking garage, or two-hour maximum parking on the streets near the park. In terms of controlling the homeless, the majority of the park's amenities are placed in highly visible open spaces, typically on or near the Riverwalk. This design feature makes any chance of sleeping or relaxing on park amenities impossible for the homeless who would surely be noticed and therefore thrown out. As noted in one of my journal entries: "All benches and sitting structures in the park are clearly designed to prevent someone from laying down on them. Metal chairs were also chained to their respective table." This observation was confirmed by a homeless individual who stated that he was "trespassed," which is slang for receiving a warning from the police that one is trespassing on 'public' property, for sleeping on a park bench in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park.

The walkability of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and the amenities that exist within the park are not the park's only defining feature, however. At the center of the park's design is a massive courtyard consisting of green space that connects the various walkable pathways in the park's core to the Riverwalk, the Tampa Museum of Art, and an adjacent geometrically intricate green space in front of the towering Sykes building and adjacent buildings in the downtown core. All of these green spaces pay homage to the 'clean' and 'green' aesthetics the city's elite are so fond of employing in their representations of the park and the broader riverfront development as a whole. In fact, these 'clean' and 'green' spaces have not gone unnoticed. Pointing to a general

trend, one couple visiting the park noted in conversation that one of their favorite aspects about Curtis Hixon was that it was “Clean! It’s clean, its open, its fresh.” This sentiment was repeated by a mother and daughter who stated: “Yeah, it’s always clean we’ve never had any issues with people and when they have events here; it’s always pretty straightforward and fun.”



Figure 5: Curtis Hixon Greenspace 1, by Jared Austin (06/17/2017)

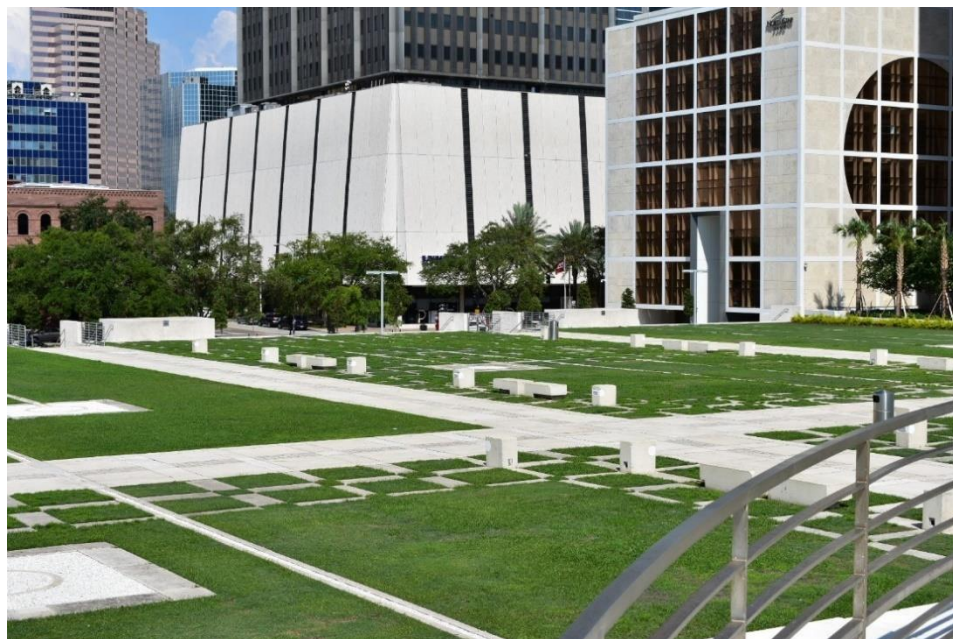


Figure 6: Curtis Hixon Greenspace 2, by Jared Austin (06/17/2017)



The environmental aesthetics of the park, however, only runs so deep with some patrons. When asked what their least favorite thing was about Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and Tampa was, a visitor from Dunedin remarked: “I’m going to have to go with the water pollution within this [Hillsborough] river.” The same visitor then followed up by stating his favorite thing about the park: “I would say the waterfront park has been done nicely. It’s definitely a nice park, they just have a huge issue with runoff and how the [Hillsborough River] water is overly polluted.” This particular patron was referring to the Hillsborough River which the Riverwalk is built on top of. This infrastructure is often responsible for garbage falling into the adjacent river that is already filled with unusual levels of particulate matter that prevent visibility beyond a few inches. All this occurring while Mayor Buckhorn boasts that “this [the Hillsborough River] is a catalyst for change in this city. What you are looking at right now, this river, is going to change this downtown as we know it” (O’Brian, 2012). What he really meant is this: “The Riverwalk will allow us to showcase our riverfront and become a catalyst for private sector development” (O’Reilly, 2012).

The apparent environmentalism encompassed by the geography of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park appears to be equally matched by the ongoing degradation of the Hillsborough River through increased automobile traffic near and around the river as result of Buckhorn’s push for more private sector redevelopment and construction on the riverfront (Martinez, 2014), as well as traffic on the river by pirate water taxis which picks up Curtis Hixon patrons for rides on the Hillsborough. The mayor has stated that “Adding activity to the waterfront, adding restaurants, adding bars and adding the ability to move up and down the water is going to be critical” and that “[a]new water taxi service I think fits perfectly with what we’re trying to do” (Reaves, 2016). Clearly increasing traffic on a major environmental resource for Tampa with

diesel boat engines illuminates the *InVision Tampa* doctrine that “Tampa’s future as a sustainable waterfront community is bright” (*Invision*, 2012, p. 25).



Figure 7: River Taxi, by Jared Austin (06/17/2017)

The apparently ‘clean’ and ‘green’ spaces of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park are not its only major aesthetic features. On one Sunday evening after dinner time, I visited the park and noticed an overwhelming number of families of color. This ‘multi-culturalism’ was noticed by other park patrons. In fact, the same couple I initially interviewed who said that their favorite aspect of the park was that it was “clean”, “open” and “fresh” also noted that the park “[l]ooks like it’s for a multitude of different people, like its geared towards different demographics, not just one demographic in particular.” This type of aesthetic legitimizes the notion put forth by the broader *InVision Tampa* project which puts heavy emphasis on the importance of culture and diversity as it relates to Tampa’s broader economic development strategy. This multicultural aesthetic, however, is exactly that; an aesthetic.

Throughout my observations of the ‘multi-culturalism’ apparent in the diversity of park patrons, it became very clear that while latter were in fact quite diverse culturally and racially, the range of interactions among patrons were not. Virtually no interactions occurred between strangers while I visited the park, raising questions about the ‘multi-cultural’ façade of park’s sociology. On one particular evening, a homeless individual was on the Riverwalk asking for spare change, which is extremely rare occurrence given the visibility of police in the park. The homeless individual was ignored entirely by everyone he spoke too and I am not even sure it was entirely because he was homeless, because his appearance did not suggest homelessness. Since the very beginning of my observations, all park patrons were extremely standoffish and refused to speak to anyone outside of their immediate social circle they came in contact with, including me. Not surprisingly, people refused my requests for interviews because they were either “in a hurry,” or were “not interested,” which they blurted out even before I could explain the purpose of my study. This reticence was peculiar given their evident lust to be served goods and services by the vendors on the Riverwalk. This anti-social but pro-consumer behavior was explained as follows by one patron who when asked what more the city could do with the park: “I think we could use a few more little kiosks or little things, doesn’t have to be like liquor but you know just selling ice cream or you know just interacting with some of the local people who have retail, or who are looking to get up and running with some of their own pieces or businesses, just vendors and stuff like that.” It is as if civic interaction has been reduced to commercial transactions, nothing more, and nothing less.

Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park is not the beacon of multi-culturalism that it has promoted to be given the pronounced degree of neo-liberal individualism and avoidance of interacting with strangers as expressed by park patrons. In fact, several weeks of intensive participant observation

in and around Curtis Hixon Park suggest the park is mimicking an aesthetic of community and providing the illusion of an organic Tampa ‘community’ that in actual reality is a juxtaposition of socially isolated consumers who appear unable to interact with strangers in public. The park’s multi-cultural façade does not hide the fact that the park itself is both a medium and an outcome of neo-liberal individualism that wears the mask of multi-cultural ‘community’ and ‘solidarity’ while actively if subtly negating both.

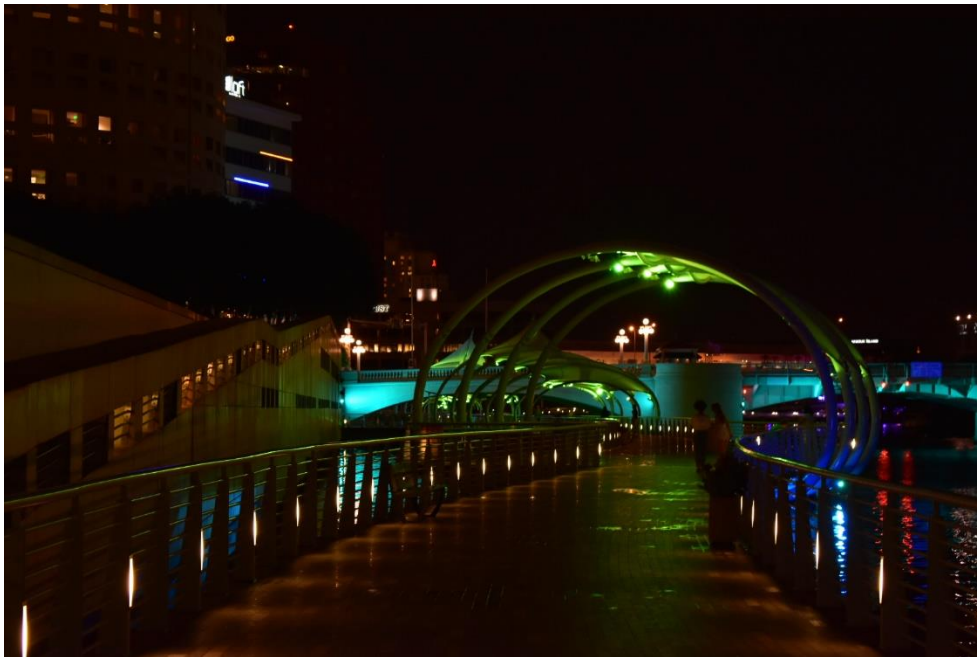


Figure 8: Riverwalk Nighttime, by Jared Austin (06/30/2017)

### **Riverfront Expulsion?**

Perhaps nowhere do the neoliberal aesthetics of the park unravel as much as into their various corporate actors and businesses which are involved in the management of the park. One such institution is the Downtown Development Corporation that, according to a spokesperson I interviewed, aims to be a “steward” of Downtown Tampa for the people that “live, work, and play” in Tampa. The Downtown Development Corporation has been at the forefront of economic

design and policy innovation for various projects in the Downtown core, especially in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. According to the spokesperson for the Downtown Development Corporation, the role of the institution in Tampa, and more specifically its primary goal, or objective is as follows:

It's really just to be a steward of Downtown Tampa, so we serve the people that live, work, play, learn, including you at the University, so we just want to make sure that we are an operative, so we actually do management services for Downtown. So, while we are technically a business improvement district, we are also an economic development corporation where we promote Downtown as far as investment, you know kind of emotionally so that people are emotionally invested in Downtown and feel good about it, but also that we want to bring investors to downtown so that it's a diverse and vibrant place to come.

So what type of “emotional investment” does the Downtown Development Corporation engage in on behalf of the patrons of Tampa? Central to this ‘emotional investment’ are several key annual events, including the Mayor’s “Food Truck Fiesta,” and “Rock the Park” in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. I attended both events and immediately noticed two things: no homeless people and a consistent police bike patrols. Another favorite which falls under the Downtown Development Corporation’s ‘emotional investment’ strategy is an event called “Yoga in the Park” which attracts hundreds of downtown residents every Sunday to the central lawn of Curtis Hixon for an early evening stretch. It is this type of “emotional investment” that gets people “excited” about the park and Downtown, according to the Downtown Development Corporation.

According to the Downtown Development Corporation, business is booming in Downtown Tampa because of all the aesthetic investment in “culture” and an “excitement” economy. According to its spokesperson, anything that is “activating the riverfront” is “great and that’s where I think a lot of the focus is going.” The spokesperson then followed this up with this:

Everyone is looking at waterfront property and Tampa's really a great place for investors because we just have all this open land, we have all this great area for them to invest in. So yeah, any development is a way to bring more people downtown to experience the lifestyle, experience all the different opportunities that we have, like the arts and culture and just all the activities that we provide so yeah anything to get more bodies down here is wonderful.

Citizens who can afford this downtown waterfront property couldn't agree more. One woman who just moved to Downtown Tampa and was visiting Curtis Hixon stated: "I mean I'm from Boston and my husband is from Baltimore and so we love being around cities along the water and this is just really cool."

With all this "emotional investment" in and "activation" of the riverfront, Curtis Hixon Park, and the Downtown district as a whole, the one question which needs asking is this: investment for who and for what? The Downtown Development Corporation in particular, which prides itself on being a "steward" for Tampa is only concerned with residents so long as they drive or contribute to economic growth. By contrast, the Downtown Development Corporation's only environmental stewardship, especially relative to the Hillsborough River adjacent to Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, is that it drives economic investment and attract developers to "all this open land, we have all this great area for them to invest in" in Downtown Tampa. This seems the only genuine care the Downtown Development Corporation has for 'green' space is that it attracts the gentrifying classes to downtown for Yoga events, to bring their dog to the park for afternoon strolls, and to consume their way through the pop-up restaurants which are attracted to the riverfront. As Merrifield (2017, p. 7) states: "Urbanisation was and still is a revolutionary process. In the present city, however, assorted ruling class play the revolutionary role. They initiate the drive to totalize the productive forces that colonize and commodify land" and in this regard "[u]rban society has been reduced to *the progressive production of evermore frackable spatial units*" (p. 8).

These elements of neo-liberal urbanism and environmentalism are integral to the “management” services the Downtown Development Corporation provides to the City of Tampa. The most visible aspect of this management service is the Tampa “Clean Team” which is responsible for ‘cleaning’ and ‘greening’ the downtown district, especially in and around Curtis Hixon Park. The Clean Team was described as follows by the Downtown Development Corporation’s spokesperson:

Also, the Tampa Guides and Clean Team they are really our eyes on the ground, our boots on the ground, so they are always very aware and when they notice activity they always notify the TPD [Tampa Police Department] on that, and that’s in regards to suspicious activity, or unsafe things like a cracked sidewalk, so they are always very aware and we report all of those to the TPD.

In this regard, ‘cleaning’ and ‘greening’ is not only a mode of attracting investment and development, but also a means to police the city and look for any ‘suspicious activity’ or ‘unsafe things’ which we can safely assume include the poor and homeless who may be harboring in the shadows of Tampa’s “activated” and “emotionally invested” in riverfront. This ‘green’ policing strategy, or what the legal scholar Volker Eick (2006) has referred to as “space patrols” whereby non-profit agents act as “para-policing” agencies, has become more common place in cities across the world since the advent of neoliberalism in the 1980’s and early 1990’s (p.266).



