SUSTAINABILITY IN THE GLOBAL CITY
Myth and Practice

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CHAPTER 11

SHIFTING GEARS: THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND SUSTAINABILITY IN MEMPHIS

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Memphis is a city of dichotomies and disparities, a perplexing city of illustrative idiosyncrasies and instructive ironies. The city roils with a sweaty, gritty, creative energy, yet it has struggled to find a creative solution to overcoming its challenging past. As a global center of commerce and trade, the prosperity of the United States relies heavily on Memphis, yet Memphis is home to some of the nation's most impoverished communities. The city is stretched geographically, fiscally, and socially in so many directions that gaining a sense of unity around any shared cultural ideal is a daunting exercise, one that Memphis has only recently begun to undertake.

This chapter explores the emergence of "sustainability" in policy making and cultural perceptions in Memphis through conversations and controversies surrounding a proposal to institute a multi-use trail network across a geophysical landscape marked by socioeconomic and racial segregation. As Wanda Rushing (2009) puts it, "for more than one hundred years, changing views of space and place, conflicting values of 'progress' and preservation, as well as divisions of race, class, and gender have affected the physical and symbolic production of urban landscapes in Memphis" (Rushing 2009). How does the concept of "sustainability" as a social ideal play into the policies and decision making that are going to shape the future of a global city mired in a history of especially poor race relations, white flight, and cultural isolationism? A conversation on "sustainability" cannot occur without first dismantling a racialized "culture of fear" that impacts nearly every aspect of urban life in Memphis (Glassner 2000).

To accomplish this, we dissect the discourses and practices associated with "community" and "safety" as they relate to transportation policy, urban planning, and alternative transportations infrastructure projects. We demonstrate how "safety" and "community" take on different meanings, even in adjoining neighborhoods, and provide ethnographic snapshots of people and communities affecting (or affected by) various connectivity and livability projects.

Ultimately, we hope to show that in Memphis (and we assume many other urban areas), achieving a "sustainability" measured in economic development and performance relies heavily upon the preceding establishment of a "social sustainability" that bridges social capital and connects diverse communities. Through this account, we propose that sustainable infrastructure – if planned, discussed, and constructed carefully – can help Memphis achieve much more than the positive environmental and economic impacts traditionally ascribed to sustainability. Sustainability takes on a different meaning for any city or any group of people, but in Memphis, sustainability entails first overcoming a social fabric tattered by inequality, injustice, and racism. A sustainable city, after all, first requires a sustainable society.

As an agricultural commerce hub in the American South, Memphis was at the heart of a Southern society that embraced segregation. Though its development as a city was unique, and Memphis's race relations have evolved in their own way, Memphis is still introduced in the history books as "a city in black and white, a vibrant city with a divided heart . . . inhabited by and divided by two peoples who share a common place in history but are separated by the social and political difference ascribed to race" (Bond 2003). As a city divided, Memphis suffers from an inferiority complex and a culture of fear exacerbated by a socioeconomic segregation induced and perpetuated by urban sprawl.Even so, Memphis is the political and economic center of the Lower Mississippi Delta and a global logistics hub. It is home to the second busiest air cargo airport in the world, the fourth largest inland port in the nation, five Class A rail lines, and America's critical commercial artery, Interstate 40. Indeed, Memphis's geographic location has attracted businesses that have shaped global commerce. Though historically and presently an important regional hub and transportation artery, the Mid-South is also a region of acute poverty and a range of deep urban issues. Memphis and its surrounding region host significant health disparities, poor education, lack of social and economic opportunities, and significant racial divisions (Hyland and Maurette 2010:255). Memphis tops (or bottoms) the list as the most sedentary city in America (Ruiz 2007), the most obese city in America (Sanderson 2012), and the hunger capital of the nation (Bengali 2010). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Memphis is the poorest large metro area in America. Memphis's infant mortality rate – a barometer of a community's overall health and well-being – is the highest in the United States and double the national average.

