I, Todd W Ebeltoft, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture (Master of).

It is entitled:
Localized Tactics | Territorial Impact

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This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Aarati Kanekar, Ph.D.

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Second-tier American cities are the new target for urban transformation and in turn require critical responses in architecture and planning. Time has shown that traditional planning instruments have become tools incapable of directing projects for redevelopment – master plans often derail leaving their results incoherent or irrelevant and the quality struggles to be controlled. Contrary to the use of long-term master plans, accretionary responses to the specific qualities and conditions of urban sites have begun to emerge as a means of acting consciously to the demands of the city.

Conditions define how and where a response formulates. As a reaction to the conditions surrounding the development of any city:

**How can tactical development critically enable sites and in turn impact the territorial scale?**

A thorough understanding of the site’s context - the consequential significances of the environmental, social, political and economic - is key to responding to this question. Acting tactically to the strategies set forth by the municipality while keeping in tune with the complexities of the everyday promotes a contingent and accretionary approach to urban development. It is crucial to recognize conjunctions between public policy and contemporary society in order to achieve environments of flexibility, ones capable of evolving in non-linear directions and allowing for productive futures.

This document acts as a summary to an in-depth study of the intersections of public policy and urban design, of the way in which the city has positioned itself and its subsequent spatial manifestations. It targets Jacksonville, Florida, which has recently been referred to as America’s most average city. The city’s historical identity as a ‘port city’ frames the contemporary issues of global society and in turn is considered to be a major contributor to evolving the identity of downtown.

Encouraged by recent revitalization efforts and intended as an extension of existing programs in the city the aim of this thesis is to catalyze transformative change on Jacksonville by identifying and exploiting existing networks that promote social, economic and ecological change.

Generative, localized events will highlight current systems and introduce future methods that support development of Jacksonville’s local identities and provoke reactivation of downtown at a variety of scales and magnitudes. This thesis probes at the opportunities in singular and small-scale urban development, localized tactics with a territorial impact.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A debrief for the unplanned

Architecture and planning have changed drastically in the past decades and now more than ever require acute attention to the issues of urban circumstance. To reflect the layered and fragmented nature of the locale. Rapid social and political changes such as globalization or network societies have rendered traditional methods of planning obsolete. The idea of controlling growth or development of the city based on prediction has become increasingly ineffective simply because future developments, in their volatile state, cannot be accurately predicted. Also, the common understanding of architecture’s scale and scope, as a component of a planned fabric, is no longer sufficient to addressing the needs of people adapting to the rapidly changing social and cultural impositions of urban life.

It is in the case of scale and time that architecture and planning can work effectively towards productive transformation. It is thinking about the responsive singular small-scale over the visionary plan that allows for urban experimentation. Implementing architecture on an as-needed basis sets up sites as test zones for their potential urban production and as a means of responding to the urgencies of the city.

In the following pages, this document stresses a focus towards flexible, contingent urban development that highlights an organic output. While defining current conditional urban crises, there is an identification of potential interventions through initiatives and activities that suggest temporal and permanent transformations.

Cultural, social and political activities and their networked operational scale inform the ways in which urban development can be collaborative. The proposal, a political and cultural imperative, suggests joint ecological programs and urban interventions to catalyze long-term cultural, social and economic development.

Topic identification

The research conducted prior to the year spent on this thesis was primarily to get a feel for recent projects that have had a similar developmental effect in other cities. Both second and top tier cities including Hamburg, Porto, Bergen NOS, Rotterdam, Aarhus, Munich, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Miami were visited during this time. This research operates as a foundational methodology and means of operation for continued investigations and informs the development of selected sites along the St John’s River in downtown Jacksonville. Given each case study city has an ongoing relationship with an adjacent port, focus was directed towards the influence of the port to the city and its service to development.

Problem definition

The future of Jacksonville depends on infrastructure. The underpinnings to any city’s development is the means by which sites are accessible. In many second tier cities, highway infrastructure, industrial zones and lack of public transportation separate certain locations from the urban core in some cases places with potential for high real estate value due to their geographic location.

The introduction of overpasses, connectors and interchanges throughout downtown Jacksonville has severed many ideal locations from becoming extensions of the cultural, social and economic activity currently existing in the Central Business District. Urban decay is the resulting expression for the misuse of these sites and society’s nomadic and negligent attitude. It is here that opportunity for reactivation occurs.
ABANDONED SITE IN INDIAN ROCKS, ORLANDO
UNFINISHED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, ORLANDO

CLOCKWISE STARTING FROM OPPOSITE LEFT:
ALI BABA CIRCLE, MIAMI
UNFINISHED LANDMARK RESIDENTIAL TOWER,
MIAMI
REMNANTS OF UNFINISHED DI LIDO ISLAND,
MIAMI
ABANDONED SITE IN RIVERSIDE, DOWNTOWN,
JACKSONVILLE
IGNITING THE URBAN REALM

SECOND TIER REVISITED
Recent articles from the US Census Bureau verify statistically what many have seen unofficially - the growing population of second-tier cities from larger US cities. This rapid movement has led to the resurgence of interest in the urban core as a place for culture, society and historical identity for cities across the US. With increases of up to 15% in tourism and the overall affordability of second-tier cities staying consistent, competition arises as to the attraction of one city over another. When marketing a second-tier city it is dependent on the brand.