Figure 9: Curtis Hixon Surveillance 1, by Jared Austin (06/17/2017)

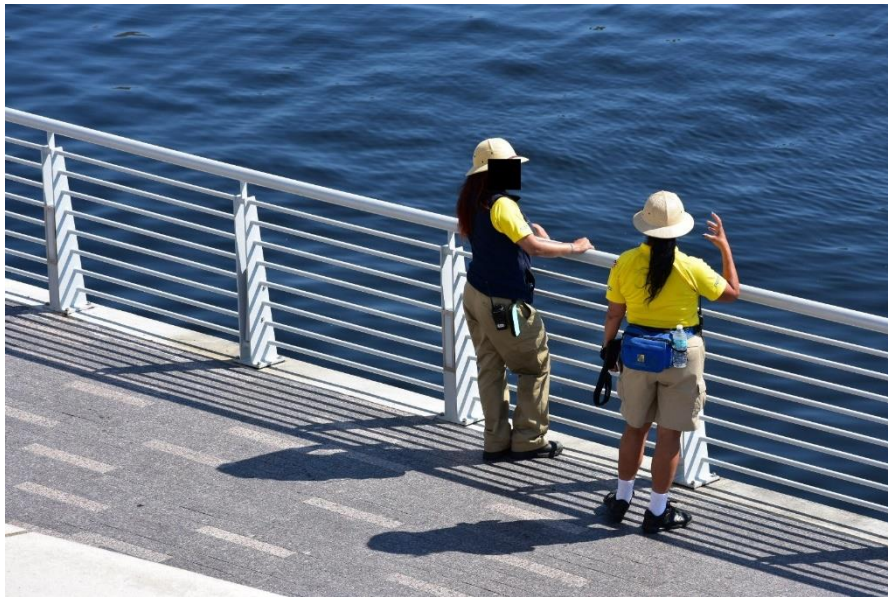


Figure 10: Curtis Hixon Surveillance 2, by Jared Austin (06/17/2017)

Perhaps there is no better illustration of urban revanchism as sustainability than the direct use of people who are charged with city beautification as “boots on the ground.” As the military metaphor of boots on the ground implies, the Downtown Development Corporation’s “Tampa Guides” and “Clean Team” are tools for both covert and overt city policing, making Curtis Hixon and Downtown Tampa as a whole aesthetically pleasing for dogs and yoga practitioners,



and for cracking down on loitering and other “suspicious activity” and various class-based offenses. This environmentally cloaked anti-urbanism (Mitchell, 2007, p. 218) is highly popular with downtown gentrifiers. According to the Downtown Development Corporation: “We also have great relations with the residents and they will call us and say ‘hey this person has been loitering in the corner’ and then we will contact the TPD on their behalf.” While these examples of vigilant urbanism define contemporary urban revanchism as sustainability in Curtis Hixon Park and in the Downtown district, it is silent about the physical and environmental degradation associated with the fire sale of undeveloped land around the Hillsborough River to increase consumer traffic and to stimulate economic investment in the downtown core.

### **Policing Sustainability: Tampa’s Military Urbanism**

Urban revanchism as sustainability in the context of city policing is highlighted further by the way in which the rhetoric of ‘green’ spaces in Downtown Tampa, specifically Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, legitimizes the kind of urban policing by the Downtown Development Corporation and the Tampa Police Department. The center of the park where patrons engage in “Yoga in the Park” on Sunday evenings serves as a means of “excitement,” “emotional investment” and “cultural” engagement with the park for well-to-do downtown residents, on the one hand, and as a panopticon of spatial policing and repression for the homeless residents of downtown who are often charged with loitering and trespassing in the park, on the other. When asked why they never enter the open green space that serves as Curtis Hixon’s park square, one homeless person replied:

Well one of the reasons is you don’t want to be a target for the cops. If they come through here and they see you down there, for instance, they will question you, but if you’re just sitting up here not doing anything they’re not going to say anything. But if you go down in that area, especially in the children’s area, yeah you don’t want to be down there.

Another homeless individual, when I asked for further clarification on what the terminology “trespassed” entails, stated: “If you don’t look like you’re a homeless person you could throw a blanket out there and lay down and they don’t say anything, but if you’re a homeless person with a backpack and you lay down and they catch you falling asleep, they will trespass you six months to a year out of the park.”

While Curtis Hixon as a sustainable panopticon has served to spatially contain and deter the homeless while simultaneously generating the illusion of an environmentally hip and culturally open center for “exciting” riverfront gentrification, the park has also served as a battleground between local protesters and the police during the nationwide Occupy Wall Street movement. In 2011, following the tailwinds of the Occupy Wall Street uprising in New York City, Occupy Tampa emerged to protest the city’s housing and financial crisis. One member of the movement explained the reason for the group’s protest as follows: “I’ve learned that our government and the people that live in this country have completely abandoned an entire class of people” (Cherkis, 2012). Another Occupy activist, aged 77, stated: “‘I’ve had a great life, an easy life,’ he said. ‘But my grandchildren and great-grandchildren won’t have it that easy’” (Warner, 2011). Such sentiments were common among Occupy activists nationwide, and drove their commitment to end corporate greed in the United States after the 2008 financial crisis. This sentiment, however, was not shared by the Tampa Police Department who shortly into the Occupy campaign rounded up and arrested 29 activists in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park for the same crime plaguing the homeless in Tampa’s ‘public’ parks: trespassing (Green, 2011). These types of trespassing arrests resulted in costly bails and affected members of Occupy Tampa throughout the duration of its protests in downtown Tampa (Reyes, 2011).



Figure 11: Curtis Hixon Occupy Tampa, by Allesandra Da Pra (10/30/2011)



Figure 12: Occupy Tampa March, by Chris Jasurek (11/25/2011)

The extremely aggressive policing of protesters in Curtis Hixon continued after the end of Occupy movement, almost up until the national protests against Tampa's hosting of the 2012 Republican National Convention (Cherkis, 2012). During the convention, the Tampa Police, in partnership with several other surrounding police departments and sheriff's deputies, displayed

the full caliber of its military might, by cracking down on protesters, the homeless, and any other ‘suspicious’ activities with the use of activist infiltration techniques and mass surveillance technologies, especially in regards to activist leadership (Danielson, 2015). The force enacted by the Tampa Police Department included military grade submachine guns, digital surveillance helicopters, S.W.A.T. teams and even tanks (Khalek, 2012). In what seemed like an overnight securitization of Downtown Tampa, like many cities across the U.S., Tampa began to resemble Baghdad in the eyes of its police force, and Curtis Hixon became the ‘green zone.’ One *Tampa Bay Times* article reported: “Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, the city's showpiece on the Hillsborough River, is being reserved as a social spot for conventioners during the Republican National Convention — not as a rallying point for protesters” (Danielson, 2012). This putative ‘public’ park had been securitized inside the “Event Zone” for all the visiting dignitaries and political patrons enjoy, while citizens and protesters were safely relegated to three parks which were designated by Tampa’s security apparatus to “free speech zones” for the vocal masses far away from the convention center (Danielson, 2012).