At 312 square miles and nearly 1.5 million people, Memphis's population density ranks in the bottom third of U.S. cities with a population over 100,000. Bound by the Mississippi River to the west and the State of Mississippi to the south, the race for development eastward has been rapid, intense, and controversial. Urban sprawl has rendered mass transportation terminally deficient, and an auto-centric, unimaginative (but not unintentional) planning strategy has yielded an average commute of more than twenty-four vehicle miles traveled each way. In Memphis's sustainability story, mitigating urban sprawl – both its environmental and social impacts – will be the second greatest feat of the city. Overcoming the racial divide and culture of fear that ignited the sprawl will be the first.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF A CITY DIVIDED

Contemporary inequality in Memphis takes its shape from the segregationist state of Southern society, and the paternalist Southern Progressive policies that emerged in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (Grantham 1981; Brondo and Lambert-Pennington 2010). In the post-Reconstruction phase, as industry replaced agriculture, Memphis and other Southern cities faced significant deficiencies in comparison to the already industrialized North (Cobb 1982; Hyland 2010). Lacking investment capital and a skilled labor force, the industry and labor that the South attracted were largely resource exploitative, hence creating "quasi-colonial relationships with the rest of the country . . . [leading] to industrial growth strategies that perpetuated and protected the plantation traditions, keeping the political system closed to protect the interests of the industry, as well as those in power" (Hyland and Maurette 2010:219).

Even as the city moved away from the histories of slavery and racial castes, social and political reform of the time institutionalized the power of white, middle class, male professionals along with their values and attitudes toward social change and development. The political tradition of Southern Progressivism that emerged in the early 1900s served to reproduce social relations and the control of change processes by an elite few. To be clear, "progressivism" of the South departs from the national progressive movement in its extreme paternalism, with a handful of local whites controlling the federal assistance funding to the Delta (Hyland and Maurette 2010:219). The Southern Progressives of the time envisioned the New South as one molded on the values of efficiency, hard work, and thrift. Their outlook was one of "helping guide" African Americans to embrace these values in order to improve their own living conditions in ways they saw fit (Brondo and Lambert-Pennington 2010). These patterns are much akin to how "development" has played out in the global south (Escobar 1995; Rist 1997; Peet and Hartwick 1999),

going to support them at our expense. We knew Hein Park didn't want us there. It really didn't matter if they had put up a brick wall or a sidewalk . . . nobody was going to walk through that neighborhood after that.

(Tyler 2007:66)

This articulation of the perceived psychological impact resulting from the construction of a physical barrier between a marginalized and privileged community is instructive in grappling with the perceptions of community "enhancements" under the guise of "sustainability" or the urban imaginary of a "safe, walkable" community. Deconstructing both the physical and psychological barriers that were created throughout and after the American civil rights movement is a critical first step to understanding what "sustainability" actually looks like for Memphis. Through the example of West Drive, we hope to provide the historical backdrop for the current advances and remaining challenges in Memphis's sustainability story.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF A CITY COMING TOGETHER

Twenty years after *Memphis v. Greene*, AC Wharton (the attorney who represented the Hollywood Springdale neighborhood) was elected in 2002 as the first African American Mayor of Shelby County. Inheriting a dysfunctional, fragmented and nearly bankrupt county government, Wharton set about implementing models that would stabilize government. What resulted was a charge to develop a sustainability strategy that transcended government, one that spilled into and was driven by the community. In 2008, Wharton delivered his "Sustainable Shelby Implementation Plan," which provided a "sustainability road map" and "strategic framework for action with regard to 'green' initiatives in Shelby County" (Shelby County 2012) by which the community was to come together around the cultural ideal of sustainability.

The implementation plan includes 151 strategies to guide the region's sustainable practices, organized around five broad areas: (1) Great Neighborhoods for a Great Community; (2) Protecting and Improving our Environment; (3) Greening our Economy; (4) Learning Green Lessons; and (5) Leading by Example (Sustainable Shelby 2008). By and large, the plan's specific strategies resemble other sustainable urban development models through its focus on improving resource efficiency and increasing market growth through urban redesign that rebrands Memphis as an attractive "green" magnet destination (Boniface 2012). These "cool cities" initiatives (Florida 2002) and smart-growth strategies are driving urban design across the nation.

Indeed, the plan was modeled in part on Portland, Oregon, incorporating Oregon's definition of sustainability – that is, "using, developing, and protecting resources at a rate and in a manner that enables people to meet their current needs and also provides that future generations can meet their own needs" (Sustainable Shelby 2008:9) – and New Urbanist principles for planning "livable cities" (Duany, Speck, and Lydon 2009; Speck 2012) and "sustainable urbanism" (Farr 2007). The New Urbanist principles of the plan focus on "walkable and transit-served urbanism" that "redesign[s] the built environment in a manner that supports a higher quality of life and promotes a healthy and sustainable American lifestyle" (Sustainable Shelby 2008:11). Mayor Wharton emphasized this aspect of "livability" in his opening comments at the kickoff event, which became memorialized as the introductory statement to the Sustainable Shelby Implementation Plan:

I have never been more certain of anything than I am of the importance of this agenda. Our citizens want a sustainable community. They may not call it that, but they want walkable, healthy neighborhoods; vibrant public spaces; energy efficient buildings; and streets that serve alternative transportation like bikers, pedestrians, and first-class public transit.