Cities like San Francisco or Orlando have already well-established brands that resonate in a consumers mind, but with most second-tier cities there exists an opportunity for development. In many cases temporary initiatives are started to bring about activity in dead zones within the urban core - the necessity of crowds to fuel development. These initiatives are typically not long lasting, rather it is the result of their ignition (shops opening, districts forming) that lingers on as the basis for urban development.

ABUSE AND ABANDONMENT
Many older assets face similar problems of abuse and subsequent decay as they pertain to industrial areas. Due to the exploitation of social, ecological or industrial resources, centers of production begin to remain leaving abandoned warehouses and remnants of former times in their wake. The now unclaimed land typically exists as a tarnished territory desperate for repurposing.

The river that was once used for transportation of goods and services has been replaced by highway infrastructure and no longer contributes to an active image of production in most second-tier cities. Initiating potential for such a prominent geography gives the basis for reusing a former life line to the city as a new type of infrastructure.

Because of the old assets, such as rivers and rails that once gave these cities their strength no longer serve the same purpose, new assets and identities must be drawn upon, and the former must be used in new ways.

POSITIONING THE ARCHITECT
Although limited in the amount of involvement in city development, architects themselves have assumed a lesser role when it comes to critical aspects of planning - positions of function, scope, technique and implementation. There exists an important distinction for architects to make as designers of systems, that is, while they may not have the power to ensure or generate investment in developmental infrastructure, they can still focus their attention to territorial organization and functionality.

Architects, when faced with the scenario of implementing projects for developing cities, have the opportunity to use their cultural knowledge over technical service. In the gathering of this cultural knowledge - typically the acquisition of layers of information pertaining to both local and global conditions of the site and its society - it is of utmost importance for architects to use their training to understand not only the factual, quantitative aspects of this information, but also the sensual, qualitative - in most cases subtly nuanced - aspects of the place.²

Considering the material aspect of the practices of architecture and planning (ie. ecology or engineering), the focus should be less involved with the aesthetic outcomes of a building or project and more interested in what their affective operation is. As Stan Allen references Michel Foucault:

"As Foucault has reminded us, techniques are not about expression; rather they condense, transform, and materialize leaving questions of meaning entirely behind. Architecture as a material practice does not mean social before they are technical. Hence, to think of architecture's ability to indicate is a significant tool to the architect working in the city. It is the employment of cultural and social ingredients along with physical materials that can have a profound stimulation to an urban center especially those longing for reinvention, repurpose, and rearrangement."³
The Reconstruction of the City

As Castells points out, the major challenge in contemporary urban design is to restore the culture of cities. According to Castells, notable contributions to social theory such as the Rise of the Network Society, a paradigm shift is occurring, in which information, image, and representation are replacing the power relations traditionally established and reproduced in institutions. These outcomes and challenges to the social conditions of the network society are determined through rethinking cultural codes and proposing alternative meanings in society. In this case, the affirmation of identity is crucial — affixing meaning autonomously through the abstract essential logic of networks.

There is an urban paradox that we are living principally in an urban world without cities. That is without a system of cultural understanding and shared meaning, even if collective shared meaning. Around the world, signs of symbolic disintegration in the urban realm are multiplying. What we must realize is that it is not of a larger structural impetus that is determining our cities — it is by conscious human operation that societies and built form are produced. It is a complex, juxtaposed relationship, along with typical capitalist emphasis and privatization of space that there is also a growing attraction of urbanity, civic life, and meaningful spaces.

Castells emphasizes four communicative players in the reconstruction of the city, planning, architecture, urban design, and urban policy. Planning, according to Castells, must be able to properly balance and link up global and local networks without opposing the two planes of operation. This means that planning should, in fact, lead to multiple sub-centers within the metropolis, but have in connection effective transportation in acceptance of this multi-modal architecture. Architecture then becomes the creation of the nodes, emphasizing a new symbolism of local and global significance. As historically so, architecture has a task of restoring symbolic meaning, but in a 21st century world in crisis of communication. In recent years, we have seen a shocking revival of architectural importance, such as the case of Frank Gehry’s museum in Bilbao, in which complete cities, and in this case regions, can not only be culturally but also economically revitalized through a single architectural move.

Symbolic meaning must be dispersed into the entirety of the city in which urban design takes the stage. Urban design must primarily designate or provide public spaces which can foster the connection of local life, global flows, the individual, and communities. Public space is the key contributor to urban experience, unlike that of a private shopping center mistaken as spaces of sociability. The function of these spaces is not always necessary to predetermine as they typically do not come from even the best urban designers — sometimes it is a park, sometimes a boulevard, sometimes a few square feet around the library. In any case, the spontaneity of use, flexibility of interaction, lack of social constraints, and multiculturalism is what matters in the creation of important symbolic social spaces. Though as Castells says, “It is the struggle of the polis to create the city as a meaningful place.”

Urban policy is the main determinant to the potential of urban space in conjunction with a connection to the global space of flows and to the local space of places. This direction must be an adaptive one, resulting from a compromise between the contradictory expression of values and interests from the plurality of urban actors.