Figure 13: RNC Tampa Police 1, by Steve Nesius (08/27/2012)



Figure 14: RNC Tampa Police 2, by Tom Pennington (08/27/2012)



Figure 15: RNC Tampa Police 3, by John Hudson (08/24/2012)

A more recent instance in which a similar form of aggressive policing was exercised by TPD was not in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, but in Lykes Gaslight Park. This park was considered a more 'secure' space for protesters during the 2012 Republican National Convention because of its proximity to the Tampa Police Department. In early 2017, activists with Tampa

Food Not Bombs decided to feed vegan friendly meals to the homeless in the park in Downtown Tampa (Varn, 2017). After food distribution began, Food Not Bombs was informed by a Police Lieutenant: “You got 30 more seconds in which to take the table down or these folks will go to jail” (Varn, 2017). When they did not comply, seven activists were arrested, prompting the group to accuse the mayor and the police department of the “criminalization of compassion” (Varn, 2017). Once again, their crime was grimly familiar: “trespassing.” The real revanchist tale lies in the details, however. One homeless individual I interviewed in Curtis Hixon Park who was present during the arrest of Food Not Bombs activists stated:

Well the problem of Food Not Bombs started with an employee of the Parks Department. He was giving everyone a hard time and I think he called the police [on Food Not Bombs] and the police came and told him he [Parks Department employee] couldn't take pictures, because he was taking pictures of the homeless and ridiculing them, and this is a person who works for the city and everything, and the cop told him you can't do that you can't just take their pictures without their permission, or something along those lines, but the guy obviously had some clout because the police's whole thing changed and they ended up arresting some of the people from Food Not Bombs, but you know it was just a small thing; it just got blown out of proportion.

The Parks Department employee was never identified, however, but if this story is true, it shows just how far up the chain of the city's command structure the authority to arrest, and to humiliate and ridicule activists and the homeless, goes as it relates to parks and policing in Tampa.

### **Private Development and the Securitization of the City**

While Lykes Gas Light Park is by no means a “Center City” (*InVision*, 2012) park on the same level as Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, the policing that has recently occurred there as it relates to activists is part of a broader legacy that defines the formation and centralization of Curtis Hixon Park and the ‘cleaning’ and ‘greening’ of public parks in downtown Tampa. Across city parks, the effort seems to be to crack down on the poor and those protesting inequality. This

spatial cleansing of the urban poor is enforced to give the illusion of keep the city environmentally sustainable, safe, entertaining, and edgy so as to better connect the various “archipelagos” of “privileged urban enclaves” (Graham, 2010, p.9). The increasingly militaristic spatial displacement strategies and tactics in and around Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park have not go unnoticed or unappreciated by Tampa’s private business interests.

One prominent Riverfront business that is adjacent to the ‘public’ Water Works Park which is also located on the Riverwalk north of Curtis Hixon is no stranger to using and rewarding police officers who actively ‘clean’ and ‘green’ their park spaces. One representative of the business stated: “We have a great relationship with TPD [Tampa Police Department], the city council gives a police officer of the month award and we go and give them a gift card because we appreciate what a tough job they have and how much we rely on them.” The reliance on the city police to keep the homeless out of their park is especially great considering the number of well-to-do patrons who regularly visit the establishment, and take strolls through the park with their wine as they take in the park and the river’s aesthetics that pay ‘cultural’ homage to the Native Americans who once inhabited the riverfront. This was of course before the arrival of Hernando De Soto, and later the Seminole Indian Wars, which eradicated or displaced these same Native Americans who are now being eulogized on the riverfront (“History of the River”). Today, the displacement that takes place in riverfront locations like Curtis Hixon Park has also been greenwashed by the police, policies, and programs whose intent it is to preserve the parks as ‘pristine’ spaces. When I asked one homeless individual if he ever goes to the Water Works Park, he replied: “They [the police] have been running people off. If you carry a book bag they automatically look at you and that you’re homeless.”

It is worth remembering that all of this is occurring in a ‘public’ park which effectively serves as a direct six-million-dollar public subsidy to a private restaurant and its rich patrons. As a representative of the restaurant stated: “The Water Works Park opened up the week before we did. It was an equally abandoned piece of land, but when the restaurant owner’s family decided to put six million dollars into building the restaurant I think the city decided they should do something to, so they put 6 to 8 million dollars into the park so that’s been great.” The same representative later followed this up with this statement: “The owner is fond of saying that when he decided to put that much money into a dilapidated building [now the restaurant] that everyone including his wife and his CFO said he was crazy, but we kind of helped spur the boom in Tampa Heights and it’s very exciting to see everything that’s happening here.” With the aid of public subsidies which accelerated riverfront gentrification, the policing practices that have been utilized disproportionately against the poor in public park space have elevated Tampa’s role as a fast-emerging revanchist city in the U.S. which is committed to producing a riverfront city for business elite and the rich.

Restaurants, however, are not the only corporate institutions singing the praises of the Tampa Police Department as they crack down on those without “legitimate business or social purpose” on Tampa’s riverfront (Mitchell, 2007, p. 218). A fairly new boutique hotel that sits adjacent to Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park describes its brand as: “Made for a younger traveler who is very well connected, who loves the arts in all forms, whether its music whether its actual art that you can see hanging there, so the brand is very unique.” When I asked a hotel representative about their relationship with the Tampa Police Department, he stated: “Yeah, it’s a great relationship, we have a really good relationship. We supported them with some donations from our hotel, so yeah it’s good.” This representative continued: “We know that they’re within



eye sight of the building so we just happen to have a great relationship with them. I happen to know a few of them personally as friends here in downtown so they do a fine job for us.” The only complaint this hotel representative had with policing the riverfront and the broader Downtown was in regards to safety, stating that: “I can go to downtown St. Pete and enjoy a Friday or Saturday night and enjoy a night out even with my family, it’s safe. I’d like to see more of that here in Downtown Tampa and I think it’s coming. I think it will be a plus and people will drive into Downtown Tampa and spend money here.”

Here ‘safety’ is conceived as the influx of capital which in turns yields greater returns from the Tampa Police Department. The police department seems to agree. A police major I interviewed stated:

Anytime you concentrate on an area and its growing and its more populated, with businesses and things like that, that’s a positive for citizens and the police, because criminals take over areas that are dilapidated and nobody is there, minimal citizens are around and they take over those parts. When you build businesses and you build apartments it grows and moves the bad elements out of that area.

These “dilapidated” spaces that “criminals take over” act as training grounds for the type of policing implemented in gentrified spaces, such as Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. In this regard, Stephen Graham (2010) states: “No longer is the simulation designed to explore outright urban annihilation through total war. Now the purpose is to hone skills of occupation, counterinsurgency warfare, and urban remodeling via expeditionary, colonial war” (p. 186). One notable example of ‘urban remodeling’ which the abovementioned police major mentioned that highlighted what Graham describes as forms of tactical urban control and occupation is the North Boulevard Homes public housing projects near the riverfront. The major stated matter of factly that: “[b]ack in the 90s we had civil unrest in the public housing [North Boulevard Homes], so we got closer with the community, started doing things in the community, foot patrol and things

like that, and that benefited us from then till now.” This “foot patrol” was part of a program called Quick Uniform Attack on Drugs (Q.U.A.D) policing that sought to crack down on drug crime in poor Tampa communities, especially communities of color, and it effectively led to the occupation and securitization of the public housing complex close to the river. The police major even boasted of the final results of this type of policing, stating: “I mean I’ve been here since 1985, and when I started we had the public housing squad which patrolled public housing. We used to have seven total, now we have only one left.” What the major failed to mention was that these squads were eventually reduced due to the reduction of public housing units. North Boulevard homes is currently being demolished to make way for *InVison Tampa* (2012) and the “West River Area Redevelopment Master Plan (January 2014)” which aims to rebrand the areas as “sustainable,” “mixed-use,” and “mixed-income” housing (p. 4-6).