(Sustainable Shelby 2008)

The Sustainable Shelby Implementation Plan thus begins with a focus on "healthy neighborhoods," noting that "sustainable neighborhoods are walkable, bikeable, clean, and are served by high-quality 21st century public transit. . . . To create great neighborhoods we need to rethink transportation so that it is less carcentric and oil dependent" (Sustainable Shelby 2008:17). And so a window opened, and alternative transportation advocates saw new spaces within institutions of power for advancing their proposals.

During his administration as Shelby County Mayor, Wharton championed a number of high profile, sustainability-related projects. Wharton led the charge, along with an engaged and supportive private sector, to create the Shelby Farms Park Conservancy, a public-private partnership that laid out a vision for the 4,500-acre Shelby Farms Park. He also led negotiations to acquire seven miles of an abandoned rail line to convert into a first-of-its-kind (in Memphis) multi-use, paved, recreational trail – the Shelby Farms Greenline – which would serve as the spine for a broad trail network spanning the Memphis metropolitan area. Wharton's strategy was sound: provide enhancements to physical spaces for outdoor experiences and improved quality of life that could then be leveraged to further the Sustainable Shelby agenda. By the time the Sustainable Shelby Implementation Plan was released in 2008, Shelby Farms Park was already seeing significant upticks in park use, and the Shelby Farms Greenline was scheduled for completion within the next twenty-four months.

In a special election in 2009, Wharton was elected Mayor of the City of Memphis and was succeeded in the county by Mark Luttrell. Wharton and

Luttrell jointly advanced the Sustainable Shelby agenda, and opened the Memphis-Shelby County Office of Sustainability in 2010. Wharton also took the City of Memphis in a sustainable direction, hiring the city's first bicycle and pedestrian coordinator and committing to constructing more than fifty-five miles of new, dedicated bicycle lanes in the City of Memphis within the first two years of his term.

With the momentum generated by the establishment of Shelby Farms Park and Shelby Farms Greenline, coupled with the mayor's commitment to enhanced bike/ped infrastructure, the bicycle quickly became the predominant symbol for sustainability in Memphis and Shelby County. Yet the history of paternalism created a high-level distrust of the local political process, and it likely contributed to a degree of skepticism about who really benefits from such sustainability plans. As such, tracking perceptions of cycling and bicycle-related projects provides one of the more tangible indicators for sustainability as a shared cultural value in Memphis.

In their review of bicycling infrastructure, integration with public transport, access, and marketing, Pucher and colleagues found that "culture, custom, and habit" play a significant role in determining whether or not a city will adopt biking infrastructure (Pucher, Dill, and Handy 2009). The authors conclude that "culture, custom, and habit tend to foster bicycling in cities with high levels of bicycling but deter bicycling – especially among noncyclists – in cities with low levels of bicycling, where it is viewed as a fringe mode" (Pucher et al. 2009: S121). With a "culture, custom, and habit" shaped by divisive transportation policies and socioeconomic segregation, and a resulting "carjacked" (Lutz and Fernandez 2010) Memphis, the city has lagged behind the national curve in adopting green infrastructure, including alternative transportation routes for cycling and walking. For years, planners and citizens argued with a "chicken and egg" reasoning: there are no bike lanes in Memphis because Memphians do not bike, or Memphians do not bike because there are no bike lanes.

Unlike in other cities where bicycle infrastructure is far more common, Memphis's alternative transportation is in its infancy and only just beginning to consider the resulting (if any) fall-out of implementing a multi-use trail network. In Portland, Oregon, for example, some have argued that bike lanes have created urban spaces void of people of color, operating as "white stripes of gentrification" and symbolic of the white repopulation of cityscapes (Mirk 2009; Plurale Tantum 2011). For now, Memphis's alternative transportation activists are optimistic, operating at the level of "at least" statements that produce opportunities for addressing decades-long social exclusion and dislocation (Fisher and Benson 2006:14). Thus, while the goals and strategies of the Sustainable Shelby Implementation Plan are predicated on economic growth, bicycling advocates argue that "at least" it has spurred conversations about alternative transportation and addressing racial segregation, and it has helped advocates better identify opportunities for advancing their agenda. Nevertheless, while cycling is entering Memphis's urban imagery as a counter-discourse, it competes with barely-veiled racism and classism embedded in the language of public "safety" in a much similar fashion to that which was seen in *Memphis v. Greene* twenty years prior.