Away from a New Urbanism

The cities everyone wants to live in should be clean and safe, possess efficient public services, be supported by a dynamic economy providing cultural stimulation, and also do their best to heal society’s divisions of race, class, and ethnicity. These are not the cities we live in.

Richard Sennett, The Open City

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In The Open City, Richard Sennett suggests that the conditions that look towards disorder and chaos lend themselves more to experimentation both of the city’s visual forms and social functions than do conditions of order and control. The idea of ‘predictive urbanism’ or the way in which city development follows strict regulations, images and plans, gives undoubtedly a loss to the vitality of urban imagination. According to Sennett, it is a sense of time that is missing in modern urbanism that in the city understood as a process, its imagery changing through use, urban imagination formed by anticipation.

The result of today’s cities in the context of urbanism is a homogeneity of interchangeable spaces.

‘As an urbanist, Le Corbusier is a Fascist Nightmare’

We can attribute the ethics of modernism to the fall of imagination in our cities. One of the most notable projects was Le Corbusier’s ‘Plan Voisin’ for Paris in the 1940s. Corbusier conceived of a series of extruded cross-shaped towers that were meant to organize a seemingly cultured ground condition. These towers would eliminate the fertile social complexity of the ground plane, segregating civic life from the people living and working in vertical isolation, all coordinated by a single master plan. This project had profound global effects on other cities in terms of zoning, programming, and building type, as well as the production of buildings following the mantra of Le Corbusier’s industrial manufacture of buildings.

Most urban architecture today — in particular New Urbanism — dangerously accepts Cartesian planning as the default means of organizing the city. There is a dependency on the grid that is an acceptance of a guiding formal structure that acts in ignorance towards the contextual conditions, such as topography and cultural differentiation, of the locale. This dependency has led to many ineffective urban spaces of value. Such channels of plan making and social intervention — acts of curatorial urbanism — cannot contend with an increasingly interconnected and diverse new world.
AWAY FROM TRADITION

A lack of urbanism to shape and maintain the quality of "location" in the rapidly urbanizing world has been a major failure of modern cities across the world. Like commodities from a production line we have been developing cities like industrial merchandise, meaning them in undifferentiated square footage, while marking them with names that stimulate nostalgia for community life. A shopping mall is now a "town center," a multi-theater movie complex is now an "entertainment district," or an office park an "innovation district." This is not the carefully crafted product of a community that has strategies and methods for building and maintaining urban advantage in the world. Building blocks grow larger and larger as political and economic bodies aggregate, often assembled with little context and under hurriedly accelerated timelines.

Traditional master plans have been understood to take areas of disused or unplanned land and envision a distribution of land uses for a variety of interactive scenarios. The concluding plans are based upon surveys and statistics of the area as to what a suitable direction should be for the development of the city. These plans rarely achieve their targets.

The areas of which master plans are repeatedly attacked for being restrictive and ineffective are in terms of content, process, implementation and monitoring. In addition, the process of planning is often affected by improper development phasing, lack of accountability and finance as well as insufficient monitoring. Guiding physical development is the objective of the master plan scope; thus it is usually fitted for expectations of 20-25 years, which does not act in accordance with what a community's strategic ambitions in the city. The comparison Bruggman makes is a community and the advantages that when empirical knowledge gained from the city systems, Bruggman argues that the ad hoc city builds on the terms of incremental development is the objective of the master plan.

PROPOSITIONS OF ACCRETION AND TACTIC

"The order is not rationalistic and underlying but is simply weave, like that of continuity one thing after another." - Donald JUDD

LEARNING FROM THE WAY MIGRANTS BUILD THEIR CITIES

An ad hoc city builds on the terms of incremental addition, typically for tactical, individualistic reasons; each builder's concern is within the confines of their own building without concern for the others or succeeding construction. Ad hoc building is a development type that is led by holistic purpose. Architects, trained to consider context via permissible activities, form, material or landscaping, are still up against the lack of fundamental functional relationships in an ad hoc scenario. The relationship between buildings and their activities is an experimental one. Though sometimes, ad hoc buildings can be surprisingly successful, as in the case of the squatter shantytowns. If the builders share interests and a common understanding of a location's unique advantages - if they share strategy to advance their interests through an urban location - then they can master ways to increase those advantages together, and regulate activities and construction that dilute it.

The major extraction from ad hoc cities is the means by which they develop, the strategic one-thing-then-another approach when addressing development in second-tier cities. The increasingly collaborative means by which most American cities develop lends themselves to cautious actions; yet deliberate in execution. Collaboration in conjunction with forces that are both surrounding and cultivated from the site give architects and planners the data for insightful urban development. These forces, typically acting by means of what I will refer to as fluid hierarchy are necessary to be deliberately channeled into a knowledge of operations. These tactics of accretion are achieved by the following methodology.