This transformation of ‘run down’ and ‘dilapidated’ neighborhoods to culturally hip, ‘clean’ and ‘green’ spaces in downtown Tampa is cause for more manpower by the Tampa Police Department. This will result in even more militarized urbanism, defined as spatial policing for the rich against the poor. The Tampa Police Major mentioned above informed me that: “[i]n the future I could see us looking to put more man power out, because Downtown Tampa is growing, the riverfront, everything is growing.” This man power currently exists in the form of bike patrols that utilize Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park’s ‘bike-ability’ to secure the park. When I asked the major what types of disturbances they typically deal with in the park, he replied: “We deal a lot with the homeless. They are sleeping in the parks and things like that, but we don’t have any major disturbances. We make sure they don’t disturb people trying to enjoy themselves.” This most interesting part of the major’s reply was his attempt to defend military urbanism by appealing to liberal conceptions of social justice:

We have two homeless liaisons and, they try and get them homes, try and get them housing and they do that with everyone they come in contact with, because we don't just lock people up. You cannot arrest away crime so we try and find a way to solve the issues without making an arrest. Arrest is the last resort. So that's the only concern we have really is the homeless in parks downtown, because sometimes they like to take over the parks.

This was the same sentiment I heard from the Downtown Development Corporation's representative who stated: "Well of course downtown homelessness is an issue to be addressed and our guides and our clean team interact with that quite frequently. We have an individual at the Police Department who handles homelessness, and this officer makes sure they are okay and do they have a place to stay?" Here once again the Clean Team and City Guides were mentioned as interacting with the homeless at the same time that the crack down on the urban poor is swept under the rug by liberal attempts by the Tampa Police Department to 'assist' the homeless. Revanchist, militaristic policing, and other forms of attacks on the urban poor once again find themselves in a cozy relationship with all sorts of claims about urban sustainability which in the end benefit elite rule.

### **Police as Policy Makers: Revanchist Tampa and the New Jim Crow**

Clearly, Tampa Police are no strangers to enforcing policies that disproportionately target poor people of class and color, but historically, and certainly today, their legacy is defined by their ability to make and shape policy as well. In the 1980's, when inner city neighborhoods were being targeted with militarized drug raids (Alexander, 2010, p. 73), the Tampa Police Department pioneered its own uniformed drug squads to wage war on inner city communities.

As the same Tampa Police Major put it:

When I started most of the crime was out, it was out on the street corners. Then we started developing a plan to deal with that, so we started our community policing squads, our QUAD (Quick Uniform Attack on Drugs) squads. So that eliminated some of that

street level narcotics and crime like that. We also did more foot patrol and stuff like that. That started in 1985 and we continued it.

Here it should be noted that Tampa's QUAD community policing still exists today, according to the major. This community policing strategy is different from policing strategy described by Michelle Alexander who states: "Law enforcement must adopt a compassionate, humane approach to the problems of the urban poor—an approach that goes beyond the rhetoric of 'community policing' to a method of engagement that promotes trust, healing, and genuine partnership." (2010, p. 221).

The "community policing" advocated by the Tampa Police Major was, and is, merely a rhetorical rebranding of a hyper-militarized, racist form of policing that cracked down on communities of color, especially in Tampa's public housing. One of the more infamous case occurred in 1989 when racial tension surrounding this form of policing came to a head. It began when a local drug bust in the College Hill public housing units led to the death of a young black man while he was in the custody of two white officers (*Report of the Joint Fire/Police Task Force on Civil Unrest*, p. 23). This event led to a youth uprising in public housing communities over the injustice. This situation was further enflamed because of great racial inequality which manifested itself in the fact that a quarter of Tampa's black community lived in public housing projects. This dire situation was exacerbated by a joblessness rate among black youth which was "critically high" (*Report of the Joint Fire/Police Task Force on Civil Unrest*, p. 22-23).

This was neither the first or last major uprising in Tampa public housing communities over civil injustice, or police violence in the context of the war on drugs. According to Tampa police officials, this is no longer an issue in Tampa and the war on drugs police tactics of the 1980's and 1990's is no longer necessary given the expulsion of communities of color from

Tampa's public housing projects, as noted previously. According to the police major mentioned earlier, these tactics are also no longer necessary because of increased "community engagement." He stated: "We have more contact and community engagement, we do different things with the community too. We have community meetings, community conversations, we have our citizen academy, our youth academy to teach the citizens more about what it is the police officers do and how we operate." This would imply that the Tampa Police Department is making a concerted effort to listen to the communities they serve, as well as those who are currently, and historically, disproportionately targeted by their policing efforts. The problem with this rosy worldview is that the evidence paints a different picture.

One major example of the lack of "community contact" and "community engagement" by the police that shook up Tampa's downtown in 2015 came after a scathing report by the *Tampa Bay Times*. This report was later echoed by the *Washington Post* and the American Civil Liberties Union that the Tampa Police Department was disproportionately targeting black cyclists, especially black men, in Downtown Tampa with ticket citations and stop and frisk tactics. The *Tampa Bay Times* article states:

In the past three years, Tampa police have written 2,504 bike tickets — more than Jacksonville, Miami, St. Petersburg and Orlando combined. Police say they are gung ho about bike safety and focused on stopping a plague of bike thefts. But here's something they don't mention about the people they ticket: Eight out of 10 are black (Zayas and Stanley, 2015).

It is worth pointing out this was happening at a time when one of the central tenants of the city's *InVision Tampa* (2012) plan was to make Downtown Tampa more 'bikeable,' 'walkable,' and overall more 'sustainable.' It is also deeply ironic that the report exposing the police came out shortly after the unveiling of Tampa's bikeshare program in the city's most 'bikeable' park, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, where Mayor Bob Buckhorn stated:

"I am thrilled to launch Coast Bike Share, and I cannot wait until the bikes roll out on the streets in April. Bike sharing programs like ours are an easy, affordable, and healthy mode of transportation," said Mayor Bob Buckhorn. "Coast Bike Share is part of the equation in continuing to attract new jobs and young professionals, who want livable cities with amenities like this that improve their quality of life." ("Mayor Buckhorn Announces Coast Bike Sharing - Announces program name, launch of website, proposed locations, and sponsorship opportunities," 2015).

Clearly, however, Tampa's bike-ability does not improve the "quality of life" for all residents, and as noted previously, the most 'bikeable' spaces in Tampa, especially Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, are most notably 'bikeable' for the Tampa Police Department who regularly patrols the area.

Given the rhetorical commitment of the Tampa Police Department to rebranding itself as an agency that is gung ho about "community policing," one would assume they would also listen to the communities they serve as it relates to community policing. This, however, is not the case. Mayor Bob Buckhorn in conjunction with the Tampa Police Department formed their own Citizen's Review Board, which includes corporate executives ("Give Citizens Review Board a Chance to Work," 2016), in direct contrast to a civilian appointed board to hold the Tampa Police Department accountable for instances such as the implementation of "Biking While Black" laws (Morelli, 2016). As it currently stands, the review board is made up of eleven people, four of whom are selected by the City Council, five of whom are selected by the Mayor, and two alternates, who are also selected by the Mayor (Morelli, 2016). Mayor Buckhorn refused to meet with the NAACP on this matter, even after a scathing review by the Department of Justice which indicated that Tampa's bicycle citations and stop and frisk tactics did in fact disproportionately target minorities (Morelli, 2016). Here again, we witness urban revanchism as sustainability as it embeds itself within Tampa's power structures and its built environment, where the poor communities of class and color are physically and spatially policed, as well as

segregated from the urban core, all in order to make way for urban ‘redevelopment’ and ‘resilience’ projects that champion the efforts of ‘sustainable’ bike shares and accessible downtown biking networks, such as those found within Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park.

## **The Architects**

The various phases of neo-liberal spatial creative destruction that is currently metastasizing across Downtown Tampa are not being engineered for private development out of thin air, but at the behest of Mayor Bob Buckhorn as stated in previous sections. However, the scope and scale of this development is as much the doing of private developers and Buckhorn’s predecessor, Mayor Pam Iorio. Nevertheless, as the current mayoral incumbent, Buckhorn gets all the credit and, therefore, also all the blame. One riverfront restaurant owner accredits Buckhorn not only with the formation of his restaurant, the same restaurant which received a six-million-dollar subsidy in the form of a public Water Works Park, he also credits him with implementing the broader Riverwalk project that emerged around Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park.