SAFETY AND COMMUNITY: THE SHELBY FARMS GREENLINE

In 2010, the Shelby Farms Greenline opened, connecting diverse communities across Memphis with a 6.5-mile multi-use trail. The completion of the Shelby Farms Greenline symbolized an initial victory and rallying point for many advocates of "sustainability" in Memphis, and its momentum spurred millions of dollars of public and private investment across Memphis in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. It did not, however, open without controversy.

Shelby Farms Park is one of the largest urban parks in the United States, spanning 4,500 acres. It is located at the geographic center of the Memphis metropolitan area with the potential to serve as a critical intersection of urban and suburban communities. However, it has lacked the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to make it a truly accessible neighborhood amenity for the majority of Memphis and outlying municipalities. The construction of the Shelby Farms Greenline aimed to change both the interaction of Memphians to the park and of Memphians to one another.

The planned thirteen-mile corridor would eventually link Midtown Memphis, situated at the heart of the city, to some of the richest and least racially diverse outer suburbs in the metropolitan area. The current eastern terminus of the trail is situated within the park itself, with plans to extend further eastward into the suburbs. The current 6.5 miles span westward from the Park and through the predominantly white, middle-class eastern neighborhoods of Avon, High Point Terrace, and Waynoka. Along the trail there also exist small pocket communities that share demographics with the above neighborhoods but are not strictly a part of them and lack a cohesive identity (Anglin, Brondo, Farr, Helt & Murray 2011). The western terminus of the Shelby Farms Greenline is in Binghampton, a now predominantly low-income, African American community. Binghampton has a significantly higher crime, vacancy, and poverty rate than the other neighborhoods along the Shelby Farms Greenline (Anglin et al. 2011).

When the Shelby Farms Greenline's opening was announced in *The Commercial Appeal*, Memphis's newspaper of record, online readers posted fear-laden negative

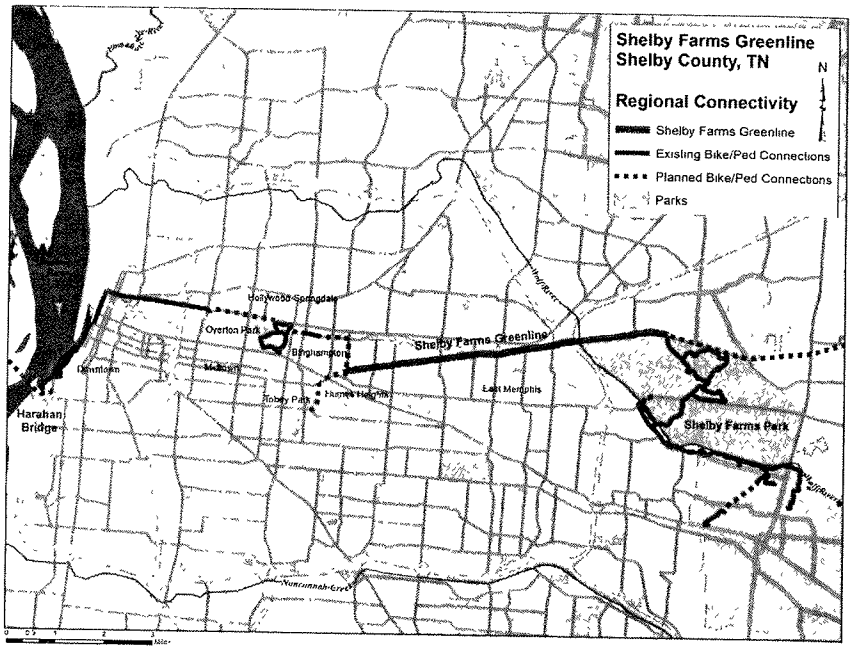

Figure 11.1: Map of the Shelby Farms Greenline. (Map: M. Farr.)

comments: "It will be a superhighway for drugs and crime!" (Charlier 2010) and, "This should give the thugs and rapists a whole new area to ply their trade. Thanks, I'll stay in my car and drive fast" (Charlier 2009). At the early public-input meetings – those conducted in 2010 before the ground broke – the most often raised concern was "safety." While Shelby Farms Park Conservancy staff, flanked by the Memphis Police Department, reviewed extensive public safety plans, residents remained worried. Residents from the eastern neighborhoods of Waynoka and High Point Terrace were vocally concerned with a trail that connected their communities to Binghampton, noting, "thugs from Binghampton will use the trail to come right in my backyard and into my house" (Anglin et al. 2010). No amount of security planning and previous statistical data concerning safety and greenways seemed to make a difference to residents whose property backed up to the Shelby Farms Greenline. Even when confronted with data from other cities, residents often responded with, "This is Memphis. We are different than everywhere else" (Anglin et al. 2010).