DATA SYNTHESIS // PROGRAM AND SYSTEMS

The field describes a space of propagation, of effects. It contains no matter or material points, rather functions, vectors and speeds. It describes local relations of difference within fields of colerity transmutation or of cantering powers, in a word: what Minkowski called the "world." - Sanford KWINTER

Through a thorough gathering of data and information surrounding site locations, of which space varies from site to site. An illustration of conditions can be made to give insight into the complex and dynamic behaviors of architecture's users. As a means of speculating program space, or as Ben van Berkel refers to Deep Planning, tracking on a means of system movement throughout the confines and surroundings of a site leads to the promotion of positioning the site. The site must accommodate the conditions in and of the surroundings. As a means of contextual goals, the constraints are treated with optimism, that they are not neglected into transgression. "Form matters, but not so much the forms of things as the forms between things." - Stan ALLEN

With the volatile state of sites, and the ever-changing conditions surrounding them, it is important to understand that the information gained must be used projectively and with great concern for the future of sites. As a means of benefitting the context better, and the context to come, new architectural legacies of the city should keep in rough the uncertainty for productive but "it is an architecture that is not oriented in certainty but rather leaves gaps for the uncertainty of the real." To integrate a broad range of socio-economic, political, cultural, demographic, and infrastructural issues in spatial and architectural terms.

IT IS THE PRODUCT OF A COMMUNITY, RICH OR POOR, THAT HAS MASTEROA ROBUST PRACTICE OF URBANISM'

Jeb BRUGMANN

"The city system has been designed and brought to life by the community of people who will use it as a hyper-productive system to achieve their own ambitions common purpose in reference to a network of shared advantages. Dharavi, one of the largest slums of Mumbai, is an example of..."
Acupuncture is a balancing and regulating therapy in traditional Chinese medicine that is also prevalent in the Western world as part of the practices of complementary and alternative medicine. With a few pinpricks, the energy flow of the whole body is meant to be put back into balance.

Analogous to this, architects and planners understand small interventions as acupuncture when their effect reaches far beyond the locale. That which exists is not ignored, let alone eliminated, but transformed through a skillful diversion of existing energies. The city is meant to regenerate itself solely through slight external interventions. In the process, the time factor plays an essential role. "acupuncture" on the city's "body" counts on the time between the intervention and its effect. Since the interventions, which are themselves often minimal, can be of a temporary or permanent character, temporality as such becomes a variable of the strategy.

Awareness rises as our familiarities with sites grow. Function and use create memory that informs logic and position of place. For many second-tier cities, the extents of the urban center are typically subdued by an array of industrial or highway zones giving way to the ambiguity of territory and order.

In many cases, the locations in which accretionary development can work best to develop second-tier cities are not positioned in existing high-functioning zones, but rather in zones which are for all intents and purposes dead. Types of non-site zones can be understood as discarded sites: post-anything abandonment.

The action of these sites is determined by the user and the surrounding site conditions. As projects that instigate a change in use come about, they can have a large, potentially transformative impact at even the small scale.

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The Metro Cable by Urban Think Tank represents an alternative response to transportation infrastructure that was approaching destruction of a favela in Caracas, Venezuela. Mass transportation, a key ingredient of connection throughout any urbanized area, will allow the inhabitants of the densely populated favelas access to extended areas of the city. The five stations' designs each have a similar set of basic components in common: platforms, access ramps, circulation flows, structural systems, and materials. However, the configuration of these components is what creates differentiation. The separate stations include multiple cultural, social, and administrative functions, such as public spaces, gyms, supermarkets, daycare centers.

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FLEXIBILITY // SUGGESTIVE OUTPUTS

With each location, diversity of ideas and spaces for future developmentflorew Evangelista Henrique and Gisberto a rich urban texture. In taking this organic approach, it is assumed that nothing is predetermined or pure, the possibility for the temporalities of intervention should be considered. As this responds to the furtherment proposition of flexibility the other being permanent. The provision, import, and unpredictability of multiple forces at play, such as local contingencies - climate, topography, urban texture, information - flows directly into the articulation of transition between what is and what will be.

The action of accretion, that is the end of one project signifying a response for the next, brings forth a contrasting method to that of

LEGSIBILITY // SIGNAGE AND RETICULATION

As sites and districts develop in decentralized locations, how do we locate them and how do the sites add to the users' understanding of the order of the city? It is no longer the singular use of the Cartesian top-down grid that informs our understanding of a location, but rather the understanding of markers of culture, society, economics, environment that unravel the events of life in the city.

Landmarks, a type of point-reference, involve the singling out of one element from a host of possibilities. In Kevin Lynch's image of the City, he refers to landmarks as identity and potentially even structure, and seeks to be increasingly relied upon as a journey becomes more and more familiar.22 The ability for these Landmarks to have a certain characteristic to stand apart from themselves as a figure-background relationship lends itself to be the core principle. According to Lynch, the landmark is able to be established in two ways: by having visibility from many locations, or by setting up a local variation that contrasts its surroundings.24 The strength of a landmark is in direct dependence to its surroundings, that is once meaning history or a sign becomes inscribed to an object, its understanding as a landmark rises. In other words, there needs to be a strong relationship the understanding of the use and development of the space around the landmark.22

In many second-tier cities, there does not exist multiple orders of understanding the body or breadth of the city. The grid, for most cases, is the system by which infrastructure and locating come about. Another consideration is the lack of restrictions on the height of building in many urban cores - it is not like Athens, in which you cannot build higher than the most praised historical monument, the Parthenon, or in Bali, in which you cannot build higher than their most prevalent natural feature, the palm tree.