As far as our restaurant is concerned, it was they Mayor’s plan, the Mayor’s administration that put out the RFP for that building [the water station turned Restaurant], it’s a city building, so the mayor was able to put out an RFP and when it was awarded to our owner, as we’ve seen, it really jumpstarted the growth with Tampa heights, so I think that was forward thinking and while their Riverwalk has been a concept and partially completed for forty years, it was his [Mayor Buckhorn’s] administration that finished it.

Here, the gentrification of Tampa Heights, as the restaurant’s representative put it, began with the Mayor’s desire to push forward the request for a proposal not only to establish a restaurant for a millionaire family, but also to come to the table with millions in park subsidies to benefit the patrons of the restaurant.

The Downtown Development Corporation has stated in regards to both Mayor Buckhorn and former Mayor Iorio:

I mean Buckhorn was there, is there, to see the final installment of the Riverwalk and I mean it continues to grow. They both [Buckhorn and Iorio] did fantastic jobs on bringing investors to downtown and again making Tampa, well I don't know about making Tampa, but showing that Tampa can be great and really encouraging that development, and just making it a friendly place to do business. So, I think they both have contributed a lot to our work and again they are both great supporters of our organization and we're supporters of them and their role to.

When I asked whether or not both Mayors' policies were good for Tampa by establishing public-private partnerships, the representative of the Downtown Development Corporation stated: "And to your other question, of course their policies are great I think they have both done fantastic work for downtown Tampa and I think it's pretty obvious and you can see all the investment and growth and just in the opportunities they've made available to the city. Visitors alike have really seen the change." Here "great policy" is defined by the ability of both Mayors to stoke private investment and securitize space, a theme common in cities across the U.S., especially since the turn of the Reagan era.

It is not just the private sector that has developed a fond relationship with Mayor Buckhorn, and former Mayor Iorio. The Tampa Police major also spoke fondly of Mayor Buckhorn and Iorio, stating:

I've known Mayor Buckhorn since I first came on and he was working for the City. He worked for Sandy Freedman and so he was always in the community so we have a perfect relationship. We talk to him daily and he holds all of us accountable. Iorio it was the same. They backed us on everything and we worked as a team. We had Dick Greco before them and same thing, we worked as a team. They were all pretty much the same in relation to policing.

These Mayors certainly did work as a team, and in fact it was Mayor Sandy Freedman, Mayor Buckhorn's former mentor, that instituted Tampa's war on drugs. According to her official profile on the City of Tampa's official website, Sandy Freedman is described in the following way:



Mayor Freedman started two specialized task forces to halt the escalating crime rate caused by drugs: one dealt with illegal aliens who had organized drug operations in Tampa neighborhoods; the second targeted repeat offenders. During her administration, "crack houses" were knocked down. Within four years she had increased the size of the Police Department by more than 20 percent. This increase in police officers substantially reduced the response time to reported crimes and provided more officers to patrol the neighborhoods. The increased police force also enabled the Police Department to form the nationally acclaimed Q.U.A.D. Squad (Quick Uniformed Attack on Drugs). (Sandra Warshaw Freedman - 55th Mayor of Tampa, 2015).

Mayor Freedman was Mayor not only during the infamous U.S. War on Drugs, but the ensuing Tampa uprisings and civil unrest that required further crackdowns and police repression in poor communities of color. Freedman's focus was to ostensibly reduce crimes associated with the perceived "crack epidemic" that was perpetuated by U.S. corporate media and the Reagan administration. To quote Michelle Alexander:

Most people assume the War on Drugs was launched in response to the crisis caused by crack cocaine in inner-city neighborhoods. This view holds that the racial disparities in drug convictions and sentences, as well as the rapid explosion of the prison population, reflect nothing more than the government's zealous—but benign—efforts to address rampant drug crime in poor, minority neighborhoods. This view, while understandable, given the sensational media coverage of crack in the 1980s and 1990s, is simply wrong. While it is true that the publicity surrounding crack cocaine led to a dramatic increase in funding for the drug war (as well as to sentencing policies that greatly exacerbated racial disparities in incarceration rates), there is no truth to the notion that the War on Drugs was launched in response to crack cocaine (2010, p. 5).

Given the effectiveness of the Tampa Police during the 1980's at cracking down on the poor in Tampa as noted in previous sections, and given the reality that it occurred under the Freedman administration that Buckhorn was a part of, it is no shock that today under Buckhorn's administration many of the same policing tactics have returned, only this time updated in ways that give the illusion of spatial freedom, while simultaneously enacting a spatial cleansing of the poor in Tampa. One homeless individual I interviewed in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park when asked what areas he noticed being policed the most aggressively and vigilantly stated: "Curtis Hixon Park and especially bridges down past the library." When I asked why, he replied:

“Buckhorn. I’ve actually had some of the police officers give me a heads up and say "Bob's on the war path against the homeless, he wants them all pushed out of downtown".” When I asked why he believed this to be the case, he again replied: “I guess it’s some of the homeless don’t make such a good impression and he’s trying to make Tampa the vacation destination and having a homeless guy laying out on the sidewalk doesn’t really give a good impression.”

In Buckhorn’s revanchist city, clearly aesthetics is everything. The development and maintenance of ‘cultural greenspaces’ such as Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, and the Tampa Water Works Park, are predicated on the removal of social impurities with the intent to secure private development and investment. His tactics come from a long history of downtown revanchism that discriminates on both race and class lines, but as so many have said, it was the “Buckhorn Consensus” (Bosman, 2018) who put the gears into motion to finally secure the riverfront for private investment in ways not seen in Tampa’s past. While Iorio may have been influential in jumpstarting this process through the construction of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park as the center of ‘cultural’ development in Tampa (“Riverwalk Master Plan”, 2006), it was Buckhorn and his vision, or rather *InVision Tampa* (2018), that completed the Riverwalk with the intent to secure the architecture and ‘green’ spaces of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park for the elite, positioning the park as the primary node of connection within the Center City (*InVision Tampa*, 2012) that links the various neo-liberal economic geographies within Tampa’s broader *InVision Tampa* project.

## CHAPTER EIGHT:

### Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the historical and material conditions of Downtown Tampa's urban revanchism that have led to its newest neo-liberal formation which I have called urban revanchism as sustainability. This analysis could only be completed by answering the following central research question: **How has actually existing neo-liberalism in Tampa changed over time to adapt sustainability as a way to encourage downtown gentrification, and how is Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park a representation of this gentrification?** This question was then divided into a series of sub-questions that needed to be answered in order to further assess this broader question.

The first sub-question was: "What methods of policing, spatial or otherwise, are being used to enforce the gentrification of Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park?" which was answered by interviewing the following groups: The Downtown Development Corporation, The Tampa Police Department, and homeless individuals who frequent Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. As noted by the Downtown Development Corporation, spatial policing is primarily enacted on behalf of the corporation by the "Clean Team" and "Tampa Guides" who are the "boots on the ground" for the corporation. As stated previously, they make sure the 'riff raff' and other deprived classes are not visibly present within Curtis Hixon, or at least not disturbing the approved patrons in the downtown core. This objective was shown to be completed under the guise of 'cleaning' and 'greening' the park. Tacking on to this particular form of spatial policing, it was uncovered from

the Tampa Police interviews and the homeless interviews that spatial and physical policing in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park is typically enacted by the bike patrol officers that navigate Curtis Hixon's 'bikeable' spaces who cite the homeless with trespassing warnings, or outright arrest. This was also the case with activists, as was demonstrated with Occupy Tampa, in order to maintain Curtis Hixon's neo-liberal "Event Zone" and "Activation Center" landscape for Tampa's resident and visiting elite. These of course were shown to be the same "bikeable" geographies that can land you a ticket, or an arrest, if you are a black patron on a bike, as noted by the uncovering of Tampa's Downtown "Biking While Black" policing practices. Finally, as noted in my ethnographic observations, homeless interviews, and architectural history of the park, the supposed "green spaces" of Curtis Hixon Park are designed to be open spaces that provide visibility to both the cops and assigned "space patrols" (Eick, 2007, p. 266) within the park for more effective policing.