In time, negative remarks were countered with more supportive posts in *The Commercial Appeal*: "I really think the fears of criminals using the trail as a passageway to the suburbs to commit crimes are unfounded. Do you really think they're going to walk or ride a bike for miles when they can just drive?" (Editorial 2008). By the summer of 2010, as the old brush was cut down and the trail was being laid, commentary was almost exclusively positive: "This project is the best thing to happen to Memphis in years!" (Anglin et al. 2010). Comparing the public commentary every six months during the two years prior to the trail's opening, one can note a palpable shift in perspective. It seemed that as the public came to better understand the implications of this trail project, public discourse became more hopeful.

In the summer of 2010, Scout Anglin led a team of students and Shelby Farms Park volunteers, knocking on approximately 1,200 doors along a quarter-mile corridor of the Shelby Farms Greenline. The teams completed 216 surveys at occupied homes; few who answered their door refused to complete the survey. The majority of survey respondents (70 percent) felt positively about the trail, and 73 percent did not think it posed a threat to their personal safety. Of the participants, 68 percent believed the trail would have a very positive or somewhat positive effect on neighborhood quality. A large majority of residents (83 percent) also thought that the trail would connect communities in a positive way along the trail. From this data, it can be interpreted that residents near the trail saw the potential of connecting communities through interaction on the trail, providing more face-to-face interaction among trail users and increasing social capital throughout the area.

In March and April 2012, students from a variety of environmental studies and anthropology classes designed and implemented a study to assess current trail usage rates and opinions about the existing trailhead, a possible trail extension westward, and the creation of an access point in the Humes Heights neighborhood. Methods to collect existing user opinions included participant observation on the trail, user counts at specific locations on the line (eastern and western points), and open-ended interviews with a convenience sample of trail users following a ten-question interview guide. Existing user data was collected across two weekends in two locations for a total of eight hours. The students collected 82 interviews in all and observed an average of 220 pedestrians and 461 cyclists per two-hour timeslot (Rich, Swistak, Steele, Bader, Goddard and Keener. 2012:3).

At this point, eighteen months after the opening of the Shelby Farms Greenline, students found that "safety" remained the most prevalent theme in their fieldnotes, both in terms of the student researchers' sense of safety and that of the users with whom they interacted. Users reported feeling "safe" on the trail because of the high level of users and "presence of athletic people," whereas they felt "unsafe" in the area surrounding the western terminus of the Shelby Farms Greenline, in the predominantly African American neighborhood of

Binghampton. The presence of vacant, boarded apartments next to the trailhead was concerning to both users and student researchers. Some users reported that they carried weapons on the trail, but felt inclined to comment that this was not because they actually felt threatened but because Memphis is known for its "propensity for crime" (Rich et al. 2012:4). In this sense, users may feel "threatened" simply by being present in a public space, as the social perception of "security" often is not about a threat to personal safety but rather the ability to maintain oneself in a bubble of personal insulation (Davis 1992).

Overall, however, users were extremely positive about the existing trail and potential for expansion. Existing users viewed positively the potential economic development that an extension of the trail could bring to the Binghampton area, drawing on the growth in locally-owned businesses along the existing trail and rising property values as evidence (Rich et al. 2012:5). Further, several users responded to an open-ended question asking what positive changes they think have resulted from the trail, with comments about how the trail brought users of different demographic backgrounds together in a shared space (Rich et al. 2012:11). One student researcher wrote that a respondent noted "people [are] integrating into different neighborhoods [and there is] more interaction of different communities" (Rich et al. 2012:19).

While much of the student research showed that people were clearly using the trail, happy with it, and excited about the opportunities to expand further west into Binghampton and beyond, a sense of marked "otherness" prevailed, reified by the Memphis police. One pleasant afternoon in May 2012, while Matt Farr and Keri Brondo were enjoying a lunch meeting at a recently opened salad and sandwich shop on the Greenline, a Memphis police officer approached Matt. They knew one another, as this officer had spent the last year serving as uniformed patrol on the trail; today would be his last day on the line, so he said. Matt and the officer spoke briefly about the proposed extension into Binghampton. The officer shared his view on patrolling if the trail extended further into Binghampton, offering, "They're going to have to increase the number of officers out on the line. You wouldn't believe how many high-end bikes we're seeing reported stolen at the station. Last week we had a bike worth $12,000 reported." Implied in his comment was that people from Binghampton were responsible for the theft.