As with the Burra Shave signs, which were well known for their short parable-like sayings, a means of visual reference can be portrayed through the intervention in elements of repetition. This superimposition of an alternate logic to the city one that reflects its development can act as a stage for not only the future of the city but also for the history of the selected sites. As these sites are the cases leftover or discarded, it marks the nodal economic and cultural attitudes of time and place.
TEMPORALITY // RETURN TO NOTHING

Temporary interventions were propagandized, for example, by the British architectural group Archigram. Their Instant City project of 1968 to 1970 was intended to revitalize cities beyond the metropolises by means of a kind of migratory idea-circus. Using mobile equipment, local events were to be stimulated, ideas and concepts brought along were to be incorporated. The cities along the route were to be networked - it was hoped that a virtual metropolis would develop. 14

At the same time, groups of Austrian architects and artists experimented with related performances and installations. For instance, Haus-Rucker Co.’s project as part of an exhibition in Dusseldorf used a 225-square-meter air mattress and three plastic balls as an opportunity for museum goers to have physical activity and exercise, blurring the borders between city life and museum. Today there is a broad praxis of performance-related interventions initiated by architects and artists. With temporary installations - including Spacebuster by Raumlabor Berlin, the physical presence lasted just a few days or weeks. The initiators of such interventions always hope that the event gives an impulse to a longer lasting development. They want to put unused spaces into the public consciousness and establish local contacts, as well as entire networks. Their goal is for citizens to have greater participation in urban development, expanding the use of a social event at the core of such interventions. It is meant to give certain urban clarity and aesthetic presence to the artistic creations.

The Spacebuster was conceived as a means to stimulate and explore the qualities and possibilities of public space in New York City. It forms a dialogue in the perception of architectural space vs. social space and opens up each urban location for temporary cooperative use. Spacebuster was built using a simple step van and large inflatable bubble, in which people step into through the back of the van. The clarity of the bubble gives direct relationship between the event on the interior and exterior of the bubble. Interior functions complemented and contrasted the exterior functions, such as community meetings held in the rough, respective parts of town. 15

The floating theater was built under a joint commission from the theater and architecture sections of the 1980 Venice Biennale. It was seen as the progeny of sixteenth-century floating pavilions. The Teatro was built at the Fusina shipyards and towed by sea to the Punta della Dogana, a spot according to Rossi, that “seemed to me a place where architecture ended and the world of imagination or even the irrational began”. It was anchored there through the duration of the Biennale. Afterward it traveled by sea to the Dalmatian coast of Yugoslavia, calling at coastal towns like Dubrovnik that were original Venetian colonies. It was later dismantled. The Teatro is related both to the tradition of the floating building and to the idea of a structure intended to temporarily alter the landscape of the city. 16
CLOCKWISE STARTING FROM OPPOSITE LEFT:

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS STADIUM | WILLOWBRANCH INLET CANAL | RIVERSIDE ARTS MARKET | COMMODORE POINT EXPRESSWAY
The city of Jacksonville is in a current state of transition. Like many other second-tier cities, the urban core has become a central figure in many political and private agendas as a means to restore the social, economic, environmental and cultural integrity to the most historical region of the city. It was fundamental for the research to look at innovative strategies and tactics in redeveloping unpredictable urban areas. Many of the initiatives taken by both the public and private sectors regarding dead zones of the urban core have led to indeterminate futures – in many cases large scale projects that involved staggering amounts of investment have yielded little return in the form of city development.

One of the most involved growth management plans for the city came in 2000, the Better Jacksonville Plan (BJP) was approved by voters as a $2.25 billion package of projects to provide road and infrastructure improvements, environmental preservation, targeted economic development and new and improved public facilities. The BJP was responsible for the construction of several major additions to the downtown area including Veterans Memorial Arena, Baseball Grounds, the new Main Library and Duval County Courthouse. Little investment was put into socio-cultural related programs or facilities in the urban core, and in turn the facilities built provide a majority of economic benefit to their own institution, in other words, businesses within the proximity of these facilities are only active during events for the planned facilities. In 2013, it was determined that the Better Jacksonville Plan had gone broke and had excessively exceeded their targeted budget, such as the nearly $400 million Duval courthouse originally planned for less than $200 million.

Jacksonvillians experienced an increased awareness of the state and potentials of their downtown during the inaugural One Spark crowd funding festival in April 2013. The festival drew people who normally spend their lives closer to the edge of the city into the downtown, and made use of the city’s public spaces, walkable scale and metro monorail line. The event was rooted in supporting ideas for art, entertainment, music, innovation and technology but with the series of venues chosen in the downtown area, the event tested the functionality of a large population dispersed in the urban space. It was proven a successful ‘dusting off’ at the urban scale, complete with street vendors, public transit, and re-appropriating unoccupied space.