The second sub-question that was used to further analyze the central research question for this study was: "Who is directly affected by these policing methods in and around Curtis Hixon?" This answer is clear: the poor of class and color, and the business elite. As noted by my interviews with the homeless and the police, and the secondary resources related to Occupy Tampa and Tampa Food Not Bombs, the appearance of homelessness in a park can get you trespassed from a public park for up to six months to a year. Additionally, activism in public parks that aims to assist the homeless or call out income and wealth inequality is also subject to arrest. Finally, if you are a minority on a bicycle, as previously noted, or in a surrounding public housing project, you are subject to racist and classist "community policing" that has been firmly embedded in Tampa's policing policy since the Reagan years and the implementation of the current neo-liberal order. Policing in Tampa, however, as it was uncovered by my interviewing

of the Tampa business elite and a representative of the business improvement district, does not affect everyone in the same way. As noted by the representatives of these organizations, they have great relationships with the Tampa police department, donate to the Tampa Police Department, and even have alliances with them. This was supported by a Tampa Police Major who stated: “We have a liaison officer who goes around and meets with the businesses, business watch, business alliances, we have social media.” And why wouldn’t they? The police have been the most effective force at spatially and physically securing the riverfront and its associated parks for the downtown elite and the patrons of their businesses as my interviews indicated.

Finally, the last research sub-question that was used to further analyze and dissect my central research question was: “How is ‘sustainable urbanism’ being used to facilitate the gentrification of the park?” This question was partially answered through an extended interview with the Downtown Development Corporation and an analysis of the *InVision Tampa* (2012) masterplan, both of which make reference to Curtis Hixon and the riverfront project as a whole as being maintained as ‘clean,’ ‘green,’ ‘sustainable,’ ‘walkable,’ ‘bikeable,’ ‘cultural,’ and other such buzzwords which have become commonplace in neo-liberal environmentalism. This brand of ‘sustainability’ is an aesthetic project which primarily aims to commodify and accumulate capital in the downtown. This question was further answered by my interviews with the Tampa Police and homeless individuals who shed light on the realities behind the efforts to ‘clean’ and ‘green’ the park. The answer: revanchist policing tactics, private or otherwise, that expel the poor in order to maintain the environmental aesthetics of park space in Tampa for the elite and gentrifying classes. Moreover, this question was also briefly highlighted by the Downtown Development Corporation’s reference to “Yoga in the Park” as a cultural indicator of the parks inclusivity and “excitement” for inhabitants of the park. The cultural aesthetics of the park,

however, were also deconstructed by analyzing what appeared to be the social isolation of the individual(s) who visited the park, and the “move along” architecture that encourages quick passing through the park in order to generate more individual consumption.

Overall, the answers to the sub-questions throughout this study allowed for a clear understanding of the central research question: **How has actually existing neo-liberalism in Tampa changed over time to adapt sustainability as a way to encourage downtown gentrification, and how is Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park a representation of this gentrification?** No longer is outward racism and classism expressed in the conventional sense as it relates to policing, policy, and city making tactics in Downtown Tampa that have historically sought to target and expel poor communities of class and color from the Downtown core. Now the methodology is one that co-opts progressive terminologies and novelizes them into neo-liberal buzzwords which provide cover for very old forms of revanchist city making and capital accumulation in Downtown Tampa. Hence, the implementation and articulation of what I have deemed throughout this study as urban revanchism as sustainability, which seeks to explain this model of racist and classist city making that has gone well beyond what is conventionally expected within the capitalist system and has secured overwhelming support from both liberal and conservative city policy makers throughout Tampa.

### **Limitations**

Every study has limitations and this one is no different. Some of the limitations that existed within the study were primarily with regards to the distribution of respondents. While each demographic was touched on, i.e., the homeless, business elites, economic development institutions, etc., future studies should look to include city planners who are involved in

community development planning, members of the parks and recreation department, public relations firms that brand the language of the elite in Tampa, as well as general beat cops. While I did intend to interview more cops, specifically those who patrolled Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park on bicycles, unfortunately the opportunity was not afforded to me given their time constraints. The bulk of the study was conducted during the time of the Seminole Heights killings which were nationally sensationalized as the Seminole Heights “serial killings.” This event unfortunately meant the police were unavailable for interviews at the time I was conducting my research.

In addition to these limitations, the homeless that I interviewed were all men which likely affected the results that I gathered. Homelessness, spatial policing, and physical policing is not only a class and race matter, it is also a gender issue. While I did attempt to interview the few homeless women I saw in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park during the interview process of my research, they were unfortunately both severely cognitively disabled. Not only should future research studies on this matter include a more gender diverse homeless population, they also should take into consideration the nature of how homelessness in Tampa affects women, its causes, the ethics of the interview process, and perhaps analyze Tampa’s relationship with homelessness and disability.

Finally, future research should consider interviewing the politicians involved in Downtown Tampa development, since virtually all major businesses, economic development institutions and even the homeless, made specific references to policies and political figures including Mayor Buckhorn and former Police Chief Jane Castor throughout my interview process. I did not reach out to these major political figures given the time constraints of the research and the busy schedules of these individuals. However, future research should attempt as

best as possible to interview them, or their representatives, since they are some of the leading figures in Tampa's neo-liberalization.

## **Significance**

The significance of this research is residing primarily in two main factors. The first factor is the definition of urban revanchism as sustainability in Tampa through a lens that positions Tampa as a primary node for this type of corporate city under the guise of 'sustainable' city buzzwords. This in turn generates the enforcement of a mass spatial exodus aimed at poor communities of class and color throughout Tampa. The second factor is the potential adaptation of this type of approach to other under studied major metropolitan cities throughout the United States that lie outside of the big three metropolitan regions of Chicago, New York City, and Los Angeles.

This study pushes beyond the veil of rhetoric that aims to mystify and erase the ideological tangibility of revanchist city policy, and synthesizes the ideas of various literatures surrounding revanchism, aesthetics, policing, sustainability, and race and class in urban environments. Likewise, the aim of this study was to reject and expose neo-liberal conceptions of environmentalism, as well as to echo Agyeman et. al (2003) conception of sustainability, as noted earlier, which goes beyond the hollow elitist conceptions of sustainability which are only sustainable for as long as they generate economic investment (Brown, 2015, p.27). This is especially critical at a time when a real conception of sustainability in Tampa is needed to combat the worst extremities of the ensuing climate collapse that has all been swept under the rug. As a recent *Washington Post* article put it

By a stroke of gambler's luck, Tampa Bay hasn't suffered a direct hit from a hurricane as powerful as a category 3 or higher in nearly a century. Tampa has doubled down on a bet



that another won't strike anytime soon, investing billions of dollars in high-rise condominiums along the waterfront and shipping port upgrades and expanding a hospital on an island in the middle of the bay to make it one of the largest in the state (Fears, 2017).

Following this up, the article stated: "The last direct hit from a category 3 in 1921 left the area in ruins, but few people lived there then. A single death was recorded" (Fears, 2017).