A year prior, Brondo had taken her Anthropology of Tourism students on a fieldtrip to the Shelby Farms Greenline. They had encountered a police patrol car at the High Point Terrace access point. The class asked the officers if they were present for traffic control (the trail had not been open terribly long and car-reliant Memphians were not yet used to stopping for Greenline traffic). "No," they were not. The officer inferred that they were present to protect the residents of the High Point Terrace neighborhood from people from "that end of the trail" (pointing westward, toward Binghampton) coming down the line to rob their homes and cars. The officer further warned the class – unsolicited – that they not go down all the way to Binghampton on the line, especially not at night. Similar warnings about safety marked student experiences during the user-count survey days. Both groups were approached by officers. When police drove by and stopped to talk with the group positioned at an eastern location of the trail, they merely asked what the students were doing and, satisfied with their response, moved on. In contrast, the group positioned at the terminus in Binghampton was warned by police officers that they were in an unsafe place and police offered to keep watch over the students through periodic drive-bys (Rich et al. 2012:4). These officers might be viewed as a contemporary physical representation of the heritage of Southern Progressivism. In decades prior, through discriminatory housing policies and sprawl-inducing urban planning, Southern Progressives and their political descendants carried out plans in support of a small class of wealthy white elites, establishing Memphis's racialized geography and "ordered segmentation" (Suttles 1974). Today, police officers reinforce that shared cultural ideal of fear and mistrust.

Importantly, public meetings and conversations with residents during survey days revealed that there was not a singular discourse on "safety" and "belonging." In the midst of the spring 2012 student data collection, Shelby Farms Park Conservancy hosted a public meeting with Humes Heights's residents to discuss the progress on a proposed half-mile westward trail expansion and neighborhood access point. Humes Heights is a middle class, mostly white neighborhood adjacent to Binghampton, but buffered by the abandoned rail corridor and the highly trafficked Poplar Avenue. The agenda for this meeting included: (1) a status update from the Executive Director of Shelby Farms Park regarding resident suggestions on alternative routes (around rather than through their neighborhood); (2) revised designs from their contracted landscape architect, in which the park attempted to address resident concerns about removing a security fence separating Humes Heights from Binghampton (residents from the neighborhood had petitioned the city to construct this fence years prior); and (3) a presentation by Matt and Scout of the preliminary data from the neighborhood survey (which showed community support for the access point). The presentations were brief, and there was ample time for extensive comment and discussion, which lasted for approximately one hour. About thirty community members were present, the majority of whom were white. Park staff explained how they took the concerns of residents seriously and spent the last year investigating each of their suggestions, including the possibility of taking the trail over the live rail (they could not get permission to

do so), constructing a bridge over the rail (it would cost $2 million, which the nonprofit did not have), or developing the trail behind houses as opposed to a bicycle route in front (the topography was too steep).

The biggest point of contention at the public meeting was the removal of the security fence that residents themselves had petitioned the city to erect in 2006. Humes Heights borders a tract of land overgrown with invasive weeds that, at times, serves as a homeless encampment. This tract of land separates Humes Heights from Binghampton. The neighborhood had suffered a rash of crime in the months leading up to the construction of their security fence, and presumably criminals entered the neighborhood through this abandoned public space. It was clear that the city was not going to invest in any major improvements to the area at that time, but residents came together to lobby for something to be done to secure their neighborhood. Their civic engagement, neighborhood unity, and advocacy were successful – the city agreed to construct the security fence, likely the cheapest solution at the time for the city. Crime did diminish – although it did not disappear – after the fence's erection, and thus the fence came to symbolize enhanced neighborhood safety.

Having heard residents expressing their concerns about the removal of their security fence back in the 2010 meeting, Shelby Farms Park commissioned their landscape architect to create a plan to replace the existing chain-linked security fence with an eight-foot-high, black vinyl fence to the existing Greenline for nearly the entire half-mile extension, from Binghampton to Humes Heights. The fence would align aesthetically with other trail features and provide a sense of safety to residents, or so the architect and park staff thought. Some residents shared their displeasure with the alternative fence: from their perspective, the core problem with it was that the fence would not actually close off the communities from one another. The proposed vinyl fence would run parallel to the Greenline, meaning that people could enter Humes Heights via the trailhead. While the trail would be patrolled during the day and was officially closed at sunset, patrols did not continue through the night and, as residents shared, "this is when we get robbed." Park staff pointed out that if a potential criminal wanted to use the trail to enter the neighborhood, they would have to hike a half-mile trail both in and then out of the neighborhood. Some residents noted they could still envision thieves entering this way and were not encouraged when staff shared data that residents along the existing Greenline, including previously opposed elected officials, reported an increased sense of security since the Greenline's opening, transforming the biggest critics of the past (High Point Terrace) to the Greenline's current "leading cheerleaders."