Should the joint actions of the city and public move into tactical interventions focused towards accretionary development rather than long-term visions, the momentum of redevelopment has the potential to reactivate the city at a variety of scales and weight.
TIMELINE OF DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
DATA: FLORIDA TIMES UNION

**French Landing, 1562**
- San Nicholas Island is the French landing and the start of downtown.

**Great Fire, 1831**
- A fire destroys many of the buildings in the downtown area.

**Town Charter Approved, 1850**
- A formal town charter is approved.

**Mills, 1852-1855**
- The first major development plan is implemented.

**Fletcher, 1861**
- Another development plan is proposed.

**Martin, 1877-1883**
- Yet another development plan is proposed.

**Alsop Jr, 1892-1897**
- Continued development efforts.

**Whitehead, 1917-1923**
- Continued development efforts.

**Ritter, 1934-1937**
- Continued development efforts.

**Tanzler, 1949-1951**
- Continued development efforts.

**Godbold, 1965-1967**
- Continued development efforts.

**Hazouri, 1979-1987**
- Continued development efforts.

**Austin, Jr., 1987-1991**
- Continued development efforts.

**Delaney, 1991-1995**
- Continued development efforts.

**Peyton, 2003-2011**
- Continued development efforts.

**Brown, 2011-present**
- Continued development efforts.

**Mills, 1852-1855**
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- Continued development efforts.

**Tanzler, 1949-1951**
- Continued development efforts.

**Godbold, 1965-1967**
- Continued development efforts.

**Hazouri, 1979-1987**
- Continued development efforts.

**Austin, Jr., 1987-1991**
- Continued development efforts.

**Delaney, 1991-1995**
- Continued development efforts.

**Peyton, 2003-2011**
- Continued development efforts.

**Brown, 2011-present**
- Continued development efforts.

**Mills, 1852-1855**
- Continued development efforts.

**Fletcher, 1861**
- Continued development efforts.

**Martin, 1877-1883**
- Continued development efforts.

**Alsop Jr, 1892-1897**
- Continued development efforts.

**Whitehead, 1917-1923**
- Continued development efforts.

**Ritter, 1934-1937**
- Continued development efforts.

**Tanzler, 1949-1951**
- Continued development efforts.

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- Continued development efforts.

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It is important to identify the state at which the city interacts with its downtown. Hard and soft data was used comparatively and conjunctively by means of quantitative and historical information provided by the US Census and local municipality as well as qualitative information provided by interviews, with local inhabitants and first hand observations of the conditions of the city.

Until recently the urban core has gone through a dormant period in which few places or programs, exist as facilitators for social life. Beginning with comparing and contrasting the land use patterns of downtown, infrastructural accessibility trends in mobility zones of population densities and recent development initiatives, we can begin to get an overall image of the city and how architects and planners can begin to insert themselves in service of development.

Reflecting multiple political agendas, the downtown is a new and important focal point for the municipality. Over 172000 residents have come to the downtown, in which the city has provided new spaces for more than 160k over the past two years. As the city begins to allocate funding for amenities necessary to foster a growing urban population, it is important to recognize the potentials of multiple actors to work together towards social projects. Much of downtown is isolated from its larger context, in which the Downtown Investment District exists only within a 7 by 7 block area. The intentions of the mayor’s office to make downtown a destination is contingent on the activation of downtown by its outside population, that is to say not only the inhabitants of downtown should have interest in the well-being of the downtown.

Secondary and tertiary nodes caused by sprawl and automobiles as the primary means of transportation have made this reconnection inherently more difficult. Though there is a growing interest in urbanity and the reestablishment of urban centers, the interest must sustain through the overlap of the public and institutions. As typical development occurs, we must be active in a way even subversive or critical, in reaction to it.

The zoning and development of downtown has lead to a centralized business district with peripheral industrial and residential clusters - many of which are located along primary or secondary bodies of water with large intermitted inactive zones between. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has allocated $300000 in funding for 32 showcase communities of which Jacksonville is Region 4. The EPA is undergoing water quality assessments in bodies of water within Region 4 as well as the brownfields and superfund sites that have impacted these waterways. Groundwork USA, a non-profit organization that is undergoing water quality assessments in bodies of water within Region 4 as well as the brownfields and superfund sites that have impacted these waterways.

The mayor of Jacksonville’s $11 million expansion zone plan for 2014 was used comparatively and conjunctively by means of quantitative and historical information provided by the US Census and local municipality as well as qualitative information provided by interviews, with local inhabitants and first hand observations of the conditions of the city.

The number of downtown residents has increased by 256% since 2004.

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The majority of activity in the urban core of Jacksonville is located within what is considered the 'Spark District', a core redevelopment area spanning a 6-block square area. This area, though crucial to the success of making downtown a destination, lacks enough exposure to the interstates that pass through and around the downtown. The zones adjacent to the highways offer no more than views of post-industrial sites or urban decay, giving an image of vacancy to the majority passing by. From the heights of the bridges, one can get an overlook of the downtown in passing, from the perspective of the river. The city's ability to draw people in can be directly influenced by a new relationship with such a large natural resource, though for the most part is currently inactive and underutilized.
LOCATING OPPORTUNITY

In 1950, Jacksonville was a thriving industrial port city with an urban area lined with piers and wharves. The proximity of these shipping-related activities to the urban core led to a vibrant downtown, where people not only worked but also maintained their livelihood. As with many other second-tier port cities, Jacksonville also maintained their livelihood. As with many other second-tier port cities, Jacksonville also maintained their livelihood. As with many other second-tier port cities, Jacksonville also maintained their livelihood. As with many other second-tier port cities, Jacksonville also maintained their livelihood.

UNDERUTILIZED ASSET

The St. Johns River, Jacksonville’s primary natural resource, was recently the locus of a study regarding the assets of the city. Asked to name the most important asset to the region, only 28 percent of metro area respondents named the St. Johns River. Nearly two-thirds put Navy bases at the top. Nearly half didn’t see a direct connection between their personal actions and the river’s health.