By moving beyond the neo-liberal conceptions of 'environmentalism' and 'sustainability' as market niches and exposing how the urban revanchism as sustainability model actually operates in Tampa, it is possible to provide pointers to other researchers about what should and should not be considered as 'sustainability.' In invoking any notion of sustainability, city leaders must be held accountable through research such as this, and planners ought to take notice of how they should plan to address the human, social, and environmental factors that comprise any notion of sustainability and environmental equity. Moreover, this research provides a methodological framework with which to analyze and critique the current economic order that dictates the formulation of city space primarily for the purposes of capital accumulation and elite enrichment.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: IRB Approval



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE  
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669  
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799  
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

6/16/2017

Jared Austin

School of Geosciences

2410 Clareside Drive Valrico,  
FL 33596

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**

IRB#: Pro00030698

Title: Policing the Riverfront: Urban Revanchism as Sustainability

**Study Approval Period: 6/15/2017 to 6/15/2018**

Dear Mr. Austin:

On 6/15/2017, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

**Approved Item(s):**

**Protocol Document(s):**

[Protocol Version 1 5/31/2017](#)

**Consent/Assent Document(s)\*:** [Verbal](#)

[Consent Ver 1 6.14.17\\*\\*](#)

\*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent documents are valid until the consent document is amended and approved. **\*\*verbal consent forms are unstamped**

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

- (6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
- (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.117(c) which states that an IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either: (1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern; or (2) That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. This waiver of documentation of informed consent is granted to allow the study team to obtain verbal consent.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,



Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson

USF Institutional Review Board

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview questions for business owners (not including the Downtown Development Corporation).

1. How long has your business been operating in Tampa?
2. What would you say makes Tampa an ideal location for your business?
3. What could still be done in Tampa to make it better for your business?
4. How has Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, The Water Works Park, and/or The Riverwalk in general, affected your business if at all?
5. How is Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park or any of the other Tampa parks incorporated with your business model? Why or why not?
6. How has riverfront development in general effected the nature of your business practices?
7. Would you say that riverfront development has helped or harmed your business? In what ways?
8. What more would you like to see developed on the riverfront in Downtown Tampa, if anything at all?
9. Would you say Mayor Bob Buckhorn and his policies are good for city businesses such as yourself?
10. What more would you like to see Mayor Bob Buckhorn, or the city of Tampa in general, do for businesses on the riverfront?
11. Have you ever needed the assistance of the police while running your business? If so, for what?
12. Does policing play any particular role in your business practices? If so, could you please explain?

13. Would you say your business has a positive or negative relationship with the Tampa Police Department?
14. Do you have any other general comments on Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, riverfront development, Tampa businesses, the Mayor, or policing in Tampa that you would like to add that you believe we have not touched on?

Interview questions for the Downtown Development Corporation.

1. How long has the Downtown Development Corporation been operating in Tampa?
2. Could you please briefly describe what the primary goal, or objective, of the Downtown Development Corporation is?
3. In your guiding principles, the Downtown Development Corporation states that it wishes to “improve the collective downtown community”, how does the Downtown Development Corporation go about doing this exactly?
4. What could still be done in Tampa to help the Downtown Development Corporation achieve these goals?
5. How does Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, Water Works Park, and/or the Riverwalk in general, fit into the vision and mission of the Downtown Development Corporation?
6. What role has the Downtown Development Corporation played in current development going on in Tampa specifically as it relates to the InVision project and Water Street?
7. What role would you say riverfront development in general plays in the Downtown Development Corporation’s vision and mission if at all?
8. What more would you say the Downtown Development Corporation would like to see developed in Tampa, on the riverfront or otherwise, in Downtown Tampa, if anything at all?

9. What role has former Mayor Iorio, and current Mayor Bob Buckhorn played in assisting with the Downtown Development Corporation's work?
10. Would you say that Mayor Bob Buckhorn and his policies are good for the Downtown Development Corporation in terms of establishing public private partnerships? How do they compare to Mayor Iorio's?
11. What more would you like to see Mayor Buckhorn, or the city of Tampa in general, do to best assist the Downtown Development Corporation in achieving its vision and mission?
12. What role has the Tampa Police Department played in the work that the Downtown Development Corporation does?
13. Does policing, or the Tampa Police Department in general, play any particular role in the Downtown Development Corporation's mission and vision, or in securing the Downtown Development Corporation's mission and vision? If so, could you please explain?
14. Would you say Downtown Development Corporation has a positive or negative relationship with the Tampa Police Department? Why or why not?
15. Does the Downtown Development Corporation have any experience with, or done anything to address, homelessness issues in Downtown Tampa? Does this issue relate to the Downtown Development Corporation's vision and mission?
16. Do you have any other general comments on Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, The Water Works Park, the Riverwalk, riverfront development, Tampa businesses, the Mayor, or policing in Tampa that you would like to add that you believe we have not touched on?

Interview questions for police precinct commanders.

1. How long have you been in law enforcement in Tampa?
2. What would you say the role of policing is in Tampa?



3. How has policing changed in Tampa over the past decade or so, if at all?
4. What would you say has led to these changes in policing in Tampa?
5. Are you familiar with *InVision Tampa* and the various riverfront development projects that are going on in Downtown Tampa?
6. How has this riverfront development affected policing in Tampa if at all?
7. Would you say that riverfront development has had a positive or negative effect on policing in Tampa?
8. What would you say is the role of the police in Tampa as it relates to public parks?
9. What types of people, or characteristics in people do you usually look for when it comes to policing Tampa and why?
10. What would you say is the Tampa Police Department's greatest strength? What about its greatest weakness?
11. What would you say is the role of the police in relation to businesses downtown, specifically those along the riverfront?
12. How frequently are the police sent to patrol in and around Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park?
13. What are the typical disturbances that occur in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and how are these disturbances dealt with most commonly?
14. What is the Tampa Police Departments relationship like with Mayor Bob Buckhorn?
15. How is Mayor Bob Buckhorn's relationship with the Tampa Police Department?
16. What is the Tampa Police Department's relationship like with the Downtown Tampa Community?
17. What more would you like to see done with/for the Tampa Police Department within the next five years?

18. Would you say Mayor Bob Buckhorn is adequately assisting the TPD in achieving those goals?

19. Where would you say the TPD needs the most improvement in terms of community police relationships? How does the TPD plan to achieve those desired relationships?

Interview questions for the homeless.

1. How long have you been homeless?
2. How long have you been homeless in Tampa?
3. How long have you been in Tampa?
4. What parks/locations do you find yourself frequenting the most in Tampa and why?
5. Do you ever frequent Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park? Why or why not?
6. Have you noticed any changes in the nature of policing in Tampa?
7. Have these changes in policing affected your ability to frequent certain locations in Tampa? What about in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park?
8. Have you had any personal encounters with the police? If so what was the nature of the encounter?
9. Where did these encounters with the police occur? Did any occur in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park?
10. If you could give me any general thoughts on Tampa and the nature of homelessness in Tampa what would those be?
11. If you could give me any general thoughts on Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park what would those be?

Interview questions for gentrifiers/general public.

1. How long have you been a Tampa resident?

2. What is your favorite thing about Tampa? Least favorite thing?
3. What is your favorite aspect of Tampa city life?
4. What do you think of Mayor Bob Buckhorn?
5. Would you agree with the Mayor's statement that Curtis Hixon Riverfront Park is "The people's park"?
6. What do you think of Curtis Hixon Riverfront Park?
7. What is your favorite thing about Curtis Hixon Riverfront Park? Least favorite thing?
8. Have you frequented any of the other public parks in Downtown Tampa? Why or why not?
9. Are you familiar with *InVision Tampa* or any of the riverfront development that has been going on in Downtown Tampa?
10. What are your thoughts on this riverfront development?
11. What more would you like to see done in Tampa in terms of riverfront development, if anything at all?
12. What more would you like to see done with Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park if anything at all?