To many of Humes Heights's residents, and to the senior population in particular, an "open" fence seemed to symbolize a threat to their community. Residents who lived near the security fence were particularly concerned, many of whom were in their later years of life or living alone. One older man, who shared his involvement in three foot chases in the recent past, was not encouraged by a trail that thieves could use as an escape route, saying, "I can't catch those kids." Another older woman described how her fear keeps her awake at night. Living alone in the neighborhood, she experienced dozens of crimes committed against her and her immediate neighbors.

As noted earlier, there is not a coherent discourse on safety emerging from Humes Heights. An equal number of residents reflected positively on the removal of the existing chain-linked fence, for which they believed itself represented rising insecurity in the neighborhood. A man in his late thirties noted that although he too had been victimized, he felt like it would be a "missed opportunity" if the neighborhood did not get behind the access point. He "dragged along" his two very small children to sit through his meeting in order to be sure his voice was heard: the blight removal would be a positive benefit for the neighborhood, and access to the Shelby Farms Greenline would enhance social connectivity. Another family supported this view, reminiscing how prior to the security fence construction and before weeds overran the area they would take their kids there to fly kites. The nearby open space, this couple noted, was an asset to their neighborhood, and "once the fence went up, the neighborhood went down."

In sum, residents expressed divergent opinions about what makes a place "safe." To some, it was keeping a close eye on who can come into a neighborhood and partitioning off an unkempt parcel of abandoned rail right-of-way. To some, it was maintaining a physical barrier between their "pocket" community and a high-crime neighborhood. For others, it was keeping bicycle traffic out, for they might disturb the peacefulness of their streets. Then there were those residents who felt creating an infrastructure that would increase the presence of people and "eyes on the street" (Jacobs 1961) could enhance community security and neighborhood well-being. The existence of this dialogue is an important step in combating the deep history of paternalism under Southern Progressivism.

SUSTAINABILITY IN MEMPHIS: URBAN DANGER, SPATIAL GOVERNMENTALITY AND THE POTENTIAL OF GREENWAY EXPANSION

Theorizing the city as a space of everyday practice shaped by macro processes, Setha Low (1996, 1999) provides us with a handful of images and metaphors to make sense of urban sustainability in Memphis. Employing the idea of the "representational city," reading Memphis as a text to find the messages encoded

within the environment, we can better understand the effect that Memphis's sociopolitical history has had on urban planning and how it plays out in the urban landscape. For all of its history, Memphis has been a "divided city" (Low 1999:7–10), with racial prejudice and discriminatory urban planning, leading to high levels of racial and class segregation. There is a vast amount of scholarship on urban space and segregation that demonstrates how a combination of macro and micro practices was behind (and continue to be at play in) the production of the racialized urban geography of most U.S. cities (Smith 1979; Katznelson 1981; Harvey 1992; Sugrue 1996). Discriminatory priorities of investment capitalists in the housing market were aided by the lending policies of the federal government, fueling white flight to more affluent suburbs, and leaving behind a core of poor blacks in decaying neighborhoods. Case studies from Detroit (Sugure 1996), New York (Smith 1979), and Baltimore (Harvey 1992) reveal the complexities of both race and class in understanding the "divided city": as suburban sprawl developed, poor whites were unable to flee to the emerging areas of affluence, and blacks who did were from higher socio-economic classes. At the same time, rising suburbs resisted the entry of people of color through restrictive covenants, reliance on discriminatory federal and municipal policies, and intimidation (Sugure 1996). In Memphis, as in cities across the nation, unequal distribution of resources and urban services (e.g., lack of public transportation through city bus routes) accompanied these physical divisions.

Typically, upper- and middle-class suburbs in the United States are physically and socially structured to promote privacy and separation. Neighbors maintain high levels of social distance, resulting in "weak ties" to other people in the neighborhood. Such structuring necessitates external governance, privatized security systems, and consumer-policed spaces (Davis 1992; Merry 2001). This spatial governmentality, or the regulation and patrolling of people through the physical urban landscape, creates a "suburban politics of exclusion" (Low 2003:19). This kind of regulation of space often involves the "racialization of space," in which the definition of "other" (or stranger) is based on human biological characteristics, particularly racial categories (Low 2003:143). The built environment then serves to create a façade of "security," but only for those with the income to purchase access to protective services and membership into private, restricted, or policed residential neighborhoods. Security is not necessarily the absence of crime, but rather the perception that one is sufficiently insulated "from 'unsavory' groups and individuals, even crowds in general" (Davis 1992:224). In Humes Heights, several residents experience real and acute fear when they consider the possibility of unfamiliar individuals (strangers) entering their neighborhood. For Humes Heights's residents, this fear emerges as a result of their victimization during a string of home invasions in 2006. The Humes Heights security fence – intentionally or not – is a concrete example of spatial governmentality; it is also a symbolic representation of "safety" and "community" to those neighborhood residents who came together as a collective of individuals with shared interests to have it erected. Taking it down now only represents the potential threat to their physical security through the entrance of "others" and a breakdown of community. Yet for other residents of Humes Heights, like the family with memories of flying kites near the neighborhood, tearing down the fence would symbolize a revitalization and investment in "community."