In many European cities, rivers are often regarded as cultural landmarks. In post-industrial areas, like the Ruhr Region, a cultural landscape has superseded the non-industrial landscape, incorporating educational and recreational infrastructure. The St. Johns river occupies a 30-mile stretch through the city with its shores representing the densest areas of population. Half a dozen bridges cross the St. Johns, supporting over one hundred thousand people daily as they move across the city. In comparison, Jacksonville’s museums collectively draw one visitor in a busy day instead of a forgotten void; the river basin has the potential to become a cultural landscape—a raw armature connecting the diverse neighborhoods on either edge.

Marking Development

To excite interest in the St. Johns River and shed light on the opportunities latent within the river basin, marking development is the extent to which the small scale projects can have a collective effect on the image of the city and how people associate with this river. Through essential structural environmental adjustment projects in conjunction with public programs, a suggested transvaluation with the river can be instilled.
CLOCKWISE STARTING FROM OPPOSITE LEFT:

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS STADIUM | skater
from downtown parking garage | jta
skyway | jaxport
TACTICAL RESPONSES

In addressing the conditions of redevelopment in downtown Jacksonville in regards to the disconnection between the inhabitants of the city and its primary natural resource, sites were chosen along the river as extensions of existing city-sanctioned initiatives but more importantly give public access to waterfront areas - areas that have had prolonged private use. The tactical way in which this reconnection can be made is not through trying to change or alter the outcome of the entire site, such as controlling what can or cannot be built on it, but rather responding to the norms of construction projects (i.e. warehouses, office projects) with an active, potentially critical or subversive intervention that accommodates the particular fabric of the site.

In the case of these waterfront sites, many contain their own immediate forces to be reckoned with - post-industrial conditions carry the burden of contamination and misuse. Fitting these sites for even minimal use has come at the responsibility of the city, in which Jacksonville has been active. Many sites have been excavated to the necessary level then replenished with top soil giving way for at least a park or minimal structure intervention. The activation of these locations gives way to immediate social potential given their adjacency to the river, though there comes a necessity of crowds in order to get the sites going. Thinking of the saying, "If you build it, they will come" can be applicable if what being built is in response to a desire, or better yet need of the city.

In the case of each location, their potential is broken into either social, cultural, environmental or economic focus. This categorizing is a conceptual framework for establishing the understood possibilities given the immediate surroundings, but is by no means a permanent label for the site, it simply gives a hierarchy to certain potentials over others. For example, in the case of sites located near the stadium and on the river social functions geared towards the economic success of the football team, such as public sports facilities, could be lightly implemented.

With each zone examined, an outlook that incorporates institutions and public function is provided as a means to expose possibilities of future intervention. These additional interventions are only suggestions as to how the first intervention can be better informed as a means for strong urban production. For example, in Zone 8, additional environmental and recreational events - fishing pier, marina, oyster bed - are included in a suggestive plan that supports the function of the proposed observation tower. The events that occur in these clusters of interventions can be inserted in any order over time, supporting the accretionary development strategy as well as the ability for each intervention to carry its own strength relying only on its context.

Each zone also posits an ability to suggest interventions that are primarily infrastructural to city development. Corridors and pathways begin to take ownership of the zones, directing and connecting these zones to others.

As these sites develop, their legibility amongst the topographical flatness of Jacksonville becomes hard to distinguish. As a suggested marker for each site, a vertical element that represents the commencement of activity is implemented to understand the breadth and location of active zones in the urban core. The serial nature of the markers simultaneously represents a new order for the city as well as symbolizes the new narrative between Jacksonville and the St John’s River.
In joining together a literal landmark to its site, each ‘site-mark’ has a unique characteristic of a function at its base. Just as a means to draw in users, discovery is made at the lively active public space below. It is then that the site-marks can have multiple functions, ranging from a monument to a signal tower, but express the qualities of seduction and navigation that encapsulate the unique historic lighthouses of Florida. As sites begin to develop and organic districts begin to form, the choice can be made to disassemble the towers, just as the Archigram parasitic idea-blimp leaves its host site or remain forever as a monument to the cooperation of the municipality, institution and the public in the rejuvenation and reinvention of the once forgotten wastelands.

Historic Landmarks

With one of the largest collections of lighthouses in the United States, Florida has a rich history in using towers as a means to direct or locate. In the 1820s, the federal government began erecting lighthouses for the protection of ships against the hazards along the Florida coast. In the 1820s, the federal government began erecting lighthouses for the protection of ships against the hazards along the Florida coast. Each was given a definitive color and form for daytime recognition and distinctive light pattern for nighttime identification.

The complex building conditions of Florida’s sandy coasts presented new problems to the engineers responsible for erecting the lighthouses for they found they could not employ the methods and materials of building used in the traditional New England towers. Coming up with a new type of foundation, the engineers developed a series of sandbars around the island, causing the appearing and vanishing of islands over time.
Downtown’s means of economic production originated with shipping and fishing. As the fishing ports maintain their operations at the mouth of the river, most fish caught are transported by auto to the rest of the city. As downtown grassroot markets are on the rise, the introduction of a fish market that extends the use of the river as transportation for fishermen gives additional exposure to local historic industry. As an extension and stimulus to the Riverwalk, a series of fishing piers and reefs, encourage a new dialog with the river while reusing existing public infrastructure. They also provide subtle, yet varied vantage points of observation into the downtown.