Indeed, Thurgood Marshall spoke directly to this "racialization of space" in his dissent for the Supreme Court's ruling on *Memphis v. Greene*: "While this barrier did not physically prevent contact between the two areas, its erection at the northernmost end of West Drive reinforced the exclusivity of Hein Park by reminding residents to the north of both their 'separateness' and their 'blackness'" (Tyler 2007:74). These sentiments were echoed in the public commentary surrounding the construction and potential expansion of the Shelby Farms Greenline. Creating physically isolated, racially homogenous neighborhoods has been a strategy for some Memphians to combat a growing "culture of fear." However, the barriers that have been erected serve as "monument[s] of racial hostility" (Tyler 2007:72) that further exacerbate the "culture of fear." In the wake of the American civil rights movement, Memphis spent decades closing streets, building walls, and erecting fences (even as recently as 2006). These pillars of racism that shaped Memphis's urban form have served as the fulcrums upon which the scales of a social sustainability balance.

In providing a place for people to experience a different kind of Memphis, the opening of the Shelby Farms Greenline has transformed not only an old, abandoned rail line into a vibrant point of pride, but also has the potential to transform the social landscape of a city in dire need of change. Since the Greenline's opening, nearly $40 million have been leveraged both from public and private sources in pursuit of various "sustainability" projects throughout the region. In 2011, the Memphis-Shelby County Office of Sustainability attracted a $2.6 million HUD grant to develop a comprehensive "greenprint" for the Mid-South. In 2012, Memphis was awarded a $15 million TIGER IV grant to retrofit the Harahan Bridge, an old railroad bridge across the Mississippi River, into an iconic bike/ped crossing. Also in 2012, a connection between the western terminus of the Shelby Farms Greenline and Overton Park was announced and will take shape in the form of the first two-way cycle track on a two-way street in the American South. And in July 2013, Shelby Farms Park Conservancy hosted a public meeting during which a 4.3-mile eastern extension

of the Shelby Farms Greenline was presented to the community – noticeably absent were any dissenting opinions such as those voiced a mere four years ago. The City of Memphis continues to construct dedicated, on-street bicycle facilities and will surpass 100 miles of new bicycle lanes by 2014. Indeed, much progress has been made in a very short time, a bicycle culture is emerging, and neighborhoods are galvanizing around the concept of livable communities.

The recent efforts to deconstruct the physical and social barriers in the name of "sustainability" through projects like the Shelby Farms Greenline and other bike/ped infrastructure initiatives have provided a window for Memphians to revisit and realign their shared cultural values. Born out of a sustainability agenda predicated upon the economic growth factors of increased property values, talent attraction, and quality of life, Memphis's bike/ped movement can first contribute to a social sustainability that, if built upon the voices of *all* Memphis communities, may serve as the foundation for the shared cultural ideal of a broader sustainability. The more successful Memphis's bike/ped movement, the more likely Memphis is to adopt sustainability as a shared cultural ideal. As such, Memphis's future is hopeful, so long as the implementation of alternative transportation projects ensures inclusivity, rigorous public dialogue, and a transparent power structure.

Memphis plays a pivotal role in global commerce; innovations and industry out of Memphis make it easy for packages, products, and goods to get from one side of world to the other. Getting packages across the world poses no problem for Memphis; getting people across town – or even to an adjacent neighborhood – on bike or on foot is, to many, a daunting notion that incites controversy and drums up age-old bias and stereotypes. Memphis fell into a sharp decline after the assassination of Dr. King in 1968 and has been struggling ever since to regain its bearings, but recently a new spark of hope has emerged in the shape of livability projects, bike/ped infrastructure and community-driven neighborhood revitalization. Memphis's path ahead will not come without a few bumps, but at least there's a path and a growing number of people who are learning that you can't get anywhere if you don't get back on your bicycle when you fall.

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