Rather than typical centralized parks, often containing non-native plant species, a wetlands restoration on this scale gives primacy to the naturally occurring plant species. Turning these sites into zones that begin to restore the habitats that once thrived in these locations shows a commitment to the natural livelihood of the city adding to a positive image of the city’s identity while educating and reinforcing the importance of the river’s health.

Jacksonville has maintained popularity of extreme sports as it moves from one trend to another. Cities like Portland have developed urban mountain biking trails, making the reason to come downtown more than a cosmopolitan experience. With the integration of recreational facilities, reviveing shipping remnants of the area along with the activity of the program builds upon the character of the formerly active shipyards.

The island’s location provides a unique opportunity for connection between urban and suburban while also taking advantage of opportunities of tidal movement between the river and the ocean. This affords itself to a facility that can connect the downtown and outer-city through a means of observing the river at multiple scales and using natural filtration processes to help restore the river’s health.
The Exchange Club Island was created in 1950 when dredging sand, silt, and other sediments from the river bottom to make way for the Mathews Bridge. Over the past 60 years, the island has naturally developed a large thicket with a diverse range of trees, shrubs, and bushes. Because of the wildlife watching opportunities as well as its position as an urban oasis, the city of Jacksonville has reserved the island as a city park though without any means of access outside a personal craft.

In 2012, JAXPORT requested permitting for 13 miles of dredging of the river to make way for larger capacity ships soon to be coming to the east coast. An environmental impact study conducted by the US Army Corps of Engineers focused on the effects caused by dredging project to the salinity levels and its impact on freshwater wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, fish, shrimp, and groundwater. Should the city decide against the dredging, Jacksonville could lose its place as a competitive port, which as of now is the main economic driver of the city. Should the city decide for the dredging, the health and ecosystems of the river could be deeply impacted.

The island is located in an area of the river that experiences directional change in flow while maintaining low current speeds in comparison to other areas within downtown. It has the potential to serve as an area for recreational aquatic activity as well as natural river restoration and filtration systems. Organizations such as the St. Johns Riverkeeper, Jacksonville University, and the Parks and Recreation Department have the opportunity to collaborate in light, yet transformative interventions for the island.

In addition to these systems, a marker that creates legibility for the site as well as an event for ecotourism, can be placed near the island. As an observation tower, this point demarcates the extents of the downtown, as well as given position an overview of the breadth of the city and its relationship to the river.

‘DEEP ADAPTATION ... IS POSSIBLY THE MOST FRUITFUL POINT OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE THEORY OF COMPLEX SYSTEMS, AND THE PROBLEM OF ARCHITECTURE’

- Christopher Alexander
EVOLVING AQUATIC INFRASTRUCTURE

As an extension of existing water taxi routes as well as park infrastructure in the city, the activation of Exchange Club Island acts as a tactical cluster of aquatic projects that can be constructed in any order and inserted at any time. Promoting the use of transportation and social infrastructures through the river acts as a supplement to the "Celebrating the River" initiative by the city but also transforms the image of the river through the specific programmatic developments surrounding recreation.

As a node that can take on political, social, and ecological agendas, the active island can become a catalyst to the development of the eastern portion of downtown. In doing so, extensions of the Riverwalk, bike/pedestrian paths and dense vegetation become possible given the representation of a terminal point.
TRANSITION

The base of the tower acts as a place of transition between hard and soft—from the city to the landscape. The ferry stop, a dense sun-shading lattice structure, is a place for waiting and observation which uses the grids of the city to keep itself positioned amongst the prevailing urban logic while in a remote location. The position of the platform recognizes the changing tides of the river, but also establishes an initial viewpoint before moving through the tower.

OBSERVING EXISTENCE THROUGH PRETENSE

The tower substantially tall allows the user to experience the city as an understanding of edge to center within a larger edge to center relationship. The winding of the river and the clarity of the historic relationship between the city and the river gives a clear visual understanding of its order. The tower is not located in service to existing redevelopment or a particular stunning vantage point, but rather positioned as a marker to the breadth of downtown as well as a stimulator to the potential of future development on Commodore Point and beyond.
Models of initial marker and base. Marker is represented by an elevator core and the base a water taxi platform.
Evolving Futures

Sites have the potential to be active and productive urban spaces without maximum implementation. In the case of Exchange Club Island, it is important to recognize the necessary actions to take through the potentials of the site - to begin mending connections between the city and its relationship with the river through environmental and social restructuring that are conditionally influenced. The implementation of these fragments of projects that have the ability to change over time allows for territorial impact through a means of singular small-scale moves. If anything, these projects begin as social, environmental, and economic infrastructures, but allow for development into much more. The observation tower gives legibility to the activation of downtown and to old and new networks - social, environmental, political, and economic.

As cities become inherently more complex and their development increasingly contingent on many factors, it is important to think of how tactical actions and growing part-by-part can be implemented to allow for a sustainable and productive urban realm.
SELECTED READINGS //


